

# Annual Report to Customers

2019/20



# Welcome from Mark Pearson Chief Executive



**Welcome to this year's Annual Report: our chance to share with you, our customers, how we've performed over the 2019/20 financial year, the investment we've made in your homes and communities and our priorities for the year ahead.**

We have worked hard to continue transforming LYHA into the customer-focussed housing association we want it to be. The key to our progress has been people – our customers, colleagues, board members and partners – working together to rebuild trust and improve the customer experience. This has been clearly shown on our largest estate, The Elmetes, where we have invested £1.5 million in a big improvement programme, in close partnership with those of you who live there.

We have also successfully refreshed our health and safety and risk management processes, achieving 100% compliance in all key safety measures, meaning we have once again been graded as G1 V1 which is the highest rating given by the Regulator of Social Housing.

There is a real shortage of affordable housing in Yorkshire and during 2019/20 LYHA has continued to build new affordable homes to help address this need. We recently completed our largest new development in many years – the 54-home Catherine's Walk scheme in Barnsley. We were delighted to hand over the keys in February this year and I hope our new customers will be very happy in their homes.

I firmly believe that working in partnership with our customers is the key to LYHA's continuous improvement. We are listening and acting on what you tell us and I am delighted that our satisfaction levels are rising once more. We are also investing time and money in wider community activity, in the neighbourhoods where you live, that will deliver real benefits to customers.

We know, however, that there is much more still to do and the next steps in our business transformation are set out in our new, Corporate Plan – Together 2023. I am excited that LYHA now has a new mission, vision and values, all which have been developed in partnership with our customers. I look forward to continuing to work closely with customers to achieve our goals – more about that on pages 16-17.

I cannot look back on the past year without mentioning the COVID-19 pandemic which has brought about such big changes to all our daily lives. Whilst it's too early to understand the full long-term impacts, what we do know is that we are fully committed to supporting our customers through this most difficult time, especially those that are most vulnerable.

Finally, I would like to take this chance to thank you all for your support over the last year and I firmly believe that we will continue to improve what we do, in partnership with our customers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Pearson'.

**Mark Pearson**  
Chief Executive



# Welcome from Adele Rae Board member and LYHA Customer



**There have been significant changes at Leeds and Yorkshire over the last year as the board resolved that remaining a small, locally based association was in the best interests of our customers.**

Our recently appointed CEO is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the people living in Leeds and Yorkshire properties and that our communities can thrive. To this end there has been a determined effort to make the customer voice stronger. The Customer Experience Committee which holds Leeds and Yorkshire to account for their

decisions, performance and conduct has been relaunched, whilst the Customer Scrutiny Panel continues to contribute to the development of policies and services, ensuring that the customer remains at the heart of all that we do. This has never been more important than during the COVID crisis when senior management met fortnightly with the Customer Experience Committee to consult and listen to how LYHA can best support the communities that our properties are part of.

I am proud to have been involved in ensuring that the customer voice is heard and I, and other involved customers, will continue to strive to ensure the customer experience is the best it can be.

**Adele Rae**  
**Board Member and LYHA Customer**

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## Improving the customer experience

**We are firmly committed to improving the customer experience: in fact it's one of six strategic objectives in our new Corporate Plan (see pages 16-17).**

We aim to consistently provide exceptional service to our customers and are passionate about improving your experience.

Over the last year we have made significant improvements to many areas of our business based on

listening and acting on the feedback you gave us. Both our Customer Experience Committee and Scrutiny Panel have played a vital, consultative role throughout 2019/20 – providing valuable customer insight and helping us to create our policies and services in partnership with customers.

Our Customer Experience Committee (made up of customers and board members) is a sub-committee of our board and is responsible for monitoring and holding LYHA to account on customer related matters.

Our Customer Scrutiny Panel is more operational and is made up of a group of involved customers who work with LYHA to ensure the 'customer voice' is central to key service improvements.



## Estates services review

**This year our Customer Scrutiny Panel carried out a review of our estate services (which includes gardening, caretaking and cleaning).**

Working with an independent consultancy, called Service Insights, the group carried out a comprehensive audit, bringing together the professional experience of staff with the lived experience of

customers and on-site observations. Recommendations were then made in terms of the way we work, equipment and resources, policies and customer expectations.

Six months later, when the report and recommendations had been implemented, there were big improvements in satisfaction with our estate services.



