

Open House

tenant's annual report for **2013/2014**



Working together to deliver quality homes and a better environment for all

Welcome to your annual report

Put together by you...
for customers, by customers

This report shows you how East Durham Homes performed in 2013/2014 and what needs to be improved. The report follows standards set by the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) for housing providers and shows how we are meeting them.



The annual report editing panel

Customers were involved in producing the report and the annual report editing panel group helped put it together. Building on the success of last year's report we decided again to have a customer 'guest editor' for each section of the report to give a tenants point of view of our services.

This year's report is being included as part of your Autumn/Winter 2014 Insight newsletter so you will all receive a copy and get the opportunity to read it. We hope that you enjoy reading it and if you have any suggestions on how we can improve the report next year please get in touch!

A year in pictures...



We were the 1st ALMO (Arm's Length Management Organisation) and the 3rd organisation in the country to achieve the 'Leaders in Diversity' accreditation.

APRIL
2013



Our SHED2 social enterprise decorating apprentices were 'ready to roll' after completing their training.

MAY
2013



The new drying area in Pembroke Close, Peterlee was ready for customers to 'hang out' in.

JUNE
2013



100% success for gas safety checks and the annual prize draw winner announced.

JULY
2013



AUGUST 2013

Mr and Mrs Stout from Horden were the winners of our best kept garden competition 2013.



SEPTEMBER 2013

The winners of our annual customer excellence awards were announced.



OCTOBER 2013

We were visited by the home office to look at our excellent anti-social behaviour service.



We held our annual customer services event.



We were awarded Investors in People Gold and Customer Service Excellence.

NOVEMBER 2013



DECEMBER 2013



Two new energy and financial wellbeing advisers were ready to help customers save money.



JANUARY 2014

We held our first 'time to get online' session to help customers go on the web.



Our decent homes partner Wates helped save a war memorial in Murton.

FEBRUARY 2014

We held a 'clean up' day in Thornley with Thornley Primary School and in partnership with Thornley Residents Group, The East Durham Housing Partnership, Esh Property Services, Morrison Facilities Services and Durham County Council Neighbourhood Wardens.

MARCH 2014

Happy 10th Birthday



Our annual report was shortlisted in the annual TPAS awards.

How did we do?

Here are some figures to show you how we performed in 2013/2014.

Our customers

8,301 homes



5,097 houses



1,040 flats

108 leaseholders



2,164 bungalows

Your feedback

77

formal complaints received



88%

of complaints resolved within the target time of 14 days

157

compliments received



9.40

days taken to resolve a complaint (average)



4,470

customer surveys completed to help us check and improve our services.

Contacting us

126,649

calls taken by our contact centre



10,554

calls received per month on average



Monday

is our busiest day in the contact centre

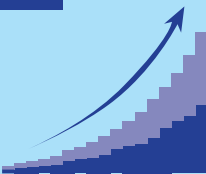
91.59%

of queries were resolved at first contact

Getting involved

101

improvements were made as a result of customer involvement



273

customers regularly get involved

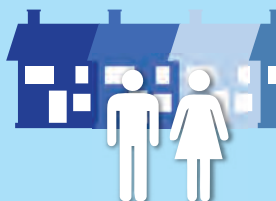
5 out of 15

members on the board are customers



19

ways for customers to get involved



15

community projects funded through our 'quick fix it' grant



Repairs and maintenance



34,823
repairs carried out

94.38%



repairs
carried out
right first
time

7.21 days taken to
complete a repair

Gas servicing



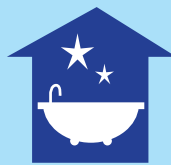
100%
of tenants homes
with a valid gas
safety certificate

Improving your home



1,700

homes made
decent as
part of our
decent
homes
programme



80%
of homes are
now decent

1,038

'A' rated boilers installed



806

adaptations made for customers
with an additional need

Housing

2,428

people registered for
housing through
Durham Key Options



681 new
customers



6 mutual
exchanges

983
properties
re-let



18.42
days taken to let
an empty property
(average)

2,652 customers given welfare
benefit and debt advice

98.51%
of ASB cases closed and
successfully resolved

514

ASB cases

£593,718
identified in benefits for
customers.

£771,499
rent arrears

30 customer evicted. 28 for rent arrears.
2 for anti-social behaviour

Tenant involvement and empowerment standard

This standard looks at our:

- **Customer service, choice and complaints**
- **Involvement and empowerment**
- **Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants**

Customers are at the heart of everything we do and all areas of the organisation actively involve our customers in decision making. We want to ensure that we meet the needs of our customers and couldn't do this without talking to and listening to our customers.



- Our customer involvement team

Our customer service, choice and complaints

- ✓ We have a number of different ways that you can contact us including online, by phone via our freephone or direct dial number, post, fax, text, website, email and Tynetalk. You can also contact us in person at our head office or customer outlets. We publish our full contact details and opening times in all our documents.
- ✓ We have developed clear service standards (called local offers) with customers for all our service areas. Our 'Providing Services Fairly' standard ensures all our customers can use our services regardless of age, race, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership.

- ✓ We have listened to our customers through surveys, meetings, service review panels and by responding to feedback and complaints. As a result, we have introduced 101 service improvements and reviewed and shaped policy and procedural changes.
- ✓ We have a 3 stage system in place to deal with complaints and have set target response times to meet. Our complaints procedure helps you tell us what has gone wrong and gives us all the information we need to put things right. We take all complaints seriously and will learn from our mistakes to improve our service.



Please remember that making a complaint will not affect your right to fair treatment and good service from us.

- ✓ We publish 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 continue to update and improve our website from suggestions made by customers in our mystery shopping group who regularly review it.
- ✓ Customers can register for 'Myplace' which lets you manage your tenancy online, 24-hours a day. It lets you view your rent account, make payments, report repairs and update your contact details.



What have we done this year?

Customer Service Excellence Standard on the plus side

We passed our re-accreditation for the Customer Service Excellence Standard (CSE). This year, the report highlighted that there has been a real sense of continuous improvement across the organisation and that East Durham Homes achieved 'compliance plus' in 3 elements of the assessment.

