



# CBHnews

SUMMER 2021

**Annual Report \*SPECIAL\***  
**Don't miss out - be in it, to win it**  
**New homes success**

**FREEPHONE** 0800 408 0000  
**VISIT** [cbh.org](http://cbh.org)







## GREAT NEWS! HAVE YOU HEARD...?

### We know CBH is a great place to work, but it is now official.

Not only did we claim a position on the Best Companies 25 best housing associations list, but we've also moved from one to watch to achieving one star. So, what does this mean? In a nutshell we genuinely value the people who work here, and they truly care about making a positive difference for you and the communities you are part of.

Would you like to join our friendly team here at CBH? Why not check out our jobs

page at [cbh.org/jobs](http://cbh.org/jobs) you can also sign up for email alerts, so you never miss an opportunity.

If you need support finding a new job, or are on the lookout for new training opportunities to improve your chances of getting one, our dedicated team of employment experts are here to help, contact them on **0800 408 0000**

COVER PHOTO: Amy, our green fingered guru brings the community together (see page 5)

# SAY HELLO TO MARK...



**"Hi, I'm a CBH stock condition surveyor and might be surveying your home to determine if certain building elements, such as the roof, kitchen and windows are likely to need replacing.**

If I need to visit you, I will let you know by letter. To help us maintain your home, I'd really appreciate it if you would allow me access so I can carry out the survey.

All members of the CBH team, or approved contractors, have ID badges with names and roles within the company. Our colleagues will always show them, but if they forget or you're not sure, please ask to see them or call **0800 408 0000**"

**If you are approached by someone posing as a CBH colleague, please call 0800 408 0000**

## WE'RE HERE TO HELP

**If you're experiencing domestic abuse or know someone who is, it's important to tell someone.**

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone and it's not always easy to recognise the signs. Did you know, it can include the following:

- Violence or threats towards you or your children
- Calling you names or making you feel bad about yourself
- Stopping you seeing friends or family
- Not letting you have any money

To help with this, Amanda our safeguarding equality and diversity manager has popped together some information on where you can get support - she shares some words below:

***"I'm here to help if you have any worries or safeguarding concerns, you don't have to go through this alone. Abuse can come in many forms, if you're unsure of the signs or what the next steps are, please get in touch by either emailing [safeguarding@cbh.org](mailto:safeguarding@cbh.org) or give us a call on 0800 408 0000***

***You can also find useful information and contact details for other local organisations that can help by visiting [cbh.org/domestic-abuse-support](http://cbh.org/domestic-abuse-support)"***



# NEW HOMES SUCCESS



**We're over the moon - all the rented homes are now let and the shared ownership properties at Radford Court are sold subject to contact.**

We are delighted to welcome the new owners and tenants to the CBH family, we hope you enjoy your new homes.

At CBH we understand the importance of having a safe and secure home to live in and the difference this makes.

**The fabulous homes are part of the £180m housing investment in quality homes and thriving communities made by Cheltenham Borough Council and delivered by CBH.**



## Did you know...?

Each year we carry out thousands of planned works to keep the 4,600 homes we manage safe and secure. **For more info visit page 9**

Want to own your home? Shared ownership is a Government supported scheme for people who could not otherwise afford to buy outright. It provides an opportunity to step on the housing ladder with a low deposit - for more information call **0800 408 0000**

## Psst...

Are you interested in a career in the construction industry? If so, let us know as we can help you reach your goal.

Our employment initiatives service is on hand to give you the advice and training

opportunities you need to progress - see page 15 to see how we helped people achieve their dream job last year.

**Interested? Why not give us a call on 0800 408 0000**

# IT'S A GROWING SUCCESS FOR AMY

**Providing people with the help they need to support each other and look after their communities is what we're all about at CBH. Our green fingered guru, Amy, is a fantastic example of this; thanks to her hard work, she's been able to successfully revive the allotment space at Clevedon Square.**

This unused space was first identified by Amy, a CBH tenant, as a potential project to bring people together. Working closely with our community investment team and Adult Education in Gloucestershire, together they were able to organise gardening courses for children and their families to give them the tools they need to help transform the area.

