

Open house

2011/12



Don't bin it, read it

Win £50
of Asda vouchers

How we have
met Decent
Homes Standards

New welfare
reforms – all you
need to know



Welcome to your annual report

Customers are at the heart of everything we do.



Our Annual Report Editing Panel



For customers, by customers

Put together by you...

This report is for customers to show you how we are meeting the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) standards, how we performed in 2011/2012 and what we need to do to improve our services to you.

We wanted customers to be involved in writing and designing the report and this is what we did:

- Held a consultation event with members of all our service review panels to evaluate the HCA standards and the report's content.
- Set up a special 'Annual Report Editing Panel' group with customer volunteers from the service review panels.
- The panel then helped to:
 - design the report
 - review the draft content
 - 'sign off' the final version.



Junior Estate Officer walkabout - see page 23



Thornley Primary School event - see page 9



Inside OpenHouse

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Very important - please read!

Get involved...



www.facebook.com/EDHomes1



[@EastDurhamHomes](https://twitter.com/EastDurhamHomes)

Our vision: "Working together to deliver quality homes and a better environment for all"

A year in pictures...

APRIL
2011



Action for Blind People presented us with an award recognising the support we give to a visually impaired employee.

MAY
2011



The prize draw for tenants who kept their first appointment for a gas or solid-fuel inspection was won by Olive Horton who received a cheque for the value of her fuel bill for the last year!

JULY
2011



Our staff helped Blackhall Guides paint their hall, as part of their new 'MAD' (Make a Difference) day initiative.

JUNE
2011



We held our third annual football tournament.

AUGUST
2011



The official signing of the Shotton neighbourhood agreement took place. It aims to improve the residents' quality of life in the Shotton area.

SEPTEMBER
2011



Our new outlet in Seaham opened for business.



**OCTOBER
2011**

Trainees from East Durham took their first steps on the ladder of a career in building through a project supported by us, East Durham Area Action Partnership and Kier.



**NOVEMBER
2011**

Community clean-up week!

**DECEMBER
2011**



We were nominated for 3 TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) Awards 2012.

**JANUARY
2012**

We held a number of drop-in sessions with the credit union across East Durham to help people with benefits, saving and budgeting advice.

**FEBRUARY
2012**



Our board director, Margaret Oswald, was shortlisted for the Housing Heroes Awards 2012, in the category of 'Inspirational Board or Cabinet member of the Year'.

**MARCH
2012**



The National Doorstep project, run by our repairs and maintenance partner Morrison, gave residents tips, advice and equipment to help deal with bogus callers.

1. Tenant involvement and empowerment standard



Customer service, choice and complaints



This standard says we should:

- offer choices, information and communication that suit the diverse needs of our tenants, when meeting all the service standards we have set
- have a complaints process that is clear, simple and accessible, so that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly.

What we've done

- We have ensured you can contact us in several ways, including online, by phone, post, fax, text, email and Typetalk, or in person at our head office or customer outlets. We publish our full contact details and opening times in all our documents.
- We have listened to our customers and as a result have developed clear service standards (called 'local offers') for all our service areas. Our 'Providing Services Fairly' standard ensures all our customers can use all our services regardless of age, race, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership.
- We opened a new customer outlet at St John's Square, Seaham in September 2011.
- We have listened to our customers through surveys, meetings, service review panels, and by responding to feedback and complaints.

89 service improvements

As a result, we have introduced 89 service improvements and made 34 changes to policies and procedures.

- As a result of our mystery shopping group, we have made 14 improvements to service and one policy change including cleaning windows as part of our caretaking service and completing reported repairs within agreed timescales.
- We continued to achieve the 'Customer Service Excellence Standard' by fully meeting all 57 compliance requirements.
- In 2011/2012 we resolved complaints more quickly, meeting the target response time.
- We published information about our services, improvements and performance in our customer newsletter Insight, on our website and on posters in our head office and outlets.
- We have developed a customer service training programme for staff.

- During 2011/12 we answered 97% of inbound calls, resolved 96% of customer queries at first contact and on average resolved complaints in 7.5 days.

What we'll do next

- Focus more on customers' experience of our services, ensuring we provide excellent levels of customer care and make it easier for customers to use our services.
- Continue to monitor and improve our performance.
- Maintain our 'Customer Service Excellence Standard'.
- Launch an online 'Self Service Portal' so you can view your rent and repairs history, make a payment online, update us with changes in your circumstances and send us instant messages.



1. Tenant involvement and empowerment standard



Getting involved

This standard says we should:

ensure we give tenants a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in:

- creating their landlord's housing policies and their priorities for future planning
- making decisions about how housing services are provided, including setting service standards



The Customer Involvement Team



Thornley Primary School event

- checking and monitoring their landlord's performance and making recommendations to their landlord about improving performance
- managing their homes, where applicable
- managing repair and maintenance services, such as when ordering and doing repairs, as agreed with landlords, and sharing any savings
- agreeing service standards (called 'local offers') for providing services.

What we've done

- In 2011/12 our customer inspection and improvement panel inspected 3 services: estate management, anti-social behaviour and how we communicate with tenants about repairs. From these inspections, the panel made 59 recommendations to the Board – 35 have already been introduced.

- Changes we have made because of the panel's recommendations include upgrading CCTV cameras to enable the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Team to gather more evidence, introducing letterbox locks for ASB victims, and employing an extra member of our contractor Morrison's staff in our contact centre.
- In 2011/12, 6 tenants successfully completed the Community Action Level 2 Award offered by the Chartered Institute of Housing. Two panel members are working towards the Level 3 qualification in Resident Scrutiny.
- We have held 2 successful 'Make a Difference' (MAD) days. We worked with Thornley Primary School to improve their garden and outdoor teaching area, and with Blackhall Guides to improve their meeting venue.
- We decorated and made improvements to Westlea Grove Community Centre through a community project with our partners.
- The Housing Partnership has been operating successfully from Murton Resource Centre and is offering services to local residents, including IT facilities, advice, and directions to other services.
- We have reviewed our Compact and renamed it the 'Customer Involvement Agreement' as our customers suggested.
- In 2011/12 we awarded 'quick fix it' grants totalling £4,800 to 13 community projects.

