



Annual Report  
for Customers

2017/18





*One Team*  
One Vision

# Introduction

Welcome from Julie Doyle, Chief Executive

## **Welcome to the 2017/18 Longhurst Group Annual Customer Report.**

It has been another successful year for the organisation as we continue to grow in size, invest further in developing new homes and provide a fantastic service to our customers.

By working as one team, with one vision to improve the lives of our customers, every team and every colleague has played a part in helping the Group achieve our business objectives and deliver record financial results.

These results included a record turnover of £145m and a net surplus of £26m. This means that, after tax, we will have £26m to invest in building more homes, enhancing our existing communities and improving many more lives.

Many things have contributed to these impressive results, including the delivery of 480 newly built homes, a £17m investment in maintaining and improving our homes, working more efficiently and reducing our repair and maintenance costs.

We have also increased the number of properties we own and manage beyond 22,000 following the transfer of 144 properties from PA Housing in March. We are also building more than ever before, completing 480 new homes in 2017/18.

We have continued to make life easier and better for our customers, supporting 750 people through our dedicated money advice service, enabling 12,000 customers to make rent payments online and helping 28 people into employment, voluntary work or training.

We have maintained our commitment to providing a vast range of care and support services to over 4,000 people passing numerous CQC inspections along the way.

Axiom has been part of the Group for over a year and it has been fantastic to see the positive impact this has made. The expertise of Axiom colleagues has helped us enhance our care and support provision and led to national recognition for the Axiom Academy training scheme, which has helped over 75 people into work in the last five years.

We are still growing as an organisation and still have much more to achieve. With the continued commitment of our colleagues, we will realise our ambitions and be able to do so much more for our communities and for our customers.







# Aims and values



## Investing in our people

Through our 'One team, one vision' approach, we continue to deliver our four business objectives:

- ✔ **To provide more homes**
- ✔ **To support our communities**
- ✔ **To deliver quality care and support**
- ✔ **To invest in our people.**

We have completed the restructuring of key business areas across the Group to ensure that the appropriate structures and resources are in place to deliver these objectives.

Longhurst Group is united by our shared values that guide everything we do as a Group and show what matters to us.

## KEY STATS



**22,691**

Number of homes



**£145m**

Our annual turnover



**480**

New homes completed



**48**

Local authority areas

## Our values

### In it together

We stand together as one team with one vision to make a difference to people's lives

### Heartfelt service

Everything we do shows we care deeply about our customers and colleagues

### Own it

We do what we say we do to the best of our ability with pride and passion

### Push the boundaries

We strive for excellence constantly looking for fresh ways of doing things

### Fun and fair

We work hard, enjoy it and treat everybody equally with respect and honesty





A member of Longhurst Group



Homes  
England

With funding from the Ministry of Housing,  
Communities and Local Government

[www.gov.uk/homes-england](http://www.gov.uk/homes-england)

60 ONE AND TWO BEDROOM  
**EXTRA CARE APARTMENTS FOR RENT**

01733 347135



Providing  
more homes



**Throughout 2017/18, we built 480 new homes, keeping us firmly on target to meet our business objective of providing at least 2,500 new homes by March 2019.**

A total of £56.6m was invested into these properties with £4.3m provided through government funding. Our sales turnover was £19million and 35 of these properties were for social rent, with 75 for affordable rent.

An increasing proportion of our new build homes programme comprised low-cost home ownership. In 2017/18, around 30% of the homes we built were for sale (including shared ownership), with the remainder for rent.

### Home Grange, Lincoln

Home Grange, a brand new 36-apartment development was delivered by Keystone (part of Longhurst Group) in partnership with Collingham-based developers Gusto Group.

Located on Boultham Park Road in Lincoln, the £5.5million development was officially opened back in March. Having all been made available for market sale, 13 new residents have already moved in and 11 sales are currently in progress.

