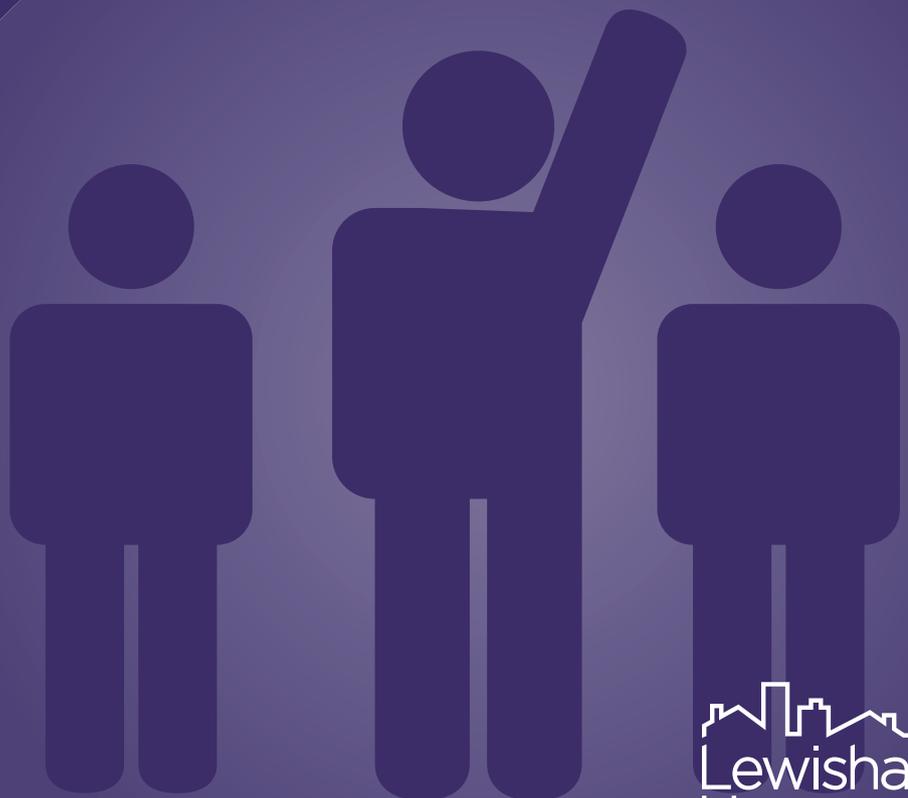


# Annual Report 2013/14

**FOR RESIDENTS**



  
Lewisham  
Homes



# Introduction



**Andrew Potter**  
Chief Executive

Andrew was appointed chief executive in 2006, he leads our team of directors.



**Julia Cotton**  
Lewisham Homes Board Chair

Julia was appointed to the board in 2007, and is currently the chair.

## Our mission

To deliver great housing services for thriving neighbourhoods.

## Who we are

Lewisham Homes is an ambitious organisation set up to improve housing in the borough, currently managing 18,000 homes on behalf of Lewisham Council. We are a not-for-profit organisation undertaking a major local investment programme, operating our own maintenance company, and building new homes through a partnership with the local authority.

We are committed to providing you with excellent housing services and a quality home to live in. This is why we were created by Lewisham Council in 2007. We have made good progress in achieving our goals with an increase in overall resident satisfaction from 60% in 2008 to 71% in 2014.

We have also been making good progress on improving the quality of residents homes with improvements made to over 4000 homes. In 2008 only 43% of homes met the Decent Homes Standard. This has increased to 63% in 2014 and this year will see our largest investment programme ever with major improvements to 2100 homes. By the end of the year 80% of our homes will meet the Decent Homes Standard.

We have been focusing on improving our repairs service with satisfaction improving by 10% to 72% over the last two years.

We are proud of the improvements we have made but know that we have more to do. Over the next year we will continue to make improvements to your homes. We know that we need to improve the grounds maintenance service and will be taking control of this service directly so that we can improve standards. We will be investing in a companywide customer care programme to improve the quality of our services, as well as looking for new ways to get your views so we can concentrate on delivering services that are right for you.



# How we are governed

We are governed by a management board. It sets our overall direction and checks on our progress in delivering on our mission to provide great housing services for thriving neighbourhoods. The Board is made up of seven residents, five independents and three Councillors who help to keep us focused and challenge our management team to ensure we are doing the right things to deliver improved services to our residents.

Our resident board members bring first-hand experience of our services and the issues and concerns that are important to our residents.

