Flying the flag for affordable housing
900 new homes in Hounslow. p10

plus

Merger moves a step closer
Everything you need to know about Notting Hill Genesis. p2-5

Calling all creatives
Get involved in our upcoming resident art show. p9

Annual Standards Report
Special supplemental summary edition.
Key contacts

Gas issues
Hammersmith and Fulham: BSW
0800 953 1229
Kensington and Chelsea: BSW
0800 953 1229
All other areas: K&T
020 8357 4595

Smell gas? 0800 111 999

Repairs
NHH repairs (out of hours)
0845 603 0714

Advice
London Plus Credit Union
020 7471 2620
Money Advice Service
0300 500 5000
Citizens Advice
0344 411 1444

How do you want to get your news?

With our shareholders voting in favour of a merger with Genesis Housing Association, we will be looking longer term at how we communicate with our residents.

But how would you, the residents, want to hear the latest news from Notting Hill Genesis? Do you want to continue receiving a print newspaper like this one? Would it suit you better to receive emails on a more regular basis keeping you up to date with the issues that affect you? Or would you prefer to visit our website to check out a regularly updated Resident News section at a time that suits you?

We’d love to hear your views on the future of our resident communications, so please drop us a line on media@nhhg.org.uk or to Communications team, Notting Hill Housing, Bruce Kenrick House, 2 Killick Street, London, N1 9FL.

Genesis merger moves a step closer

Our proposed merger with Genesis Housing Association is a step closer after shareholders from both organisations voted in favour of the move at special general meetings held on 16 January and 1 February.

Our shareholders are a mixture of residents, former staff, current and former board members and interested people from our local communities. Some have been involved with NHH and Genesis since we were founded in the 1960s.

Their approval, which is a requirement of our respective constitutions, is an important milestone, but there is more to do before we can formally merge. In particular, we need to continue talking to our funders and our staff. Although our formal consultation with residents is closed, we’re also always happy to hear from you, so please continue to let us know what you think about the merger, or if you have any questions. You can do this by calling 020 3815 0010, emailing involvement@nhhg.org.uk or writing to Freepost NH Housing, Notting Hill Housing, Bruce Kenrick House, 2 Killick Street, N1 9FL.

We’ll be writing to all residents again to let you know once we’ve formally merged – we hope in early April – and what that means for you. On a practical level, very little will change beyond the name of your landlord. Your rents and service charges will not go up because of the merger – any changes will be in line with the current tenancy agreement or lease. Nor will tenancy or lease agreements change because of the merger, and no-one will be asked to move home because of the merger. For now, you will continue to deal with the same housing officers as now and contact details and payment arrangements will not change.

Kate Davies, current Chief Executive of Notting Hill Housing (NHH), who will perform the same role for the proposed new organisation, said: “The Boards at both NHH and Genesis believe that joining together will be an exciting and positive move for residents and colleagues, as well as for London and the south east more widely.

“No-one will be worse off due to our proposed merger. Rather, we believe it will help us build more homes, create stronger communities and give more low-income families a secure place to live.”

The proposed new organisation will have 54,000 homes across London and 64,000 across London and the south east, half of which will be general needs homes with social or affordable rents. Financially, the merger will bring together two substantial organisations to make a new and stronger entity. This financial strength will enable us to deliver around 2,700 new homes a year, 400 more than would be achievable separately.
How you had your say on the merger

From mid-July 2017, when our plans to merge with Genesis Housing Association were first announced, to December we consulted residents on our plans to merge and asked for their views.

We wrote to all residents and worked closely with groups such as involved residents, local scrutiny panels, estate monitors and co-operatives to find out what you would like to see from the new organisation.

As well as the letters, we also provided information and feedback forms on our website, emails to resident groups, telephone research, estate walk-abouts, Q&A events, drop-in sessions and phone lines for those unable to access email or online resources.

It helped us engage with more than 3,000 residents, though the majority did not respond to the consultation. Of those who did respond, they tended not to express strong views either for or against the merger itself.

Two organisations – Genesis Residents and ListenNHH! – actively oppose the merger. Their concerns relate largely to the selling off of social housing, rent increases and the commercialisation of housing associations. They have held a series of protests and maintained an ongoing letter-writing campaign, requesting factual information and statistics. We have responded to all of these letters and had conversations with members of the two groups.

The consultation also identified several themes that residents consistently told us were important to address as a larger organisation:

- Improve our repairs and maintenance service
- Make better use of digital platforms and new technology to develop services
- Provide residents with more chances to move home if they wish
- Create genuine resident involvement opportunities
- Maintain a personalised service for those who want and need one
- Provide greater training and employment opportunities
- Ensure value for money and transparency around service charges

In addition we have spoken to our shareholders, made up of residents, former staff, current and former board members and interested people from our local communities, who want us to ensure we continue to provide genuinely affordable social homes in our heartlands, improve services, maintain a local focus and give residents a voice in the new organisation.