Thornley
Primary School
Garden

Quick Fix It
grants totalling
£4,800

1. Tenant involvement and empowerment standard



What we'll do next

- Review the success of our Customer Inspection and Improvement Panel and make recommendations for improvement.
- Work closely with our tenants and residents associations, in line with the Localism Act, to ensure we help them improve their local areas.
- Review our STAR incentive scheme to ensure it still offers good value for money.
- Develop a neighbourhood plan and ensure customers are involved in shaping it.
- Develop our social media sites to include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube, to communicate with our customers and provide news and event information.



The Housing Partnership



Get involved!

Would you like to help shape our services?

There are plenty of ways you can get involved, and how much time you give is entirely up to you. We can support you with transport, and you can collect rewards for giving up your time.

You could...

- join the customer inspection and improvement panel (CIIP)
- join the Housing Partnership
- attend service review panels
- take part in mystery shopping
- form a tenant and resident association
- join the editing panel.

To find out more...

- visit the 'getting involved' page of our website
- call **0800 032 0835** from a landline or **0191 518 5497** and ask to speak to a member of the Customer Involvement Team
- text the word 'Involve' to **07786 207 745**
- email customer.involvement@eastdurhamhomes.co.uk

1. Tenant involvement and empowerment standard

Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of our customers

This standard says we should:

show how we respond to tenants' needs in the way we provide services and communicate with them.

What we've done

In 2011/12 we have:

- helped customers fill in forms
- provided an interpretation service if a customer's first language is not English
- provided information, on request, in different languages or in different formats such as large type, Braille, CD or audio tape

- used plain English
- taken into account any additional needs customers may have
- provided customers with support, if they need it, so that they can access our services and get involved
- taken calls using Typetalk
- whenever possible arranged for customers to speak to or be visited by a member of staff of the same sex as them, if they wish
- provided induction-loop systems
- visited customers at home if they couldn't get to our office
- provided customers with a sign-language service
- offered customers who have told us they need large print the choice of a large bar magnifier or an A4-sheet magnifier
- provided customer-care kits in our offices and for staff to take with them when visiting customers. The kits include magnifiers, easy-hold pens and signature strips.
- We have developed a new, clearer vision for our future that will help us continue to develop equality throughout our company.





- We have developed 3 equality objectives with our staff, customers and partners. We have published these objectives and will report our progress against them annually. Our equality objectives are as follows:
 1. Ensure we treat all individuals fairly, and with dignity and respect.
 2. Ensure that the opportunities and services we provide are accessible to all.
 3. Ensure we provide a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for staff, customers, board directors, partners and visitors.
- We have developed our new Single Equality Scheme that tackles the issues associated with the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. This is available on our website.
- We have continued to improve access to our outlets so that more disabled people, pregnant women and people with young children can use them more easily. The Tenant Participation Advisory Service has recognised our work as 'best practice', and we were finalists in their annual awards.
- We have collected information about our customers that will allow us to assess which groups of people use our services. We have used

this information to take action to deal with the areas of our business where certain groups are not accessing our services, and we will continue to do this.

- As a result of our annual customer services day we implemented a number of customer suggestions including making Estates' staff uniform more visible and increasing the promotion of our handy person service.

What we'll do next

- We are introducing a system called Customer Knowledge, which is more effective in letting our staff know about any additional support needs a customer has. It will automatically produce information in that customer's chosen format, such as large print.
- Continue to improve the accessibility of our offices, customer access points and communal areas in our flat blocks.
- Review our practices and procedures to ensure they meet our duties under equality and human rights legislation. This will help us provide excellent customer services.
- Review the way we buy goods and services so that we meet our public-sector equality duties and ensure we provide the best possible value for money.
- Work towards the National Centre for Diversity's 'Leaders in Diversity' accreditation.



2. Home standard



Quality of accommodation, repairs and maintenance



Before Decent Homes work



A kitchen after Decent Homes work

The standard says we should...

- ensure tenants' homes meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard and that we should maintain their homes to at least this standard
- meet the standards of design and quality that applied when the home was built, if these standards are higher than the Decent Homes Standard
- provide a 'right-first-time' cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to our tenants' homes
- meet all applicable statutory requirements for the health and safety of our tenants in their homes.

What we've done

- In 2011/2012 we carried out Decent Homes work on 1,288 properties – this means 39% of our homes are now up to the Government's Decent Homes Standard. Nine out of 10 customers were satisfied with our Decent Homes work.
- We originally aimed to improve 950 homes in 2011/12. However, we received an extra £3 million of funding from the Government so we revised our target to 1,164 homes, which we exceeded.
- In 2011/2012 we made 890 adaptations to properties and 9 out of 10 customers were satisfied with this service.

1,288
homes were
improved

Actual waiting time only 10.74 weeks

- In 2011/2012 our target waiting time for major adaptations was 16 weeks – the actual waiting time was only 10.74 weeks. For minor adaptations, our target waiting time was 3 weeks – the actual waiting time was only 2.37 weeks.
- We secured £572,102 from the Carbon Energy Savings Programme (CESP) and Carbon Emissions Reductions Target (CERT) programmes for energy-efficiency improvements in our homes.
- We recycled 95% of our waste that would otherwise have gone to landfill.
- In Shotton we completed 2 fencing projects and removed a canopy to improve the look of the estate and help prevent anti-social behaviour.
- We have completed Phase 1 of the environmental scheme in Peterlee to improve estates. We have also taken on local young people as trainees.
- We worked with our customers to agree a Partnership Improvement Plan to improve our services. This means the partners we work with have agreed standards that they can monitor their performance against.
- During 2011/12 we installed new energy-efficient boilers in 1,749 homes. We also installed air-source heat pumps to 8 properties in Castle Eden that are not on the gas network.
- We successfully carried out annual gas-safety checks on all our homes.

