



# Annual Report to Customers

2022 - 2023

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# Welcome to our latest Annual Report

Welcome to the 2023 issue of our Customer Annual Report. We've updated the format this year but hopefully kept true to what this report is all about. It's our opportunity to tell you what we have been up to over the last 12 months, alongside providing you with information on how we have performed – good and bad!

*"Our vision is to work with our customers to help make Warrington a great place to live, in which the potential of individuals and communities can be realised"*

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# Nostalgia, Gratitude and Optimism – A message from the Chair,

**Judith Winterbourne.**



“When things are good, we want to shout about it, we want to get more people involved and engaged and we want build on our success. Equally, we know we are not perfect, and we know that sometimes we get things wrong, and we will always try to put it right and learn.

This report is also our opportunity to tell you about the year ahead, what we have planned for the organisation, working alongside our customers and responding to your expectations. One exciting change is that 2023 will be my last year as Chair and the Board have appointed Michelle Scattergood as my successor. Michelle will take up the reins from September.

Our code of Governance, which helps us effectively govern WHA, defines that Board membership should be for a maximum of 6 years and this year will be my 6th having been appointed in 2017. It's been an honour and a privilege to support colleagues and fellow Board members during this time, steering WHA through some challenging times, not least was having to negotiate COVID 19.

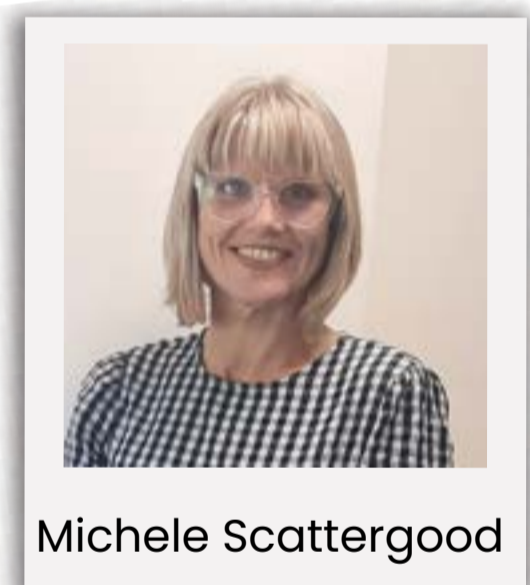
WHA has grown and diversified in this time, we have built over 100 new homes for people in housing need across Warrington. We have developed a whole new Private Rented service working alongside Warrington Council. Most importantly, I'm proud of the fact that we have kept true to our purpose of helping make Warrington a great place to live, investing over \*\*\* in our existing homes over the last 6 years, maintaining our Social Purpose, through the Gateway, Lifetime, and our Home Improvement Agency, and winning a few awards along the way. In all this time Warrington Housing Association has continued to maintain high levels of customer satisfaction for the work we do.

I wish Michelle, the rest of the Board and colleagues all the best for the future in ensuring that WHA continues to stay true to its core purpose. “

## **Michele Scattergood**

I'm very honoured and excited to be asked to take up the baton from Judith who leaves WHA in a real place of strength.

I have spent my career working in the not for profit sector to strive for equality , promoting independent living and working to identify and remove the barriers that prevent people from living well. I have extensive experience of ensuring lived experience and the voice of those people least heard are able to influence service design and delivery. I pride myself in collaborative working with partners to achieve change. I commit to using my experience and skill set in the best way I can to ensure WHA responds to our next set of challenges and aspirations.



**Michele Scattergood**

Good homes and our communities are very important to our health and wellbeing. I am committed to ensuring that our homes are the best they can be and our resident voices and lived experience are heard loud and clear in our planning & service response. This will be particularly important as we embrace the increased focus from our regulator on customers rights and involvement. WHA has always been proud of its relationship with its customers but there is always room for improvement.

There are many changes facing housing associations like ours, there are new standards we must demonstrate and new approaches we must develop as we respond to the recommendations of the Better Social Housing Review. Whilst all this is going on, we will not lose sight of our reason for being - great homes in a great place and ensuring our communities can live their best lives.

We must also support the borough in providing affordable accommodation, support our customers through this very difficult economic period and the cost of living crisis. We cannot and should not do this alone - we will work with our customers and partners across Warrington to achieve the best outcomes we can.

The Gateway is a thriving hub in the town held up as a centre of excellence and our Lifetime services support older people to keep well and maintain their independence which is essential at this time of stretched health and public services. this wider offer to the borough is very important to us and we will work hard to maintain these whilst and ensuring we can deliver them in a cost-effective way.”