**Jason Hutchinson, our Estates and Facilities Manager commented:**

*"We refocused our efforts onto what had been raised by customers in the review and customer satisfaction with our estate services increased."*

**Suzie, one of our Customer Scrutiny Panel members, added:**

*"There's always room to improve and I hope that I can support LYHA to become the best in the field. I have already taken part in a big review of their estates services and am looking forward to working on many more key projects as part of the Scrutiny Panel at LYHA."*





## Listening to you

Over the last two years we have focussed on transforming the organisation and improving our service to you. We are confident that we're headed in the right direction, but we also know that we've still got some way to go to achieve the highest levels of service every time, which is what we aspire to.

Your feedback is very important to us in highlighting where we need to improve. So we have increased the range and frequency of our customer surveys. We have recently switched from an annual STAR survey to quarterly telephone surveys in the hope that this will give us more regular and extensive feedback. We are working with independent research agency, MEL Research,

to administer this. They are now calling a sample of our customers every quarter to find out how you feel about our service, what we do well and what we need to work on. All responses are anonymous and confidential. LYHA is not told individual customer's feedback unless you specifically ask for your comments to be passed on.

*\*The results on the right are from our first quarterly STAR survey carried out in May 2020 at the close of the 2019/20 financial year.*



We are pleased that our overall customer satisfaction rating has increased this year from 70% in 2019 to 76% at the beginning of 2020.

**78%** of customers are happy with the quality of their home

**85%** are happy with their neighbourhood as a place to live

**76%** think LYHA are easy to deal with

**74%** believe you have ample opportunities to share your views with us

**69%** believe we listen and act on what you tell us

## Focus on improving our repairs service

One area where we don't score well is repairs. When we've made our repairs follow up calls this year 87% of customers have told us that they are happy with their recent repair, however when we asked about repairs in our STAR survey only 57% said they were satisfied with the service.

We know this isn't good enough and we have just retendered our repairs

contract, with our Customer Scrutiny Panel playing a key role in the selection of GTD as the preferred contractor. The award of this new contract gives us a great opportunity to start afresh and we will immediately begin work to improve our processes and customer experience.

We will also be undertaking a stock condition survey of a large sample of our homes in the next few months and are recommending our planned maintenance programmes, replacing kitchens and bathrooms, before the end of the financial year. (Subject to COVID restrictions).

### Total repairs completed

During 2019/20 we completed 3,925 repairs:

Emergency repairs:

**887**

Urgent repairs:

**939**

Routine repairs:

**2,099**

Average spend per property:

**£954**





## You Said, We Did



### You Said:

**You wanted us to improve our customer service, particularly call answering.**

### We Did:

**During the 2019/20 financial year, LYHA's team of Customer Advisers answered over 20,500 calls (nearly 2,000 calls a month), which is a call increase of almost 30% on last year.**

The Customer Services team also responds to more than 30 customer emails every day and carries out various other administrative tasks, such as processing housing applications and sending out information to customers.

We are currently reviewing our digital channels so that we can provide more online resources to improve the speed and efficiency of our service to customers.

### You Said:

**You wanted us to improve customer parking**

### We Did:

**Over the last year we have made big improvements to the parking at a number of sites including clearly marked parking bays at Church Cottages in Roundhay and parking permits issued to each flat which has a car registered and insured at Rosemary Thompson House in Horsforth.**



### You Said:

**You wanted our staff to be more visible to customers**

### We Did:

**Over the course of the year we have held 13 drop-in events where members of the LYHA team (including senior management) visited different estates and communities to meet customers and find out how we can improve our service.**

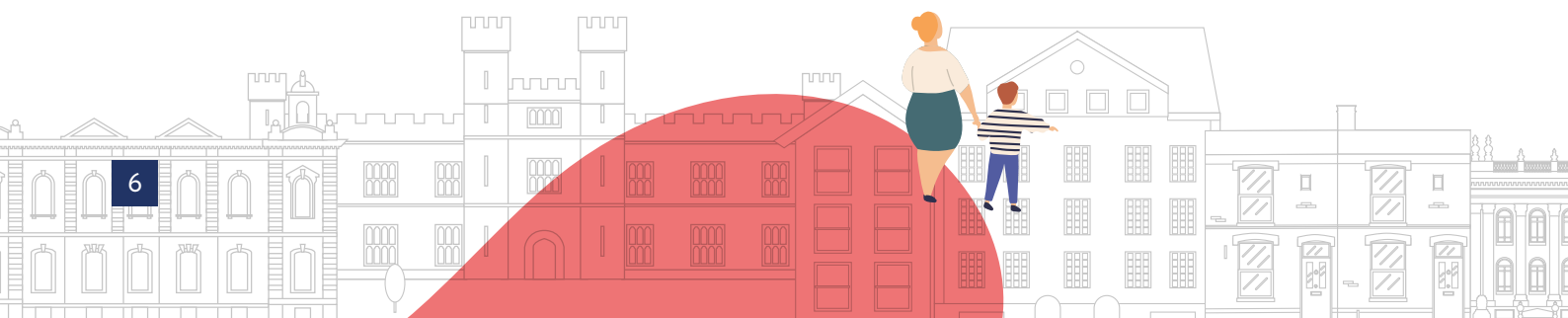
We ask for anonymous feedback on various topics, such as parking, gardening and cleaning, then collate the information and feedback to customers about next steps and improvements.

