

CORPORATE PLAN

2022-2027



Contents

A message from our Chair and CEO	2
Our Values	4
About us	4
Who we house	5
Where we operate	5
Delivering our corporate plan	6
Corporate plan summary	8
Strategic objective 1	9
Strategic objective 2	10
Strategic objective 3	11
Enabling objective 1	12
Enabling objective 2	13
Enabling objective 3	14
Appendix	15

Foreword

A message from our Chair and Chief Executive



Susan Kane
Chair



Zaiba Qureshi
Chief Executive

Founded in the Great Depression, Housing for Women began as an employment agency supporting single women who found themselves unemployable. Women were originally supported with training, clothing and sometimes meals and respite. However, it soon became clear that these women needed something more...a home. The need to provide women with good homes supported by good services remains today and perhaps even more so given the harsh economic environment and cost of living crisis.

The current uncertain economic environment presents particular challenges to us as a small independent landlord; limited income through a proposed government rent cap or rent freeze, a competitive employment market, high costs of utilities, goods and services, high levels of inflation, war in Ukraine, and change in UK government leadership.

All these challenges are exacerbated for the women we house, many of whom already live on limited incomes and/or welfare benefits and are having to make extremely difficult choices as to whether to 'heat' or 'eat'. We want to do as much as we can to support our residents and will be developing partnerships with others who can offer expert help to manage debt, maximise income and budgeting, or help with interviewing skills to increase employment prospects.

Whilst we have made good progress in some areas over the life of our previous plan, our customer satisfaction results have fallen short and this is further reflected in the volume of complaints we have been receiving.

Our plan clearly sets out a required step change, bringing our customers back to the core of our operations.

We are heartened by the recent mobilisation of our new housing and finance system which streamlines case management and customer contact and will enable our teams to record and track customer queries and requests effectively. This should in turn free them up to do more customer facing work and improve overall contact management with our customers.

We know we need to do more to win back the trust of our customers and show them we are listening and acting on their feedback. We hope in time to have increased levels of engagement, with residents co-developing improvement plans and holding us to account in respect of our activities and performance.

We will be celebrating our 90th year in 2025/6 and we believe that achieving the aims in this Corporate Plan will provide strong foundations upon which to realign our homes and services for women to our original mission, moving from 'good to great'.



OUR MISSION:

To empower women through providing good homes and services and challenging inequalities they face.

OUR VISION:

Deliver homes that women can be proud of and services they can trust

Our Values

We have 4 values that underpin our mission and vision



**Committed
to Excellence**

**We strive to deliver
excellent services.**



**Acting with
Integrity**

**We are fair, open and
honest and keep our
promises.**



Positive

**Our people have a
'can do' attitude.**



Empowering

**We empower our staff
and customers.**

About us

Housing for Women (HfW) is a registered housing association, a charity and a company limited by guarantee. We have been providing homes for London's women since 1935. We also provide specialist housing and support solutions for those women in London whose housing needs are exacerbated by intersectional inequalities and disadvantage, especially those women who have experienced gender-based violence.

We are proud to be based in London with our workforce reflecting the diverse communities we serve.

The Association is governed by a committed ten-member volunteer Board, who bring a broad range of skills, expertise, and experience from inside and outside the housing sector. In addition to our main Board, we have two Committees: People & Customer and Audit & Risk.

Who we house

We own and manage over **900** homes. Most of our accommodation is general family housing without specialist support. We offer social rented tenancies solely to women and their families nominated by the local authorities where we operate.

About **7%** of the homes we manage are used to house women facing particular challenges. We provide them with support funded either by local authorities or by grants from charitable foundations. This supported housing includes specialist refuge type accommodation and ordinary flats or houses which we either own or lease. Increasingly, we offer floating support services to women in other accommodation.