## Here to listen to and support our customers

### Your Housing Team



Roisin, Kimberley and Tim – your Housing and Rent Officers

WHA work closely with tenants to ensure that they have a voice and influence, we have both a Customer Experience Manager and a Customer Voice Officer. These roles are key to ensuring we improve the customer journey, deliver services which meet customer expectations and ensure customers are informed and engaged in how we operate.



Lucy Cordwell

Our teams have worked hard to ensure any properties which become empty have any necessary work completed to bring them back to a lettable standard and allocate them to new customers as quickly as possible.

**87**  
properties became empty, with new customers moving in once we had carried out our safety checks.

**32**  
brand new homes were let for the first time during the year.

**0.42%**  
of our money was lost from empty homes because we could not collect rent.

**90.70%**  
of tenants said they were happy with the service that we provided.

**72.20%**  
of tenants said they were happy that we listen to their views and act upon them.

**93.10%**  
of our tenants felt that Warrington Housing Association treats them fairly and with respect.

**83.34%**  
of our tenants felt that Warrington Housing Association kept them well informed.

**100%**  
of our homes were occupied at year end.

**99.12%**  
of rent was collected by the income team.

**4.57%**  
of rent money was owed.

**236**  
Customers were helped to access benefits & grant funding to the value of over **£400,000**

**Great work!**  
Money Advice Officer Steven, helped a tenant who was worried about their money. Steven did some research and found out that the tenant could access more benefits, so he helped the tenant with their application. The tenant's application was accepted, and they now feel reassured and are still living happily in their home.



Steven Higham

## The customers volunteering, to ensure your voices are heard

We are continuing to look at ways to increase the membership of our Scrutiny Panel (WHASP) and how the roles within the group can be varied, enabling customers to get involved at a level that suits them. Including playing their part in reviewing our policies, performance and services. This year we gained two new members, one of which works at one of our partner agencies in the Gateway and also made their home in one of our new build affordable housing properties. Our newest members have also brought with them a fresh perspective and a number of ideas, which have been the driving force for the work the panel have undertaken..



### WHASP Service Reviews

During 2022 WHASP undertook a review of how WHA handles Void properties. A property is considered 'Void' once a customer moves out and returns the keys. This is when our Property Services team review the condition of the property and work, such as repairs and safety checks, are carried out. The property is then inspected again, to ensure that our re-let standards have been met.

Next, they reviewed our Allocations process and put forward recommendations to WHA. This process relates to how our Housing Management and Customer Service teams allocate our properties and welcome new customers to their homes.

In the Summer 2022 colleagues from across WHA carried out a Big Door Knock, visiting a sample of 482 properties, approximately 1/3 of WHA properties. Completed over 4 days with 44 colleagues and 4 board members, 98 questionnaires were completed on the doorstep with 209 posted through doors. The event increased customer engagement and WHA received valuable customer feedback.

## THE BIG DOOR KNOCK



Bernie Hubble

### Our Aim for this Campaign

Was to meet as many customers as possible and get their views on our service delivery.



**482**  
properties visited



## Survey Report

### Areas covered

- Town centre
- Padgate
- Fairfield/Howley
- Stockton Heath
- Latchford
- Grappenhall
- Westbrook
- Great Sankey

**4**  
days

**44**  
colleagues

**4**  
board members involved

**98**  
questionnaires completed on doorsteps

**309**  
posted

We asked you do you feel safe in your community



You said you prefer to be contacted in the following ways



“Liz, Lancaster Court - 'I love my flat and I love Robert, he's made a big difference to how I feel when I call now - also Steven, he's marvellous, without him I really don't know where I would have ended up. I cant forget Tim, he was great too - he got me in here you know and checked I was ok after.”