Unfortunately, because of the current COVID restrictions, we are not able to confirm future drop-in events. However, if you would like to feedback to us about anything to do with your home or community, please email our team at: [info@lyha.co.uk](mailto:info@lyha.co.uk).

## Achieving the customer excellence award

We are delighted to have been re-awarded the Customer Service Excellence Award in recognition of our commitment to customer-focussed change. Previously known as the Charter Mark award, the assessment involved a two-day on-site review of LYHA's

policies and procedures, shadowing our staff and speaking to customers. The assessor praised our "committed and supportive workforce" and believed the "culture has transformed" since their previous visit. The next annual review will take place in November 2020.





**You Said:**  
**You wanted us to take action at The Elmetes and tackle the heating system problem**

**We Did:**  
**Over the last 18 months we have invested £1.5 million in improvements to The Elmetes estate, including installing cavity wall insulation and a new heating and hot water system.**

We were very keen that the improvement programme should involve the customers who live there at every stage. So, we formed an Elmetes Customer Steering Group who have been a real asset in identifying priorities and developing proposals.

The Elmetes works are ongoing but we have been pleased with the positive feedback we have received from customers.



**You Said:**  
**We needed to improve our repairs service**

**We Did:**  
**We carried out a full review of our repairs service and decided to retender our repairs contract.**

Our Customer Scrutiny Panel played a key role in the selection process to ensure that customers' views were taken into account. We are now pleased to announce that GTD Painting & Property Maintenance has been chosen as our preferred lead contractor. The award of this new 8 year contract gives us a great opportunity to start afresh and we will immediately begin work on designing service improvements. We believe that GTD share our core values and feel confident that they will help us deliver consistently high levels of service, good value for money and a positive customer experience (see repairs panel – page 5).



**You Said:**  
**You would like various improvements to the outside space where you live**

**We Did:**  
**Over the course of this year we have made improvements to the grounds and gardens at various sites, including installing benches, rotary dryers and raised planters in response to customer requests.**





## Good Governance & Strong Finances

LYHA has been graded G1 V1 by the Regulator of Social Housing. This means that both our governance and financial viability have been given the highest ratings.

Providing value for money is central to all that we do: we focus on efficiency, economy and effectiveness.

### How we spend your money

All the money that we collect helps to fund our homes and services. During 2019/20 for every £1 of rent or service charge we spent:



Overheads and management  
40p

Benchmark – 28p

Major works and maintenance  
26p

Benchmark – 27p



\*The benchmark figures refer to the average for our peer group: classed as housing associations across the UK with between 1,000 and 6,000 homes who have less than 10% supported housing and less than 10% non-social housing.

Repairs  
25p

Benchmark – 18p

Services to customers  
7p

Benchmark – 8p

Other costs  
2p

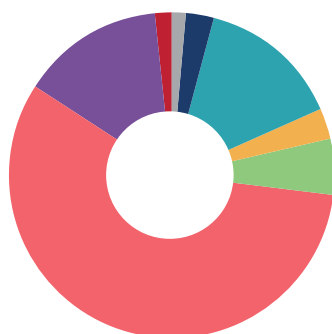
Benchmark – 6p

## Handling customer complaints

We want to get things right first time but occasionally we fall short. We take all customer complaints very seriously and do our best to resolve them quickly, fairly and effectively.

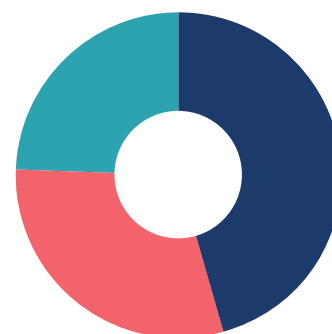
We aim to resolve all complaints within 5 working days. However, some issues may take longer for us to investigate. If this is the case, we will contact you to explain why and give you a revised timescale. By telling us what has gone wrong, we can learn from mistakes and put things right.