Our independent board members bring expertise in areas such as finance, development, property management and governance.

Our Council Board members bring a wider perspective on community issues across Lewisham and help ensure we are working effectively with the Council and for the community. They provide a valuable challenge helping us focus on priorities and ensuring we have strong resident membership.



# Our corporate objectives

**This annual report is set out under our five objectives; these are the main areas we focus on to deliver great housing services to residents. They are:**

Excellent services

Quality homes

Sustainable business

Community focus

Employer of choice





# Excellent services

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We want our customers to experience great service at all times, to do this we spend time listening to residents' and responding to their needs. We are committed to providing easy to access services and are continuing our efforts to improve this area.



Six out of seven visiting our offices are seen within 10 minutes



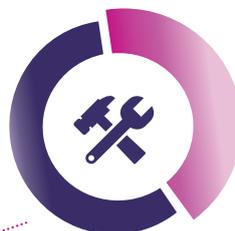
90% of phone calls answered within 20 seconds



Our residents helped us to significantly improve satisfaction with caretaking from 58% to 68%



Reduced complaints by a quarter and improved responses when things do go wrong



Our repairs service has continued to meet and exceed most of its targets - more details on this on page 6.



# Changes to benefits under Welfare Reform

In April 2013, the Government brought in new rules for people claiming housing benefit for their council homes. The introduction of the under occupancy charge (commonly known as bedroom tax) and the benefit cap have had a big impact on both tenants and social landlords.

To support our residents through the changes, we set up a dedicated Welfare Benefits team to provide free, impartial advice including claiming benefits, managing debt and explaining options available for moving home. We are continuing to work with the Council to support residents to explore their options as well as minimise the financial impact on housing services.



1100

Lewisham Homes' tenants had their benefit cut

48

Residents assisted to move home

£71 million

Rent collected in 2013/14 (98.7% of rent due)

95

Tenants registered to move

## CASE STUDY

### “My new flat is absolutely gorgeous!”

Monica, 53, a resident from Forest Hill received support from Trading Places after being affected by bedroom tax.

“A lady called Christine from Trading Places came round to see me and really understood what I needed.

She listened to me, found out what I wanted and within a couple of days a ground floor flat became available for me. I couldn't believe my luck, my new flat is absolutely gorgeous and as I'm no longer under-occupying by one bedroom, I'll be saving £13.73 a week which works out to be £713.96 a year!”

## Enforcing tenancy conditions

We know it is important to our residents that we tackle neighbourhood problems and antisocial behaviour. In 2013/14 we recovered 52 homes which were illegally sublet; these properties were subsequently let to families on the waiting list under the council's allocation scheme.

We have also improved the way we handle antisocial behaviour cases by implementing changes that led to steady rise of satisfaction through the year. This is an area we are continuing to work on.



# Community Focus

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We aim to enable residents to influence how we shape and deliver services, we are committed to investing in local people, providing employability opportunities and skills training that support our residents to get ahead.

## Highlights in 2013/14



### Supporting residents to make a difference

We run a £100,000 Community Investment Programme in partnership with our contractors Breyer and MITIE. It supports residents to get back to work through the apprenticeship scheme, work experience, and work clubs; as well as offering residents skills based opportunities in carrying out basic repairs.

In addition to this we have a £60,000 Community Fund which enables residents to bid for funding to improve their local environment or run projects to benefit their community. During the year 16 projects were funded including street dance for young people and gardening projects. The Fund is available again in 2014/15.





# Investing in Lewisham communities



## Our financial inclusion work has included:

- > Partnership working with local **food banks** to provide vouchers for those residents most in need
- > Increasing the membership of **Lewisham Plus Credit Union (LPCU)** to 1583
- > Training staff to increase their awareness of **loan sharks**, and to advise about the support available to residents.

Our community investment programme is deeply connected to our approach to resident engagement.

## By numbers

**47** residents attended High 5 intensive employability skills courses

**166** residents attended work clubs where help is given with online job searches, CV writing, and sign posting to further training

**26** residents had work placements with contractors Breyer and MITIE

**140** residents attended DIY courses

**208** residents took part in training covering committee skills and accredited workplace training



The Lovezdance street dance workshops promote confidence and wellbeing. They attracted more than 100 young people in 2013/14. The programme is now entering its third year.

**70** young people attended the Evelyn sports sessions, with five going on to achieve level 1 Sports Leadership, and now preparing to take level 2.