The standard recognises excellence in customer service from organisations in the public sector, and East Durham Homes are one in only a handful of housing organisations in the North East to have gained this standard.



'Obsessed' with customer service

We have continued our 'obsessed' staff training programme for all staff, which looks at how we can deliver excellent customer service. It includes:



- ✓ Valuing our customer's time and delivering against their expectations
- ✓ Turning a poor experience into a great one and demonstrating honesty and integrity
- ✓ Friendliness and meeting customer needs in a way that feels personal.

Complaints procedure

Our complaints procedure was reviewed in 2013 and we introduced informal and formal complaints. An informal complaint is a general expression of concern or dissatisfaction about a policy, procedure or service you have received from us and empowers staff to resolve complaints at the first point of contact.



This year we had 409 informal complaints which were resolved without the need to go through our complaints procedure. We had 77 formal complaints and only 5 of these went to stage 3, which is the highest stage.

Social media development

We have continued to develop our Facebook and Twitter pages to engage with our customers and partners using social media.



Facebook likes:

April 2013 – 229

April 2014 – 343

Twitter followers:

April 2013 – 420

April 2014 – 1,000

Involvement and empowerment

We offer many ways for you to get involved, including:

- ✓ **Service review panels** - we have 7 panels looking at different services. They are:
 - Customer involvement and access
 - Home (property improvements and repairs)
 - Tenancy
 - Rental income/sustainment
 - Neighbourhood and community
 - Leaseholders
 - Value for money
- ✓ **Housing Partnership** – an independent group of tenants, residents, and leaseholders in the area who we work closely with and consult with on key services.
- ✓ **Mystery shopping** - helps us to identify strengths and weaknesses in our services by testing to see how well they meet the standards expected.
- ✓ **Tenant and resident associations** – the customer involvement team supports groups who want to set up tenant and residents associations to help improve the area.
- ✓ **Editing panel** - helps us to ensure the information we produce is interesting, informative and clear. The panel also review the content for our Insight newsletter and give ideas on what to include in each issue.

We run an incentive scheme called 'EDH STARS' for customers who get involved. In 2013/2014 3,439 reward stamps were given to customers who got involved, 43 customers collected all 10 stamps and claimed their £50 reward.

Mr and Mrs Broadhead, Mrs Joyce Sloan and Mr James Soppitt were the lucky annual prize draw winners receiving £200, £100 and £50 respectively.



■ Mr and Mrs Broadhead receiving their prize

Customer Involvement and Inspection Panel (CIIP)

The Customer Inspection and Improvement Panel or 'Scrutiny Panel' as they prefer to be known, are a group of customer volunteers who inspect key services within East Durham Homes. They decide which areas to review and carry out a detailed inspection to find out how that service is performing. They use the information gathered to make suggestions, observations and recommendations to East Durham Homes Board.

Over the last year the scrutiny panel has continued to grow and continue to improve services for all customers. They carried out 3 inspections on:



- job cancellations
- decent homes
- the impact of neighbourhood and community schemes.

From these inspections they made 41 recommendations to improve services. They also recruited new members during the year and the panel grew to 10.

During their annual review they came up with a number of changes to their key documents such as the terms of reference and code of conduct to help make them more independent.

What have we done this year?

Getting more customers involved

We have increased the number of tenants who regularly get involved from 192 to 273.

Our door is always open – come and join us!

To find out about getting involved contact our customer involvement team on 0800 032 0835 or 0191 518 5497 or email customer.involvement@eastdurhamhomes.co.uk



Local events

We held a 'Week in action' event in September 2013 in Murton, which included a welfare benefit advice day, litter pick and coffee morning, as well as a door knocking exercise to let people know how to get involved.



We have held MAD days (Make a Difference) in a number of areas including Blackhall and Thornley. We have involved local schools and carried out litter picks, provided skips and gave advice on issues such as crime prevention and bogus callers.



Providing training for our customers

We had 86 customers who received training to increase their knowledge and skills and help them play a more active role with East Durham Homes. Training included:

- IT and getting online
- Charing meetings
- Presentation skills
- Equality and diversity
- Value for money.



■ Customers at the 'Time to get online' training

Support to other organisations

Our customer involvement team supports and works with various local organisations. They have helped local special interest groups and have supported residents associations to produce newsletters and flyers. They have also helped to re-establish residents groups and helped to set up the MS Active group, which supports local people with MS (Multiple Sclerosis).



■ The MS Active Group

Understanding and responding to diverse needs

- ✓ We collect information about our customers to help us understand our customer's needs and, combined with the training we have provided to all our staff, to tailor our services to meet them.
- ✓ Equality and diversity training is part of our staff induction process. We also provide training for customer groups, our partners and their suppliers.
- ✓ We can provide all our information in alternative formats such as large print, Braille or audio, or translated into another language. If a customer asks for information in large print, we offer them a choice of a large bar magnifier or an A4 sheet magnifier as an alternative.
- ✓ We can also provide interpretation services on the telephone, or face to face, when English is not a customer's first language.
- ✓ We have a range of customer-care kits that are available in our offices and for staff to take out when visiting customers. They include magnifiers, easy-hold pens and signature strips.
- ✓ We also have induction loops at our offices for people with hearing impairments and can take a portable loop when we visit people in their own homes.
- ✓ We can also provide a BritishSign Language interpreter when required.
- ✓ Our staff E&D group looks at diversity issues and representatives from all areas of the company give examples of any support they have given customers.

What have we done this year?

Leaders in Diversity accreditation



We were awarded the prestigious 'Leaders in Diversity' quality mark from the National Centre for Diversity. We were the first ALMO (Arms Length Management Organisation) and only the third organisation in the country to achieve this award.

To achieve the accreditation we had to demonstrate that not only did we have the right policies, but also have staff dedicated to ensuring accessible services are provided to customers, which make a real difference in the lives of vulnerable people.

Improving access for our customers

We have continued to improve the accessibility of our offices, customer access points and communal areas in our flat blocks.

Improvements made to our Peterlee Customer Outlet include:

- New powered doors to improve safe access for disabled people and people with prams and pushchairs.
- Providing new customer service counters which provide screens for increased privacy and are accessible to people with mobility issues.