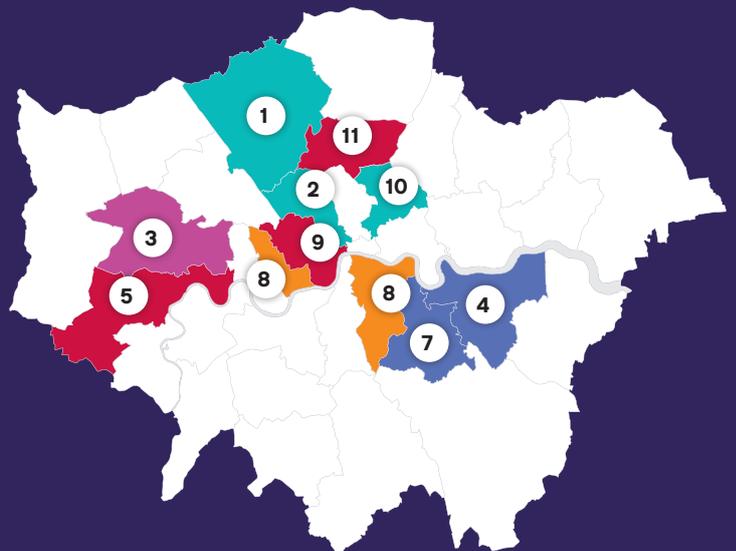
Our provision includes housing and support services for:

- + women rejecting domestic violence and abuse
- + trafficked women
- + women leaving prison with complex needs
- + women with a history of street homelessness

FACILITATING PLANNED MOVE-ON FROM THESE PROJECTS IS A KEY MEASURE OF SUCCESS AND WE WORK WITH ESTABLISHED PARTNERS AND PRIVATE LANDLORDS TO ENABLE THIS.

Where we operate

	Borough	Owned	Managed	% Stock	Total
1	Barnet	8		1%	8
2	Camden	10		1%	10
3	Ealing	62	12	8%	74
4	Greenwich	174	22	21%	196
5	Hounslow	43		5%	43
6	Kensington & Chelsea	199		21%	199
7	Lewisham	209	6	23%	215
8	Southwark	120	20	15%	140
9	Westminster	24		3%	24
10	Hackney		4	1%	4
11	Haringey		13	1%	13
	Total	849	77	100%	926



■ 1-10 UNITS
 ■ 11-50 UNITS
 ■ 51-100 UNITS
 ■ 101-150 UNITS
 ■ 151-220 UNITS

Delivering our Corporate Plan

To support the delivery and vision of our Corporate Plan we have established three strategic objectives. These strategic objectives are our key areas of focus and will be supported by our three enabling objectives which are critical to our success.

Both our strategic objectives and our enabling objectives will be delivered via our three core strategies and through our annual business planning process. Our Executive team and Board will

regularly monitor progress, and our Annual Review will provide an overview of our progress and achievements to our customers and other external stakeholders.

We will review our strategic plan each year, assessing our performance. Our activities and targets will also be reviewed each year based on our shared learning and our operating/environment. Therefore, the details of the last two years of our plan are still in development.

Strategic Objectives



Enabling Objectives



Phases of our Corporate Plan



Our improvements to date include:

- + Recruitment of a new Chair, Vice Chair, and new Board members
- + Establishing a partnering contract for responsive and planned works
- + Development of our active asset management strategy and improved understanding of our buildings through stock condition surveys
- + Creation of a treasury function and strategy
- + Delivering new supported housing services
- + Moving our workforce to an agile working model
- + Significantly improved performance in property compliance
- + Investing in a new housing management and finance system
- + Significant improvement in procurement of goods and services

Our learning from our satisfaction surveys, complaints, and feedback clearly shows that we need to do more to improve our core services to customers.

We recognise that we now need to refocus on our customers and rebuild service delivery from the bottom up.

This is why we have separated our Corporate Plan into two distinct phases.

Phase One

This phase will focus on our customers' needs and wants. We will transform our customer service increasing the size of our customer facing team and building our relationship with our customers with a 'back to basics' approach in core services. Our officers will have a greater presence on our estates and other properties, and we will begin to re-engage with customers at grassroots level.

Our contacts with customers will be more efficient and effective, supported by our new housing management system enabling us to better manage interactions and build relationships with customers.

We will also seek opportunities to grow our specialist supported housing services for women under the umbrella of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

Our stock is widely dispersed across London making the delivery of services more complex and costly. During Phase One we will review the whole of our stock portfolio and consider where and how we can deliver services most effectively and efficiently with a view to rationalising our areas of operation to improve both quality and value for money.

By the end of Year Three, we will have fully embedded our strategies (see Appendix) and significantly improved our customer services, meeting median quartile benchmarking scores of our peers.