In response, we have agreed that we will:

- Preserve and invest in our legacy stock
- Seek opportunities to provide new homes in areas where we have our roots
- Not sell off central London homes other than in exceptional circumstances
- Introduce a local contact for each resident and a guaranteed annual visit
- Use our expertise to create a financially strong organisation
- Improve accountability through local resident involvement and resident board members
- Finalise our resident promise and introduce a commitment to ensure we are accountable to it

Altogether this will make up our draft resident promise, which sets out our commitment to the services residents can expect post-merger. It will reflect what Notting Hill Genesis will stand for, what improvements we will make and what further services we will develop with residents.
Your merger questions answered

Our decision to propose a merger with Genesis Housing Association has understandably left residents with a lot of questions about what it means for them, for services and for the future of the organisation.

We have put together a list of the most frequently asked questions that have been raised through consultation, open Q&A sessions and smaller meetings with residents. You can find out even more information by visiting our website www.nhhg.org.uk.

About the merger

Why merge?

We believe that we can achieve more together than we could apart.

We want to build more homes – in London and the south east.

As a new, combined organisation, we will have greater financial strength to deliver that aim. We will invest in our social purpose: to build quality, affordable homes in thriving communities, to provide modern and valued services, and to create amazing places.

For residents like you and your neighbours, the merger will provide a big opportunity for us to raise service standards, do more for you with more homes available in our stock, and increase value for money.

We want to prioritise modernising and automating services to offer you more choice and make it easier for you to access services and information with and from us. You will still be able to talk directly to a member of staff if that is what you prefer.

Why merge with Genesis?

We believe we’re a good match – we have a lot in common.

We were both founded in the 1960s in west London by local people who shared a similar vision – to house west London’s working poor, providing them with a home from which to build themselves and their families a more secure future.

Although we’ve both evolved with the times, our core purpose as housing associations has remained the same throughout: to provide homes for low-income households in London and the south east.

Today, we employ similar numbers of people and own and manage a similar amount of homes.

We are both involved in major regeneration projects, strengthening our commitment to developing mixed communities.

We are similar in outlook, areas of operations and values.

When will this happen?

We are aiming to formally merge early in April, but work to truly integrate our services will continue beyond the formal merger and is expected to take about two years.

What’s happening now?

Our shareholders recently voted in favour of our proposal to merge, but there are several other things we need to do before we can formally amalgamate, alongside continuing to talk to you, our residents:

- Continue talking to our staff, listening to their views and ideas, as well as any concerns
- Talk to our funders, regulators and ratings agencies

What happens after the two organisations merge to become one?

In the short-term, you’ll notice very little difference.

Following the formal merger, if you’re a tenant or leaseholder with Notting Hill Housing Trust, you’ll have a new landlord – Notting Hill Genesis. If you’re a tenant or leaseholder of any of our subsidiaries (Notting Hill Home Ownership Ltd, Folio London Ltd and so on), your landlord will not change.

An integration programme, which we expect to take about two years, will follow the formal merger. Neither the change of landlord nor the integration process will impact you detrimentally – we will continue to provide high standards of customer service throughout.

Any changes that are needed will be made as seamlessly as we can. Our focus will be on maintaining and improving customer service.

There will need to be discussion and negotiation on what the culture of the new organisation will be, how to deliver services and what standards to adopt.

By the end of the two years we will have a new organisation that will be neither Notting Hill Housing nor Genesis, but a fully integrated, new organisation, which offers the best of both.

Why do housing associations continue to get bigger? We’re worried services will get worse.

The reason for getting larger is to achieve greater efficiency through economies of scale. As a larger organisation, we will be able to make more savings that will allow us to build more homes that are desperately needed, especially in London. NHH and Genesis want to do more to tackle this issue. Merging will also help us invest more in improving and maintaining our existing homes and services for residents.

We fundamentally believe in providing a local service to our residents. We know from talking to you just how important local knowledge and a local connection with the communities we serve are. We will ensure that a local focus is not lost and that levels of service remain high.

My home

Will my rent stay the same?

Your rent and service charges will not change as a result of this merger: any increases/decreases in rent and service charges will be in line with your agreement or lease.

Please continue to pay your rent and service charges just as you do now.

Will I need to move home?

You will not be asked to move home as a result of the merger.

Does this mean that I will be given a new tenancy agreement or lease?

Your tenancy or lease agreement will stay the same and you will have the same rights as you do now, including issues such as right to buy and succession arrangements.
What about secure tenancies?
If you're already a secure tenant, your terms will remain the same.
As a result of recent Government legislation, housing associations are no longer allowed to offer secure tenancies, so we offer most new tenants fixed-term tenancies with a length of five years. In practice, the majority of our tenancies are assured tenancies.