Helping hand to save visually impaired group

We opened the doors of our Alcote House Community Centre in Shotton to the Peterlee Visually Impaired Group so they can continue to meet.

The group were about to stop meeting as the venue they were using was no longer available, which is when we stepped in and offered our services.



Annual customer service day

We held our annual customer service day in October 2013 which was attended by nearly 60 customers and local community groups including Durham Deafened Support, MS Active, Peterlee Visual Impairment Group, Stoneham Support Groups, Seaham Disabled Group and our Sheltered Housing Units. This year's event included presentations and workshop discussions around illegal money lending, estate management, digital inclusion and universal credit.



Decent homes partners pledge to be breastfeeding friendly

Our 3 decent homes partners: Keepmoat, Kier and Wates all signed up to Durham County Councils 'Breastfeeding Friendly Scheme' in May 2013.

We were the first housing provider to sign up to the scheme in 2013 and all 3 of our decent homes partners have signed up, which is another first.



You ask the questions... with Joan Zettle, tenant from Horden

Q. What have you done to get new people involved and what plans do you have to get more?

A. We have held 'week in action' events across the area to encourage customers to get involved either in their local community or with us.

We encourage our staff and involved customers to promote what we do to customers, friends, neighbours and family and our customer involvement team will contact them to give them more information on how they can get involved with us.

All new tenants are told about getting involved when they 'sign up' for a home with us.

We have our STAR scheme which is an incentive for customers getting involved with us. If someone comes along to 7 or more customer involvement activities they will receive £50. We also have a prize draw at the end of the year where you can win up to £200.

We will be holding more week in action events to enable you to be more involved in your community and make it easier to get

■ Joan Zettle with Steven Dawson, Customer Involvement Officer.



involved. We will be supporting existing residents groups and looking at re-establishing groups or setting up new groups where they are needed so that you have the opportunity to tackle local issues.

We want to continue to develop new ways for you to get involved and are particularly keen for younger people to get involved. With stock transfer on the horizon it is even more important that you have your say on how your services are run and is the perfect time for you to get involved.

Q. What support can you give to people who want to get involved?

A. We have a range of ways for people to get involved, which enables you to get involved at a level that suits you, from attending meetings to filling in surveys. We can provide training, which will increase your knowledge and skills and help you participate fully. We can provide transport for meetings or reimburse travelling expenses for coming along. All of our venues are easily accessible and we provide hearing loops and customer care kits. We want as many people to get involved as possible so will help anyone who wants to take part.

Home standard

This standard looks at our:

- **Quality of accommodation**
- **Repairs and maintenance**

Creating and maintaining decent homes for our customers is what we want to achieve and we have been working very hard to make this happen.

Making our homes decent

Over 80% of homes now decent

- ✓ We have continued to invest in customers' homes and have spent more than £25 million making improvements during 2013/2014. Working with our construction partners Esh Group, Keepmoat, Kier, Morrison and Wates, over 1,700 more homes were brought up to the decent homes standard.

The total number of homes made decent now stands at over **80%**.

What have we done this year?

New contractors appointed

In July 2013, Keepmoat, Wates and ESH Group were chosen to carry out improvement work on houses owned by Durham County Council and managed on their behalf by Durham City Homes, East Durham Homes and Dale and Valley Homes.



wates



ESH GROUP



Keepmoat
PROMISE DELIVERED

What an improvement!

Here are just a few examples of the homes we have improved this year.



- One of the 'Tarran' bungalows in Shotton before and after improvement works



- A bathroom before and after

Our repairs and maintenance service

- ✓ Our partner, Morrison Facilities Services, have been carrying out responsive repairs and maintenance to all your homes since July 2009. During 2013/2014 they carried out 34,823 repairs and 94.38% of these were done 'right first time'.
- ✓ By offering evening and Saturday morning appointments we can make life that little bit easier when you need a repair to your home. This service also applies to gas and solid-fuel servicing.

Appointment times are:

- Monday – Thursday – 8am to 4pm
- Friday – 8am to 3.30pm
- Saturday – 8am to 12 noon

We also offer evening appointments on:

- Tuesday and Thursday – 4pm to 8pm

- ✓ **Our waiting times for repairs are:**

- emergency repairs – completed within 24 hrs
- urgent repairs – completed within 5 days (3 working days)
- non-urgent repairs – completed within 9 days (7 working days)
- routine batched repairs – within 6 weeks (30 working days).

Missed appointments cost us and you! If you can't keep your appointment please help us by calling to rearrange or cancel it.

What have we done this year?

100% success in gas safety

Thanks to the help and cooperation of our customers, and the excellent teamwork shown in our partnership with Morrison Facilities Services, we have successfully carried out the annual check on all homes.

Annual gas safety check prize draw winner

In 2013/2014 there were 7,451 properties which needed to have a gas or solid-fuel safety check and 89% of customers gave us access on the first request. All of these customers were entered into a prize draw to win up to £1,000 towards their fuel bills, and the lucky winner was Miss Amanda Cleaves from Peterlee.



You ask the questions... with Janet Iley from Peterlee

Q. When I report a repair, I want it done properly. How do you make sure this happens?

A. When you report your repair, our staff will take as much information as possible and make a note of any special needs you may have. They will tell you what work we will order and how long it will take to do. We will agree a convenient appointment time with you when you report your repair, so we can do your repair within our published times.

We have set a target to carry out 96% of repairs 'right first time'. In 2013/2014 we were close to this target and achieved 94.38%

Q. What happens if I didn't want any decent homes work?

A. If you chose not to have any decent homes works done on your property, you have the chance to 'opt back in' before the end of March 2015.

We have been contacting all our customers who have previously said they didn't want any improvements to have a chat with them about why they didn't want the work done and to see if we can do something differently for them.

Mrs Pringle from South Hetton previously opted out of our decent homes programme as she was worried about the disturbance.

Mrs Pringle said: "Without EDH supporting and being there at every step I would have not coped, but the end result is excellent and I would recommend everyone to have the work done. The kitchen is fabulous and a real pleasure even at my age."

Call us on 0800 032 0835 or 0191 518 5497 for more information.

