



**west  
north  
west**  
homes leads

***FOCUS ON EXCELLENCE***



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**Storyboard**

Issue 1

September 2009



**CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE**



The Government Standard

## **FOREWORD**

*It's almost three years since West North West homes Leeds was established. This storyboard demonstrates that over that period we have progressively developed into a strong organisation that is recognised for effective service delivery and customer excellence.*

*I am pleased to report our good progress towards the audit re-inspection in March 2010. We are responding well to the previous inspection recommendations. Over the next months we must accelerate our efforts to complete the BaildonDeanTambe short and medium term recommendations before the Inspectors arrive on site.*

*We are constantly aiming to be more cost effective. As we drive to meet challenging efficiency gain targets, we are also exploring new opportunities to maximise income and improve our range of services. We must focus on the things that positively benefit our customers.*

*Our goals can only be achieved through the dedication, knowledge and experience of a diverse and flexible workforce. Through all your hard work and commitment, myself and the Senior Management Team look forward with confidence to the opportunity during the inspection period to provide the inspectors with a comprehensive picture of our track record and quality.*

*Thank you all for your contribution to our achievements to date.*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Claire".

*Claire Warren  
Chief Executive*

# ***FOCUS ON EXCELLENCE***

## **Storyboard**

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### ACHIEVEMENTS – ACCESS AND CUSTOMER CARE

**WE HAVE** achieved the Government Customer Service Excellence Award in September 2009 – This award demonstrated that we are using customer profiling to better understand our customer needs and preferences. We have a good range of consultation mechanisms involving customers, partners and staff, and a strategic approach to reviewing consultation. We have well developed approaches to vulnerable customers and high levels of customer satisfaction across all main areas of service.

**WE HAVE** a dedicated Strategic KLOE Board consisting of customers and SMT focused on customer service access.

**WE HAVE** delivered Customer Care, Equality and Diversity training to managers and front line staff.

**WE HAVE** involved our customers in the development of comprehensive Service Standards across all of our key service areas.

**WE HAVE** 84% of respondents finding our customer facing staff helpful and we received the highest rate of satisfaction amongst the 3 ALMOs in Leeds.

**WE HAVE** provided 24 hour telephone out-of-hours service for Anti-Social Behaviour.

**WE HAVE** all neighbourhood housing offices equipped with induction loops: language line and interpreting services are offered on request.

**WE HAVE** provided customers with the opportunity for a private interview room at all our customer facing offices.

**WE HAVE** provided our customers with the facility to report hate crimes at all our neighbourhood housing offices.

**WE HAVE** redesigned the Customer Service Division to improve access and customer care in line with our customers' priorities.

**WE HAVE** offered freephone service for customers to contact other services provided by WNWhL or LCC.

**WE HAVE** been credited with Investor in People and Level 4 Equality Standard.

**WE HAVE** achieved a high level of customer satisfaction with LCC Customer Service at around 90%.

**WE HAVE** improved LCC Customer Service handling performance since the last inspection, **98% of calls, against a target of 95%, were answered in September**, with customers waiting on average **37 seconds**, a massive improvement from **82 seconds** when we were last inspected.

### ACHIEVEMENTS – ACCESS AND CUSTOMER CARE

**WE HAVE** consistently achieved above our target of 80% in responding to customer complaints within 10 days.

**WE HAVE** undertaken a range of service satisfaction surveys and used feedback mechanisms to improve and develop services for customers, for example the introduction of extended opening hours.

**WE HAVE**, in consultation with our stakeholders and customers, revised our complaints policy and procedures which has resulted in the introduction of a stage 3 process.

**WE HAVE** a bi-monthly Complaint Review Panel to oversee performance and demonstrated evidence of learning from complaints using the principle “you said we did”.

**WE HAVE** used our customer profile information to target services for individual customer needs. For example; we are running a pilot to extend our opening times on Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings at Wortley neighbourhood office, making it more accessible for customers who work full-time.

**WE HAVE** offered appointment for repairs, improvement, adaptation and gas service work and surveyors’ inspections on evenings and Saturday mornings for customers who are unable to take time off work.