The pie charts below illustrate the complaints received during 2019/20 by complaint type:



#### Complaint type

Allocations	1.4%
Anti-social behaviour	2.9%
Estates services	14.3%
Other	2.9%
Rents & service charges	5.7%
Repairs & maintenance	57.1%
Staff & customer service	14.3%
Tenancy management	1.4%



#### Complaints upheld

Upheld	45.7%
Not upheld	30.0%
Partially upheld	24.3%





# Customer safety is our top priority



We are pleased to report that we are fully compliant in all aspects of health and safety. This includes all gas, electrical and fire safety inspections, as well as water hygiene and asbestos risk assessments.

Our two Health & Safety Block Inspectors, Graham and Andy, have continued to carry out fire safety inspections of all our properties with communal areas (wearing protective equipment and maintaining distancing rules). Customer safety is our top priority and it is very important that we check that all fire alarms, smoke vents, emergency lighting and fire doors are working correctly.



Please make sure that you maintain social distancing around any LYHA team members or contractors when they are on-site, so that together we can keep everyone safe.

## During 2019/20 we carried out the following:

**1,256**

gas services completed



**111**

fire safety inspections of communal areas completed



**339**

electrical inspections completed



**577**

smoke detectors fitted



**624**

water hygiene assessments completed



**30**

asbestos surveys of communal areas completed



If you have any concerns about health and safety, please call us on Tel: 0113 278 3335.

We also provide an emergency out-of-hours service on the same number. If your call is not urgent, please contact us during our normal opening hours: Monday – Friday 8.30am – 5.00pm.



# Responding to the Coronavirus Crisis

The last few months have brought about many challenges and changes to our daily lives. There remains a lot of uncertainty about the months ahead and what the full long-term impacts of the coronavirus pandemic will be. Clearly people have been affected in different ways and our focus throughout has been on supporting our customers, particularly those that are vulnerable, whilst maintaining high standards of safety.



## How we are supporting customers at this time

We've contacted all customers who are 70+, or 65+ in age restricted accommodation, to see if they need support



Customers have appreciated the calls. Most reported being safe and well, with support from friends and family



We've made follow up calls to all customers that asked for them



We've created directories of useful support and contacts in the areas where our customers live



We've set up a LYHA support fund to help customers in financial hardship



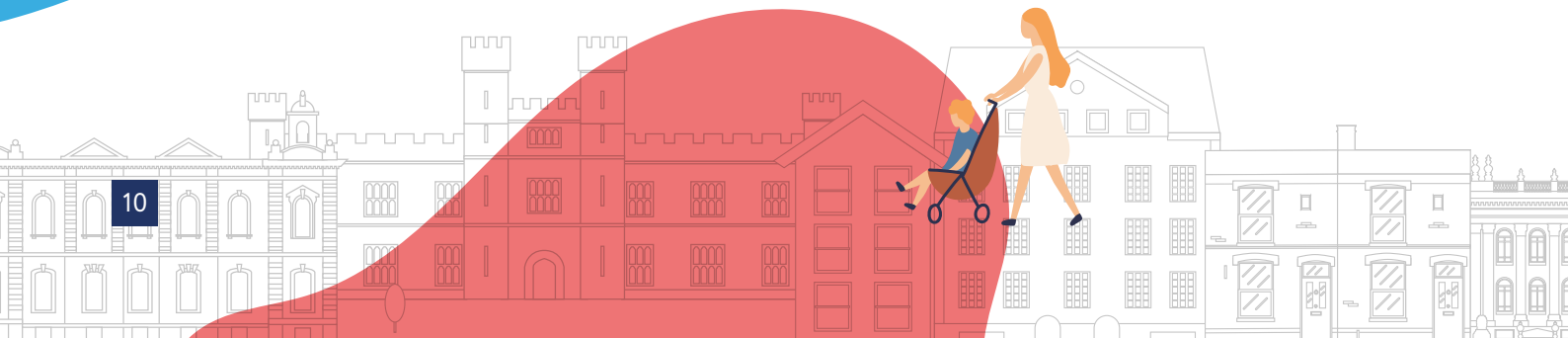
We've supported customers with payments and benefits advice



We've made referrals to food banks and support agencies



We're supporting local charities





## Delivering services differently

**Over the past few months, we have had to make changes to the way we deliver many of our services as customers' and colleagues' health must come first. However, all of our team have continued working, in many cases from home, to ensure that we continue to provide the high levels of service that we are committed to.**