1,749 homes got new boilers

- During 2011/2012 we completed 33,770 reported repairs, a fall of 1,688 from the previous year.
- We installed new UPVC fascias and guttering at 46 homes in Wheatley Hill. This means they are no longer part of our regular re-painting programme.
- We did asbestos surveys on 2,999 properties – we have now surveyed 89% of all our properties.
- We have done decoration work to 17 flat blocks, which included extra work to ensure they meet fire risk and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements.
- Nearly every tenant that had Decent Homes work received a decoration voucher to help towards the cost of re-decorating.
- 99.15% of repair appointments were kept.
- 95.87% of repairs were 'right first time.'
- 99.95% of emergency repairs were completed on time.



Accessible shower

2,999 properties surveyed

99.95% of emergency repairs

2. Home standard



What we'll do next

- Continue to deliver the Decent Homes programme, aiming to have 1,500 more homes brought up to the Decent Homes Standard in 2012/13.
- We plan to raise all our homes to the Decent Homes Standard, but we still need about another £37m – we are currently looking at other funding options. When we start this work will depend on us receiving the extra backlog funding from the Government, and the outcome of the stock options consultation.
- Continue the Peterlee environmental scheme – we aim to look for ways of working with Durham County Council and other agencies to make use of the best funding opportunities available to us and to create training opportunities for local people.
- Investigate using more renewable energy.
- Work with customers and our partners to investigate ways of enhancing our work programmes by improving the materials we use or our working methods.
- Continue to provide new energy-efficient heating systems, firstly for properties with out-of-date or solid-fuel systems. This will release more money from the CESP, CERT and Green Deal programmes.
- Continue to promote the importance of gas and solid-fuel servicing.
- Do internal Decent Homes work to high-cost empty properties to limit disturbance to our customers.



Improved access



Before Decent Homes work



A bathroom after Decent Homes work

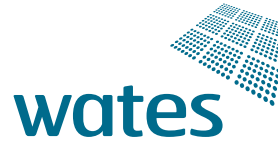
The Government has extended its target for making all homes decent to 31 March 2015. In 2011/12 we received £16 million extra funding from the Government, and just under £48 million over the next 3 years, which will be split as follows:

£16 million extra funding

| 2012/2013 | 2013/2014 | 2014/2015 | Total |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| £12,000,000 | *£10,600,000 | *£26,286,219 | £48,886,219 |

**Note: the final 2 years' figures are not definite yet*

Our partners



3. Tenancy standard



Allocations, rent and tenure



This standard says we should...

- let our homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way, taking into account the housing needs and wants of current and future tenants
- give our tenants opportunities to exchange their tenancy with another tenant through internet-based mutual-exchange services
- offer tenancies or terms of occupation that are suitable for the accommodation our customers need and in ways that ensure we use our available housing efficiently and help maintain communities
- charge rents in line with the Government's aims and general guidelines, as set out in the 'direction to the regulator' of November 2011.

What we've done

- Last year we re-let 757 properties. 559 of these went to new tenants, 198 went to existing tenants and 41 were exchanges.
- We have advertised homes across the county weekly and on the Durham Key Options website.
- Durham Key Options has made available a 'Housing Options Wizard' on their website, which provides advice on available housing options, including shared ownership, private rented and mutual exchanges. The wizard can also give advice on mortgage rescue, debt help and homelessness.

We re-let
757
properties

- We offer advice on housing options in County Durham, and are registered with the national HomeSwapper mutual exchange service, which lets you swap your home with another tenant.
- As well as being able to access Durham Key Options through Digital TV, an 'app' has been developed for iPhone and Android smartphone users to download.
- In 2011/12 we started to promote 'Smarterbuys' to our customers. Customers can register with 'Smarterbuys' to buy essential items for their home at discounted prices, with a range of payment options to choose from.
- We have made an agreement with the Illegal Money Lending Team to award priority to applicants who are fleeing violence from a loan shark.
- Durham Key Options became a partner with Accent Homes – this has widened the choice of homes you can bid on.
- We encourage you to move into a smaller home if you have more space than you need. We give you a higher priority banding to enable you to do this quickly and to free up larger properties for people who need them.
- We have promoted our empty homes standard, which our customers have agreed and monitor. This clearly shows the standard that you can expect when you accept a new home from us.




- We manage your homes, but the council sets the rent you pay. We have provided a leaflet 'Your guide to how your rent is calculated', which shows how rents are set. This leaflet is available from our outlets and on our website.
- It took an average of 23 days to re-let a home.
- In 2011/12 we made only 7 evictions for rent arrears, less than half than the previous year. This is a direct result of the support we offered tenants about paying their rent.

**23 days
to re-let a
home**

3. Tenancy standard



- To make paying rent as convenient as possible, we now offer a wide range of ways for customers to pay, including:
 - by direct debit or standing order 
 - by phoning us and using a debit or credit card
 - by text message
 - over the internet via our website
 - through our Allpay automated telephone payment service, 24 hours a day
 - at the local post office, local shops and garages offering PayPoint, using an Allpay swipe card.

- During 2011/12 we gave free welfare debt advice to 1,644 customers. This advice identified over £500,000 in housing or other welfare benefits for customers.
- We continually work with Financial and Capability North East (Fincan) and the Durham County Financial Capability Forum to keep up to date with ensuring that everyone can access the relevant financial help. This has enabled us to provide the most up-to-date and useful financial advice to customers.

1,644 customers received free debt advice



Beware of loan sharks!