This has been a dream come true for Amy, who shares some words below:

*"This is a garden project I've been wanting to get up and running for the past four years. It's a pleasure to finally see the kids' excitement when they're picking the food, it makes all the hard work worth it. Since growing and running the allotment I've been trying new foods that I wouldn't normally try in the supermarket... the taste is just so much more different and it's the thought that I grew them myself. I'm so proud of our achievements"*



Not only have the green spaces been transformed but also the lives of three families who escaped their war torn country. They are avid supporters of the allotment.

One of the tenants was a farmer, growing apples and almonds. He has really enjoyed pottering around in the garden watering the plants and sharing his knowledge of growing produce.

**Clevedon Square allotment project has given the families an opportunity to make friends with neighbours, learn English and rebuild their lives in Cheltenham. If you'd like to find out more about our popular allotment schemes, contact us on 0800 408 0000 or email [communityinvestment@cbh.org](mailto:communityinvestment@cbh.org)**



# Your 2020/21 Annual Report



## Message from our Chief Executive, Steve:

**What a year its been! We've all had to face new challenges following the impact of coronavirus. One thing that hasn't changed is the amazing individuals, who each day continue to make a difference to thousands of lives across Cheltenham.**

I'm proud to work alongside these incredible people, who share our passion in providing a caring and neighbourly approach that puts our customers first. We understand the importance of feedback from you, our customers. This was highlighted in our telephone survey (see page 18) which showed 73% of you were satisfied we listen to your views and act on them. It's an exciting time as we continue to grow and expand our digital offer to provide even

more opportunities for you to have your say and engage with the shaping of our services.

More importantly we want to make sure our new and existing homes are a place that can be called home. Despite the unusual times we've all faced over the past year, we've continued to provide safe and secure homes, support strong and vibrant communities and inspired people to go beyond what is expected and deliver what can be imagined.

We are looking forward to working closely with the council and HBD X Factory to deliver much needed homes and thriving communities, and are thrilled to be playing our part in making the Golden Valley Development a massive success and helping Cheltenham be stronger post COVID-19.

### Our message is simple.

We want to make Cheltenham an even better place to live. We do this by:

Supporting strong, vibrant communities



Providing quality homes

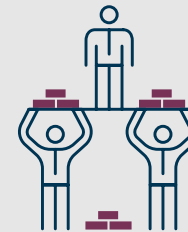


Inspiring people



## Inspired People:

Our colleagues really do care about people, seeing the person not the tenancy. Their neighbourly approach and drive to go the extra mile empowers people to thrive, creating stronger and sustainable communities.



### Our People Plan:

Our colleagues are amazing at helping people but sometimes they need help too. To look after them and provide the support they need to thrive, we have a dedicated team of colleagues who are qualified as Mental Health First Aiders.

We also offer development and training opportunities to retain and recruit talented people who share our values and passion for people - see page 2.

## Enhancing our operations:

In 2019/20 we replaced several housing and property management systems with one system. You told us this made a huge difference, especially during the pandemic, making it much easier for you to access our services online.



## Developing our accommodation, new ways of working and covid response.

The world has changed, so we're reviewing our office space to ensure we efficiently invest our resources where they are needed. Savings are re-invested into homes and services where we can. We're looking at new ways to support and provide a safe place for our employees so they can continue to provide excellent services.

**"Confident and comfortable with their services and the security is good. Polite and courteous staff and it is easy to pay the rent online"**

CBH Tenant

**"They provide good value for money, the properties are up to standard and they are always there for you during a crisis"**

CBH Tenant




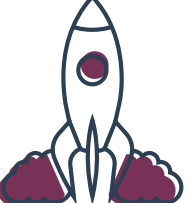
**Your health and wellbeing is so important and even more so during these unusual times.**

Our Help2 project is an example of this and was set up by our colleagues to help people going through significant hardship. Last year we made a difference to the lives of 34 customers dealing with difficult circumstances.