Q. I have had decent homes work done, but what happens in the future?

A. By 2015 the majority of homes will meet the decent homes standard but if we don't keep investing in your homes, then over time they will no longer meet this standard.

As part of the offer document for housing stock transfer there will be a planned programme of various works to your homes over the next 30 years, which would be required at different times but would include:

- ✓ kitchens would be replaced every 20 yrs
- ✓ bathrooms would be replaced every 30 yrs
- ✓ energy efficient boilers and heating systems replaced every 15 years for those homes which have a gas supply
- ✓ external refurbishment including new roofs, painting and brickwork repairs and improvements.

Tenancy standard

This standard looks at our:

- **Allocations and mutual exchange**
- **Tenure**

Allocations and mutual exchange

We want to make the best use of all council housing in East Durham and we apply Durham County Council's lettings policy when allocating properties.

The main aims of the policy are to:

- Ensure that we let our homes to those who need them most
- Offer you a choice about where you live
- Be simple and easy to understand.

✓ Offering people more choice about where they live

Most of our homes are allocated through our choice-based lettings system, called Durham Key Options. This system gives people more choice about where they want to live. Once registered, applicants are able to see what homes are available and 'bid' (express an interest) for the ones they are interested in.



We offer advice and support to anyone wishing to move, including bidding for properties on their behalf. We have a vulnerable applicant's officer who can help people who need a bit of extra support to find a new home.

✓ Helping people move home

If someone wants to move to a bigger or smaller home or in a different area they can use our mutual exchange service. This is a quick and easy way to find a new home. Once registered the system matches your needs with other people who are registered and once you have permission you 'swap' homes, as simple as that!

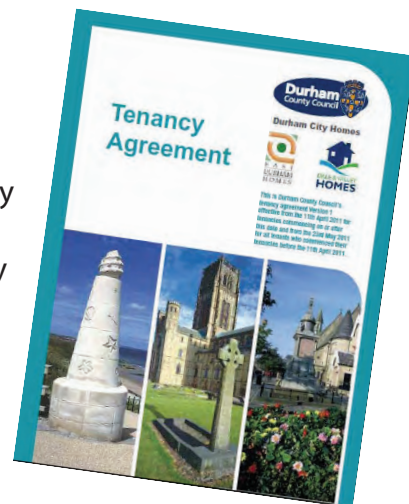
In 2013/2014 we were initially registered with homeswapper, a national mutual exchange service, then we started using a new system called Home Swap Direct from April 2014



- ✓ We ensure that when someone moves out of a home, the time taken to let to another tenant is as short as possible so homes aren't left empty for long. When needed, we have carried out decent homes work on an empty property, and although this increases the time before a new tenant can move in it means all work can be completed quickly and without any disturbance to the tenant.

Tenure

- ✓ All new tenants are given an Introductory Tenancy. An introductory tenancy usually lasts for 12 months, after which you will normally become a secure tenant. Introductory tenants have fewer rights than secure tenants.
- ✓ We carry out a tenancy visit every 3 years on secure tenants and their property. This helps us check that you are still living at the property and keeping to the tenancy agreement. We visit new customers (introductory tenants) after 3 weeks and again after 9 months. You then become a secure tenant after 12 months if you have met the conditions of the tenancy agreement.
- ✓ We understand that taking on a tenancy, especially for the first time can be daunting and we offer a tenancy sustainment service for younger people to give support once they have moved into their new home.



What have we done this year?

Energy and financial wellbeing advisers warmed up and ready to help

Since December 2013 we have had 2 Energy and Financial Wellbeing Advisers ready to help you get the best energy deals and give advice on energy efficiency.

Anmarie Sirs and Kirsty Hewitt can give you advice on saving money on your fuel bills, claiming discounts you may be eligible for, and sorting out energy issues.

Call us on 0800 032 0835 or 0191 518 5497 to see if they can help you.



Helping our customers

- 133 people were supported by our tenancy sustainment service.
- Our free welfare debt advice service has helped approximately 2,652 customers this year and has identified £593,718 of potential benefits that customers may be entitled to claim.
- East Durham Homes work closely with NEFirst Credit Union and this year 142 tenants have joined. The credit union gives you an easy and flexible way to save with the benefit of a competitive dividend and they also offer low-cost fixed-rate loans.

If you would like any further information on joining the credit union, please contact us or visit the NEFirst's website www.nefirstcu.co.uk or call them on 0191 375 7677.



You ask the questions... with Fran Cunningham from Peterlee

Q. How long does it take for someone to get a house when they apply?

A. This all depends on an individual's circumstances. Once someone has registered with us through Durham Key Options they are given an allocation banding according to their housing need. People in higher bands are given higher priority. At the close of the weekly advertising cycle, our computer generates a shortlist of applicants who have placed bids, in line with our lettings policy.

Q. How do you make sure people can afford to rent a house?

A. When applying for a home, applicants are given one of our 'The cost of renting' leaflets, which gives details of the types of expenses you will have when you get a home. The leaflet is aimed at getting potential customers to ask themselves "Can I afford this?"

As part of the application process, customers who identify that they have issues with fuel,

finance and furniture can be referred into the Countywide MONKEY project, which has an aim of improving financial confidence amongst social tenants.

All customers who are offered a tenancy are given a pre-rent determination to ensure they are aware of how much rent they will have to pay when their tenancy begins. In cases where people have complicated benefit problems or if affordability is an issue, our tenancy management officers will try and advise whether taking on the tenancy is best for them.

Our energy and wellbeing advisers will contact customers who have been allocated a property and try to help them get the best deal on their energy supply from moving in. They can also advise on saving money by being energy efficient, and help customers access grants and discounts they may be eligible for.



Neighbourhood and community standard

This standard looks at our:

- **Neighbourhood management**
- **Local area co-operation**
- **Anti-social behaviour**

Neighbourhood management

- ✓ Keeping estates tidy is one of your top priorities. We have a regular programme of estate walkabouts that help us ensure our estates are clean and well maintained. Walkabouts with customer representatives take place every 3 months and their dates and times are advertised in Insight, on our website and through social media.
- ✓ Last year we carried out **147** estate walkabouts, **38%** of these were with customer representatives. The estate management team also check that gardens are well kept and that customers keep to the rules in the tenancy agreement and they provide a caretaking service to look after the shared areas in blocks of flats and maisonettes.



