

# Annual Report

**FOR RESIDENTS**

**2014/15**

  
Lewisham  
Homes



# Introduction



**Julia Cotton**  
**Lewisham Homes Board Chair**

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



**Andrew Potter**  
**Chief Executive**

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

## 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 an ambitious 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 great housing services and contributing to creating thriving neighbourhoods in Lewisham. This is what drives our business activities every day and we are proud of our achievements to date.

In 2014/15 we have delivered significant advances bringing 80% of homes up to the Decent Homes Standard. We have increased customer satisfaction to 71% for tenants and seen a 10% rise in satisfaction with our repairs service which we know is important to our residents.

We are working in a sector which is adapting to a rapidly changing landscape, dealing with the challenges this presents and making the most of opportunities. We are working with the council to respond to the demand for housing and in March 2015 we completed our first new council homes at Atlas Mews. While this was a small development of six homes it is only the beginning and we will build a further 500 new homes by 2019. We are also supporting Lewisham Council to address the homelessness crisis by acquiring properties to let to households who would otherwise need to be placed in expensive nightly accommodation.

There are more opportunities ahead for us in 2015/16 when we take on new services for grounds maintenance on Lewisham estates. As a business we must do more ourselves, be less dependent on contractors, play our part in increasing housing supply and regenerating estates for Lewisham.



# Our corporate objectives

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

Excellent services

Thriving neighbourhoods

Sustainable future

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, so we can keep improving.

# One stop shop

The journey of transforming our customer contact centre into a one stop shop for residents began this year. In December 2014 we moved to our new offices at the Old Town Hall in Catford. By bringing our teams together under one roof we can provide a much improved customer experience. We have a bright, welcoming reception area, with private meeting rooms and free access to online services. We also began an organisation-wide programme of customer care training, to equip all our employees with the skills and knowledge to make a difference.





# Moving online

In August 2014 we launched My Lewisham Homes, a new, secure online portal, where residents can report repairs, check their rent balance and update personal details, at a time that suits them. We will be adding more services over the next year, such as booking repairs appointments, and feedback forums.

Don't waste time  
Do it online...





- ★ open 24/7
- ★ free to use
- ★ rent balance
- ★ repairs history
- ★ safe and secure

3 simple steps to register

## Supporting our residents



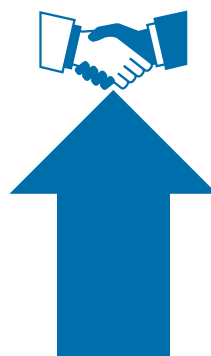
**We had the best year ever for rent collection**

We collected an additional £2.2 million compared to the previous year. We've also supported our residents to claim more than £320,000 in additional benefits.

### Case Study

Mrs Martin, aged 50, from Deptford was the victim of a severe stroke that left her completely housebound. She was unable to carry on working full time and couldn't afford to pay her rent or Council Tax. Her children did their best to support her financially but were unable to cope.

Our welfare benefits advisors worked with Mrs Martin and identified that she was entitled to nearly £8000 in backdated benefits including Personal Independence Payment, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.



**Tenant Satisfaction**  
**71%**  
(up from 58% in 2007)



We are taking action against residents who breach their tenancies

**56 Evictions**

16% increase from 2013/14

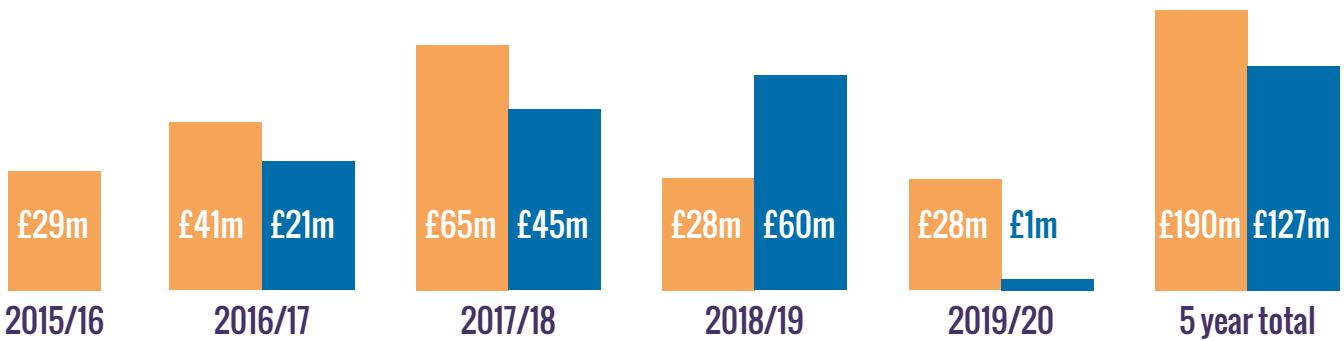


**Our antisocial behaviour team is now on twitter - see page 8 for more info**

# Thriving Neighbourhoods

We know that improving homes is essential to ensure our residents love where they live.

