

Annual Report for Customers



year ending 31 March 2014

Providing local affordable homes and doing it well

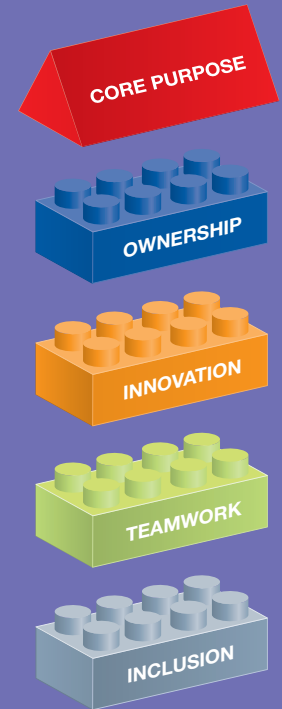
Our core purpose is to understand and effectively meet local affordable housing needs by involving our customers and working closely with local authority partners to deliver responsive, value for money services and homes.

OWNERSHIP – each of us takes responsibility and will respond to an enquiry, issue or situation to ensure a satisfactory outcome.

INNOVATION – we will understand, value and nurture new ideas and use creative thinking, passion, energy and enthusiasm to achieve practical results.

TEAMWORK – we value each person and their job as much as we value our own. We welcome different points of view and will work co-operatively in teams and across teams to achieve more together than we could alone.

INCLUSION – our relationships with each other, customers and stakeholders are based on trust and respect and we will ensure that everyone is able to fully participate in our services and organisation.



Introduction

Over the next year you will start to see a lot of changes at Housing Solutions, as we aim to achieve our 2020 vision – to create Happy Customers and provide More Homes.

Happy Customers

The results from our last Have Your Say survey showed that overall customer satisfaction fell, from **85%** in 2012 to **83%** in 2013. The results highlighted that repairs and maintenance, home improvements and how we deal with anti-social behaviour are the top three service areas for our customers.

However, there were gaps between the importance of the services and levels of customer satisfaction. In response we have launched a new Customer Service Strategy which is designed to help us offer our customers an unbeatable combination of quality homes backed-up by excellent service.

Over the next six months you will see lots of changes in the way we do things and the service you receive. This is just the beginning of a six year plan that will produce major improvements in every area of customer service. We will be investing more money in improving key areas such as repairs and maintenance, anti-social behaviour service and our Customer Contact Centre.

You may have already seen some changes. We have already changed the way we deal with complaints of anti-social behaviour and customers are much happier with this new approach.

More Homes

To meet the growing need for more affordable homes we plan to build 2020 new homes by the year 2020. We currently have nearly **600** new homes on site, with more on the way. Last year we invested **£34m** in new developments and improving existing

homes. We delivered **96** new homes and are on track to deliver **320** new homes in the coming year. We are also coming to the end of our work on Project Care, a **£50m** regeneration programme across Buckinghamshire. In total the programme will provide **669** beds in eight care homes and **11** learning disability schemes.

You will find the highlights of our work over the last year in this calendar. Once again we have asked customers to review each area and feedback on how they think we've done. Customer feedback is extremely important to us, it helps us to improve the services that mean the most to you and it makes us aware of what we need to do to achieve Happy Customers. So we are very grateful to all of the customers who have taken the time not just in this calendar, but over the past year to review our performance and help us improve it.

We hope you enjoy your new calendar, and would love to know what you think. If you've got ideas on how we can make it even better or suggestions on what you'd like to see in next year's calendar, there is a feedback form on the inside back cover. By filling this in and letting us know what you think you could be in with a chance of winning **£50** in shopping vouchers – just in time for Christmas!



Meeting Housing Need

With the average waiting time for a three bed house being between seven and eight years, a key part of our six year strategic plan is to provide more homes. Within that strategic plan we have set a target to build **2020** new homes by the year 2020.

Last year we invested **£34m** in new developments and improving existing homes. We delivered **96** new homes in the year including **64** for social rent, **26** for shared ownership and **6** supported units. We currently have nearly **600** new homes on site in Maidenhead, Slough, Wokingham, Chesham and High Wycombe. We are on target to deliver **320** new homes in the coming year.

This includes; **138** shared ownership in Wokingham, Slough and Maidenhead to help people to get on to the housing ladder. As well as our first development of **40** new build apartments for market rent which are due to be completed in the autumn.

In partnership with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead we are operating a Do-It-Yourself Shared Ownership scheme which helped **13** first time buyers get onto the housing ladder.

Customer's View

"I am so glad that Housing Solutions are continuing to offer the incentives to downsize, as I moved to a smaller home last year. It was so quick and easy and both families were pleased. The large building programme is great news, as the current shortage of houses is rife. I do hope that they continue with their carefully planned building and only use brownfield sites."

Louise Punter of Woodlands Park

Waiting Times

We had an average relet time of **9.4** days, beating our target of **13.5** days and beating our 2012/13 performance by **3.8** days!