### Allen Road, Rushden

Allen Road in Rushden, which features a mixture of tenure types, has also been delivered in the last 12 months. Comprising two sites, the development received £1.15m from Homes England and has redeveloped the former Grenson's shoe factory site into 32 homes for affordable rent and 14 shared ownership properties.

### Orchard Drive, Grimsby

In March, another successful regeneration project brought 70 two and three-bedroom homes to Grimsby. Orchard Drive is a £7million social housing project that was delivered following joint investment from Longhurst and Havelok Homes, North East Lincolnshire Council and Homes England.

Excellent progress has been made on our 400-home joint venture with Westleigh in Humberston, North Lincolnshire. When completed, the Carrington Gardens site will offer a mix of 200 family homes on Humberston Meadows and 200 luxury-living properties for the over 55s. So far, just six of the initial 22 homes made available on Humberston Meadows remain on the market.

## Longhurst Group Development Programme 2017/18

Units completed	<b>480</b>
Units started	<b>705</b>
Amount invested in units completed	<b>£56.6m</b>
Grant received for units completed	<b>£4.3m</b>
Completions due 2018/19	<b>768</b>







Development and New Business Manager Christine Steele (left) and Project Manager Tracey Pearson pictured at Orchard Drive with Councillor Matthew Patrick, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Community Assets, Governance and Tourism.

## Orchard Drive, Grimsby

In March, the last phase of a £7 million social housing project in the heart of Grimsby was finished following the completion of the final 19 socially-rented homes.

Orchard Drive comprises 70 new properties and has been delivered thanks to joint investment from Longhurst and Havelok Homes – part of Longhurst Group – North East Lincolnshire Council (NELC) and Homes England (formerly the Homes and

Communities Agency).

The new two and three-bedroom homes, developed by Lindum, have been created following the demolition of 100 terraced houses which were over a century old and in poor condition.

The completion of the remaining homes marked a dramatic transformation of one of North East Lincolnshire’s most challenging brownfield sites.



## Willow Court, Whittlesey

Earlier this year, work began on a state-of-the-art £9.3million care complex for the elderly in Cambridgeshire.

Due for completion in October 2019, Willow Court, delivered by Axiom Housing Association – part of Longhurst Group – and builders Lindum Group, will provide 60 new Extra Care apartments for rent in the town of Whittlesey.

When finished, Willow Court will offer 47 one-bedroom apartments and 13 two-bedroom properties as well as a residents’ lounge, restaurant, hair salon and therapy room, micro-shop and communal gardens.

The development has received support from Cambridgeshire County Council, Fenland District Council and Homes England, which has provided £3.6m of funding.



# Growth

## PA Housing

We extended our stock to more than 22,000 properties after completing the transfer of 144 homes from PA (Paragon Asra) in March. The properties comprise 19 supported housing units and 10 shared ownership homes. This agreement included the transfer of the Sleaford Foyer (right) and the Family Plus Team, which is now managed by Axiom through the Supported Housing department.

The Sleaford Foyer provides supported accommodation for homeless or potentially homeless young people, aged between 16 and 25. As well as a place to live, young residents have someone to talk to and receive support with learning new skills.

This followed the transfer of 27 leasehold schemes from Waterloo Housing Association in July 2017.



## One year of Axiom

In the last year we have seen many positive impacts of Axiom joining the Group.

A further 2,200 units have been added to the total number of properties we own and manage and our provision of housing for older people has increased by 1,850 units. This includes independent living, sheltered and supported living accommodation.

We have seen national award listings for the Axiom Academy training scheme, which has supported over 75 people into work in the last five years, while Helen Florence, the Service Manager at the Wisbech Foyer (pictured right, centre), has reached the final of the Young Leader's Award, run by 24housing.

The addition of Axiom has also helped us enhance our combined development programme, enabling the delivery 700 new homes a year, which is 100 more than we



were delivering previously. Over the next two years, we expect to deliver efficiency savings of £1.6m on operating costs as a result of Axiom joining the Group.





