

Creating homes and communities people feel proud of

Annual Report 2021/2022





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Welcome from Kul Bains Chief Executive

Welcome to our annual report for 2021-22.

As we've come out of the pandemic and resumed full services, our focus has been to create homes and communities our residents feel proud to be part of.

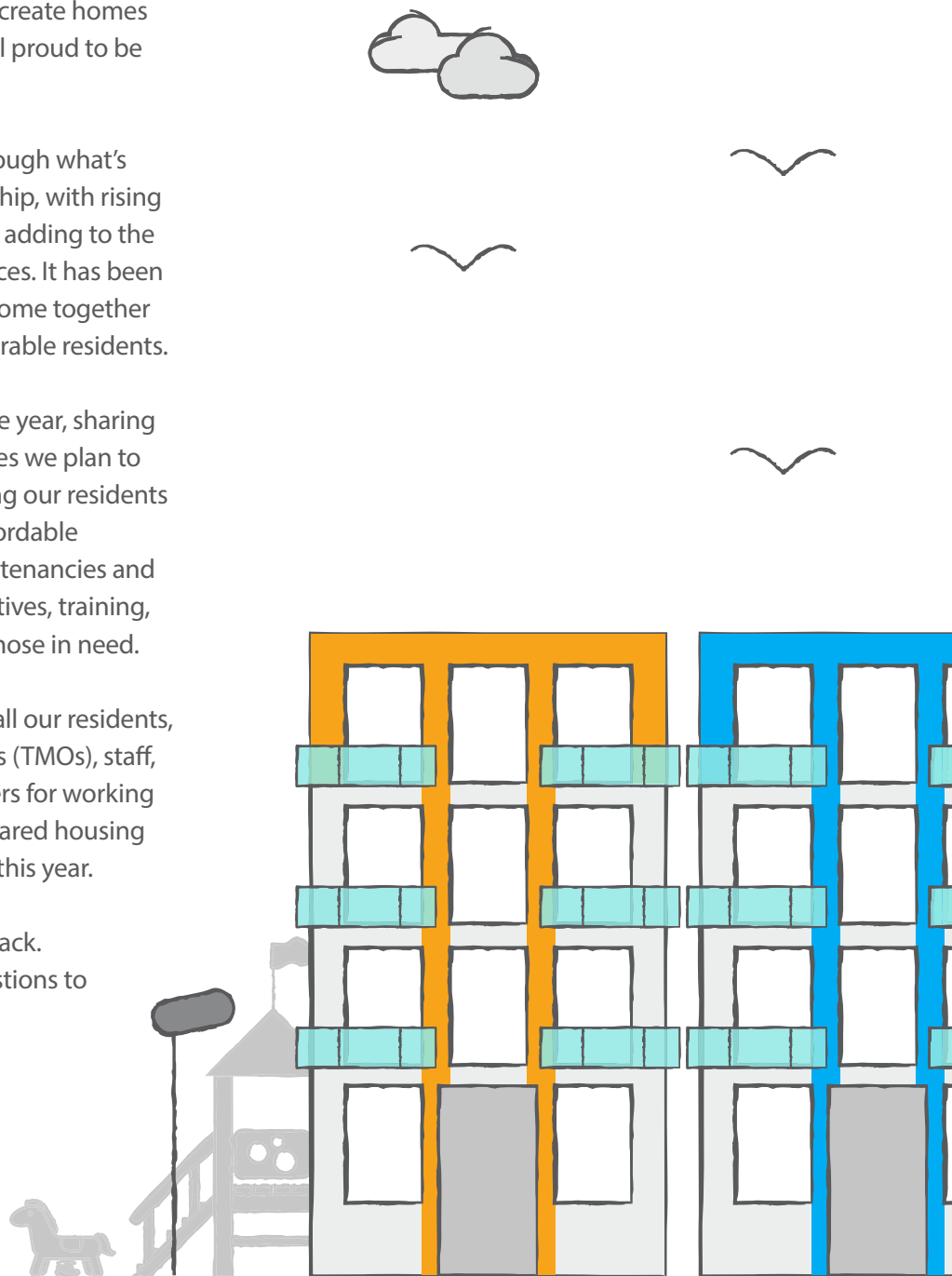
We've supported our residents through what's proven to be another year of hardship, with rising energy prices and soaring inflation adding to the huge pressure on household finances. It has been wonderful to see the community come together to help take care of our most vulnerable residents.

In this report, we look back over the year, sharing the highs and lows, and the changes we plan to make. We explain how we're helping our residents to live in good quality, safe and affordable homes – and how we've sustained tenancies and offered health and wellbeing initiatives, training, employment and food parcels to those in need.

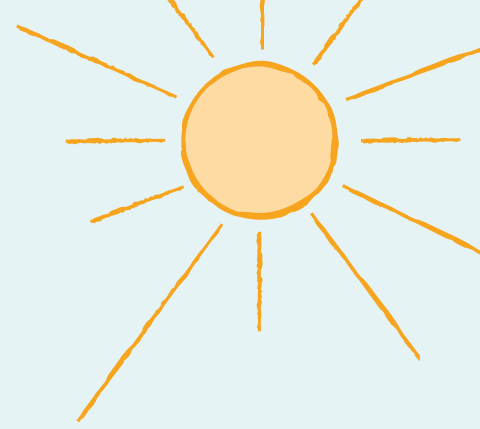
We must also give huge thanks to all our residents, Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs), staff, partners, contractors and supporters for working with us to successfully meet our shared housing and community commitments for this year.

As always, we welcome your feedback. Please send any comments or questions to info@watmos.org.uk.

Kul Bains,
Chief Executive,
WATMOS Community Homes



Chair's Report



As the new Chair of WATMOS Community Homes, my responsibility is to deliver strong and effective governance and make sure we:

Meet all our legal and regulatory duties, such as keeping our residents safe, listening to their feedback and modernising our homes.

Spend money wisely, with well-managed, open and transparent financial reports.

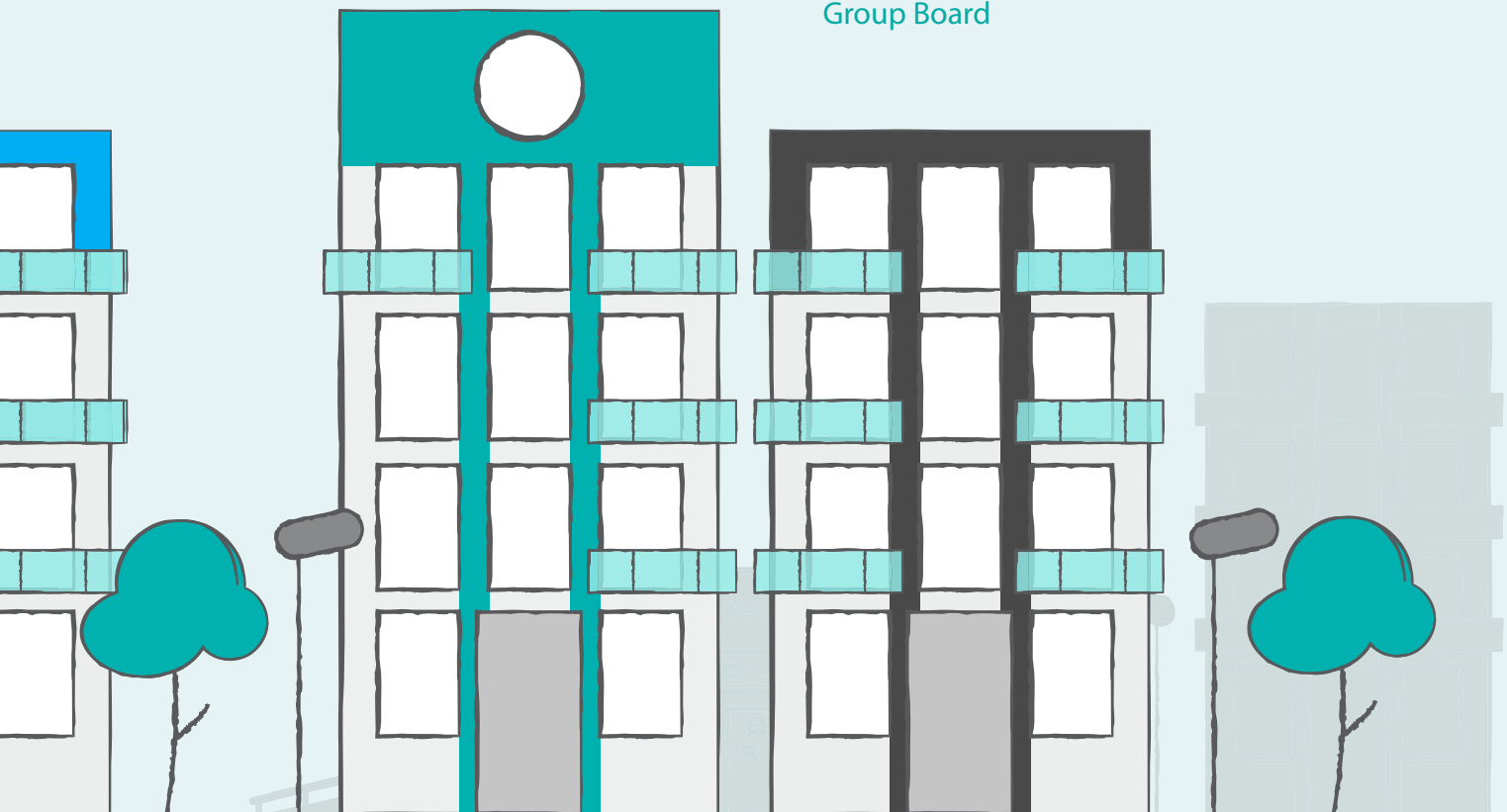
Drive change and respond to challenges in the social housing sector.

Plan for a strong future for social housing across our Walsall and London neighbourhoods.

So this year, we've made changes to our board and committee structure, recruited new board members with the skills and experience to transform challenges into opportunities, and looked at the best ways to engage with our residents; all to help achieve our strategic goals and plans.

I'm excited to work together on our new corporate priorities – and to deliver our strategic objectives in line with our values.

