



Annual Report to Tenants 2016/2017.

karbon
homes

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Foreword

We have much to be proud of as we look back at 2016/17. It has been a very busy period for everyone at what is now Karbon Homes.

We came together with Cestria Community Housing in October 2014, and then it was announced last November that Isos Housing was to merge with Derwentside Homes in Stanley in April this year.

All this is happening against a backdrop of political uncertainty, and the likelihood of more upheaval through the Brexit process, which reinforces why we moved to become more efficient and further strengthen our financial position by creating Karbon Homes.

Throughout this period, we have experienced significant change in our organisation, though we hope the experience for you as our tenants has been as seamless as possible.

The purpose of this report is to look back on the achievements and challenges encountered in the last year of Isos Housing and Cestria Community Housing operating together as a group.

Over the 12 months, we completed over 250 new homes, investing almost £25 million in our development programme.

We have achieved high levels of tenant satisfaction across the business, including crucial areas like repairs and maintenance.

We hope you enjoy reading this report, and if you have any questions about your tenancy, or Karbon Homes as your landlord, please do get in touch.

Paul Fiddaman
Chief Executive - Karbon Homes



Welcome

What is in this report?

Welcome to our 2016-17 Annual Report to Tenants. This is an opportunity for us to report back to you on our performance last year, highlight key achievements, and to update you on future priorities.

In this report we highlight progress against our Promises, which are our commitment to delivering the quality and range of services our tenants want, in the way you want them. This report updates you on the delivery of our Promises during 2016/17, as well as our plans for 2017/18.

As a Registered Social Landlord, Isos Housing (now Karbon Homes) is regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), and our Promises reflect the standards they set us. We report performance against seven standards. These are:

- **Home Standard**
- **Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard**
- **Neighbourhood and Community Standard**
- **Tenancy Standard**

We also provide an update on our compliance with the Economic Standards. These are:

- **Rent Standard**
- **Value for Money Standard**
- **Governance and Financial Viability Standard**

A year of change

We announced in November 2016 our intention to merge Isos Housing and Cestria Community Housing with Derwentside Homes.

We set ourselves a challenging timetable, aiming to complete the merger by April 2017, and we were all proud and relieved to complete all the preparations on time.

Right from the start of the process, our Chief Executive Paul Fiddaman was determined to ensure we maintained our usual high standards for the homes and services we provide to you.

The reason behind the merger was simple – we thought it was the best way to protect and enhance our services at a time when the housing sector is operating in a very challenging financial climate with less money available to invest in homes and communities.

We want to continue to improve our services and build more homes to rent and buy across the region, and by pooling our resources we are now in a better position to do just that.

Your views

Gathering tenants' views helps us to understand what we are doing well, what needs to be improved and how we can learn from your feedback. To help us do this, we collect satisfaction information when we deliver services to you. We surveyed over 2,000 tenants last year through these 'transactional' surveys.

We set high targets with an expectation of achieving overall satisfaction scores of 90% and above.

Throughout this report we highlight satisfaction levels with the services we provide, and identify good feedback as well as areas where we need to improve and, most importantly, what we have done as a result of your feedback.

In addition to our 'transactional' surveys, we seek tenant feedback through regular 'opinion' surveys. During 2016/17 we received almost 3,000 responses to surveys on various topics, including repairs appointments, anti-social behaviour, rent statements and the amalgamation proposals to form Karbon Homes.

Contacting us

Do you know there are a variety of ways in which you can contact us to provide your feedback?

Email info@isoshousing.co.uk
Website www.isoshousing.co.uk
Facebook www.facebook.com/talktoisos
Telephone **0300 300 1505**

My Isos Home provides online access to your account, where you can easily pay your rent, check rent statements, report repairs and see more information about your tenancy with us 24 hours a day.

What do you think?

You can share your views about this Annual Report to Tenants by using this survey link:
www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/TenantsReportIsos/

We would like to hear your views about how well you think we are doing and to gather your feedback and suggestions about how we can deliver even better services to our tenants.




Your feedback is invaluable and allows us to design services how you want them delivered.

How we are performing

Here we set out our performance during 2016/17 under the regulatory standards. Our performance is important to us as it indicates how well we are doing as an organisation, and more importantly how well we are delivering our services to you.

We set targets every year and monitor our performance against these targets. This helps to highlight good performance, areas which need to be improved and areas for immediate review.

Key:

-  means we are meeting or exceeding target
-  means we are close to target
-  means we are not meeting target

The arrows in the coloured circles show whether performance has improved or declined, compared to 2015/16.