# Customer service



We continue to deliver excellent services that reflect innovation, customer service and value-for-money.

Our Customer Services Team answered 214,827 calls and responded to over 15,000 customer emails during the last financial year.

Our first Group-wide survey was issued to over 12,000 customers. From this, we discovered that 80% of customers are satisfied with the quality of their home, 79% of leaseholders were satisfied with the overall service they receive and 85% of supported customers felt happy with the help they received.

### Universal Credit

We have continued to support many people affected by changes to welfare benefits and the introduction of Universal Credit. We are working hard to try and help customers through these changes.

Contact us if you have any concerns about how changes might affect you, or if you have difficulty paying your rent.

## Improved repairs service

After listening to customer feedback, in April we introduced a new and improved repairs service for customers living in Friendship Care & Housing, L&H Homes and Spire Homes properties.

We appointed Wates Living Space to deliver this service. Wates now manage all customer phone calls and online queries directly, meaning that customers can book an appointment that works for them.

Following the introduction of this new service, we have been extremely grateful to our customers for the patience they have shown as we look to make these improvements. We are doing everything we can to ensure you receive the best service possible.

## THIS YEAR WE ANSWERED

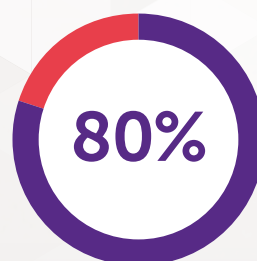


214,287  
Customer calls

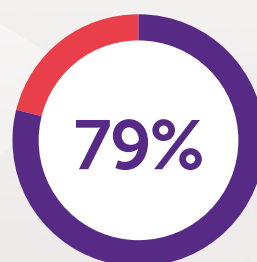


15,000+  
Customer emails

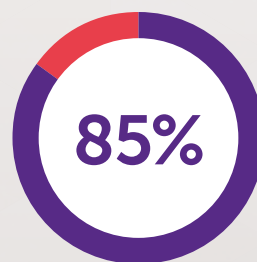
## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION



Happy with quality of their home



Leaseholders satisfied with overall service



Supported customers happy with help received





## Digital Services

The Customer Access Centre has promoted the online tenant portal to callers, specifically targeting areas of the business with lowest usage. We also have issued over 30,000 online surveys. Over the next two years, we will be implementing a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution through Microsoft Dynamics. This will significantly improve our customer insight and help us further develop online services in the future.

## Complaints

We welcome feedback and complaints from our customers as it helps us to see where our service may not quite be hitting the mark. It also means we can take steps to improve the services we provide. Our involved customers play an important part in this, helping us to consider complaints and find the right

solutions. We received 1,185 complaints from customers in the last year. Of these, 1,169 (98.65%) were resolved at stage one, which meant that only 1.35% of complaints were escalated to the Housing Ombudsman. On average, it took us 24 days to respond to formal complaints.



## Antisocial Behaviour

Following our customer survey, we discovered that 59% of customers were satisfied with how easy it was to report and 44% of customers were satisfied with how their enquiry was dealt with. We recognise that this level of satisfaction needs to improve.

We take all reports of antisocial behaviour in and around our properties very seriously. One example of this occurred when we joined forces with Northamptonshire Police to close a Rushden flat and bring an end to months of anti-social behaviour problems.

Northampton Magistrates granted a closure order following repeated reports of nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

Neighbours had raised concerns about drug use, people sleeping in communal areas damage to the building and litter. The address had also been linked to the supply of drugs in the town.

Colleagues from Spire worked closely with police, leading to a three-month closure of the flat and a series of arrests.





Kind-hearted customer Gerald receives his Good Deeds of Christmas gift from Longhurst Group's Customer Engagement Team Manager, Helen Mead.

## Good Deeds of Christmas

Kindhearted individuals and worthy causes from across Longhurst Group's operational area were recognised for the difference they make in their communities as part of our Good Deeds of Christmas campaign.