Jaz Saggu,
Chair, WATMOS Community Homes
Group Board



About WATMOS Community Homes

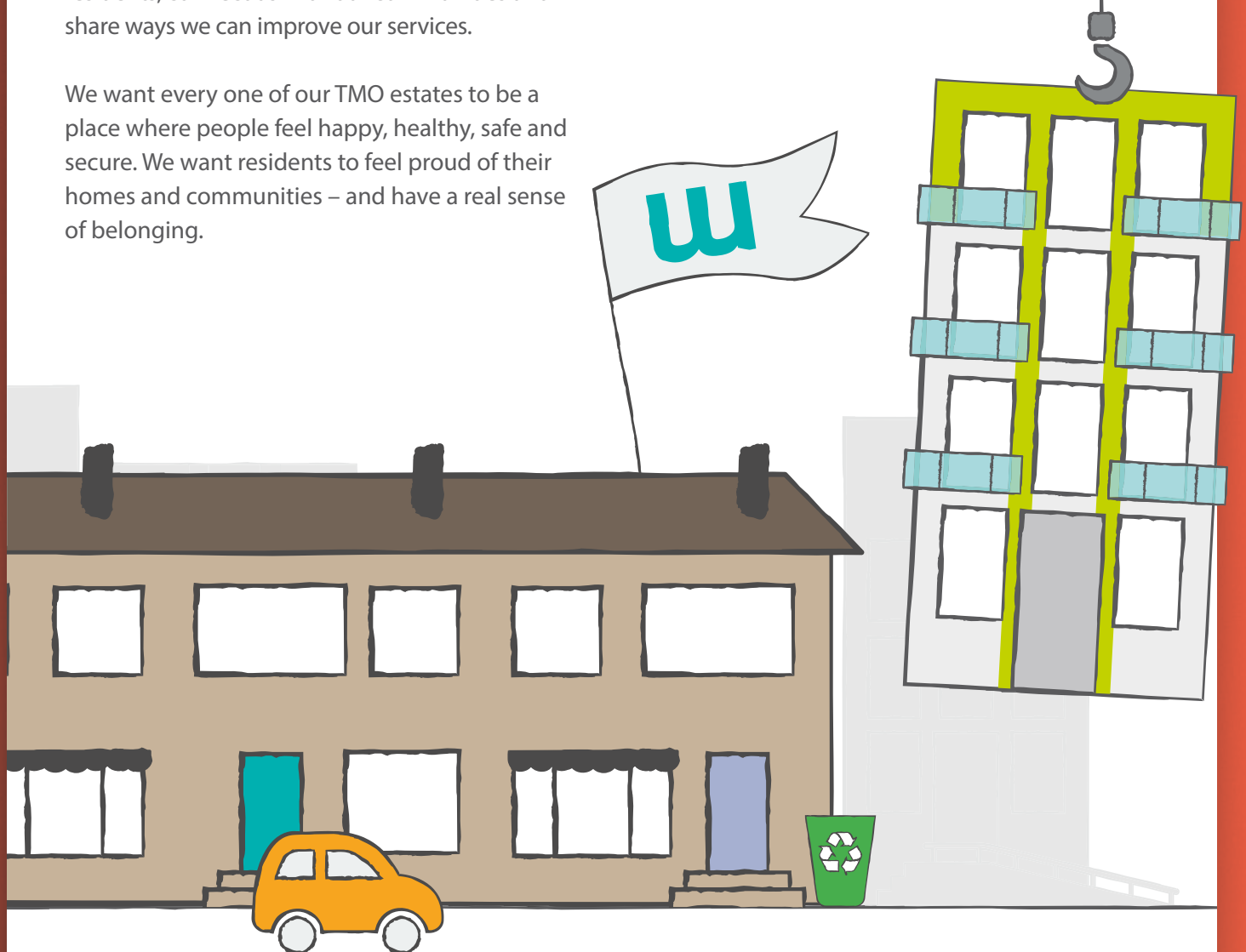
Formed in 2003, we own and manage around 3,000 homes – many of which are high rise – across 10 neighbourhoods in Walsall and London. It is the Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) who help shape how we deliver services on each estate.

Most of the TMOs no longer provide management services. They focus on delivering community development activities and overseeing how services are being delivered on their estate. They help us to build strong relationships with residents, connect us with our communities and share ways we can improve our services.

We want every one of our TMO estates to be a place where people feel happy, healthy, safe and secure. We want residents to feel proud of their homes and communities – and have a real sense of belonging.

That's why we offer spaces and services that enable people to connect with each other. From community hubs to green spaces, residents can meet, socialise and build their confidence and skills, whatever their age.

We have established a new Communities team and introduced funding for TMOs, to help build our communities' resilience in the face of challenges.



Investing in our homes and neighbourhoods

Building and creating new homes

WATMOS Community Homes is committed to building new, good quality, safe and affordable homes that meet the demands and needs of local people.

Demand for social housing is high and we have an ambition to meet affordable housing need. We have let our new 3-bedroom houses located at Avenues, Brownhills and Leamore on affordable rent which is at around 80% of the market rent.

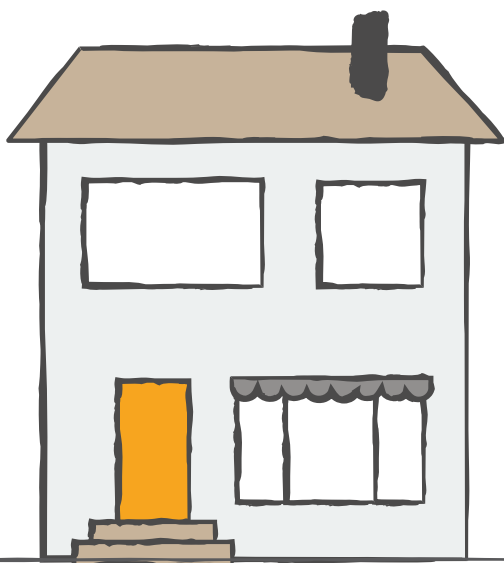
Through our strategic partnership with Matrix Housing Partnership, we've just secured a further **£3.3m grant from Homes England to build 60 properties** across our estates over the next 4 years.

To make the best of underused or empty spaces, we also converted the Twin Crescents office in Pelsall into a residential flat.

We secured
£170,000
from Homes
England

We built
7
new homes

We're funding
the build with
£1m
from cash
reserves



Maintaining and improving our homes

Our ambition is to create homes and communities our residents feel proud of. In practice, this means making sure all our homes are safe, well maintained, energy efficient and future proofed.

Having carried out an assessment to see how best we maintain our tower blocks and make sure they remain structurally sound for years to come, in 2021, we started the major investment in them to improve their energy efficiency, value and appearance.

Walsall tower blocks investment – our largest decarbonisation project

We're undertaking **£20m of energy efficiency works to all 21 tower blocks in Walsall**, making it one of the largest tower block energy efficiency investment schemes in the UK.

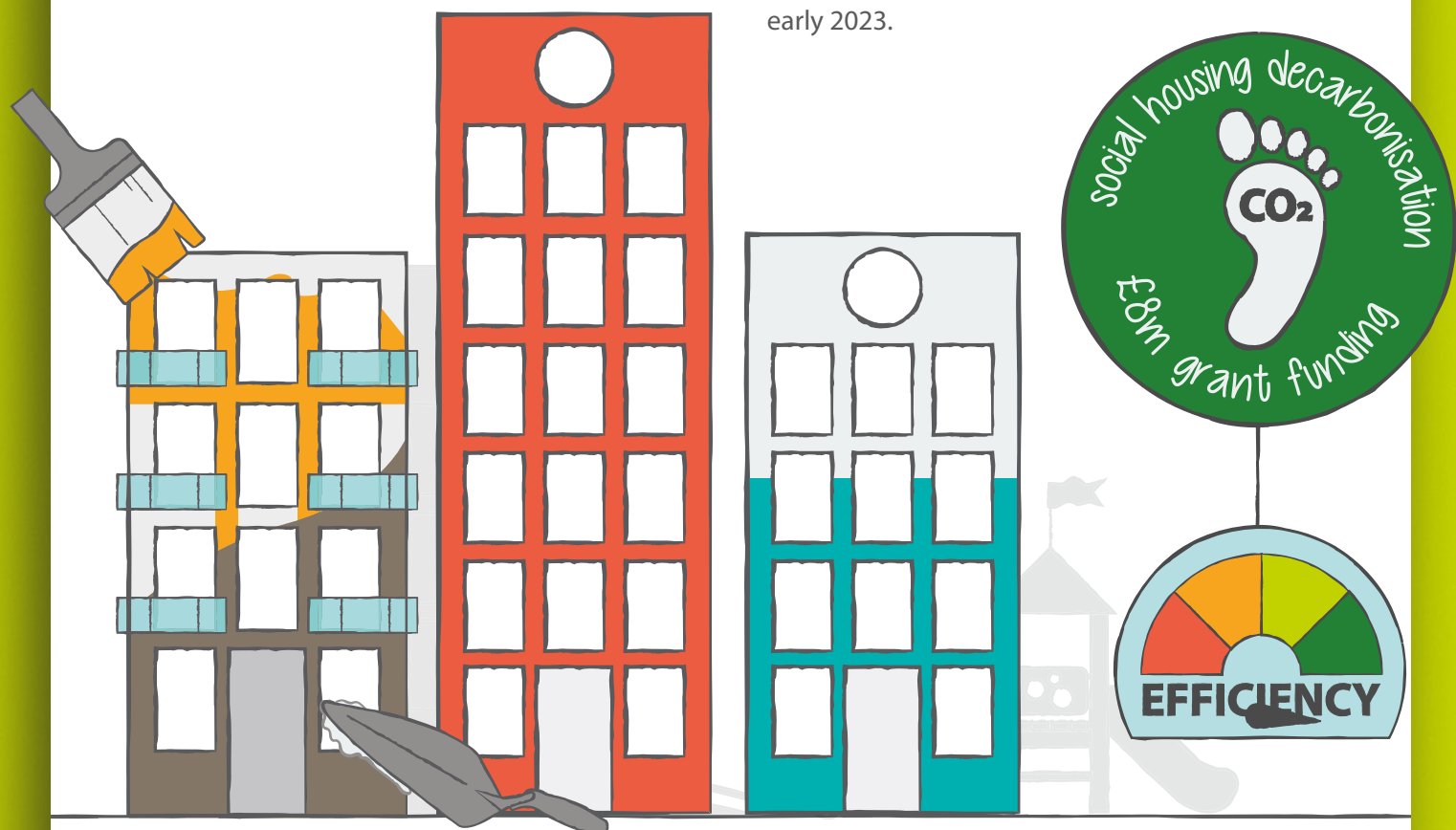
The works are being subsidised with an £8m grant from the Government's 'Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund' – the fourth largest allocation of funding in the country.

By significantly improving the buildings' thermal energy efficiency, it will help to lower energy bills for our residents.

We've started refurbishment works, which included a thermal wrap installation made up of external wall insulation and render. We'll also install new external balcony doors and windows, and upgrade or renew balcony balustrades and floor coverings.

We've worked closely with professional consultants, government agencies and the fire service to make sure we use approved non-combustible materials that meet the highest safety standards and comply fully with fire safety requirements.

The works are due to be completed in early 2023.



Installing new boilers

We invested £500,000 to replace older boilers with new high-efficiency boilers in 197 properties across our estates. This will improve reliability and reduce running costs for our residents – and help us to lower our carbon footprint.

Installing energy efficient lighting in our blocks

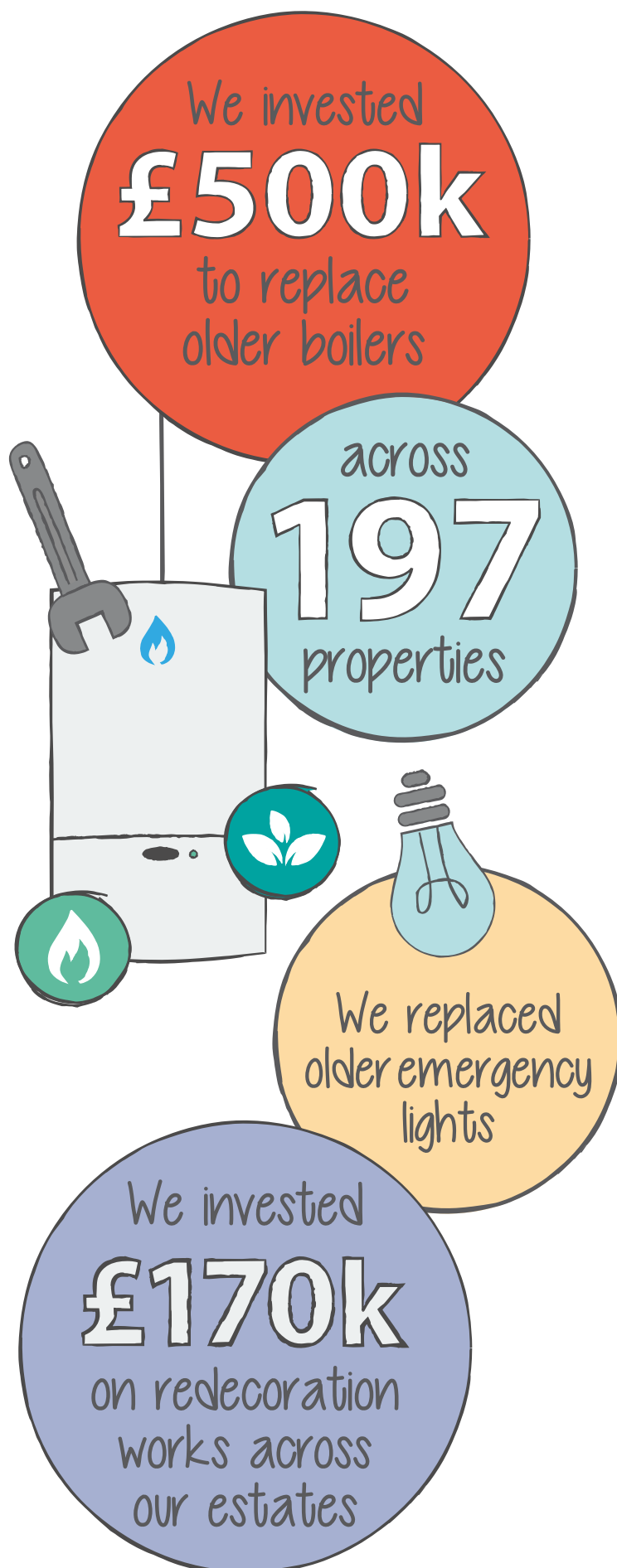
We invested £120,000 to replace older and inefficient emergency lights in the internal communal areas of 12 blocks in Leamore and Burrowes Street. The new lights will lower carbon emissions, improve lamp life and, with a dimming feature at night with movement sensors, they will help reduce running costs.

