



# Doing The Right Thing

Social and Environmental Accounts



# Housing 21 at a glance

Housing 21 is a leading, not for profit provider of Retirement Housing and Extra Care for older people of modest means

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™**  
We invest in people Gold

We have three guiding principles

## 21 Better Experience

**21** Provide a modern, forward thinking 21<sup>st</sup> century service, updating and modernising existing housing, developing new and innovative property designs and service models for future.

**Better** Strive for continuous improvement and innovation, challenge ourselves to do better and achieve greater value for money and never become complacent.

**Experience** Provide a consistently good service and great customer experience, empower residents to make choices and devolve decision making to local staff.

Own and/or manage  
**over 20,000**  
**Retirement Housing**  
and **Extra Care**  
**properties**

The largest provider of  
**Extra Care** and leading  
provider of **affordable**  
**Retirement Housing**  
in England

**Limited exposure**  
**to welfare reform**  
as a result of resident  
demographics



A leading provider of **Extra Care** and



**Retirement Housing** for older people of modest means



Over **94%** of care services rated **'Good'** by CQC with six services rated **'Outstanding'**

\*as of 31 March 2020



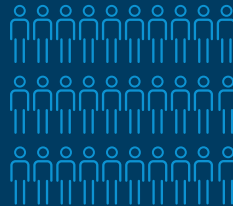
**334** Retirement Living schemes – **over 14,000 properties**



Over **42,000 hours** of care delivered to **over 5,000 service users** each week in Extra Care



Working with **over 240** local authorities nationwide



**3,200** (FTE) staff employed in **Retirement Living, Extra Care** and our corporate services



A leading **dementia-friendly organisation**



Charitable **not for profit**



Over **55 years'** experience



**Experts** in the provision of **housing for older people**



**Stephen Hughes,**  
Chairman



**Bruce Moore,**  
Chief Executive

# Chair and CE Introduction

‘Doing the Right Thing’ is a theme and principle that drives the decisions and actions of Housing 21. It emphasises the importance of being true to our purpose of providing more and better Retirement Housing and Extra Care for older people of modest means and the value of maintaining a strong and positive culture. The message and philosophy of ‘Doing the Right Thing’ was emphasised in staff and resident events and conferences throughout 2019/20 and underpins our devolved operating model.

Our ‘Doing the Right Thing’ approach enabled us to respond quickly, effectively and responsibly to protect residents and maintain vital services when faced with the Covid-19 pandemic. Our frontline staff showed particularly heroic dedication - going above and beyond the call of duty to maintain safe services and care for those in the greatest need and at most risk. While we already placed emphasis on valuing and recognising our Care Workers by offering guaranteed hour contracts and paying at least 10% in excess of the National Living Wage, we further showed our appreciation by providing free meals during shifts and improved their occupational sick pay protection, as well as ensuring we provided them with sufficient and suitable Personal Protective Equipment. Our staff, in all roles, have been simply brilliant in their willingness to adapt and respond positively and flexibly and for continuing to do the right thing.

We seek to do the right thing for our residents, employees, communities and the environment:



## For residents

We operate across England, in over 500 locations, providing over 20,000 homes that enable older people to live well and access the support or care they require without sacrificing their independence.



## For employees

We employ over 3,500 people and strive to be a good and fair employer that invests in our people, supports their development, and champions employee wellbeing and work/life balance.



## For communities

In collaboration with our residents and employees, we seek to make a positive contribution to local communities and good causes. We are committed to investing in new developments and improving existing services, working in partnership with local authorities and using local and regional contractors whenever we can.



## For the environment

We are conscious of our impact on the environment and have therefore set ourselves challenging targets to be more sustainable in the use of energy and the carbon impact of our buildings and ways of working, as well as ensuring that our services are also more climate resilient.

This ‘Doing the Right Thing Report’ is a step towards demonstrating how Housing 21 works and seeks to have a positive impact, whilst also being willing to be questioned and held to account for our policies, practices and performance, across these four aspects of our work. We intend to build on these strong foundations in order to continue to promote and develop our commitment to ‘Doing the Right Thing’.

# Doing The Right Thing

We have chosen to focus on ‘Doing The Right Thing’ across four areas which we explore in more detail throughout this report:

## Supporting our residents to live well and independently

p.07-15



We operate across England, in over 500 locations, providing over 20,000 homes that enable older people to live well. We want to share and celebrate our successes in achieving that.

We are working towards achieving 95% resident satisfaction, currently 94% in Retirement Living and 92% in Extra Care.

## Investing in our staff and being an employer of choice

p.16-21



We employ over 3,500 people (3,200 FTE) and strive to be a good and fair employer. We want to share how we invest in our people and support their development as well as their wellbeing.

We empower our people. We are happy to talk flexible working. We invest in employee development. We celebrate diversity.

## Investing in communities and the economy

p.22-27



The decisions we make impact on local communities. We make positive decisions which have a positive contribution to local communities and good causes.

We encourage intergenerational activities. We collaborate with other charities and not for profit organisations. We are proud to be developing our first co-housing scheme.

## Making positive choices for the environment

p.28-29



We are conscious of the impact we have on the environment so we have set ourselves challenging targets across our services to be more sustainable and strive to go above and beyond legal requirements and government targets.

We will not be installing any new fossil fuel systems in new developments after 31 December 2022. Every scheme will have a climate change resilience survey and subsequent action plan to promote longer term environmental sustainability.

This is our first ‘Doing The Right Thing’ report, one of many Housing 21 publications available on our website, [www.Housing21.org.uk](http://www.Housing21.org.uk), which showcase our varied work across the breadth of England.



# Supporting our residents to live well and independently

## Our residents are at the heart of everything we do.

We are committed to giving residents the power to determine how they want their Retirement Living or Extra Care scheme to be run and to do that we introduced a process of local choice and consensus. Our frontline staff are trained on running inclusive and welcoming events which draw out opinion and agree on options and actions meaning residents can genuinely influence life at their scheme. We actively engage, involve and support residents in all aspects of our service, respond to their feedback and consider how our services need to adapt and develop to meet their changing needs and expectations.

We will now showcase how we do this through information on the following areas:

- [Engaging with our residents, to give them an active voice](#)
- [Listening to compliments and complaints](#)
- [Being dementia-friendly](#)
- [Providing support for residents to maintain their tenancies](#)
- [Becoming digitally inclusive](#)

### **We give our residents an active voice**

We actively listen to our residents to understand how well we are doing and in which areas we could do more. The ways in which we engage with residents are rich and varied, informal and more formal, and always tailored to the local situation and with a positive can do attitude.

Consultation with residents is crucial to ensure that we continue to provide high quality services informed by our residents. Consultation and communication is regular and ongoing. One of the main ways our residents can be heard and have genuine influence is through their Court Service Agreement. This is an agreement decided by using choice and consensus to determine and agree how residents want their scheme to be run.

This can include agreement on car parking, pets and use of communal lounges and gardens. Consultations also take place by corporate teams to explain any changes for residents such as rent or service charges. Communications also extend to information displayed in courts and a bespoke court newsletter containing both local and organisation wide news.

Where residents want to meet more formally we will assist them with setting up their own residents groups. An amazing example of this is the 'Better Together' events run across Retirement Living in the North East. This is an event run by residents for residents and has been attended by senior staff and our resident Board Member. The agenda is set by residents so discussions are relevant and they have even held their own awards ceremony to celebrate great neighbours and community volunteers.