Our contractors MITIE delivered **18** careers events in schools

MITIE delivered **12** IT training sessions in sheltered schemes

**60 Up** delivered activity sessions across 10 sheltered schemes

**7** Gardening projects were completed to improve communal gardens



4000

Homes complete under the Decent Homes programme



95%

Resident satisfaction with works

# Quality homes

We know that improving homes through our major works programme and maintaining them through our repairs service is essential to ensure our residents love where they live. We're pleased to be delivering the first new council homes in 30 years as the Council's new development partner - these projects will help us to improve the environment for all residents.



£58 million

Invested in homes and neighbourhoods to date

# Repairs

56,000 repairs inside and outside residents' homes completed in 2013/14

99.6% completed within the target time

93% tenant satisfaction with repairs

Tenants' homes are 100% gas safe



# New homes for Lewisham

We have started work to build the borough's first new council housing in 30 years.

**£15,000**  
annual income of 48% of Lewisham households

**15,000**  
the predicted shortage of homes in Lewisham by 2025

**7000**  
Lewisham households waiting for social housing

**Private**  
rent market is rising

**1 in 10**  
are overcrowded in their homes across Lewisham

**250%**  
Lewisham house prices have risen over the past decade

**Just 16%**  
of homes in Lewisham are council housing

**Families**  
are squeezed in the middle claiming Housing Benefit + paying private rent rates

The first new build project will see six family homes built in place of unused and run-down garages in Mercator Road in Lewisham.

## New build



The development is part of the New Homes Better Places programme – a joint initiative between Lewisham Council and Lewisham Homes – which will build up to 500 council homes over the next five years.

Lewisham Homes is working with London-based construction company, Roof Limited, to build the first six new homes in Lee. They have been designed by PTE Architects, specialists in the creation and revitalisation of neighbourhoods.

Mercator Road's site will have energy efficient three-bedroom and two-bedroom homes with private family gardens containing bike stores, refuse and composting facilities. Expected completion for the first six new homes is January 2015.

Throughout 2014/15 we are developing our capacity to deliver this. Consultation will be carried out on five other potential sites in the borough and works will also include estate improvements to surrounding areas for residents.



# Sustainable Business

We aim to strike a balance between delivering the things that customers want and the cost of achieving them. We are working hard to reduce our costs, while increasing customer satisfaction and generating surpluses to invest in resident priorities.





# Highlights in 2013/14

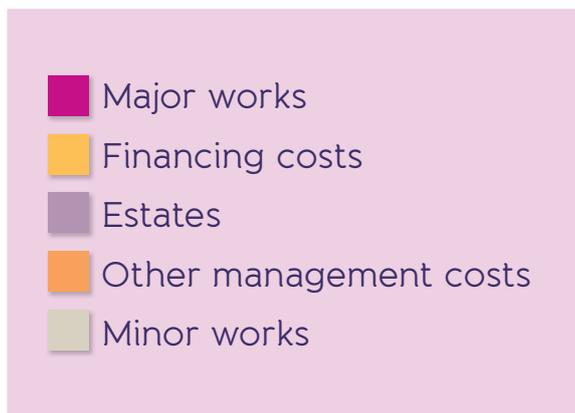


- ▶ Reduced our management costs by £500,000 while continuing to improve resident satisfaction
- ▶ Saved £624,000 on our repairs costs while continuing to improve the service
- ▶ Saved £430,000 on lost rent by repairing and re-letting properties more quickly