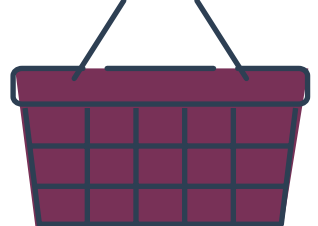
**Despite the impact of COVID -19 teams across the business went above and beyond to:**

 <p><b>Provide household goods</b></p>	 <p><b>Secure training for those trying to find work during these uncertain times</b></p>
 <p><b>Deliver benefit and money advice to support those who are struggling financially</b></p>	 <p><b>Help with utility bills/arrears</b></p>

**Last year we supported the CCP's (Caring for Communities and People) Hamper Scamper appeal which was a huge success and our amazing colleagues provided:**

 <p><b>£610</b> of food donations for vulnerable people and their families</p>	 <p><b>44</b> gifts for local children</p>
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**We also joined forces with John Lewis and Waitrose to provide:**



**25**  
food and gift hampers to our customers who have been working incredibly hard with our benefit and money advice service to overcome significant challenges this year

**Great Homes:**

**Each year we carry out thousands of responsive repairs and planned works to make sure the 4,600 homes we manage are safe and secure.**

We are providing great homes, as part of the £180m housing investment in quality homes and thriving communities made by Cheltenham Borough Council and delivered by CBH, by supplying more affordable homes to meet the demand; and are committed to looking at new opportunities to make both new and existing homes more energy efficient.



**Repairs to your home:**


We spent £3.8m on responsive and cyclical repairs to your home and achieved the following:



**99.8%**  
of over 8,000 emergency, urgent and responsive repairs completed on time



We responded to **555** emergency repairs at night or over the weekend



Carried out **544** electric tests to keep tenants safe and secure in their homes

**"They do everything I always ask for. I've got a nice home. I feel safe"**  
CBH Tenant

**"They are sympathetic. They do listen. They have fantastic customer service. They get things sorted as fast they can..."**  
CBH Tenant



Awarded grant funding from The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) as part of the social housing decarbonisation project to help Cheltenham become a carbon neutral town.



**To improve energy efficiency in the home and reduce fuel bills, we carried out the following works:**

Last year we spent £6.2m to improve homes.

Fitted

**743**

new high quality doors to lower tenants' energy costs

Renewed the wiring and lighting to

**117**

communal blocks to keep people safe and secure in their homes

Improved the energy efficiency of

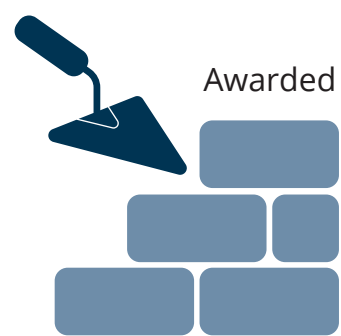
**47**

homes to save on tenants' energy bills

**Supplying more high-quality homes for Cheltenham**



homes we acquired on the open market, making good use of the money received from the properties sold under the right to buy scheme



Awarded

**£2.7m**

From Homes England



homes freed up for families as part of our downsizing programme

We built

**35**

new affordable homes providing more opportunities for families to find their home through social rent or shared ownership



homes were completed under a section 106 agreement for families

**Stronger Communities:**

**We work closely with local partners including Cheltenham Borough Council to create stronger, safer and more resilient communities across Cheltenham, highlights include:**



Supporting No Child Left Behind to help four young people return to education after long term absence and supported a further 12 children to thrive following traumatic circumstances.



Reducing anti-social behaviour in the community: Our ASB team support our partners, including the Police in tackling issues surrounding drug use.