Repairs and services
Will repairs arrangements and contractors remain the same?
For the time being, all existing arrangements will continue just as they do now. Over the next few months and years, as specific contracts end, we'll need either to reappoint existing contractors on new terms, or appoint new suppliers.
Will how I report a repair change?
For the time being, there will be no change to existing arrangements.
What do you mean by ‘digital services’? Will I still be able to talk to my housing officer?
We aim to provide a range of digital services that will support you to contact us in the way that suits you. These could include using our app or website to log repairs, make a complaint, pay rent/service charges and more. If you prefer not to use digital methods to contact us or receive services, you’ll of course still be able to speak to a member of staff over the phone or face to face.
Will the staff I see now change?
For now, you’ll continue to see the same people you do now – whether that’s a housing officer, property management officer, or care and support colleagues.
What does this mean if I’m a customer who receives a care or support service?
Your care service will continue as it does now. The local authority has contracted us to provide the service and the merger will not affect this.
Will the merger improve the quality of local services?
We believe so, yes. At the heart of our commitment to new digital services is the objective of freeing up our people to spend more time on the issues where you need the most support. These include resolving problems and complaints, ensuring the area you live in is in a good and safe condition, and listening to and acting on resident feedback.

Social and affordable housing
Will you still build social housing?
Yes. This is one of the major reasons for bringing our two organisations together. Both NHH and Genesis currently build social housing and we will continue to do so in future.
We are committed to providing affordable housing. Funding is scarce at the moment but affordable rents are still set at 65–70% of the market rate (affordable rents can be charged at up to 80% of the market rate) and will never exceed the local authority housing allowance (the maximum rent that will be covered by housing benefit). The merger will put us in a position where we can build more social housing.
Will the merger mean more affordable homes?
Both Genesis and NHH have a history and continued commitment to delivering new affordable homes. In the recent past Government policy has not supported delivery of new affordable (particularly social rented) homes. Both organisations campaigned for this to change. At the same time, in a very difficult financial climate with no public funding and a massive shortage of housing in London we tried to maintain delivery of new homes.
The good news is that we are both now strategic partners with the Greater London Authority (GLA). This means that Genesis will deliver more than 2,400 homes over the next four years of which 60% will be affordable homes, including more than 600 either social rent or London Affordable Rent homes – London Affordable Rent is a new GLA product, which aims to mirror social rent. NHH’s partnership with the GLA will deliver 8,000 homes up to 2022. At least 60% of these will be affordable, including more than 1,800 social or London Affordable Rent homes.

Development plans
What are your development plans as a joint organisation?
NHH has plans to build 7,352 homes in the next five years, 909 of which will be social rented homes, with 996 being affordable rent.
Genesis has plans to build 3,612 homes in the next five years, 215 of which will be social rented homes, and 710 affordable rent.
Development programmes for the two organisations will remain intact, with an additional 400 homes added to later years. The starting point for the plan was the combination of the long-term plans of NHH and Genesis. The merger means we can deliver more homes and, importantly, proportionally more affordable rent and social rent homes.
Why do you need to develop more housing? Why not look after the stock you already have?
The Government aim for one million new homes to be delivered by 2020. As a large housing association we have a role to play in the delivery of this. The need for more affordable housing (social and affordable rent, shared ownership, etc.) is widely recognised. The merger will mean we have more buying power, can build more and be more efficient with how we organise ourselves. We will re-invest the savings generated in new and existing homes and services.

Keeping in touch
Will your contact details change?
Our phone numbers and email address will remain the same for now. We’ll harmonise them as part of the integration process, but will give you plenty of notice of any changes.
Will I still receive The Resident?
For the time being, you’ll continue to receive a quarterly newsletter.
Will your website change?
At some point, we’ll have a combined website, but that won’t happen straight away. For now, our website addresses will remain as www.genesissha.org.uk and www.nhhg.org.uk.
Volunteers help make Christmas special

Volunteers and generous donors helped make Christmas extra special for elderly residents and those living around the Aylesbury Estate in Southwark.

For the fifth year in a row, parents, staff and children from Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School in Holland Park have donated a van full of food and toiletries to Notting Hill Housing.

Our Estate Services Officers Larry Awobayiku and Fardoush Chowdhury volunteered their time to take the items across London to the Aylesbury neighbourhood where Community Connector for Youth, Chris Cotton, received the delivery.

The Aylesbury Regeneration team have continued to build up strong links with local faith groups, so the donations were taken to English Martyrs Church and St. Peter’s Church in Walworth. From there the donations were distributed to members of the local Aylesbury community in need.

Chris said: ‘On behalf of all the team and the local community we’d like to say a huge thank you to Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School for the generous donation. It’s a simple gesture but it means a lot to people.’ Father Thomas of English Martyrs added ‘We were so grateful for the donations this Christmas.’

In addition, Junior League London, a women’s voluntary organisation, donated 400 holiday hampers filled with food, toiletries, gifts and other essentials to our office, so they could be handed to our elderly residents.

Care scheme opens its doors

Notting Hill Housing (NHH) have launched vital extra care services in Lewisham helping older residents stay healthier for longer, remain close to their families and live independently in their own home.

Hazelhurst Court, which welcomed its first residents in October, has been developed by Phoenix Community Housing with funding contributions from the Greater London Authority (GLA) and Lewisham Council.

Located in Beckenham Hill Road, Catford, the scheme provides 60 self-contained apartments specifically designed for older people.