Phase Two

During the last two years of our Plan, we will build on the foundations of our achievements in Phase One and develop 'good' services into 'great' services, in line with our mission and vision. We will target our performance to the upper quartile results of our peers. We will explore a Housing for Women service offer "Housing Plus" that provides added value to our residents and distinguishes us from other landlords. We will also explore how we can grow our services, to deliver to more women across London.

The details of the last 2 years of our plan are not yet fully developed, as we want these to be informed by our learning from Phase One, customer and stakeholder feedback and consideration of the context and impact of the economic/operating environment at that time.

Corporate Plan 2022/27 Summary

OUR VISION

Deliver homes that women can be proud of and services they can trust

2022-27 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Positive outcomes for our customers

Deliver homes where women want to live

Grow high quality support services

ENABLING OBJECTIVES

Our **People** are valued and enabled to deliver quality services to our customers

Our **efficient processes and quality data** drive decision making, Value for money and risk management

Our **financial resilience** is strengthened

KEY STRATEGIES

Customer First Strategy

Asset Management Strategy

People Strategy

Supported Services Strategy

ENABLERS

Human Resources; Information Technology; Finance & Treasury; Communications; Risk Management and Governance, Customer feedback, Innovation/ Transformation, Partners

OUR MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Annual plan objectives, KPI's, budget

Departmental and team plans and individual objectives

Positive outcomes for our customers



We recognise that, in recent years, the services we deliver to our customers have not been at the level we strive for, and we need to do more to deliver consistent services and rebuild trust.

We recently invested in a new housing and finance system and will ensure that it is fully mobilised to better manage customer contact and support our day to day service delivery. We will positively engage with customers and work with them to improve service delivery in their homes and neighbourhoods. We know that many of our residents already live on limited incomes and/or welfare benefits and we will work in partnership with others to access the support that they need.

Our plans will include:

- + **Understanding who our customers are**
We will carry out a full resident census enabling us to better understand who currently lives in our properties and their specific and emerging needs so that we incorporate this into our service planning. We will also consider how we can positively contribute to customers wider life outcomes, e.g. employment and wellbeing, either directly or by establishing partnerships with others.
- + **Take a 'Back to Basics' approach to deliver core services that our customers want and need** – We will increase the number of Housing Officers delivering front line services, increasing our visibility, and carrying out more visits to residents' homes and neighbourhoods. We will begin grass roots engagement on issues that are important to them, co-producing improvement plans they can hold us accountable for. Our People will be supported by the appropriate tools and training to be effective in their roles. When mistakes occur, we aim to put them right as quickly as possible and use our learning from these as a key strand of our service improvement process.
- + **Make it easy for our customers to contact/engage with us** – We will review both our Service Standards and methods of customer contact to ensure that customers know who to

contact and how and what to expect from us. We will increase our customers' access to the digital world including developing our portal to enable increased self-service transactions for customers.

- + **Streamline activities and reduce 'silos'**
We will bring together all our Housing and Asset teams under one executive director to ensure the efficient and collaborative delivery of operations resulting in improved outcomes for our customers.

Year 1 Targets:

- + Develop a Customer First Strategy that enables improved services and positive engagement and deliver Year 1 outcomes.
- + Deliver sustained improvement in performance on Customer Satisfaction, listening and acting, neighbourhoods
- + Deliver our complaints management to meet the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code
- + Carry out a full resident census
- + Develop our neighbourhood improvement plan and procure a partner contractor to support delivery
- + Develop a financial inclusion offer that supports those in most need

Year 3 Target:

- + Deliver performance in line with median Peer Benchmark in Customer Satisfaction, listening and acting, neighbourhoods
- + Reduce number of complaints to median Peer Benchmark
- + Develop a digital inclusion offer to support women to access our services online
- + Have an established pool of customers who are engaged in the co-production of service improvements and scrutinising our performance.

Deliver homes where women want to live



There are several regulatory legislative and regulation challenges that we, like all social housing landlords, need to address in respect of our property portfolio.

These include:

- + Building Safety Bill
- + Fire Safety Act 2021
- + Decent Home standards
- + Decarbonisation agenda
- + Regulatory challenges from the Social Housing white paper
- + Increased demand on responsive repairs and increased cases of disrepair

Our new Asset Management Strategy (AMS) will be key to setting out our approach to meeting these challenges in the delivery of this strategic objective. The AMS will have a continued focus on the active asset management of Housing for Women's stock portfolio. We have built up a significant amount of data about our stock condition and we will use this, together with cost information considering Value for Money of stock investment, to make strategic decisions about our assets and support our corporate plan objectives.