Tenancy Standard



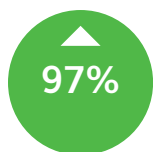
Tenancy turnover
down from 10.5% last year.
Target was 10%



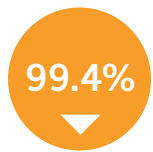
Properties that were vacant and available to let
down from 1.2% last year.
Target was 1.0%



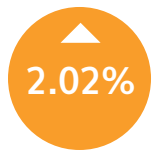
Average time it takes to re-let a property after a tenant moves out
compared to 34.8 days last year.
Target was 28 days.



of tenants satisfied with the service we provided during the lettings process
up from 95.5% last year.
Target was 95%



of rent collected
down from 100% last year.
This was £52.7m based on a target of 100% (£53.1m)



of rent arrears for current tenants (excluding Housing Benefit)
compared to 1.92% last year.
Target was 2.00%



Young Preston, aged 2, feels right at home in his new house in Teams, Gateshead, with parents Stephen and Kayleigh



Home Standard

94.8%

of repairs appointments met
Target was 95.0%

12.4
days

Average time to complete responsive repairs
Compared to 10.9 calendar days last year.
Target was 10.5 days

95.7%

of responsive repairs completed within target time
compared to 94.7% last year.
Target was 98.0%

99.7%

of gas services due were completed
compared to 99.4% last year.
Target is 100.0%

£116

Average cost of responsive repairs compared to £109 last year.
Target was £116

93%

of tenants satisfied with the repair service overall
compared to 92% last year.
Target was 93%

95%

of tenants satisfied with the way their repair call was handled
compared to 97% last year.
Target was 95%

94%

of tenants satisfied with the overall quality of the repair
Compared to 94% last year.
Target was 93%

97%

of tenants satisfied with the planned maintenance service overall
Target was 90%



Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard:

142,598

calls were handled by the Customer Services Team compared to 129,810 last year.

89%

of those were answered in 20 seconds or less (same as last year).

Target was 80.0%

99%

Callers satisfied with the way their call was handled by the Customer Services Team

compared to 94.8% last year.
Target was 90%

31

Number of complaints received about our service down from 43 last year

20

Number of complaints upheld

Up from 14 last year.
65% of all complaints upheld, compared to 33% last year

214

Number of compliments received

Up from 213 last year

Neighbourhood and Community Standard:

150

serious anti-social behaviour cases dealt with by the Safer Neighbourhoods Team

100%

of serious anti-social behaviour complaints responded to within 24 hours



Children created artwork to brighten up the Park View sheltered housing in Lynemouth

Home standard



Overall satisfaction with the repair service.



Repairs completed.
40,233 completed last year



Overall satisfaction with the planned maintenance service.
Target was 90%



of tenants satisfied that trade staff keep dirt and mess to a minimum.

The Regulatory Standard

What our regulator says landlords should deliver under this standard includes:

- Provide a quality of accommodation that meets the Decent Homes Standard
- Carry out a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas
- Meet all statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their home

Our Promises

- Improve support, training and information for our repairs staff so they can carry out your repair at your convenience, to a high standard, the first time they visit your property
- Provide training, employment opportunities and apprenticeships
- Compare ourselves with other repairs companies to help improve our service, reduce costs, and provide the service you want from us
- Deliver planned maintenance improvements that meet the standard we agreed with our customers
- Through partnership work, provide an efficient aids and adaptations service to help you live in your home more comfortably and independently

Delivery of the repairs and maintenance service is the responsibility of Isos Property Services (IPS).



This wonderful mural has been painted on the side of our iLearn centre in Stobhill, Morpeth

Planned maintenance

To ensure your home is maintained to a high standard, as part of our planned maintenance programme (long term scheduled work), during 2016/17 we delivered:

- 440 new kitchens
- 153 new bathrooms
- 407 new heating systems / major heating components
- 204 roof replacements
- 146 new windows (whole property replacements)
- new fencing

We spent over **£6.7 million** on planned maintenance work during the year. Our 2016/17 programme of works was delivered right across our stock in the North East.

In the west of our area: Prudhoe, Hexham, Acomb, Haydon Bridge and Bellingham.

In the east: North Shields and Tynemouth.

In the south: Benwell and Gateshead.

In the north: Allendale, North Tyne and Otterburn.

97% of tenants reported they were satisfied with the planned maintenance service and **98%** said they were satisfied with the quality of the work.



What you said about the planned maintenance service:

-  *The results speak for themselves, bravo to the trade staff and site management I am one very happy tenant.*
-  *Being totally deaf I was pleased with the contact and patience as I am also poor with my speech.*
-  *The work lads treated me with respect. They did the work, but also I felt comfortable leaving them in my house whilst I went out. A great bunch of lads please say thank you, they deserve it.*

What we spend on maintaining homes

We spent over **£17.4 million** in 2016/17 on repairs and maintenance for all our homes. This includes both planned (long term scheduled work) and reactive (responding to your calls about repairs and maintenance) work.

