

Hexagon



18-  
RESIDENTS'  
ANNUAL  
REPORT  
19

**INFORMED  
ENGAGED  
INVOLVED**

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# Chair's welcome

Hexagon has had a successful year with a number of new initiatives. We have continued to develop our policy of open communication with residents through various initiatives including the residents' Performance Review Group (PRG), community events, community Digital Champions, the Readers' Panel, and the annual Co-op Seminar. We have also hired a resident as our new Communications Officer and Editor of our Home News magazine.

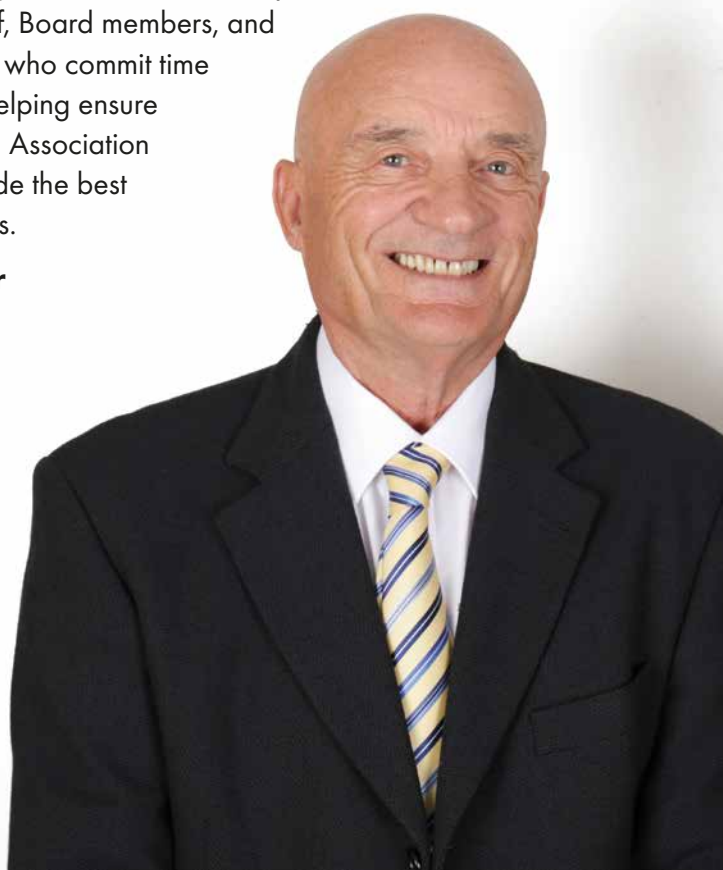
Understandably a key area of concern for residents has been around fire safety and we have addressed those concerns by taking additional factors into consideration, delivering actions where required. We have also hired a dedicated Fire Safety Project Manager.

Investment in the home improvement programme has continued, with £3.4m invested this year. A full commitment to this programme helps to ensure residents are happy and healthy within their homes. As part of this, we continue to commit to becoming a 'greener' organisation using energy saving resources wherever possible. This has helped us maintain our Gold status with SHIFT (a sustainability standard within the housing sector).

For Hexagon the future looks exciting, with developments taking place across all of the boroughs we work in. We're particularly pleased to see our new development in Old Kent Road taking shape, bringing a mix of rented and shared ownership homes.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the residents who have engaged with us this year, providing their feedback and suggestions to help shape the organisation's success. My thanks also go to the staff, Board members, and all of our partners who commit time and energy into helping ensure Hexagon Housing Association continues to provide the best service to residents.

**Mr Roy Coulter**



# Fire safety

**This year a heightened concern from residents has been around fire safety. Feedback from the Performance Review Group (PRG), Hexagon's residents' scrutiny panel, showed that fire safety was uppermost in their minds.**

Residents reviewed Hexagon's performance in this area and wanted confirmation that Fire Risk Assessments were not only being undertaken, but that any remedial work identified as being required was undertaken in a timely manner.

