

LOOKING FORWARDS...

Our year
2021-2022



Contents

A message from our Chair and CEO	3
Our year in numbers	4
Spotlight on High Cross, Haringey	5
Adaptations	6
ReConnect	7
Estate Services Focus Group	8
Fundraising successes!	9
Staff Feature	10
Black History Month	11
HomeMaster	12
Inspired by volunteering	13
Ealing Floating Support Service	14
Valentina wins an Anti-Slavery Day Award	15
Asset Management	16
Our money	17
Our thanks	20

Welcome

A message from our Chair and Chief Executive



Susan Kane
Chair



Zaiba Qureshi
Chief Executive

It has been yet another year of challenge for our customers, our people, and our contractors.

The Prime Minister's roadmap gave the nation a plan to finally exit the Covid Lockdown, but there were further challenges to come both nationally and globally including the war in Ukraine, and energy price hike, labour shortages and the UK's exit from European Union all culminating in a cost of living crisis. Despite these impacting our operating environment, we have continued to deliver and, in some cases, grow our services.

We have been continuing on our journey to improve our governance and infrastructure. A key part of this was going live with our new HomeMaster Housing and Finance system which will support our people to deliver more effective customer services and bring some streamlining and efficiencies in our processes. We are already seeing the difference this is making in tracking customer cases and contacts.

Towards the end of the year, we used the opportunity of changes in our Executive Team to review our structure and bring together our Asset and Housing teams under one Executive Director overseeing the delivery of operations to all of our General Needs residents. Customer complaints and queries are now being resolved through improved collaborative working.

We were delighted to add High Cross, in Haringey to our portfolio of specialist projects supporting single homeless women with complex needs. We worked hard with our partners L&Q to deliver refurbishments to the accommodation and the horticultural 'cherry on the cake' was the wonderful sensory garden delivered by volunteers from Intuit QuickBooks which have made all the difference to the women who live here.

Our Childers scheme has historically been one where there have been both challenges around the quality of the accommodation and the satisfaction of tenants. We are continuing to progress the works required to remediate this scheme, to make it a safe, clean, and enjoyable place to live within an affordable financial envelope.

It was heartening to see the women from our Greenwich DVA service come together with staff to celebrate Black History Month. Attended by women from a range of ages and cultural backgrounds sharing food, activities and stories with each other, this event evidences how diversity is valued, and difference is explored by raising mutual awareness.

At the end of 2022, our Board approved our new Corporate Plan 2022-27 which is divided into two distinct phases. In response to customer feedback, our first phase is clearly focussed on getting 'Back to Basics' with customers at the heart of

all that we do. In the second phase, we will build on our achievements of Phase One developing 'good' services into 'great' services, bringing these back into line with our mission and vision.

Our people remain our most valuable asset and we are proud to share a few of their stories in this year's review. We hope you are inspired by Alyshia's story and enjoy the recognition of Valentina's work with trafficked women.

Our successes could not be achieved without the commitment of our staff, volunteers and Board of Trustees who dedicate their time and efforts to achieving our mission. We extend our grateful thanks to you all.

**OUR PEOPLE
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REVIEW.**

Our year in numbers

136



We supported 136 women escaping abuse with community-based support services

21

We supported 21 men escaping abuse through floating support



66



31 children were supported to overcome the trauma of witnessing abuse

53



Our domestic abuse refuges provided safe accommodation and support to 53 women

7529



7529 callers were supported by our telephone advice line

54



54 survivors of human trafficking were provided with practical and emotional support

165 referrals

We supported the co-ordination of 165 referrals for 'Sanctuary schemes' which aims to enable households at risk of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes and reduce repeat victimisation through the provision of enhanced security measures



3,426

We carried out 3,426 of repairs in tenants' homes



849

The number of permanent homes provided to women and their families

11

2 kitchens and 9 bathrooms were fitted to tenants' homes

128



We fitted 128 fire doors to improve the safety of tenants in their homes

56



56 volunteers gave a total of 3879 hours to support our work

Spotlight on High Cross, Haringey

We are very proud to be delivering our new supported housing service for 13 single women with complex needs in Haringey.