Lettings 2013/14

General needs and affordable rent lets	181	Supported Housing lets	23
Sheltered Housing lets	21	Lets to BME group	22

Downsizing

We also are keen to ensure the homes we already have are being put to best use, this is why we are still incentivising downsizing. Last year **45** residents downsized to smaller homes more suitable to their needs, freeing up larger properties for families living in overcrowded homes. Did you know you could get up to **£7,500** for downsizing to a smaller property?

Average general needs weekly rents (excluding service charges)

Bedsits	£75.97	4 bed	£148.11
1 bed	£98.31	5 bed	£160.25
2 bed	£113.37	6 bed	£161.61
3 bed	£130.77		

fact:

Over the coming year we will deliver **320** new homes across Maidenhead, Slough, Wokingham and High Wycombe.



November

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 / 30	24	25	26	27	28	29

DID YOU KNOW?

Our average relet time is **9.4** days this makes us one of the top performing housing associations in the country for relet times.

Customer Service

Our investment made in new technology has continued to improve efficiency and produced savings in the cost of our tenancy management service by approximately **12%**. This is a result of IT investment in mobile working and the introduction of iPads to allow our Tenancy and Neighbourhood Officers (TNOs) to spend more time out and about in our neighbourhoods and less time in the office.

They visited **540** customers in their homes, and were able to spend more time working with customers and on community initiatives, as well as completing **100%** of neighbourhood inspections with the help of our neighbourhood inspectors.

As a result of the efficiencies our TNOs were also able to spend more time on the collection of rents, resulting in rent arrears reducing from **2.54%** in 2012/13 to **2.31%** last year.

We reduced the time it takes to relet an empty property requiring non-major works down from **13** to **nine** days. Our improved performance on letting homes more quickly has created a saving of **£60,000**. We evicted **18** customers last year due to rent arrears and five because of Anti-social Behaviour.

Over the last year the Customer Contact Centre took nearly **80,000** calls this is nearly **20%** more than 2012/13. They also managed to resolve **78%** at first point of contact, this means that

fact:

Last year, our Customer Contact Centre dealt with **78%** of telephone calls at first point of contact.

you get the answer you want first time and don't have to wait for us to call you back or chase us for an answer.

We have introduced a new customer feedback email hotbox which allows customer to give us their feedback – Good or Bad- on any aspect of our Customer Service. If they feel there are things we can change, do differently or are doing just right then they can drop us an email at **customer.feedback@housingsolutions.co.uk** or alternatively call our Customer Contact Centre on **0800 876 6060**.

Don't forget to budget for your December rent.

Customer's View

"On the whole the new six year plan sounds great for the customers. Customer Service is a huge part of any business and Housing Solutions new customer service strategy is putting the customer at the heart of everything they plan to do, and using our feedback to determine how they improve over the coming years. I hope that the staff are strongly supported as well as praised, their job is not easy."

Virma Orso of Central Maidenhead



December

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 Christmas Day	26 Boxing Day	27
28	29	30	31			

DID YOU KNOW?

Last year, our Customer Contact centre dealt with **79,774** telephone calls, an increase of nearly **20%** on the previous year.

Financial Inclusion

We have invested time and resources to help hundreds of our customers, who face financial difficulties, to sustain their tenancy.

During the last year we have, strengthened our financial inclusion team, provided debt advice training for all of our front-line housing staff giving them skills to offer financial support and advice to customers and established stronger links with local credit unions, poverty groups, benefit offices and food banks.

Our financial inclusion team worked with **530** customers – more than twice the number they helped last year. As well as providing debt advice and budgeting training they also helped Customers secure additional income in the form of benefits and grants of **£108,000**. This is an increase of **£50,000** on last year.

Customer's View

"What the Financial Inclusion Team do is amazing, they work extremely hard to help customers improve their financial situation. I have spoken to many people who were in debt but now thanks to the team they are nearly debt free. The Financial Inclusion Team offer everything from cookery on a budget courses to budgeting training. I don't think enough residents are aware of this service and the help it offers, so over the next year I'd like to see more advertisement of this great resource."

Paul Fuller of Larchfield

Help to customers can take many different forms; we are giving an increasing number of customers food vouchers. More customers are engaging with us to improve their household budgeting skills or learn how to get the best energy deals and even how to cook on a tight budget.

We offered advice and support to nearly **200** customers who were directly affected by the bedroom tax, with incentives for them to pay their rent by direct debit and downsize to a smaller home. Nearly a quarter moved to a smaller home freeing-up larger properties for families. We appointed a new Financial Inclusion Officer to manage rent arrears for this group of customers and these fell from **£54,000** at the beginning of the year to **£17,000** in March 2014.

fact:

If you need help with your finances after Christmas, contact our Financial Inclusion Team at financialinclusionteam@housingsolutions.co.uk or on **0800 876 6060**.