Continuing out of hours working to support our work in specific areas and reassure local residents.



Working proactively through supporting people dealing with trauma related vulnerabilities.



Teaming up with local partners and with the Monkscroft Action Group (MAG) to help create a vibrant and inclusive community.



We work closely with Cheltenham Borough Council and many local partners to create a town where everybody thrives.



**"We have worked with CBH, Hesters Way Neighbourhood Project, Ubico, Adult Education in Gloucestershire and other organisations and have managed to improve where we live"**

Steve, MAG group member



# We focus on the person not the tenancy:

Last year when the coronavirus crisis broke we adapted quickly to identify those people who needed extra support and who were struggling with their emotional and mental wellbeing during these uncertain times.

**This included:**



Helping you and your neighbours who were vulnerable and shielding from the virus, by working closely with partners to support the co-ordination and delivery of prescriptions across Cheltenham.



Putting your mental and social wellbeing first through welfare calls to provide a friendly voice and identify anyone in need of extra support.



Using new processes to keep in contact with you when we couldn't meet face to face. This included our new IT system and Facebook live videos on our 'What's on' groups.



number of people who were at risk of losing their tenancies. We were able to help them to keep their homes and improve their quality of life.

# Bringing the community together:

Times may have changed due to the coronavirus but that hasn't stopped us from looking at exciting new ways for residents of all ages to get involved with their community, to help reduce loneliness and isolation.



**Our community investment team achieved the following:**



**5,000**

number of residents contacted to get a better understanding of their interests and what they would like to see in their communities

Supported the delivery of

**386**

food parcels to our residents throughout the past year especially within our sheltered schemes



**£2,500**

of support, we provided to local community groups in need as part of our covid response fund



**Worked with over 35 partners to provide activities and online sessions, this included:**



**70**

Facebook Live sessions



**1,163**

craft and baking packs to families across Cheltenham



**104**

crafting packs to residents who live in our sheltered schemes

**"I first came across Facebook Lives, run by CBH, in the Summer. They delivered crafting packs along with video tutorials. This was one of the many lifesavers for me when I had the kids at home during the first lockdown."**

Lou, CBH volunteer



# Preventing homelessness and reducing rough sleeping:

We are supporting the council, and other partners, by working closely to provide more solutions to prevent homelessness and sustain a place you can call home.

Our benefits and money advice team provided the following support:



Teamed up with Severn Trent, helping us to reduce our customer's bills up to **£300 per year** and clear historic debts of over

**£1000**

Raised awareness of the risks of using loan Sharks, launching a new bus stop advert on

**16 sites** across Cheltenham

## Our housing options team provides housing and homelessness services for the whole of Cheltenham



families provided with assistance to remain in their home or find a place to stay to prevent homelessness



in additional benefits we helped families across Cheltenham claim



families housed in Cheltenham through homeseekerplus



homes secured through the private rented access scheme to help those who are homeless

**125**

people helped off the streets through the 'Everyone In' scheme to provide them with the support they need



Worked closely with our partners Cheltenham Borough Council and the County Council to secure additional funding to help rough sleepers



Our new domestic abuse interventions officer is co-ordinating support for victims with complex needs across the county

# Helping people into work, training and education:

Our employment initiatives service delivered the following virtual support for people trying to find work and training opportunities:

### Pino's story:

● **CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme)**

Pino had an ambition to increase his employment prospects by gaining a CSCS construction card. The team worked closely with Pino to make sure that we were able to provide him with the right support safely and remotely so that he could thrive during the training. The support he received helped him to secure his Construction Skills Certification Scheme CSCS card after passing his test. In Pino's words:

*"I was really nervous to start this at first, but I have gained so much confidence being able to practice the tests online with Lorna, visually seeing each question and answers helps me to remember them, especially the symbol questions, and knowing I am passing each time makes me feel ready to take the real test with confidence I can pass"*