Fire safety also arose as a key topic of interest at our annual Co-op Seminar – an event enabling those residents living in properties managed by housing co-operatives to engage directly with Hexagon. Feedback from attendees highlighted that keeping residents safe in their homes, including carrying out Fire Risk Assessments, were at the forefront of their minds.

As a direct result of the feedback from residents, we implemented a review of how Fire Risk Assessments were undertaken. Working with our external consultants, the cycle of Fire Risk Assessment reviews have been made more frequent.

Our newly appointed Fire Safety Officer Jon Fleckney explains, "Additional factors are taken into consideration in terms of the style of property and any vulnerability of residents. This has resulted in delivering clearer actions where any issues have been identified. For example, HMO's (houses of multiple occupation) present their own challenges in regard to fire safety.



Fire Safety Officer Jon Fleckney carrying out a fire assessment

"If a premises has a shared means of escape, such as a block of flats or a converted house with multiple occupancies, then Hexagon has an obligation under the Fire Safety Order to provide a safe means of escape. This refers to factors such as fire alarm systems, emergency lighting, and clear signage showing the escape route. Whereas houses that are essentially private homes and have front doors that open onto the street are not usually subject to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005."

**"Additional factors are taken into consideration in terms of the style of property and any vulnerability of residents."**

# Gauging customer satisfaction

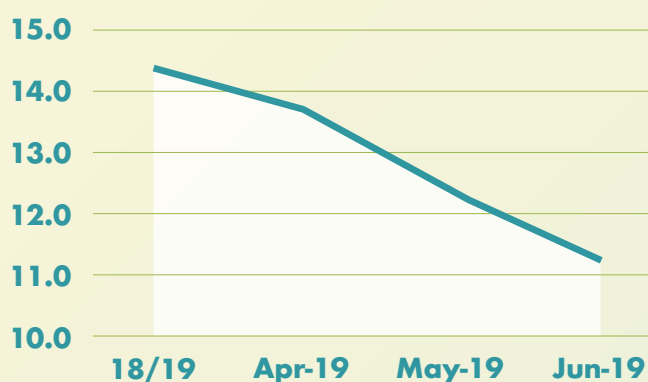
We constantly work to increase resident satisfaction with our repairs service. Some of the barriers we faced are now being overcome and we are seeing improvements in the number of residents who have been happy with their last repair.

The way we measure satisfaction has changed. The previous method was to use an external market research company who phoned residents to get their feedback. This information was helpful to us, but the fact that some calls were made weeks after the repair was completed meant that sometimes there was a lack of clarity in the feedback.

The current method, which we introduced last autumn, meant we were confident enough to 'switch off' the market research method. We now rely solely on the surveys that are carried out at the time of the repair. The resident feedback is captured on the contractors hand held device, called a 'PDA'. We have worked with our contractors to ensure they understand the importance of explaining the survey to residents and giving them space and time to complete it. We are very encouraged by the results so far and we are strengthening our approach by amending the current contract so that a minimum number of surveys must be completed.

We are encouraged by the results of these surveys and we are now routinely getting satisfaction levels of 95% and more. In addition to this we have made some improvements to our processes in order to better deal with those repairs that need follow on works.

## Average end to end time



We have also made changes to the contract in order to streamline the way repairs are processed. We feel confident that this will see satisfaction figures improve even more as a result of these.

Most importantly the performance of one of the two main repairs contractors (P&R and KnK) has improved to now being the best it has ever been on the contract. An indication of the change is that the level of open (ie. unfinished) repairs has reduced from 673 down to 200 by end of May 2019.

Our contractors now work to an established culture of keeping on top of repairs by managing appointments, arranging access and follow on works every day, and addressing exceptions as they occur. This means that our residents now have a more reliable service and have to wait less time for their appointments and for the completion of their repairs.

**Satisfaction levels of**

**95%**

**and more for repairs via Customer Service team**



# Striving ahead through community investment

## Employment and Skills

Hexagon's Employment and Skills Support (right) Service is part funded through the European Social Fund. Hexagon is part of the Love London Working project, funded through the Social Fund.