The vast majority of our schemes have a dedicated Court Manager to provide day to day support for residents. They organise everything from signing up new residents to repairs and liaising with contractors as well as being there for any information residents may need about their accommodation. Engaging with our residents is part of everyone's role at Housing 21 and these locally based staff also arrange regular activities which are not just socially enjoyable but have also given information and gathered views on issues such as direct debits and welfare benefits, healthy eating and keeping fit and learning new skills such as artwork and table tennis.

Residents really value the Court Manager service and the support they provide.

91% of Retirement Housing residents and 88% of Extra Care residents are satisfied with the overall service provided by their Court Manager.

### **Organised resident events**

Residents have the chance to meet with their Housing Managers at least once every eight weeks to enable them to raise issues at the local level. This results in most concerns being addressed quickly and efficiently at these Housing Manager surgeries.



“What a thoroughly enjoyable and informative day – huge credit to all of the staff involved”

The annual resident events are open to all residents. It is a chance for residents to ask questions and voice concerns to the Executive Team and Board Members and hear about the latest news and developments in Housing 21. They also give residents the chance to tell us what additional services they would like to see, and where we should concentrate in the future. All issues raised are addressed at a local level. They have included the need to improve social activities at schemes, local building issues and requests from those services where we are the landlord only for us to also provide the care.

Extra Care events were held in 135 schemes, attended by 1,500 residents.

“Five star event.”

Retirement Housing events were held in eight accessible venues, attended by 610 residents.

“Fantastic day – really enjoyed it.”

The events last year were a mix of information, interaction and a lot of fun and were very well received.

“All of my worries were dealt with.”

### Surveys

Another way we listen is through surveying our residents. We have a target for 95% of all of our residents to be satisfied.



**Currently within Extra Care the satisfaction rate is 92%, and in Retirement Housing it is 94%**

The table below shows the positive movement in satisfaction levels across different service offers and tenures since 2016.

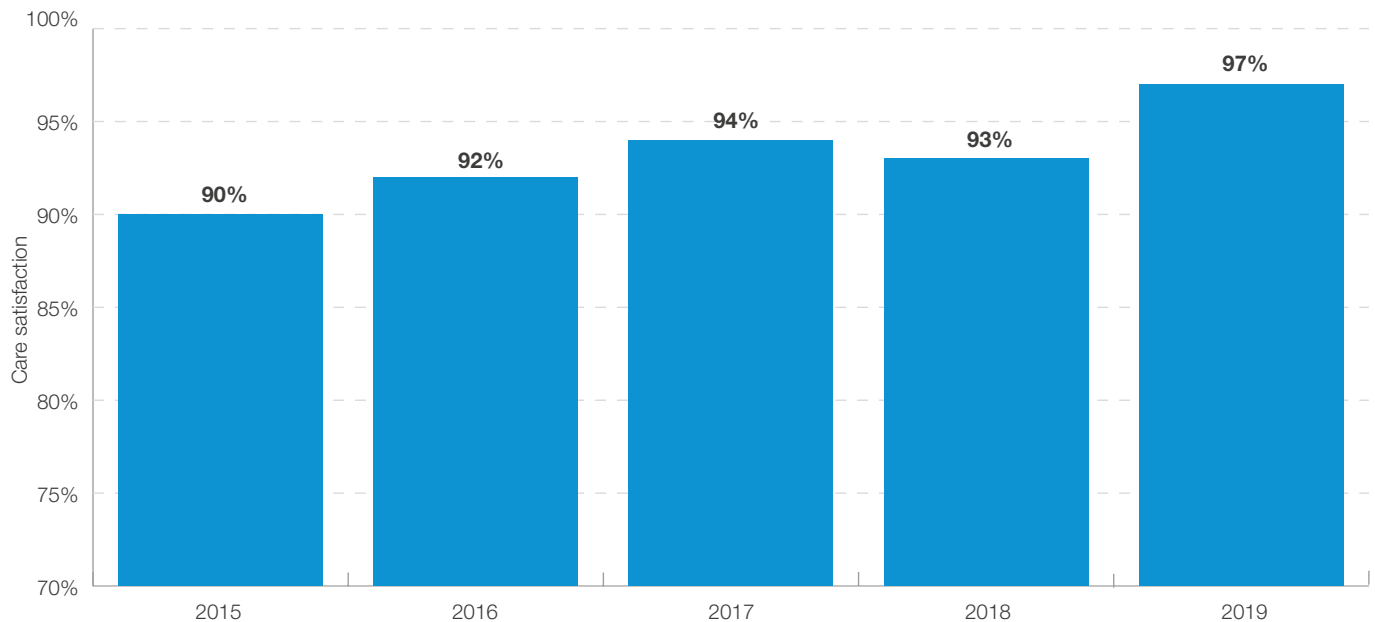
	<b>Retirement Housing</b>			<b>Extra Care</b>			
	Retirement Rented National	Leasehold	Oldham PFI	Walsall PPP & Sandwell	Kent PFI	Shared Ownership National	Extra Care Rented National
<b>2019</b>	94%*	89%*	90%	91%	95%	87%*	92%*
<b>2018</b>	90%	-	-	93%	94%	73%	85%
<b>2017</b>	-	83%	-	-	92%	-	-
<b>2016</b>	87%	-	90%	88%	93%	70%	86%
<b>2015</b>	-	78%	-	-	96%	-	-



## We are proud of the quality of our care

We are also keen to listen to our residents who receive care from us to ensure that the service which we are providing is what they actually want. We ask about the quality of our care and what is important to them. We are really proud that currently 97% of our residents who receive care from us are satisfied.

### Care customers overall satisfaction, 2015 – 2019



Our excellent Care Workers are also doing well in providing those elements of the care packages which our residents value.

- 98% of residents agree that Care Workers treat them with dignity, respect and listen to what they say
- 97% of residents say Care Workers help them with things they want them to
- 97% of residents say Care Workers support their independence

“All my care staff are wonderful and we can laugh together as well as get on with the job in hand and they will always listen if you need to talk.”

“I am happy with everything that happens here. So very helpful.”

However high our resident satisfaction we will never become complacent and we are open to gaining honest feedback.

## We like hearing compliments and learning through complaints

We are a responsive organisation and actively encourage feedback from residents.

Throughout last year we received nearly 800 compliments and only 59 formal complaints.

If things do not go as well as they should we see complaints as a way to learn and to do better. We try to resolve issues at schemes locally, but that is not always possible. So, we have a one-stage complaints process with an option for a Director’s Review.

This approach enables a complainant to have their complaint reviewed by a Director if they are not satisfied with the initial outcome. A final response by the relevant Director is provided within 15 working days stating whether it is upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. If the complainant is still unhappy at this stage they can then make a complaint to the relevant Ombudsman. For some housing related complaints residents can also ask for their complaint to be reviewed by our Residents’ Complaints Panel. In that case a panel of our residents will look at the complaint and can make any recommendations back to us which they feel may help or resolve an issue.

Any complaints are carefully monitored so we learn from them and develop good practices for the future.

From the 59 formal complaints last year, 31 were upheld. These will always result in an action, be it a change of policy, further training for staff or compensation.