Volunteers from our corporate partner Intuit QuickBooks worked to provide a new outdoor sensory garden for residents of our High Cross service last summer. The eight green-fingered helpers worked with residents to design a whole new area planted with herbs and flowers, including mint, sage and nepeta, transforming the communal garden, which had been unloved into a green, relaxing space for the women. Not only can they use fresh herbs for cooking, but the area also now offers many therapeutic and sensory benefits. This includes watching the bees and butterflies who now frequent the garden.

Josie*, one of the resident's expressed her delight about the garden improvements: **"I enjoy being in the fresh air and with nature. The flowers were beautiful, and (the Volunteers) donated flowerpots for my end of the garden. It makes me feel happy as I like being outside."**

Rachel, a Support Worker from Housing for Women said: **"The garden made the residents feel happier and relaxed over the really hot summer of 2022. The transformation of the different colours and smells was very nice. The volunteers did an excellent job."**

* Not their real name



Adaptations – making homes safer for residents

Nancy, a general needs resident has lived in her flat in Southwark for 32 years and had a new adapted bathroom installed in August. Below she talks about the big improvements this has made to her well-being and safety.

Nancy's Story



My old bathroom was replaced because I have serious back and hip problems,” she says. “Before that, I could not get in or out of my old bath. Even though I had a makeshift shower, I had nothing to hold onto - I did not feel safe and was nervous every time I used it. When the lady from occupational health came to inspect it, she said it wasn't safe and that I needed a new bathroom installed.

“When COVID-19 restrictions were finally lifted, the workmen came and took everything out. They also retiled the walls and installed a higher toilet for me to use. The floor was also resurfaced to make the bathroom into a partial wet room. My old bath felt dangerous, I now have a walk-in shower with a seat should I need to use it.

Having my new, safer bathroom is fantastic. I am delighted as it's a 100 per cent improvement on the old one. Before, if I had fallen, I would have landed on the toilet or broken my ribs on the edge of the bath. I feel much safer now.”

HAVING MY NEW, SAFER BATHROOM IS FANTASTIC. I AM DELIGHTED AS IT'S A 100 PER CENT IMPROVEMENT ON THE OLD ONE.



RECONNECT

Our ReConnect project offers supported accommodation to women upon their release from prison, supporting women with histories of intersecting and 'complex' support needs, trauma, and abuse.

The project combines shared accommodation and holistic support to help women bring about positive change in their lives, reduce substance misuse, improve emotional wellbeing, and prevent future re-offending.



WITH RECONNECT'S CONTINUED SUPPORT, MADAR AND HER DAUGHTER HOPE TO POSITIVELY MOVE ON TO THE NEXT PHASE OF THEIR LIVES.

Madar's* Story

Madar talks about her experiences at ReConnect and how it gave her a safe and positive experience, despite some worries when first arriving at the project.

Madar says she would be “lost and alone without ReConnect”. Although she experienced safety fears and anxiety when she first came to us, Madar says that staff worked with her to address her worries and concerns.

Today Madar is improving her IT skills at college while talking to colleagues at ThamesReach about career progression. She also values the ongoing updates and volunteering opportunities we provide. Although anxious about starting a new job, she is confident she will adjust and adapt to a new working environment.

With ReConnect's continued support, Madar and her daughter hope to positively move on to the next phase of their lives. She credits her daughter's improvement in behaviour to our teams continued support connecting her to employment opportunities and therapeutic services as well as exciting new learning opportunities for her daughter. Describing her experiences with ReConnect as “positive and supportive”, Madar is looking forward to a brighter future.

* Not her real name

Estate Services Focus Group

We are procuring a new contractor to provide cleaning and grounds maintenance services for the communal areas across all our estates. With this in mind, we felt that the best way forward was not to take a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach but to tailor our services accordingly.

Alyshia Watson, our Head of Property and Estate Services, explains that even though the specification of our cleaning and estate services will remain the same for all our properties, the frequency of visits will be reviewed.



“Our vision is to give residents better value for money,” Alyshia said. “To achieve this, we want our service charges to align with the frequency of the services required. This will depend on each property’s size, location, and capacity on each of our estates.

“Our new approach was reached after we held a customer focus group to share our vision and proposals for the future, including the procurement of new contractor for our estates. We met five residents in September 2022 to hear their feedback. Everyone expressed their views on the current services including what they thought was going well, and not so well, and what they would like to change.

“We value our customer’s input and are grateful for the time they gave to help us improve and develop our services. It was great to hear their opinions in a shared forum. Their feedback will help us make better decisions in the future when we hire new contractors to clean and maintain their homes and wider estate environment.”