January

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
				1 New Year's Day	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

DID YOU KNOW?

Our Financial Inclusion Team worked with over **500** customers last year and managed to source an additional **£108,000** in annual benefits.

Community Social Responsibility (CSR)

As part of our Community Social Responsibility Programme (CSR) each year we invest up to two per cent of the surplus we make in community initiatives.

Last year we continued to expand the training and support we offer our customers and local people to get back into work. At the heart of this is our award winning Strive Business Start-Up course which we now offer in partnership with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham Borough Council and several other housing associations. We have now delivered training through this course to **105** local people. Our next courses start in January in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham and Wycombe. So if you are looking for a new start in the New Year why not sign up to the course.

To run alongside this training we have launched an Opportunity Fund for our customers who need help paying for qualifications or buying essential clothing for interviews. We also offer work experience to people who are long term unemployed to help to improve their CV's and job opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

We want our staff to take an active role in helping to build stronger communities. Every employee can spend three hours a year doing voluntary work with a local charity of their choice, or working for our corporate charity. Last year we supported local charity,

Sequela, which provides support for people with neurological conditions. Staff spent **240** hours working at the charity and raised **£700**. These funds were then matched by the company enabling us to donate **£1,400** to the charity. For the next two years we are supporting DASH – Domestic Abuse Stops Here, a local charity that works with and supports women, men and children affected by domestic abuse. So far we have already raised over **£300** which has been used to take the children in the refuges to the seaside.

Customer's View

"There are so many ways for residents to get involved! Housing Solutions provides many opportunities to learn new skills and improve their quality of life. I am so thankful to Housing Solutions for running the Strive Start-Up course, in two years they have created a community of over 100 graduates with successful businesses. Housing Solutions will help you and give you the support you need to make your project happen"

Dorota Kunicka of Central Maidenhead

fact: **105** local people have now graduated from our Business-Start-Up Course and many have now started up their own businesses.



February

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

DID YOU KNOW?

Our staff spent **240** hours working for our Corporate Charity Sequela and managed to raise over **£700**.

Quality of Homes

Last year we invested **£8.6m** in existing homes and we achieved **100%** of gas servicing.

We are continuing to invest in improving communal areas of flats. Last year we invested **£412,000** transforming unused outside courtyards into pleasant outside areas for residents to use.

Rising fuel costs continue to be a major concern for our customers. We have developed a new six-year Energy Efficiency Strategy, which will allow us to improve the energy efficiency of our homes and reduce running costs for our customers. As part of the strategy we are working towards creating a greener homes standard by increasing the average SAP rating of our stock to **73.2** with a minimum SAP rating of **60**.

We have invested **£225,000** to improve the energy efficiency of heating systems in homes in our largest off grid neighbourhood. Through the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) we have been able to

Customer's View

"The investment Housing Solutions have made into new developments and repairs are on target and very good. The investment into energy efficiency is great – everyone wants to save money on energy bills. The improvements to communal areas are really necessary as for some residents living in flats it's their only outside space. Over the next year I'd love to see Housing Solutions look into more ways they can help elderly and vulnerable residents keep their homes up to a good standard."

Jane Stillman of Cookham

provide **10** flats with **25%** more efficient, intelligent storage heaters and **19** houses with renewable air source heating systems - this investment will help cut energy bills for our customers and create more energy efficient homes.

We have installed five BlueGen cells in sheltered housing schemes. These generate electricity from gas and the excess heat produced is used to heat water. This first phase is a pilot to trial the technology with the short term objective of delivering locally produced, clean electricity for no more than we are currently paying and use the heat produced from the fuel cells to meet the hot water requirement in the schemes at zero cost. Both these initiatives are being evaluated with a view to future investment potential.

We have worked closely with customers on our Your Home action group to improve the lettings standard of our empty homes, to ensure that properties are up to a suitable standard before we relet them to a new customer. – see October for more details on customer involvement.

During the year we:

Replaced **56** Kitchens and **125** bathrooms;

Replaced **190** boilers

Completed **844** electrical upgrades

Replaced **79** external doors.

fact:

We invested **£8.6 million** in improving existing homes and made **191** disabled adaptations.



March

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

DID YOU KNOW?

We have invested **£225,000** in improving the energy efficiency of heating systems in homes in our largest off grid neighbourhood. This investment is helping to reduce energy bills for our customers.

Feedback and Complaints

The Have Your Say Survey identified Repairs and Maintenance, Home Improvements and Anti-social Behaviour as three of the most important services for our customers. However, there were significant gaps between the importance of the services and the level of customer satisfaction with the services. As a result of this we have set out to radically improve these three areas which are key for our customers and introduced a new Customer Service Strategy aimed at improving customer service across all of our services.