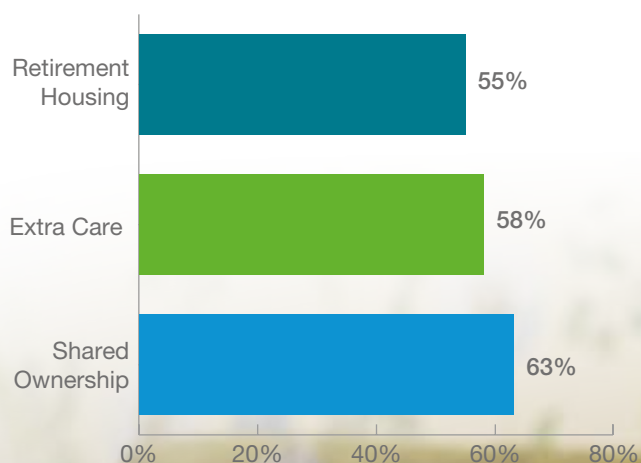
We are also resolving complaints in a timely manner. The average acknowledgment response time was 1.55 working days against a target of two days and the average time taken to respond to complaints was 10.1 average working days against the target of 15.

### Our social activities

Each resident decides to what extent they want to be involved with, or organise, different events and activities at their scheme. Organised social activities are not for everyone and residents are obviously free to choose whether, and how, they get involved.

There are on average at least 1,600 activities per week across our schemes and the extent to which people engage with them varies across the services as well as from scheme to scheme.

#### % taken part in social activities



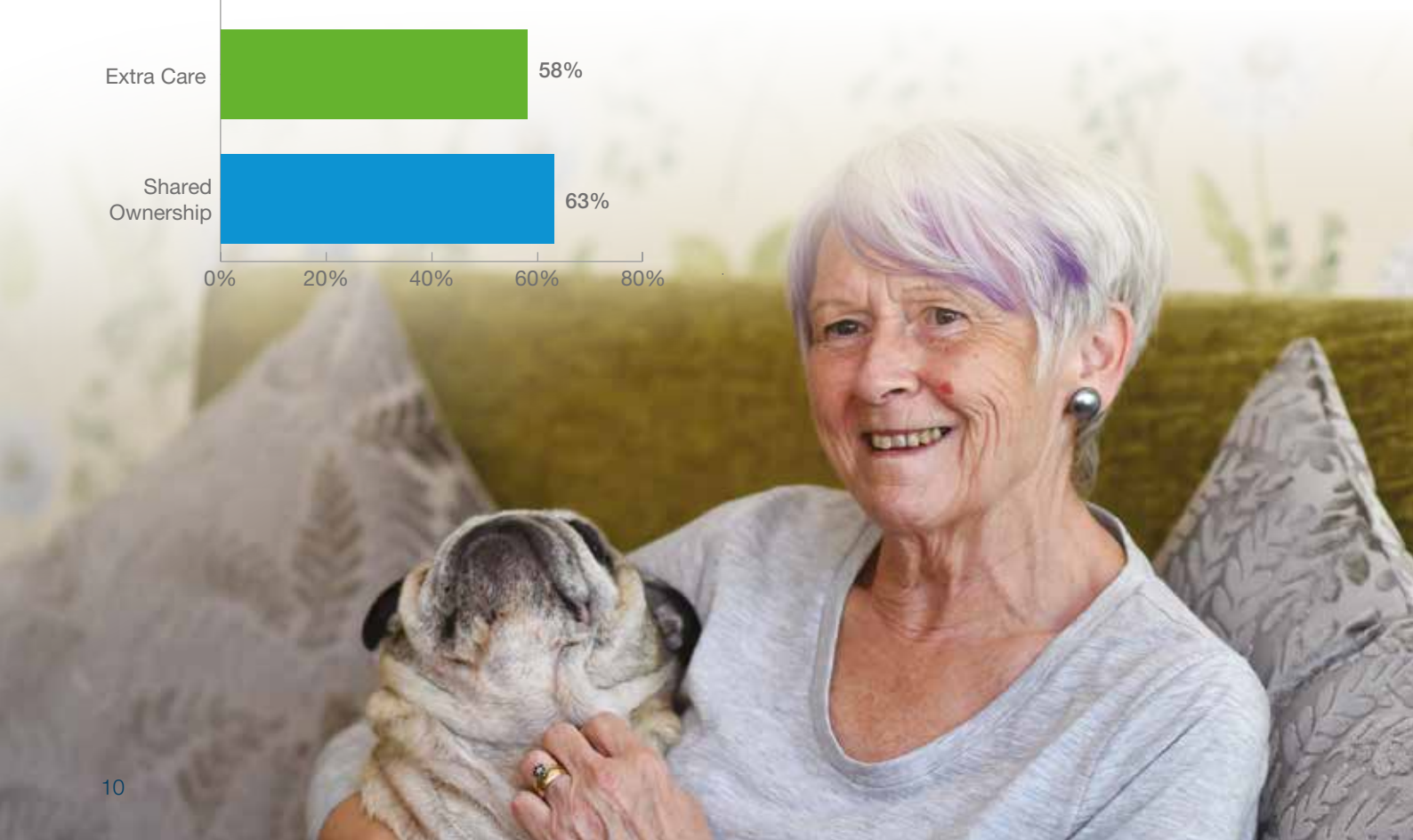
There are so many examples of events and activities, too many to list in any detail here! Our annual Regional Reports have some fantastic examples of the social life at some schemes.

- Competitions include Britain In Bloom, It's your Neighbourhood, scarecrow competitions and those related to celebrations.
- Clubs at schemes including breakfast and lunch clubs, craft and music clubs, books and film clubs. Community groups also use the schemes for clubs such as local history for example.
- Exercise and health focused events: Tai chi, yoga, music therapy, pet therapy and falls prevention.
- Many schemes also undertake activities which help organisations or groups of people such as making miscarriage baby coffins, NHS scrubs and dementia twiddle muffs.

### We are pet-friendly

We know that pets have a positive impact on our residents' wellbeing and can provide a real sense of comfort and purpose, so we are a pet-friendly organisation and actively welcome pets to join their owners in their new home.

"I feel safe and secure. I was able to bring my dog. Company if I want it."





## We are dementia-friendly

We are committed to supporting our residents who are either living with, or are affected by, dementia.

There are approximately 24% of residents in Extra Care and 11% in Retirement Housing with either a diagnosis or suspected dementia.

Good quality, appropriate housing can help people live as well as they can with dementia and so consideration of this and other conditions is embedded throughout our housing and care services. This includes:

- **Design of properties**

All of our new buildings incorporate dementia-friendly design and our retrofits and refurbishments contain as many dementia-friendly design elements as they can.

- **Services**

- Training of staff
- Advanced training for Dementia Advocates to support other members of staff

- **Commitment to dementia related initiatives**

- All staff are Dementia Friends
- Contractors are required to undertake a Dementia Friends session before working on our properties
- Potential and current suppliers are required to sign up to the Dementia Friends initiative



To influence the wider housing sector we chair the national Housing and Dementia Working Group and are core members of the Housing and Dementia Research Consortium.

We co-authored the Dementia-friendly Housing Guide with Alzheimer's Society which has recently been updated and relaunched. This guide is aimed at the whole of the housing sector, giving information and resources on how to work towards becoming dementia-friendly.

The 'Housing – Rising to the Dementia Challenge' events were attended by 120 housing professionals. Attendees received information which would enable them to make changes, however small, in their housing services to help people affected by dementia.

The Dementia Friends initiative is a great way to provide a basic understanding of dementia and how it affects people and we remain committed to all staff becoming Dementia Friends. We also strongly encourage residents to take part in a session too. During the last financial year 193 Dementia Friends were made in Extra Care and 768 in Retirement Housing. This means in total we have helped 5,070 residents become Dementia Friends.