We offer a range of employment and skills based services for residents. We can help residents with employment and training options, whether they are:

- not yet ready for employment, but wanting to develop skills or experience
- unemployed and looking for work
- already in employment and wanting to find better employment

Hexagon works in partnership with the London Learning Consortium and Learning Curve to deliver a range of accredited training courses, all free of charge to residents.

### In 2018/19 Hexagon:

- Provided employment support to 96 people – of these 57 people moved into employment.
- Supported 19 employed residents who are looking for better work to move their careers forward.
- Enrolled 54 residents into accredited learning courses.

## Supported

# 36

## residents to get online

## Digital Skills

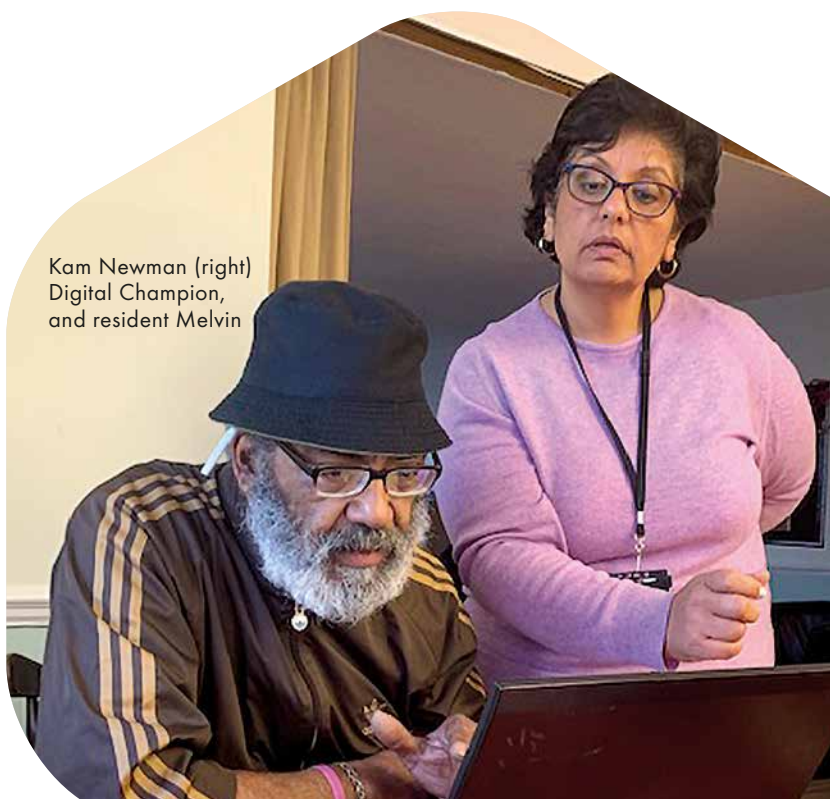
Hexagon provides digital skills support to help residents to get online, and to help those already online to further improve their digital skills.

In the past year Hexagon secured funding from the Clarion Futures One Digital Programme to recruit and train a team of digital champions. All our Digital Champions are Hexagon residents who are at hand to provide digital skills support to other residents. The role of a Digital Champion is about enthusing others to learn more about life online, and supporting them to make the most of the internet.

### In 2018/19 Hexagon:

- Completed 347 basic digital skills mentoring.
- Recruited 5 residents as paid digital champions.
- Supported 36 residents to get online and improve their essential digital skills.

Provided employment support to **96** people – of these **57** people moved into employment.