Improving the quality of our homes

We invested £85,000 in decoration works in Lambeth Walk, Stoughton Close and Gibson Road on the Ethelred Estate, which included repainting the white lines on the car parks. These works will extend across more properties on the estate in 2022/23.

We invested a further £85,000 in redecorating 250 properties and communal areas across the Delves Estate. Again, the works will continue in 2022/23 to complete the estate.

We have also replaced 14 kitchens and 10 bathrooms, so that all our properties continue to meet the Decent Homes Standard.



Supporting older and disabled residents to live independently

We're committed to enabling older residents to live independently in affordable, secure homes that they can easily manage.

We've engaged with our residents before redeveloping our sites – to understand how our housing can help meet the health and wellbeing needs of older people, what changes we need to make, and what's the best local approach.

We are reviewing our sheltered housing services, including the buildings, to assess their fitness to meet the future housing needs and aspirations of older people. We've hosted two estate-based resident consultation events this year to ask their views on possible redevelopment.

This was supported by a grant through 'Community Led Homes' to help facilitate and develop ideas and feedback from residents.

We spent
£15k
on home adaptations

We adapted
30
homes in Walsall
to improve
independence and
accessibility

Home aids and adaptations

To help our disabled residents live independently, we've adapted some of our homes with a more accessible, comfortable and safer setup, and catered for individual health and mobility needs.



Investing in digital fibre TV and broadband

Through its 'digital by default' strategy, the UK government is encouraging all public services to be delivered digitally. These services must be straightforward and convenient for all who choose to use them – while those who can't should not be excluded.

So, in partnership with SCCI Alphatrack Ltd, we've installed digital TV and full fibre broadband across our high and low rise homes. Residents can now subscribe to the fastest broadband packages available on a special low rate 'social tariff' (typically 50% of normal rates) and benefit from a 30-day rolling contract.

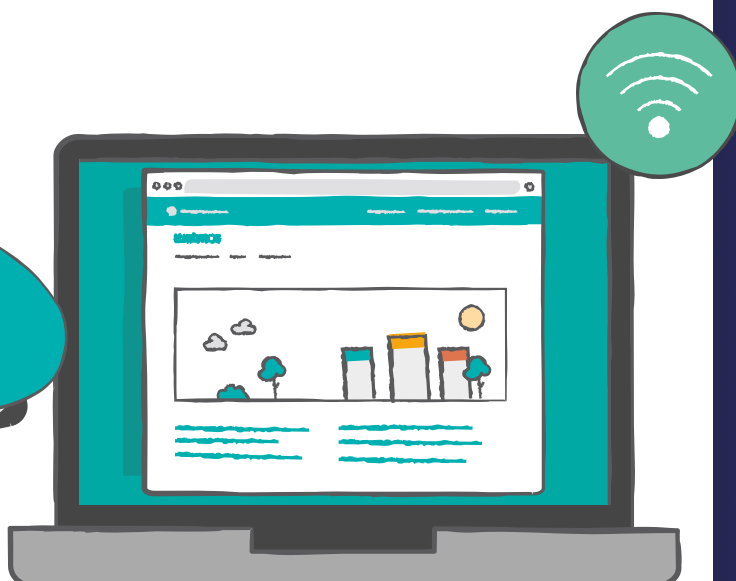


We've made **40** laptops and tablets available to all residents across our estates – children especially – to access digital services.



We've worked with Clear Community Web and West London Mission (WLM) to provide a range of digital skills courses that help build our residents' skills and confidence to use the internet in a safe, secure and effective way.

This has enabled them to connect with family and friends during lockdown, supported home schooling and remote working and given residents access to government, local and consumer services – as well as our WATMOS housing services – that are increasingly delivered through digital technologies.



Keeping our homes a safe place to live

To improve efficiencies, we've changed how we deliver some of our repairs and maintenance services. Rather than using small local teams on each estate, two regional offices now oversee the services.

A large proportion of the homes that WATMOS owns are flats, which result in significant health and safety obligations. These include a need to carry out statutory routine checks and servicing work to keep our properties safe.

During the year, we strengthened the team and made new appointments following the retirement of some well-known faces. We took the opportunity to consolidate our monitoring and reporting arrangements, enabling us to meet the requirements of increased regulation and compliance.

Fire safety improvements

In February, we started £750,000 of work to remove the timber cladding from several blocks across the Ethlered Estate in London.

This contract, which includes replacing existing doors with new fire doors, is scheduled to complete in autumn 2022.



Managing our homes

Collecting rents

COVID-19 brought financial challenges to many households. So, throughout this time, we helped our residents to manage their money, get extra financial help and support to cover their rent and living expenses plus gain access to debt advice and services to improve their personal financial position so they could keep up with rent payments. By doing so, we kept rent arrears within target.

We made good use of the Universal Credit payment portal, which enabled us to improve rent collection and payment processing.

However, as living costs increased, we've helped our tenants to maintain their tenancies and cope in very challenging circumstances in several ways:

We referred tenants experiencing debt and budgeting issues to local money advice services or Citizens Advice.

We helped 26 tenants to claim Discretionary Housing Payments when they were in hardship or experienced difficulties paying their rent.

2021/22 rent performance highlights

By supporting residents through debt advice and access to additional welfare support, we've been able to collect this rent and avoid rent arrears and losses.

77%

of residents are satisfied that their rent provides good value for money

101.4%

of rent collected

1.02%

rent lost from empty properties

2.61%

rent arrears



How we help sustain tenancies

Managing a home can be difficult and, with the increasing financial pressures of rising food and fuel costs and inflation, we're committed to providing services that support our residents to sustain their tenancy.

As part of this, we set up new tenancy sustainment officer roles to support tenants who may struggle to manage their tenancies or need a little extra help. They look after our most vulnerable tenants, giving advice on paying rent and bills or managing health-related conditions, or simply making sure older people are safe and supported while they live in their home.

Over the year, we've been able to:

Engage directly with tenants struggling to pay their rent.

Use local food aid programmes to help residents get basic food support.

Act on potential arrears risks with our new monthly rent monitoring strategy.

Refer residents to external organisations for money advice and counselling.

Working in this way, we've made sure our residents are not at risk of losing their home. We've avoided the need to make any evictions due to residents being unable to pay their rent.



Managing empty properties

Our dedicated housing team have worked hard to improve how we manage voids and reduce lost rental income from empty homes in our neighbourhoods.

We strive to get new residents into our vacant homes quickly, easily and comfortably – and have focused our efforts to reduce our average re-let times from **90.6 during COVID restrictions to 45.6 days** over the last year. Streamlining our operations has meant we've reduced rent losses - money we've then reinvested to improve our homes, services and communities.



Creating safer neighbourhoods and managing anti-social behaviour (ASB)

We're committed to creating strong neighbourhoods and communities all our residents can feel proud to be part of – and safe in.

With specialised Tenancy Officers in post from September 2021, we can now offer our tenants expert advice and support to manage antisocial behaviour (ASB).

During 2021/22 there were **60 antisocial behaviour cases reported** – mostly due to noise nuisance, rowdy behaviour and loud music. We want all of our residents to live safely within their homes and neighbourhoods.

We take reports of antisocial behaviour seriously and have clear procedures in place to ensure that we provide a fair and consistent service that supports victims and addresses antisocial behaviour effectively. When necessary, we issue Notices of Suspended Possession Orders. Regrettably, last year we evicted three residents for antisocial behaviour.



Our 2021/22 performance

Our residents are at the heart of everything that we do. Their feedback informs the services we offer. So we use satisfaction surveys, complaint forms and organised surgeries to gather up-to-date information and insight to see how we are doing, where we can improve, and what changes we can make to do better.

Service area	Group performance 2021/22	Group performance 2020/21
3-year tenancy visits completed	98%	94%
Garage tenancy checks completed	100%	95%
Average re-let times for empty properties	45.6 days	90.6 days
Rent arrears as at 31 March 2022	2.61%	3.95%
Rent collected as at 31 March 2022	101.41%	99.7%
Rent lost from empty properties	1.02%	1.44%
Number of ASB cases reported	60	189
Repairs completed within target	97%	95%
Properties meeting the Decent Homes standard	100%	95%
Repairs completed at first visit	99.8%	98.9%
Gas services completed	99.9%	100%
Average energy performance SAP Rating*	70.08	70.15
Number of estate inspections carried out	64	41
Properties vacant & not available for letting (average percentage over the year)	0.37% (0.27% at year end)	0.14% (1.4% at year end)

* SAP is the 'Standard Assessment Procedure'. It's the only official, government approved system for assessing the energy rating for a new home. The higher the SAP rating, the lower the fuel costs and the lower the associated emissions of carbon dioxide.

How we have kept our homes safe

We completed:

99.9%

annual gas service and safety checks

100%

of required fire risk assessment surveys

100%

of the required asbestos inspections

100%

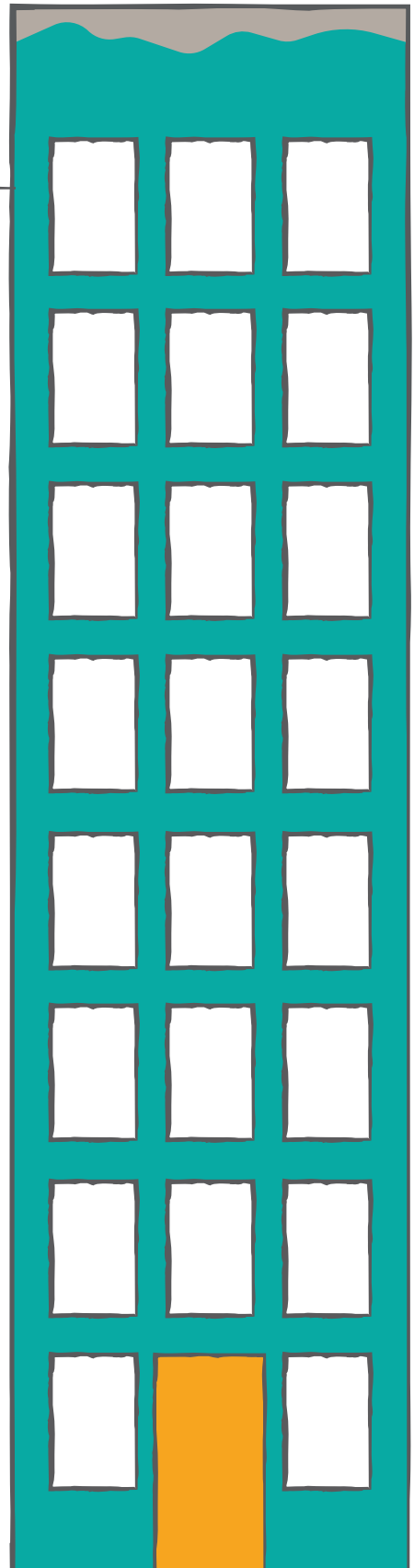
of the required water hygiene checks

10%

of our properties with gas installations were audited by an independent accredited company to ensure that the works certified are all correct

411

electrical safety tests



We serviced and carried out safety-inspections on:

45

passenger lifts

34

stair lifts

51

lightning conductor tapes

We prioritised the 10,303 reported repairs as follows:

14%

emergency

49%

urgent

37%

routine

96.5%

of responsive repairs
were completed
within target
timescales

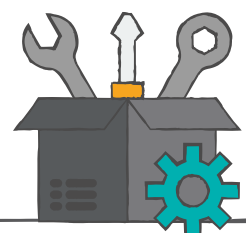
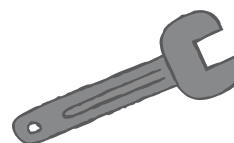
98%

of responsive
repairs were
completed right
first time

We've cleared the backlog of repairs after the final COVID lockdown. We've also completed some large projects across London to improve the long-term condition and performance of our buildings' roofs. This will help to reduce the number of roof leak repairs that get reported in the future.

