

How we've delivered our services over  
the last year and what's coming up next



# Delivering with Tenants

Annual Report 2022-23





Please scan the QR code for support on how to tackle damp and mould in your home.

*Our Tenants First team are here to help.*

Welcome to the annual report which reviews the delivery of services from April 2022 to March 2023 and looks at what's happening now and next for tenants.

We as tenants like you, realise the difficulties we've all faced financially over the last few years during these challenging times. Working in partnership with Barnsley Council, we have helped and supported tenants struggling with the cost of living. Help is available for everyone. This includes those who are working and not claiming benefits, so it's important to reach out for help so you don't miss out. You can find information on what help is available on **page 9**.

We know many of you have struggled with the cost of heating your homes and keeping your family safe and warm. Thankfully help was available for the most vulnerable to help with their energy costs. But without heat, damp and mould problems have been on the increase,

we do request you report any problems as soon as you are aware of them. Now is the time before winter is upon us.

Finally, it's important that Berneslai Homes have your up-to-date contact information, so they can inform you of any changes to your services. You can do this quickly on your Housing Online account. Scan the QR code on **page 11** to create an account or if you have one already update your information.

Enjoy reading your report and don't forget to enter the competition to win one of the £25 shopping vouchers. There are 10 prizes so good luck to you all and keep safe.

**For and on behalf of your Tenant Voice.**

# An introduction from this year's editorial group

## How we measure our performance

**84%**



**Overall SATISFACTION** with our service.

✓ **Benchmark** average **75%**

**77%**



**SATISFACTION** in the quality of the home.

✓ **Benchmark** average **73%**

**83%**



**SAFETY** and security of home.

✓ **Benchmark** average **80%**

# Making every pound count

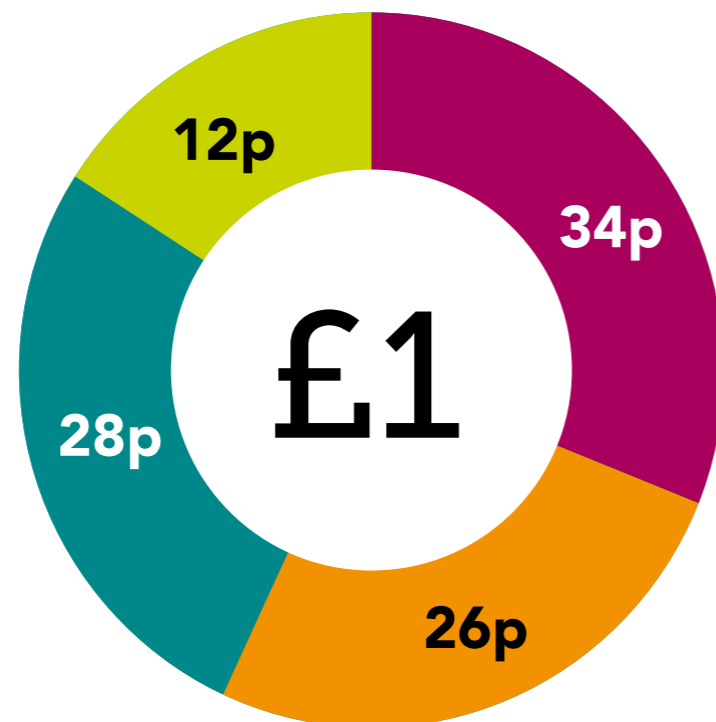
**It's important that Berneslai Homes offers value for money, and we work hard to manage our finances carefully.**

**In 2022-23:**

- We collected **96%** of rent due
- **66%** of funds were spent locally, supporting the local economy and keeping the 'Barnsley Pound'\* in Barnsley
- We made over **£154,000** of efficiency savings that we can invest back into services

**How every £1 is spent:**

- **34p** Improving homes
- **26p** Day to day repairs
- **28p** Managing our service  
(eg: tenant involvement, tenancy management, supporting people)
- **12p** Interest, loans and borrowing



\*The 'Barnsley Pound' is money that stays in the borough spent on local supplies and services, and wages that are paid to employees who live locally.