## How we are supporting residents to maintain their tenancies

With our purpose being to provide housing, care and support for older people of modest means we estimate around 75% of our residents claim welfare benefits. We support residents to prevent them falling into arrears. We do not ask for a deposit but usually residents are able to pay us a month's rent in advance. If they are unable to provide this we ask for one week in advance and agree a payment plan with them. We never refuse a tenancy if a resident is not in a position to pay a week in advance.

Court Managers assist residents in maximising their benefit income and identify affordable payment plans.

Ultimately, our Court Managers are dedicated to their schemes and have the most regular contact with residents, and our new housing system, PEBBLEs, allows them to put in place the best support for individuals.

## Our safeguarding focuses on prevention

Keeping residents safe and secure is at the heart of what we do.

Our emphasis is on Making Safeguarding Personal, taking a 'nothing about me, without me' approach. A person centred and empowering framework is adopted where we document the resident's views, wishes and outcome in relation to any concerns.

We have provided clear information for residents and updated training for staff. We are providing the tools and knowledge to our staff to further build their confidence to manage safeguarding concerns whilst empowering residents.

## Becoming digitally included

We are at the forefront of the housing sector in the work we are doing to fully embrace the digital agenda. Across the organisation, we have worked hard over the last few years in partnership with Appello, our digital calls system partner, to bring the benefits of digital connectivity to our residents and staff. We have invested heavily in time and resource so that we can get staff and residents digitally connected and engaged.

During the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, the importance of this technology to stay in touch and to support residents has been evident. Our PEBBLEs system has allowed Court Managers to maintain services and contact with residents whilst working safely from home, and the digital call systems have given residents additional assurance and the means to stay in contact with the Court Manager and their neighbours via video calling.

**180 (38%)** of our schemes, so 5,091 apartments have been upgraded to a **full digital service.**

**We provide WiFi for residents and visitors in 150 of our schemes. This is mainly within the communal areas and in Extra Care.**

**We spend approximately £25,000 per month on the rental of WiFi lines.**



We are continuing to develop the functionality and digital connections for our residents through:

- **WiFi**

Five schemes have the capability to use the *Appello Living Hub* in each flat as a WiFi router. This will be rolled out across the organisation. All new installations will have WiFi capacity.

- **The Appello app which mirrors the Living Hub**

This allows a mobile tablet to be linked to a Living Hub giving Court Managers the ability to audio call every resident in their flat from the Court Manager's home, even if the resident does not have a telephone. We are currently testing a video call version of this.

- **Adaptive technology**

We have been working with Appello to understand the devices that they can supply, and the capability of those devices such as voice commands, for example: "Alexa close the blinds", "Alexa turn on the light". With our new understanding of the technical dependencies and costs from a pilot, we are completing a catalogue for use by Court Managers and residents. Some of these offerings will be free to access (as a Housing 21 funded adaptation) and others will be the residents' choice to pay for.

We continue to work with Appello to identify more innovative opportunities using this digital system.

There is a budget of  
**£420k** for upgrading the  
 infrastructure and **£100k p.a.**  
 in line rental.

"For me, it's really helpful when doing my regular calls with residents as I can see them over the video system and can tell if they are looking unwell, or pick up other signs about their wellbeing."

Court Manager

## Residents want to spend time in our schemes

We want to provide accommodation which our residents are pleased to call their home and which has kerb appeal in the local community.

Since 2015 we have invested significantly in our stock to meet our enhanced property standards, ensuring we maintain our properties in an excellent condition which residents value, while meeting all regulatory and legal building safety requirements.

We have developed comprehensive Scheme Business Plans to assist in the development of individual scheme strategies which will determine their longer term investment requirement.

### **Our property standards mean that:**

- Kitchens and bathrooms are no more than 20 years old
- Every scheme has a design-led makeover at least every seven years

We spent £12 million to achieve these in the last financial year.

### **In the last financial year we spent:**

- £5.3 million on design-led makeovers
- £2.5 million on remodelling works

### **We are also placing greater attention on some of the external elements of our schemes. These include:**

- External landscaping (hard and soft)
- Accessibility
- Car parking provision
- Pathways and fencing

This provides attractive kerb appeal, particularly for prospective new residents. Attractive, usable areas offer opportunities for residents to enjoy the outdoors as well as engage in gardening activities, both of which can be very beneficial to wellbeing.

When designing outside spaces they will be inclusive and suitable for residents with mobility problems, dementia or visual impairments.

All work on our courts includes consultation with the residents living there to give them a say as to how their scheme looks.





In the last financial year we spent:



**£5.3 million** on design-led makeovers



**£2.5 million** on remodelling works

# Investing in our staff and being an employer of choice

Our 10 'people promises' were created based on the feedback from staff survey results and our Investors In People report which detailed what employees value most about working for Housing 21. We are committed to listening to our employees and value their feedback.

## People promises



We **make a difference to our residents**



We **empower our people**



We **are happy to talk flexible working**



We **are committed to investing in your development**



We **value individual opinions and ideas**



We **encourage you to be the best you can be**



We **are inclusive and celebrate diversity**



We **champion employee wellbeing and work/life balance**



We **are a charitable and not for profit organisation**



We **care**



### We make a difference to our residents

Our purpose is to provide good quality housing and care for older people of modest means. We are completely driven by this, so it is important that we attract and retain people who really do want to make a difference to the people and communities we provide our services to.

We know that we change people's lives by enabling them to live independently for as long as they can and it is our staff who make this happen. When someone chooses to make their home in a Housing 21 property they will feel the benefits of having a team of people, some seen but many unseen, who are completely dedicated to ensuring they can live independently for longer. We are passionate about people and believe that happy employees will ensure we have happy residents, so from designing and maintaining the fabric of the building to providing support for everyday tasks, we make sure we invest in our people to deliver remarkable services.

### We empower our people

94% of our staff say that they are encouraged to use their initiative in their role. We place our people at the heart of the decision making process, including them through staff representative groups, surveys and local forums. It is important to us that our people can see how they can contribute to, and shape, our organisation.

We recently changed the way we do business as a direct result of challenge from our staff - we now operate a devolved model of working with our local managers being in charge of how their scheme is run. This means that one of the roles that is most valued by our residents, the Court Manager, is empowered to deliver a localised service which reflects the way their scheme and surrounding community works.

At Housing 21 we believe that 'everyone is a leader' and we actively encourage our people to use their initiative and let us know how we can be better than good. We have a continuous FAB ideas programme, where staff can send through their ideas about any aspect of work.

One really successful FAB idea was for welcome boxes to be given to all new residents containing essential moving in items.

**Last year 321 boxes were issued to new residents, totalling £4,782.**



Within our staff development programmes, Leading to Excellence and Inspiring Excellence, individuals scope, implement and evaluate projects that have the potential to bring about real and sustainable change for the organisation.

Active engagement of staff is one way to make people feel empowered. We share our ambition and objectives via staff conferences. Last year, for the first time, we took the content of those conferences to a very local level to engage with our Care Workers in a way which is meaningful to them.

### We are happy to talk flexible working

We recognise that people are at the heart of what we do and we actively promote and support flexible working. We want our staff to feel valued and happy working for us and to provide them with opportunities to contribute meaningfully in all aspects of their life, in their family, community and personally. We therefore firmly believe in flexible working and all of our line managers are asked to say 'yes' to any request and explore all options with employees to make it work.

We have recently introduced term time only working and are improving our technology offer to enable more people to have the choice to work from home if they are able to.

We see flexible working as giving our employees a say over when, where or how they do their job. This flexibility can contribute to a better work life balance, improve wellbeing and job satisfaction.