### Customers also told us

Our online access had not been shared widely

The text service should be used more

Our website needs to be more current

They struggled to access the portal and could it be more interactive

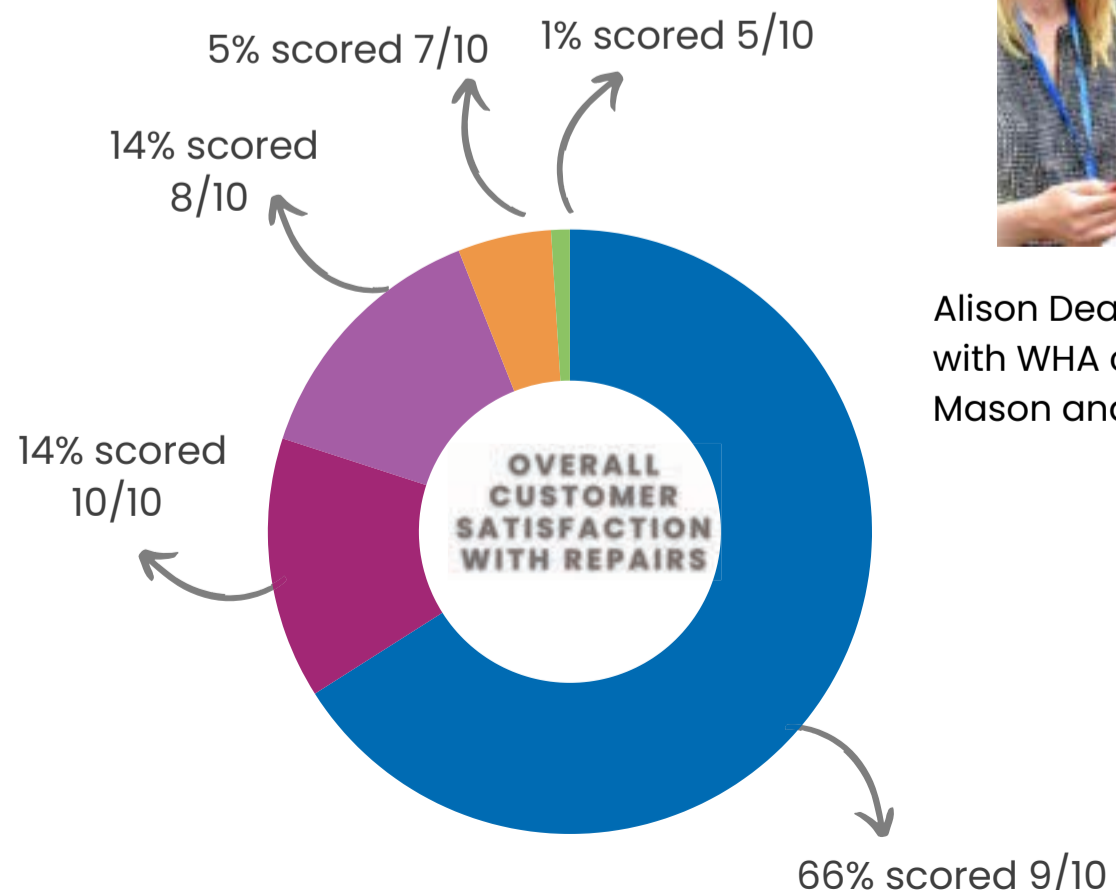
Lighting in some areas needed to improve

WBC had stopped street cleaning and weeds/rubbish had increased in general, especially since the pandemic



Alison Dean, board member with WHA colleagues Tim Mason and Steven Higham

Our Customer Voice Officer has held Customer drop-in sessions at the Gateway over the winter months with the offer of a free hot drink, providing support with general queries, money advice and support needs. Regular Resident meetings have been held at Edgewood to assist our customers with settling into a new build property and area. We also continue to meet our Independent Living residents regularly throughout the year.



*"We take the safety of our customers very seriously and our Property Services team ensure that all of our inspections and servicing schedules are completed within the right time-frame."*



Helen Smith

## Providing homes that are safe and well maintained

Our core purpose is to provide safe, secure, and decent homes within sustainable communities. In our aim to provide decent homes for our customers to live in, in 2022/23 we completed a number of improvement and energy efficiency works to ensure the homes we provide are places people are proud to live in.

### How we did

#### Gas Safety

100% of our properties with a gas supply have been inspected & serviced, ensuring they are safe



#### Electrical Safety

100% of our homes have electrical safety certificates.

**85.72%**

of our tenants told us they were happy that their home was well maintained and safe to live in.

We spent **£85,000** on service charge items, such as water safety checks, electrical testing and fire & emergency light maintenance

The repairs and maintenance of our properties is very important to us, we want our customers to live in homes they are proud of. We want to make sure the services we provide meet our customers needs and expectations.

To make sure this happens, we work hard to engage with our customers and listen to what they want. We work with our contractors to ensure they are consistently providing a high quality, customer focused service and this is evidenced in the high levels of customer satisfaction with our repairs service. Our frontline colleagues are real advocates for our customers and work to ensure our standards are both met and fit for purpose.

But it doesn't stop there, we regularly survey our customers and work with our scrutiny panel to look at how we can continuously improve our services and processes to make sure we are providing quality homes for our customers to live in.

We have reviewed and published our policies for the big 6 safety areas to make sure we are doing our very best to keep our customers safe. These are: Gas, Electricity, Water, Lifts, Asbestos and Fire.