*Our easily recognisable vans are always out on estates, working on your homes.*



**"Most of every £1 we spend goes towards supporting you and improving homes and neighbourhoods. A safe and comfortable home is more than just bricks and mortar, it's about giving you a good quality of life and support where you need it most."**

**Amanda Garrard**  
Chief Executive

# Keeping tenants safe

Keeping you safe is our main priority. Our Resident Engagement Strategy effectively involves everyone in scrutiny, service planning and delivery, and decision making.

To improve community engagement, we set up a residents panel who meet regularly to discuss building and fire safety in our high rise buildings. We work together to develop and maintain services and support. So far, tenants have been involved in the:

- Installation of sprinkler systems in the buildings
- Installation of fire doors
- Consultation of the closure of bin chutes and new bin store works

We've fitted sprinkler systems in three high rise blocks and our independent living schemes.



We've spent **£8.3 million** on improvements and safety measures. Including sprinklers, fire safety works and fitting smoke and CO alarms to homes.

## You said

**"I moved my son's furniture to find mould growing on the pipes in his bedroom. It was also present in the front room, behind the sofa."**

## We did

We understand damp and mould is a concern, so we've created a dedicated campaign about this, updated our website and sent a leaflet to every tenant by post this year which is also given to new tenants. Our 'STAR' campaign helps you spot the signs, try the useful tips, act fast, and report it to us.

Customer Engagement Officer Leon Sidebottom with members of the Fire Safety Group.



Scan this QR code to watch our fire safety video for tips and advice to keep you and your family safe.

In the next 12 months, we'll be:



**Building Safety Cases for high rise buildings.** Managing structural safety and reduce the risk of fire spreading.



**Maintaining the fire door register.** We'll continue to make regular inspections, safety checks and replace fire doors.

How we measure our performance

In 2022-23 we carried out:

**100%**

\*Electrical inspections are **99.57%** due to 'no access' - we're working to carry out these inspections as a priority.



**FIRE RISK** assessments



**GAS SAFETY** checks



**ASBESTOS** surveys



**LIFTS** maintenance



**ELECTRICAL** inspections\*

# Making your homes fit for the future

**We're investing in your homes to make sure they are warm, safe, comfortable and fit for the future.**

The Capital Investment Programme is funding energy efficient replacements in the housing stock. We call this retrofit works. These include insulation, new windows and doors, LEDs, and solar panels. These works can help make your homes warmer and more insulated. This saves you money on your bills and reduces condensation, which can lead to damp and mould. It's also better for the environment so it's a win-win!

We worked with Barnsley Council, Energise Barnsley, and Age UK Barnsley to fit domestic smart batteries and intelligent smart controls to 125 properties. Tenants living in those homes can now store excess solar energy for when they need it, saving £200-£250 a year off their bills.

**"The battery is great, and the app is brilliant. We look at it daily along with our smart meter and hardly use anything from the grid now."**

*Mr Richards, Monk Bretton.*

We delivered a retrofit programme to 32 properties that provided external wall insulation. This helped make the homes warmer, raised the energy efficiency (keeping more heat in), and reduced heating costs.

**How we measure our performance**

**86%**

! **Benchmark**  
average 85%

✓ **SATISFACTION**  
with repairs

**82%**

! **Benchmark**  
average 77%

✓ **SATISFACTION**  
with repairs being  
'right first time'

**In the next 12 months, we'll be:**



**Investing £25M** to deliver 4,000 improvements to homes, saving tenants approx. £600k per year.



**Delivering retrofit works** in up to 300 homes.



**Working with Barnsley Council and Energise Barnsley** to install 1,000 solar PV systems to homes.



**Continuing to tackle the backlog** of repairs as we know this is important to tenants.



*Wentworth and Dearne MP John Healey, visits our solar energy scheme at Bolton-upon-Deane.*

**In 2022-23 we spent:**

**£40.2M**

✓ **on REPAIRING, maintaining, and improving your home.**

If you're waiting for a repair and it gets worse or your situation changes, please call us on:

**01226 787878**

# Listening to tenants

Following your feedback, we've made lots of changes to how we involve you. We've worked together on a new model to capture as many tenant voices as possible.

We've been preparing for the changes to social housing regulation (as set out by the Regulator). This includes the introduction of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). Working together with our involved tenants we've developed a joint action plan. Our dedicated volunteers constantly challenge us and keep us on our toes:

- **Tenant Voice Panel** – meet regularly to check and challenge our performance. They've got their teeth into retrofit and helped us design lots of policies.
- **Scrutiny Panel** - produced reports on damp and mould, and communication about planned repairs.
- **Service Excellence Assessors** - carried out empty property spot checks and made sure our communications are fit for purpose.