This year (2017/18) our budget is over **£17.8 million**.

Gas Servicing – please let us in, it's for your own safety

By law, we have to check all gas appliances and pipework once a year. It is really important that you allow us access to your home to complete these checks. We will contact you in advance to make an appointment to carry out this service.

Customer service telephone number **0300 300 1505**, press '1' for the repairs team.

If you suspect a gas leak, call the National Gas Emergency Service immediately on **0800 111 999**.

 **98%**

of tenants satisfied with the Gas Services Team.

Repair feedback

During the year, overall satisfaction with the repairs service met our target of 93%. 94% of tenants said it was easy to report their repairs and were satisfied with the quality of the repair. Also, 96% said that they were satisfied that the trade staff kept dirt and mess to a minimum.

When you complimented the repairs service, you said

“ It was very good, I reported it, they gave me a date, they arrived on the day and everything was fine.

“ They always treat me with respect.

“ They are always good. I am disabled you see. When I ring the office they are always nice.


“ The joiner was the same one as I usually have, and he is very polite and very friendly to talk to. Everyone I have dealt with at Isos is absolutely lovely.

“ They have always been on time and we have always been very satisfied with them.

“ I was kept informed every step of the maintenance work. The workmen never stopped and were happy to tell you and what job they were to do the next day.

In areas we could improve

You said...

 When you report a repair it can be done online or on the phone. I think they should call you back after you have been given an appointment to check that it's acceptable.

...so we...

introduced an appointment and scheduling system where all repair jobs, apart from some external works, are now allocated an appointment date and time, generally at the first point of contact. These are arranged around your diary commitments.


You said...

 I would like to see the tradesmen wearing plastic covers on their shoes like they used to when they come in the house.

...so we...

have provided all our trades staff with overshoes to protect your home when we are visiting.

You said...

 That they keep in touch with the customer in regards to appointments. It would be nice if they told us if they cannot come and keep us up to date with what's happening.

...so we...

make sure that our work schedulers always endeavour to keep you fully updated as the repair job progresses. If we need to change your appointment for any reason, we will always try to do so at the earliest possible time and make sure this is rearranged to your convenience.

Key achievements during 2016/17 in delivering our promises under the Home Standard

- Further improvements have been made to our new electronic repair scheduling and appointment system which has helped to improve our performance. For instance, the average time to complete a repair and the number of appointments made and kept have all improved as a result of improved resource management
- We carried out a review to improve the process of how newly built homes are passed from the Development Team over to our Housing Management teams, ensuring the best possible service to the new residents. The review has resulted in improved communication between staff. Communications with tenants are now always entered onto our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, and a standardised demonstration process of new homes to new residents has been introduced. Using a CRM system enables us to manage correspondence with tenants more effectively and deal with enquires more quickly and efficiently, resulting in a better customer experience
- During the year we have also streamlined and standardised our satisfaction survey process for our development service. We use regular telephone surveys to gather your feedback which we use to help improve our service to you
- To help reduce fuel poverty we have carried out a number of improvements. We extended the mains gas network to 88 homes in 5 blocks of flats. In the 'off gas' villages of Wark and Mitford in Northumberland, we installed 26 air source heat pumps in place of electric night storage heaters which were inefficient and expensive to run
- At a housing scheme in Felling, Gateshead, we installed a CCTV and door entry system which will help us to address issues of anti-social behaviour in the blocks.

Building new homes


To help meet housing demand, 247 new homes were built across the region, including; Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Alnwick and Hexham. Of these, 208 were for affordable rent and 39 were shared ownership properties.

At the Temple Park Road development in South Shields, we have built 18 affordable homes for rent (12 x 1 bed apartments and 6 x 2 bed apartments). During the year, we have also built some much needed new supported housing living schemes at Sherringham House and Willow Court in Newcastle.


 **89%**


of tenants satisfied with the quality of their new home.


When you complimented your newly built home, you said

 The houses are absolutely beautiful, nice big rooms and my garden is an alright size.

 I love my new home, all the rooms are a good size; big bedroom and kitchen.


 I am just very satisfied. We have a big bedroom and a small one but that is quite alright.

 I love everything about it, the kitchen and bathroom is nice and the rooms are massive.

 Going from a home where we were getting harassed to a place where my kids are safe I couldn't be happier, the area is a lot nicer. It's a perfect size, it's a good sized kitchen and a garden.

In areas we could improve

You said...