- The National Federation of Arm's Length Management Organisations recognised the events we held with the Durham County Credit Union and Illegal Money Lending Team as good practice. The events led to more customers using the credit union and volunteering to work with the service.
- In partnership with Lloyds Bank and the National Skills Academy for Financial Services, 3 of our staff have gained a Level 3 qualification that will enable them to teach financial capability to customers.
- In 2011/12 our vulnerable applicant officer helped 304 people with additional needs to successfully get a new home.
- In 2011/12 we secured 60 charitable fund grants for our customers, worth £8,000.
- During 2011/12 181 customers received extra support in the first year of their tenancy.
- In partnership with Centrepoin, our Lifewise project has provided workshops to help 148 younger people develop life skills.
- In 2011/12 we provided 179 furniture packs to help people set up their homes.
- We worked closely with East Durham Partnership and our partner, Morrison Facilities Service, to recycle and reuse furniture.
- During 2011/12 a tenancy sustainment customer has accessed training at the Shaw Trust and 3

customers volunteered with East Durham Partnership.

- A tenancy sustainment officer was seconded to the Family First project. The officer returned to East Durham Homes and now helps customers through the complexity of the job market and finds them basic-skills training.

What we'll do next

- Review the Durham Key Options policy to take into account the effects of welfare reform, particularly for customers who will need to move because their current home is too large.
- Explore all the ways we can reduce the effects of welfare benefit reforms for our customers.
- Review the way we assess the provision of furniture packs following the welfare benefit changes. We will develop alternative options for customers to buy furniture using more affordable credit.
- Review the Durham Key Options property paper to assess whether it continues to offer good value for money.
- Work with the council, to review the provision of temporary accommodation for homeless families.
- Reduce the amount of time it takes to re-let a property.

4. Neighbourhood and community standard

Estate management, partnership working and anti-social behaviour



This standard says we should...

- keep our neighbourhood and communal areas clean and safe
- work in partnership with our tenants, other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so
- co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in East Durham
- work in partnership with other agencies to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour in our neighbourhoods.

What we've done

- Keeping estates tidy is one of the top 10 priorities for our customers. Last year we carried out 160 estate walkabouts, 62% of these with customer representatives.
- We have made 12 environmental improvements as a result of our estate walkabouts. We have made 5 environmental improvements as part of the Neighbourhood and Community Service review panel meetings.

160 estate walkabouts

149 customers used our handy-person service

- In 2011/12 we helped 149 customers with our handy-person service. This service does small repair and maintenance jobs for tenants who are over 60 or are registered disabled (or both).
- We have employed 2 estate apprentices, giving them the opportunity to learn and gain work experience.
- In consultation with customers we are now working in partnership with Krystal Cleaning Services, which provides the cleaning service to communal areas of our flat blocks. This has improved the service.
- We continue to use QC space in Peterlee for tipping green waste and recycling. They are closer to our offices, so this saves us money.
- We have introduced the role of 'junior estate officer' to encourage younger people to participate in our work and to build on the current links to schools in the area.
- We launched a competition to find the best-kept garden at an East Durham Homes property – sponsored by local contractor Daisy Landscaping.
- We arranged for 6 handrails to be fitted on public footpaths at Peterlee and Murton, as a result of estate walkabouts. Fencing has been installed to the car park at Hovingham Close Peterlee, to help prevent vehicles parking there illegally.



Handy-person service in action



New handrail at Oakerside Drive



Before

Canopy removed at Alcotte Drive to prevent anti-social behaviour



After

4. Neighbourhood and community standard



- We have held a community clean-up day, when we encouraged tenants to do litter-picks and provided skips for people to dispose of rubbish.
- Working in partnership with Thornley Chapel, we have painted the inside of the building.
- In 2011/2012 our Neighbourhood Enforcement Team dealt with 466 reports of anti-social behaviour. Almost 93% of these cases were successfully resolved, and we made 3 evictions.
- We carried out 4 injunctions, and issued 16 demotion notices and 475 warning letters.
- Forty-two of our frontline staff attended training on domestic violence and reporting hate crime, which has led to an increase in the number of cases tenants refer to the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team.
- We have supported East Durham football tournaments for 14-16-year-olds, which helps discourage anti-social behaviour.
- Dennis Gilbertson, a tenant, has completed training in Victim Support and he now supports victims of anti-social behaviour on our estates. Dennis was shortlisted for a TPAS award for his commitment to the service.
- Following an inspection by our Customer Inspection and Improvement Panel, we put in place several new schemes, including improving the way we provide noise-checking equipment and promoting the anti-social behaviour service through Facebook and Twitter.
- We made 162 referrals to support agencies and work with several partners to tackle anti-social behaviour, including:
 - **The Fire Service** – to help prevent arson through education
 - **STEP (Support Tenants, Eviction Prevented)** – to offer support for people who are causing anti-social behaviour
 - **UNITE mediation services** – to help resolve neighbourhood disputes
 - **Victim Support** – an independent national charity that helps people cope emotionally with crime
 - **Derwentside Domestic Abuse Service (DDAS)** – to offer support to victims of domestic abuse.
- We have introduced risk assessments, which are completed for all victims of anti-social behaviour to ensure an action plan is put in place.
- We have given workshops on anti-social behaviour and hate crime to local schools.

93% of cases successfully resolved

What we'll do next

- Review the communal flat block cleaning contract and the handy-person service.
- Review the estate champion scheme and identify areas for improvement.
- Develop further the support work and training for local people to become 'buddies' for victims of high-level anti-social behaviour or hate crime.
- Provide life locks to victims of domestic abuse. The lock allows victims to make safe any room in their home that has a door, giving them extra time to contact the police. The lock is as small as a mobile phone and is easy to fit and remove.
- Buy extra CCTV and sound-recording devices, as a result of more tenants needing to collect evidence of anti-social behaviour. This will enable victims to get the evidence they need more quickly, which can help resolve cases much more easily.



Junior estate officers at work



New fencing at Hovingham Close car park

5. Value for money standard



This standard says we should...