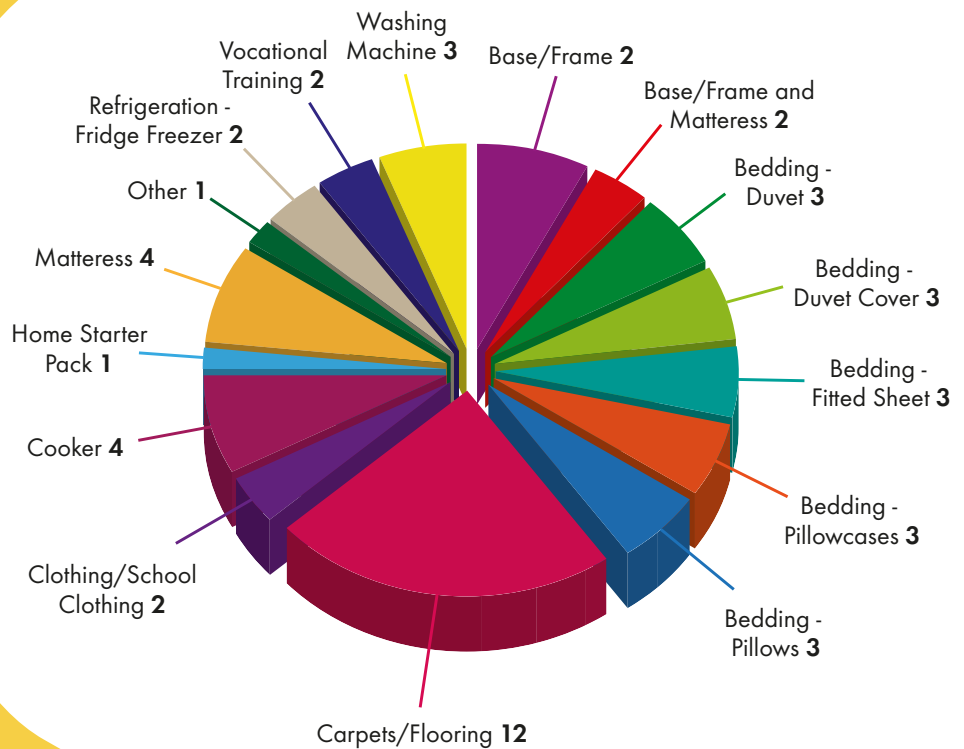
Kam Newman (right) Digital Champion, and resident Melvin

## Money Matters

We appreciate that times are tough financially for many people. Hexagon provides one-to-one financial inclusion support for our residents to help them to unravel any money worries that they may be having. We work to help our residents maximise their income and give practical advice on how to make their money go further.

### In 2018/19 Hexagon:

- Provided first time financial inclusion support to 136 residents. This compares to 89 residents who accessed our financial support services in the previous year.
- Supported 36 residents to successfully apply for welfare grants, with a total value of £10,502. The grants are to help residents to purchase essential items such as cookers, bedding, or flooring.
- Supported five residents to successfully appeal against benefits decisions made by the DWP (Department of Work and Pensions). In each case we have supported the resident in preparing their case, and attended the hearing alongside the resident to support them. The outcome of each case has been that the resident has had their benefit(s) reinstated.



How grants from social and welfare funds were awarded to Hexagon residents in 2018/19

Proposed development at  
Old Kent Road, Southwark

# Building new homes

**We currently have development projects across all of the boroughs where Hexagon works.**

Our new development in Old Kent Road is on a site bought directly from the vendor, ensuring Hexagon have control of the design and quality from the outset to secure the best building layouts and design features for future residents. Buying land directly ensures we work closely with the Local Authority, and over time helps establish a pipeline of sites for future development.

The Old Kent Road development, and some of our other new build sites, have commercial space on the ground floor. We develop good relationships with agents and developers to lease the commercial units. We work closely with these specialist agents to ensure the commercial use doesn't infringe on residents' enjoyment of their home and life within the development.

Moving forward, we're hoping to deliver about 300 affordable homes under the Greater London Authority (GLA) funding programme, with a scheduled start date from March 2021. A mixture

of property sizes and tenures – with a small number available to purchase outright to subsidise the building of rented homes – the shared ownership to rented properties split for this programme will be 60/40. As a priority, we will once again be looking to sell shared ownership homes to those on the lowest possible incomes who can afford to do so.