Fundraising successes!

During International Women's week (8-15 March 2022), we ran a campaign to raise money for our SafeSpace project which helps women who have been brought to the UK and have escaped trafficking and modern-day slavery.

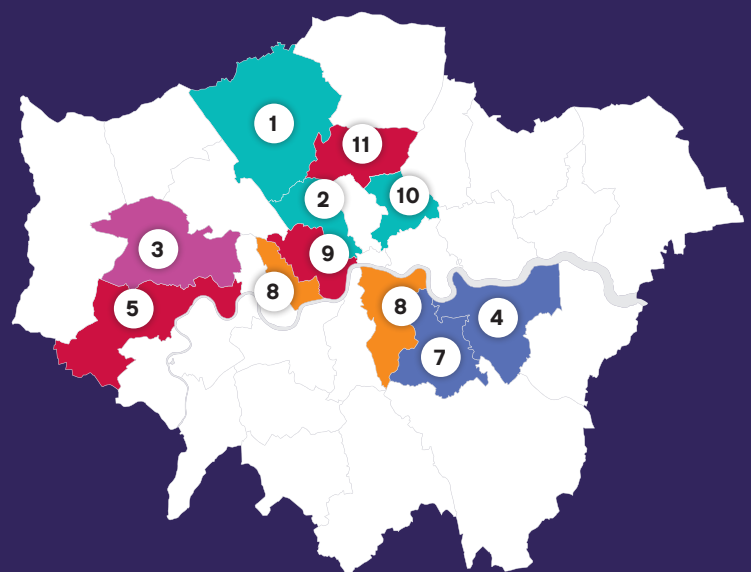
With the Big Give matching the donations given to us, we raised the fantastic total of £10,138. Our SafeSpace Project will use the money raised to help provide safe accommodation and lifesaving practical and emotional support. This includes providing women with the absolute basics like food, toiletries, clothing and travel to key appointments.

In addition to this we raised over £50k with the following activities:

- + Workplace talks and awareness raising sessions with a range of companies who have shown interest in supporting our work
- + Community presentations including schools and women's interest clubs
- + Payroll giving
- + Gaining through sponsored platforms like Amazon
- + Individuals have also raised money through activities like clothes parties and coffee mornings
- + Auction of paintings donated to Housing for Women

Where we operate

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1 Barnet | 7 Lewisham |
| 2 Camden | 8 Southwark |
| 3 Ealing | 9 Westminster |
| 4 Greenwich | 10 Hackney |
| 5 Hounslow | 11 Haringey |
| 6 Kensington & Chelsea | |



Alyshia talks about her superpower!



Our Head of Property and Estate Services, Alyshia Watson, gave an inspiring speech at our Staff Meeting in January.

Talking about her dyslexia, Alyshia spoke about how the condition has impacted her personal and professional life. Notably, she described how having a positive mindset has helped her overcome adversity in the workplace.

Speaking in front of more than 60 colleagues, Alyshia explained that 97 per cent of the UK population views dyslexia negatively. Because of this stigma, she said she was scared to apply for new jobs. “I felt trapped and worried about failing. It was hard watching work colleagues flourish around me while I stood still. I was worried people thought I was stupid because I struggle with jargon, especially in work meetings. I also avoided saying words, I might mispronounce.”

Alyshia said that dyslexia should not be viewed as a negative thing. “Being dyslexic is my superpower, and I believe I have a

brain wired for the 21st century. I am good at thinking outside the box and solving complex situations. Dyslexic people can often cut through the noise to see the big picture rather than get stuck in detail. We are good at empathising and influencing others and are open to exploring new ideas. This can make us good leaders at work. Hopefully, these are the strengths and energy I bring to Housing for Women.”

These qualities have helped Alyshia thrive in her career. She explained that having good people around her who noticed her strengths has been a big factor. “Having colleagues and managers who believe in me has opened doors and opportunities for me. This has empowered me and given me confidence. Working in the right environment, as I do at Housing for Women, gives me the strength, motivation, and encouragement to break the cycle.”

Ethel Fosu, our Head of Housing who encouraged Alyshia to give her presentation, said: “Alyshia’s experience with dyslexia was an opportunity to enlighten and educate us all about hidden disabilities. Alyshia is also a positive and encouraging role model to others who have dyslexia which can often be more challenging in our new working environment where we are often working remotely and online a lot of the time. It was a great opportunity for Alyshia to shine a light on this important issue.”