Colleagues nominated a whole range of groups and individuals throughout Autumn before a judging panel carefully select those to be presented with awards, in partnership with project sponsors Keepmoat, Kier, Burleys, J R Allen, and Aaron Services.

Marguerite, 84, who is a resident of The Forrester's in Raunds, Northamptonshire, was recognised for organising various events at the

sheltered scheme to support the community.





For the last 13 years, she has been waking up early most mornings to open up the scheme's community room and get it ready to host the day's activities.

Gerald, meanwhile, was nominated for looking out for his neighbours in Fosse Green, Rushden. The 81-year-old regularly brings in the bins for people on his street so it isn't obvious that their homes are empty while they're away at work.

His 'bin monitor' service also extends to some of his more elderly neighbours to save them the strain of having to do it themselves.



# Your rent

	 <b>Axiom</b>	 <b>Friendship</b> Care and Housing	 <b>L&amp;H</b> Homes	 <b>Spire</b> Homes	<b>Consolidated</b>
% rent collected for all homes	100.03%	98.7%	100.18%	100.49%	100%
Rent arrears of current tenants as % rent due	2.16%	3.42%	2.25%	1.66%	2.32%

Despite an increasing number of customers receiving Universal Credit, we again saw an improvement in the percentage of rent we collected and a reduction in the percentage of rent arrears that we have.

Our total current tenant arrears percentage fell from 2.35% in 2017 to 2.32% and rent collection rate was 100%.

We also collected £893,069 of former tenant debt, an increase of £303,000 on the previous year. The rent first culture and improved income collection and processing tools we have embedded over the last 12 months has led to almost 12,000 customers paying by direct debit. This has contributed £29m of income for the Group.



## Money advice service

Our Money Guidance Service continued to provide good value for money for the Group and our customers, helping 557 customers boost their finances by a combined £910,000 and ensuring that almost £700,000 of welfare benefits were received.

A team of three money advisors delivered these fantastic results at an overall cost of £150,000, helping people reduce rent arrears, sustain their tenancies, increase their income and enhance their quality of life.

Quite simply, the team is there when our customers need them the most, taking energy and water companies to task for incorrect or unfair billing practices, setting up bank accounts and helping people navigate the complexities of Universal Credit.





## Pam crowned Housing Professional of the Year

Last year our Money Advisor Pam Malhi (above) was crowned as Housing Professional of the Year after helping people save or reclaim almost £300,000. Pam, who received the award at the 24housing awards, managed a caseload of 255 people between April 2016 and March 2017 and recovered £200,000 of ongoing benefit entitlement and back-paid claims. Other financial gains included £60,000 of PIP claims and discretionary housing payments totalling £8,000. One of Pam's individual success stories saw a disabled customer receive 12 years of backdated DLA care payments totalling £25,628 and the reinstatement of £55 weekly payments after that had been wrongfully withheld.



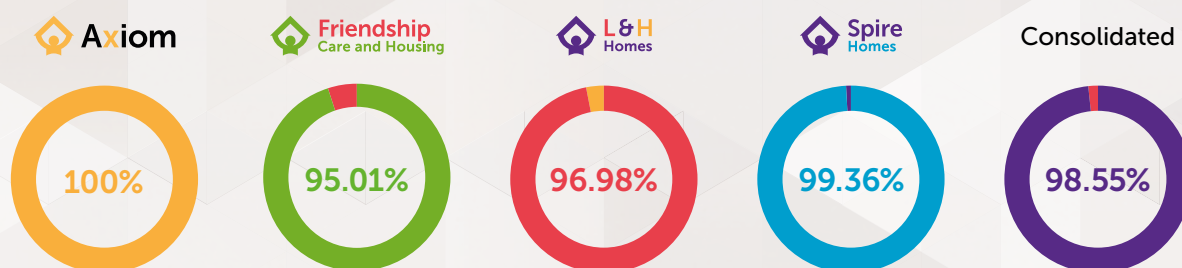
# Your home

## Repairs





	 <b>Axiom</b>	 <b>Friendship</b> Care and Housing	 <b>L&amp;H</b> Homes	 <b>Spire</b> Homes	Consolidated (excl. Axiom)
Total repairs	Unavailable	10,512	14,461	13,924	38,897
Total repairs on time	Unavailable	10,455	12,917	13,680	37,052