Our Water Safety Policy sets out specific guidance to ensure our compliance with water hygiene legislation and the control of risk by introducing measures which reduce and/or control the risk of legionella growth and to identify, manage and/or mitigate risks associated with hot and cold-water systems or any other system that may cause exposure to legionella bacteria.



WHA has a legal duty to manage asbestos in its homes and buildings and this must be done in accordance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations (CAR) 2012. See our Asbestos Policy for more information.



We work with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services and our Fire Risk Assessor to make sure we are keeping you and your family safe in the event of a fire. We inform customers what they should do in the event of a fire. We have compiled information on our website of ways you can reduce the risk of a fire in your home.



We have an duty as your landlord to make sure all gas appliances, fittings and flues that we own are safe. It is a legal requirement under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998, to carry out a gas service every 12 months. Gas Servicing is carried out by our approved Gas Safe registered Contractors.



Our Electrical Safety Policy sets out specific guidance to ensure the safety of fixed electrical installations and portable appliances (where applicable) in properties owned and managed by WHA.



A colleague from our Gas Safe contractor, will visit your home every year to service and inspect your gas boiler and CO2 detector. If you have any questions please get in touch with our team [admin@wha.org.uk](mailto:admin@wha.org.uk)

# Repairs matter

## More than just a repairs service.

Our Assets team plan which homes will be decorated, have works completed inside and outside their homes, which properties need new kitchens or bathrooms and make sure customer's homes are made more accessible. We also want to help our customers to save energy in their homes to help them save money on things like fuel, by delivering our compliance inspections and carrying out stock condition surveys.



Lisa Dennett

"Hello, I am Lisa Dennett and I am one of the Property Services Officers. We know that keeping your home in a good state of repair is good for wellbeing and helps you to feel safe and secure. That's why it's important to us to keep improving on what we do so we can offer a better service. This year, we have been looking at new ways to collect your feedback so that we can make the changes that matter to you."

We spent **£1,465,890** on planned maintenance works, including replacement windows and doors, kitchens, bathrooms to ensure our customers homes are well maintained.

We spent **£198,932** on our empty properties to make sure they were ready for new customers to move into.

We spent **£325,879** on day-to-day repairs.

We spent **£188,142** on our cyclical painting programme to ensure our customers homes are homes to be proud of.

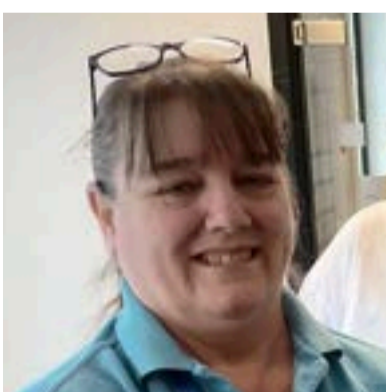
### Customer feedback:

"Brilliant came out quick and repaired in no time."

"Your service is excellent. Would like to say a thank you to the plumbers for not just fixing the loose fitting but by replacing the taps with handles, so much better as sometimes I can't turn the taps on and hubby had to do it."

**92%**

of customers were satisfied with the repairs service they received this year. This was a 2% improvement from the previous year. We value our customers feedback on all of our services so that can understand how we can keep improving and do better.



Julie Behan - Chair

It took an average of **8.47** days to complete a repair and **97.42%** of repairs were completed within target.

"Repairs are really important to tenants; I like being part of the Scrutiny Panel and having my say to make things better.

WHASP also play a part in contacting customers to ask them about their experience with repairs service." Julie Behan, WHASP Chair

### During the year, we completed:



### Customers at Lyon Court welcomed new kitchens



Key to us being able to invest in your homes, is us understanding what our properties look like. We carried out stock condition surveys to a large number of our stock last year. This helps us to understand what condition your homes are in as well as knowing what works we must do, where, and when.

This data is also used to drive our sustainability agenda, which will help us to provide more efficient housing. At the end of last financial year our average EPC rating across our stock was B and we have plans to continue improving on this towards a target of all properties being EPC C or above by 2030.

# EDGEWOOD COURT

We have invested  
**£4.6 million**  
in new homes over the  
last 12 months



WHA were pleased to take handover of the new build Edgewood Court development in October 2022 – this is a purpose built 3 storey block of 30 one and two bedroom open plan apartments with communal gardens and parking. The properties are general needs accommodation for over 55s.

Edgewood Court was built on a brownfield site owned by WHA for many years, therefore the new development made use of an existing asset and the new apartments were occupied as soon as they were complete.



Judith Winterbourne

## The Grand opening

In early 2023 the new development was officially opened by the Mayor of Warrington, Councillor Jean Flaherty, with a ribbon cutting ceremony .