NHH, who were last year awarded an ‘outstanding’ rating by the Care Quality Commission for extra care provision at Turnberry Court in Ealing, were selected by Lewisham, following competitive tender, to provide 500 hours of care per week at Hazelhurst Court.

While everyone living at Hazelhurst will benefit from the 24-hour on-site care team, a third of customers will not have particular care needs. The other 40 customers will receive individualised tailored packages of care which aim to maximise each person’s independence.

Linda Strong, Assistant Director of Notting Hill Pathways – the care and support arm of NHH – said: ‘We are excited to have been chosen to provide these care services at Hazelhurst Court. It is so important to ensure people can lead an active and full later life while living independently in their own homes.

‘We are very excited to be working with Phoenix and Lewisham Council, and getting to better know the residents who have moved in.’

Phoenix Community Housing’s Chief Executive, Jim Ripley, said: ‘Hazelhurst Court is our first residential development and we wanted to focus on providing good quality homes for older people. There’s a real need for this kind of housing in the south of Lewisham.

‘We’re very pleased to be working with NHH to enable older people to enjoy a great home within their community, and with the comfort that the care they need is on hand.’

Councillor Chris Best, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Older People at Lewisham Council, said: ‘As the population of older people in Lewisham continues to rise, so too does the need for high quality care and support services. NHH has a strong track record in providing excellent levels of care and support which will now benefit Hazelhurst Court’s residents. We look forward to working with them and Phoenix Housing in the years to come.’
Welcome to the summary of our Annual Standards Report 2016/17. The report covers performance across all key housing management services including permanent rented housing (PRH), Pathways (extra care and support) and leasehold services. We hope you find the information presented both useful and interesting.

This is a summary version of the full report and includes all the key stats and figures in a convenient shorter format. If you’d like to read the full report please visit: www.nhhg.org.uk/publications

Our performance at the end of 2016/17

Customer satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of residents satisfied with our performance as a landlord</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent rented housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In 2016/17 we changed the methodology for our customer satisfaction surveys so that scores for our services are now weighted against what matters most to you. We cannot therefore directly compare this year’s results with previous years’ performance. The leasehold service, which was behind target at the start of the year, has seen the score stabilise. Based on the additional information that you have provided, further improvements to the leasehold service are being implemented.

Income collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of rent and service charges collected</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent rented housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.1%</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrears as a percentage of rent due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent rented housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cash value of current arrears</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£6.73m</td>
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</table>

Our income collection rate held up well across all three services and we collected all of the rent and charges that were due within the year (100%) plus a little more than this to reduce outstanding arrears from previous years. We ended the year just below our target collection rate of 100.8%.

Complaints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complaints resolved at first stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent rented housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complaints per 1,000 properties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent rented housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complaints resolved within 10 days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent rented housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We achieved our target for resolving complaints so that fewer than 10% are escalated. However, we did not achieve our target for responding to 85% of all initial complaints within 10 working days. This was partly due to the fact that we tried to ensure that our responses addressed all of the issues raised within the complaint, which sometimes meant that the responses were delayed. Where this happens, complainants should be informed.

Voids

Our performance on turning around empty property (voids) did not achieve target (21 days) and we will be focusing on this in 2017/18.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turnaround time for re-let voids</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent rented housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 days</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Repairs

We want all of our residents to love where they live. To achieve this, we recognise that for most people, that means getting our repairs service right. At the end of 2015/16 we terminated the contracts which covered south London and Hammersmith and Fulham, as the performance of the contractor who worked in these areas was unsatisfactory. We have continued to closely monitor repairs performance during 2016/17 and will make further improvements. Since August 2017, Wates have been responsible for all day-to-day repairs across all Pathways (extra care) and permanent rented housing (PRH) properties.

In 2016/17 we increased resident involvement in the monitoring of repairs performance. Each local scrutiny panel (LSP) was invited to send representatives to join the quarterly contract monitoring meetings. This has proved very successful and in 2017/18 the remit of the resident repair representatives is being extended to include scrutiny of the cyclical (planned) works programme. Representatives are able to put questions directly to staff and the contractors about the performance information presented and give feedback to their LSP.

Fire risk assessments (FRAs) are carried out annually on some buildings such as sheltered housing, extra care schemes and high rise properties and every two years for all other buildings. We track progress of both the programme of assessments and the remedial actions that are identified by the assessments. In 2016/17 we completed all of the FRAs that were due and 77% of the actions arising from the assessments have also been completed.

We also work to ensure that every home receives an annual gas safety inspection. In 2016/17, 99.98% of properties with a gas supply had a valid safety certificate. Where access to carry out inspections is not given we will work with the tenant to try to achieve this, but legal action to force entry will be taken as a last resort.

Our performance at the end of 2016/17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permanent rented housing</th>
<th>Leasehold services</th>
<th>Pathways (extra care)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customer satisfaction rating</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Customer satisfaction is one of the key performance areas that we monitor and this is still not where we would like it to be for repairs. We are making further changes to the arrangements for day-to-day repairs and will continue to listen to resident feedback to identify any areas for further improvement.