**"We're hoping to deliver about 300 affordable homes under the Greater London Authority (GLA) funding programme"**

The original grant allocation from the GLA was £8.9m, later enhanced by an additional £3.2m. With continued investment, secured funding, and a robust track record in land purchasing, we are in a strong position for future growth to meet the housing needs of local people in the boroughs where we work.



# Improving homes

**Our Stock Improvement programme has helped residents this year with both minor works and major works being undertaken, representing an investment of £3.4m on refurbishments.**

An example of major works is our kitchen and bathroom programme where we undertake a full and complete refurbishment. This includes repair of walls, electrics and installing water saving taps – all in addition to the core elements which comprise a kitchen or bathroom. We completed 171 new kitchens and bathrooms over 2018/19.

As part of the ongoing commitment to being a 'green' organisation, energy saving bulbs were installed, as well as a programme of motion detected LED lighting, in communal areas. Water saving devices were fitted into baths and basins, and all new toilets have a dual flush system.

Minor works include where residents over 65 years old who may require minor work in their home. This year has again seen the installation of a number of grab rails for example, which assist elderly residents live more independently.

## Sustainable living

Hexagon maintained its Gold status following our Sustainable Homes Index for Tomorrow (SHIFT) assessment. SHIFT is the independent sustainability standard for the housing sector.

We identified all properties with an energy rating lower than SAP 65. A Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is a value out of 100 given to homes for their energy efficiency, with 100 being the highest possible score. It offers a way of comparing the energy performance

of different homes. We have 469 homes which are currently below SAP 65. We aim to install improvement measures to these homes to bring the rating up to SAP 65 or above.

The overall average SAP rating of our homes is SAP 72.73 which is above the London average when compared with other social landlords.

This year saw sustainability measures implemented not only into our properties, but also at Hexagon's head office which has included increased recycling and reduced printing.

By implementing changes which include energy efficient boilers, installing high performance windows, under floor insulation, and solar panels, we can create homes which are not only sustainable, but can also help residents save money. This goes a long way to helping residents stay out of fuel poverty.



Solar panels on roof at  
Brampton Road, Bexleyheath

# Evolving housing services

For some time Hexagon has had Housing Officers whose job was to chase rent arrears, monitor estate services and deal with tenancy matters. However by 2018 we began facing new challenges, such as the introduction of Universal Credit and completing new actions identified in regular Fire Risk Assessments.

We responded to these changing needs by replacing the role of Housing Officers with new – more focused – teams namely the Rent and Revenue and Neighbourhood Services teams.

Our priorities with the new teams are:

- **Safety of residents** – whether spotting and dealing with fire hazards, dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour, or tackling other issues identified through regular estate inspections.
- **Responsiveness** – listening to residents and responding accordingly.
- **Income** – as a not-for-profit organisation we must ensure that we collect all rents and service charges as this income is necessary to run our services. This has become increasing difficult since the introduction of Universal Credit.

## Rent and Revenue

Five Revenue Officers and a Team Leader now work with residents to reduce our outstanding service charge and rent arrears.

Our early intervention strategy means speaking to our residents more regularly by phone. This enables Hexagon to understand barriers for people not making their rent payments and to refer residents for support from our Financial Inclusion Team.

For 2018/19, we finished on an arrears figure of 6.5% of the total due, against a target of 5.6%. With the implementation of our early intervention strategy, we anticipate arrears will continue in a downward trend.

## Neighbourhood Services

Nine Neighbourhood Officers and two team leaders now deal with estate and tenancy issues. There are also other new roles such as a Housing Support Officer for more vulnerable residents, a dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, and a Leasehold Officer.

## Some of our 2018/19 achievements

The Estate Graders (residents who inspect our estates) graded seventeen estates with the following results:

- 11 Gold
- 5 Silver
- 1 Bronze

However, a telephone survey of residents found overall satisfaction with estates at only 61% – a rating which we are working to improve on.