Being so flexible also makes business sense as it helps us to attract and retain great people and we want the best for our residents.

### We are committed to investing in your development

Not only do we create a great place for our people to work, we also make sure that they have the opportunity to develop their skills and career with dedicated role specific learning pathways, a Leadership Development Pathway and Apprenticeship opportunities. Working for Housing 21 helps individuals realise their career ambitions. We have a dedicated learning design and delivery team who work closely with experts from the organisation to align development with our strategic goals and operational demands and provide a chance for people to develop their interests beyond their area of responsibility if they wish.



**86%** of staff say that they feel supported in their personal development



Our Learning Management System, FRED, enables our people to take control of their development - learning is available when they need it via e-learning packages and we are currently developing a suite of 'Knowledge Nuggets' which will contain key business insights and guidance available for staff to access just when they need them.

We work hard to ensure all of our development opportunities are current and up to date and our key products are endorsed by Skills for Care, the Chartered Institute of Housing and the Institute of Leadership and Management.

“This course was very enjoyable and very valuable for my development as a manager. I recommend it to anyone.”

Inspiring Excellence delegate

“I have thoroughly enjoyed the Inspiring Excellence programme, it has not only helped me to look at my own style of management but to also help me see how my team might see me. Some of the exercises I feel will be useful to help develop my care team so that they can get an idea of how they may come across to others. Self-awareness and self-reflection is a very important aspect of working in the care sector, whatever your role, and I feel that what I have learnt from taking part in this program will not only help me but help us all on court.”

Inspiring Excellence delegate

- 22,793 e-learning sessions were accessed last year
- 130 members of staff are currently undertaking our Leadership Development Programme
- 228 employees are working toward an Apprenticeship from Level 2 to an MBA
- We have delivered 846 training sessions in the last 12 months

We see beyond CVs and value potential. At Housing 21 we emphasise the importance of having the right values – skills can be learned, but sharing our values and being committed to our purpose is the most important thing.

“If you had told me 10 years ago that I would have a career I would have laughed at you, as I had been a stay at home parent for 13 years. I am so proud of everything I have achieved.”

Julie Izzard, Court Manager.  
(Joined Housing 21 in 2012 as a Cleaner).

## We value individual opinions and ideas

We truly value the opinions of our people, they are the key to helping us move forward and fulfil our purpose. We listen to our people and use their feedback to inform our plans for the future and we also recognise the great things that they do.

We have put in place a wide range of 'staff voice' mechanisms to capture feedback from our people and encourage participation such as staff conferences, Workplace by Facebook, our Intranet, staff surveys, team meetings and representative groups.

- We have five employee representative groups
- 90% of our staff are satisfied working for Housing 21
- We have a FAB Ideas Initiative to encourage innovation

The Care Workers' forum is one of our employee representative groups. They have been great at influencing our work and improving our offer to them. They drove the redesign of their uniform, and requested water bottles and branded bags to carry their equipment in. They also managed to get parity with corporate staff in not having to pay for their own tea and coffee.

## We encourage you to be the best you can be

At Housing 21 we love to celebrate the great things our people do and hold annual events that enable our regional teams to get together, network and have fun. Last year 2,013 of our employees attended a regional event, engaging with our Executive Team and discussing our strategy.

Over the course of the events we presented awards to 53 exceptional people and teams for Outstanding Initiative and Creativity, Outstanding Team Work and Outstanding Customer Service. These people all had fantastic examples of where they had worked to the best of their ability to deliver a great service to our residents and each other.

We believe that the performance of our employees is key to providing good customer service and enabling our success, and our recognition schemes allow managers the freedom to recognise individuals and teams for doing a great job all year round.

We recognise that our leaders are the key to enabling our people to be the best they can be, that's why we offer a wide choice of ways to develop leadership skills including working with Henley Partnership, our in house designed and delivered Leading to Excellence and Inspiring Excellence programmes, and Diplomas in Leadership and Management. Housing 21 has also identified the behaviours they want in their leadership team and our 'Leadership Principles' are available to everyone to assess themselves against.

- Do the right thing – set an example and ensure your values underpin your actions.
- Show how people contribute – share the vision and inspire your team to succeed
- Act as a champion for change – look for innovation and challenge your team to continually improve
- Trust your team – Grow their independence and let them take actions with confidence
- Give time to your team – Get to know your team and celebrate their achievements.



We have a devolved working model and this means that we need great leaders to ensure that everyone throughout the organisation is empowered to be the best they can be.

Our Investors in People report 2018 praised the organisation for its people and leaders who “act in line with the organisation’s values and embedded into the culture of Housing 21 is a supportive, compassionate and encouraging approach to leadership.”



**84%** of staff state that their manager motivates them to achieve their best



**94%** of staff say that diversity is welcomed at Housing 21

“It’s as if all our managers have been on a course or given an injection to be approachable, caring and supportive!”

## We are inclusive and celebrate diversity

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group is working hard to initially raise awareness of the different equality strands to increase knowledge across the organisation. The next step is to analyse where we are on each on those strands and develop action plans.

Last year we took a ‘bite sized’ version of our staff events on the road to enable nearly 1,000 of our care staff to be directly included and creating an opportunity for the Senior Management Team based at Tricorn House, our Head Office in Birmingham, to build relationships with our resident facing teams.

Throughout August, September and October 2019, our leaders delivered of 109 bite sized sessions in 58 Extra Care schemes.



## We champion employee wellbeing and work / life balance

We want our people to feel valued and happy working for us and to provide them with opportunities to contribute meaningfully in all aspects of their life, in their family, community and personally.

We have a flexible working policy to give employees a say in how, when and where they do their work, and understand that they may have other commitments to consider.

Time away from work is important for wellbeing and to maintain a good work/life balance and so in addition to their contractual annual leave allowance, employees are able to purchase up to 10 extra days of holiday each year through a salary sacrifice arrangement.

Wellbeing is about so much more than time off, and our Employee Wellbeing group focuses on what we can do to support our staff to look after their wellbeing. The group introduced a Wellbeing Strategy and has subgroups to support the work of four key strands:

- New ways of working
- Mental health
- The menopause
- Financial wellbeing

Last year we introduced 33 Mental Health First Aiders across the organisation who advocate our belief that 'it's ok to not be ok' and provide first line advice and guidance.

Nearly 50% of our staff are female and aged over 50, so many will be menopausal or perimenopausal and may be suffering debilitating symptoms. To support them we have launched our menopause policy and provided training for managers to support them. This has helped to raise awareness and understanding of the challenges which some female employees face.

**"I am made up Housing 21 is looking into ways to support their staff going through the menopause, so forward thinking."**

- We promote a Cycle to Work scheme
- £285,000 was spent on medical and life assurance
- £6,900 was spent on employee wellbeing initiatives

## We are a charitable and not for profit organisation

Our staff really value working for an organisation which is led by a Board who want to 'do the right thing' rather than shareholders. They like the fact that all surplus monies are reinvested into existing or new stock to continue to provide much needed accommodation for older people of modest means.

We are able to add value to local communities not only financially, as detailed earlier, but also through being members of various Boards and Committees to share the knowledge and expertise of our staff. We also engage with charities and schools and offer the support which a larger organisation can give to them.

Giving back to local communities is important to us and that is why we also offer a volunteer leave initiative, enabling our staff to take up to two days paid leave a year to help out a cause that they feel passionately about. Lots of our corporate teams like to support our own services, with tasks like gardening and repairing fencing.