We have four EPIC (Empowering, Positive, Integrity, Committed) values that underpin Housing for Women’s mission and vision. Alyshia’s positive approach to her dyslexia at work is an excellent example of our a ‘Can do’ attitude.

Black History Month

October 2022

We aim to celebrate Black History Month every year. By observing this important event, we strive to promote diversity and inclusion across our organisation.

In October, we welcomed our service users and their children to our meeting space in Greenwich. The celebration was open to women from our domestic abuse refuges as well as women from our floating support services. It was a joy to having so many people attend, including some of our partner agencies!

To ensure the day was fun for everyone, and to help women to build their confidence, we encouraged residents to run a range of activities for the attendees. They did us proud with guests taking advantage of the activities including free massages and tap-dancing lessons. Our staff also provided workshops on manicures, healing crystals, headscarf wrapping, yoga/breathing meditation and exercises. There was also lots of delicious food to share!

The day was an excellent opportunity for our partner agencies to meet residents and Housing for Women staff. Most importantly everyone had a great time.



“

“I enjoyed the food. It was my first time tasting Jollof rice. The activities were nice.

I had my nails done. The staff and managers were nice and respectful. I liked the yoga very much.” (***Dalia** – **Service User**)

“It was brilliant. I had some emotional, exhausting days coming up to the event. It really lifted my spirit. It was nice doing it with all the other residents. The activities were nice. Nails, crystal cards, Henna. It was so good. I really enjoyed the food.” (***Ruth** – **Service User**)

“The music was amazing. The nail treatments, everyone coming together and the therapy. It was very good.” (***Rosie** – **Service User**)

“Nice experience. The nail treatment and food were good. I liked the woman with the stones, cards and crystals. The music was good, and the tap dancing too.” (***Jackie** – **Service User**)

“I enjoyed the day. The dancing and yoga were great – really relaxing and fun.” (***Susan** – **Service User**)

*Not their real name

HomeMaster – our new Housing and Finance system

Our new Housing and Finance platform HomeMaster went ‘live’ in October 2022. It has been a significant, but essential investment for Housing for Women and we believe it will revolutionise communication and interaction with our customers and stakeholders.

Our staff were very involved in choosing our new system. They attended demonstrations from a number of different companies and also saw systems in use with other organisations. HomeMaster was chosen as our new system primarily because it is easy to use and can be accessed 24/7 from any device. It allows us to track contacts with our customer which we believe will help us to deliver better customer services. It also enables us to review and streamline our processes which should save time for both

staff and customer alike. HomeMaster is excellent value for money and because its web-based platform is built on the latest technology it will help underpin and future-proof our wider digital strategy.

Alongside our consultants 3C, our IT department worked with the housing, repairs, and finance teams to identify their requirements for a new system.

The six-month implementation process went smoothly, with our project group and staff working tirelessly to make sure our ‘go live’ date was met. Since its launch, HomeMaster has proved much more efficient, with staff praising its functionality, security and reliability. Most importantly, it has delivered improved communication and satisfaction with our residents.



HomeMaster was chosen as our new system primarily because it is easy to use and can be accessed 24/7 from any device.

Illustration from HomeMaster.co.uk

Inspired by volunteering

We have had over 56 volunteers during the last year. Working alongside paid staff volunteers provide a huge amount of added value to the services we deliver to women. Volunteering also provided individuals to develop their skills and experience and can often be a valuable step for entering the job market.



IT'S INSPIRING TO SEE THE SUPPORT GIVEN TO HELP WOMEN REBUILD THEIR LIVES AND BUILD THEIR CONFIDENCE.

Averil shares her story:

“ I began volunteering at Housing for Women last July when I joined the SafeSpace team. It has been an enriching experience for me.

Growing up, I faced many life-changing incidents without support from others, so volunteering is dear to my heart. It's inspiring to see the support given to help women rebuild their lives and build their confidence. Watching them start over is a testimony to the work Housing for Women does.

While volunteering, I shadowed Valentina, one of the Support Workers, who helped me progress and develop, sharing her wealth of knowledge as well as giving me one-to-one support. Maria, the Volunteer Co-ordinator who interviewed me to become a volunteer, has also been very supportive and encouraging.