Repairs performance by contract area – PRH and Pathways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Average working days to complete a non-emergency repair</strong></th>
<th><strong>Appointments kept</strong></th>
<th><strong>Number of repairs completed</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inner West 1</strong></td>
<td>8 days, 14 days, 95%, 92%, 10,482</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kensington &amp; Chelsea and Westminster (Mears)</td>
<td>8 days, 16 days, 95%, 90%, 12,735</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inner West 2</strong></td>
<td>8 days, 7 days, 95%, 98%, 9,785</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammersmith and Fulham (Mears)</td>
<td>8 days, 7 days, 95%, 99.96%, 9,432</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outer West boroughs</strong></td>
<td>8 days, 10 days, 95%, 99%, 13,203</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Wates)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North / East boroughs</strong></td>
<td>8 days, 7 days, 95%, 99.96%, 9,432</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Wates)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>South London boroughs</strong></td>
<td>8 days, 10 days, 95%, 99%, 13,203</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Wates)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Complaints

In 2016/17 most complaints made by PRH tenants and by leaseholders were about repairs. In most cases this was due to repair work not having started. Complaints made by residents in our Pathways service were more likely to be about staff. This is to be expected when providing a care service and any complaints of this nature are thoroughly investigated and reviewed at senior level.

In 2016/17 we were below our target for responding to complaints. We have stressed to staff the importance of the quality and thoroughness of each response to ensure that issues are addressed as fully as possible. This has meant that in some cases, we have taken longer to close the complaint. We have also recently expanded the number of reviewers so that complaint reviews can be undertaken more quickly.

Across the organisation, 92% of complaints were resolved satisfactorily, with only 8% of those who complained asking for their complaint outcome to be escalated to review.

Value for money

For us, value for money (VFM) is about being effective in how we plan, manage and operate our organisation, so that we can re-invest in new homes.

Our approach to VFM is based on ensuring that we balance the resources we use to build homes, to maintain them, and to provide a good quality landlord service.
I love where I live

"It was while living at Oak Square that I realised despite living in London, young people in the area rarely ventured beyond their neighbourhoods. I set about trying to show children a different cultural perspective and organised for young people and their parents to attend a ballet at the Royal Opera House.

The first visit was such a success that I was able to secure funding working with the Notting Hill Housing fundraising team for a full programme of visits in 2017, including Kew Gardens, Tate Modern and London Zoo.

I wanted to see what I could do to engage people on a cultural level and see whether it would give people more pride in where they live.

My favourite trip was Kew Gardens. I was worried our group would all clump together all day but they didn’t and as the day went on I was so delighted to see everyone smiling because they’d all discovered things that they’d never seen before”.

Anthony Garner, LSP member and resident of London Borough of Lambeth
Anthony was nominated and shortlisted for a Housing Heroes award which is sponsored by the Chartered Institute of Housing.

I love the job I do

“So you remember my tenant who I told you was not receiving the Employment and Support Allowance and she should have been since 2013 and was therefore broke and had not been able to afford to heat the house etc?

I have just spoken to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and she has been sent £8,466.14 in backdated benefit.

I am so happy. She is a really nice lady who for three years has not been able to buy her family Christmas presents or even pay for heating in the home.

Times like these are why I love my job”.

Welfare benefit adviser (sent by email on Christmas eve)

Aylesbury Estate, London Borough of Southwark

“During the past year the Aylesbury Regeneration team has been working hard to progress work on site. Our extensive consultation programme has seen us successfully take the detailed design proposals for our next phase through to planning committee. This was a significant milestone.

However, our work is not just about the physical design and build. The Resident Involvement team (working closely with community investment staff), has focused on a number of priorities ensuring that residents and stakeholders are kept up-to-date with the development progress and are on hand to listen and address any queries. To make this happen, the team has put on consultation sessions, resident training workshops and community events. These interventions have resulted in more than 2,700 attendances at our activities, events and one-to-one sessions. We are now in regular contact with nearly 400 local residents and are very excited about the year ahead”.

Lorraine Gilbert
Head of Involvement and Communication, Aylesbury team

This is a summary version of the full report and includes all the key stats and figures in a convenient shorter format. If you’d like to read the full report please visit: www.nhhg.org.uk/publications
Can you help older adults get fit?

We have an exciting new partnership that started in January with Oomph, an award-winning social enterprise dedicated to enhancing the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of older adults through tailored and meaningful exercise sessions that are run by trained volunteers.

We introduced Oomph at our extra care schemes Penfold Street, Cheviot Gardens and Elgin Close, and at our sheltered schemes Darton Court and Ormrod Court.

Currently we are recruiting volunteers to become community exercise leaders for this project and in particular we are looking for people who have experience of working with the elderly. All volunteers will have two days of accredited training where they will learn how to facilitate and plan tailored exercise lessons for elderly residents that focus on fun and motivation.

Although a basic fitness level is required this role will be more about engaging the group so an athletic background is not a necessity. Volunteers will be expected to facilitate at least two sessions per week.