 **120** volunteer leave days were taken last year

## We care

Housing 21 recognises that our people are not just our employees, they are parents, partners, brothers, sisters and we want them to be able to enjoy every aspect of their life. We provide a comprehensive benefits package that includes access to Cash Health Plans and an Employee Assistance Programme all of which can be extended to include family members. We firmly believe in flexible working and all of our line managers are asked to say 'yes' to any request and explore all options with employees to make it work.

We achieved Investors in People Gold standard in 2018, but we are not complacent and know there is more to be done as we work towards achieving Platinum standard in 2021.

We are passionate about people and continually strive to make work better.

# Investing in communities and the economy

Housing 21's schemes are in a wide range of different settings and locations and we want them to be integrated into their local community. We house people who have connections with the local community and this is a condition of the nomination agreement with the relevant local authority for Extra Care housing.

Recommendations from our current residents to potential residents is a real compliment to our organisation and last year 38% of our new residents found out about us in this way.

By housing local people, our residents have existing connections with the community which they can strengthen by:

- Bringing the community into our courts
- Taking part in intergenerational activities
- Working with charities

As an organisation we also:

- Promote volunteering
- Provide housing which is appropriate for different communities

## Bringing the community into the scheme

The communal spaces in our schemes can be used by the local community, giving residents the opportunity to discuss local issues and influence local action.

Charities using our facilities include amongst others, Age UK, dementia related groups, the Women's Institute, the Cinnamon Trust, Macular Society, RSPCA, stroke support groups and the police and fire services. Some of which provide funds to the residents for activities.

There are also examples of residents going into the community.

Dymond House is a specialist dementia unit. Their residents attend a number of events in the community such as Volunteer Befriends parties and weekly tea dances. This is a great way to increase their social engagement in a dementia-friendly environment.

## Intergenerational activities bring many benefits

The benefits of connecting different generations and sections of society are countless, including reducing inaccurate stereotypes, learning new skills and broadening social circles.

The Regional Reports, available on our website, have a whole range of examples of intergenerational activities which you may find interesting.

One example is mother and toddler groups meeting in our schemes which, as can be seen by the quotes below, have significant positive impacts on the residents.

“Their company brightens the day up. It is so lovely to see young, vibrant lives.”

Extra Care resident

“The children have a bright outlook on life, it brings up the mood.”

Extra Care resident

“A baby yoga class is held in the main lounge and residents come down to watch and join in with the songs and nursery rhymes. We also bring a couple of our dementia dolls into the sessions for those who like to participate.”

Retirement Housing Court Manager

## Case studies of intergenerational activities

Knave's Court, an Extra Care scheme in the West Midlands, has several partnerships in their local community - primary and secondary schools, dance schools, cadets and a children's home. The Activities Co-ordinator says that the residents talk about the visits for days and that it "widens their world". These activities give the residents a different mindset and make them feel valued. The security and care offered by Extra Care can also sometimes result in feelings of loneliness and the loss of ownership over their own lives. Having the opportunity to teach the younger people allows them to become the expert again, subsequently improving their wellbeing and self-esteem.

Student tea and talk. Each month students from Loughborough University visit a scheme and socialise with the residents.

## We want to support charities

Fundraising is a passion of our residents and staff. As an organisation, we do not support just one charity. Each scheme chooses which charities – local or national, they would like to support and the way in which they would like to do this.

The following figures most likely underestimate the amount raised as we have not yet routinely collected this information.

Over £118,000 has been raised by residents to fund activities to take place at their own scheme.

At least a further £11,144 has been raised specifically for Alzheimer's Society.

Other charities, such as Macmillan Cancer Support, Air Ambulance, Dementia UK, Help for Heroes, Local Hospices, local food banks and the Royal British Legion have benefited from approximately £115,000 being raised.

Residents at Dovecote Meadow raised enough money to buy a minibus. They did this through Christmas and summer fairs and by holding raffles. The bus, which has recently been upgraded from a nine to a 14 seater allows them to go on day trips and helps residents go to appointments.

## Encouraging staff to volunteer

We give our staff two days each a year to volunteer either at our schemes or for causes they personally support. The activities are varied and have included gardening, fence painting, building a sensory garden and also supporting residents with visits to a temple, cinema and other attractions.



One team were looking at having a team building day away from the office. They chose to incorporate this with giving something back to the community by volunteering at Middleton Hall in the West Midlands where they undertook gardening and cleaning the outdoor area of the heritage site.

## We are passionate about providing appropriate housing for communities

We want to provide the housing which communities want and need. Our first co-housing project has identified two pieces of land in the Lozells and Alum Rock wards in Birmingham. Both wards have significant deprivation and large BAME communities.

Our co-housing project will provide housing to meet the needs of the local community as well as giving potential residents the opportunity to shape the design of the property and its communal spaces.

We are proactively engaging with the local community to co-design how the service will run. This involves working with residents rather than adopting a 'we know best' approach.

# Economic impact – supporting the local and national economy

Housing 21 invests a considerable amount of money in its staff and in maintaining properties, money which is spent in both the local and national economy.

We do this by:

- Employing staff throughout England
- Investing in our properties
- Employing local contractors to undertake repairs
- Building new schemes

## Providing employment

We provide local employment opportunities through our existing and new schemes, and employ over 3,500 staff across England.

Our spend on staff totals £70,256,000 per annum.

Our care staff do a vital job and make a huge difference to the lives of our residents, so in 2018 we started to pay our Care Workers 10% more than the National Living Wage. We also offered guaranteed hours to provide more stability and fairness. There is a sound business case in doing this to ensure that we consistently provide high quality care and ensure that staff turnover is lower. This has resulted in continuity of care for residents as well as decreased costs relating to staff turnover.

The increased wage for Care Workers has resulted in extra spend of £1,790,880. Our Care Worker turnover of 19.7% is significantly less than the adult social care average of 30%.

## Investing in our properties

We have been investing £27 million a year in our properties since 2015 to improve kerb appeal and other design aspects. These pictures, right, show how Ellis Gordon Court was transformed by developing a new main entrance, external landscaping, a remodelling of the flats and design-led communal redecorations.

The result is very satisfied residents who are happy and proud of their newly refurbished modern home. The investment has created a strong sense of community, which helped the scheme win Best Community Garden and Best Overall Garden awards in the Newhaven in Bloom competition.

Last year we spent £31,200,000 on our stock investment programme.

## Using local contractors

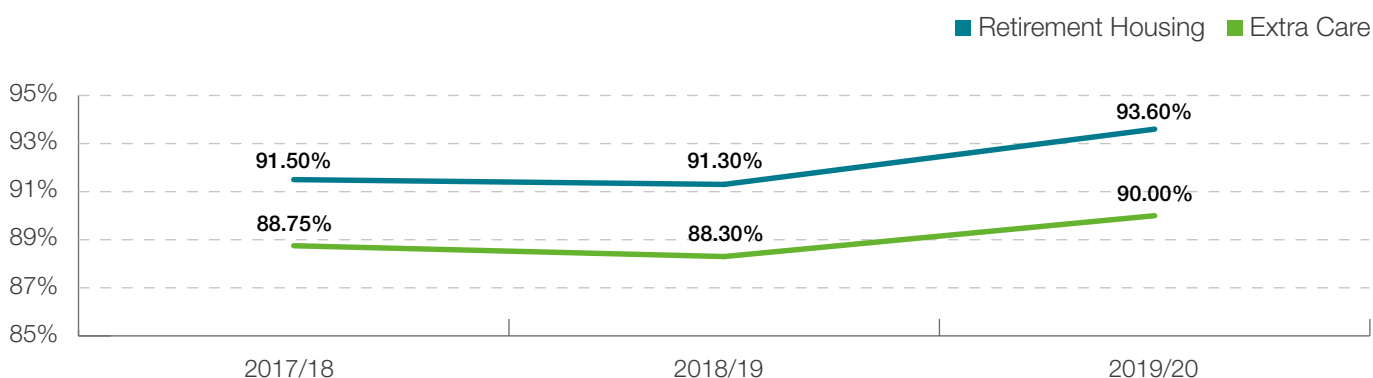
Any repairs which are needed in our properties are arranged locally, so this means that our spend of £11,198,000 went to local companies, helping local employment opportunities.