Money to be spent on ■ New build ■ Major works to improve homes




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## Improving your homes

### By numbers 2014/15

£49.3 million invested in improving properties

2800 homes benefitted from internal work including new kitchens, bathrooms and electrical rewiring

2400  homes benefitted from external works including new windows, doors and roofs, insulation, improving communal areas and external decorations

80% of the homes we manage now meet the Decent Homes standard

£156.2 million has been invested in homes and neighbourhoods over the last four years

 93% resident satisfaction with internal works



We will build  
**500**  
new council homes  
by 2019.



This year we completed the first new council housing in Lewisham for 30 years at Atlas Mews, which is now home to six local families.

The energy efficient homes are better for the environment and reduce utility bill costs for residents.

We're consulting local residents for each site and trying to incorporate their feedback to inform our design.

## Building more homes



## Growing our repairs service

We are carrying out more repair work ourselves, and using contractors less - to improve quality and efficiency and create more local job opportunities.

Hawke Tower, in New Cross, was our first block to have Decent Homes work completed by Lewisham Homes' own repairs team. 65 kitchens were installed, in an average 7 working days each.

- > 2 local apprentices learning new skills
- > 95% of residents satisfied

“ Resident Rhett Buckle, 33, said he is very happy with his new kitchen.

The work was all wrapped up in two weeks – I was shocked and impressed! My new kitchen is a big change from my old kitchen. I'm happy with the work, there were no problems and everyone I've dealt with has been friendly and efficient.”

”



- ▶ 100% gas safe
- ▶ We carried out a gas safety check on every single tenanted property with a gas supply last year.



# Thriving Neighbourhoods

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

Creating safer neighbourhoods

In response to resident feedback we've shaped a new antisocial behaviour service to provide better support in local neighbourhoods.

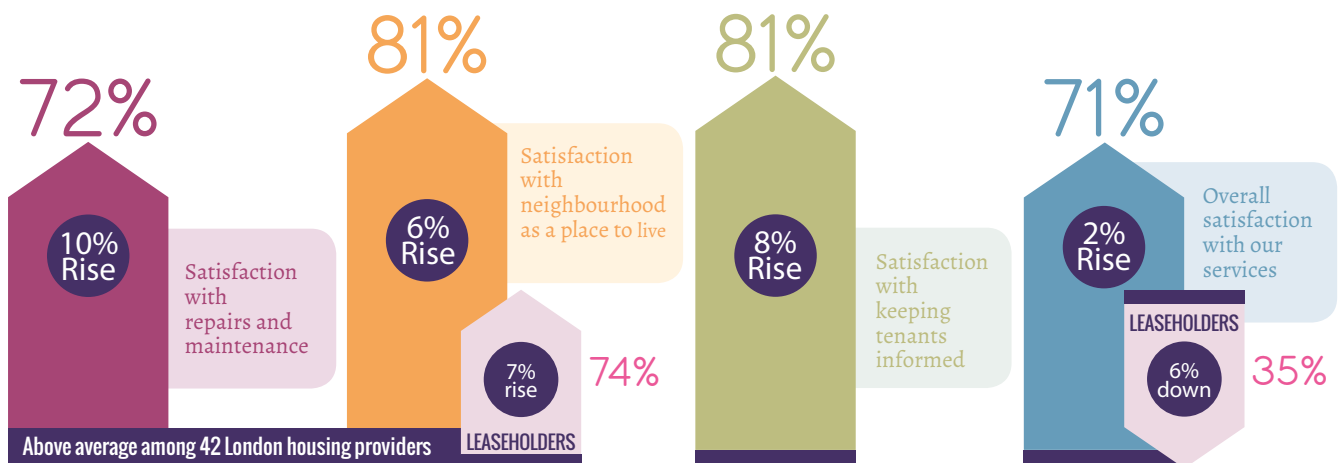
Most antisocial behaviour occurs during evenings and weekends so we've changed our hours. Up to three officers are on duty every Thursday, Friday and Saturday night and work closely with the local Safer Neighbourhood Team to tackle problems as they happen.

- > 350 reported cases of ASB resolved
- > Noise nuisance was our most reported issue, with 103 cases resolved
- > Intervention work with 50 victims of Domestic Violence/Abuse



## Resident Survey: Reporting back

Every two years we commission researchers to find out residents' views. Tenant Satisfaction has improved across all areas since our last survey in 2012 and we have worked hard to deliver great services and improvements.