Over the next 12 months, we'll aim to improve how quickly we attend repairs, clearly communicate appointments to our customers, and make sure we schedule and complete more complex jobs faster.

We'll continue to work with our contractors and employed tradespeople to complete works quickly, safely and to a good standard, while achieving good value for money. We also intend to recruit for a new handy person role in London to respond more effectively and proactively to repairs for our residents on a local level.

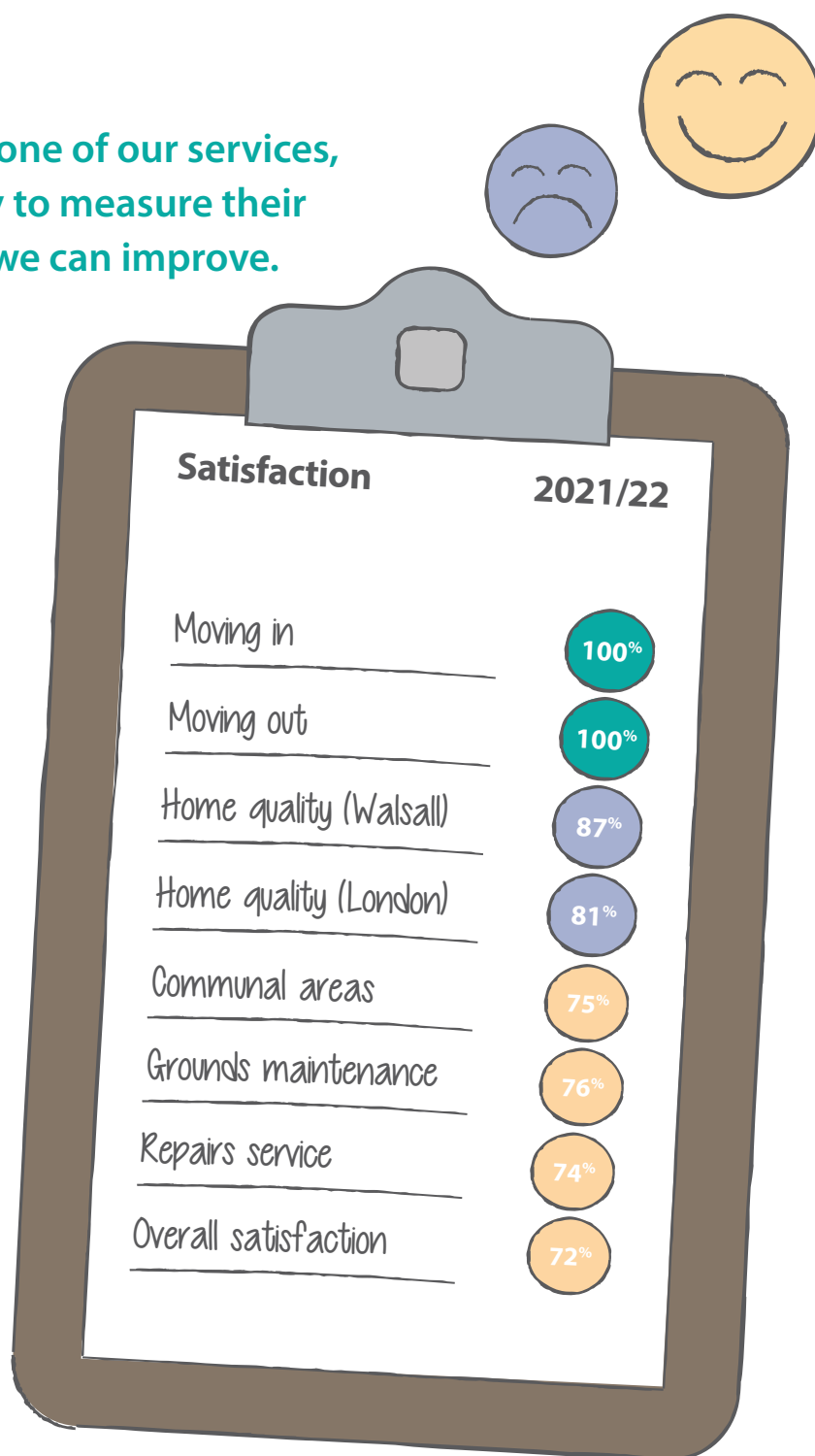


Satisfaction

Whenever a resident uses one of our services, we follow up with a survey to measure their satisfaction and see ways we can improve.

We carried out a group-wide service delivery perception survey to gauge tenant satisfaction on key priority areas such as repairs, cleaning and grounds maintenance. A number of residents took part in the survey, and we were pleased with the nearly 30% return rate which is higher than average.

The results from this survey show us where we perform well and where we can improve further. We also followed up on feedback where residents appeared to still have an outstanding issue.



Responding to changes in Consumer Standards

The Regulator for Social Housing has consulted with tenants and landlords across the country to develop a set of national performance metrics, known as Tenant Satisfaction Measures, which all registered providers must start collecting from 1 April 2023.

This will provide tenants with greater clarity and understanding of their landlord's performance and show how well they comply with the Government's Consumer Standards. We fully support the draft measures, and are already aligning our key performance indicators (KPIs), surveys and communication channels to comply with these new standards.

How we've handled complaints

We strive to deliver a great resident experience and meet expectations by getting things right first time, every time. However, we don't always achieve what residents expect, giving them cause to complain.

When this happens, we work hard to try to put things right. We operate a clear and transparent two-stage complaints process, with the option of having complaints reviewed by a panel of staff and residents.

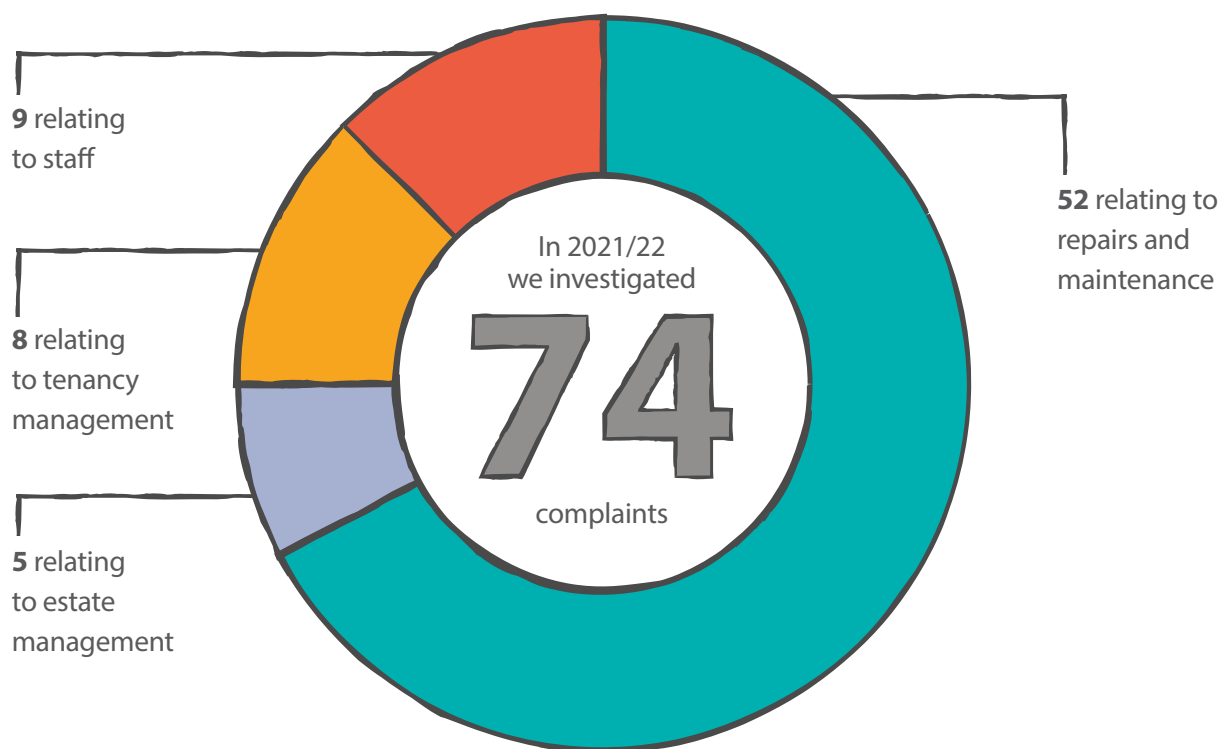
When we receive complaints, we may need to make changes to the way we do things, for example, changing a form or letter. But, where we need to make significant changes, such as to our housing management system or procedures, we'll consult with residents.

In 2021/22 we received 82 complaints.

5 were withdrawn.

3 were in the investigation stage at year end.

74 complaints were fully investigated and responded to.



85%

of complaints were closed within target

27

complaints were upheld

23

complaints were partially upheld

24

complaints were not upheld

7 complaints were escalated to the stage 2 review hearing panel. There were no decision changes in 6 of these complaints. The hearing panel upheld one appeal.

Responding to the Housing Ombudsman

Housing Associations are required to have clear and transparent processes for dealing with complaints and are expected to operate within the complaints code published by the Housing Ombudsman.

As part of this, we ensure that we follow a clear set of procedures to ensure we do everything reasonable and possible to resolve a complaint.

Once a complaint has gone through these internal processes, and after a set period of time, there is one final stage of redress which involves residents appealing directly to the Housing Ombudsman.

This past year, there were three complaints escalated to the Housing Ombudsman for review. Two of these were not upheld or not investigated, and one led to a determination that we failed in how we handled it.

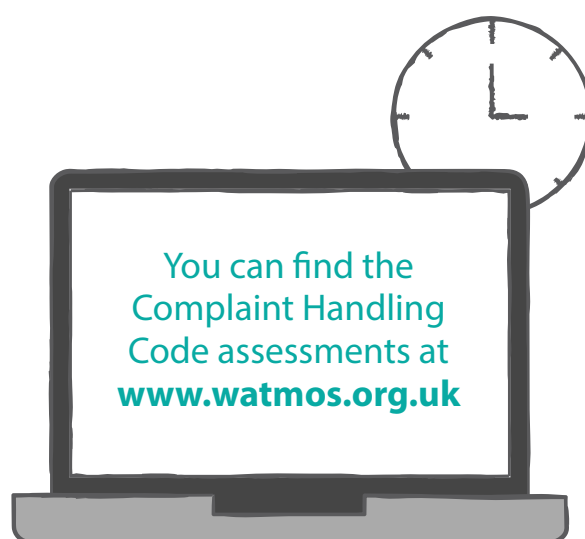
Complaint 1: After investigating an antisocial behaviour (ASB) complaint, the Ombudsman decided that there was no maladministration on the part of WATMOS therefore no Complaint Handling Failure Order for non compliance was issued.