✓ Giving you a helping hand in your home

Our handy-person service is available to all tenants who are over 60, registered disabled (or both). A member of our estate management team can spend up to 2 hours in one visit to do small jobs that you may not be able to do yourself. They can visit you a maximum of 2 visits every year. Last year **95** customers used our service.



■ The handy-person service

✓ Looking after our leaseholders

We have a leaseholder service which currently looks after 108 leasehold properties.

Leaseholders are customers who have previously bought their flat or maisonette through the Government's Right to Buy scheme, or from former tenants who owned their property.

We are responsible for the upkeep of the structure, exterior and shared parts of the block. Leaseholders have to pay a share of these costs which we incur for this work. These costs are called service charges.

Anti-social behaviour

- ✓ Dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB) is the second highest priority for our customers. In 2013/2014 our Neighbourhood Enforcement Team dealt with 514 reports of anti-social behaviour.

Legal action is a last resort, and we will always try to work with you to resolve the anti-social behaviour. Partnership initiatives to help prevent and resolve anti-social behaviour include:

- **Lifewise Project** – run by Centrepoin, this project provides training workshops for young people aged between 16 and 25 years, who may be living independently for the first time.
- **Fire Service** – we work with the Fire Service to help prevent anti-social behaviour, such as carrying out arson awareness events in local comprehensive schools.
- **HIP (Housing Intervention Project)** – support for people who are causing anti-social behaviour to work with them to stop the behaviour before it gets worse and perhaps risks their tenancy.

- **Mediation** – we work with BLISS mediation services, which help resolve neighbourhood disputes and anti-social behaviour-related problems.
- **Supporting victims** - as part of the anti-social behaviour action plan, we will work with various agencies to help support people. One of these agencies is Victim Support, an independent national charity that helps people cope emotionally with crime.
- **School workshops** – we visit schools in the area to raise anti-social behaviour awareness.
- **HARBOUR** – we can refer customers suffering from domestic abuse to HARBOUR who offer a specialist support service.

We also work with other local organisations to promote social and economic inclusion, including:

- **Safe Durham Partnership** – offer a Total Home Safety project to reduce burglaries and fires in the homes of vulnerable people. They will assess your home and fit one or more security measures such as window and door locks, outside lighting or smoke detectors.

What have we done this year?

Quick fix it grants

The 'quick fix it' grant aims to encourage community and voluntary groups to apply for up to £300 towards projects that will improve the quality of life within an East Durham Homes estate

area. In 2013/2014 we awarded grants totalling £5,025 to 14 projects. One of those was for Horden Colliery Heritage Society and their 'Making Mats and Sharing Memories Project' which aimed to bring younger and older people together making clippy mats.



Estate improvements—problem solved

Trimdon Station - following an estate walkabout in Trimdon Station, residents from Malvern Crescent said they were experiencing anti-social behaviour behind their homes. It was agreed to replace boundary fence to help.



■ Before



■ After

Murton - residents of Federation Square in Murton, supported by the local Councillor asked if fencing could be put up to help prevent vehicles being driven on and parking on open plan grassed area. As part of a partnership agreement, we agreed to contribute to a fencing scheme from the estate management environmental budget and Durham County Council erected the fencing.



■ Before



■ After

SHED decorating apprentices ready to roll

We recruited a second batch of apprentices on our social enterprise initiative, SHED2. The 6 apprentices, all from the East Durham area have completed their training and have been busy painting our empty properties to get them ready for new customers to move in.



Best kept garden competition 2013 winner

The 2013 winners were Mr and Mrs Stout from Horden.

Gardening judge, Anthony Dobell from Daisy Landscaping who sponsored the competition said: "Mr and Mrs Stout's garden really stood out to me. What's more, when there's an attractive garden in the neighbourhood, it makes others want to follow suit."



You ask the questions... with Jeff Bunney from Blackhall

Q. How do you deal with cases of ASB?

A. When a case is received by the enforcement team it is referred to one of our enforcement officers to carry out a risk assessment, this is to make sure we assess the level of risk and support the victim. An action plan is completed with the victim which gives clear guidance on what support options are available and what action is to be taken against the alleged perpetrator. A case is opened on our IT system and fully investigated. All victims have a designated enforcement officer who will keep in touch with them on a regular basis and provide feedback on the progress of the case.

Q. How can someone report ASB?

A. You can report anti-social behaviour, hate crime and domestic violence by:

- Going in person to one of our customer outlets in Peterlee or Seaham, our Head Office or to any member of staff
- Telephone – call freephone 0800 032 0835 from a landline or 0191 518 5497 from a mobile phone
- Email: tenancyenforcement@eastdurhamhomes.co.uk
- Website: use our online form on our website www.eastdurhamhomes.co.uk

■ Jeff Bunney with
Amanda Fulcher, Senior
Enforcement Officer



If you need help outside normal office hours, you can contact us on 0800 032 0835 from a landline or 0191 518 5497 from a mobile phone. Your call will be logged and passed to the enforcement team who will contact you the next working day.

Remember: if you are in any danger call the police

Q. What can you do if a tenant has an untidy garden?

A. Once an untidy or overgrown garden is reported to our estate management team, the estate officer in the area will visit and speak to the tenant about the issues. If they don't take steps to tidy the garden, we will issue warning letters and also invite the tenant into our office to discuss further. Our aim is to liaise with the tenant as much as possible to ensure they are given the necessary support to keep to the terms of their tenancy agreement and keep their garden maintained and tidy.

If the garden is still not tidied, we may need to arrange to carry out the work ourselves and charge the tenant for the work to their rent account. If they continue to allow their garden to become overgrown, the estate management team will liaise with the tenancy enforcement team to consider taking action against the tenant due to a breach of the tenancy agreement.

Value for money standard

This standard looks at our:

- **Approach to achieving value for money**

Value for money

What is value for money? Value for money is not about doing things cheaply! We need to get the best results possible from the resources (staff and money) we have.