We've worked with Barnsley Council and partners on a full review of the Council's Lettings Policy. We've held some events to get the views of tenants, applicants, and the

general public. Their feedback was used to draft the new policy which will be implemented later this year.

As we continue to make improvements, please get involved if you can. Every tenant matters, every tenant has a voice, and **we want to hear yours!**



"Every tenant has a voice and needs to use it, so we can make the changes needed for the future."

*Brian Griffin, Involved Tenant.*



"It's important tenants get involved so they can give a 'real life' account of the issues we face, and Berneslai Homes can improve services for us."

*Adele Lacy, Involved Tenant.*



*Annual Report Editorial Group members: Brian Griffin, Jane Faulkner, Louise Cassidy and John Townend.*

## In the next 12 months, we'll be:



Working on new initiatives in our action plan.



Working with a broad range of tenants in different ways to increase involvement.



Working with you to develop new ways to capture the tenant voice in our neighbourhoods.



Developing a strategy that puts you at the heart of communication.

## How we measure our performance

**68%**

✓ Benchmark average 59%



**SATISFACTION** that the landlord listens to tenants' views and acts upon them.

## Get involved



Scan this QR code to get involved and have **your voice heard** and to read our Scrutiny Panel Damp and Mould report.

# Helping tenants into work

The **ACHIEVE** programme helps and supports tenants who are unemployed or not currently in education or training.

The programme, funded by the European Social Fund, can help you to overcome barriers, access education or training, and give you the skills and confidence you need to move forward and gain employment. It's delivered by our Tenants First team, working in partnership with Barnsley Council's Employment and Skills team.

## Case Study: River



18-year-old River asked for support after completing a GCSE in Childcare Development. The team helped River with her CV, interview skills, and an interview outfit. This led to River finding her dream job as apprentice at a local nursery.

## Case Study: Mike



Mike had the right qualifications and had even bought all the tools he needed but was struggling to find a full-time job. The team helped Mike with his CV and he was given a work experience opportunity in Construction Services. We're delighted he's now employed by Berneslai Homes as an electrical apprentice.

## In the next 12 months, we'll be:



Recruiting a team of **Ambition Coaches** to support more tenants into work and employment.



Looking at how we can **continue the great work** after the ESF funding ends in December 2023.



Helping more inactive people in Barnsley move forward towards employment and training.

A Berneslai Homes tenant at one of our ACHIEVE training sessions.

## How we measure our performance

**16**

✓ **APPRENTICES**, with 4 securing permanent employment with us.

**31**

✓ **KICKSTART apprentices** with 11 securing full-time employment with us.\*

\*Since 2020 when scheme started to its completion in March 2023.



Scan the QR code if you need support with training or employment.

## During 2022/23 we ran successful pilot projects including:

- 9 successful 'Have a Go' sessions were funded by the Community Renewal Fund. 68 people completed 30 hours of training in beauty, DIY, gardening, crafts, and hair extensions!
- Multiplier project run through Adult Learning to support residents without a Level 2 qualification in maths to re-start their learning:
  - 35 self-employment workshops
  - 10 workshops on how to turn your hobbies and skills into a business

## Since starting in January 2021 up to March 2023 we've helped:

- **474** people registered with the programme
- **82** people gained skills through training
- **49** people to find employment
- **228** digital support sessions delivered



**European Union**  
European Social Fund

# Creating great places to live

**Neighbourhood officer Alyson is passionate about making sure tenants are happy and safe. She's recently helped John\* who had his gas meter capped off as he couldn't afford to pay his heating bills.**

John was reluctant to engage with us, but over many months Alyson gained his trust and was allowed into his home to do a full inspection. As he'd lived without gas heating, there were damp and mould issues and other repairs needed. Alyson made a referral to the relevant teams.

She also put John in touch with our Tenants First team and social prescribers. They helped him with his finances and helped build his confidence. John had a new gas meter fitted and he's now feeling much happier living in a safe and comfortable home.

\*Name and personal details have been changed.



## Neighbourhood Teams

Scan this QR code to find out more about the teams.