## Repairs – customer satisfaction

Satisfaction with overall repairs service – main contractor for responsive repairs



## Responsive repairs

	 <b>Axiom</b>	 <b>Friendship</b> Care and Housing	 <b>L&amp;H</b> Homes	 <b>Spire</b> Homes	Consolidated (excl. Axiom)
% emergency and routine repairs completed on time	Unavailable	99.46%	89.32%	98.25%	95.26
% responsive repairs completed on first visit	98.12%	94.77%	93.99%	91.46%	93.24%

Unfortunately, we do not have complete details for the repairs service supplied to Axiom customers for the 2017/18 financial year. Looking at our other member companies (Friendship Care & Housing, L&H Homes and Spire Homes), although results have improved, the percentage of responsive repairs completed on first visit are a little lower than what we reported last year.

One likely explanation for this is that – following the announcement of a new Group-wide contractor towards the end of the financial year – we noticed a slight variation in the level of service as the previous contracts came to an end and the new one began.

We are doing everything we can to ensure that this service continues to improve.





Supporting  
our communities



One of our Housing Officers, Maurice Hegarty provide advice to customer Anna Pearce as part of the House2Home project.



**As already outlined, our Money Advice service demonstrates a significant return on investment against outlay.**

This specialised service has a dual purpose of sustaining tenancies through the reduction of rent arrears as well as enabling customers to improve their quality of life through increased income.

We also use a sustainability matrix that allows us to assess affordability, health and wellbeing issues as well as risks associated with the tenancy.

This means we can put a tailored tenancy sustainment plan in place for the incoming tenant.

“I learned so much after just one session at the House2Home project. It was a great experience.”

Sufiah Bibi, Beechdale's first participant on the House2Home project

## House2Home

Our House2Home project continues to offer much needed support to new customers. The scheme, provided by Friendship Care and Housing, has supported hundreds of customers on the Beechdale estate since its launch in 2015.

It trains customers in a range of tenancy matters from sourcing affordable furnishing to accessing rent statements online and is designed to help develop life-long skills as well as helping to sustain successful tenancies.

It is the second House2Home project that Friendship has established, following a successful pilot scheme in Sparkbrook, Birmingham.

Sufiah Bibi, who was the project's first customer on Beechdale, added: "I learned so much after just one session at the House2Home project.

"I took part in a DIY session and learned about decorating and furnishing a home; I've even passed on a few tips that I learned to other people!

"It was a great experience. I have signed up for more employment training, and I'd love to volunteer there myself."



## 'Rob set me on the right road towards my new job'

One customer to benefit from the Training and Employment service is 21-year-old Umhar Hussain, from Birmingham, who is on the road to a full-time job after receiving support to land an apprenticeship.

After seeing an advert for an apprenticeship scheme, Umhar, reached out to Employment and Training Advisor Rob Friday. With Rob's help, Umhar rejuvenated his CV and learnt some key interview tips and techniques, which helped him to wow the panel.

Nearly three years on, Umhar now has experience of working with a range of Aaron's teams and is well on the way to completing a plumbing qualification.

He explained: "I knew I didn't want to go to Uni and so I was looking for an apprenticeship that would help me get started on the road to finding a job. My uncle is a gas engineer and so

I thought that a trade like that would suit me.

"When we saw that Friendship was advertising for apprenticeships, it was perfect. I got in touch with Rob and it all went from there, really.

"Thanks to his help, the interview went well and I was offered the apprenticeship.

"It's my first real job and I'm really enjoying it. I've had part-time jobs in the past but nothing like this.