Value for Money (VFM) has been and always will be a key strategic priority to East Durham Homes. By continually reviewing and assessing our services to deliver the best possible affordable services, that meet the needs of our customer base, we will look to ensure that:

'VFM is embedded across the organisation and our services are of a high quality at the best possible cost, in order to meet the priorities of our customers'



We are always looking for ways to save money and be more efficient by doing things differently. Value for money is central to everything we do and we actively seek suggestions on how to save money from staff and customers.

Any efficiency savings made are used to make further improvements to our services or to provide more investment in your homes.



We have worked hard to embed VFM within the organisation and this has been achieved on all levels from our customers, staff, board to the executive management team.

We have developed a number of ways to ensure the effective delivery of VFM, including:

- ✓ **VFM Service Review Panel** - this customer led panel meets regularly and is supported by a representative from the Executive Management Team and staff from the finance team. The group is provided with the relevant information to allow them to review and discuss our VFM and efficiency performance. The group will also offer suggestions and talk about topical issues influenced by VFM in housing, consider the effects of VFM on all areas of the business and also discuss future changes to the housing scene that may have an impact on the organisations ability to deliver VFM services.
- ✓ **Customer Inspection and Improvement Panel (CIIP)** - our CIIP have been a key tool in driving out efficiencies and suggesting improvements in service provision. As customers who experience our services they have valuable insight into where we could further improve our services.
- ✓ **Service review panels** - we are proud to involve customers in all aspects of service shaping and have a number of service review panels covering all areas of the business.
- ✓ **Mystery shopping** - our mystery shoppers provide valuable insight into service delivery and make suggestions of improvements and efficiencies.

What have we done this year?

New Value for Money Champions Group

This panel was established during 2013 to replace the VFM Improvement Group. The purpose of the group is to further embed and refresh the culture of VFM. The group meets on a regular basis, and has members from East Durham Homes officers from across the company, together with representation from the Board (Director with a special interest in VFM) and the Chair of the VFM Service Review Panel.

The Panel works in harmony with the customer VFM Service Review Panel and the main focus is to look at VFM issues and ideas that affect the internal operations of the company.



Value for money self-assessment

We have produced a VFM self-assessment report, which helps us and our customers understand that we are doing everything possible to deliver the best services we can, for what we can afford.



Annual efficiency savings

The total efficiency gains generated in the year to 31 March 2014 exceeded the challenging target agreed by Finance and Human Resources Panel by 25%. This highlights the work done to develop, promote and capture efficiency gains. These efficiencies are drawn from all areas of the business and range from a few pounds, to hundreds of thousands of pounds – no efficiency is too small to document.

Examples of efficiency gains made this year as a result of staff and customer suggestions are:

- By changing the printing specification and frequency of Insight newsletter, in consultation with customers – calculated savings £10,500.
- By officers procuring key fobs from a different source – calculated savings £100.
- By carrying out decent homes to properties reduced the value of responsive repairs on the improved properties – calculated savings £139,286.

Efficiency gains are reported to the Finance and HR Panel on a quarterly basis.

You ask the questions... with Ken Hancock from Shotton

Q. What happens to the money you save?

A. We are always looking at ways of improving our customer's journey and one of the ways to achieve this is by re-investing all savings made back into the delivery of customer services.

Q. What can tenants do to help you save money?

A. Everyone can help us save money. This could be by:

- Keeping any appointment we make with you

- looking after your home and any fixtures and fittings
- paying your rent on time
- paying your rent by direct debit as this is the most convenient and efficient way of paying
- reporting any repairs promptly
- keeping your garden in good condition
- keeping to your tenancy conditions
- contacting us if you think you need support with your tenancy.



Governance and financial viability standard

This standard looks at our:

- **Governance arrangements**
- **Financial viability – how we manage our resources**

Governance

East Durham Homes is a private, not-for-profit company controlled by a board of 15 directors. We are an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) owned by and reporting to Durham County Council.

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 3 sub-groups, called panels that focus on improving key areas. Panel meetings are open to the public. The panels are:

- customer service
- 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 have we done this year?

£1,350 raised for Centrepont

We have raised £1,350 for Centrepont, the Chair's Charity 2012/2013 and a cheque was presented to them at our AGM in September 2013.

Jennifer Tennant Area Manager from Centrepont said: "We would like to thank East Durham Homes for their generous donation. The money raised will help us support young homeless people in the North East."



■ Jennifer Tennant and Lindsay Peach from Centrepont being presented with the cheque

Keith Gallagher award for scrutiny

Tenant and CIIP (Customer Inspection and Improvement Panel) member, Ken Hall won our Keith Gallagher award for scrutiny this year. He was presented with his award from Keith Gallagher at the board meeting in November 2013.

Ken won the award for his role as secretary support for the CIIP. He is eager to take part in all aspects of resident scrutiny from planning inspections, taking on different roles during an inspection and his involvement with producing the final report. He is a team player and well respected member of the panel and fully deserved this recognition for the work that he does.



Appraisal praises board of directors

The board of directors was presented with a 'seal of approval' for their work from the Housing Quality Network (HQN). A full independent appraisal was carried out in May 2013 and the glowing report was presented by Charlie Hughes from HQN. The report praised the board for its focus on customers and outcomes, professional and effective conduct and the significant attendance of the general public.



■ Charlie Hughes, HQN with Vice Chair Michael Bell

Charlie Hughes said: "The performance and effectiveness of East Durham Homes Board is up amongst the best we have seen. The board functions very effectively."

On board with Jenny Shutt, tenant board director

Jenny Shutt is our latest tenant board director, being appointed earlier in 2014. We are committed to ensuring our board directors have a full induction to enable them to fully participate in board meetings.

Jenny said: "Since joining the board everyone has been very welcoming. I had a full induction which explained the process of how the board works step by step. The governance manual I received was excellent and covered the roles and responsibilities of the board, policies, code of conduct and even had information on EDH staff with photos. I also had a meet and greet with staff, equality and diversity training and a health and safety briefing."



■ Jenny (centre) with Patricia Thornhill, Governance Manager (left) and Andrew Lowery, Governance Assistant (right)

She continued: "At my first board meeting on the 22 May I felt confident in my role as a board director and was able to take part. I am now a member of the customer service panel and am really enjoying being a board director."