We had to temporarily stop our cleaning and gardening services and some customers will have waited longer than normal for routine repairs. However, we have done our very best to now reintroduce all core services in a safe and planned manner whilst ensuring that customer safety is always the top priority:

- All our team are wearing suitable protective equipment when visiting sites
- We are maintaining social distancing

- We continue to carry out home visits virtually where possible (such as new tenancy visits and routine checks)
- If we or one of our contractors do need to visit you in your home, we will contact you in advance to discuss how we can do this safely
- We thoroughly clean all areas that we have been in contact with before we leave

We ask that customers continue to maintain social distancing around our team too, so that together we can keep everyone safe.

## Financial Support

**We recognise that for many people, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on jobs and livelihoods resulting in many households experiencing financial difficulties.**

It is our firm policy that we will not evict anyone experiencing financial hardship due to the current crisis and our Income Officers, Katy and Chris, have been busy providing support and assistance where needed.

We ask that you prioritise paying your rent. If you are struggling to do this, please speak to one of our Income Officers as soon as possible. They can answer your questions, help maximise your income and signpost you to support: [www.lyha.co.uk/paying-your-rent](http://www.lyha.co.uk/paying-your-rent)

We have also set up a LYHA Support Fund to help customers who are struggling. Please visit: [www.lyha.co.uk/supportfund](http://www.lyha.co.uk/supportfund) for more information.

- If you receive Universal Credit and your income has changed (or you wish to make a new claim), please visit the DWP website: [www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit)
- If you receive Housing Benefit, you should contact your local council benefits and welfare team
- You may also be eligible for Council Tax Support - again please contact your local council
- You can read the latest government advice at: [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)
- The Citizens Advice Bureau is also a useful source of impartial financial/welfare support: Tel 03444 111 444; [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)



Katy, Income Officer



Chris, Income Officer





## Thriving communities

**LYHA is a social purpose business. We want to support our customers to live well in thriving communities.**

We recognise that a home you love is a platform for a happy, fulfilling life. Yet we know many customers face significant challenges, especially at the current time.

**We provide support in a number of ways. These include:**

- Our dedicated team of **Neighbourhoods Officers**, who are there to offer help and advice regarding your home and neighbourhood, including community safety, anti-social behaviour, moving home and referrals for support.

- Our **Income Officers**, Katy and Chris, who will help you maximise your income and answer your questions about rent, service charge or benefits (see previous page).
- Our **Customer Support Fund** provides help to customers who are struggling financially
- We have **developed strategic partnerships** with a number of organisations which provide skills and opportunities that benefit our customers, such as **Interserve Learning & Employment**, who are providing free digital/skills training – see panel below.
- Our **LYHA Community Fund** provides grants of up to £300 to LYHA customers for projects that will

benefit their communities. Previous grants have included a community Christmas party, garden table and chairs, large oak barrel planters and several raised beds for community gardening. If you have an idea for a project and could use some help to make it happen, please email: [community.fund@lyha.co.uk](mailto:community.fund@lyha.co.uk)



## Free digital training for LYHA customers

**We have partnered with Interserve Learning & Employment (ILE) to offer free digital skills training to LYHA customers and your families, friends and neighbours (even if they are not LYHA customers themselves). The free training teaches a range of IT and employment skills and is available to start online now.**

At the end of the course you will receive a certificate in Social and Personal Development Level 1.

Interserve is also offering free support and training to people facing redundancy in Yorkshire. For further information about the training available, or to sign up to a free course, please email: [toni.easter@interserve.com](mailto:toni.easter@interserve.com) or call 07525 902643. If any LYHA customer has access to the internet but does not have the appropriate IT equipment we will provide a free tablet for the learner to keep.

Customers who have completed the course already have given us great feedback:

**Fadzai** – “My experience on this course has been a very positive one. I now have confidence in my IT skills and personal development. I feel so motivated and encouraged to study further and continue to self-develop. This course has given me the boost I needed.”

**Helena** – “I have learned a lot of things in this course and it has started shaping my life. It has made me realise how important it is for me to be conversant with the use of computers and has helped my daily life, especially in filling online forms and applications and much, much more.”





# Our Community Investment Strategy

In 2019 we launched our new Community Investment Strategy, focussed on investing resources and delivering activity in the areas where you live, such as improving the physical environment and creating opportunities for people to come together. You can find out more about this on our website: [www.lyha.co.uk/our-community-investment-strategy](http://www.lyha.co.uk/our-community-investment-strategy)

One of the first initiatives we launched was the transformation of a previously overgrown site, next to one of our Leeds developments, into a fantastic outdoor learning space for local school children (see below). We've also got some other exciting projects in the pipeline and we'd love to hear your ideas about how we can help improve the neighbourhood where you live.