Over the past six months we have dramatically changed the way in which we handle our complaints about ASB, talking to all customers with ASB issues face to face. We now offer to visit all our customers who make genuine complaints about anti-social behaviour and the person they are complaining about. As a result customer satisfaction with the way we handle ASB complaints has increased to **83%** The changes made to ASB are outlined in August.

In response to customer feedback we have developed an in-house Gas Installation Team to carry out boiler replacements as part of our planned maintenance programme. We expect this to improve customer service, produce energy efficiency savings for customers and add flexibility to our team, enabling them to deal with peaks in workload particularly during the winter months.

Feedback from our customers is hugely important; it shows us where we are getting things right and where we need to improve. There are many ways in which you can give us feedback.

You can call our Customer Contact Centre on **0800 876 6060**, you can email us at **customer.feedback@housingsolutions.co.uk** use our online form found on our website at **www.housingsolutions.co.uk** or you can comment on our Facebook Page **www.facebook.com/Housing.Solutions.UK**

Last year we received **213** complaints down by **23** on the previous year.

Of those complaints -

21 complaints progressed to Stage 2 of our complaints procedure.

2 complaints progressed to Stage 3 of our complaints procedure.

Customer's View

"At the moment customers get mixed messages when they talk to different members of staff, Housing Solutions needs to improve its communication internally to stop this happening, so customers get a consistent message all the time"

Lizzie Jones of Cox Green

fact:

We are completely transforming our Customer Service and over the next **6 - 12** months you should see some major changes in the quality of the service you receive.



April

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
			1	2	3 Good Friday	4
5	6 Easter Monday	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

DID YOU KNOW?

If you want to give us your feedback - good or bad - on any aspect of cusotmer service please email us at: customer.feedback@housingsolutions.co.uk

Repairs and Maintenance

Our maintenance team kept more than **99.2%** of repair appointments last year, missing just **120** out of more than **14,400** appointments. We also attended **98%** of all emergency repairs within four hours.

Our trade's team carried out nearly **5,000** emergency repairs and **15,000** routine repairs. Fixing **95%** of repairs on the first visit. If they cannot fix the repair they will make a follow-up appointment with customers before they leave the property, ensuring the customer knows what is happening next.

As a responsible landlord we have a legal responsibility to ensure that customers are safe in their homes, which is why we carry out gas service checks every year on all of our properties. Last year we achieved **100%** of gas servicing.

We are continuing to use new technology to achieve efficiencies and improve services for our customers. We have launched an online repairs reporting system, which allows our customers to log routine repairs and select and change appointment slots any time of the day or night.

Following a recent resident scrutiny on the work done by our external contractors, we have now started the process of tendering for a new responsive repairs contractor. – **See October for more details.**

fact:

98% of the emergency repairs reported were responded to within **4** hours.

We have also invested in a Keystone Asset Management database which enables us to hold more in-depth data on the condition of our housing stock. This will be put in place in the coming year, and will allow us to:

- improve our approach to planned maintenance;
- target improvement that will improve the energy efficiency of our properties;
- improve communication with customers about planned changes to their homes.

Customer's View

"The maintenance team work extremely hard to ensure that they keep to their appointments, and 99.2% is a figure Housing Solutions Solutions proud of. I feel the Housing Solutions Maintenance Team deserve a 10 out of 10 for customer care, as they have always been friendly helpful and on time"

Jane Webb of Central Maidenhead



May

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
					1	2
3	4 Bank Holiday	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 / 31	25 Bank Holiday	26	27	28	29	30

DID YOU KNOW?

You can book routine repair appointments online at www.housingsolutions.co.uk, as well as checking your rent account and changing your personal details.

Sheltered Housing

We announced plans for a **£900,000** modernisation of Jakes House, the work starts next year following extensive consultations with customers. The modernisation is set to totally transform the interior of the 1970's scheme. It includes installing level access shower rooms, remodelling all of the flats and installing a lift to improve accessibility. We also announced that Gardener House one of our oldest sheltered housing schemes is to close. The design and accessibility at Gardner House are poor.

We have also announced that Maudsley House is to get a fresh new look. The communal lounge, dining area, all the corridors will be repainted and receive new carpet, furniture and curtains. There are also plans to give the gardens a facelift. Customers from Gardner House are being moved to other accommodation in Maidenhead.

Customer's View

"The work Housing Solutions have already done as part of their Designing for the Future Programme is great, especially the conversion of bedsits into flats at Christian Smith House, and it's really improved people's lives. From what I've read over the past year in Streets Ahead, other Housing Associations are nowhere near as good as Housing Solutions, they must be one of the best."

Maurice Barnes of Woodlands Park

Earlier in the year we launched a new communal Wifi system to provide customers with fast, easy and affordable access to the internet in our sheltered housing schemes. The first scheme to receive the communal Wifi was Neve House.