Our Board Directors as of 31 March 2014

Tenant/ leaseholder representatives	Independent representatives	Council representatives
Marion Brunskill	Michael Bell (Vice chair)	Jimmy Alvey
Ray Lamb	Eileen Gill	Geraldine Bleasdale
Margaret Oswald	John Hewitt	June Clark
Warwick Rothesay	Paul Morgan (Chair)	Joyce Maitland
	Ian Youll	Kevin Shaw

Executive Management Team

The day-to-day running of East Durham Homes is managed by the Interim Chief Executive, Michael Doyle, with a team of 2 directors. Rachel Taylor is the Director of Finance and Support Services and John Musson is the Director of Neighbourhood Services.



(l-r) Rachel Taylor, Michael Doyle and John Musson



Paul Morgan (Chair) and Michael Bell (Vice Chair)

Financial summary 2013/2014

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 commenced trading on 1 April 2004.

East Durham Homes is an Arms 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.

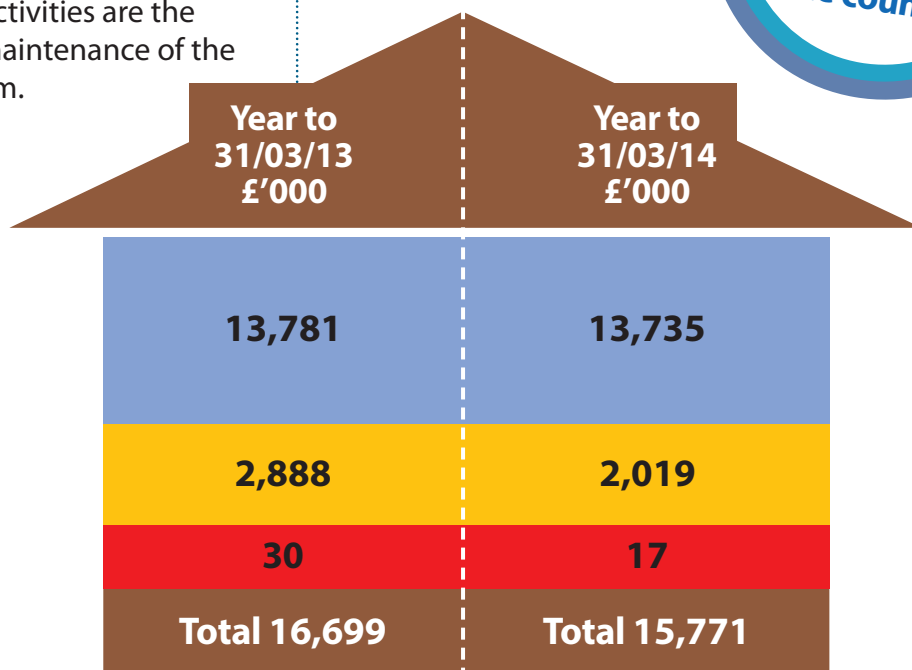
- Management fee for day-to-day management and maintenance of the council's housing stock
- Income for managing and completing improvement work to the council's housing stock
- Income for services to organisations other than the County Council

Results for the financial year

Income

We had a turnover of **£15.77m (2013: £16.70m)**. You can see the activities that generated income for us below.

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



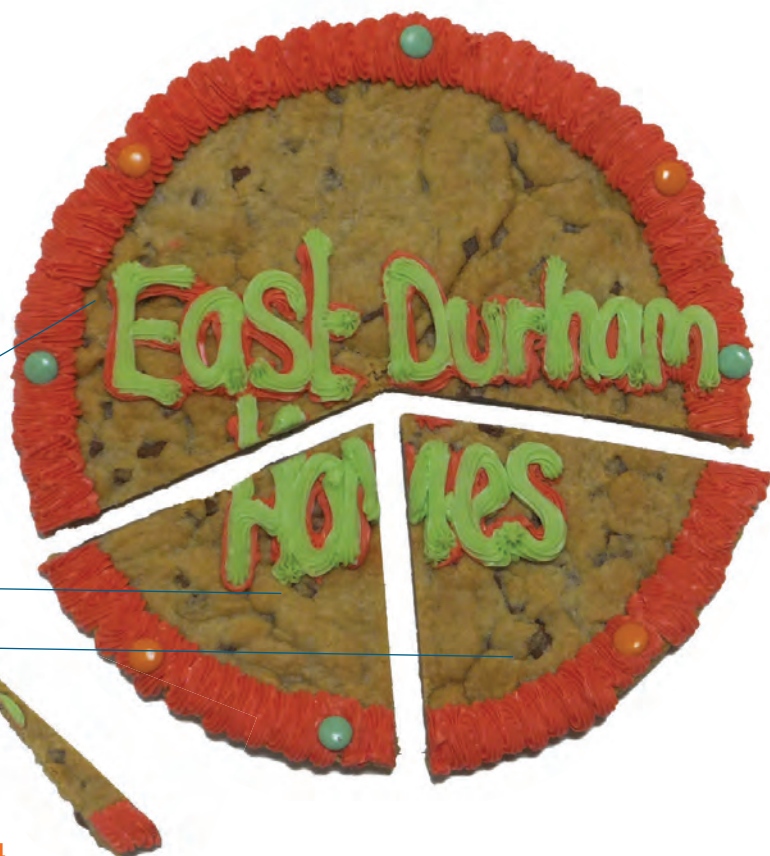
Operating costs

The operating costs for the period were **£15.4m (2013: £15.8m)**. The breakdown of our costs is shown in the following picture:

Where money is spent 2013/2014

Total £15,389k

- Repairs and maintenance (including managing repairs and improvement works) **£8,609k**
- Housing management **£3,605k**
- Central services **£3,805k**
- Pension adjustments (**£630k**)



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, which is dependent 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. We completed a voluntary value for money self-assessment for 2013/2014 which has been approved by the Board.

Position for the financial year

In this financial year we had a deficit of £151,421 (2012/2013: £288,192 surplus) after 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 deficit of £231,421 (2012/2013 £628,192 surplus). Our reserves have decreased to £2,530,823 as at 31 March 2014

(£2,762,244 as at 31 March 2013). This information is in the balance sheet. The reserve is for emergencies, contingencies and business planning.