- have a complete and carefully designed and planned approach to achieving good value for money when meeting our organisation's objectives
- assess how well our assets and resources are performing, taking into account the interests of all interested parties and our commitment to them, and make this information available to them in a clear and accessible way
- manage our resources economically, efficiently and effectively to provide good-quality services and homes
- continually plan for and provide improved value for money
- show how we are looking to achieve good value for money and give customers the opportunity to influence how we provide services.

We are always looking for ways to save money and be more efficient by doing things differently. Giving good value for money is central to everything we do and we actively seek suggestions from our staff and customers about how to save money. We use any efficiency savings to make further improvements to our services or to invest more in your homes.

What we've done

- In 2011/2012 our VFM (value for money) target was £707,258 – we actually saved £855,993.
- Our Value for Money Service Review Panel is made up of customers and staff, and is chaired by a tenant. They meet quarterly to review procedures and ensure we promote and provide good value for money. This year the panel has made savings in several areas of our work, including reviewing our taxi supplier.
- Our Customer Improvement and Inspection Panel looks at value for money as part of their service reviews and have made suggestions for how we can make savings.
- In 2011/12 we saved £322,441 as a result of the repairs and maintenance contract we agreed.
- We saved £159,320 when providing aids and adaptations as part of our Decent Homes work.
- Our environmental policy has brought about a number of changes that have resulted in savings, such as double-sided, one-colour printing, introducing Dyson hand dryers, turning off heating earlier, and installing light sensors in toilets and kitchen areas. We saved £2,642 as a result.

**£855,993
saved**

**£322,441
saved**

**£159,320
saved**

- This year we saved £19,079 by changing the provider we use for cashing cheques and banking cash.
- We saved £17,000 by reviewing our insurance policy and negotiating a better rate.
- Efficiency savings allowed us to reinvest in several new initiatives and to plan for the future. Reinvestments we made in 2011/2012 helped us improve services to customers and included:
 - £157,650 in growth areas in 2011/2012
 - £800,000 extra into our property improvement programme to bring more homes up to the Government's Decent Homes Standard.

£19,079
saved

£17,000
saved



What we'll do next

- In 2012/2013 the Value for Money Service Review Panel will look for savings in:
 - *printing and graphics*
 - *areas highlighted from the 2011/2012 Housemark best practice report.*
- All parts of our organisation must meet certain efficiency targets for 2012/2013, including:
 - *various IT projects to improve our systems and create savings*
 - *reviewing our energy usage in line with our environment policy*
 - *using outside contractors to clean flat blocks.*
- Review our day-to-day spending to prioritise investment into the improvement of your homes.

6. Governance and financial viability standard



This standard says we should...

- ensure we have effective governance arrangements that enable us to achieve what we want for our current and future tenants effectively, openly and in an accountable way
- ensure that our governance arrangements:
 - *comply with all relevant laws*
 - *comply with the documents that set out those arrangements, and all regulatory requirements*
 - *are accountable to tenants, the regulator and relevant stakeholders*
 - *safeguard taxpayers' interests and the reputation of the social housing sector*
 - *have ways to manage risk effectively and ensure we are working efficiently*
 - *manage our resources effectively to ensure we can continue our work.*

Who we are

East Durham Homes is a private, not-for-profit company controlled by a board of 15 directors. East Durham Homes is owned by and reports to Durham County Council. It is an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO), which means we are not required to meet this standard, but we measure our performance against it.

- Our board of directors is made up of equal numbers of tenant or leaseholder board directors (or both), council representatives and independent members.
- The board has 4 sub-groups, called panels, that focus on improving key areas. Panel meetings are open to the public. The panels are:
 - *customer service*
 - *equality and diversity*
 - *finance and human resources*
 - *audit and risk.*
- Board meetings take place every other month in community venues throughout the East Durham area. They are open to the public and are promoted in our newsletter Insight and on our website.

What we've done

- Board director Margaret Oswald was shortlisted for the Housing Heroes Awards 2012, in the category of 'Inspirational Board or Cabinet member of the Year'.
- We raised £2,314 for the Chairs Charity. For 2010/2011 this was the County Durham Society for the Blind and partially sighted. To raise money, staff arranged several events including dress-down days, tombolas, raffles, a cake sale, quizzes and a race night.
- Simon Ramshaw of Anthony Collins Solicitors assessed the board and ranked it as one of his 'personal top 2' companies.
- We have completed a self-assessment against the National Housing Federation Code of Governance, and results show we have complied with most of the code.

What we'll do next

- Aim to achieve an 'Excellent A+' rating in the full board appraisal.
- Recruit new board directors who represent the community and have skills in finance, housing and support, asset management and development, and business.

**Raised
£2,314 for
charity**



Margaret Oswald (pictured centre)



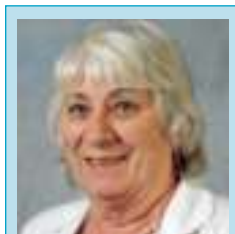
Chair's charity cheque presentation

6. Governance and financial viability standard

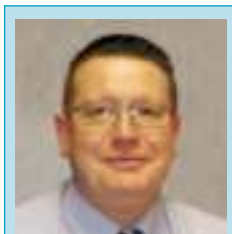


Meet our 2011/2012 Board Directors... (at 31 March 2012)

Tenant/leaseholder representatives



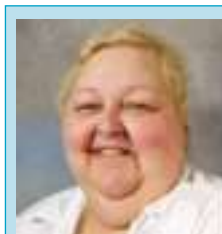
Marion Brunskill



Michael Fortune



Margaret Oswald



Jennifer Shutt

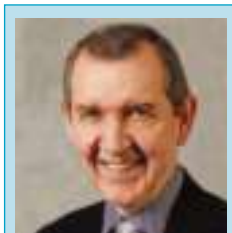


Thomas Wareing

Independent representatives



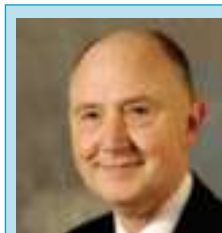
Michael Bell



Keith Gallagher
Chair



Rachael Howard

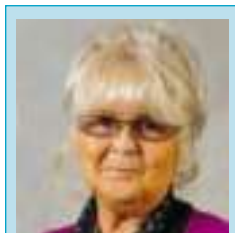


Paul Morgan
Vice Chair



Ian Youll

Council representatives



Geraldine Bleasdale



Edna Connor



David Boyes



Dennis Southwell

Executive Management Team

In 2011/12 the day-to-day running of East Durham Homes was managed by the Chief Executive, Paul Tanney, with a team of 3 directors.