If you are interested in this opportunity then please contact the Volunteering Programme – email volunteering@nhhg.org.uk or call 07743 812 966.
Equality group helps prepare for future

Here at Notting Hill Housing (NHH) we take equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) seriously and as part of our commitment we have an ED&I resident forum made up of a dedicated group that meets quarterly.

They help us in a number of ways, from reviewing policies and procedures for ED&I considerations and testing service processes, to giving their views on office space refurbishment.

Last September the forum took part in some usability testing as part of NHH’s WorkWise programme. WorkWise is our major programme to simplify, standardise and automate some of our key business processes making them available to customers online.

Residents were asked to complete a series of tasks on a clickable prototype of the new resident dashboard. Tasks were designed to test how intuitive and usable participants found the process of navigating the new dashboard and raising a repair. By observing residents and asking them to talk through the tasks as they carried them out, WorkWise colleagues were able to identify areas where the prototype could be improved.

In the most recent ED&I forum meeting, residents took part in an introduction to mental health awareness and signposting. It was a really open, positive and honest discussion with a number of residents expressing interest in taking a level 2 course in mental health via our Tenancy Support Network.

Do you want to become a member of the ED&I resident forum? Get in touch with our Resident Involvement team to find out more email: involvement@nhhg.org.uk or telephone 020 3815 0010

Scrutiny panels helping form Government paper

Members of our local scrutiny panels (LSP) were invited to attend a meeting with former Minister of Housing, Alok Sharma MP, in December.

The meeting contributed towards the Government’s green paper on social housing, which is expected to be published this year.

More than 12 events were held across England, with a feedback questionnaire being offered to give further perspectives. Organised by Shepherds Bush Housing Group, and held in central London, the local event was attended by Stephen Johnson, Chair of the Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster LSP, Mary Burke, Chair of the West London LSP and Linde Carr, Resident Board Member.

Stephen Johnson said: “Whatever our own personal views and politics might be, it was a privilege to take part in what felt like a real and genuine collective attempt to help shape and provide solutions – a sentiment shared by many I talked to afterwards.”

Despite the Minister being replaced by Dominic Rabb MP following the recent cabinet reshuffle, the Government remains committed to publishing the paper as planned in spring 2018.

Cocktail parties bridge generations

People living in care homes can sometimes feel isolated for various reasons, such as health issues or missing their family – so we are now working in partnership with charity Magic Me to hold fabulous cocktail parties for some of our extra care residents each month.

Magic Me bring together artists to develop projects that “bridge the gap between different generations”. Their simple idea of holding a party each month in one of our extra care schemes is a great success – everyone dresses up, the lounge area gets decorated for the occasion, there is music and cocktails are served. Residents really enjoy it and some even bust some moves!

At the most recent party, at Elgin Close in Shepherd’s Bush, Magic Me announced that they have just been awarded £100,000 from the People’s Postcode Lottery to continue running and expanding this fantastic project with all the organisations they work in partnership with.

Magic Me have worked in partnership with NHH for the last five years in several of our extra care schemes and, with support from NHH’s Volunteer Programme, will continue to expand into several new locations in 2018.

Sarah Watson, Project Co-ordinator for Magic Me, said: “A fantastic time was had by all and we couldn’t have found a better party to announce our very exciting upcoming funding relationship with the People’s Postcode Trust. We really look forward to the year ahead in bringing the project to more cities and more people.”

“On behalf of Magic Me and our Cocktails in Care Homes project, I wanted to say a massive thank you to the residents and staff at Elgin Close, as well as representatives from NHH who joined us for the amazing party.”

Mandy Worster, Volunteer Programme Manager for NHH, added: “We can’t thank Magic Me enough for sharing this wonderful project. The joy and laughter it brings to our residents and our staff is priceless.”

Image courtesy of Lisa Belletty, People’s Postcode Lottery.
Keep your communal areas safe

We want to ensure that you are as safe as possible at home and one important aspect of that is keeping communal areas clear.

There are firm rules about communal areas that we have developed with London Fire Brigade to comply with fire safety laws.

Our policy is “zero tolerance” in our permanent rented housing properties. You are not allowed to store or leave any possessions in the common areas – this includes the space underneath stairs and immediately outside your front door.

Bicycles and pushchairs are not exempt from this.

We know that some residents are unhappy with these rules and feel they are unnecessarily harsh, but imagine trying to get out of your building if it were dark, hot and full of smoke, with people running and panicking.

Hopefully you would never be in this position, but we have to ensure safety and in those conditions even the smallest obstructions could cause you to trip and fall.

These are the scenarios we are duty-bound to bear in mind when putting together policies around the use of communal areas. We hope you recognise the importance of these rules. Please ensure you keep your common spaces clear.

Welfare advisors help residents claim extra £2m

Welfare advisers from Notting Hill Housing (NHH) have helped residents claim more than £2m in nine months, allowing some of our most vulnerable tenants to lead more comfortable lives.

Our welfare benefits team work with residents to help them resolve benefit problems, challenge incorrect decisions and make sure they receive the money they are entitled to.