 The only thing I would say is when I phoned up and complained about things needing changing in the house, I have had to complain about three or four times and nobody has gotten back to me.

...so we...

reviewed and updated our complaints, compliments and suggestions policy in consultation with tenants and will be using the new policy alongside our new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. This is an ICT system which allows any member of staff to log your complaint, compliment or suggestion and enables us to manage correspondence with tenants more effectively which means a better service for you. We aim wherever possible to resolve your complaint as quickly and smoothly as possible.

Focus on adapting your home

Our Adaptation Service completed over 1,200 adaptations during 2016/17, helping tenants retain independence in their homes. 34 of these were major adaptations and 1,173 minor adaptations.

We can provide a range of adaptations to your home, for example minor adaptations such as handrails, key-safes and over-bath showers. Major adaptations include installing stair lifts, ramps and level access showers.



of tenants were satisfied with the quality of the work.



of tenants said the adaptation work had improved their lifestyle and independence.

What you said about the service:

- “ Rails are very effective...staff very helpful”.
- “ Feel safer in that I can use the lock as it is meant to be used.
- “ Great job! Every time I contact you the service is brilliant 10/10.
- “ Great staff and a great job 100% satisfied.

If you would like to discuss your needs further then please do not hesitate to contact us on **0300 300 1505** and ask to speak to a member of the Adaptations Team.



Our plans for 2017/18

- Our aim is to build 143 affordable rented homes and 6 shared ownership homes across the region. This includes 8 much needed affordable family homes in Stannington, Northumberland (4 x 3 bed houses and 4 x 2 bed bungalows)
- We have a budget of just over £7 million to carry out planned maintenance (long term scheduled work) works during 2017/18. The areas we will be working in include Morpeth, Widdrington, Pegswood, Lynemouth, Ellington, Blyth, Tynemouth, North Shields, Benton, Longbenton, Walker, Heaton, Howden, Benwell, Fenham, West Denton, Jesmond, Sandyford and Gosforth. The type of works will cover kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems/major heating components, roof replacements and windows
- There will also be land stabilisation works completed in Hexham to prevent any further land movement in a large hillside and to protect the garden areas of 23 homes.



Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard



142,598

calls handled by the Customer Services Team.



214

compliments received.
Up from 213 last year.



99%

of callers satisfied with the way our Customer Services Team handled their call.

The Regulatory Standard

What our regulator says landlords should deliver under this standard includes:

- Provide opportunities for involvement and empowerment
- Have a clear focus on good customer service, choice and complaints
- Understand and respond to the diverse needs of our customers

Our Promises

We want every customer to have a say on:

- How we run our organisation
- How we support local communities and provide opportunities for customers
- How we tackle local issues

To do this we

- Provide lots of different ways for customers to get involved and have a say about what we do
- Provide support and training for our involved customers so they represent different customers' point of view
- Make sure that our customers are involved in developing our business plan so that we tackle the local issues that matter to you
- Enable customers to get more involved in deciding our service priorities by developing new networks. These will be focussed on specific neighbourhoods and interests, as well as other innovative forums
- Ensure customers with disabilities or specific needs can easily access and use our services
- Deliver the best possible supported housing services, and offer excellent value for money
- Publish timely and accurate information about how we are performing against our Customer Service Standards
- Deliver an accessible and clear complaints process and make sure we learn from complaints in order to improve our services

Over 142,500 calls were handled by the Customer Services Team in 2016/17 and we are really proud that the team came first out of 28 other housing providers in terms of customer satisfaction with the service provided.

We know we do not always get things right and when we don't we want to hear from you so we can improve and avoid similar things going wrong in the future. During 2016/17 we received 31 complaints and 214 compliments. Of the 31 complaints reported, 20 were upheld (ie. the complaints were justified).

Here is a breakdown of the types of complaints we received:

- Anti-Social Behaviour x 2
- Estates Services x 2
- Tenancy Management x 4
- Repairs and Maintenance x 23

We know we do not always get things right and when we don't we want to hear from you

Although we received complaints mostly about repairs and maintenance, it is useful to understand that, on average, our repairs service completes around 40,000 responsive repairs each year and thousands of additional visits associated with gas servicing and planned maintenance work. Most of the enquiries and concerns we receive are successfully resolved at the first point of contact by our Work Scheduling Team, leaving a relatively small number to escalate into a complaint.

We use the complaints and feedback we receive to improve our services. Here are some examples.