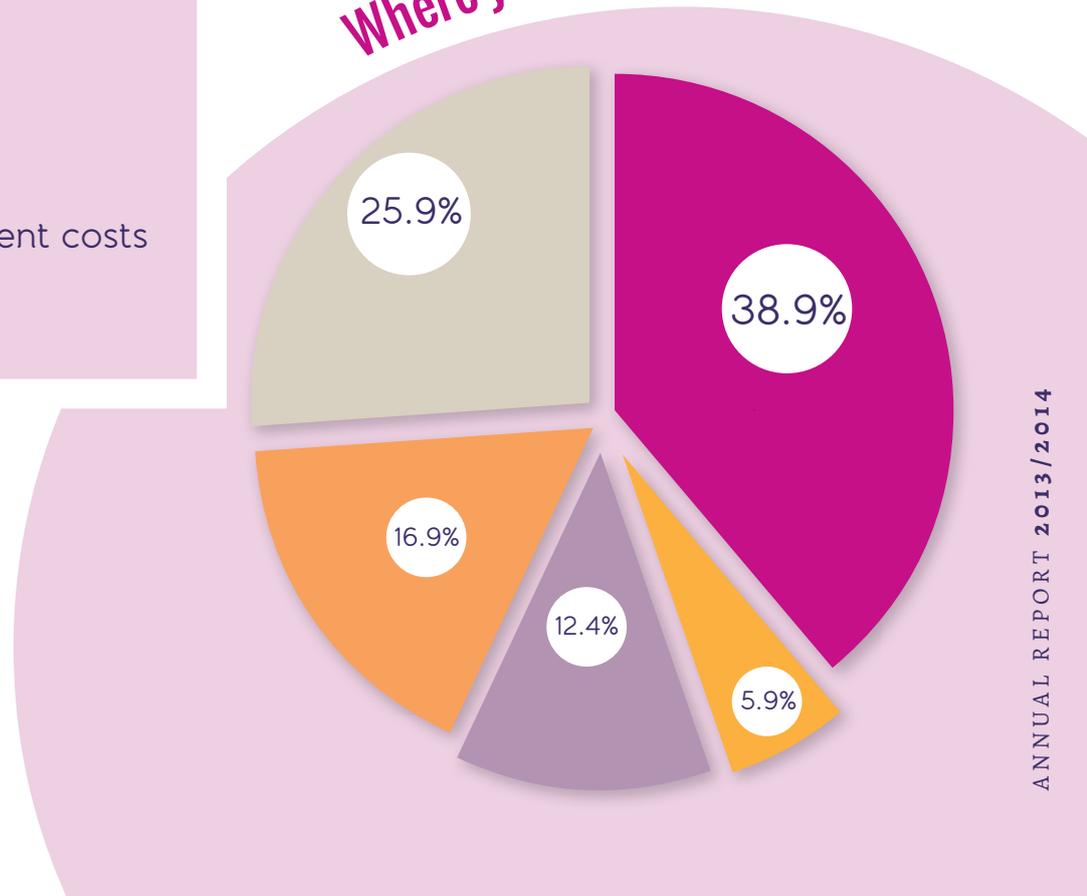
## Keeping service costs as affordable as possible

per week	2011	2012	2013
<b>Lewisham service charge</b>	£6.06	£6.18	£6.34
<b>London average</b>	£8.68	£8.76	Not available
<b>Lewisham council rent</b>	£81.61	£87.40	£90.87
<b>London average council rent</b>	£89.33	£95.50	£100.18

By making sure our services cost less than the rent we collect, we can invest in making improvements to your home, the services you receive, and invest in new homes for future generations.



## Where your rent is spent







# £10.5 million

The total savings Lewisham Homes has made up to 2013/14.

## A further £1m is planned for 2014/15.



## Top 10 performance indicators

Performance Indicator	2013/14	Target	Are we meeting target?
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### Excellent services

Tenant satisfaction with the overall service	71%	75%	✗
Tenant satisfaction with the last repair	93%	95%	✗
Satisfaction with internal caretaking and cleaning	68%	68%	✓

### Quality homes

Tenant satisfaction with the quality of their home	70%	70%	✓
Homes that meet the Decent Homes Standard	63%	63%	✓
Tenant satisfaction with internal Decent Homes work	95%	96%	✗

### Sustainable business

Percentage rent lost through vacant properties	0.78%	0.80%	✓
Rent collected in the year (excluding historic arrears)	98.7%	99%	✗
Current tenant rent arrears as a percentage of the annual debit	4.7%	<5%	✓

### Community focus

Tenant satisfaction that we listen to views and act upon them	59%	60%	✗
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# Employer of choice

14

To achieve our goals and deliver excellent services to our residents we need great people on our team. As an employer it is important to us to create opportunity and invest in our staff to ensure they give their best.

## Highlights in 2013/14



### Apprentices and graduate schemes



We have a good track record with our graduates and apprentices. This year we employed five graduates in a range of roles; and in partnership with our Decent Homes contractors, Breyer Group and MITIE, employed 39 apprentices in tenancy, caretaking, electrical, carpentry, plumbing and business administration.

As an employer we are keen to provide opportunities for young people and offer a mixture of training and on-the-job experience. We offer advice and training to assist people in carving out a successful and fulfilling career.



### Dominic Kirby

*Electrical Apprentice in our Repairs Service*

In March 2014 he was awarded the Outstanding Progression award at Lewisham Council's Celebrating Achievement Awards.



### Alice Noonan

*Graduate Trainee, Community Engagement*

"The programme gave me the opportunity to work through problems with fellow graduates and receive training on themes such as customer service, team working, communication skills and stress management.