Since April, they have helped our residents claim more than £600,000 of backdated payments, while securing almost £1.4m of future benefit payments.

Individual residents have been better off by thousands of pounds each thanks to our team, who work alongside agencies like the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure residents get the benefits for which they are eligible.

Tom Pringle, one of the welfare benefits advisers, said: “This is the best job in the world. You give hope to the hopeless, give dignity to those whose dignity has been taken away and give a voice to those who would otherwise be without one.

“We have a great team and are brilliantly supported by an excellent bunch of housing officers and a fantastic Tenancy Support Network. I cannot think of a role where I would be more appreciated by my customers and fellow staff and cannot think of a career move that would give me greater job satisfaction.”

Elly Hoult, Director of Business Improvement at NHH, added: “The fantastic work of our welfare benefit advisers is helping those tenants in most need, supporting them to receive the benefits they are entitled to, pay their bills and any debts and ultimately keep their homes. We are incredibly proud that they are making a real difference to people’s lives.”

“To have reached £2m in extra cash over just nine months is an incredible achievement. We urge any resident who feels they may be eligible to benefits they aren’t yet claiming to speak to their housing officer.”

Calling all creatives!

For 2018, we are pleased to announce that the Notting Hill Housing bi-annual art show is back!

If you have creative talent and would like the chance to see your art work exhibited in a central London gallery, then this is the perfect opportunity.

This year art work entries need to be A5 in size, will be sold for one flat price and all displayed anonymously. There is no theme and you can use whatever medium you want.

For the first time ever the art show will be open to resident artists, staff artists and artists in the wider public.

All proceeds from sales will go to the Notting Hill Housing’s Hardship Fund, which supports our most vulnerable residents. If you are interested in taking part and would like to submit art work, please email your name and contact details to TheA5Show@nhhg.org.uk
Developments round-up

Notting Hill Housing (NHH) has ambitious plans to build 1,400 much-needed homes for London every year, with projects ranging from large community regeneration schemes to supported housing properties. PR Officer Wayne Tuckfield shares the latest news.

Flying the flag for affordable housing

The creation of 900 new homes, more than half of which will provide affordable housing, took a step closer with a “topping-out” celebration at Lampton Road in Hounslow.

Four flags, representing the London Borough of Hounslow, NHH, Bouygues UK and the Mayor of London, were raised to mark the development reaching its highest point, which came just nine months after building work began.

The development, on the site of Hounslow’s current civic centre, will provide a total of 919 homes, with the current first phase made up of 160 affordable properties.

Once a new civic centre is complete in nearby Bath Road, the council’s service will move across and the rest of the homes can be built.

Homes will be a mix of studios, one, two and three-bedroom apartments and housing across 10 buildings, varying between three and nine storeys.

A three-way development agreement means NHH will develop the residential element of the scheme while Linkcity will develop the new civic building. Bouygues UK are the main contractor.

Cllr Steve Curran, leader of the London Borough of Hounslow, said: “This has been a great team effort from everyone involved. It is fantastic to be here, seeing this brilliant development and looking out over so many London landmarks.

“It is so important for us to have good housing here. We promised residents we’d secure 3,000 affordable homes by 2018 and we are up to 2,760 now – 450 of which come from this scheme. It also meets the Mayor of London’s aim for 50 per cent affordable housing on new developments, one of the first schemes to achieve it.”

Kate Davies, Chief Executive of NHH, said: “To see what has happened here since the ground-breaking in February is fantastic. I’m really proud of what is happening.

Southwark firms boosted by Aylesbury regeneration

Businesses in Southwark are already benefiting from the Aylesbury regeneration – to the tune of £1m so far – a sign of Notting Hill Housing’s commitment to the borough.

As part of the business plan for the project, we pledged that a figure equal to 10 per cent of construction costs would be spent with local firms.

That target would currently stand at £440,534, yet the total spent with Southwark businesses by the end of 2017 had already reached £1.19m – almost three times the target sum.

Companies that have benefited from the Aylesbury regeneration range from supply chain partners, such as architects like Cottrell and Vermuelen, to community partners commissioned to deliver projects, such as Social Life who carried out a resident survey.

Local groups have benefited from small grants, including Aylesbury Community Garden, Surrey Square Primary School and Missenden Tuesday Community Club. Also, local caterers like Electric Elephant Café, Indulgent Sugar Plum and Cally Munchie have been used for events, while local providers including Training Circle have offered Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) training.

Meghan Doyle, Head of Community Investment for NHH, said: “Not only
Notting Hill Housing (NHH) is providing around 236 new homes in the Royal Docks, Newham, of which 50% will be affordable housing, after entering into partnership with the Greater London Authority (GLA) for Gallions 3B.

It is the first site in the Royal Docks to come forward with a development partner under the current Mayor – meeting his aspirations for 50 per cent affordable housing and including homes for London Living Rent.

NHH are already on site with an adjacent development, Royal Albert Wharf. This site, combined with Gallions 3B, will deliver 1,900 new homes and is creating an exciting new destination in the Royal Docks.