- Housing Management teams don't always accurately inform tenants of progress with a repair

Housing Management teams now receive regular updates and information is always entered onto our Customer Relationship Management system so anyone across the organisation can provide information to tenants

- An elderly tenant had to call our 'out of hours' service several times

We liaise frequently with our 'out of hours' provider to make sure that telephone calls are answered within appropriate timescales/standards. We have regular meetings to discuss their performance and any feedback from tenants

- Dissatisfaction with our grounds maintenance contractors

Our staff have been asked to inspect known 'hotspot' areas more frequently and the Estate Inspection/Management Policy will be prioritised for review and developed for the new organisation, Karbon Homes.

We will also continue to meet and speak regularly with our grounds maintenance contractor to make sure that the service improves.



An animation project at Weavers' Court in Alnwick saw residents create plasticine figures to star in a film

Key achievements during 2016/17 in delivering our promises under the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

- During 2016/17 we launched a new Customer Engagement Model which sets out the different ways you can provide feedback and become involved in how we run our business. Our new model is less formal than before and uses digital methods to engage with more tenants. It was felt that previous, traditional customer engagement methods were restricted to a small section of our tenants
- There are a number of ways in which you can now get involved and help to influence the way we run our business.
 - **Tenants Panel** – the main role of the Panel is to oversee the Customer Engagement Model, making sure that it is working effectively and that tenants' views are being used to help improve our services
 - **Regional Forums** – are meetings that take place with tenants in a particular region that is experiencing issues and require our support. Meetings can take place until the issue is resolved. Meetings can be called by tenants or staff
 - **Local Engagement** – will provide tenants with opportunities to assess the quality of services delivered locally through activities such as Tenant Inspectors for empty properties, estates, sheltered housing, housing blocks and grounds maintenance

- **Digital engagement** – you can engage with us via a number of digital methods such as such as Facebook and Twitter. We also have online forums, 'live chat' and a 'rate and review' facility on our website
- **Review and Assist Panel** - the role of the RA Panel is to scrutinise the services we provide, acting as 'critical friends'. This is done by the RA Panel identifying issues of concern to tenants, carrying out in-depth reviews and making recommendations for improvements to our services.

If you are interested in getting involved, call us on **0300 300 1505** and ask to speak to the Community Involvement Team or email us on info@isoshousing.co.uk

Our plans for 2017/18

- During 2016/17 we reviewed and updated our complaints, compliments and suggestions policy in consultation with tenants and in 2017/18 we will be using the new policy alongside our new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. This is an ICT system which allows any member of staff to log your complaint, compliment or suggestion and enables us to manage correspondence with tenants more effectively which means a better service. We aim wherever possible to resolve your complaint as quickly and smoothly as possible
- We plan to review the activities that have been delivered by the new Customer Engagement Model and improve it if necessary for Karbon Homes.

Neighbourhood and Community Standard

 **150**

serious anti-social behaviour cases dealt with by the Safer Neighbourhoods Team.

 **100%**

of serious anti-social behaviour complaints responded to within 24 hours.



We want to build and support communities which can sustain successful lives.

 **84**

individuals helped move into employment.

The Regulatory Standard

What our regulator says landlords should deliver under this standard includes:

- Keep the neighbourhood and communal areas clean and safe
- Co-operate with tenants and other partners to promote social, environmental and economic well-being
- Prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour in neighbourhoods.

Our Promises

- Provide local activities in areas that have experienced problems with anti-social behaviour, so people can meet and talk about local issues – and find solutions
- Work with community partners such as council and parish representatives, police and local schools to tackle anti-social behaviour and nuisance
- Help our Residents' Forum collect information from all our involved customers and from their local communities to make sure we respond to local issues.

We are about more than just bricks and mortar and see it as our responsibility to build more than just the homes people live in. We want to build and support communities which can build successful lives. During 2016/17 we developed a new Community Investment Strategy to help achieve this.

These door numbers designed by local children will look great in our new homes in South Shields.



Through our iFund initiative we help fund projects that will have a positive impact on the community. The types of projects vary considerably such as:

- Employability projects working with people to find employment which will in turn enable them to pay their rent
- Projects working with young people either helping with employment, education and training or providing diversionary activities to reduce complaints or anti-social behaviour
- Working with people who are digitally excluded helping them to access online services. For example, setting up direct debits or paying bills, or accessing websites
- Projects working with people who have experienced mental health issues to help and support them as they gain confidence and improve their health and wellbeing.

Key achievements during 2016/17 in delivering our promises under the Neighbourhood and Community Standard

- We have worked on many different projects which have helped:
 - **84** individuals move into employment
 - **147** individuals engage with employability projects
 - **418** young people engage with our projects
 - **294** individuals report increased confidence
- Over the last 12 months we brought together the two anti-social behaviour teams from former Cestria and Isos so we can provide a consistently high quality service to tackle anti-social behaviour

We introduced **The Noise App** for tenants experiencing noise nuisance. It's a free smart phone app service whereby tenants can instantly record noise nuisance and send the recordings to our officers. We aim to respond directly to tenants within one working day of receiving a noise report.