"To have that prospect of getting a job at the end of it is brilliant. To get that, would mean a lot to me – it would be a big boost.

"I have to thank Rob for everything he did in helping me to get the apprenticeship. I'd definitely encourage anyone who is in the position I was to go and speak to Rob; look at what he's done for me.

"He really set me on the right road."

## Training and education

The Training and Employment Advice service continued to support customers to help them into work, education or employment.

During 2017/18, the service helped 17 people into employment, nine people into voluntary work or work experience and two people were supported into training.

## Axiom Academy

The Axiom Academy comprises skills and development centres that are based at supported housing projects for the homeless.

Their primary aim is to deliver accredited learning in Maths, English and IT – essentially a 'one stop shop' for functional skills and the first step back into learning.

The centres generate their own income through external funding secured for qualifications and projects that they deliver.



# Customer involvement

## Helping us make changes for the better

We are extremely grateful to our involved customers for the role they have played in helping us to improve the service we have delivered in the last 12 months. To everybody that has been involved this year, we would like to say a heartfelt thank you!

We are very lucky to have so many dedicated people who are passionate about ensuring we continue to deliver what their fellow customers need.

We are always looking for new ways of getting our customers involved. We constantly review the way customers scrutinise our services and have introduced a Scrutiny Team which communicates feedback to Board members and senior staff.

You can get involved and help us improve the way we do things too. Joining one of our groups is a great way to develop new and existing skills, gain experience and meet new people, as well as help to improve the services you get from us.

### Join one of our customer panels

There are local panel groups for your housing provider. Each group reports to our Longhurst Customer Scrutiny Team.

### How much time is required?

There are four meetings each year, with lunch provided.

### What's in it for you?

You'll get access to professional training programmes to improve your skills and knowledge, including CV and meeting skills. We'll also pay reasonable travel expenses.

### What we need from you

These panels have been set up to scrutinise and review our performance.

You will have an input in developing and changing policies and procedures, reviewing complaints and helping to monitor our service standards.



## Get involved

All panels are led and chaired by our customers. If you think you could make a difference and would like to get involved, please get in touch.

✉ **customerengagement**  
**@longhurst-group.org.uk**

- ▶ **Friendship Care & Housing**  
0300 123 1745
- ▶ **L&H Homes**  
0800 111 4013
- ▶ **Spire Homes**  
0300 123 66 11
- ▶ **Axiom**  
0300 123 7598





Children from the local nursery make the most of Beechdale's new Community Garden

# Community Champions

Our Community Champion project on Beechdale continued throughout 2017/18 with a total of 18 projects and activities either directly led through the project or proactively supported by the Community Champion, Jemma Betts.

One of these projects, was The Community Book Swap, which was set up in Beechdale after the estate's library was forced to close due to council funding cuts last year.

Jemma Betts, who also lives on the Beechdale estate, alongside other members of staff and volunteers from the local church, created The Community Book Swap (right), ensuring the estate's bookworms could continue to enjoy their favourite page-turners. For a donation of just £1, visitors can now borrow a maximum of three books, swapping them for different titles once they've finished reading. The Book Swap has become a real hub for the community.

Another successful project led to the opening of a new Community Garden on Beechdale after a previously disused are of

the Longhurst Group office on the estate was transformed into an all-year garden for the whole community to use.

With support from the local branch of Buildbase, who donated hundreds of pounds worth of materials and the hard work of Jemma's partner Kirk, repurposed mini allotment beds have been installed, along with low-maintenance gravelled borders and planting. The garden is regularly used by children from a nearby nursery.





# Value for money

**Value for Money (VFM) is fully integrated into the way we work and deliver services to our customers.**

In March 2018 the Regulator of Social Housing issued new guidance around the reporting of value for money. The new guidance incorporated a series of standard metrics which were measured based on a standard definition from information contained within the Financial Statements.