Complaint 2: Following a complaint about our response to window repairs, the Housing Ombudsman issued Complaint Handling Orders. We developed an action plan to ensure all recommendations and suggestions by the Housing Ombudsman were addressed. The Ombudsman confirmed they were happy with the response to the Orders and the actions taken by WATMOS.

Complaint 3: This complaint related to water rates and the Housing Ombudsman did not investigate as it was deemed outside their jurisdiction.

To make sure our processes are the best standard they can be, WATMOS is carrying out a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's new Complaint Handling Code. This sets out good practice for landlords in responding to complaints effectively and fairly, and how to learn from complaints to drive service improvements.

We'll carry out a new self-assessment each year or whenever we introduce major service changes to make sure we comply with the Code and will publish these assessments on our website.



Learning from complaints

We need to:

Communicate better with residents.

Improve our working practices and systems with our repairs contractors.

Train staff to ask the right questions when taking details of repairs.

Focus on finding the root cause of complaints.

Next steps

We will:

Streamline how we collate satisfaction surveys for complainants to feed back.

Complete an annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code of Practice 2022 and publish this on our website – and we'll make changes to our policy and procedure if necessary.

Focus on learning from complaints by holding an internal debrief session after each complaint.

Publish quarterly performance reports on how we handle and learn from complaints.



We're improving
the way we deal
with complaints
to make the
process better
for everyone

W



watmos

Promoting community empowerment, involvement and social value

Throughout the year, many vulnerable residents within our communities have felt lonely and isolated. This has fuelled a rise in mental health conditions, exacerbated by severe financial pressure caused by the cost of living crisis.

That's why, to support our residents and communities, we've worked with our housing management teams and followed our "local solutions to local challenges" approach – designing programmes according to what's important for each area.

New communities team

In 2021, we established a dedicated communities team to build on our relationships with our TMOs and network of resident volunteers – and give them a stronger voice in our governance arrangements.

The team works with local councils and organisations to deliver community development initiatives that improve lives through education, employment, skills and training, health and wellbeing, social activities, charity and volunteering, plus the natural environment in our communities and neighbourhoods.



Introducing

WatWorks

A **watmos** Community Homes initiative

In 2022, we launched our new
WatWorks community-focused brand.

With a dedicated identity, residents can easily see and get involved with local community initiatives that help to build a better community and future.

WatWorks will inspire togetherness, realise potential, improve environments, and give talent a stage to shine on.



New fund to support community initiatives

In 2021, WATMOS Community Homes set up a Community Development Fund (CDF) to help our TMOs finance local initiatives.

We've invested **£350k** into community development and received **£39k** from external sources.



How we're building stronger communities

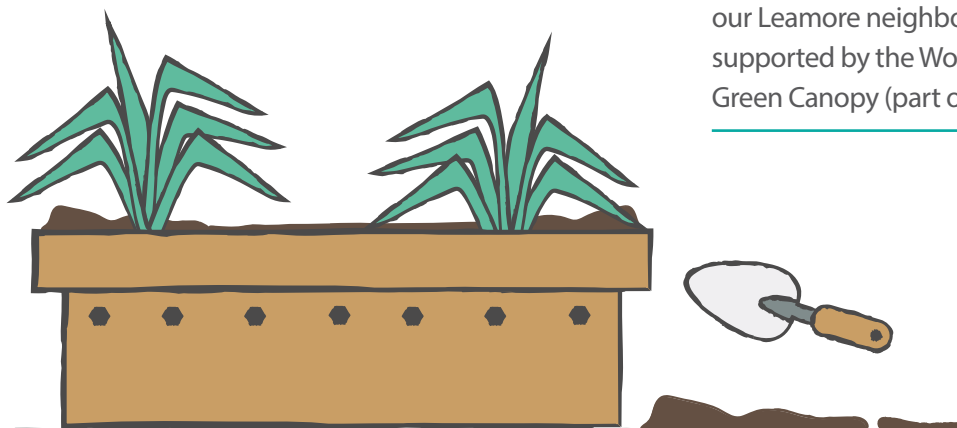
Here are some highlights of the initiatives that are making a difference.

Nature and local environment

Residents can get involved in the natural environment to help improve their quality of life, connect with nature and each other and enhance the environment in our neighbourhoods.

Our residents recently asked us to improve green spaces on our estates, offer better recycling facilities and support them to establish community groups for gardening and food growing.

This year, **we've run 100 local sessions** across our neighbourhoods.



Here's just a few of our recent nature and environment projects:

Ethelred residents created a thriving community garden through our Grow Back Greener project, growing flowers, fruits and vegetables on installed raised garden beds. It's improved the natural environment, air quality and biodiversity and developed our residents' gardening skills, volunteering and employment opportunities.

We created a memorial garden in our Ethelred neighbourhood, giving residents a quiet space to relax, reflect and connect to nature and one another – all to boost their health and wellbeing. This initiative was supported by Lambeth Council, Ethelred TMO and Urban Growth.

We co-hosted a tree-planting day for residents in our Leamore neighbourhood and community, supported by the Woodlands Trust and The Queen's Green Canopy (part of the Platinum Jubilee).

Supporting social connections

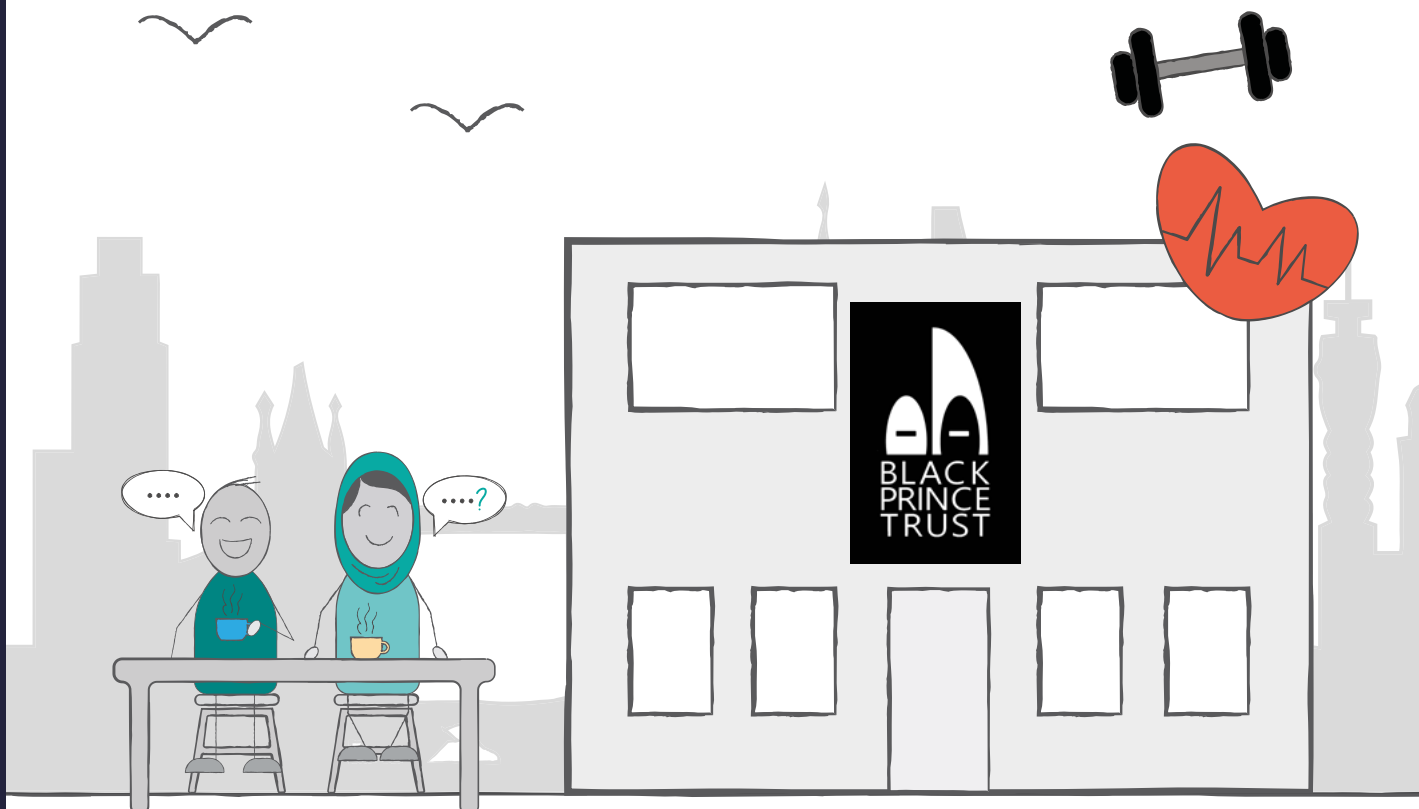
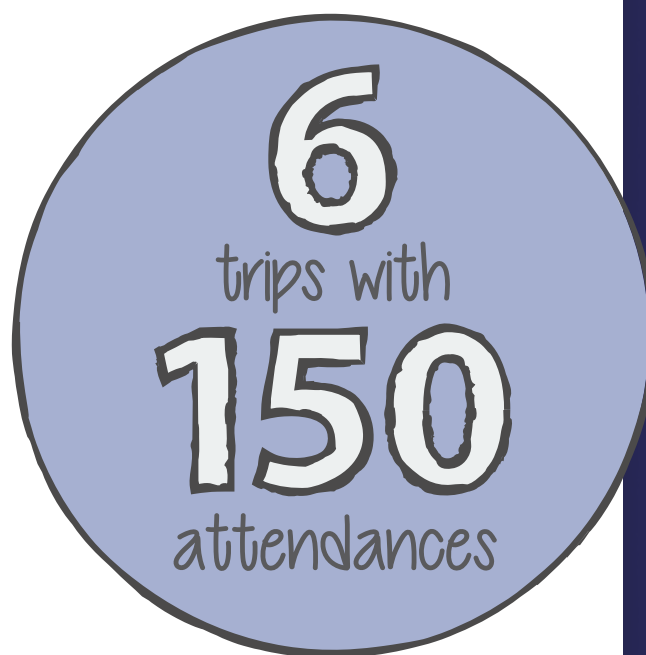
We've set up and run online and in-person health and wellbeing activities, including walking groups, fitness and yoga classes and healthy lifestyle clubs in partnership with the NHS.

We also ran weekly coffee mornings and cream teas, weekly bingo games, monthly Pensioner Convention Group meetings and regular AGE UK drop-in sessions to offer extra help to our older residents.

We delivered over **500 health and wellbeing activities during the year.**

Residents living in London have subsidised access to gym, sports classes and activities at Black Prince Trust.

We offered subsidised family days out to the beach and Christmas pantomimes. These events were popular with our residents, particularly for those with young families or those needing carers.



Charity and volunteering

The Communities team delivered vital outreach services to support our most vulnerable residents during the lockdowns. These services included a telephone befriending service and food parcel deliveries.

Residents raised over £2,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support through cake bakes and raffles.

We've hosted community open days on our estates to bring residents together, meet TMO committee members and get involved in upcoming community initiatives.

Personal development and financial wellbeing

Since many residents are facing increased financial pressure, we've worked with local financial charities and organisations to provide specialist information, advice and guidance to help residents manage their money and reduce their debt.

We've helped people to open their first bank account, apply for Universal Credit entitlements, set up as self-employed and even apply for business start-up loans.



Training and skills programmes to support residents into employment

We supported **46 residents** to gain a new employment skill or qualification in carpentry, digital skills training and horticulture. We partnered with the Michael Tippet College to deliver an onsite carpentry skills course at the Ethelred estate, which led to an employment opportunity for a local resident and accredited carpentry skills qualifications for **12 attendees**.

