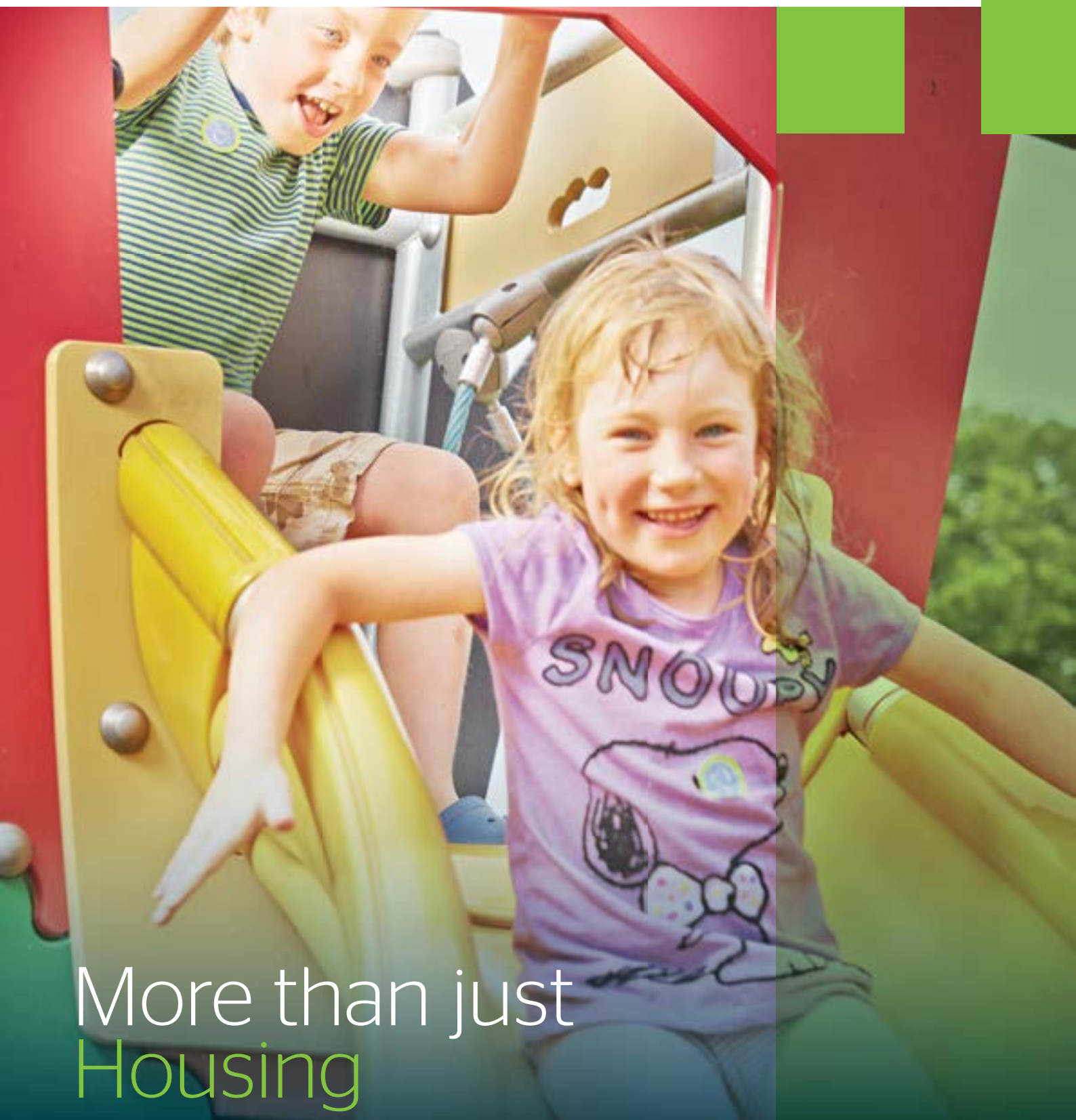




herefordshire housing

>People >Homes >Communities

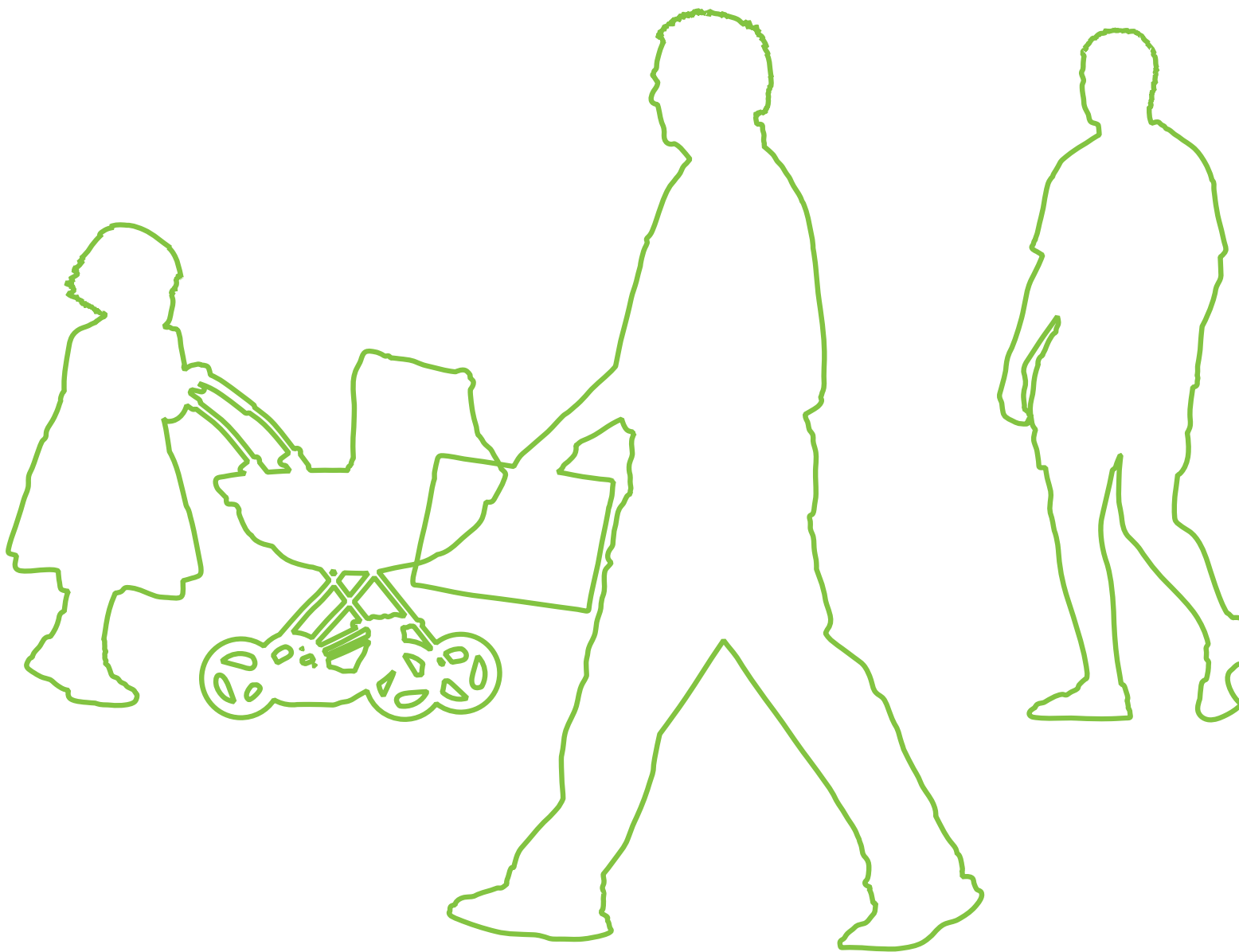


More than just
Housing

Annual Report - 2013/14

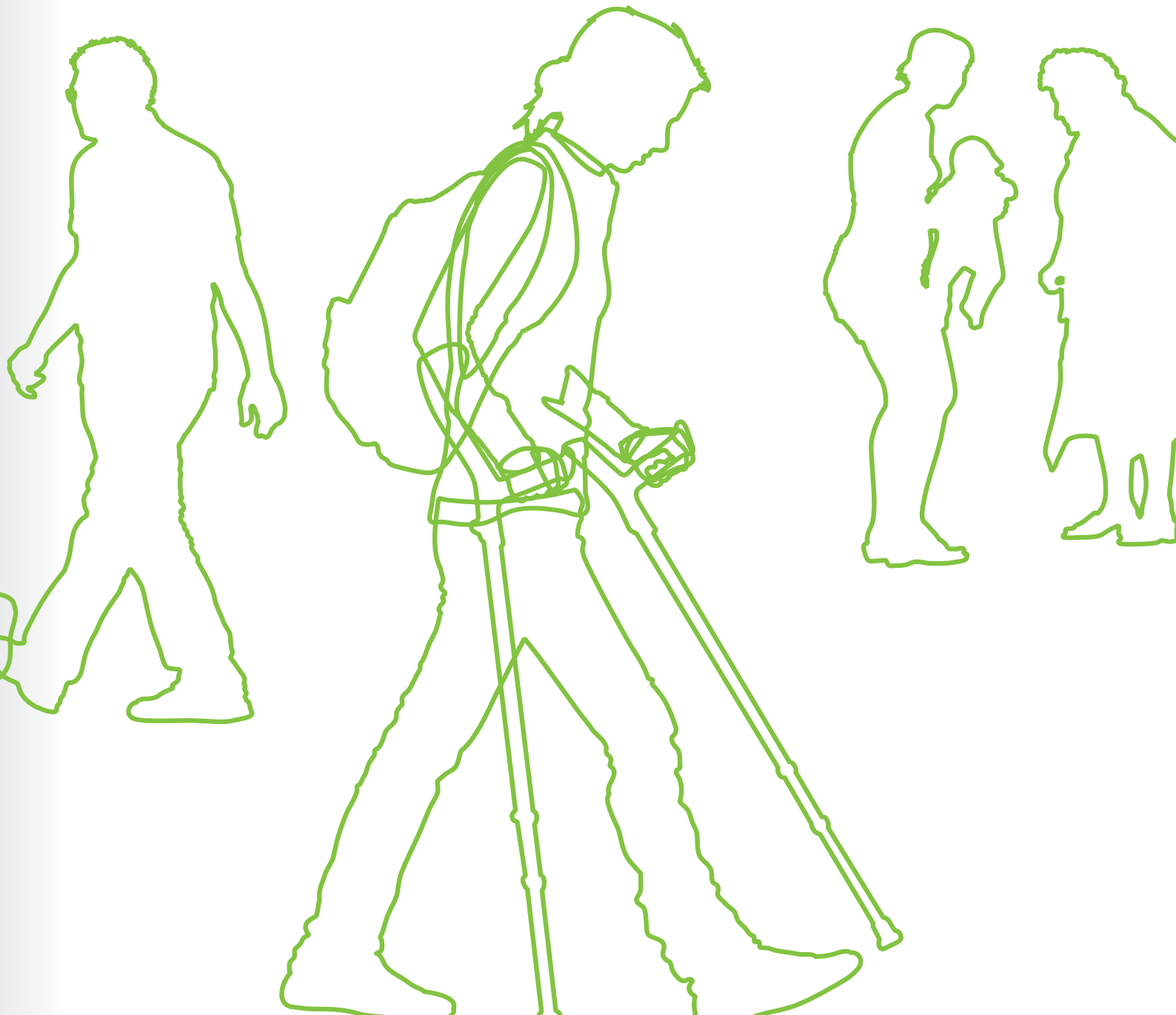
Contents

Introduction	4
More than just Housing	5
Supporting People	8
Enhancing Homes	19
Creating Respectful and Caring Communities	28





For more information
contact us on 0300 777 4321



Introduction

The past year has been a watershed for Herefordshire Housing. Delivering an excellent service to our tenants is the core of our work. From that platform, we set about exploring how we could use our expertise, our assets and our passion to develop new services in Herefordshire and beyond.