**WE HAVE** used ring ahead and ring after service to remind tenants of booked appointments to reduce “no access”.

**WE HAVE** provided all our new tenants with a Sign up DVD to promote our services and to ensure our tenants have a clear understanding of their condition of tenancy.

### FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

**WE ARE** going to reduce the number of avoidable contacts that impact on customer satisfaction and to get better value for money for this service area.

**WE ARE** working with LCC Customer Services to ensure the number of abandoned calls does not exceed 5%.

**WE ARE** going to undertake robust investigation into disparities in customer satisfaction and low take up of services by equality strand and develop services to meet the needs of specific groups.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

**WE HAVE** a dedicated Tenancy Support Team who co-ordinate support needs, respond to crisis support and complex multi-support needs to our vulnerable tenants.

**WE HAVE** provided induction loops, language line and offer interpreting services on request at all our neighbourhood housing offices.

**WE HAVE** held a very successful 'Fusion' fashion, food and music celebration event for customers, raising almost £1500 for local charities; a cooking around the world project; an English for Speakers of Other Languages course; and, through Area Panel funding, have held intergenerational events with the Red Ladder Theatre Company and two Tea Dances.

**WE HAVE** all neighbourhood housing offices equipped as reporting centres for victims of, or witnesses to, hate crime.

**WE HAVE** a dedicated section on our website for customers on Hate Crime, Domestic Violence, Cohesion and Diversity and translations.

**WE HAVE** an Action Plan in place to help promote sheltered accommodation to BME customers.

**WE HAVE** been successful in being externally assessed as Level four of the Equality Standard.

**WE HAVE** supported the objectives of LCC by working within their Cohesion and Diversity Strategy and the Strategic Landlord's Performance Framework which includes equality.

**WE HAVE** a Board Director and Chief Executive who act as our Equality Champions. A Diversity KLOE Board has been established and includes directors and customers.

**WE HAVE** attained the Diversity '2 Ticks' Accreditation showing consideration in recruitment and employment toward disabled people. Targets have been set for recruitment of staff based on diverse groups.

**WE HAVE** 351 staff who have completed the on-line Grass Roots Diversity Workbook.

**WE HAVE** a Staff Diversity Champions' Group that meets quarterly to promote and raise awareness of equality and cohesion issues.

**WE HAVE** developed the staff volunteering programme that engaged staff to develop Year 6 students reading skills and as mentors to Year 11 students. They have also been involved in a 'World of Work Day' to help raise the aspirations of children and link their learning to work and what they want to do when older.

### FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS FOR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

**WE ARE** developing a mobile outreach service, which will enable us to provide an accessible service for customers who live in remote areas.

**WE ARE** delivering a comprehensive staff training programme including sessions on Hate Crime, Mental Health Awareness, Sexuality Awareness and HIV/AIDS.

**WE ARE** working on implementing the new Equality Framework.

## RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

### ACHIEVEMENTS

**WE HAVE** customers who attend Service Improvement Groups (SIG) for key service areas. We have Customer Sounding Boards for each SIG area and through these mechanisms customers have been involved in developing policies and strategies.

**WE HAVE** customers participating in our Complaints Panel, Editorial Panel and Staff Rewards and Recognition Panel and are included on Panels for Recruitment and Selection of front-line staff.

**WE HAVE**, in 2008, attained the TPAS Quality Accreditation and we are very proud to be the first ALMO in the country to have achieved this award.

**WE HAVE** committed a Diverse Community Fund (total £9,000) for Associations to carry out specific projects that seek to involve all their members ie European Community Day or visit to a mosque.

**WE HAVE** in partnership with Healthy Living Network Leeds, secured funding of £20k to deliver workshops, aimed primarily at new tenants, enabling them to learn basic home skills, build confidence and capacity to manage their tenancy.

**WE HAVE** reviewed and streamlined the Area Panel bidding process which enables customers to submit their own bids for Tenants Association work, community safety and environmental projects. The Panels have provided funding for community gardens, fencing and equipment for sports clubs, provision of a youth worker and an urban arts project.

**WE HAVE** undertaken neighbourhood sustainability mapping which is used throughout the business to assist teams in understanding triggers potentially responsible for, or leading to, decline. Staff work with tenants to plan approaches, steer resources and make service improvements based on this.