Make a difference!

Would you like to play a key role in improving the area?

We are always on the look-out for committed, enthusiastic, community-minded people to join our Board of Directors.

If you are interested you can find out much more by visiting the 'Board information' page of our website, emailing us at governanceunit@eastdurhamhomes.co.uk or calling the Governance Unit on **0800 032 0835**.

Financial summary 2011/12



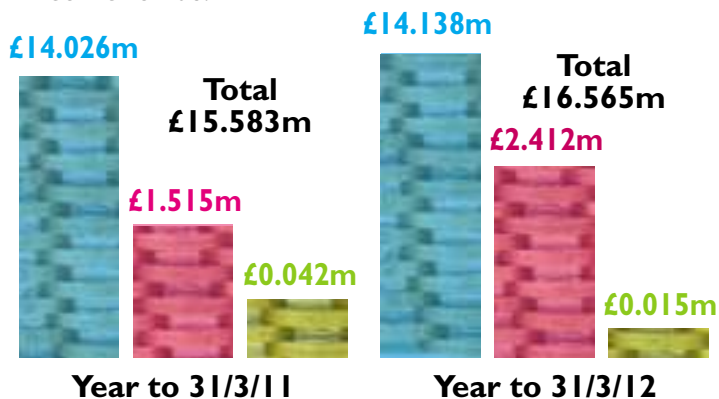
Introduction and background

East Durham Homes Limited is a company limited by guarantee; the company's sole member is Durham County Council. East Durham Homes was incorporated on 20 February 2004 and started trading on 1 April 2004. East Durham Homes is an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) of the County Council. The company's main activities are the day-to-day management and maintenance of the council's housing in East Durham.

Results for the financial year

Income

We had a turnover of £16.56m (2011: £15.58m). The bar chart shows the activities that generated income for us.

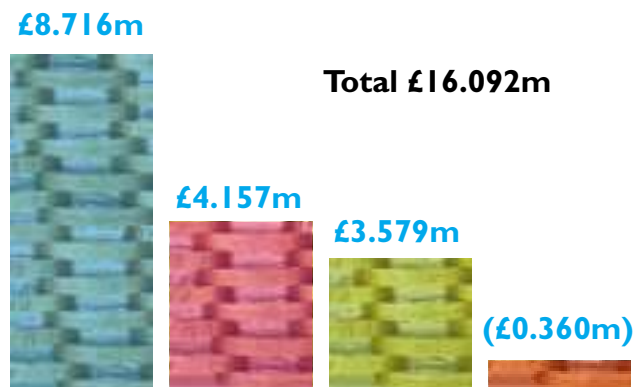


- Management fee for day-to-day management and maintenance of the council's housing stock
- Income for managing and completing improvement work to the council's housing stock
- Income for services to organisations other than the County Council

This shows that we get 99.9% of our income from the council.

Operating costs

The operating costs for the period were £16.092m (2011: £11.92m). The breakdown of our costs is shown in the following graph:



- Repairs and maintenance (including managing repairs and improvement work)
- Housing management
- Central services (including office accommodation, finance and communications)
- Pension adjustments

East Durham Homes' costs

Most of our income comes from the council. The council pays the management fee and provides some of the income for improvement work to council homes, from the Housing Revenue Account. The income to the Housing Revenue Account comes mainly from rents and government housing subsidies, both of which depend on the number of properties the council has. The number of properties the council has falls every year as a result of the Right to Buy, and the fact that some of the properties that people don't want to live in have to be demolished.

We are committed to providing services that give good value for money, and we will continue to review our costs to ensure that the organisation can continue its work. During the financial year ended 31 March 2012, we put in place several schemes to reduce our ongoing organisational costs, to ensure the company can continue in the long term.

Position for the financial year

In this financial year we had a deficit (loss) of £7,288 (2011: £2,879,828 surplus) after taking into account exceptional items, interest and tax. This includes disclosing the company's pension liability, as required by Financial Reporting Standard 17 (FRS17).

If we exclude our pension liability, then for this financial period there is a surplus of £142,712 (2011: £29,928). Our reserves have increased slightly – £2,134,052 as at 31 March 2012 (£1,991,340 as at 31 March 2011). This information is in the balance sheet. The reserve is for emergencies, contingencies and business planning. We intend to use some of the reserves to help us provide our Decent Homes programme.

The Board of Directors are satisfied that the company is a going concern.

A summary of the company's income and expenditure account and the balance sheet is overleaf. The audited financial statements provide the detailed analysis for the period. A copy of the financial statements is available from the Financial Controller, East Durham Homes, 2 Meridian Court, Whitehouse Business Park, Peterlee, County Durham SR8 2RQ.