Our plans will include:

- + **Ensuring our homes are safe for women and their families** – We will maintain our focus on property compliance to ensure properties are safe and secure, continuing our servicing and testing regimes. We will also work to engage customers in staying safe in their homes and neighbourhoods.
- + **Delivering strong contractor management** We will monitor the performance of our contract partners to ensure Value for Money and good standards of service delivery. We will engage our customers in contract performance meetings so that they can provide first hand feedback on performance. Improvements to our

neighbourhoods will be supported by our new cleaning and grounds maintenance contractor.

- + **Using stock data and information to plan investment** - We will use the intelligence from our increased property visits, customer feedback, and data insight and analysis to support the planning of investment in customers' homes.

Year 1 Targets:

- + Deliver a new Asset Management Strategy and 5-year investment programme
- + Implement Building Safety plan
- + Contractor KPI's met or exceeded
- + Deliver sustained improvement in Customer Satisfaction – Repairs, Quality of Home

Year 3 Targets:

- + Deliver in line with the Asset Management Strategy
- + Contractor KPI's met or exceeded
- + Deliver performance in line with median Peer Benchmark in respect of Satisfaction with Repairs, Quality of Home



Grow high quality support services



We are proud of our supported housing services and know that they provide a vital place of respite and recovery and/or community based support within a psychologically informed approach for women who have experienced trauma. We will build on our existing services, developing opportunities with local and central government partners to develop new projects that meet service gaps as well as promoting our thought leadership, evidenced in our strong track record in delivering successful specialist projects under the umbrella of Violence against Women and Girls.

Our plans will include:

- + **Proactive assessment of new business opportunities** – We will continue to liaise with central and local government to be ready to respond to new service opportunities.
- + **Ensuring women are engaged in co-production** Women with lived experience offer a valuable insight to the design and delivery of services. We will build on our existing practice offering women even more opportunities to shape the services they receive.
- + **Providing additionality through partnerships** Partnerships are vital to the delivery of outcomes across all parts of our business. We will increase our partnerships with those inside and outside the sector during the life of this plan to add value and addition expertise and support to our customers.
- + **Provide additionality through volunteering** Our Volunteer programme and student placements offers significant added value to both central services and direct services to customers. They also provide tangible skills and experience for those who are looking to secure employment. We will review our programme to enhance our core service offer in line with our Corporate Plan.
- + **Promoting services and highlight Social Return on Investment (SROI)** – We know our support services deliver positive results for women. We will share these successes and promote our expertise, evidencing the impact through SROI to be a ‘Provider of Choice’.



Year 1 Targets:

- + Develop and deliver a Support Services Strategy and delivery plan
- + Develop and deliver a Volunteer Strategy and delivery plan
- + Deliver new accommodation and support service for women who have experienced the Criminal Justice System
- + Maintain Women’s Aid National Quality standard accreditation
- + Develop and promote our thought leadership in respect of our specialist services
- + Secure new strategic partners in line with Partnership plan

Year 3 Targets:

- + Retain Ealing and Greenwich DVA Services
- + Deliver additional DVA services
- + Continue to deliver in line with Support Services Strategy

Our people are valued and enabled to deliver quality services to our customers

Our People are our most valuable resource and are the key to making the 'step change' required to deliver better outcomes for our customers. We want to attract and keep the right people who are committed to our vision and mission, act in line with our values and customer-focussed culture and see Housing for Women as a great place to work.

Our leaders will be developed and empowered to drive and embed a strong performance culture, enabling their teams to work smart whilst promoting greater collaboration and innovation to secure solutions.

We recognise that, like our customers, our People are also living and working in increasingly challenging times, and we will reinforce our nurturing organisational culture with a refreshed Wellbeing framework.

Our plans will include:

- + **Developing our People Strategy** — A new strategy is required to reflect the changes in the working world over the recent years. Our strategy will have a focus on attracting and retaining staff who are aligned to our values and culture in an increasingly competitive market and will also include:
 - **Learning and Development** — Ensuring our People have the right tools and skills to carry out their roles effectively is key. We will focus our early programmes on the development of Customer Service and Leadership at all levels.
 - **Wellbeing** — We will provide tools to enable our people to access support for their health and wellbeing and refresh our framework to support workplace resilience.
 - **Office Move** — The lease for our existing office ends during phase one of this plan. We will move to a new office space that is fit for our workforce and offers flexibility for future working arrangements.