Over the coming year we will be rolling Wifi out to other sheltered schemes to try and encourage digital inclusion. To run alongside this, we are working with **Students@Home** to set up a project to help get more of our customers online and benefit from having access to the internet.

fact:

We are running a **Students@Home** project to help get more of our customers online. If you're interested contact our Community Engagement team on **01628 543123**.



JUNE

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

DID YOU KNOW?

We made **191** adaptations to properties last year to help customers continue to live independently.

Anti-social Behaviour

We have dramatically changed the way we handle complaints of ASB. We now offer to meet all of our customers who report ASB issues face to face. This gives them the opportunity to talk through problems with us and allows us to explain what we can do to help resolve their issues.

The changes we have made were in response to the feedback from our recent Have Your Say Survey which identified the way we respond to complaints of Anti-social Behaviour as a key service for our customers.

Since the changes were introduced satisfaction with the way we handle ASB has increased each month and now stands at **83%**, whilst the number of ASB cases reported has doubled.

In the last year our ASB team dealt with **259** cases, **92** of these complaints were regarding noise related incidents, **37** were about drugs and alcohol related incidents and **16** for pet and animal nuisance. We evicted five customers for ASB last year.

A number of ASB complaints are noise related. Customers are always surprised when they are told that noise is not always ASB.

Children playing, a door banging etc is classed as everyday noise which we all have to live with.

To help people to identify cases of Anti-social Behaviour our ASB team have been going out to community events and educating children and their parents in the form of an ASB treasure hunt in order to try and help our customers become more aware of what is and isn't classed as ASB.

Customer's View

"I think Housing Solutions are doing a great job at improving customer satisfaction in ASB. All of the residents I have spoken to are really pleased with the way that ASB has been handled by the ASB team, and have seen a real improvement in the service provided. The drop-in sessions that are being introduced is a really good idea as it gives people the chance to come in and talk about their problems"

Elizabeth Cowlard of Larchfield



fact:

Last year our Anti-social Behaviour team dealt with **259** cases of ASB. Customer satisfaction with the way we handle ASB complaints now stands at **83%**.

July

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

DID YOU KNOW?

If you want to talk to us about any ASB issues you may have, we have introduced a weekly drop-in session, on Monday mornings from **9am-12noon** at our Crown Square Offices, Maidenhead.

Neighbourhoods

Our Tenancy and Neighbourhood Officers (TNOS) have inspected all of our neighbourhoods over the past year with the help of Customer Volunteers. The inspections help to identify changes, repairs and improvements that need to be made as well as ensure that all communal areas are safe and secure.

To get involved in our neighbourhood inspections or to provide feedback on how we can improve your area contact our Community Engagement Team at community.engagement@housingsolutions.co.uk

Our TNO's have a budget to spend each year on improving neighbourhoods; this could be through community events or on improvements to communal areas.

Last year saw improvements to Windrush Way and the creation of a new community group the Alley Group put together by resident Jane Webb. The group get together every two weeks to keep the local area neat and tidy. They also help elderly and disabled people to care for their gardens. If you are interested in joining the Alley Group please contact Jane on janespiderwebb@hotmail.com.

Over the past year we also transformed courtyards at Blenheim Road and Sunderland Road as part of our Courtyard Refurbishment Programme, which has seen unused courtyards turned into pleasant outside areas for customers to use. In the coming year

we will be transforming courtyards at Northumbria Road and Cumbria Close and plan on investing **£500,000** modernising nine courtyards.

In the coming year we have a number of community events, estate improvements and neighbourhood competitions to look out for in some of our neighbourhoods. To find out more visit our Neighbour and Neighbourhoods website at, getinvolved.housingsolutions.co.uk

Last year we visited over **543** customers in their homes as part of our tenancy audit. The information we collect from these visits allows us to tailor our services to meet the specific needs of the customer.

fact:

Our Tenancy and Neighbourhood Officers visited **543** customers in their homes as part of our tenancy audit.

Customer's View

"Housing Solutions work in the neighbourhood is great; the Alley Group is a great concept and more residents should get involved in this. Redevelopment of communal areas and courtyards really lift community spirit. However there are still some issues with Community Maintenance and as a resident there is a worry that Housing Solutions will become complacent. I feel more residents should get involved as it allows you to get to know more people and opens the door to many opportunities"

Paul Fuller of Larchfield



August

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 / 30	24 / 31 Bank Holiday	25	26	27	28	29

DID YOU KNOW?

To get involved in our neighbourhood inspections or to provide feedback on how we can improve your areas contact our Community Engagement Team at community.engagement@housingsolutions.co.uk

Value for Money

As a not-for-profit company, any profit that we make is put back into the business and used to build new homes and make improvements to our existing homes, neighbourhoods and services.

We are keen to ensure that every penny we spend counts and have a value for money target to reduce operating costs per unit.

Last year we generated over **£200,000** of new savings on top of the **£420,000** generated in the previous year. By focusing on how we source materials and services and utilising the buying power of other housing associations through frameworks we have managed to drive our costs down.