Please email [info@lyha.co.uk](mailto:info@lyha.co.uk)



## Featherbank Forest

In 2019 we worked with conservation volunteers to transform a piece of land next to our Rosemary Thompson House scheme in Horsforth into a fabulous woodland classroom for pupils at Horsforth Featherbank Primary School, complete with a climbing frame, see-saw, fire pit and a bug hotel. It is now called 'Featherbank Forest' and is used to deliver learning for all pupils at the school in a natural, outdoor setting.

Lorraine Scudder, Headteacher at Horsforth Featherbank School, told us: *"It's fantastic to have somewhere where we can investigate science and deliver all aspects of the curriculum in a safe, natural, outside space, next to the school. We'd like to thank LYHA for their hard work and generosity in donating this space to us. We're sure it will enrich the children's learning and add to their enjoyment of their time in school."*

Needless to say it's got a big thumbs up from the kids too and is an excellent example of our desire to support community initiatives in the areas around our homes.





During 2019/20 LYHA spent

**£4.89 million**  
on building new homes.

## Building new homes

**We are committed to helping tackle the housing crisis by delivering high quality, affordable and desirable homes which people feel proud to live in.**

During 2019/20 we built 72 new homes: 55 in Barnsley, 14 in Morley and another 4 in Horsforth. This brings the total number of homes owned and managed by LYHA to 1,591. In fact, Inside Housing named us as number 5 in their list of top developers as we increased our housing stock by 4.5% last year.

There is an acute need for more affordable housing in Yorkshire, so we will continue to explore new development sites. When deciding where and what new housing to build, our top priorities include:

- **The right place** – we look for locations close to local amenities and well-connected to local transport links, where we know people want to live
- **Affordability** – we want to create homes that are genuinely affordable to those on low incomes

- **Good design** – we are sympathetic to the surrounding area and focus on high build quality

- **Energy efficient** – we build homes which are low in carbon emissions and affordable to run aiming for an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of A where possible

We continue to work with our local authority and developer partners in the delivery of new homes, accessing funding from Homes England, where possible, to subsidise development costs.

## Catherine's Walk, Barnsley

**February 2020 saw the official opening of our largest new build scheme for many years.**

**We are delighted to welcome our newest customers to the 54-home Catherine's Walk development in Barnsley.**

The development has taken 18 months to build and comprises a mix of two- and three-bedroom houses, flats and bungalows situated in the middle of existing housing and close to local amenities.

Engagement with the local community throughout the build was important and we held a competition for local primary school children to create the names for the new streets. The winners were 'Tawny Street' and 'Blossom View' and it is lovely that one of the girls who won now lives on the street she named.

The development is well designed, and we were delighted that the new residents were able to get the keys to their new homes just before lockdown started.

**Nicola** – *"I'm really happy and grateful to live in this new home and it's extra special that my daughter has named the street that we are living on."*



## Shared Ownership

**As well as homes for rent, we continue to offer a small number of homes for shared ownership, primarily on our new developments.**

Shared Ownership is a government scheme designed to help buyers get on the property ladder. The scheme is mainly aimed at first time buyers and families whose circumstances change: perhaps after experiencing a

relationship breakdown. Put simply, it allows you to buy part of a property (anywhere between 35% and 75%) then rent the remaining share, with the option to increase your share or buy outright at a later date.

If you can't afford to buy outright and only have a small deposit, this could be a great option for you. To find out more, please visit:

[www.lyha.co.uk/shared-ownership](http://www.lyha.co.uk/shared-ownership)



## Sustainability and Innovation

**Decarbonisation and tackling climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing our generation.**

Housing providers have an important role to play in this and we at LYHA are firmly committed to being proactive: both by delivering new homes that don't rely on fossil fuels, and by retrofitting our existing homes to ensure that they are as energy efficient and affordable to run as possible.

When we build new homes, we are keen to use renewable energy sources for heating and hot water rather than fossil fuels. For example, we are installing air source heat pumps in one

new development and our recently completed homes at Moor Knoll Fold in East Ardsley have been built with solar panels and external charging points for electric vehicles. With an EPC rating of 96 (out of a maximum 100), they should have very low running costs.