One of the best aspects of the programme was being allocated a mentor who offered me support and advice whenever I needed it. My mentor also organised opportunities for me to shadow other teams where I experienced wider aspects of the business and developed my contacts throughout the organisation.

I have now secured a permanent post at Lewisham Homes and will be working in the Development Team which is focused on building new housing in Lewisham. Lewisham Homes is an exciting place to work where you get to make a real difference to people's lives."



## Investing in our people



We have improved staff development through our staff appraisal process, and introduced a wide range of training courses including the Institute of Leadership and Management programme for new managers. We have seen the highest number of internal promotions than any other year, and enabled more coaching and job shadowing opportunities for our staff.

## Accreditation



We want Lewisham Homes to be a great place to work, to ensure we are on the right track we ask independent agencies to assess our approach. In 2013 we achieved the Investors in People 'Bronze' rating, this assessment is focused on what staff and managers say, not on policies and procedures. Our areas of strength were in developing our values and knowledge sharing across teams, as well as having good career development opportunities and resources for learning.



# What are we doing in 2014/15?



Offer more online services

## Excellent services

- > Offer access to more services online
- > Re-locate to one office and create a one-stop-shop
- > Provide specialist support for residents
- > Take over and improve grounds maintenance services

£40 million programme of work for 2014/15



## Quality homes

- > Decent Homes and Major Works
- > £40 million programme of work for 2014/15
- > 2000 homes to have works
- > External improvements to estates in Sydenham, Blackheath, Forest Hill, Catford and other areas.

### LONG TERM PLANNING

We are reviewing and updating our Asset Management Strategy which sets out how we will achieve and resource new homes, and improve the quality of existing homes.

## Sustainable business



### INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE

Since April 2012 councils have kept their rental income and used it to fund their housing stock – this is called ‘self-financing’. For Lewisham Homes, this means that there is more certainty about funding for the future and we can develop a longer term Business Plan that will secure investment to benefit residents. We will invest in a new office to accommodate all our staff and introduce our own repairs service vehicle fleet which will be more efficient.

our housing stock through the Right to Buy, this means we must provide services with less resources. We will focus on and invest in services that make a difference to our residents. For example, by combining our customer service teams, supporting residents through the impact of Welfare Reform, and improving services for vulnerable residents.

Improving services for vulnerable residents

### CONTINUING TO SAVE MONEY

We want to support the Council to increase housing supply, improve existing homes and services and create employment, training and other opportunities for people. But we are also facing the loss of some of

### DELIVER MORE SERVICES

We aim to bring more services under our control including reducing the use of repairs contractors, running the grounds maintenance service, and improving ICT infrastructure by running our own ICT systems.





# Employer of choice

Creating opportunities for young people



## KEY LOCAL EMPLOYER

Our graduate and apprenticeship programmes help young people by giving them first steps in their careers. In 2014/15 we are offering 6 graduate placements and more than 30 apprenticeships in partnership with our contractors.

## DEVELOPING OUR STAFF

We will invest in developing future leaders in the organisation. This will help us to ensure we are equipped to deliver great services and we can maintain a sustainable business.



# Community focus

Providing equipment and support for residents in sheltered schemes

## RESIDENT SURVEY

Every two years we commission independent researchers to contact our residents to find out their views of our services. By sharing views on the services we provide, participants will help us to improve and deliver great services to all residents.