### Tim's story:

● **Work clubs and one to one sessions**

Tim had a long history of working and being self-sufficient, until recently, when he found himself in the unfamiliar situation of being unemployed. In need of some advice and guidance, he contacted us to support him through his next steps. Our benefit and money advisors helped him to improve his financial situation, so that he could then focus on gaining employment. He said:

*"The help and support I have got from Caroline and Gayna has been amazing, they have been very supportive, and the service I received has been fantastic, thank you both"*





“Thank you for teaching me how to use Teams, I can now join the work clubs and see other people who I have missed during lockdown”

CBH Work Club attendee

“I never thought I could do this, I’m rubbish on computers, now look at me I’m in your work club, it’s great thank you”

CBH Work Club attendee



Helped young people secure life changing apprenticeships and traineeship opportunities thanks to the invaluable support received from our local partners – providing them with the tools they need to kickstart their careers and achieve paid employment.



Launched an exciting new partnership with local partners to continue to support people with their next career steps after they’ve completed training programmes/courses



Working closely with Hays recruitment to make it easier for people to access CSCS training so they can achieve their dream of working in the construction industry

**Our employment and training experts helped:**



**43**

into work



**68**

into training

Secured **£600**

to enhance the employment and training service we offer providing:



Safety equipment to people starting work in the construction industry



CSCS tests and cards



ASDAN training materials

## Dealing with your complaints:

We don’t always get things right, which is why your feedback is so important. We want to make it as easy as possible for you to tell us about this, so we can focus on resolving the situation, respond to your feedback and improve.

**Last year:**  
30 complaints and we upheld 21 of these

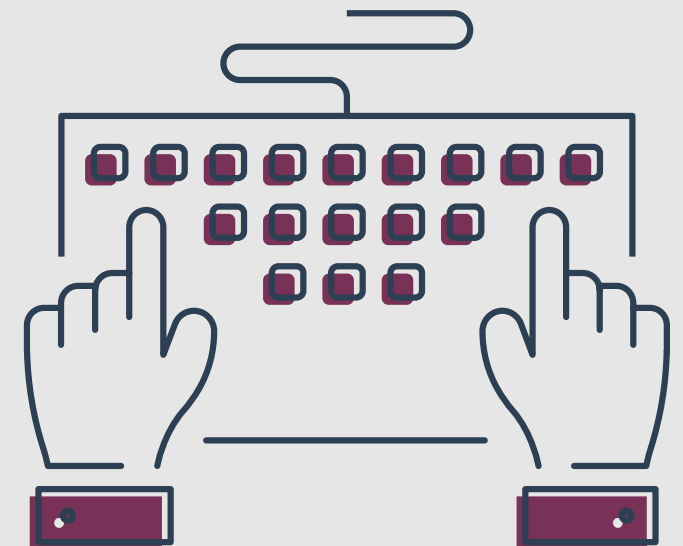
On average it took us **10** days to respond to each stage 1 complaint – we were able to close **90%** within these timescales

We answered **42,898** calls, with **93%** of calls answered in under **60** seconds

**101** compliments

## Our online portal makes it easier for you to:

- ✓ to make a rent payment
- ✓ book your own repair (non-emergency)
- ✓ check your rent statement
- ✓ view your own account details
- ✓ refer yourself to our benefit and money advice team
- ✓ contact your tenancy management and ASB officer



You can do this in the comfort of your own home.