- As part of our Safer Neighbourhoods service, we offer safety and security measures, including temporary CCTV in those cases where victims are at high and serious risk. During 2016/2017 we used CCTV in 60 cases and installed over 100 extra security measures to properties in our communities
- We received over 800 responses to our online anti-social behaviour survey, with over 1,100 comments made. This provides great insight into your views on anti-social behaviour. The purpose of the survey was to get a better understanding of your perception and satisfaction with our anti-social behaviour service and what we can do to improve the service in the future as Karbon Homes.



Residents at the new Welbeck Close development in Walker can grow their own vegetables.

Our plans for 2017/18

- Use the feedback you provided through the online anti-social behaviour survey to help improve our anti-social behaviour service
- Continue to support projects that have a positive impact on our communities and develop a Karbon Homes approach to this.

Focus on anti-social behaviour

We want our tenants to feel safe and secure in their home and understand that experiencing anti-social behaviour where you live can be distressing and difficult for all involved. Our Housing teams and dedicated Safer Neighbourhoods Team work together to respond promptly to any reports they receive.

The Safer Neighbourhoods Team who deal with high and serious risk anti-social behaviour cases responded to 100% of complaints within 24 hours of being reported during 2016/17. In total, 150 serious anti-social behaviour cases were dealt with by the team.

We prosecuted 12 breaches of injunction orders during the year, showing that we will not tolerate anti-social behaviour. Although eviction is a last resort for us, in 2016/2017 we saw a rise in unacceptable serious nuisance and anti-social behaviour cases, leading to 10 evictions.

If anti-social behaviour is causing alarm or distress to you or the community where you live, you should report it. This can be done anonymously.

You can report anti-social behaviour incidents to us anonymously via our website: www.isoshousing.co.uk/anti-social-behaviour-reporting/

Or speak to us in person at one of our offices, or please give us a ring on **0300 300 1505** and ask to speak to one of the Housing Teams or the Safer Neighbourhoods Team.

You can also report incidents via your Local Authority Community Safety Team or Local Authority Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinator on **0845 600 6400**.

iWitness service

Our award winning iWitness service has gone from strength to strength with an average of two call outs per night from tenants wanting us to witness and evidence anti-social behaviour in our neighbourhoods.

You can use the service anytime day or night, as our specially trained team are on hand 24 hours a day and can arrive within 30 minutes of tenants calling to report anti-social behaviour.

The team will bring cameras and recording equipment and observe what is happening before producing a detailed report for us by the start of the next working day. To use the iWitness service contact us on **0300 300 1505**.

The service has been nominated and shortlisted for awards three times over the last year, demonstrating that the service is recognised for its innovative and specialist approach to anti-social behaviour when our offices are closed.

Tenancy Standard

 **97%**

of tenants satisfied with the service we provided during the lettings process, up from 95.5% last year. Target was 95%

 **87%**

of tenants satisfied with the condition of the property when they moved in

 **90%**

of tenants satisfied with the length of time they had to wait for the keys after being made an offer

Our Promises

- Provide financial support and advice for customers who have seen a change in their benefit entitlement due to their tenancy with us
- Work with partner agencies to make sure that the right customer is living in the right property
- Provide advice and support for customers struggling to pay their rent
- Provide help to increase our customers' income by at least £1m per year
- Provide an alarm monitoring and response service for vulnerable customers, in partnership with another organisation. This service can support our tenants to live independently in their own home
- To provide Telecare equipment that can sense risks, such as smoke, floods and gas, can remind service users to take pills and can even automatically call for help in the event of a fall
- Provide more opportunities for property exchanges, for example, by promoting access to the national "Home Swapper" scheme from the Isos website.

The Regulatory Standard

What our regulator says landlords should deliver under this standard includes:

- Allocate properties in a fair, transparent and efficient way and have ways for tenants to mutually exchange
- Offer tenancies in a way that makes best use of stock
- Meet all applicable statutory and legal requirements in relation to the form and use tenancy agreements or terms of occupation.