To see how the Group performed against each of the VFM metrics for both 2017/18 and the previous year, please see our Financial Statement.

We are developing our 2025 Vision which builds upon our successful growth strategy and strong financial performance in 2017/18 and the preceding three years.

We have reviewed the VFM Standard and undertaken a self-assessment against the new standard and code of practice, which we have met.

To ensure value for money, we have undertaken an independent stock condition survey of 70% of our stock during 2017/18. This work has ensured that we hold accurate up to date information on the condition of our stock which will be used to inform our future investment plans.

This results of the independent surveys has confirmed our stock is in good condition and that the level of investment needed is consistent with that provided in the business plan but with a reduced investment need during the next 10 years.

The Group entered into a long-term contract for Responsive and Planned Maintenance in April 2018 with Wates Living Space. This achieved procurement savings of £90k compared with the costs which would have been incurred by our member companies if they had re-tendered individually. Although savings have been made, the same levels of service have been delivered. We are continuing to work on improving our approach to procurement across the Group to find more efficient processes and deliver further savings.

## Empty Homes

In 2017/18 our void rate for our general needs and housing for older people showed a slight increase from 0.54% in 2016/17 to 0.55%, costing around £7,563. The slight increase can be attributed to an increase of void times during quarter 4 when news of the new repairs contractor was released coupled with a number of difficult to let homes in the East region.

Despite a slight increase in void loss, re-let times have reduced across our regions. In 2016/17 it was taking an average of 18.11 days to re-let our homes compared to 18.04 days in 2017/18.







Quality  
care & support



The Group's Care and Support activities are flourishing and expanding, despite funding reductions by many local authorities, which continue to threaten the viability of care and support services across the country.

We have started to reorganise our Care and Support team in response to these changes and have created a new role, Executive Director of Partnerships, Care and Communities, to ensure we can continue to provide support to the many vulnerable people who rely on us in the future.

**Enjoying the garden at one of Longhurst Group's care and support schemes in Nuneaton**



## Axiom celebrates a high five after latest CQC report

In November Axiom celebrated a high-five for its care schemes after receiving another glowing report from the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Bircham House in Sawston, Cambridge, which had previously been assessed by CQC inspectors as 'requiring improvement', has been graded as 'Good' in its latest report, following a comprehensive, unannounced inspection in August.

The scheme provides care to people within their own flats, including older residents living with dementia, people with mental health conditions, younger adults and those with physical disabilities or sensory impairment.

The latest report means that five of Axiom's six care schemes across Cambridgeshire are now rated as 'Good', with Willowbank in Cambridge, Friary Court and The Pavilions in Peterborough and Beech Court in Littleport all achieving the same standard in their most recent inspections.

Bircham House is an Axiom care scheme which has just improved on the latest CQC report.

In Bircham House's assessment, inspectors rated it as 'Good' in all categories including its safety, its effectiveness, how caring and responsive it is and the quality of its leadership.

The report found that 'staff treated people with care and respect and made sure that

At this age, it is difficult to know what care you need, one is dealing with an entirely new situation, but the care staff here are very friendly and helpful.

A Bircham House customer

their privacy and dignity was respected all of the time.'

One customer, who was interviewed as part of the assessment process, said: "At this age, it is difficult to know what care you need, one is dealing with an entirely new situation, but the care staff here are very friendly and helpful."

A member of staff added: "We work together to make a difference to people. Some people don't have families close by and so we support them and chat with them. I think we make a lot of difference."





**Wade Lyn, Jamaica's Honorary Consul (left) visits Mary Street to celebrate a resident's 100th birthday**

## Focus on Mary Street

"If one of my residents wants ice cream for breakfast, I make sure we accommodate that! We make sure every day is their birthday."

Those are the words of the Val Paragon, who routinely goes above and beyond the remit of her role to improve the lives of those in her care at Longhurst Group's Mary Street Extra Care Service in Birmingham.

The centre provides individualised support for older people with dementia who choose to live happily and as independently as possible within an African Caribbean culture.