# Investing in our communities



We supported local projects with £60,000 from our Community Fund in 2014/15. Residents were able to bid for funding for projects that would improve the local community, increase safety and benefit our residents. 29 projects were chosen including social and wellbeing activities for over 50s and a summer programme aimed at educating, inspiring and empowering young women.

- ▶ 18 accredited training opportunities offered for residents
- ▶ £151,776 investment from our contractors Breyer and Mitie
- ▶ 250+ young people have accessed our Love2Dance street dance programme
- ▶ 500 young people attended the Lewisham Youth Conference at Goldsmiths University

Four projects have secured funding for 2015/16 with a focus on getting online, managing money, health & wellbeing and employability.



## Joining forces with the Albany



Lewisham Homes and the Albany  
Creativity inspiring communities



Based in the heart of Deptford, the Albany is establishing itself as a leading London arts venue and community hub. It provides a creative centre for learning within the community, contributing to cultural, social and economic benefits, and shares Lewisham Homes' commitment to Community Engagement.

We began to formalise working with the Albany early in 2015. This innovative and unique partnership will create long-lasting opportunities that make a real difference to Lewisham families.

By working together, we will expand the reach of the Albany's activities across the borough and develop programmes which will place creativity at the heart of community engagement for our residents. Activity will begin in 2015/16 with programmes for young people, families and older people.



# Sustainable Future

We aim to deliver great value services and be as efficient as we can. We are committed to spending wisely and investing in our residents' homes and neighbourhoods. This year we...

- ▶ Started a £20 million programme to provide temporary housing for Lewisham residents in housing need, supporting the council to reduce its costs
- ▶ Began purchasing a new fleet of 100 vans which are kinder to the environment, use less fuel and are cheaper to run. These are on the road in 2015/16
- ▶ Saved more than £1 million in lost rent (compared to 2010/11) by repairing and re-letting homes more quickly
- ▶ Began setting out a 30 year plan for investment in properties and neighbourhoods





# Delivering more services



We are continuing to deliver more services ourselves. We have taken a big step to improving technology and systems by taking over ICT. This will give us more freedom to develop online services, improve our internal systems and be more efficient as a business.

We consulted residents about taking over the grounds maintenance service currently delivered by Glendale. Of those who responded, 88% said they would like to see it delivered by an in-house Lewisham Homes team, and this began in October 2015.



# Keeping costs affordable for residents

We have delivered another year of below inflation rises in our service charges and rents, and Lewisham remains among the lowest in London.

per week	2012	2013	2014
<b>Lewisham service charge</b>	£6.18	£7.61	£7.72
<b>London average</b>	£8.76	£9.21	£9.08
<b>Lewisham rent</b>	£87.40	£91.20	£95.64
<b>London average</b>	£95.50	£99.26	£103.76
<b>Market rent</b>	-	-	£283.38

## Services for leaseholders

While tenant satisfaction is improving, leaseholder satisfaction has dropped to a disappointing 35%. We know we have to do more to improve our services for leaseholders as this is a growing area of our business, as more people take advantage of the Right to Buy. We have already increased contact by phone and locally and revamped information to make it easier to understand. Our resident scrutiny group is reviewing this area of service and will offer recommendations.



Tenant Satisfaction



Leasehold Satisfaction



# Employer of choice

Our people make a difference. We know that great employees deliver excellent services, so we strive to be an employer of choice.



## Apprenticeship scheme

Our award winning apprenticeship programme has been hugely successful, providing on-the-job learning for young Lewisham residents.

- ▶ 88 placements since the programme began
- ▶ Nine apprentices have been employed full time across a range of teams and trades

In 2014 we won two apprenticeship awards at the Mayor's annual Celebrating Achievement Awards:

### Outstanding Team Award: Repairs Team

*'We are proud to receive this award from the Mayor. It recognises our commitment to providing local young people with wide-ranging work experiences to ensure their long term employment prospects with Lewisham Homes.'*

**Alex Slattery, Team Leader**



### Outstanding Contribution Award:

*'I'm only 17, so it's great to know that the effort I have put into my work has been recognised. I really appreciate how my colleagues have supported me and made work enjoyable for me. It's a great way to start a career.'*

**Andrew Addo, Home Ownership**

## Graduate Programme

We employed five graduates this year in five different teams across the organisation. At Lewisham Homes we have a number of previous graduates who are now in permanent positions.

*'I've gained a strong understanding of what housing management involves. I've worked in antisocial behaviour, income and tenancy, conducted research projects and had daily interactions with tenants. This year I will be doing placements in more teams to expand my knowledge.'*

**Graduate Harriet Longshaw**





## Our new home



In December 2014 we moved to our new office in the Old Town Hall, reducing five offices to one and freeing up our old offices for space to build much needed housing for at least 19 families. With all of our services under one roof we're better placed to deliver excellent services.