In partnership with Clear Community Web and West London Mission (WLM), we delivered digital skills training to Ethelred's sheltered housing scheme residents and pensioners. 9 residents successfully completed our Digital Horizons course and we gave five residents a Lenovo tablet each.

We held our first Employment and Training Open Day in Walsall, enabling residents to talk to our experts from Steps To Work and Vocational Skills Solutions (VSS) about getting into work, training and volunteering.

Lifestyle and culture

Volunteers in Walsall provided a free Christmas meal to our most vulnerable, older residents. In London, volunteers ran estate-based children's parties in our own community centres.

The Lambeth Christmas event for WATMOS and Ethelred TMO – was a large-scale, co-funded event led by the council and hosted by Black Prince Trust. It attracted hundreds of people from across the immediate neighbourhood and surrounding areas.

Working together with our TMOs

WATMOS Community Homes was founded by like-minded TMOs who came together to manage their estates. We continue to actively engage with residents through the Board, committees and other involvement activities, ensuring that the residents' voice helps to guide the organisation.

Half of our Board (6 members) are residents and a further 6 residents sit on the Resident Services Panel. We also currently have 79 residents as committee members on TMO Boards.

Investing in community centres and facilities

We're committed to building strong communities. That's why we've invested in our community centres and improved our community gardens and spaces to give residents a place where they can meet and socialise with each other at local activities and TMO committee meetings.

Across our neighbourhoods, we have 9 community facilities managed directly by the TMOs. These facilities are used to host local activities and are often the heart of our estates, which is why we recently provided financial support to refurbish the centre at Avenues TMO (Walsall).



Resident engagement

Our residents are at the heart of everything we do. We always involve them in our housing and community decision-making and we listen to our residents' views, ideas and experiences about our homes and services.

Residents can meet with us at our local offices to talk over any housing and service-related needs.

We offer housing surgeries and provide opportunities for residents to have their say in our governance structure via their TMOs or directly.

We encourage residents to join open days, resident consultations, community projects and activities.

We invite residents to participate in regular surveys – helping us to inform and measure our approaches to tenant satisfaction, housing, repairs and maintenance services and neighbourhood services.

We have a high level of resident involvement in the governance of WATMOS, with **3%** of all households being actively involved in the organisation.

Resident newsletter

We deliver our 'Community Roots' newsletters twice a year to keep our residents informed of all the latest WATMOS Community Homes information, news, updates, initiatives and events.

Organisational prosperity

We're committed to achieving the maximum value for money from our homes and properties. That's why we reinvest income generated to build new or improve existing homes – and create strong, sustainable communities. We also invest in our people, which enables us to deliver better services for our residents.

Good governance

WATMOS is required to meet the terms of the Regulator of Social Housing's Regulatory Standards, in particular the Governance & Financial Viability Standard, as well as the Consumer Standards. The good news is we currently comply with these standards.

The Regulator carried out an In Depth Assessment (IDA) of WATMOS, which concluded in March 2021 and gave us a rating of G2 for governance (it was G1 before). We need to improve some aspects of our governance arrangements whilst we remain strongly focussed on our services, our homes and our estates. Our financial viability rating didn't change and remained at V2.

Following the IDA, our board developed a Governance Improvement Plan, setting out all the improvements and changes we would make to reach the highest standard once again. We continue to work on the plan, changing our company rules, implementing a new tenant engagement strategy and establishing a new Residents' Committee.

Over the year we have:

Improved our risk management arrangements.

Carried out rigorous stress testing to help us plan for and mitigate against extreme financial pressures.

Completed a full review of our board members' skills, refreshed our succession plan, introduced board member remuneration and recruited new members.

Developed a programme of board member training and a board readiness programme for prospective tenant members.

Reviewed how tenants are involved in governance to make sure we continue to value their voice and experience.

Identified effective and accessible ways for residents to shape and influence services.



We appointed three new independent board members, including Jaz Saggu as the new Board Chair. We are in the process of recruiting two new resident board members in line with our ethos of tenant influence. These will be formally appointed soon.

We established a new People & Culture Committee who will lead our work on promoting equality, diversity and inclusion – one of our areas we wish to strengthen.

We must also comply with the National Housing Federation's Code of Governance – and we're pleased to say we do. In June 2022, our board adopted the NHF's latest (2020) edition of the Code and put in place a work plan to make sure we're fully compliant by March 2023. Much of the work already completed under the Governance Improvement Plan will help us in this but we have some more to do.



Technology is shaping how we deliver our resident services

Through the year, we've been busy developing our new tenant portal which will bring new features that are designed to help residents manage vital aspects of their tenancy, such as:

Reporting repairs.

ASB reporting and management.

Multi tenancy support.

Paying rent and service charges.

Accessing account information and key documents.

Improving customer service with a messaging tool.

We are excited to launch this portal in the year ahead. Residents will soon be able to register and enjoy the immediate benefits of online access to services.

We implemented our new Totalmobile solution during the year in Walsall. It gives our colleagues instant access to information such as repair job sheets so they can meet tenants' needs quickly. The reduced administration time means we can focus more on customer-facing activities. In London, our teams have access to this same information but through our contractor's software solution.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, we've been working to improve the quality of information and data we hold relating to tenants' homes, their repairs history and property facilities and condition. This helps us to comply with all the health and safety legislation relating to tenants' homes – and shapes future investment decisions.

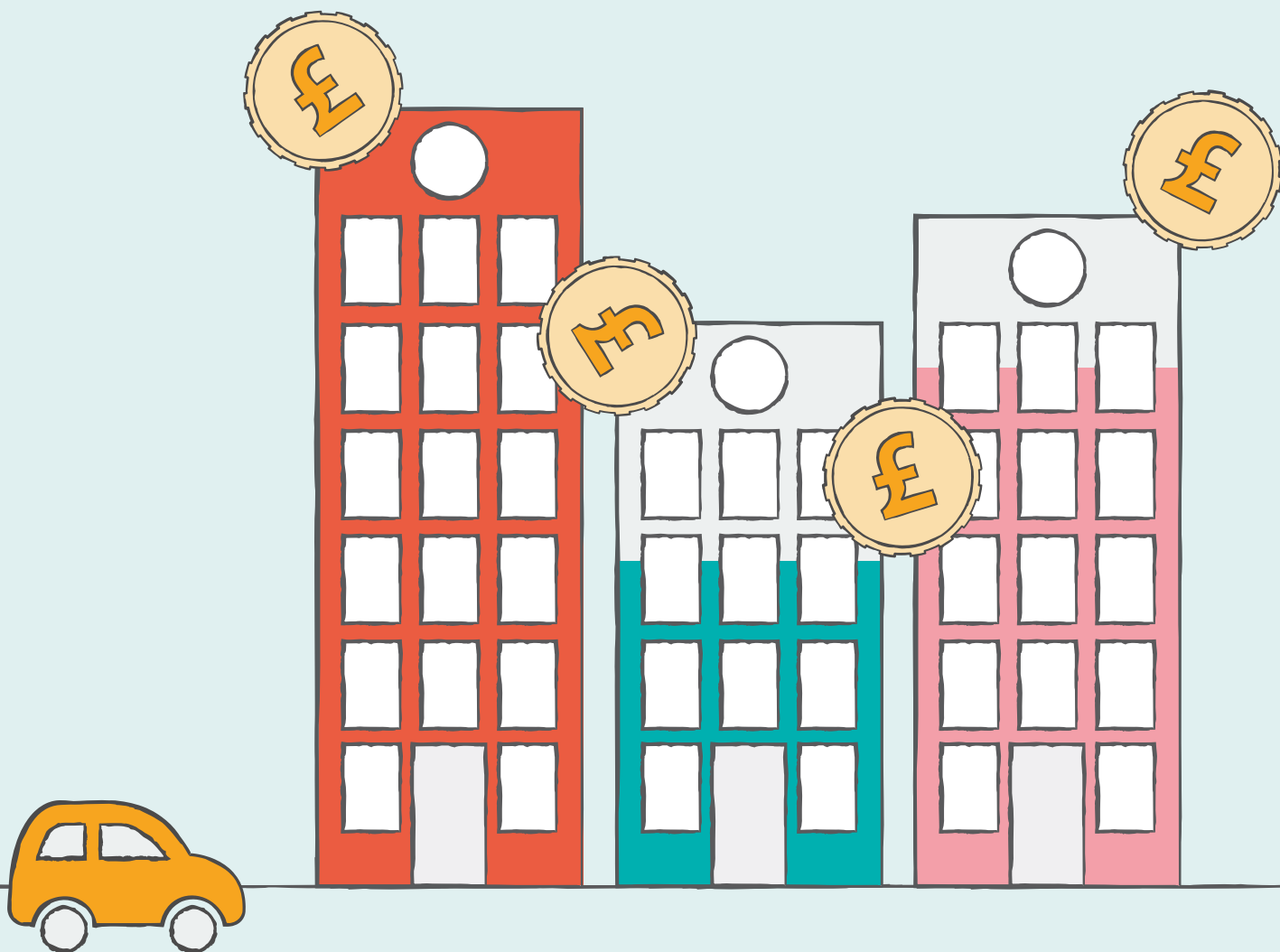
How we spend our money

The table below summarises our financial position. For more details, please refer to our audited accounts on our website.

Income and expenditure for the period ended 31 March	2022 £000s	2021 £000s
Income		
Income from lettings	14,537	14,241
Other income	1,434	1,250
Interest earned	1	3
NET surplus on sale of fixed assets	153	156
Total income	16,125	15,650
Expenditure		
Management of properties	2,855	2,464
Estate service costs	3,197	3,038
Property repairs and maintenance	4,735	3,662
Depreciation	2,211	2,114
Development costs not capitalised	-	-
Other activities	454	299
Interest on loans	261	264
Bad debts	27	105
Total costs	13,740	11,946
NET surplus	2,385	3,704