## SUPPORTING RESIDENTS TO GET AHEAD

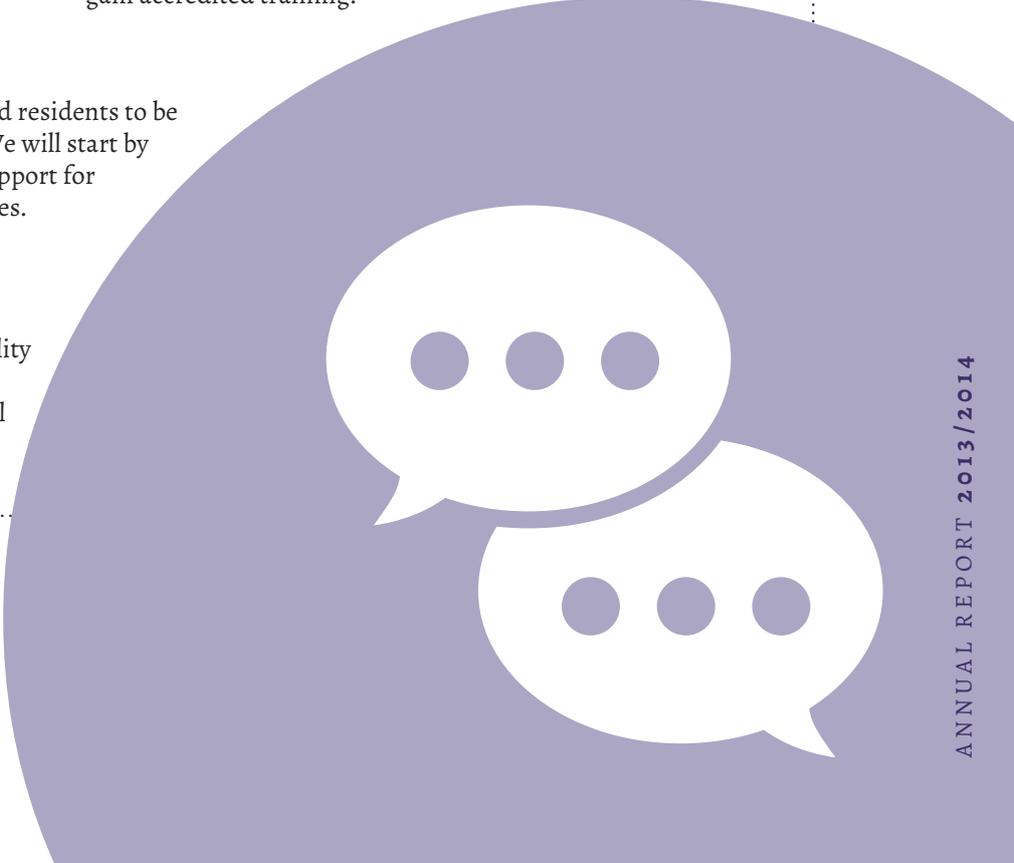
We will continue to offer employability courses and invest in local people by providing opportunities and skills training. We will increase the opportunities available to gain accredited training.

## DIGITAL INCLUSION

We want all digitally excluded residents to be able to access the internet. We will start by providing equipment and support for residents in sheltered schemes.

## SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

We are looking at the feasibility of setting up a social enterprise to benefit the local community.





# OUR BOARD

We want our residents to be at the heart of all we do. That's why our Board includes places for seven residents, the largest group on our Board. Our Board work closely with our Executive Management Team to ensure that we meet our objectives and mission – to deliver great housing services for thriving neighbourhoods.

The board is made up of residents, councillors and independent members of the community with relevant skills and experience. The board makes strategic decisions and receive updates on the work being carried out by the organisation. Meetings are open to the public and observers are welcome, if you would like to attend a meeting please contact us.



**BOARD MEMBER**

Julia Cotton

Resident and chair



**BOARD MEMBER**

John Paschoud

Councillor

I live and work in the community in the hope of a better community for all.



**BOARD MEMBER**

Steve McGann

Resident and chair of scrutiny committee

It's a great opportunity to be part of a body that oversees the activities of **Lewisham Homes**

I hope the organisation can assist in making people happy where they live.



**BOARD MEMBER**

Ophelia Bobori

Resident



**BOARD MEMBER**

Neil Poppmacher

Resident



**BOARD MEMBER**

Paul Bell

Councillor



**BOARD MEMBER**

David Gannicott

Vice chair and independent



**BOARD MEMBER**

Peter Batten

Resident



**BOARD MEMBER**

Susan Wise

Councillor



**BOARD MEMBER**

Nick Joslyn

Independent and chair of DLO committee



**BOARD MEMBER**

Sarah Smith

Independent



**BOARD MEMBER**

Terry James

Independent and chair of audit committee



**BOARD MEMBER**

Grace Padonou Addy

Resident

My hope for residents is for them to feel that they can contribute and make a difference.



**BOARD MEMBER**

Could this be you?



**BOARD MEMBER**

Ainsley Forbes

Independent



## MY LEWISHAM HOMES IS A SECURE AREA OF OUR WEBSITE THAT ALLOWS TENANTS TO:

- > See your current rent balance
- > View your regular charges and a statement of recent transactions
- > See outstanding and completed housing repairs
- > View and update your contact details that we hold on our system

Sign up today! [www.lewishamhomes.org.uk](http://www.lewishamhomes.org.uk)



We can give you this information in any other way, style or language that will help you access it. Please indicate which language you require and provide your name, address and telephone number in the box below.

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