### ACHIEVEMENTS – RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

**WE HAVE** worked with partners and delivered innovative projects to increase engagement with under-represented customers including four Dreamschemes (community youth development programmers based on a simple concept of work and reward) and an English for Speakers of Other Languages course.

**WE HAVE** in partnership with Groundwork Leeds delivered community and youth engagement projects.

**WE HAVE** developed an effective relationship with Armley mosque and provide a surgery on a weekly basis (to coincide with Friday prayers) as well as more informal engagement activity including regular cricket matches.

### FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

**WE ARE** delivering a free customer training programme offering a variety of topics and skills aimed at both active community members and non-involved tenants and leaseholders.

**WE ARE** delivering a tailored training programme to staff and Board Members to raise awareness of involvement and engagement mechanisms and how they can support customers more effectively.

**WE ARE** further developing our action plan to address under-representation of younger and BME tenants in our involvement mechanisms. We are also working with TRAs to ensure inclusiveness of diverse community groups and have introduced a Diverse Communities Fund to assist TRAs in involving all their members.

## VALUE FOR MONEY

### ACHIEVEMENTS

WNWhL have adopted an organisational wide approach to value for money, supported by a Value for Money and Procurement Strategy, including an action plan approved as part of the strategic document. Below are examples of VFM projects undertaken by staff teams across our company.

**WE HAVE** a value for money assessment undertaken for translation and interpretation resulting in a cost saving of 20% for written translation.

**WE HAVE**, under the Management Fee to West North West homes Leeds in financial year 2009/10, seen an increase of 1.7% or £467k in cash terms.

**WE HAVE**, since the formation of WNWhL in April 2007, achieved 2 year cashable efficiencies to the value of £2.3m, with a further series of cashable gains through mini projects in financial year 2008/09 of £468k.

### ACHIEVEMENTS – VALUE FOR MONEY

**WE HAVE** switched to an approach where more emphasis is placed on other income streams and match funding has also been adopted – recent examples of this include energy efficiency works to the value of £246k (to be reinvested in the capital programme).

**WE HAVE** through the sale of the modernised policies to sister organisations in Leeds realised additional income of £11k.

**WE HAVE** delivered a number of value for money projects within the sheltered housing services, including changing utilities provider.

**WE HAVE** an arrangement in place with Scottish Southern for the gas and electric tariffs. WNWhL receive £50 for each void property which is transferred over and the customer then has 28 days to change supplier. WNWhL has received £34,000 income from this scheme and has reinvested this into service improvements.

**WE HAVE** introduced a decoration voucher scheme. The procurement of these arrangements have saved the organisation £11,000, which has been reinvested into service improvements.

### FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS – VALUE FOR MONEY

**WE ARE** introducing more comprehensive use of activity based cost benchmarking information across the business.

**WE ARE** identifying gaps in comparative performance in existing service areas and introducing improvement actions where necessary.

**WE ARE** developing in-house expertise in contract management.

**WE ARE** considering further rationalisation of the office estate to align to key priorities and further enhance value for money objectives.

## STOCK INVESTMENT

### ACHIEVEMENTS

**WE HAVE** 17,147 (83.20%) of homes that meet the Decent Homes Standard and we have a full delivery programme to achieve the March 2011's target.

**WE HAVE** 98% of our customers satisfied with our repair service.

**WE HAVE** responded to 99.03% of urgent repairs on time and we complete all non-urgent repairs on average in less than 9 days which is below our target of 10 days.

## ACHIEVEMENTS – STOCK INVESTMENT

**WE HAVE** during 2009/10 set a stretched target of 60/40 ratio of planned / responsive repairs against the actual year end performance for 2008/09 of 53/47.

**WE HAVE** reviewed our Asset Management Strategy and highlighted how we will tackle recently emerging issues such as Fire Safety and our worst condition non-traditional properties.

**WE HAVE** further targeted 10% of the stock for full stock condition surveys and use the stock condition database Keystone to inform our investment needs beyond 2011.

**WE HAVE** delivered improvements that exceed the basic Decent Homes Standard, such as fitting over-bath showers, fitting extractor fans, offering floor covering choices and additional tiling in kitchens and bathrooms.