We are also about to embark on an extensive carbon foot-printing exercise, together with three other local housing associations. This will involve looking at all our existing homes and how we operate as a business, then creating a decarbonisation plan to achieve our energy efficiency targets.





## A new vision for Leeds & Yorkshire

We are delighted to launch our new three-year Corporate Plan which sets out our vision for establishing LYHA as a leading community-based housing association: one that works in partnership with you, our customers, to influence and shape what we do and how we do it. It builds on the

improvements of the last two years and focuses on addressing the gaps where we know that we still need do better.

We firmly believe that the 'customer voice' must be at the heart of our ambitious plans and we have called the new strategy 'Together 2023' to reflect this.

We hope this page gives you an overview of our new direction but please take a look at the actual plan which is published on our website at: <https://www.lyha.co.uk/corporate-plan> to find out more. We have published both full and summary versions.

As ever, we'd love to hear your feedback.

## Our new mission, vision and values

### Mission:

"We will enable our customers to live well by providing warm, safe and secure homes, by investing in relationships and by delivering great services."

### Values:

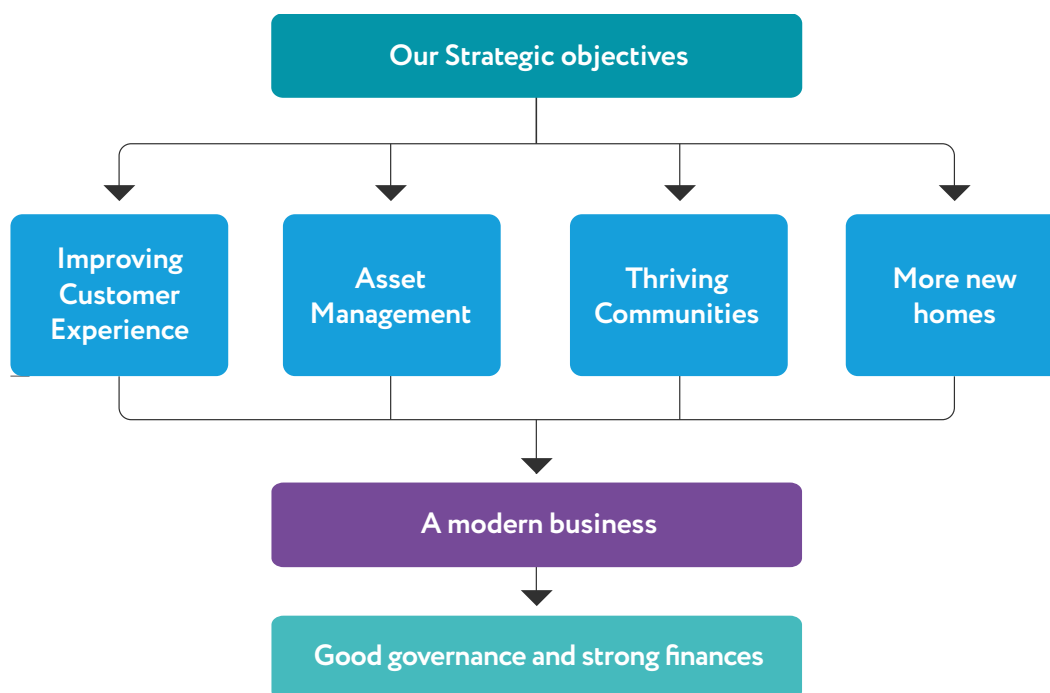
We BELIEVE that our values define our culture:

### Vision:

"To ensure all our customers live in a home they love and in a community in which they can thrive."



## We also have six key strategic objectives:



## What does the new Corporate Plan mean for customers?

**We are passionate about improving your experience as a customer of LYHA. We understand that we haven't always got it right in the past. However, we have made big improvements to all areas of the business over the last two years and this plan illustrates how**

**we will build on this progress to rebuild customers' trust and improve all aspects of our service.**

Our mission and vision demonstrate our commitments to you and your family, not only in the homes we provide, but also in our desire for

you to thrive and live well in your community. Whilst our values define our culture and illustrate the consistently high level of service that you can expect from our team.

If you'd like to give us any feedback on our new Corporate Plan, you can email us at [info@lyha.co.uk](mailto:info@lyha.co.uk)





## Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

**Recent events, in particular the Black Lives Matter Movement, have shone the spotlight on the continuing prejudice and inequalities facing people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, both here in the UK and throughout the world.**

We believe that as an organisation, and as individuals, we have a duty to speak up; to take a stand against racism and injustice and ensure that nobody faces discrimination because of their skin colour, race or religion. This extends to our customers, communities, employees and society as a whole.