Customer's View

"Housing Solutions have made some brilliant savings over the last year, £200,000 on top of the £420,000 they saved in 2012/13 is a fantastic amount of money. They are definitely going in the right direction, but they shouldn't stop there. It's great that these savings will be used to go back into building new homes to help more people across Maidenhead and the South East."

Heather Whyte of Central Maidenhead

The new savings included:

- Savings of **£64,000** by procuring a painting contract for general needs, sheltered and care home properties through a consortium.
- Negotiating new contracts in Telecoms and Telecare generating **£7,000** savings.
- **£60,000** saved by sourcing windows and doors through a framework.
- **£5,000** on banking fees
- **£17,000** saved by gaining discounts on existing pricing with plumbing, kitchen and building material suppliers.
- **£27,000** saved by negotiating discounts on IT projects and related consultancy.
- **£21,000** saved by gaining rebates from advisors.
- **£5,000** by outsourcing letter printing.

The full VFM assessment is within our annual report and accounts, which can be found on our website at

www.housingsolutions.co.uk/Aboutus/Corporatepublications.aspx

fact:

We saved **£17,000** by negotiating a discount on the cost of plumbing, kitchen and building materials without cutting back customers kitchen choices



September

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

DID YOU KNOW?

Since 2012 we have now generated savings of over **£620,000** as part of our value for money strategy.

Customer Involvement

Our Customer Scrutiny Panel has now completed two scrutines looking at our website and the repairs service provided by contractors. A wide range of recommendations from both scrutines have been implemented bringing about improved accessibility to the website and a drop in complaints about the work of contractors.

The first scrutiny looked at our two websites – the Housing Solutions website and the 'Get Involved' part of our website. We made lots of changes to Housing Solutions website earlier in the year, in response to feedback from the panel. These changes included; making the news section on the home page bigger and labelling pages differently to ensure customers clearly understand how to find things.

Their second scrutiny reviewed the quality of work done by external contractors and recommendations on how to improve it. These changes include; giving contractors mobile phones so it is easier to contact them and ensuring the contractors use the same reporting system as our in house trades' team.

A copy of the scrutiny reports can be found on our 'get involved' part of our website.

The panel are reviewing our Tenancy and Neighbourhood officer Service this year.

fact:

after the last scrutiny we saw a drop in complaints about our contractors, thanks to the recommendations suggested by the panel.

The Your Home action group have been working closely with our Home Inspector this year on setting a new relet standard for our empty properties. They have worked on designing a new moving leaflet and have accompanied us on a number of visits to empty properties to help us to set the new relet standard. Regular empty homes inspections now take place by members of the Your Home group.

If you'd like to be more involved and would be interested in joining one of our action groups, become a neighbourhood inspector or get involved in anyway, contact our Community Engagement Team on **01628 543123**.

Customer's View

"The Scrutiny Panel is in its 2nd year and as well as accomplishing a rapport with HS staff, we have done three scrutines to date, for which we have received great responses from the Board of HS. As a panel we have produced excellent reports, but feel we can achieve even more success by scrutinising the top three Key points of any scrutiny, therefore allowing the Panel to do more scrutines in the coming year. The Panel's aim is to continue to work hard in order to make sure that tenants are given the best quality of service from HS."

Rachel Bonner of Larchfield



October

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

DID YOU KNOW?

If you're interested in making a difference and would like to join one of our action groups email, community.engagement@housingsolutions.co.uk

Income and Expenditure Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2014

	Group 2014 £000	Group 2013 £000	Association 2014 £000	Association 2013 £000
Turnover	34,395	31,236	34,187	31,056
Cost of sales	(1,405)	(39)	(1,377)	(6)
Operating costs	(18,568)	(18,043)	(18,544)	(17,912)
Exceptional item	-	(3,066)	-	(3,066)
Operating surplus	14,422	10,088	14,266	10,072
Profit on sale of fixed assets	1,170	777	1,170	777
Interest receivable and other income	183	282	284	282
Interest payable and similar charges	(9,023)	(8,375)	(9,020)	(8,375)
Surplus on ordinary activities before taxation	6,752	2,772	6,700	2,756
Tax on surplus on ordinary activities	-	-	-	-
Surplus for the financial year	6,752	2,772	6,700	2,756