Year 1 Targets:

- + Develop and deliver a People Strategy and delivery plan
- + Deliver a programme of core customer service and management development training
- + Reinvigorate our Wellbeing offer

Year 3 Targets:

- + Staff Engagement shows improved trend of satisfaction in line with median Peer Benchmark
- + Continue to deliver in line with People Strategy
- + Continue to deliver and develop our Wellbeing offer
- + Complete relocation of Head Office in 2024/5



Our efficient processes and quality data drive decision making, value for money and risk management

It is essential that we have clear, up to date, information to support the objectives of this plan. Managers will be able to access and create reports that support risk and performance management, and the decisions we make about our business will be timely and data driven at all levels of governance.

Our data collection and reporting will be significantly improved by the implementation of our new Housing and Finance system and the associated reporting tools will enable robust analysis of performance and trends. This, together with other technology, will also help us to review and shape services for our customers.

Our plans will include:

- + **Our processes minimise duplication and waste**
Our processes must be refined and made 'leaner' so that they are easier for both our staff and customers, and by delivering efficiencies within a value for money framework effectively reduce operating costs.
- + **Our data is robust and easy to access** – Our systems will be fully embedded and integrated as far as possible, and our people will be trained in accessing key reports to support their work.
- + **Managers proactively manage risk** – Our management development programme will upskill managers to analyse data effectively to proactively manage risk.
- + **Embedding Value for Money (VfM)** – We will embed VfM as a core principle and will assess this across all our key services and activities as part of our daily work.

Year 1 Targets:

- + Mobilise and embed HomeMaster housing and finance
- + Mobilise Power Bi/reporting tool to produce a regular suite of business reports to support good governance at all levels
- + Update our policies and make them easy to understand
- + Review our Value for Money Strategy

Year 3 Targets:

- + Complete integration of compliance software with HomeMaster
- + Improved processes to deliver real time reporting (where possible)
- + Bring operating costs in line with Peer Benchmark
- + Deliver activities in line with VfM strategy



Our financial resilience is strengthened

We will maintain and strengthen our financial resilience to secure our long-term viability over the life of this Plan. We will focus on maximising our income, reducing voids, and realigning our areas of operation, to achieve the best outcomes for our customers. We will also mobilise our plans to adapt our company structure, to further maximise income and continue with our planned programme of procurement to achieve greater Value for Money.

Our plans will include:

- + **Cash allocations are effectively controlled**
With the support of our new finance database we will ensure the improved management of payments to invoices to ensure that we maintain accurate, up to date records of our cash position.
- + **Our asset base is optimised/rationalised**
Using data from our condition surveys, investment programmes and management costs, together with customer feedback, we will assess where and how we should focus our finite resources to deliver the best outcomes for our customers efficiently.
- + **Cost transparency** – We will continue our work to clarify costs, to better determine our operating costs and service charges for our customers and stakeholders



Year 1 Targets:

- + Deliver operating result in line with budget
- + Complete the disposal of our property on Gordon Place
- + Deliver sustained improvement in income collection – voids and arrears
- + Develop our Stock Rationalisation Strategy and delivery plan
- + Deliver in line with our procurement plan
- + Establish Regeneration approach for Childers project
- + Deliver the new company structure for HfW to maximise income

Year 3 Targets:

- + Deliver operating surplus in line with budget
- + Deliver income collection – voids and rent – in line with median peer benchmark
- + Complete Stock rationalisation
- + Identify and commence disposals in line with financial plan
- + Childers regeneration in respect of block 2 complete and legal resolution in respect of other blocks confirmed

Appendix

Supporting Strategies	Date
Customer First Strategy	May 2023
Asset Management Strategy	May 2023
People Strategy	March 2023
Supported Services Strategy	March 2023
Communications Strategy	March 2023
VfM Strategy	March 2023
Stock Rationalisation Strategy	September 2023
Fundraising Strategy	March 2023
Volunteering Strategy	March 2023
ICT Strategy	March 2023
Digital Inclusion Strategy	September 2023
Data Quality Strategy	September 2023

Our strategies will be underpinned by the relevant improvement and delivery plans.



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