In addition to helping to devise and deliver Mary Street's varied programme of events, Val, who has been shortlisted for two national awards this year, also takes it upon herself to organise special celebrations.

When one of her residents turned 100, Val personally arranged for Wade Lyn, Jamaica's Honorary Consul, to be the guest of honour and present the resident with his birthday card from HRH The Queen.

She also helped another resident – who was unable to attend her daughter's wedding in America – to record a video message that was played at the ceremony, ensuring she could still be part of the big day.

Val also regularly attends funeral and memorial services for her former residents – often in lieu of family or friends – to deliver readings and heartfelt eulogies to people who she regards as members of her own extended family.



Mary Street Registered Care Manager, Valerie Paragon, chats to residents.



# Future plans

We will continue with our asset management analysis, identifying units that perform poorly (whether generally or relative to their value), and carry out options appraisals to identify appropriate courses of action.

We will continue to focus on innovation, efficiency and value-for-money to ensure that our business is as efficient and effective as possible. In practice, this means further people and infrastructure changes to enable us to deliver our 'One Team One Vision' transformational plan.



## To provide more homes

- ✔ We have plans in place to deliver over 3,500 new homes in the next five years with a development pipeline of nearly 1,600 homes. By 2020, around 3,000 new homes will be built. This will include a Homes England funded development programme of at least 400 homes.
- ✔ We will continue to explore opportunities for joint ventures and other partnerships
- ✔ We will continue to identify stock rationalisation opportunities that, over the last 12 months, have seen our stock numbers grow by over 1,000 homes.
- ✔ Maximise traditional development models and increase our use of creative and innovative value for money solutions to meet a broad range of needs through a diverse range of tenures, including affordable home ownership.

## To support our communities

- ✔ Having a strong profile in our communities which will be well managed and maintained, working closely with residents to ensure we provide heartfelt, quality, responsive services that contribute to great neighbourhoods where people want to live.
- ✔ Link our Community Champion with community schemes and projects via our repairs contractor, Wates Living Space, and their social value agenda
- ✔ Reassess how we can better support customers and colleagues affected by domestic abuse through our involvement with the national Make a Stand campaign
- ✔ Continuing to develop a stronger focus on employment, training and skills for our customers through initiatives like the Axiom Academy to support the economic resilience of our neighbourhoods. Apprenticeship and work placement opportunities will also be promoted.



# Our key priorities for 2018/19

- ✔ To provide more homes
- ✔ To support our communities
- ✔ To deliver quality care and support
- ✔ To invest in our organisation and people.

## To deliver quality care and support

- ✔ Investing in a range of care and support housing and services in which we are sufficiently skilled and knowledgeable to deliver on our aims of being influential, innovative and forward-looking.
- ✔ Devising innovative solutions to individual and community care and support needs through the pooling of our resources and through influencing regional and national agendas.
- ✔ Using our comprehensive customer information database we will proactively target support services for the customers and communities that need them the most. We will actively involve our customers by providing more tenant training, advice on finances and encouraging more interaction with our tenants by refocussing on frontline, face-to-face contact and community support.
- ✔ Expanding the reach of the Group's customer engagement tools to include service users (and their families) to capture views and satisfaction to help shape services and drive continuous improvement.

## To invest in our people

- ✔ Developing an Organisational Development Strategy to provide an overarching framework for creating the organisation we need to be to achieve our future ambitions.
- ✔ Further embedding our 'One Team, One Vision' philosophy to maximise all the skills, resources and energy within the Group in pursuit of our shared purpose, whilst recognising local needs and context.
- ✔ Ensuring we are an employer that people want to work for and that we inspire people to perform at their best.
- ✔ Ensuring we have a motivated, happy, engaged workforce who are passionate about what they do and understand the contribution they make. We will continue to listen and learn from our staff, consult them appropriately, take account of their views and opinions and keep a close eye on staff morale.





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