The Neighbourhood Officers use a mobile App to record in real time the quality of cleaning, gardening and litter picking on estates meaning that these can be remedied promptly.

We introduced a Priority Estates Programme which coordinates services from different teams within Hexagon geared toward enhancing improvements on estates.

## Anti-social behaviour

In the 2018/19 year we had 117 Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) and 15 Domestic Abuse cases reported to us. Our new Anti-Social Behaviour and Domestic Abuse policies were launched to help to ensure that residents receive a consistent and transparent service in these cases. Noise was the most commonly reported type of nuisance with 33 new cases opened.

We monitored the resident satisfaction levels on the outcome of ASB cases from September 2018 onwards. The response to our survey showed that 67% of residents were very or fairly satisfied with the outcome of the case. The main reason this figure is not higher is that 50% of those not satisfied were unhappy with how we kept them up to date. We will work to improve on that this next year.

## Transfers & mutual exchange

Of nearly 500 residents on the Transfer List only 25 were able to move last year. However 24 of our residents arranged a Mutual Exchange which means that this is just as an effective way for residents to move home. After consulting with residents' groups, we reviewed our Allocations Policy which means that we now stop accepting new transfer applications, except for Band A residents.

The year has been a challenging one, but it is a challenge that we looked forward to. The changes that we have introduced will help ensure a more focused and responsive service which will improve your experience of Hexagon.

# 2018/19 in numbers

## 61%

overall satisfaction with  
estate management





# Satisfaction with customer services

Over recent years we have introduced new systems to help us make improvements to the service for residents who phone us. We introduced call recording which allows us to review calls and learn from them. Regular spot checks and supervision meetings have helped us increase the levels of satisfaction from our callers.

In late April 2018, we implemented a new system which gives all of our callers an option to provide satisfaction feedback based on their interaction with our Customer Services Team. The feedback survey has three questions: the first asks how satisfied the caller is with the length of time we took to answer their call; the second asks how satisfied the caller is with the level of customer care we provided; and the third asks if their query was resolved satisfactorily.

The survey feedback has genuinely helped us to make improvements to our service. We review the results on a daily basis, selecting a handful of surveys

where callers have been satisfied and dissatisfied. This helps give a picture of the all-round feedback.

Below is an outline of our results during 2018/19 with the new system:

## Question 1:

Are you satisfied with the time to answer your call?

## Question 2:

How satisfied are you with the level of customer care you received?

## Question 3:

Was your query resolved satisfactorily?

We would like to thank all of our callers for taking the time to complete our survey. This has provided us with this valuable feedback. We will continue to use your feedback to carry on our journey towards delivering an excellent customer service.



The Hexagon Customer Service team hard at work.

# Resident involvement

**Resident feedback and scrutiny of our performance has helped us to shape the service we provided during 2018/19.**

Residents monitored Hexagon performance at the Performance Review Group, a resident's scrutiny panel and through the Residents' Inspection. This year the focus of the Resident Inspectors was on Aids and Adaptations – improvement works that help make everyday life easier for residents with mobility issues. The Resident Inspection team carried out a thorough inspection; they wrote a report on their findings and presented their recommendations for improvement to Hexagon.

The Estate Graders carried out assessments of our estates. The residents visited the estates and took a view of the conditions of all the communal areas and then awarded a rating of Gold, Silver or Bronze. In 2018/19 they made spot-checks on 17 estates in the boroughs of Southwark, Lewisham and Bexley. See page 10 for the result of the Estate Gratings.

The remaining residents' scrutiny exercise is the Repairs Group. The Repairs Group met once during 2018/19 solely due to the lack of contractor's data. This is an IT issue and we have actively worked to resolve this, so that reports are available for the Repairs Group to scrutinise.

## Key recommendations

The Performance Review Group made two key recommendations to the Hexagon Board about the repairs service. One relates to the performance of one of the contractors, and the other that Hexagon improves its



Aids and Adaptations enable elderly or disabled residents to remain in their homes.