Our stunning new Willow Court supported housing scheme in Benwell, Newcastle





Key achievements during 2016/17 in delivering our promises under the Tenancy Standard

- Our housing teams have introduced new ways to advertise and allocate our properties using social media, our website and local newspapers, rather than just the traditional method of Choice Based Lettings. This is good for those in housing need who for whatever reason cannot access housing through Choice Based Lettings schemes
- Each year, our Supported Housing Operations Team deliver a number of celebratory events to raise awareness of the mental health services we provide. The Star Awards celebrate our service users' successes on their pathway to independence and the World Mental Health event in October raises awareness and helps reduce stigma around mental health
- As our supported housing service relies on funding from local authorities, they can request to inspect our services at any time to ensure we are delivering value for money and quality services. In 2016/17 we were inspected by two different local authorities and have received excellent reports and feedback from these inspections
- Two of our sheltered schemes for older people received national recognition at the National Housing for Older People Awards. Almost 1,200 schemes were nominated from across the UK
 - Osborne Villas in Jesmond, Newcastle, received the Bronze award for "Best UK Retirement Housing Schemes" in the category for under 25 units
 - Northfields House in Heaton, Newcastle, received recognition within the "Highly Commended Schemes" category
- We continue to deliver the Silver Talk telephone befriending service, which helps to tackle social isolation amongst our older tenants. We now have 11 volunteers supporting a growing number of tenants across the region
- Staff have worked with the Alzheimer's Society to deliver 'dementia friends' sessions to colleagues to raise awareness of dementia
- Our housing teams have been making best use of new technology. Housing officers are using mobile technology to record their estate/scheme inspections on their mobile devices whilst they are out on site, without having to go back and report this at the office. Officers can send information such as reporting repairs or uploading photos immediately back to the office. This saves valuable time meaning officers can spend more time on our estates and schemes doing the work that is needed rather than being tied to an office. This has been so successful that we are now looking to introduce this across other areas of our work.

Working hard to maintain your tenancy

Our dedicated Financial and Social Inclusion Team have seen a very busy year with the introduction of some of the most complex and impactful welfare reforms since the introduction of the 'bedroom tax' in 2013. During the year, the team worked with over 3,000 tenants and helped secure £3.4 million in annualised income gains for our tenants (an increase of £800,000 compared to 2015/16).

The new welfare reforms, including the reduced 'benefit cap', the introduction of full service Universal Credit (and the full roll out of 'live service' Universal Credit), as well as other changes to customers' entitlements to tax credits, pension

credit and Housing Benefit, have presented the team with the opportunity to increase the help we can offer you, with an increase in advice on removing barriers to employment.

The team has worked closely with those households whose income has been effected by the benefit cap, resulting in more families being able to stay in their homes.

In addition to their roles as welfare benefit experts, the team provides specialist debt and energy advice.



Benefit Cap Case Studies

1. A single parent with four children had their housing benefit entitlement reduced by £138 per week because of the reduced benefit cap.

The team helped the client first by reducing their furniture pack service charge, however, this still left a considerable shortfall. Debts were dealt with and budgeting looked at. Finally, employment was presented as the only option available to the tenant, who had not worked for approximately 10 years and had suffered from domestic abuse and other social and family problems.

After receiving advice and support from us, the client was able to secure paid employment. However, due to difficulties adjusting to the workplace, she ended her employment before her first wage payment. Our adviser suggested self-employment, and after extensive advice and support, the client registered as self-employed. 6 months on, the client is £176 per week better off, and their rent account is in credit.

2. A couple with four children had their Housing Benefit reduced to 50 pence per week by the benefit cap, making them liable to pay £94.15 per week rent.

The couple were refugees, and spoke English as a second language. They received no support and post often went unopened, making communication difficult. Our team identified health issues within the family, and helped them apply for Personal Independence Payment (PIP). This was successful, and resulted in an award of PIP worth £4,000 per annum, and full Housing Benefit. The team also switched the family's energy supplier, saving them over £300 per year. Overall the family are £175 per week better off as a result of the team's intervention.

Focus on Independent Living with Support

Karbon Homes provides housing with support to a wide range of people with support needs, including learning disabilities, mental health, domestic abuse and vulnerable young people.

We have recently completed three new build developments across Newcastle for people with a learning disability.

Our Welbeck Close development comprises 5 x two bedroom bungalows for people with learning disabilities, autism and complex challenging behaviour. The sixth bungalow operates as an office base for housing and support staff, with a communal meeting space. The bungalows have fully accessible showers, wide hallways and an intercom system which connects to the office. There is also an extensive landscaped garden with vegetable beds and a greenhouse. One tenant in particular is a very keen gardener and has already started to supply his neighbours with home grown vegetables.

Sherringham House and Willow Court both comprise 10 x two bedroom flats and 5 x one bedroom flats for people with a learning disability.

A concierge service is on site 24 hours a day, ensuring security of the building, organising activities in the communal areas and delivering housing related support. This can help tenants with their day-to-day bills and making sure repairs are reported. Both developments have landscaped gardens and Willow Court also boasts an allotment area and a small orchard.