LYHA has always been committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and this commitment is central to all that we do.

We achieved the Housing Diversity Network's accreditation in 2017 and we are currently developing a new EDI strategy and action plan, once again in conjunction with the Housing Diversity Network. One of the elements this will focus on is gaining a greater understanding of customers' individual needs, challenges and priorities, such as any language barriers or disabilities, so that we can better tailor our services and communications. We are also keen to

ensure that we actively engage with all our customer groups, including those that can be harder to reach.

If you would like to help us develop this strategy, by simply sharing your experiences and ideas or through being part of an ongoing steering group, please get in touch with us by emailing: [info@lyha.co.uk](mailto:info@lyha.co.uk)



## Supporting local charities

**During 2019/20 we have supported a number of local charities both financially and with donations of food, clothing and Christmas gifts.**

We have focused on donating to charities that help those in need in our area, including foodbanks, St George's Crypt in Leeds and the Barnsley Homeless Alliance.

We have also joined forces with housing associations across the country to support the #MoreThanHomes campaign which is seeking to raise £1 million for Trussell Trust foodbanks which are sadly now more in demand than ever.







## Meet the team

**Our busy Neighbourhoods Team are here to provide help and support with anything to do with your home and community. Here we catch up with Nina Forrest, one of our Neighbourhood Officers, to find out all about her role.**

I've worked at LYHA for just over a year, but I've worked as a Neighbourhood Officer (and in various other housing roles) for 17 years. In normal times (pre COVID) I typically spend about 60% of my time out seeing customers in person and the other 40% of my time in the office responding to enquiries and completing the necessary admin. My patch includes inner city Leeds out as far as Morley, and then Whitby and Scarborough as well, so I spend quite a bit of time on the road.

The issues I deal with, on behalf of customers, are wide-ranging: everything from helping people access the support they need (be it health or welfare related), to dealing with reports of anti-social behaviour or

looking at new initiatives that will benefit communities. I also attend lots of meetings with other agencies such as local councillors, the police and other housing associations, which I really enjoy.

Collaboration is very important to get the best overall outcome for customers. Often that means enlisting help from other teams, such as support workers, social services and health professionals. I also work very closely with other LYHA colleagues, such as our Income Officers and Surveyors – it's a real team effort.

No two days are ever the same. I have over 700 properties in my patch and sometimes just dealing with a handful of issues can take up most of the week. I'm always juggling and I often feel like I've not stopped talking all day.

I love meeting people face to face and I've got some lovely customers, some of whom have even sent me Christmas cards or given me homemade honey. So one of the hard parts of the COVID epidemic has been not doing as many home visits; I particularly miss seeing

a lot of our older customers. We are currently only making urgent home visits, to reduce the risk of infection. However, we have been busy making lots of phone calls to all our older and more vulnerable customers: checking if they need any additional help and signposting them to local support agencies.

Unfortunately, there has been a rise in people experiencing hardship and we encourage everyone to get in touch with us as soon as possible if you are struggling. Ultimately, we are here to help our customers live well in their homes and be happy in their communities.





## Who's Who

### Executive Management Team

**Mark Pearson**  
Chief Executive

**Adam Hutchinson**  
Director of Resources

**Joanna Chambers**  
Director of Assets and Growth

**Gavin Fisk**  
Director of Customer Services

### Operational Managers

**Michael Driscoll**  
Neighbourhood Services Manager

**Wayne Fox**  
Property Services Manager

**Jason Hutchinson**  
Estates & Facilities Manager

**Craig Warren**  
Neighbourhood Services Team Leader

**Joe Taylor**  
Customer Services Team Leader

**Russell Beavers**  
Contracts Manager

### Our Board

**Mike Gaskell (Chair)**  
**Liz Sandwith (Deputy Chair)**

**Jon Prashar**

**Adele Rae**

**Anne McMaster**

**Simon Edwards**

**Steven Brook**

## Thank you

A big thank you to everyone who has helped us to produce this annual report, including our Customer Scrutiny Panel who kindly input ideas and gave us feedback.

If you have any comments or would like to receive this report in large print or a different format or language, please email: [georgina.thompson@lyha.co.uk](mailto:georgina.thompson@lyha.co.uk)

## Get in touch

**For all general enquiries:**

 0113 278 3335

 [info@lyha.co.uk](mailto:info@lyha.co.uk)

 [www.lyha.co.uk](http://www.lyha.co.uk)

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