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.

Income and expenditure account	Period 1.4.12 to 31.3.13 £	Period 1.4.13 to 31.3.14 £
Turnover	16,698,651	15,771,342
Operating costs	<u>(15,797,957)</u>	<u>(15,389,781)</u>
OPERATING SURPLUS	900,694	381,561
Interest receivable	<u>47,497</u>	<u>21,273</u>
	948,191	402,834
Interest payable and similar charges	<u>(650,000)</u>	<u>(550,000)</u>
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES BEFORE TAXATION	298,191	(147,166)
Taxation	(9,999)	(4,255)
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR	<u>288,192</u>	<u>(151,421)</u>

Balance sheet	At 31.3.13 £	At 31.3.14 £
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible assets	<u>56,120</u>	<u>17,883</u>
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	1,516,081	618,337
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>4,231,261</u>	<u>3,839,608</u>
	5,747,342	4,457,945
CREDITORS		
Amounts falling due within one year	<u>3,041,218</u>	<u>1,945,005</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>2,706,124</u>	<u>2,512,940</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>2,762,244</u>	<u>2,530,823</u>
PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES		
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	17,520,000	14,010,000
RESERVES		
Other reserves	(17,520,000)	(14,010,000)
Income and expenditure account	<u>2,762,244</u>	<u>2,530,823</u>
	<u>2,762,244</u>	<u>2,530,823</u>

And finally...



Tenants vote yes to housing transfer

Durham County Council's tenants have voted in favour of transferring the ownership and management of their homes.

82 per cent of those who took part in a confidential ballot supported the proposal, with 51.2 per cent of tenants voting.

Plans are now on track for the ownership of homes to pass from the council to the County Durham Housing Group. This group will be



made up of three new landlords – Dale & Valley Homes, Durham City Homes and East Durham Homes.

By voting yes tenants can now expect more than £800m of investment opportunities over the next 30 years.

For more information visit www.yourhomeyourchoice.info

Contact us

✉ 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:

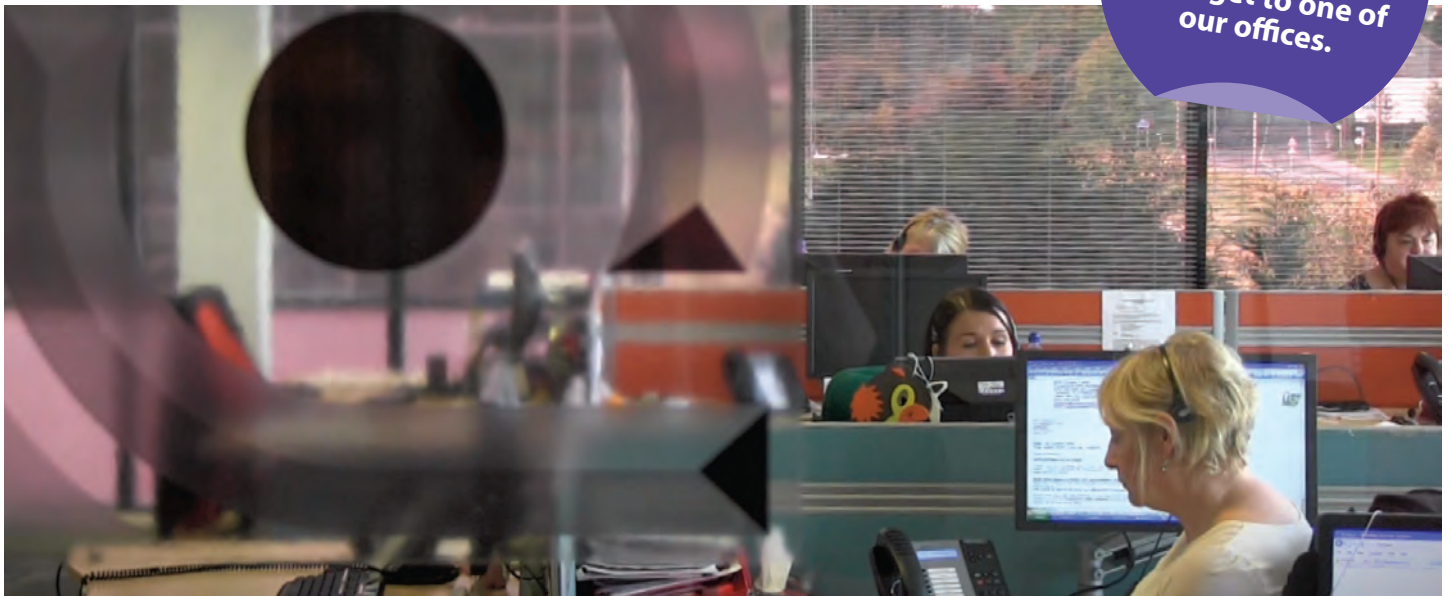
Monday, Tuesday and Thursday – 8.30am to 5pm

Wednesday – 10am to 5pm

Friday – 8.30am to 4.30pm

Saturday – 9am to 12 noon (Peterlee outlet only)

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)



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 2013/2014. 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 2013/2014. 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 لتتم المقابلات وفقاً للنوع (رجال فقط أو نساء فقط)، هذا بالإضافة إلى المقابلات المنزلية عند الطلب.

Bengali এই নথিটি হল আমাদের 2013/2014 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 বিষয়বলী 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 2013/2014 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相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 2013/2014. 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 2013/2014 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 करे। 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 2013/2014. 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 2013/2014 ਲਈ ਸਾਡੀ ਸਲਾਨਾ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਊਂਟ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ 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 ਮਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਕਰਵਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

Urdu یہ دستاویز ہماری 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 مشمولات 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 والا/والی فراہم کرسکتے ہیں، نیز ضرورت ہوئی تو ہم گھر پر بھی حاضر ہو سکتے ہیں۔

Turkish Bu doküman 2013/2014 yılı için Yıllık Raporumuz ve Hesaplarımızdır. 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.