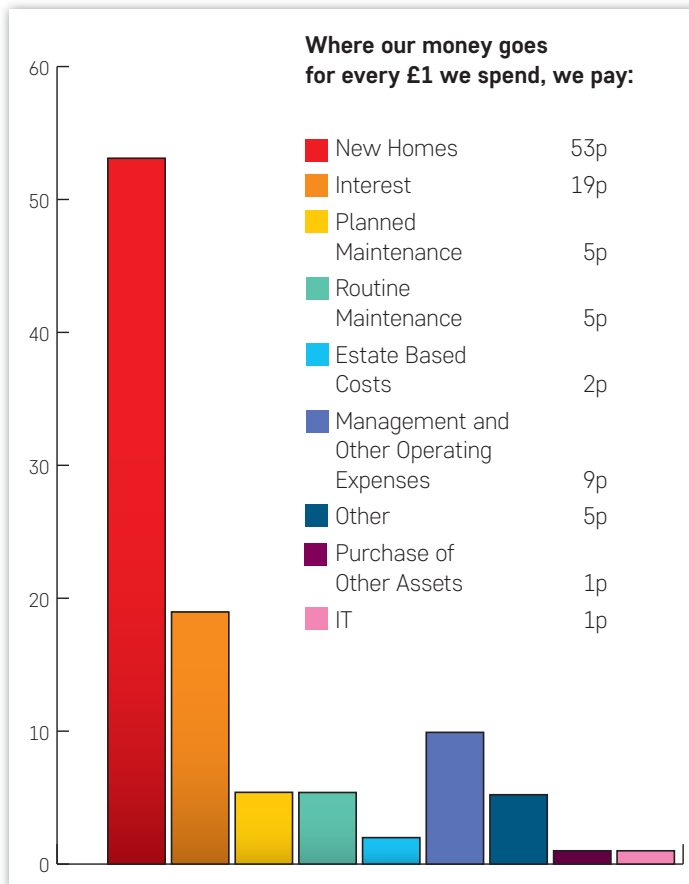
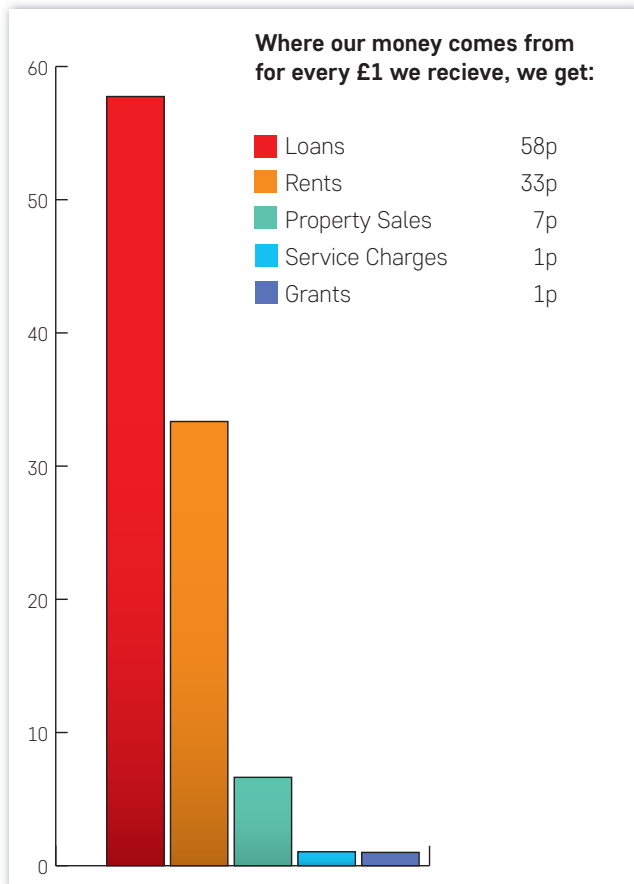
All of the group's turnover and surplus disclosed above are derived from continuing activities.

Consolidated Balance Sheet for the year ended 31 March 2014

	2014 £000	2013 £000
Tangible Fixed Assets		
Housing properties	424,563	382,801
Other tangible fixed assets	9,712	9,577
	<hr/> 434,275	<hr/> 392,378
Current Assets		
Properties for sale	2,361	-
Debtors	2,476	3,587
Cash at bank and in hand	46,110	17,110
	<hr/> 50,947	<hr/> 20,697
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(5,277)	(5,165)
Net current assets	45,670	15,532
Total assets less current liabilities	<hr/> 479,945	<hr/> 407,910
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	258,602	208,227
Pension Liability	9,516	7,626
Capital and reserves		
Called-up non-equity share capital	-	-
Revaluation reserve	179,514	165,863
Revenue reserve	32,313	26,194
	<hr/> 479,945	<hr/> 407,910



Our money



Performance Information

Some of the key indicators used by the Group to monitor achievement of performance are listed below.