**WE HAVE** 97.4% of our customers satisfied with the works delivered through the capital programme.

**WE HAVE** a robust plan to complete DDA surveys for all our communal areas to our sheltered complexes, and high and low-rise blocks. Resources have been identified within the capital programme to deliver the priority actions within the DDA programme and progress against these have been made within the 2009/10 programme.

**WE HAVE** introduced “Right First Time” and monitored the percentage of jobs completed on first visit by our partners.

**WE HAVE** offered customers £10 compensation for missed appointments by our partners (paid by the contractors).

**WE HAVE** reviewed the extended contracts to March 2011 to yield savings in 2010/11.

**WE HAVE** strengthened our approach to managing gas servicing and revised our Gas Servicing Policy and Procedures. We have introduced an 11 month service programme to ensure that the no access procedure is started in advance of CP12s lapsing.

**WE HAVE** offered our customers flexible appointments including early evening and Saturday mornings and have robust procedures in place to monitor and manage no access cases to ensure action is taken early and which take into account customer vulnerability.

**WE HAVE** improved and we have no properties with outstanding CP12s over 3 months.

**WE HAVE** 100% customer satisfaction on our aids and adaptation service in the last two consecutive months and we have a clear mechanism to learn from customer feedback.

## FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS – STOCK INVESTMENT

**WE ARE** implementing our 3 year investment programme to tackle fire safety in our communal areas.

**WE ARE** working with the Council to review the longer term business strategy for the garage and 'garage plot' stock to ensure that the service is cost-effective and the rents and charges set for the service are sufficient to cover the full service costs.

**WE ARE** reviewing with the Council how we will deliver an investment needs programme beyond Decent Homes to sheltered housing outside PFI.

**WE ARE** working with the Council to establish projected customer demand for disability adaptations and to find funding solutions to meet customer needs.

**WE ARE** working with the Council to agree a renewal programme and timescale for old and obsolete sheltered warden call equipment.

**WE ARE** carrying out an option appraisal to bring in-house the contract administration and management for delivering the capital investment programme from April 2011.

**WE ARE** completing the 2011 procurement for responsive and planned maintenance works with a view to appointing preferred partners by November 2010 for a start on site on 1 April 2011.

**WE ARE** carrying out an option and cost appraisal to extend communal digital reception services to all blocks not currently serviced and also for the upgrade of the existing digital services to include 'digital plus' and broadband access.

## **INCOME MANAGEMENT**

### ACHIEVEMENTS

**WE HAVE** worked in partnership with the Council to increase awareness amongst our customers and staff to develop services with organisations such as Leeds Credit Union to deliver ethical financial services to our customers.

**WE HAVE** rolled out a "Now Let's Talk Money" training programme to 120 staff via an active learning workshop. This enabled our front line staff to quickly identify, advise and sign-post customers to debt, financial and benefit advice without lengthy referral processes.

**WE HAVE** improved HMA1 from 3.55% to 3.41% since 2008/9 year end and we are very confident of meeting our 2009/10 year end targets

**WE HAVE** surpassed our former tenants arrears target for 08/09 of 2.60% by achieving 1.58% in the final month reduced from 2.05%.

### ACHIEVEMENTS – INCOME MANAGEMENT

**WE HAVE** responded to the impact of the recession and have focused our resources on debt prevention and current arrear recovery. As a result, we are on target to maintain our high former tenant arrears performance levels.

**WE HAVE**, since the establishment of WNWhL, developed and delivered strategies focusing upon arrears and debt prevention. There has been a significant reduction in enforcement activity, whilst arrears levels have continued to decrease. Clear evidence of this can be demonstrated by the fact that, over a one year period, we have reduced evictions from 51 to 28, and NSP levels from 11.14% to 8.56%.

**WE HAVE** in a Customer Satisfaction Survey in August 2008 for Income Management an overall satisfaction of 92.51%, with just over a 20% response rate.

**WE HAVE** funded a Citizen Advice Bureau Debt Outreach Worker who operates exclusively for our customers to ensure they have access to fast, independent debt advice. This was introduced in Sept 08 and we have seen a massive impact resulting in, up to March 09, debts of £527,529 handled and income gained projection (annual actual and estimated) £70,505.