## Working together for the local community



We're proud to be part of Lewisham and we're passionate about our local community. As well as our day-to-day work helping Lewisham residents we also support St. Christopher's Hospice. We entered a team into the Hackney Half marathon, raising over £3000 for the local hospice. We also donate to Lewisham Food Bank, with staff bringing in much needed food and supplies to help support the local community.



## Investing in our people



We aim to attract the best people to work for us. We know that engaged people provide excellent service, so we are working hard to make our people feel valued and have opportunities to develop. We've improved our staff appraisal process and provide opportunities for skills and career development, and have increased the number of internal promotions. We encourage our people to be the best they can including visits from inspirational speakers, and recognising good performance.



## Make a Difference training



We want the best for our residents and have invested in specialist customer service training for every member of staff. This encourages staff to work together to solve problems and improve the service by looking through customers' eyes – we hope you will notice the difference!





# Value for money

In 2014/15 Lewisham Homes generated a surplus of £1.3m. The surplus will be used to invest in projects that will benefit our communities.

## Average leasehold service charge

Over 3 years, from April 2012 to March 2015, we have reduced the service charge by 6.2%, including inflation.

Value	Lewisham Homes properties without repairs	Lewisham Homes properties with repairs	Street properties Management Charge	Estate properties management charge
2011	£627.86	£774.43	£52.99	£151.12
2012	£648.13	£825.51	£50.60	£145.70
2013	£624.80	£809.38	£38.90	£111.03
2014	£639.63	£810.55	£45.82	£133.39

## Top 10 performance indicators

Performance Indicator	2014/15	Target	Target met?
<b>Collecting Rent</b>			
Rent lost through vacant properties	0.61%	0.8%	yes
Rent collected within the year (excluding current arrears)	99.9%	99%	yes
Current tenant rent arrears as a percentage of the annual debit	3.8%	5%	yes
Number of tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears	53	n/a	n/a
<b>Customer Satisfaction</b>			
Satisfaction with internal caretaking and cleaning	64%	75%	no
Tenant satisfaction with last repair	87%	95%	no
Complaints responded to within timescales	90.6%	90%	yes
<b>Repairs and Decent Homes</b>			
Average number of days to re-let empty properties (includes major works)	43	45	yes
Tenant satisfaction with internal Decent Homes Works	93.3%	96%	no
Homes meet the Decent Homes Standard	80%	80%	yes



# What are we doing in 2015/16?



## Excellent services

- > Invest in an improved contact centre
- > Improve grounds maintenance
- > Customer care training for all staff
- > More responsive approach to tackling antisocial behaviour
- > Improve services to leaseholders

Provide more services online



## Thriving neighbourhoods



Build new homes

- > Grow our repairs service to do more, and use contractors less
- > Improve the look, feel and quality of our neighbourhoods
- > Diversify resident engagement and work with partners
- > Internal refurbishment works
- > Set out a 30 year plan for investment
- > Provide opportunity for people through training and employment programmes





## Employer of choice

Graduate  
and trainee  
programmes

- > Recruit, develop and retain excellent staff
- > Internal career opportunities
- > Recognise and reward excellence
- > Health, wellbeing and social initiatives
- > Raise our profile to attract good candidates

## Sustainable future



- > Purchase homes to provide temporary housing for Lewisham
- > Prioritise resources to deliver services efficiently
- > Invest savings in better homes and service improvements
- > Improve technology and systems
- > Good systems of governance

Do more  
with less



# 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 residents, councillors and independent members of the community with relevant skills and experience. The board makes strategic decisions and receives updates on the work being carried out by the organisation.

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

Meetings are open to the public and observers are welcome. If you would like to attend a meeting please contact us.



**JULIA COTTON**  
Resident & Chair



**AINSLEY FORBES**  
Independent & vice chair



**TERRY JAMES**  
Independent & chair of audit committee



**SUSAN WISE**  
Councillor



**STEVE MCGANN**  
Resident & chair of scrutiny committee



**PAUL  
BELL**  
Councillor



**NEIL  
POPPMACHER**  
Resident



**SARAH  
SMITH**  
Independent



**STEVE  
GOUGH**  
Independent



**OPHELIA  
BOBORI**  
Resident



**JOHN  
PASCHOUD**  
Councillor



**NICK  
JOSLYN**  
Independent &  
chair of DLO  
committee



**GRACE  
PADONOU ADDY**  
Resident

We **WILL BE**  
looking after  
your grounds  
**ALL YEAR ROUND!**



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