Financial summary 2011/12



Income and expenditure account

| | Period 1.4.10 to 31.3.11 £ | Period 1.4.11 to 31.3.12 £ |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Turnover | 15,582,663 | 16,565,711 |
| Operating costs | (11,923,517) | (16,091,641) |
| OPERATING SURPLUS | 3,659,146 | 474,070 |
| Attributable to: | | |
| Operating surplus before exceptional items | 211,146 | - |
| Exceptional items | 3,448,000 | - |
| | 3,659,146 | 474,070 |
| Interest receivable | 26,306 | 26,306 |
| | 3,685,452 | 509,873 |
| Interest payable and similar charges | (800,000) | (510,000) |
| SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES BEFORE TAX | 2,885,452 | (127) |
| Tax | (5,524) | (7,161) |
| SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR | 2,879,928 | (7,288) |



Balance sheet

| | At 31.3.11 £ | At 31.3.12 £ |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| FIXED ASSETS | | |
| Tangible assets | 154,574 | 132,512 |
| CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Debtors | 754,731 | 753,296 |
| Cash at bank and in hand | 3,941,064 | 4,352,802 |
| | 4,695,795 | 5,106,098 |
| CREDITORS | | |
| Amounts falling due within one year | 2,859,029 | 3,104,558 |
| NET CURRENT ASSETS | 1,836,766 | 2,001,540 |
| TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES | 1,991,340 | 2,134,052 |
| CREDITORS | | |
| Amounts falling due after more than one year | - | - |
| | 1,991,340 | 2,134,052 |
| PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES | | |
| Defined benefit pension scheme liability | 13,470,000 | 16,680,000 |
| RESERVES | | |
| Other reserves | (13,470,000) | (16,680,000) |
| Income and expenditure account | 1,991,340 | 2,134,052 |
| | 1,991,340 | 2,134,052 |

Changes to welfare benefits...



Very
important
- please
read!

...how will they affect you?

The Government has recently received approval for its plans to make some changes to welfare benefits and payments over the next two years. The changes which have now been passed as law will affect housing benefit, which means they may affect how much housing benefit you get and how it is paid.

Do you have more bedrooms than you need?

From April 2013, housing benefit to cover rent payments will be based on the size of property you and your household need. This means that if you have more bedrooms than you need, your housing benefit may not be enough to cover all your rent.

Do other adults live in the household?

If another adult over 18 lives with you, they are normally expected to make a contribution towards your rent. This means the welfare benefit you may

be entitled to will be reduced. The amount other adults are expected to contribute depends on their circumstances.

The amount that welfare benefits can be reduced by increased in April 2011. We expect this to continue to increase annually up to 2014.

Will there be a limit to the amount of benefit you can receive?

Yes. From 2013 the amount you will be able to receive in total from a combination of benefits will be £500 a week.

What is universal credit?

Universal credit is a single payment that will replace jobseeker's allowance, income support, employment and support allowance, housing benefit, working tax credit and child tax credit.

Universal credit will be introduced in October 2013 for new claimants and existing claimants who have significant changes in their circumstances. It will be paid direct to you, monthly in arrears. It will include the amount for your rent and you will no longer be able to have this paid direct to us.

If you have any questions about the changes to welfare benefits, please contact us.



And finally...

...a word from our Interim Chief Executive and Chair



We hope you've enjoyed our 2011/12 Annual Report for tenants. We are really proud how much our customers have helped shape the report this year, and all the achievements we have made with our customers over the last year.

2011/12 was a really successful year for East Durham Homes. We have continued to make substantial investments in your homes and as a result we have made major inroads into our Decent Homes backlog.

At East Durham Homes customers are at the heart of what we do and we have continued to work closely with our customers to develop service delivery and improve performance throughout the year.

This year and beyond will see many challenges, particularly in light of government changes around welfare reform, which will bring about changes in welfare benefits and the way benefits are paid to our customers.

Durham County Council is also carrying out a Stock Option Appraisal to explore the future management of council homes and how best to meet the investment needs for all of the stock over the next 30 years. With your continued support we feel we're in a good position to make the most of these challenges and the opportunities they bring.

If you want any further information about what you've seen in this report, please do get in touch with us using contact details at the back.

Paul Mains, Interim Chief Executive



My term as a Board Director with EDH ends at the AGM on 27 September 2012. I have had the privilege to be Chair of the company for the last 5 years and have thoroughly enjoyed my time in the role, albeit there have been many challenges.

There still remains the major challenge of the Stock Options Review but I am confident that the outcome will be positive for EDH, its staff, tenants and stakeholders.

I would like to thank my fellow Board Directors, all the staff at EDH and all the tenants I have been involved with for their support and encouragement. I have made many new friends during my time on the Board, I wish everyone associated with EDH well and I will continue to promote the interests of the company at all times.

Keith Gallagher, Chair of East Durham Homes

Contacts...

For more information, please contact us at:

East Durham Homes

2 Meridian Court, Whitehouse Business Park,
Peterlee, County Durham SR8 2RQ

Freephone: **0800 032 0835**

Direct dial: **0191 518 5497**

You can use this local-cost, direct-dial number from your mobile phone to avoid premium charges, which your network provider may charge for calling freephone numbers.

Text: "enquiry" to **07786 207 745**

Typetalk: **18001** then the telephone number
you require

Fax: **0191 518 5349**

Email: enquiry@eastdurhamhomes.co.uk

Website: www.eastdurhamhomes.co.uk

Our contact centre is open from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, and from 8am to 12 noon on Saturday.

Please note: for emergencies outside normal office hours, you can contact us on **0800 032 0835**.

Customer outlets:

Peterlee Customer Outlet

29 Yoden Way, Castle Dene Shopping Centre,
Peterlee SR8 1AL

Seaham Customer Outlet

St John's Square, Sophia Street, Seaham SR7 7JE

Opening times:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday – **8.30am to 5pm**

Wednesday – **10am to 5pm**

Friday – **8.30am to 4.30pm**

Saturday – **9am to 12 noon**

Remember
we can also
arrange to visit
you at home if
you can't get
to one of
our offices.



www.facebook.com/EDHomes1

[@EastDurhamHomes](https://twitter.com/EastDurhamHomes)



www.carbonbalancedpaper.com
CBP0001167100912539



All our publications can be provided in large print, audio tape or CD, electronically via email or in Braille. We can also provide an induction loop, BSL interpreter, same-gender interview or home visits if required. Please contact us on 0800 032 0835.

This document is our Annual Report and Accounts for 2011/2012. If you would like us to provide this information in your first language, or you would like us to provide a translator and meet with you to discuss its contents, please contact us on 0800 032 0835. We can also provide same-gender interviews and home visits when required.