I was inspired to apply for a SafeSpace support worker role. I'm proud to say that I'm now a permanent member of the Housing for Women team. I hope to continue helping change women's lives while also encouraging other people to volunteer.”

Ealing Floating Support Service

It's been a busy year in Ealing. We successfully continued our Domestic Violence and Abuse refuge services to provide safe emergency accommodation for women and children fleeing harm.

Now in our thirteenth year, we are also proud to continue building strong partnerships with our stakeholders, agencies, and other services across the borough to help prevent violence against women and girls and help support victims with their recovery.

A big change came in March 2022 when we launched our new outreach service. Funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA). The scheme is aimed at providing community-based support to women and men who have experienced domestic abuse.

With our holistic one-to-one support, we proudly remain here in Ealing to support abused women and men in our borough. We also help at-risk people who cannot access or do not want refuge-based support. Our outreach workers' support is tailored to the victims'/survivors' needs. Most importantly, people are able to access services through self-referral as well as professional referrals.

The additional GLA funding has also allowed us to launch a dedicated referral and advice line offering practical advice and emotional support to victims while signposting them to support survivors and professionals across London.

Since the new service was launched, we have grown from a small team of four support workers to 11 people. We continue to grow, which has allowed us to support over 90 women over the year. Of this number, 22 women (including their children) have been provided accommodation in our refuges.



Valentina wins an Anti-Slavery Day Award



Valentina Spencer has worked at Housing for Women for five years. She was recently the proud recipient of an Anti-Slavery Day Award, which celebrates outstanding contributions to the fight against modern slavery. The occasion was also a fantastic opportunity to highlight good practices and focus on areas of policy where improvements can be made.

Congratulations on your award, Valentina. What does it mean to you?

I was very honoured and proud. I felt very privileged to receive such an award.

Tell us about your role and the SafeSpace project.

I am a Support Worker for SafeSpace, focusing on anti and modern slavery. We have two flats with four women, and I have been working with them for over 18 months.

There are two elements to SafeSpace – the flats and the drop-in centre. We have two apartments, which are safe and house four women in total. Each woman is at a different stage in their asylum claim, and I meet regularly with them. As they only have a small allowance from the state and no welfare benefits, Housing for Women raises funds to pay the rent, and we also

supply them with toiletries and supermarket vouchers to subsidise their food costs. The Drop-in centre runs three days a week for and is open to women who have been trafficked from across London. They can come to us for support. The aim is to extend the service and offer more resources.

What is the favourite part of your role?

Seeing very traumatised women coming into the service, who then leave us with increased self-confidence and feeling empowered.

What is the best thing about working for Housing for Women?

The flexibility. During my career, I've had the opportunity to move around different projects. Housing for Women has allowed me to use my skills in lots of different areas.

I would like to see more projects and services like those we deliver. We are still small in comparison to other organisations, but what we do changes women's lives for the better, that's our unique selling point.

Housing for Women has allowed me to use my skills in lots of different areas.

Asset Management

There have been a lot of changes and developments in our asset management service.

Mandy Dunstan, our Director of Operations, says there have been some big achievements which her team are proud of.

“A significant change was securing a five-year repair contract with our new long-term partner MCP, who was hired to deliver our responsive repairs, voids, major works and planned programmes,” explains Mandy.

“As a result, customer satisfaction has improved immensely since they came on board in October 2021.

“One of the reasons is because MCP has a direct labour force and their own operatives. Before they came on board, we had 28 different contractors working for us and one of the biggest complaints from customers came when they tried to book appointments. MCP now takes these calls, speaking to and managing our residents directly. This includes making appointments and sending texts ahead of them to say they are on their way!

“Feedback has been excellent – many residents say that the friendly MCP operatives turn up on time and finish the jobs. This is a massive boost for our customers, and we are very pleased that they now get the service they deserve.”

Mandy and her team also made other improvements, including developing a fire safety management plan with residents for all our blocks.

“We also conducted a stock survey and spent a year collecting data about our properties, says Mandy. “This helped us design a five-year planned programme of work. We are already fitting new kitchens, bathrooms, and windows and repairing roofs. Customers can expect to be

contacted by us as we continue this work in the years ahead.

“A new repairs team was also recruited. Our permanent staff members now enable us to address one of our residents’ biggest complaints; their frustration with speaking to different people whenever they try to contact us. With high staff turnover in the past, things were often missed, leading to frustration from our customers. Again, we have already seen improvements in this area.