The announcement comes after NHH signed a strategic partnership with the Mayor that would create thousands of new affordable homes by 2021.

The affordable housing at Gallions 3B, a riverside site, will be evenly split between shared ownership, London Living Rent and London Affordable Rent. The other half of the homes will be available for private sale.

The scheme will be integrated with NHH’s neighbouring Royal Albert Wharf development, while retaining its own character and distinctive features with private and landscaped shared gardens attracting residents and visitors to the waterfront. A portion of a neighbouring development site, adjacent to the existing Armada Green, will be landscaped and managed by NHH providing outdoor sports areas, as plans for a future Thames river crossing emerge.

Plans for the space include community allotments, an outdoor cinema, art exhibitions and further amenity space aimed at drawing residents and visitors to the waterfront and making Gallions 3B a destination in its own right.

Once integrated into Royal Albert Wharf, the development would also benefit from access to an existing energy centre, which is already live and comfortably has the capacity to provide for the needs of Gallions 3B residents.

John Hughes, Group Development Director at NHH, said: “It is a priority for both NHH and City Hall to provide new affordable homes for the capital, which is why we signed our strategic partnership, and this scheme is the first example of that agreement in action.”

Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development, James Murray, said: “We are determined to do all we can to tackle London’s housing crisis, and NHH is a key partner in our commitment to build thousands of new affordable homes for Londoners to rent and buy.

“This site is an important milestone in the wider regeneration of the Royal Docks – the first in the area to deliver 50 per cent affordable housing, including homes for London Living Rent, those based on social rent levels, and shared ownership homes for first-time buyers.”

It lays out our joint mission to deliver the most dynamic and successful housing programme in London – one that is recognised as a great working example of the partnering approach. Taking into account the Aylesbury and other ongoing projects at Wooddene, Manor Place and Canada Water we have a total of 5,208 homes in our current pipeline for Southwark, 43 per cent of which will be affordable housing.

Kate Davies, Chief Executive of NHH, said: “We have a great relationship with Southwark Council and our pipeline contains thousands of homes to be built in the borough. We are committed to creating thriving communities both on the Aylesbury Estate and beyond, and this charter further demonstrates that desire.”
Overcome your money worries

Housing officers in our west London region have teamed up with our Tenancy Support Network to host a free financial support workshop – MoneyWise.

MoneyWise workshops involve a collection of London-based companies and organisations offering financial information and support to residents who may be struggling with their finances. They can help with accessing discounts, creating personal budgets and managing debts.

The feedback has been really positive, with one resident writing in to say: “It was a really good, useful day, especially the utility bill session. One of the contacts there helped to get a discount on my bill.” Housing officers have also seen a great response from their residents – with one of the residents taking part managing to clear their arrears within two months.

There are plans to introduce MoneyWise workshops in our north east and south region. If you would like to be invited to the next event then please get in touch with your housing officer.

Don’t forget if you would like employment support, debt advice, budgeting support, digital skills or mental health support then you can ask your housing officer to make a referral to the Tenancy Support Network on your behalf.

Course solves job struggle

One of Notting Hill Housing’s residents recently found work after receiving training from our employment support partner Love London Working.

Helen had been out of work for six months and was struggling to find new employment. She had applied to a few places but hadn’t had any success. When Helen’s housing officer, Alex, went round on the annual visit they got chatting and Helen told Alex about her work struggles.

“I was feeling a bit down about it. I wanted to find work, but was struggling and wasn’t sure what I wanted to do,” Helen said.

Alex was happy Helen had told her as she could help. “I made a referral to Love London Working who got in touch with Helen and talked to her about her options and what she wanted to do.”

Love London Working offer a range of courses and Helen had her pick. She looked at the childcare course but decided on health and hygiene instead. Helen said: “I was so happy to see that course as I’m interested in food and I had tried to get on a course before but couldn’t afford to pay for it myself. Love London Working booked me straight on and I didn’t have to pay a penny.”

Two weeks later Helen was offered a job working at global food chain Pret a Manger. Helen couldn’t believe that after six months of searching she found work so quickly. “Love London Working were so efficient and really supportive, I’d recommend anyone looking for work to go to them.”

If you’d like to find out how Love London Working could help you, get in touch with your housing officer to be referred to your local support service.

Changes to Universal Credit

The Government has recently announced some changes to Universal Credit. These changes may benefit you if you need to claim Universal Credit in the future.

• Currently, a lot of people have to wait seven days before they are entitled to Universal Credit. Essentially this means that no money is paid for the first week of the claim. This seven-day wait will not apply to anyone who makes a Universal Credit claim from 14 February.

• When you claim Universal Credit you have to wait a month and seven days before you receive your first payment. If you make a claim you can request an advance so that you can get some money sooner. This can now be up to a full month’s payment which you would have to pay back over 12 months.

• From 11 April Housing Benefit and Universal Credit payments will overlap. This means you can get an additional two weeks’ Housing Benefit at the start of your Universal Credit claim.

If you need any extra information or support, please speak to your housing officer.