So, how happy are our residents with the repairs?

- 94% of our residents are happy with the overall quality of the repair
- 88% are happy with the repair being done right the first time

The graph below shows that there is a gradual increase in the level of satisfaction with repairs.

Resident satisfaction with the repairs service, 2017-2020





From this...



“Always very happy with repairs done and workers very polite and happy.”

To this...



## We are continuing to provide much needed housing...

We know that more quality contemporary accommodation and support for older people is needed and we are committed to playing our part. Housing 21 is committed to building 2,021 new units of accommodation by 2021 and 800 per year thereafter.

We've made a commitment to build in those areas with the greatest need, such as those with high levels of deprivation or with a high BAME population.



**We spent £67.33m on building new schemes last year**



**To staff these new schemes, our costs increased by £1.79m**



We know that more quality contemporary accommodation and support for older people is needed and we are committed to building 2,021 new units of accommodation by 2021 and 800 per year thereafter.



# Environmental Impact – taking care of the environment



Housing, or the residential sector, is responsible for about one-fifth of UK carbon emissions. If construction is included it is significantly higher. The Board have considered some environmental proposals and agreed that we should seek to go beyond the legal requirements, exceed those minimum standards and strive to achieve a position of ‘doing no harm’.

It is clear that environmental challenges are going to play a greater role in future strategic thinking and prioritisation for Housing 21 and we are truly committed to making positive changes for the environment. We believe that a targeted approach will make a greater impact than a little work on lots of areas.

We also believe that environmental impacts and issues will not be addressed if they are simply seen as an ‘add on’ or an ‘after thought’. We are serious about addressing this agenda and will challenge our assumptions and approach, ensuring that environmental considerations are embedded throughout the organisation.

We are focusing our efforts in those areas that will make the most difference, so the emphasis will be on the five key areas of:

- Carbon impact/energy consumption
- Climate change resilience
- Water usage
- Waste management and recycling
- Transport

We will also develop metrics to report on each of the above areas to assess the positive impact which we are making.





## Carbon impact/energy consumption

We are currently at the forefront of the housing sector in terms of energy consumption with 84% of our properties already being EPC C or above. Once this level has been achieved across all properties, we will maintain that level without recourse to fossil fuels. We will not be installing any new fossil fuel heating systems in new developments after 31 December 2022. This is a number of years ahead of the commitments of other providers to not install fossil fuel systems after 2025.

We fully expect average energy use per property to fall as further improvements are made to current stock and new developments achieve higher energy rating levels.

All electricity is only sourced from renewable sources.



## Waste management and recycling

By 31 December 2020, we will ascertain the position on waste produced at our schemes, disposal to landfill and recycling.

Once we have that picture in place we will cooperate with local authorities' recycling campaigns and remind residents about the importance of recycling at their scheme. Centrally procured contracts will be required to include consideration of sustainable waste disposal.



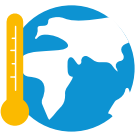
## Transport

Targets have been set to reduce travel costs in the 2020/21 budgets by at least 5% and reduce car travel by 10%, but these need to be linked to a review of car and travel policies and the organisation's new ways of working.

The impact of Covid-19 and the need to work from home demonstrated the potential for better use of video conferencing and less travel. We are in the process of reviewing office versus home based working to minimise non-essential travel.

We will also review our car and travel policies to ensure they are in line with our environmental stance.

We have a dedicated steering group to monitor and drive progress towards our environmental objectives and to challenge peers in their areas of responsibility. The steering group is sponsored by the Chief Executive and backed by the Board.



## Climate change resilience

Every one of our schemes will have been surveyed for climate change resilience and action plans will be produced for each scheme during 2021 to promote longer term environmental sustainability.

All of our new developments are going to be subject to a climate risk assessment and there will be an evaluation of options as well as alternative solutions to reduce carbon impact, water usage and waste.



## Water usage

We will set a baseline level of water usage and establish a means of monitoring water use by 31 December 2020.



# Our services

We have two distinct service offers:  
Retirement Living and **Extra Care Living.**

## Retirement Living

Retirement Living offers older people the opportunity to remain independent in their own home but in a community setting, with the added benefit of support from a dedicated Court Manager and a 24 hour emergency alarm system.

Court Managers are a vital component of our offer and are highly valued by our residents. They provide advice and arrange help if required whilst also managing the building and associated services.

### What our residents say:

“I receive the right level of support and live in a beautiful home, I am so much happier here.”

“The standard of my property is excellent and the support I receive from Housing 21 is the cherry on the cake.”

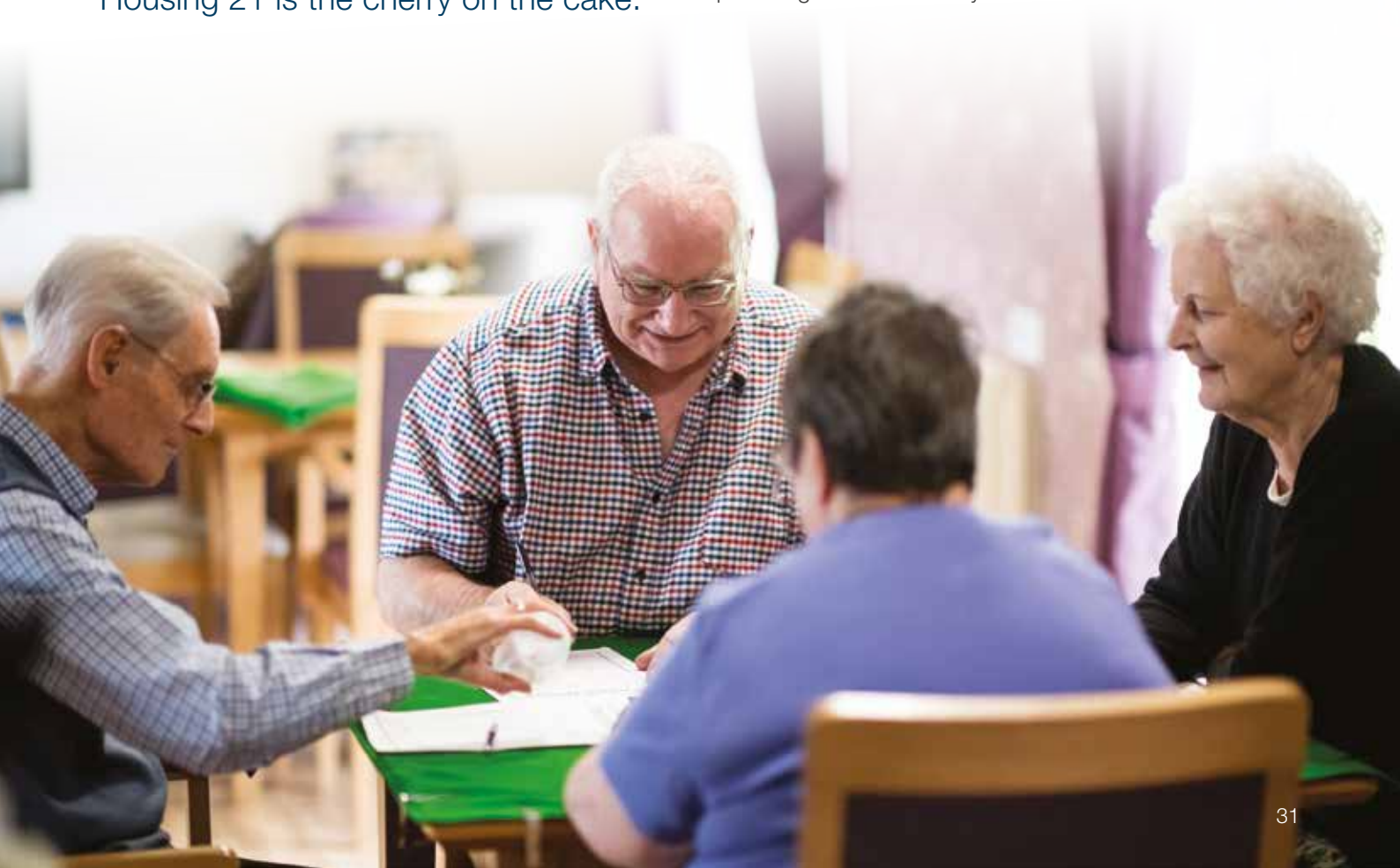
“I wanted to stay independent while also feeling safe and supported and moving to this Housing 21 property has meant I can do that.”