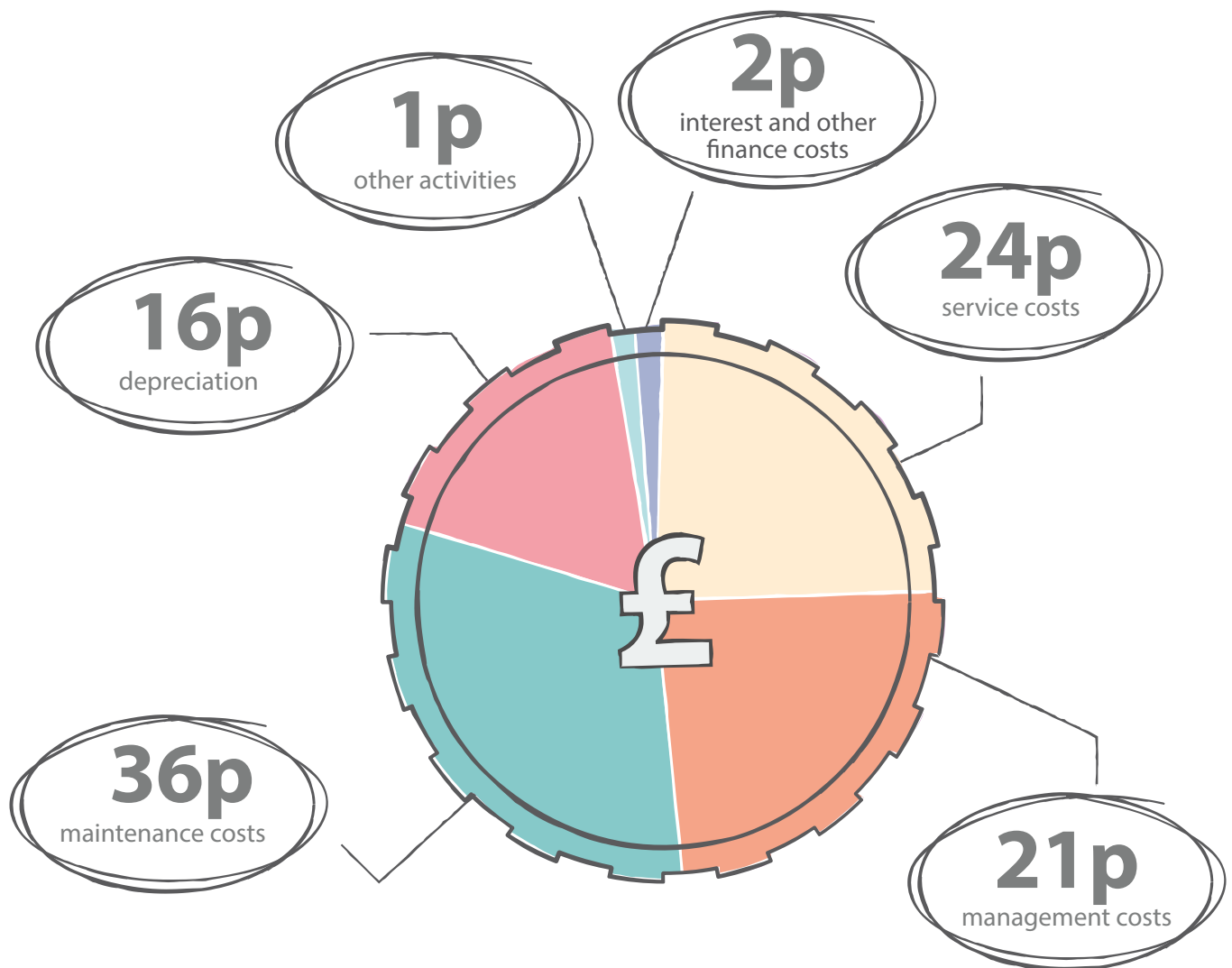


Balance sheet for the period ended 31 March	2022 £000s	2021 £000s
Fixed assets	52,114	47,229
Current assets	10,022	12,406
Current liabilities	(4,514)	(4,788)
Total assets less current liabilities	57,622	54,847
Financed by		
Loans	1,865	1,875
Grants and other creditors	18,455	19,625
Reserves	37,302	33,347
	57,622	54,847



How every £1 of tenant's rent was spent

During the year, we saw an increase in repair costs, partly due to catching up on the backlog following lockdown and due to cost pressures in the wider economy. We've set our budgets for the forthcoming financial year to make sure there are sufficient resources available to keep homes well maintained. As a not-for-profit landlord, each £1 that we receive is spent on tenants' and leaseholders' homes and services – as illustrated below.



We seek value for money at every opportunity. In the current economic climate, we aim to control price pressures by re-tendering and market testing our contracts regularly and by working as efficiently as possible.

The table below shows the costs WATMOS incurs for each home we manage and how this compares to other housing associations whose homes were transferred from local authorities and has changed over the last five years.

Upper Quartile 2021	Unit Costs Data Headline Social Housing Costs (Total cost per unit £'000s)	Group 2022	Group 2021	Group 2020	Group 2019	Group 2018
	Housing management	0.78	0.69	0.80	0.90	0.81
	Services	1.23	1.16	1.26	1.19	0.93
	Routine maintenance	1.53	1.20	1.18	1.07	1.21
	Planned maintenance	0.30	0.18	0.22	0.51	0.43
	Other social housing activities	0.43	0.33	0.26	0.31	0.30
3.27	Sub total	4.27	3.56	3.72	3.98	3.68
0.66	Major repairs	2.43	0.64	0.24	0.69	1.20
3.93	Total cost per unit	6.70	4.20	3.96	4.67	4.88

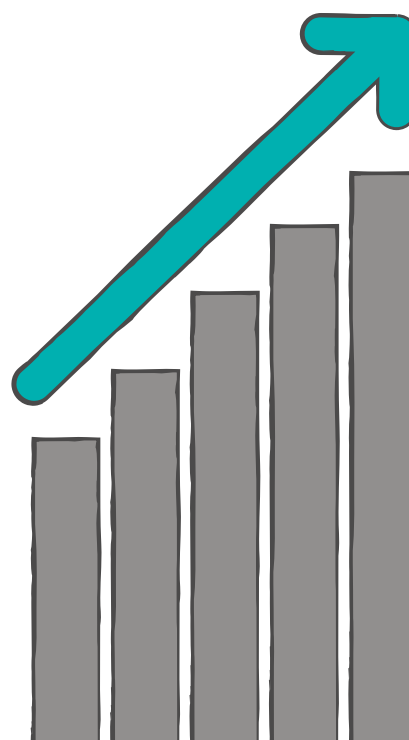
Overall, our costs are higher than some other associations and our Board recognises that this is a consequence of both a high proportion of flats (including high rise blocks) and local service delivery arrangements.

Our management costs were lower in 2021/22 than five years ago. This represents a real saving when taking inflation into account. The spending on "Other social housing activities" illustrates our priority for investing in the TMO's community development fund.

We've remained responsive to the changes in the wider economy. We've seen other costs grow, particularly around labour, materials and increased health and safety and compliance costs.

Our major tower block investment programme began this year – and this drives the increase in capital costs per unit represented above.

But through careful budgetary control, contract management and resident engagement and influence, we remain committed to achieving value for money while maintaining safe and high-quality homes and communities.



Investing in our people

Making WATMOS a great place to work

We've recently reformed our initiatives to attract and retain the best talent.

We've transformed our approach to employee performance management, so that we can better understand and meet our employees' financial, mental, physical and emotional needs. By getting this right, they are more productive, satisfied and willing to stay with us for longer.

As part of our people management strategy, we introduced Open Blend, a new platform to introduce coaching-led, one-to-one conversations that make it easier to grow and nurture a high-performing culture – and for managers to support all aspects of an individual's personal and professional journey.

It enables real-time recognition and employee motivational and wellbeing metrics, which nurtures happy, healthy, high-performing, productive employees – and better business results.

We're transforming WATMOS into a modern agile workplace, designed for maximum flexibility, productivity and performance to shape the future of our work, our people and workplace.

We have empowered our managers, teams and employees to work how, where and when they choose; making sure they have the resources, technology and tools they need to deliver their work to the best standard. With agile working, our people have greater freedom and flexibility on how they deliver their work and contribute to achieving our corporate objectives and plan. By nurturing happy, healthy, high-performing and productive employees, our business results will get better and better.

We offer a more flexible, hybrid and agile workplace



Creating a flexible, hybrid and agile workplace

Employers across the UK recognise the importance of 'duty of care' and 'doing the right thing'. As such, many are adopting more flexible and agile approaches to work – which has become a crucial recruitment and retention tool along with other employee benefits.

We've implemented ongoing hybrid working for some jobs and considered what we can do to build a workplace where our people's wellbeing, work-life balance, mental health and need for flexibility are seen as a central part of the business agenda.

We've introduced systems to support these different ways of working so that we are less reliant on office buildings and give our teams a more agile way to work. These changes have led to a range of efficiencies in value for money and we've ploughed the cost savings back into delivering our services digitally.

We asked staff to score their levels of happiness, confidence and ability to manage stress. Overall score for employee wellbeing was 70% (March 2022).

Average number of days lost through short-term sickness: 2.6 days on average per person for the year.



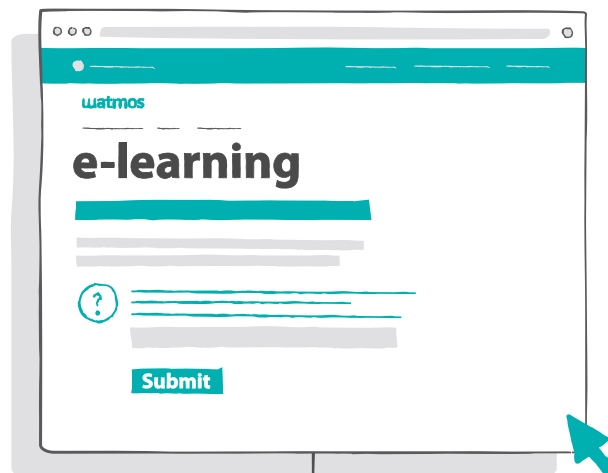
Attracting talent and developing people

During the year, we substantially improved our online recruitment portal and processes.

We strengthened our employer branding and enhanced the candidate experience at every stage of the application and onboarding process. It's made it easier to advertise on social media and feedback from new recruits and staff has suggested that applying for vacancies at WATMOS on all platforms (phone, tablet and computer) has never been easier.

We've recruited over **30 diverse and talented employees** to a wide range of posts.

In 2021/22, we delivered **597 internal and external classroom-based and online courses** for our employees.



Leading with emotional intelligence in the workplace

We provided emotional intelligence training to all line managers. As a result, we've strengthened their self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy and social skills – and developed greater awareness of how they, as individuals, are positively impacting team engagement.



Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

We want our services and opportunities to be accessible, responsive and good – no matter who you are or where you live. We recently developed a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and from this we'll put in place an action plan overseen by our new People and Culture Committee.

As part of our commitment to EDI, we continue to publish the diversity statistics of our residents, staff and Board members. Our aim is to make sure that our people are representative of the communities we serve and where this is not the case, we seek to introduce a range of actions to achieve more balanced representation.



Diversity data for 2021/22	Customer profile	Employee profile	Board profile
Age			
16 - 24	1.9%	0.9%	0.0%
25 - 24	9.6%	14.7%	9.1%
35 - 44	15.5%	17.4%	9.1%
45 - 54	18.4%	34.7%	27.3%
55 - 64	24.2%	29.4%	27.3%
66+	22.9%	2.8%	27.3%
Unknown	7.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Gender			
Male	44.2%	49.5%	90.9%
Female	55.8%	50.5%	9.1%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Unknown	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Disability			
Yes	5.2%	8.3%	18.2%
No	94.8%	91.7%	81.8%
Not disclosed	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Diversity data for 2021/22 continued	Customer profile	Employee profile	Board profile
Ethnicity			
White British	51.1%	60.6%	81.9%
White Other	5.8%	8.3%	0.0%
Asian/Asian British	3.1%	10.1%	9.1%
Black/Black British	20.3%	15.6%	9.1%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups	2.5%	4.6%	0.0%
Other	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Prefer Not to say/unknown	15.6%	0.9%	0.0%
Religious belief			
Christian	28.5%	33.9%	10.0%
Muslim	1.6%	3.7%	0.0%
Jewish	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Buddhist	0.2%	0.9%	10.0%
Hindu	0.2%	0.9%	0.0%
Sikh	0.1%	2.8%	10.0%
Other	4.0%	0.9%	0.0%
None	15.9%	8.3%	10.0%
Not disclosed	41.1%	48.6%	50.0%
Prefer not to say	8.5%	0.0%	10.0%
Sexual orientation			
Heterosexual/Straight	45.2%	17.4%	36.4%
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual	1.5%	0.9%	18.2%
Not disclosed	41.4%	81.7%	45.5%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Prefer not to say	11.9%	0.0%	0.0%

Improvements you'll see over the next year

Using the feedback from our various engagement channels (including resident committees, forums, service reviews, satisfaction surveys and the complaints process), we've set out key areas to improve in the coming year:

Improve our repairs service in London

Invest in more resources, particularly around estate and communal area maintenance.

Improve value for money by introducing a handy person service for more routine jobs and how we manage and oversee the work of contractors.

Visit every property experiencing damp and mould and resolve any damp or mould issue caused by leaks.

Develop the functionality of the tenant portal to report repairs, including better diagnosis and sharing status updates on how their repair is progressing.

Improve our overall communication with residents who are waiting for repairs to be completed.