“Furthermore, £1 million was invested in replacing the wooden balconies at our homes in Gosterwood, Lewisham because they were perceived as a fire hazard. This work was well received by our customers.

During the year we also improved our void standards following customer feedback. We have now revised our standards to improve our voids process going forward.

“When we re-let our properties, our customers now get a better quality of home to move into.”



Our money

Income and Expenditure account for year ending 30 September 2022

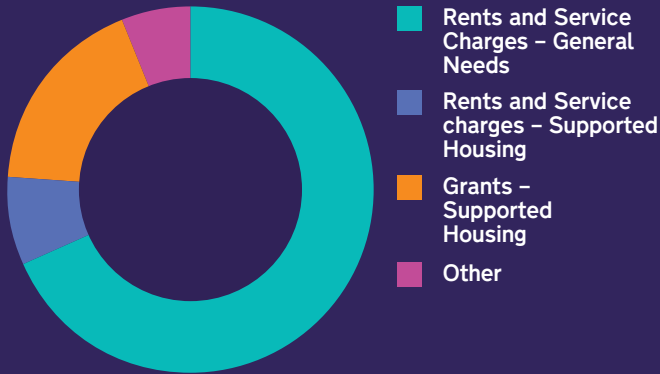
All figures in £000s	2020	2021	2022
Turnover	7,978	7,885	8,415
Operating costs	-7,427	-7,857	-8,823
	551	28	-408
Interest receivable	28	23	20
Interest payable	-459	-359	-718
Surplus/Deficit on ordinary activities	120	-308	-1,105

Balance sheet at 30 September 2022

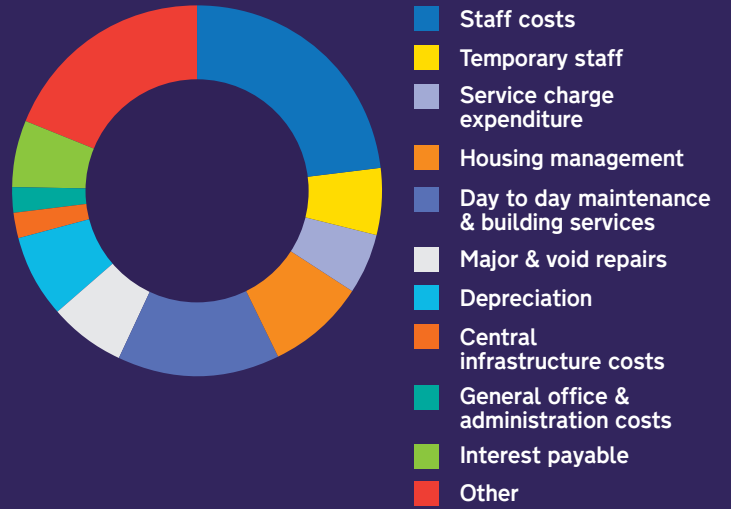
All figures in £000s	2020	2021	2022
Fixed assets	82,875	83,878	86,222
Grants	-	-	-
Depreciation	-13,621	-14,537	-15,527
Investment properties	-	870	1,250
Investments	14	5	5
	69,268	70,217	71,949
Current assets	7,951	4,623	11,916
Current liabilities	-3,167	-3,114	-3,774
	4,784	1,508	8,141
Net assets	74,052	71,725	80,091
Long terms loans/ Deferred grants	58,983	57,777	67,884
Reserves	15,069	13,949	12,207
Reserves and long-term financing	74,052	71,725	80,091