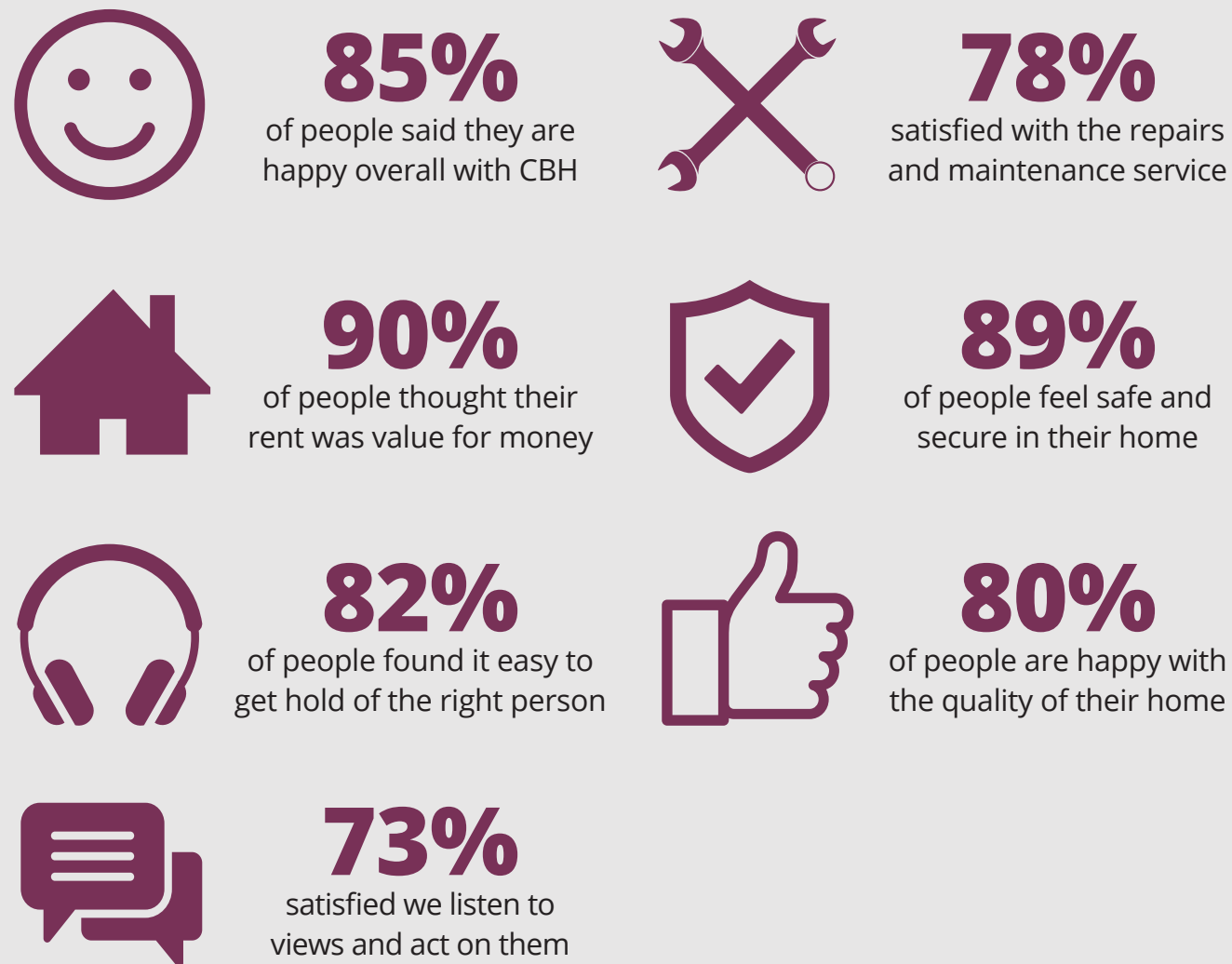
# Your CBH - share your voice:

**We continue to listen to and act upon of customer feedback because your voice matters.**

We run quarterly telephone surveys carried out by Acuity, which are a great way of finding out your thoughts on our services. Although 73% of you are satisfied we listen to views and act on them, your input continues to play a crucial role in helping us improve and support those people who need it the most.