“ This is a high quality development to reflect Warrington Housing Association’s continued commitment to substantial investment in the borough to make Warrington a great place to live. We are helping to address the housing needs of local older people as well as boosting local employment and supply opportunities. ”



“ I can’t thank Warrington Housing Association enough for providing me with a lovely warm home near to my friends and family.”  
-Maureen Woods ”



Mayor Jean Flaherty

“ It’s great to see the redevelopment of a vacant overgrown site which will provide a much needed safe, secure and comfortable place to call home for local older people in an established thriving community which has great shopping, leisure and health service facilities on hand.  
- Mayor of Warrington, Councillor Jean Flaherty ”



Maureen Woods



WHA's vision is to make Warrington a better place to live. We encourage better health and wellbeing through our services including the Gateway, our community asset hub, our Home Improvement Agency WHIA and LifeTime hub for ageing well.

## The Gateway is famous!

The Gateway was voted for by the people of the town, to appear on a Warrington edition of the world renowned board game, Monopoly.

Lynne Bennett, The Gateway Manager, was invited to the unveiling of the board game and was delighted to discover that the Gateway has been featured on the famous board.

*"I am so proud that this remarkable building is on the Warrington edition of Monopoly. The Gateway is a community facility that supports the Warrington Community so this is a wonderful legacy to have."*  
-Lynne Bennett



Lynne Bennett



Lynne Bennett with Former Deputy Mayor, Cllr Graham Friend.

## WHIA's winning success at National Awards Ceremony

### Congratulations!

WHIA - Warrington Home Improvement Agency won the independent Living Trust Award at the Foundations HIA National Health Housing Awards.



Pictured above - From the left - Nicola Issac and Gerry Kiddle receiving the award



Geraldine Kiddle

*"I am so proud of the whole team and their tireless work to keep the people who need our support independent."*

Geraldine Kiddle



21,398

Annual visits from the over 50's group in warrington

600

Members take part at least once a month in LifeTime activities

2,106

Annual activities from art and craft to zumba and trips

75

members regularly attend health support groups

Members range in age from 50 to over 90, with the majority being over 70 years of age. The average age of our members is 73.

## Margaret's Story

Margaret had not returned to LifeTime after Covid as she has poor health and mobility. When contacted she said she was struggling with her health and did not feel up to returning. However, with the support of the project worker she was encouraged to join a group. She is now an active member of a creative writing group, feels much better with improved wellbeing and says that she would not have had the courage to have ventured out without the contact.



We were awarded a grant from Cheshire Community Foundation of £10k for additional assistance to help our members as Covid restrictions were relaxed. The Covid Recovery Project ran from January to June 2022. This gave one to one support to people to return to taking part in activities and connect with others and regain the skills, confidence and fitness that has been lost. 209 people have been contacted as part of the project with many going on to take part regularly in activities.

**We have learnt about the impact of being involved in LifeTime from our members and some key points that emerged are:**



We have worked with our members and volunteers to learn what issues are most concerning them, and to work with them on how best to support

**87%**

say that taking part has improved their wellbeing

**62%**

say if helped them cope with changes such as bereavement or illness

**90%**

say that they have achieved what they wanted from joining LifeTime

**50%**

said it is the cost of living

**51%**

said it is health

**18%**

said it is loneliness.

**75%**

say it has helped them take care of their health

**72%**

said that it has helped them maintain their independence.

**72%**

of members join to connect with other people

**Examples of how LifeTime is responding to need:**

## Volunteering

**46**

We currently have 46 volunteers that support the work for LifeTime.



**5,981**

hours given in volunteering annually

Activities that support connecting with others including free Soup and a Chat.

The timetable offers a free activity each day as well as free to access IT

Our customers are a real asset to our organisation and their work as regular volunteers giving time, expertise and care make the community a better place to live and extend the services our organisation is able to provide. Volunteers contribute to the work of LifeTime helping our organisation to deliver on our objectives. Volunteering is also an opportunity for people to gain experience, to give back to the community and has benefits for the volunteer.

Registered Warm Space.

A free money advice session is available weekly for members on dealing with utility costs

## Our volunteers say, "I volunteer because..."

"Being able to help someone who is lonely or chatting with someone who has very few visitors makes me feel great".

"Meeting lots of lovely people gives me a reason for getting up in a morning".

*"It makes me feel good when I help people, I get a lot of happiness from it".*

Health related groups including for people with hearing loss, stroke, fibromyalgia



Links with the WHIA service for grants and funding available

**Our volunteers tell us they feel part of a team and it benefits them in the following ways:**

Improved mood and mental wellbeing

Making friends and social connections

Improved confidence

Keeping up skills and learning new skills

Feeling useful.