Area	Indicators	Target 2013/14	Performance 2013/14
Rent Income	Rent arrears		
	Overall rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent debit	2.37%	2.14%
Lettings	Average general needs re-let time	13.5 days	9.42 days
Asset Management	Emergency repairs responded to in four hours	98%	98.07%
	Satisfaction with responsive repairs	82%	91%
	Appointments made and kept	99%	99.08%
	Gas servicing access	100%	100%

Breakdown of properties		Lettings		Average general needs weekly rents (excluding service charges)	
General Needs	3,378	General needs and affordable rent lets	181	Bedsits	£75.97
Supported housing and housing for older people	561	Sheltered Housing lets	21	1 bed	£98.31
Low cost home ownership	217	Supported Housing lets	23	2 bed	£113.37
Key worker housing	29	Lets to BME group	22	3 bed	£130.77
Residential care homes	713	Complaints		4 bed	£148.11
Market rent properties	39	Complaints received	213	5 bed	£160.25
Total	4,937	Complaints to Stage 2 of our complaints process	21	6 bed	£161.61
Properties maintained for third parties		Complaints to Stage 3 of our complaints process	2		
Disabled adaptations	191	Staff			
Tenant Evictions		Number of staff:	155		
Rent arrears	18	Percentage of staff from a BME groups	11%		
Anti-social behaviour	5	Disabled staff	2.84%		

If you would like the information in this calendar provided in another format, please call our offices on 0800 876 6060.

Urdu

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

☎ 0800 876 6060

Hindi

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

☎ 0800 876 6060

Gujarati

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજ બીજી ભાષા અથવા રચનામાં જોઈતો હોય, અથવા જો તમને ઇન્ટરપ્રિટરની સેવાઓ જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક સાધો.

☎ 0800 876 6060

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

☎ 0800 876 6060



Contacting Us

If you need to contact us you can do this in a number of ways:

In person at our offices at:

Crown Square, Waldeck Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 8BY

Our office opening hours are:

Monday 8.45 am until 5.15 pm

Tuesday 8.45 am until 5.15 pm

Wednesday 8.45 am until 5.15 pm

Thursday 8.45 am until 5.15 pm

Friday 8.45 am until 4.45 pm

Our offices are closed at weekends and on bank holidays.

When you visit us at our offices we will aim to:

- Offer you the choice to discuss your enquiry in private;
- Offer you the choice to speak with a male or female member of staff;
- See you within 20 minutes, if you do not have an appointment;
- Offer you a translator, if appropriate.

Access to our offices

Our offices are accessible to people in wheelchairs and we have hearing loops fitted. Disabled parking is available immediately outside of our offices.

You can also contact us:

By minicom: 01628 638136 **By fax:** 01628 543199

By email: contact@housingsolutions.co.uk

Via our website at: www.housingsolutions.co.uk

By Post: Crown House, Crown Square, Waldeck Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 8BY

Via our Facebook page at: facebook.com/Housing.Solutions.UK

By telephone to our Customer Contact Centre

Our 24 hour numbers for calls during the day and emergencies outside normal office hours are:

**Freephone number
0800 876 6060**

**or for mobile phone users
01628 543101**

Customer Contact Centre opening hours

Monday 8 am until 7 pm

Tuesday 8 am until 7 pm

Wednesday 10 am until 7 pm

Thursday 8 am until 7 pm

Friday 8 am until 7 pm



Find us on

Facebook

We are now on Facebook. All our job vacancies, details of events and news can be delivered to your phone at:
facebook.com/Housing.Solutions.UK

About Us

Housing Solutions, was established in 1995 and is now a leading provider of affordable homes in the South East. We own, manage and maintain more than 7,500 homes. We offer affordable homes to rent, shared ownership schemes, market rent properties, key worker housing and specialist accommodation for older people and people who need support and care to live within the community. All our homes are backed up by a range of housing services, including our own professional team of trades staff who provide a comprehensive repair and maintenance service.

Our work as a social housing provider is supported by profits from our growing commercial activities. We have an ambitious development plans to build 2020 new homes by the year 2020.

We see ourselves as more than just a landlord. We are active members of the local community, and we aim to make a real difference to the lives of our residents.

We have developed a series of initiatives dedicated to that goal. These include: our award-winning Strive Business Start-up programme which is helping our customers and local people get back into work; Our investment in improving the energy efficiency of our homes which is helping customers cut their fuel bills; Our Financial Inclusion Team which is helping to improve living standards for hundreds of customers who are struggling financially.



feedback form

Please let us have your views

We hope you liked your Annual Report and would welcome your comments. If you would like to give us your feedback please complete this form.

All forms returned to us by 15 December 2014 will be entered in a prize draw to win one of two £50 shopping vouchers just in time for Christmas. If you want to enter the prize draw please make sure you fill in your name and address.

Name.....

Address

.....

Telephone number

Email address.....

To help us improve the Annual Report next year please let us know what you think about the following areas of the report by ticking the appropriate box below.

	very good	good	poor
Size	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Readability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Layout	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How useful was the information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photographs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Would you like next year's Annual Report produced as a calendar? Yes No

If you would like to be involved in putting together next year's Annual Report to Residents please tick here.

Please put this completed form in an envelope and send to:

PR/Marketing, Housing Solutions, Crown House, Crown Square, Waldeck Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 8BY



Crown House, Crown Square,
Waldeck Road, Maidenhead,
Berkshire, SL6 8BY.

freephone: 0800 876 6060

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