**WE HAVE** delivered two Benefit Take Up Campaigns gaining our customers extra income of £22,539.39.

**WE HAVE** introduced a quarterly prize draw for those who pay by Direct Debit and Standing Order and also those with a clear rent account to encourage low cost methods of payment and regular payments. Customer feedback has also demonstrated that they are most aware of Direct Debit and Paypoint payment methods, demonstrating that our promotional campaigns of the most cost-effective payment methods have been effective.

### FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

**WE ARE** working with Leeds City Council on how a more joined up service can be provided for tenants at risk of eviction, for example joint visits between Customer Accounts Team staff and homelessness officers within Leeds City Council.

**WE ARE** reviewing standard working hours for the Customer Accounts Team and other staff to provide a more flexible service for customers.

**WE ARE** undertaking a value for money analysis of the costs and benefits of having an in-house benefits advice service compared to outsourcing the service.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

**WE HAVE** introduced bi-monthly Area Panel Meetings, Tenant and Resident Groups, Multi-Agency Tasking Groups and Neighbourhood Housing Action Groups, and estate walkabouts and inspections to enable a co-ordinated approach to Tenancy and Estate Management.

**WE HAVE** identified Crime and Environmental ASB hotspots and, as a result, carried out a successful operation to tackle drug issues in Little London. Through joint Area Panel Funding and police funding, we have set up an estate based surgery on the Hawksworth Wood estate.

**WE HAVE**, with our customers, revised the Tenants Handbook to include comprehensive information on enforcement and tenancy/estate management issues. At sign-up the tenant's obligations are clearly stated and a DVD has been produced with customer involvement.

**WE HAVE** introduced "introductory tenancy" visits at 1, 5 and 8 months to ensure support / tenancy conditions are complied with. We record their effectiveness on a monthly basis and have found the process most effective for picking up rent arrears and non-occupation.

**WE HAVE**, through our Customer Sounding Board, introduced a systematic approach to undertake annual home visits, including sheltered housing, where high risk cases are prioritised.

**WE HAVE** a Tenant Support Team who can engage and monitor support providers to help vulnerable tenants to sustain tenancies. Over 50% of the tenancy support cases that have been closed have been successful in promoting independent living and sustaining tenancies.

**WE HAVE**, in 2008, achieved the top performer in the city in terms of customer satisfaction with aspects of how our ASB report was handled.

**WE HAVE** achieved, according to the 2009 annual benchmark report, top quartile for the percentage of tenants satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live, fifth out of 22.

**WE HAVE** a Child Safeguarding Policy and actively work on the "Every Child Matters" (ECM) agenda by piloting approaches in partnership with LCC Children's Services. The strategy also supports our approach to hate crime and domestic violence.

**WE HAVE** signed up to the RESPECT Standard (September 2007) and have made a commitment to deliver an effective response to ASB and nuisance. We have undertaken a gap analysis against the standard and developed an action plan to deliver service improvements.

## ACHIEVEMENTS – TENANCY AND ESTATE MANAGEMENT

**WE HAVE** streamlined our estate caretaking and multi-storey caretaking service to offer our customers a more effective localised service. We have increased customer satisfaction from 71% to 87% since these arrangements have been put in place.

**WE HAVE** delivered efficiency savings against the current Cleaning Service Level Agreement and processes of £70,104 to date, with an additional £96,575 anticipated.

**WE HAVE**, tackled fly tipping and offensive graffiti within 1 working day. These targets for removal were agreed with customers and performance was 100% in 2008/9.

**WE HAVE** introduced innovative measures to reduce occurrences of fly tipping such as clearing unused bin stores and provided bins rather than black bags.

**WE HAVE** a number of caretaking staff on call to deal with emergencies during non-working hours.

**WE HAVE** recently undertaken a peer review with Hull City Council, which demonstrated positive results, including a total overall quality score of 85%, grounds maintenance quality of 79% and caretaking/cleaning and estate amenities of 86%. This positioned us third in the benchmarking group.

**WE HAVE** carried out estate grading with our customers which helps us direct resources to improve levels of service and value for money. The results of this process is reported through our Local Performance Framework and used to set improvement targets for Neighbourhood Management Officers at a local level.