## Lifetime take 'summer school' on the road to Lyon court & St. John's court



Andrea Rees conducting the Summer School sessions.

In the summer we took LifeTime on the road to showcase the brilliant activities that are on offer at the centre and in the community. Customers sampled activities including Line dancing, Crafting and mindfulness.

## Ensuring our colleagues have the skills to deliver the very best services to our customers

The Better Social Housing Review made some key recommendations for Housing Associations, in particular that “Housing associations should increase investment in recruiting, developing and supporting the retention of more housing officers to enable them to re-establish more manageable patch sizes” and that “the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) should promote the traditional “housing officer” role as a supported and valued employment opportunity with a Chartered Institute of Housing recognised programme of training and continuing development.”

Our 3 year training plan is designed to incorporate organisation learning and development and role specific training, to ensure our colleagues acquire new skills, sharpen existing ones, perform better, increase productivity and better understand the needs of our customers.

5 of our colleagues started their CIH qualifications during the year.

**296**

**Training courses completed**

**£24,350**

**Invested in training and development**

### Colleague Promotions



Lisa Dennett, who was a Customer Service Advisor, was appointed as a Property Services Officer



Steven Higham, who was a Money Advice Officer, was appointed as the new Data Analysis & Project Manager



Karen Cowell, who was a Customer Service Advisor, was appointed as the new Sales & Development Officer

### Apprenticeships

WHA has offered apprenticeships for young people in our community since 2011 and has trained 24 young people. The aim is to bring young adults into our supportive business environment to give them the opportunity to gain practical work experience and qualifications.

Warrington Housing Association is proud of all of its apprentices, and we currently have Ben and Zak currently in the team, as our Asset Compliance and Housing Co-Ordinator Apprentices.



Zak Islam, Housing Co-Ordinator Apprentice



Ben Gilbody, Asset Compliance Apprentice

Here is a little bit about our apprentice Zak. You may have spoken to him if you have contacted the Customer Support team.

Zak came to WHA as a very quiet and reserved employee after doing his A levels but soon moved on to a prime position in the office for answering calls from customers. He didn't just win us all over by bringing in baked treats from his Mum, but due to his charm, helpfulness and willingness to go the extra mile.

He has a passion for the role and has aspirations to become a Housing Officer and is working hard on his qualifications.

Zak and Ben are such conscientious team players and no doubt stars of the future at WHA.



## Celebration of inclusivity by WHA colleagues

At WHA we celebrate diversity of our colleagues and customers. In June throughout Pride month we had a celebration day in the office and encouraged colleagues to wear bright colours and share lunch together. Robert from Customer Service won the 'Best Dressed Colleague' - I think you will agree he looks fantastic!



We have 5 trained Mental Health First Aiders to provide additional support to our colleagues.



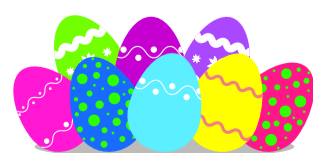
Throughout the year our colleagues have been graciously kind in supporting the



Colleagues once again supported the Warrington Toy appeal and gave gifts to those who may otherwise have gone without toys during the holiday season.



Easter eggs were also donated, so that the Easter holidays tasted a little sweeter.