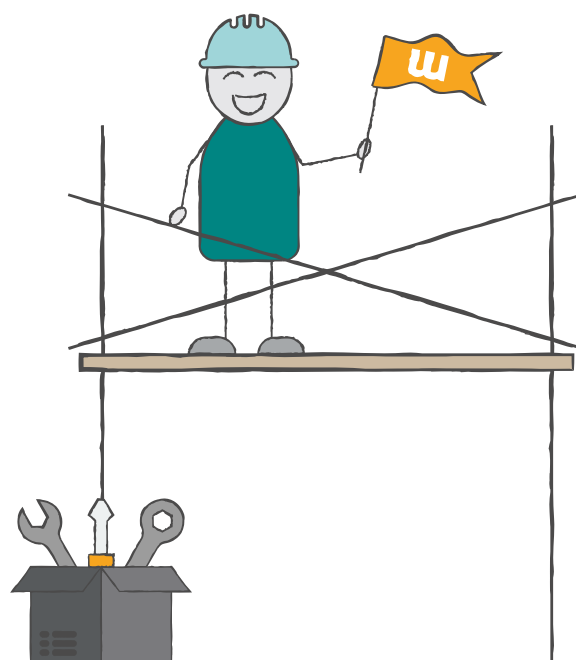
Improve our customer services

Invest in customer service training for all front-line staff.

Review our office opening arrangements to improve access to customer services.

Review our approach to resident engagement to find more ways for them to raise their personal experience with us and for them to co-create and co-design services.

Make sure we deal with complaints fairly and speedily.



Improve our neighbourhoods

Enhance the communication with all residents about the frequency and specification of the cleaning, caretaking and grounds maintenance services they receive.

Review our parking and CCTV monitoring arrangements in London.

Renew communal lighting that has been identified for replacement and needs upgrading.

Increase the visibility of our tenancy teams, with regular site inspections and ensuring ownership of any issues within their dedicated patches.

Improve our homes

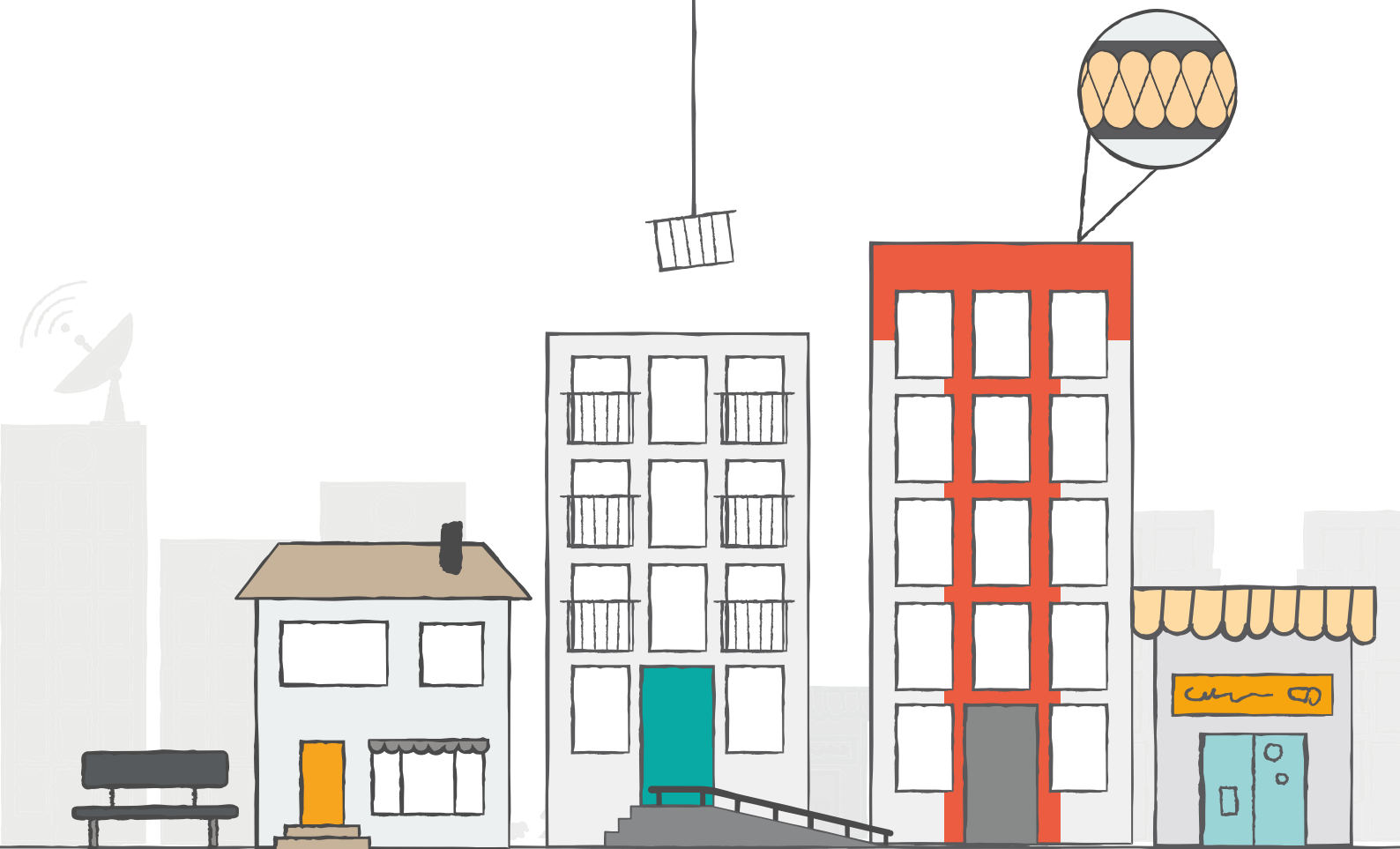
Complete the refurbishment of our tower blocks in Walsall to improve their thermal efficiency as well as their kerb appeal.

Invest in safety by starting a programme to renew fire doors to tower block properties.

Improve our community facilities

Invest funds to bring more disused garages back into use.

Invest in improving community centres.



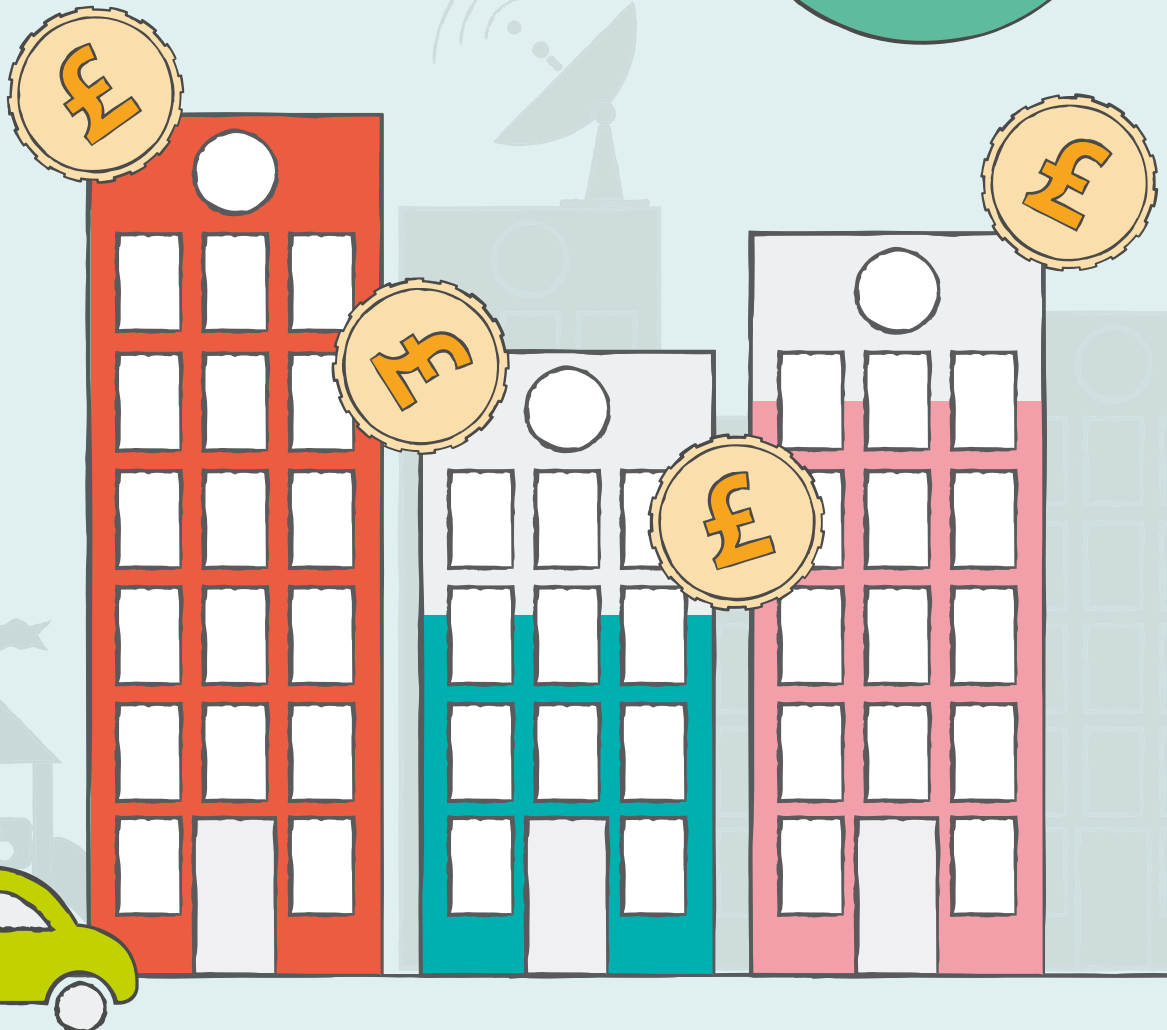
Future focus

In 2023, our focus will be on completing the tower block refurbishment contract. But we still have other exciting improvement projects to progress, including:

Spending
£650k
to replace internal
fire doors

Investing
£400k
to improve the
emergency, corridor
and stair walkway
lighting in London

Investing
£500k
on fire safety
works in London



Group Board and Executive Team

Our Executive Team:

Kul Bains	Chief Executive
Jason Holder	Executive Director of Asset Management and Regeneration
Graham Watts	Executive Director of Housing and Communities
David Saunders	Executive Director of Resources

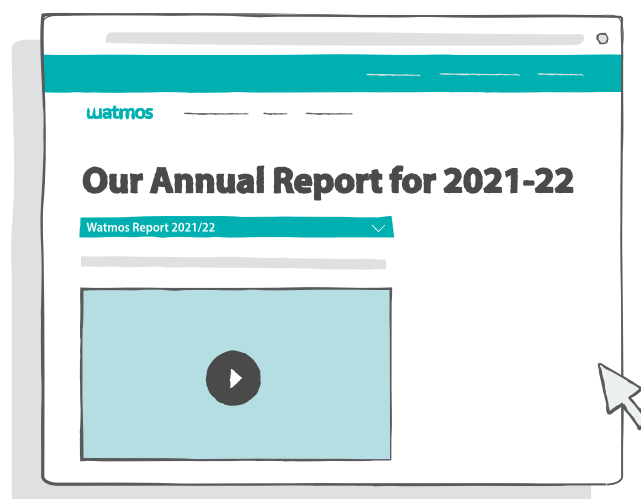
Our Group Board:

Jaz Saggu	Chair
Lynne Nicholls	Vice Chair
John Banks	Member
Barry Dutton	Member
Nigel Finney	Member
Jonathan Palmer	Member
Karl Linder	Member
Mark Leffler	Member
Jennifer Davies Everall	Member
Richard Worrall	Member

On behalf of the WATMOS Board, we'd like to thank all our staff, TMO Committee members and residents who support us in our work to bring positive change for all WATMOS residents.

We'd love to hear your feedback on this report, from the content to the design. Let us know your thoughts – info@watmos.org.uk

 www.watmos.org.uk/publications



 Watmos
Community Homes