There are now four neighbourhood teams (formerly housing management teams) with more frontline officers to support you and your communities more effectively.

We also created a specialised anti-social behaviour (ASB) team to tackle anti-social behaviour across the borough, working in partnership with Barnsley Council Safer Neighbourhood Service and South Yorkshire Police.

We've introduced on a pilot basis an ASB App and Respect Line. This makes it easier for victims to supply evidence and make and receive calls to help support them through the process.



**Don't let damp and mould be a problem – please report it to us straight away.**



Neighbourhood Officer Alyson Francis.

## You said

**"There's anti-social behaviour where I live. It feels like no one is helping."**

## We did

We now have a specialised team to support with ASB. We've also reminded staff to provide regular communication with you on any reports you make of anti-social behaviour.

## In the next 12 months, we'll be:



Working with partners to help you sustain your tenancy and maintain a quality environment.



We're also reviewing tenant engagement opportunities within your community.



Continuing to fund our ASB report app and Respect line.



Surveying tenants to see how satisfied they are with the service, act on findings and feedback on any actions taken.

## How we measure our performance

**82%**

✓ Benchmark average 75%



**SATISFACTION** landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods.

**60%**

✓ Benchmark average 59%



**SATISFACTION** with landlord's approach to handling of anti-social behaviour.

**66%**

✓ Benchmark average 63%



**SATISFACTION** that communal areas are clean and well maintained.

# Help when you need it most

The rising cost of living has meant many of you have been feeling the squeeze.

Our Tenants First team have stepped up to help and support tenants who are struggling to pay bills and buy everyday essentials. They offer a listening ear and the right help and support at the right time.

The team look at individual circumstances to give targeted personal and financial support including:

- Barnsley Council's Household Support Grant
- UK Prosperity Fund (for those experiencing hygiene poverty)
- Hardship Fund - our own fund to help with things like gas and electricity bills and food shopping.

In the last 12 months they helped over **2,300** tenants and their households. They secured **£1.04 million** in additional income through grants, employment support, and benefit entitlement.

We've helped tenants who have issues around hoarding and are at risk of self-neglect. Thanks to help from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, we've provided skips, deep cleaning, and cleaning packs, to help in the long term.

## Case Study: Geoff

Geoff (\*) was referred to our service and our tenant support team looked at his finances and discovered he wasn't on the correct benefits. He'd been declined a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and we were able to help him with an appeal. Geoff's benefits were reassessed, he received a whopping £8k in backpay, and is now £400 a month better off!

## Case Study: Lisa

Lisa\* was approaching her 18th birthday when she was referred to us. Living in a residential children's home, she suffered with her mental health. Our housing coach helped Lisa to find and bid for the ideal flat, close to her friends at the children's home who were her main support. We helped her to set up benefits and utilities. She's now managing her tenancy and is happy, settled, and doing well.

John, one of our Tenant Support Officers, with Judy.



## Case Study: Judy

Judy\*, a main carer for her children turned to us for help following a family bereavement. She was suffering from mental health issues, financial hardship, and was unemployed. Her children weren't attending school. Our family intervention team helped Judy manage her tenancy and worked with her to make improvements. These included: parenting techniques, family time, emotional and bereavement support, and social activities (including funding a gym membership). Judy and her children are all doing well and have improved their physical and mental health. They've maintained a successful tenancy and the children are back in school. Judy's also received help from our ACHIEVE programme to support her into employment and training.



If you're struggling with the cost of living, scan this QR code to contact the team, or call **01226 787878** for help today.

\*Name and personal details have been changed.

In the next 12 months, we'll be:



Making sure tenants we've supported have **all the skills they need** to sustain their tenancies.



Recruiting a **cost of living champion** and administrator to respond more quickly and effectively to tenants in crisis.



Developing the **housing coach** model to support tenants with hoarding issues.

How we measure our performance

**1,492**

✓ Financial **SUPPORT** referrals accepted.

**£783,389**

✓ **BENEFITS** gain value.

**£156,638**

✓ **FUNDING** and grants value.

# Valuing your views

**Every complaint is important to us. It's an opportunity for us to listen to you, learn, and put things right.**

Improvements have been made to how we handle complaints. We've reviewed policies, trained staff, and raised awareness that 'It's Ok to complain', complying with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, and we've involved tenants in our annual assessment.