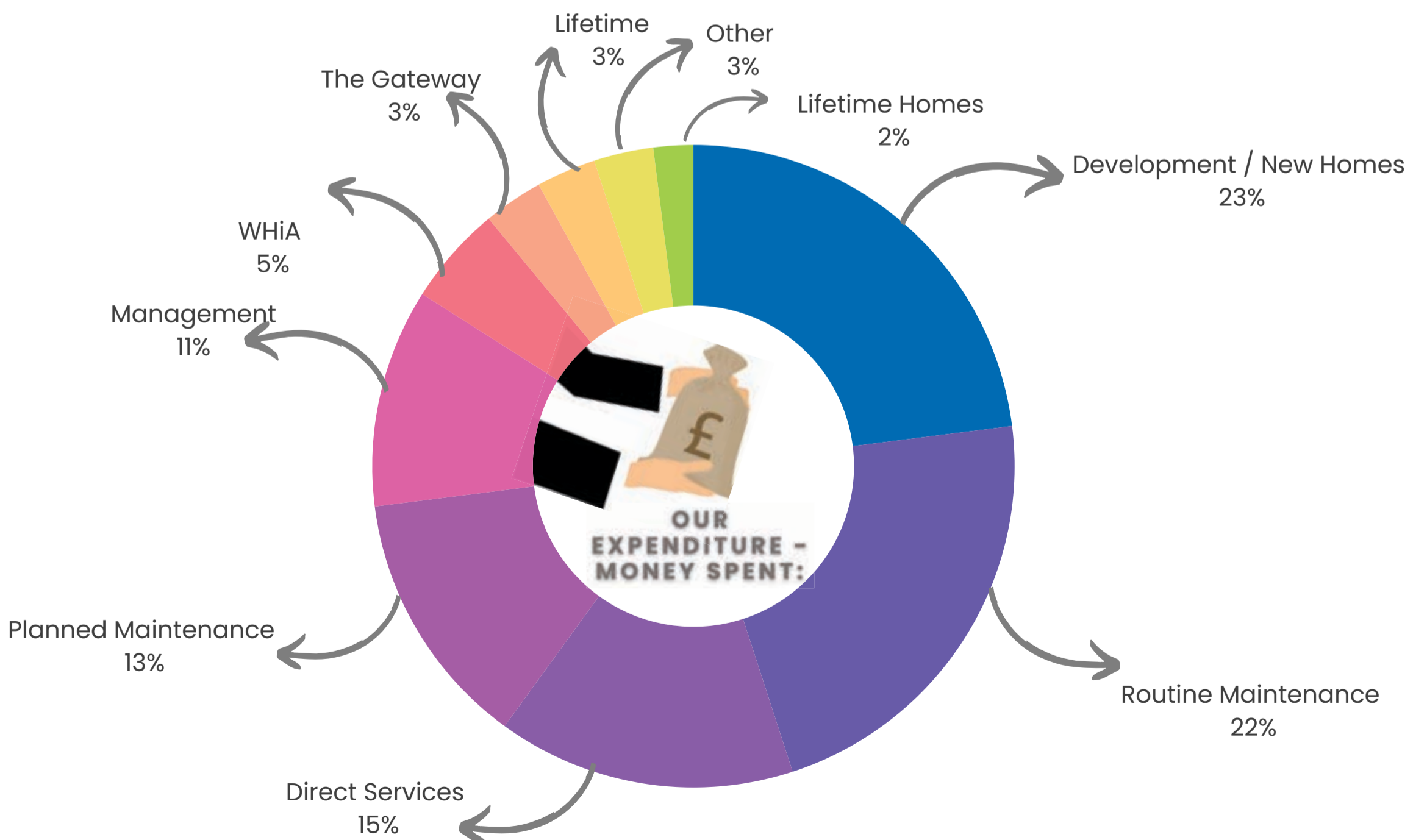
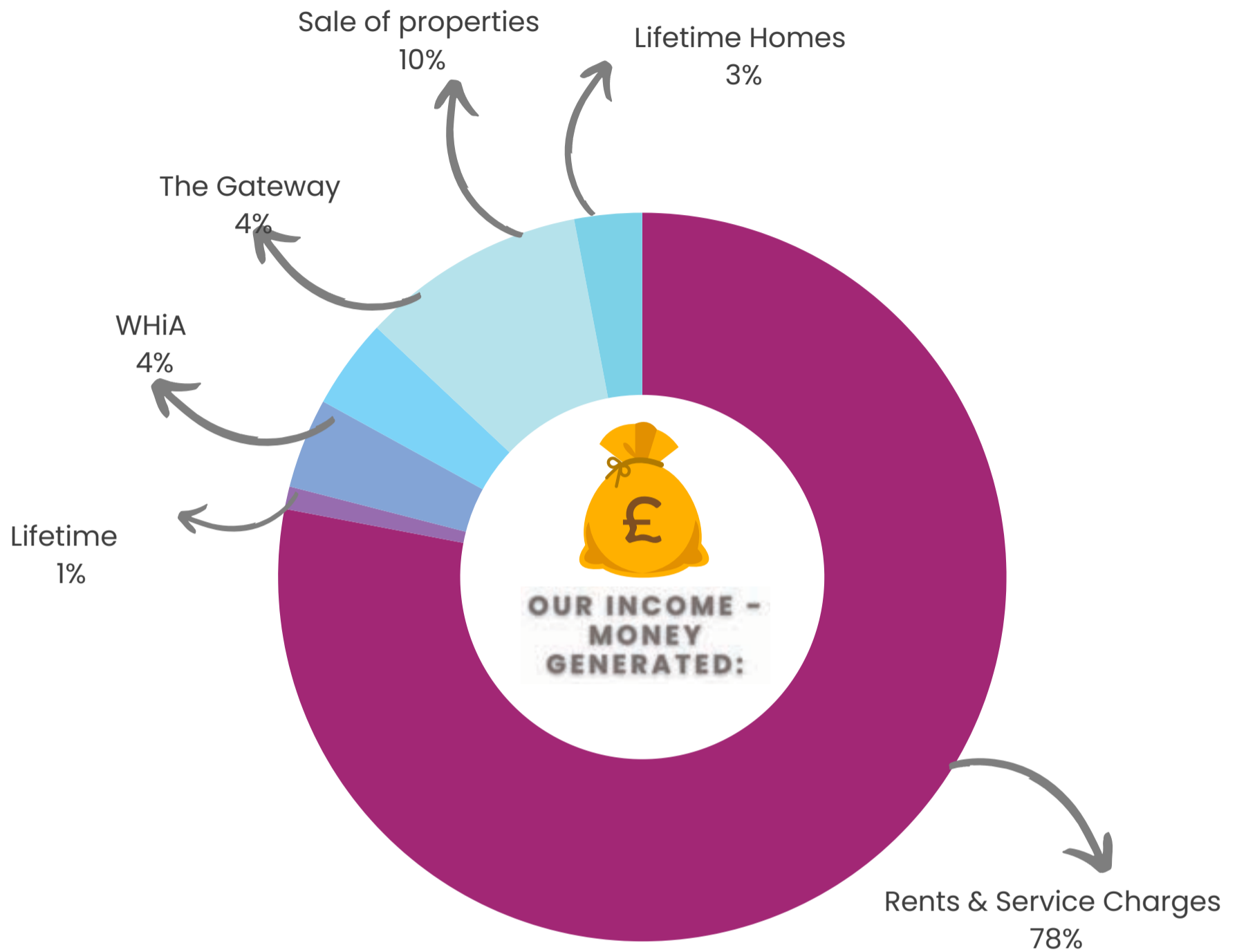
The second annual Warrington Running Festival attracted runners from across the country to participate in the 5k, 10k or half marathon races which passed through the town's iconic Golden Gates, right outside our front door!