**WE HAVE** robust monitoring and contract management in place for a grounds maintenance contract and have involved tenant inspectors to help drive up performance. Current performance is at 100% as a quality measure from our 10% sample monitoring. Our benchmarking demonstrates we are in top quartile for VFM.

**WE HAVE** an effective partnership with Groundwork which actively engages the community in projects to help improve the environmental appearance and tackle community safety issues. Examples would be the junior warden scheme, Bawns and Holtdale environmental weeks, Whincover sheltered garden scheme project and recycling schemes in Little London and Grayson Crescent multi-storey block.

### FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

**WE ARE** continuing to ensure that we meet the Respect Standard for Housing Management.

**WE ARE** implementing initiatives to improve access rates to homes through this process, including the involvement of the Sheltered Housing Wardens and Accounts Team.

**WE ARE** continuing to develop partnership working to ensure a holistic approach to tackling ASB and its causes.

**WE ARE** working on procuring a new Grounds Maintenance contract.

**WE ARE** carrying out and implementing the caretaking and cleaning review.

## **ALLOCATIONS, LETTINGS AND VOID REPAIRS**

### ACHIEVEMENTS –

**WE HAVE** completed a comprehensive review of the 3 service areas. In May 2009 the Allocations and Lettings Team merged with the Void Repairs Team to improve value for money, performance, customer service and to ensure there is clarity and ownership of the whole empty homes and allocations process.

**WE HAVE** developed a range of customer friendly leaflets, including a demand leaflet to inform customers of the average waiting times and demand per area based on the bedroom requirements and priority.

**WE HAVE** offered a direct line telephone service to the lettings team and appointments to see a Lettings Officer are flexible with either home or office visits available.

**WE HAVE** developed a Sign up DVD which outlines all of our key services and the rights and responsibilities of our new tenants. The customer satisfaction survey carried out shows that out of 150 customers, 143 customers found the DVD informative.

**WE HAVE** our own Occupational Therapist to identify suitable applicants for any adapted properties which speeds up the relet process and ensures that we are making best use of stock.

**WE HAVE** reduced empty property numbers from 345 to 182 in a period of five months. This includes reducing long term voids from 118 to 31 within the same period.

**WE HAVE** reduced the time from Ready to Let to Tenancy commencement date to 12.88 days as at the end of August 09 from 17.32 days in April 09.

### ACHIEVEMENTS – ALLOCATIONS, LETTINGS AND VOID REPAIRS

**WE HAVE** improved our performance on registering waiting list applications within 10 working days to 99% in September 2009 from 67% in 2008/9.

**WE HAVE** customer satisfaction results for the void process that show currently 91.64% of our customers were satisfied with the process and service they received.

**WE HAVE** offered flexible sign up slots for customers and carry out sign ups on Saturday mornings for customers who are at work during the week.

**WE HAVE** introduced home visits to all transfer applicants at the time of application and also at the pre-offer stage. This ensures we understand the reasons why customers wish to transfer within stock and can deliver solutions to keep people in their homes for longer, and ensure their original decisions reflect their future housing need.

**WE HAVE** enhanced accompanied viewings to include properties that are undergoing repairs to speed up the process and improve performance.

**WE HAVE** undertaken robust contract management by carrying out 100% pre-inspections, 25% post-inspections and check all invoices to ensure the contracts are being managed effectively and value for money is being achieved.

**WE HAVE** introduced a Recharge Policy and Recharge Procedure which clearly set out our robust approach to recharging outgoing customers for damage and unauthorised alterations to our properties.

**WE HAVE** introduced pre-tenancy termination visits to all properties within five working days of receiving the termination, to ensure the property is left in a good condition and any adaptations, recharges, support needs or rent arrears are identified.

**WE HAVE** procured an external organisation to provide energy performance certificates at the change of tenancy, which became effective in June 2009.

### FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

**WE ARE** striving to improve performance to top quartile (without exclusions) in 2010/11 for turnaround times.

**WE ARE** developing a pro-active mutual exchange system to reduce void transfers.

**WE ARE** developing a more proactive approach to identifying and offering assistance to vulnerable applicants who may have difficulties bidding for properties.