With a view to being awarded a Complaint Handling accreditation, we invited Housemark to independently assess us to look at our approach to complaints. They'll give an in-depth assessment and challenge of our current performance and practices.

We're better understanding our tenants by gathering their needs, views, and preferences. One of the ways we've done this is by producing journey maps to help us understand their lived experiences. It brings their stories to life and provides real insight into the difficulties they may face. This has been really useful and helped us identify 37 improvements we can make to our services, some are included in this report.

Want to see more about this?



Scan this QR code to see the annual assessment results.

**You said**

**"I've been waiting 13 days for my new boiler to be fitted, that's 13 cold days."**

**We did**

To prevent delays with boilers being installed, our repairs partners now provisionally book installation dates for 24 to 48 hours after the asbestos report is due back.

**In the next 12 months, we'll be:**



Focus on **resolving complaints fully at stage one**, reducing the number escalating to stage two.



Improving **response times** to complaints.



Acting on and **learning from feedback** more quickly.

How we measure our performance

**64%**



**SATISFACTION** with the landlord's approach to handling of complaints.



**Benchmark** average **62%**

*Our Customer Services officers work hard to answer your calls.*

# Engaging with tenants



Customer Engagement officers Leon Sidebottom and Gill Totty with tenant Gez.

## Our Customer Engagement team work with tenants to make sure 'every voice matters'.

They engage with tenants from across the borough and listen and respond to their voice. This is really important so we can deliver and develop high quality, accessible and fair services.

The team work with our Tenants and Residents Associations (TARAs) who make a real difference delivering local projects and connecting communities. They've had a busy year holding coffee mornings to combat isolation, bingo sessions to improve mental health, organising street parties for the Coronation and delivering winter warmer packs.

The team delivered a successful Digital Inclusion Project in partnership with the Community Renewal Fund. Altogether, 43 tenants took part and we installed 18 free 12-month contract internet connections.

All participants received a free chrome book, helping them to improve or learn digital skills for the first time.

We really value your input, no matter how much time you can give, there are plenty of ways to get involved in your neighbourhood and community. If you would like to get involved, then we'd love to hear from you. Please drop us an email at: [communityengagement@berneslaihomes.co.uk](mailto:communityengagement@berneslaihomes.co.uk)



**"It took me beyond the basics and taught me how to use websites and learn about internet security."**

*Mrs S from Churchfields.*

## A thank you

This year, we're celebrating our 21st birthday and we want to thank you for being on this journey with us. We're giving 10 tenants a £25 shopping voucher.

1. What percentage of tenants are satisfied with our service?
  - a. 70%
  - b. 80%
  - c. 84%
2. What is the memory aid in our campaign about damp and mould?
  - a. STAR = spot the signs, try our tips, act fast, report it
  - b. MOON = move furniture, open windows, open doors, no condensation
  - c. SUN = spot some mould, check underneath the bed, report it
3. In the last financial year, we've helped with grants, employment support, and benefits entitlement worth how much?
  - a. £500K
  - b. £750K
  - c. £1.04M
4. 'Retrofit works' include which of the following:
  - a. Insulation, new windows and doors, LEDs, and solar panels
  - b. extensions
  - c. kitchens and bathrooms

To be in with a chance of winning, simply answer the following questions and email your answers to [communityengagement@berneslaihomes.co.uk](mailto:communityengagement@berneslaihomes.co.uk) before 5pm on Monday 2 October.

## Contact us

For all enquiries and to report urgent or emergency repairs please phone us on:

**01226 787878**

To report non-urgent repairs, please download our App:



Android



iPhone

## Connect with us for help and advice



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



Facebook



Twitter



Instagram



YouTube

## Be sure we have your contact details...



Scan this QR code with your smartphone to create your **Housing Online** account, or update your information if you already have one.

# Housing

## Ombudsman Service

The Housing Ombudsman encourage and assist landlords and tenants to resolve a dispute at the earliest opportunity. You can contact them to talk about your concerns. They may be able to help you before or during the complaint process.

You can also complain to the Housing Ombudsman once you've gone through both stages of our complaints procedure and are still dissatisfied. During 2022/23 we received 12 enquiries from the Housing Ombudsman and no complaints or determinations.

- **Phone:** 0300 111 3000
- **Email:** [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
- **Post:** Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ.



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

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