All three of these new developments provide people with their own front door, enabling them to live independently whilst ensuring that they receive appropriate levels of support.

Some things our tenants have said about our schemes:



and natural light.



I love the gardens and the patio.



I like being able to open the door in my own flat.



I love it here.

And one parent said:



We feel like we've regained our independence as well as our daughter gaining hers.





Our new supported housing scheme in Kenton has been presented with a piece of artwork by local schoolchildren



Our plans for 2017/18

- Our housing teams will look into using mobile technology across other areas of our work to provide you with a more efficient service
- We will continue to explore opportunities to expand our mental health and crisis response service in existing and new areas where we work. We are also keen to offer our mental health services to tenants who live in our 'general needs' properties
- To help our tenants gain valuable work experience and employment skills, we will offer volunteering opportunities to the people we support to work with us
- We will be carrying out assessments of our older persons sheltered schemes to identify if we can make them more dementia friendly. Examples may include introducing 'dementia friendly' communal clocks.

When you complimented the lettings and tenancy management service, you said

- “ Can't think of anything that could improve the service. Really great staff who are helpful, friendly and knowledgeable.
- “ Great service, felt valued through the whole process.
- “ Dead easy process, nice people too.
- “ Lovely property and lovely people to deal with. BRILLIANT.

In areas we could improve

You said...

- “ I wasn't sure at first how to get a home through the Choice Based Lettings process.

...so we...

have introduced new ways to advertise our properties using social media, our website and local newspapers, beyond the traditional method of Choice Based Lettings.

How we are performing against the economic standards - Our Financial Performance

Rent Standard

We follow Government guidelines to keep rent and service charges affordable. Our housing, customer services and financial and social inclusion teams are on hand if you are struggling to make payments. You can call us on **0300 300 1505** or email **info@isoshousing.co.uk**

In 2016/17 our weekly average general needs rent was

£79.96

and the weekly average service charge was

£8.36

Our net rental income in 2016/17 was

£52,220,000

(including service charges).

Governance and Financial Viability Standard

Our regulator, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), assesses housing providers against their Governance and Financial Viability Standard.

The HCA grades housing providers using 4 grades:

For Governance

- G1 and G2 are compliant
- G3 and G4 and non-compliant

For Viability

- V1 and V2 are compliant
- V3 and V4 and non-compliant

The HCA has awarded Isos **G1 governance V1 financial viability** ratings. This means we are fully meeting the HCA's requirements.

Value for Money Standard

Our annual Value for Money Assessment provides evidence to the HCA on how we comply with their standards. The 2016/17 assessment can be accessed at

www.karbonhomes.co.uk/value-for-money/

Our Board Members monitor our performance to make sure we meet standards and legislation and deliver the objectives in our strategic plans. They also manage the organisation's budget and assets to make sure we provide you with quality homes and services. In addition, they help us plan and deliver improvements to services and deliver value for money.

All the money we collect in rent is reinvested in homes, communities and the services we provide.

We reached an agreement with Morpeth Town Council for these allotments to be managed by the local community. This is the gatekeeper.

Our future as Karbon Homes

Karbon Homes is one of the largest housing associations in the North East, owning and managing nearly 24,000 homes regionwide.

As you know, we were only formed in April this year from a merger of Isos Housing, Cestria Community Housing, and Derwentside Homes.

We are committed to being a very significant developer of new homes, building more than 500 each year across different tenures.

We want to provide a range of high quality housing to suit the varied needs of you, our customers. As well as providing homes for rent, we will also develop homes for sale, or for shared ownership or rent-to-buy through our commercial development subsidiary Prince Bishops Homes.

Alongside the management of our homes, we will continue to deliver a wide range of services and projects such as welfare advice; community initiatives; and support for older people and housing for a range of different client groups requiring specialist support.

To help us stay focused on what we need to deliver for you, we've developed five strategic aims. They are:

- 1. To provide as many good quality homes as we can*
- 2. To deliver excellent, modern services to all our customers*
- 3. To build successful and sustainable communities*
- 4. To grow the business and its reputation*
- 5. To maximise capacity to deliver our ambitions*

We know that running a housing association in 2017, is a very different task than 10 or 20 years ago, and it's likely to remain challenging over the next few years.

We know we will need to be more self-reliant than ever before – but we are confident that, working alongside you as our tenants, we can create great things together.

We hope you will support us in developing the future of Karbon Homes, and we will continue to work in partnership to deliver high quality homes and services for an ever larger community of Karbon Homes tenants.



Children in Lynemouth helped us tidy up their village

If you need this document
or other information in
another language or
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