**WE ARE** identifying and analysing the proportion of properties accepted at first offer as a ratio of offers made to enhance the effectiveness of our shortlist process.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

**WE HAVE** our own in-house Tenancy Support Team who support our most vulnerable customers (both applicants and tenants) ensuring that they are given clear information about services relating to the Tenancy Support Policy, Allocations Policy and other services provided by WNWhL and our partner agencies. The Tenancy Support Team also delivers a focused service which promotes and encourages independent living.

**WE HAVE** a Sheltered Housing Compact in place which has been reviewed and is monitored on a quarterly basis by WNWhL and customers.

**WE HAVE** seen a number of examples of our sheltered housing schemes linking with Area Panels and the bidding process to secure funds and enhance parking provision and environmental elements of schemes.

**WE HAVE** 54 warden staff that have been through an intensive period of training and development. Courses attended have included dealing with conflict, support planning, dementia, alcohol misuse and working with sex offenders and high risk clients.

**WE HAVE** 'hot desk' PCs for our sheltered wardens that enable them to access our internal systems, the internet and intranet. This ensures that customers have better informed wardens who can check on the status of customer enquiries, complaints, repair reports etc.

**WE HAVE** wardens who carry out 100% accompanied viewings with lettings staff and agree a pre-support plan with the new customer.

**WE HAVE** a "Care-Ring" alarm service that provides 24/7 emergency support to our sheltered housing customers.

**WE HAVE** developed a "Your Sheltered Home" booklet which is given to every customer outlining the warden service they can expect from WNWhL.

**WE HAVE** remodelled the Wharfdale Court sheltered scheme and built a community centre at Brookleigh, both of which have delivered outcomes aligned to the Older People Housing Strategy.

**WE HAVE** carried out advice sessions to BME customers at Mosques and at the Aphna day centre. We introduced a new job description to reflect the needs of the new Quality Assessment Framework. Diverse language skills are now a key element within the team so that we can promote our services in the BME community.

**WE HAVE** encouraged and facilitated group activities so customers are able to keep fit and active and so we can respond to the changing population needs.

**WE HAVE** regular walkabouts around the schemes and always include customers in choices of carpets for communal areas and any changes we are making around the service.

## FURTHER IMPROVMENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

**WE ARE** working with Leeds City Council on the PFI project for older persons' housing.

**WE ARE** continuing the modernisation programme through role negotiations with wardens, improving physical access to buildings and access.

**WE ARE** introducing clearer outcome measurement of support from the Tenancy Support Team.

**WE ARE** proactively increasing the customer profile of BME residents in sheltered housing.

## LEASEHOLD MANAGEMENT

### ACHIEVEMENTS

**WE HAVE** a Customer Sounding Board (CSB) and have introduced local surgeries for leaseholders along with regular articles in our customer newsletter 'the Buzz'.

**WE HAVE** quarterly meetings with the Council to manage performance of the service and ensure compliance with the standards. Leeds City Council is also represented on our Service Improvement Group (SIG) for Leasehold Management, which meets monthly to monitor performance and progress on projects designed to improve services.

**WE HAVE** improved access to this service by introducing a phone panel for customers who wish to be involved but choose not to attend formal meetings.

**WE HAVE** introduced two open forums per year, which are chaired by a leaseholder customer, and in response to customer feedback, allow a greater amount of time for open questions.

**WE HAVE** an integrated IT system to allow our staff to deal with service charge enquiries. WNWhL employs a dedicated Leasehold Officer to work on service development, oversee training needs for the organisation and resolve any complex enquiries which cannot be dealt with at first point of contact.

**WE HAVE** introduced a visit to all new leasehold customers to provide the handbook and talk through the responsibilities of being a leaseholder. We also use this as an opportunity to engage with customers and promote the various methods of consultation and the ways leaseholders can become involved in service development.

**WE HAVE** procedures in place which provide leaseholders with statutory Section 20 Consultation Notices in respect of major works and Qualifying Long Term Agreements.

**WE HAVE** a range of payment options are offered to leaseholders including direct debit, standing order, internet, post office and pay point.

**WE HAVE** undertaken mandatory gas flue checks and, following consultation with leaseholders, offer full gas servicing to leaseholders.