Our money

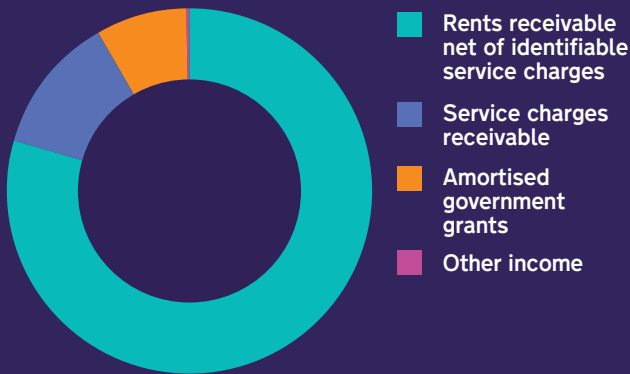
Total Income



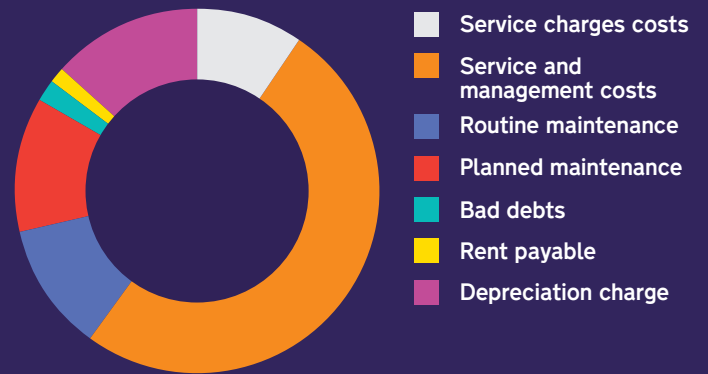
Total Expenditure



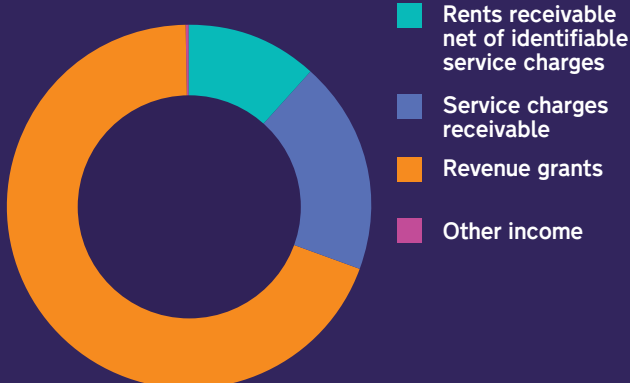
General needs Income



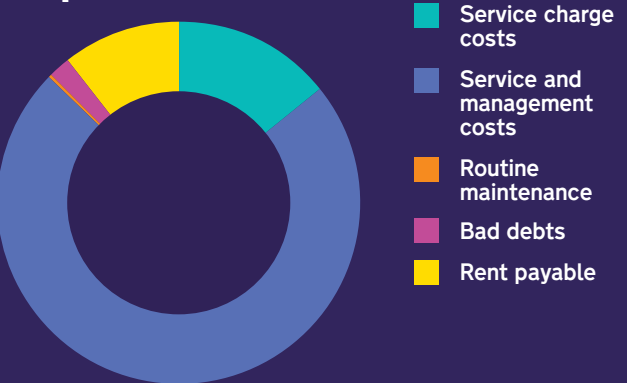
General needs Expenditure



Supported housing Income



Supported housing Expenditure



Our people

(as of October 2022)

Trustees

Susan Kane

Chair

Carli Harper-Penman

Vice Chair

Helen Webb CIPD

Chair of People and Customers Committee

Nicola Ewen

Chair of Audit and Risk Committee

Simon Basey

Abbi Agana

Yvonne Akinmodun

Troy Henshall

Caroline Davies

Christine Pointer

Chief Executive

Zaiba Qureshi

Senior Management

Susan Croft

Director of Finance and Resources and Deputy CEO

Mandy Dunstan

Director of Operations

Jill Maddison

Director of Supported Housing

Trustees who served during the year to 31 September 2022

Sally East (Chair of Audit Committee until May 2022)

Joanne Norris (until April 2022)

Yewande Showunmi (until March 2022)

Our thanks

In 2021/22 we continued to diversify our income, despite a challenging year. We are extremely grateful to everyone who supports us, including our corporate sponsors, trusts and foundations and our individual donors. Without your generosity, none of the work we do to provide safer lives and positive futures for women, would be possible.

Our funders this year include:



City Bridge Trust

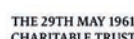
The Mary Kinross Charitable Trust



Garfield Weston Foundation



Intuit QuickBooks



The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust

The Joseph Ettedgui Charitable Foundation



Comic Relief



The National Lottery Community Fund



Children in Need

Statutory bodies

London Borough of Ealing
Mayor's Office for Policing
and Crime

Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Housing
Communities and Local
Government – Domestic
Abuse Team

Royal Borough of Greenwich

**Thank you for your
continued support
in 2021/22. To find out
more about how
you can support us visit
hfw.org.uk**

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