During 2020/21 we've had a fantastic **1,034** responses - see how we did below:

**"I like the personal approach. Everything is so automated these days. It is really lovely to have such kind and helpful staff that actually talk to you"**  
CBH Tenant



**Your feedback plays a crucial role in helping us improve our services and continue our work to create stronger communities and support those who need it the most.**

**Thank you for giving us your views as part of the telephone surveys. Below are some examples of how your voices have influenced the services you receive:**



**You told us the difference having your housing support officer made to you. That's why, as soon as we could, we made sure our colleagues were available safely at sheltered schemes.** During lockdown weekly welfare calls were made to more vulnerable residents and help was given to anyone needing support with food and prescriptions.



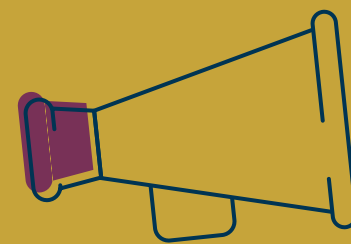
**We've listened to the concerns about repairs following the changes we had to make to keep you and our colleagues safe during the pandemic.** To deal with the backlog of non-urgent repairs we introduced early evening and Saturday working. We've now caught up and resumed normal service and will keep you posted to any future changes.



**Following the cash hall closure, we listened and housing support and revenues colleagues have been working closely to support anyone who needs help making payment.** If you need help making payments we're here to help. Please speak to your housing support, or revenue officer or call **0800 408 0000**.



**You told us you were experiencing long wait times when contacting our gas contractor, PH Jones.** We are pleased to say they have upgraded their phone software and got more people on the phones to make sure you are not kept waiting.



**Please keep talking to us!**  
As you can see your input really does make a difference and is helping us to change and improve our services.



## Making sure your voice is heard:

Your ideas are so important to way that we run our services. We provide a variety of ways you can get involved to share your thoughts and have your say. Carrying out surveys and feedback groups to help scrutinise and challenge us is a huge part of our Tenant Scrutiny Improvement Panel (TSIP).

### A message from Edwin, TSIP Chair:

**"I joined TSIP several years ago at the suggestion of one of the employees at the CBH job club, who thought it would give me an opportunity to improve my confidence and presentation skills.**

I went to a few meetings and it seemed a worthwhile use of my time. I was voted in as a full member shortly afterwards. The scrutiny work gives us an insight into how CBH works as an organisation and how it achieves its goals as a housing provider. Membership of TSIP is an opportunity to influence this.

I took over the Chairman's role when my predecessor became a Board Member of CBH and have been developing my skills in the role, having recently completed Chairing training with Tpas (Tenants Participation Advisory Service).

**Covid-19 has meant the last year has been interesting, but CBH have worked miracles helping tenants with the problems they have encountered.**

TSIP have not been able to do a great deal of our usual scrutiny activities this year as a lot of it involves getting out and meeting people, which has not been possible with lockdown. Thankfully we have still been able to feedback on items like the new complaints process and customer services strategy.

**Our involvement with Tpas gives us plenty of good training opportunities. Hopefully, the next few months will see us all able to return to normal activities."**



### Some of the areas that the panel have influenced include:



#### Customer service:

TSIP fed into the customer service strategy, providing valuable feedback on how we enhanced the digital offer so you can access services online 24/7, making it easier for you to talk to us and maintain our high satisfaction rates.



#### Tenancy visits:

Looked at ways to improve the accessibility of the tenancy visit questionnaire, to make it easier for you to understand and provide your input.



#### Complaints handling:

Provided insight into the complaints process, to make sure that there are multiple routes for you to share your views.



#### Tenant engagement:

The panel are working closely with CBH to set out a 2 year engagement plan, focusing on opportunities for you to get involved and ensure our services continue to meet the needs of you and your communities.

### A note from the chair of our board - Jason Langley

**"Being part of the CBH family is something I am extremely proud of. I, and the other nine non-executive directors work together to support and challenge CBH, with the shared aim of being one of the leading housing providers in the UK.**

Our board is made up of tenants, leaseholders, local councillors, and independent members like me who are motivated to deliver the best experience we can to our main stakeholders – namely you.