Our CEO, David Cummins & Director of Social Value, Gerry Kiddle, Di ran the half marathon while Housing Officers Roisin Cain and Kimberley Flynn put their best feet forward in the 5k.

David said: "It was great to be part of this iconic running festival, I'm hoping to encourage even more colleagues to take part in 2023."

To deliver a financially strong and well managed business, fit for today and prepared for tomorrow.

We have a number of income streams which generate money for the services we provide and here you will find a break-down of where our income came from, along with an overview of how we spent that money to provide our services to customers, maintain our customers homes, deliver our social value and continue to develop more homes for our community.



# Our Governance

Warrington Housing Association (the Group) comprises of Warrington Housing Association Limited and its wholly owned subsidiary LifeTime Homes (Warrington) Limited.

Warrington Housing Association (WHA) is a not for profit organisation, a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2017 with tax-exempt charitable status and as such has charitable objectives. WHA's core business is about creating and maintaining affordable homes for those in housing need.

LifeTime Homes (Warrington) Limited is a general commercial company, with the requirement to covenant any profits to WHA. LifeTime Homes will act as a subsidiary for the organisation's Market Rent properties.

WHA is governed by a Board of management composed of between five and twelve non-executive members. The maximum number serving at any time is as determined by the Board. Board members are non-executive and are directors for legal purposes. They are drawn from a wide background bringing together professional, commercial and local experience and are remunerated for services performed for the Association.

The Chief Executive and other Executive Officers act as Executives within the authority delegated by the Board.

WHA's Annual Report 2022-23 is shared with our customers in accordance with The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard and is in-line with our organisational value, that our customers are at the heart of everything we do.

This report outlines who we are; our vision for helping to make Warrington a great place to live and our performance during the year 2022-23.

This report also provides key information that shows our organisation moving forward together with our customers, partners and stakeholders, whilst continuing to build upon our successes for our shared communities.

Published: September 2023

Unless otherwise stated, figures provided within this report are from WHA's HouseMark and Sector Scorecard results.

WHA's Board operates within an effective and efficient governance framework to ensure that leadership of the Association is of the highest standard complying with the National Housing Federation's Code of Conduct 2015. We are committed to achieving the highest standards of governance and financial viability through ongoing retention of our G1/V1 rating.

## Don't forget to keep up to date with the work we do, via our website and social media:



/WHAorguk



@WHAorguk



WARRINGTON HOUSING  
ASSOCIATION LIMITED



[www.wha.org.uk](http://www.wha.org.uk)

## Here's how you can get in touch:



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