We manage over 14,000 Retirement Living properties in more than 350 locations across England which are mainly rented. They vary in size and facilities but many have a communal lounge, gardens and a guest room for visitors.

## Leasehold properties

We have over 1,000 leasehold properties where we provide a management service.

Leasehold is the most popular tenure to facilitate home ownership within buildings with multiple households. Housing 21 uses leasehold to offer affordable home ownership and is committed to this tenure being fair and transparent with no hidden charges or penalties whilst providing value for money for its leaseholders.



## Extra Care Living

Extra Care Living provides care for older people in a housing setting, enabling them to maintain their independence with the reassurance of having Care Workers on-site 24/7. Extra Care is also a positive alternative to residential care, allowing couples to stay together when their care needs vary. All of our properties are pet-friendly and we encourage pet ownership for the positive difference it can make to the lives of our residents.

**“I am very comfortable in my flat, carers on duty 24/7 which gives my family and me peace of mind.”**

Our preference is to integrate the management of housing and care, providing care with our own Care Workers. Although we do not provide the care to all of our Extra Care residents we do deliver over 42,000 hours of care a week and are proud of our commitment to providing the highest quality care services, leading in the sector with over 94% of our Extra Care schemes rated ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ by the Care Quality Commission. We are leading the sector with six ‘Outstanding’ services as rated by CQC\*.

Extra Care schemes tend to be larger than Retirement Living schemes and typically have between 60 to 80 properties per site as well as more extensive communal facilities including hair salons and on-site restaurants providing freshly cooked meals. We develop Extra Care schemes in partnership with local authorities as Extra Care often offers a cost effective way to provide for care needs. Properties are available to rent but also to purchase on a shared ownership basis for older people who have some housing equity.

Housing 21 is the largest provider of Extra Care in England with over 6,000 properties, around 10% of Extra Care provision, and is set to retain this position as a major developer of Extra Care.

**“People received exceptional, person-centred care from the onset. Their wishes were understood and close relationships between people, staff and families had developed. Family members told us the care their relatives received was exceptional and had far exceeded their expectations.”**

CQC report for Cambrian Green Court

Within our Extra Care housing we have a number of properties which are managed in a different way or offer an alternative to renting.

### Shared ownership

We have 972 shared ownership tenancies where residents buy the lease for a property at a percentage of the full market rent, from 25% to 75%. A monthly rent is payable on the share that is not owned.

**“The service that is provided is excellent. All staff from the cleaner upwards do a first class job.”**

Housing 21 offers a shared ownership option alongside the rental option to enable people to retain their current status of homeowner if they wish to whilst being able to access the additional care and support offered by us.

### Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

Housing 21 has two PFI contracts, both for a period of 30 years. They are located in Oldham and Kent.

### Our housing in Oldham

In Oldham we manage over 1,400 properties on behalf of Oldham Council. The project covered the initial refurbishment of the council’s sheltered housing stock and some new builds, resulting in 820 bungalows and 613 flats, split across six Extra Care and 13 Retirement Housing courts. The service contract runs until 2036, under which we provide full housing management, repairs and maintenance and support services for residents. Now in the 14<sup>th</sup> year of the project we are also delivering additional improvements to properties in partnership with the council, to ensure they continue to meet the changing needs of residents.







## Our housing in Kent

Better Homes Active is the PFI in Kent through Kent Community Partnership to Kent County Council in partnership with 10 district and borough councils. We manage 16 schemes providing 275 units of Extra Care housing, 58 supported apartments for adults with learning disabilities and seven supported living apartments for people with mental health conditions.

## Sandwell and Walsall Public Private Partnership (PPP)

This 30 year contract between Housing 21 and Walsall Borough Council consists of five Extra Care sites and a specialist dementia residential care home. We also manage three Extra Care sites in Sandwell.

## We responded quickly to provide a safe place during Covid-19

### For our residents

The pandemic in the UK has been horrendous and particularly scary for older people with underlying health conditions.

Housing 21 reacted very quickly to the Covid-19 challenge and has maintained a calm and proportionate response. The robust nature of our delivery and our strategic intent to equip the frontline to manage the business meant that across nearly 650 locations local managers stepped in to Do the Right Thing for residents.

Unlike care homes, in both Retirement and Extra Care Housing the resident has their own home (typically a flat or bungalow) and own front door. That meant for those shielding or needing to self-isolate they could do so easily.

As our model of operation is to have on-site local staff, every resident had daily contact and support to access repairs, medical help if needed, and essential supplies.

During lockdown we restricted access to the communal grounds and facilities to residents only and encouraged social distancing. We acknowledged and promoted the importance of social interaction with residents being able to enjoy the outside space and talking to neighbours, abiding by social distancing, for their own wellbeing and mental health.

**“Being safe and happy. It makes a big difference, thank you”**

For our more vulnerable and frail residents living in Extra Care, we could and did offer very high levels of assurance and support.

The 24/7 domiciliary care service is based on-site and the care staff really did rise to the challenge and have been fantastic throughout the pandemic, frequently putting themselves at risk to make sure residents are safe and well.

## For our employees

Housing 21 also wanted to make sure all frontline staff were supported and recognised for the superb work they have done during an uncertain time. We:

- Used our scale to ensure all appropriate PPE was in place for all staff
- Provided free meals for staff on shift (at a time of supermarket shortages and when we encouraged staff not to go out to shops during breaks). This offer had the benefit of supporting our catering partners as well and maintaining services for residents
- Introduced Occupational Sick Pay for cleaning and care staff. This was a significant step in making sure all staff are on comparable terms and ensuring frontline staff would not be penalised financially for taking time off if they experienced illness or Covid-19 symptoms
- We are constantly reviewing our support to both staff and residents as we move forwards and face the new challenges posed after the global pandemic.





# Housing

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Community Benefit Society FCA Reg. No. 16791R

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™**  
We invest in people Gold