Arabic

هذه الوثيقة هي عبارة عن تقريرنا السنوي والحسابات الخاصة بالعام 2011/2012، وإذا أردت الحصول على تلك المعلومات بلغتك الأولى، أو أردت إجراء مقابلة مع توفير مترجم لمناقشة محتوى هذه الوثيقة، فيرجى الاتصال بنا على 08000320835. كما يمكننا التنسيق لنتم المقابلات وفقاً للنوع (رجال فقط أو نساء فقط)، هذا بالإضافة إلى المقابلات المنزلية عند الطلب.

Bengali

এই নথিটি হল আমাদের 2011/2012 সালের বার্ষিক রিপোর্ট ও অ্যাকাউন্টস। আপনি যদি চান যে, আমরা আপনার মাতৃভাষায় এই তথ্যাবলী প্রদান করি বা আপনি যদি চান যে, আমরা একজন অনুবাদক প্রদান করি ও আপনার সাথে এর বিষয়বস্তু নিয়ে আলোচনা করি, সেক্ষেত্রে অনুগ্রহ করে, আমাদের সাথে 0800 032 0835 নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন। এছাড়াও প্রয়োজন অনুযায়ী, আমরা সম-লিঙ্গের সাক্ষাৎকার ও বাড়িতে যাওয়ার ব্যবস্থাও প্রদান করি।

Chinese

本文件是我们的 2011/2012 年度报告及财务报表。如果您希望我们用您的母语为您介绍这些信息，或者希望我们为您提供一名译员与您讨论本宣传册的内容，请拨打电话 0800 032 0835 联系我们。如果需要，我们还可以安排与您同性别的工作人员与您面谈和上门拜访。

French

Le présent document nous sert de rapport annuel et de comptabilité pour l'exercice 2011/2012. Si vous souhaitez en recevoir le contenu dans la langue de votre choix, ou bénéficier des services d'un traducteur ou d'un interprète pour en parler, veuillez nous contacter en composant le numéro 0800 032 0835. Nous pouvons également vous accorder un entretien avec des personnes de même sexe que vous et des visites à domicile en cas de besoin.

Hindi

यह दस्तावेज़ वर्ष 2011/2012 की हमारी वार्षिक रिपोर्ट एवं खाते है। यदि आप चाहते है कि हम यह जानकारी आपकी प्रथम भाषा में उपलब्ध कराएँ या आप चाहते है कि अनुवादक उपलब्ध कराएँ एवं इसकी अंतर्वस्तु पर चर्चा करने के लिए आपसे मिले तो उसके लिए कृपया 0800 032 0835 पर संपर्क करें। आवश्यक होने पर हम समान लैंगिक साक्षात्कार एवं घर पर भेंट की व्यवस्था भी करा सकते है।

Polish

Niniejszy dokument stanowi sprawozdanie roczne i rozliczenie za rok 2011/2012. Gdyby chcieli Państwo otrzymać te informacje w swoim języku ojczystym lub też gdyby chcieli Państwo spotkać się z nami w obecności tłumacza by omówić zawartość tego dokumentu prosimy skontaktować się z nami telefonicznie, dzwoniąc na numer: 0800 032 0835. W razie potrzeby możemy też zapewnić spotkanie z osobą tej samej płci oraz wizytę domową.

Punjabi

ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ 2011/2012 ਲਈ ਸਾਡੀ ਸਲਾਨਾ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਊਂਟ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਵਾਈ ਜਾਣੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਜਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦਕ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਜਾਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਇਸਦੀ ਸਮੱਗਰੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਲਈ ਸਾਡਾ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਆਉਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ 0800 032 0835 'ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ। ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਜਦੋਂ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਸਮਾਨ ਲਿੰਗ ਵਾਲੇ ਨਾਲ ਮੁਲਾਕਾਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਘਰ ਮਿਲਣ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਮਹੁੰਦੀਆ ਕਰਵਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

Urdu

یہ دستاویز ہماری سال 2011/2012 کی سالانہ رپورٹ اور اکاؤنٹس پر مشتمل ہے۔ اگر آپ چاہتے ہیں کہ ہم آپ کو یہ معلومات آپ کی پہلی زبان میں فراہم کریں، یا یہ کہ ہم آپ کے لئے کسی ترجمان کا بندوبست کریں اور اس کے معلومات پر بات چیت کرنے کے لئے آپ سے ملاقات کریں تو، براہ کرم 0800 032 0835 پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔ ہم آپ کے انٹرویو کے لئے آپ ہی کے جنس کا انٹرویو لینے والی/والی فراہم کر سکتے ہیں، نیز ضرورت ہوئی تو ہم گھر پر بھی حاضر ہو سکتے ہیں۔

Turkish

Bu doküman 2011/2012 yılı için Yıllık Raporumuz ve Hesaplamalarımızdır. Bu bilgileri size ana dilinizde sağlamamızı, veya içeriğini görüşmek üzere bir tercüman ayarlamamızı isterseniz lütfen bizi 0800 032 0835 no'lu telefondan arayınız. Ayrıca gerektiğinde aynı cinsiyetten görüşmeler ve ev ziyaretleri de düzenleyebilmekteyiz.



WIN £50 in Asda vouchers!



Tell us your thoughts?

We're always looking to improve, so let us know what you thought of 'Open House,' the Annual Report for tenants 2011/12.



What did you like about 'Open House'?

.....

.....

What didn't you like about 'Open House'?

.....

.....

What else would you like to read more about next time?

.....

.....

Do you have any other comments?

.....

.....

Your details

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone number

Email address

Send this survey to FREEPOST, East Durham Homes Limited, 2 Meridian Court, Whitehouse Business Park, Peterlee, SR8 2RQ before 31 November 2012 and you could win £50 worth of Asda vouchers!