**This year the focus of the Residents Inspectors was on the Aids and Adaptations service**

communication with residents on repairs. In listening to this feedback we devised a performance plan for one of the contractor's to deliver on. We have also brought in changes to the process which now allows us and our contractors to communicate in a more timely way with residents.

In their review of the Aids and Adaptations service the Resident Inspectors made seven recommendations for improving the service. These included recommendations around record keeping and checking the completed works.

## Improving Services

Hexagon has taken on board the scrutiny recommendations that residents have provided us with and is already using these to improve the service to you. We would also like to thank the Residents Forum who gave us feedback on our policies which in turn has helped shape the service provided to you.

## Neighbourhood Events

During the year we came out to meet residents in local areas in the boroughs of Bexley, Greenwich and Southwark. This enabled us to meet with residents in their localities and take on board the concerns raised about where the service hasn't gone right.

# Value for money

For Hexagon, Value for Money (VFM) is about making best use of our resources and achieving good quality results, not simply about cutting costs. Hexagon has an annual VFM Strategy which the Hexagon Board approves each year. For 2018/19 the Strategy focussed on reducing rent arrears and bringing down empty homes turnaround times, and in 2018/19 we worked to move new residents into a home whenever it became available with improved speed and efficiency.

Our Value For Money Strategy for the past year looked toward improving resident satisfaction with

responsive repairs. Hexagon repairs fall under two main categories – planned repairs on the information from our records, and responsive repairs which come through residents contacting us.

During 2018/19 we improved our turnaround time of empty properties from 44 days to 35 days, plus secured land for development of two schemes for homes for outright sales. The proceeds of these sales will go towards developing new homes for rent.

## Comparisons with other London Housing Associations

The comparisons in the table show how Hexagon is doing compared with other London Housing Associations using "Housemark" data.



Best 25% of Housing Associations in London



Middle 50% of Housing Associations in London



Worst 25% of Housing Associations in London

COST COMPARISON		QUALITY MEASURE	
Costs of estate services per home	😊	% of rent collected	😐
<b>Repairs</b> – managing the service (cost per home)	😊	Residents satisfied with the overall service	😐
Cost of repairs per home	😐	Resident satisfaction with estate services	😞
Cost of carrying out cyclical painting and gas safety work	😊	Residents satisfied with repairs service	😐
<b>Central costs</b> – IT, Finance and HR (per home)	😊	Gas safety record during the year	😊
		Staff sickness	😊



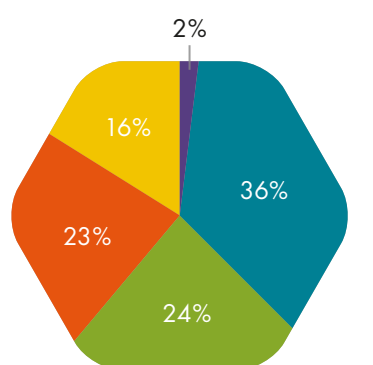
# Our finances

## Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019 (£000s)	2019	2018
Turnover	41,555	33,527
Cost of sales	(8,687)	(2,409)
Operating costs	(24,039)	(23,634)
Surplus on sale of properties	3,088	1,659
<b>Operating surplus</b>	<b>11,917</b>	<b>9,143</b>
Interest receivable	39	9
Interest payable and similar charges	(4,775)	(3,935)
Change in fair value of financial instrument	(414)	1,103
<b>Surplus for the year before tax</b>	<b>6,767</b>	<b>6,320</b>
Taxation	-	-
Change in fair value of hedged financial instrument	(185)	2,219
Other (employer benefit and pension schemes)	(4,346)	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>2,236</b>	<b>8,539</b>

Full financial statements can be downloaded from our website at [www.hexagon.org.uk](http://www.hexagon.org.uk)

## How every £ of your rent was spent



- Planned maintenance and home improvement programme
- Responsive repairs
- Interest on loans
- Housing management and tenant participation
- Community development





# Hexagon

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