I feel strongly about the important role social housing plays in building strong communities, families, and futures, and am privileged to be part of the CBH team. To achieve this, we are constantly looking for ways to bring the voice of our customers - your voice - into the boardroom. We will continue to work with the CBH team and TSIP to amplify this voice and to ensure you continue to shape the way CBH is run. We are also keen to hear any ideas that you may have.

CBH is always pushing boundaries and our plans will see us further increase the supply of new homes for Cheltenham and reduce the carbon footprint of the homes we manage. Putting you, our customers, at the centre of what we do is paramount, and we will continue to evolve our innovative work with people and families, to keep you in safe and secure homes you can afford, whilst helping you take advantage of opportunities to improve your quality of life.

This year we have achieved a lot, and next year we will achieve more thanks to you and our passionate and professional colleagues who care about you and what they do."



# FUTURE PLANS!

At the heart of CBH is you - our customers and the amazing people who go that extra mile to look after and support our communities. We're always looking ahead to make sure we are providing excellent services that provide great homes and create stronger communities.

We are committed to listening and will continue to put you first and deliver the high quality services you and your family need.

Below are some of our top priorities for 2021/22:



### Inspired People:

We care about you and your family, which is why we're enhancing our recruitment process so we can continue to retain and recruit talented individuals who share our values and passion for people.

The health and wellbeing of our colleagues is a top priority. We will continue to provide development and training opportunities, so they can thrive and provide the services you need.



### Great Homes:

We provide great homes, as part of the £180m housing investment in quality homes and thriving communities made by Cheltenham Borough Council and delivered by us. We will be playing our part in making the Golden valley Development a success and helping Cheltenham be stronger post COVID-19.

We've already identified a pipeline of 370 homes and will keep working to provide more homes and drive up standards.

We know keeping your home safe and secure, supporting the Carbon Neutral agenda and improvements to communal are important that's why we are:

- Keeping you safe in your home through the renewal and upgrade of electric heating and rewires
- Continuing to improve fences, paths and communal gardens and addressing issues like security, antisocial behaviour, waste collection and recycling where you live



### Stronger communities:

Repairs are important to you and us which is why we're embracing technology to help us carry out more repairs each day.

We will continue to work closely with partners to ensure services are accessible, including for those who are vulnerable, dealing with a language barrier, or in need of extra support.

With unemployment levels more than doubling over the past year we're working with 16 - 24 year olds to help prepare for their future career.

# OUR FINANCES:

Every year your rent is paid into a pot of money called the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The income generated in this account enables us to:

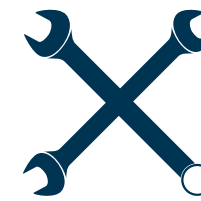
- Deliver enhanced services
- Maintain and improve your home
- Provide more affordable homes

During 2020/21 the HRA spent a total of £20m and every £1 of income received was distributed across the service areas in the following day:



### Homes

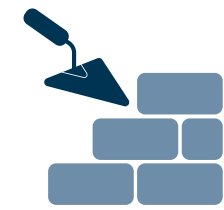
Improving homes



19p

### Homes

Maintaining and repairing homes



13p

### Homes

Providing new homes



3p

### Communities

Involving residents



12p

### People

Delivering services



2p

### Communities

Maintaining neighbourhoods



15p

Business support services



10p

Interest in amounts borrowed



£20m

spent on the services customers need



# Don't miss out...

## Be in it - to win it!

**If you let us in your home to carry out your electrical test at first appointment you could win £50**

Keep your eyes posted for a letter about your electrical inspection. Not only will this help keep your home safe but if you let us in at your first appointment, you will be **automatically entered into our free September prize draw to win a £50** shopping voucher.



**You have until March 2022 to be in with a chance to win**

For more information, or to check if you're due an electrical check contact the repairs team on **0800 408 0000**