In 2011, we agreed our Strategic Plan and set about getting ourselves fit for the future. Improving and changing habits and practices from head to toe. Over the last year we have reached out beyond our traditional customers and boundaries. It has been a huge and welcome challenge not only to see colleagues forge new links and contacts outside our traditional business, but also discover how keen other individuals and customers are to work with us. Our reputation for reliability and quality is established.

This year I watched with immense pride as colleagues across the organisation helped support others; Michael with the support of Job Club secured his first job in 4 years; Jane who suffers severe bipolar and depression, with the support of colleagues was able to stay out of hospital for the longest time in her

life; Denise and her children were given the support and stability of a secure home with Herefordshire Housing, something they hadn't had for a very long time. These are just a few examples of how we affect people and their families. These are difficult times and these individual stories remind me of the difficulties people face and how our work changes their lives for the better in Herefordshire.

Supporting our communities is important to us so at the end of the year, it was exciting to see a separate charity providing care and support, the Independence Trust, work with us to create a group structure. This widens the range of services we can offer and our support work now extends into Shropshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire.

People across Herefordshire cannot have failed to notice that we're building. New homes are desperately needed and we are delivering in Hereford, in Ross on Wye and in villages across the county. The biggest change will be at The Oval where the much awaited transformation has started. Slowly and steadily the unsightly concrete flats are being replaced with new buildings, predominantly

houses with gardens.

This report marks the success of our planned transformation. Our new Strategic Plan 2014 - 2018 reinforces our commitment to providing you with the best housing services in Herefordshire and creating quality choices for communities. Thank you.



Andy Ballard
Chair



More than just Housing

Our work is far more than just housing. Here at Herefordshire Housing we believe in a seamless, co-ordinated approach that supports people, enhances homes, and creates respectful, caring communities. Together, these add up to quality choices across communities. We work closely with our customers to understand needs, so we can deliver the services they

need. We have become a pioneering provider of Total Wellbeing services; building a revolutionary Health and Housing partnership. We have created a group structure combining the expertise of the Independence Trust, provider of wellbeing services, and Herefordshire Housing, a housing association. Together the group structure aims to support and challenge individuals, families and communities to achieve their potential for sustainable wellbeing and independence.

At its core, Total Wellbeing is the quality of day to day living that individuals and communities experience. Drawing on the skills and expertise of the two organisations means factors including social networks and relationships; good mental and physical health; occupation and safe and secure housing will form a unique package for customers. The group structure is within its infancy and will be reported on more extensively next year. Exciting times ahead! •

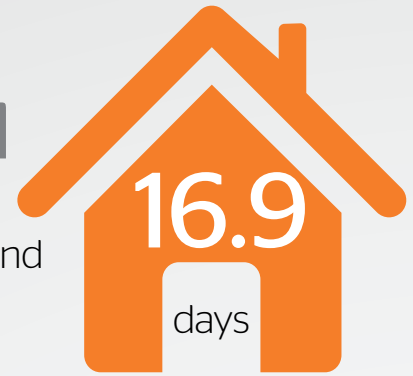


Value for Money Savings

We saved **£812,821.71**

Void

property
turn around



days



Repair Statistics

Responsive repairs fixed at first visit **88.9%**

Total number of repairs - **13,906**

Work completed on time **99.9%**

94.8%

satisfied with
our responsive
repairs
service



Careline

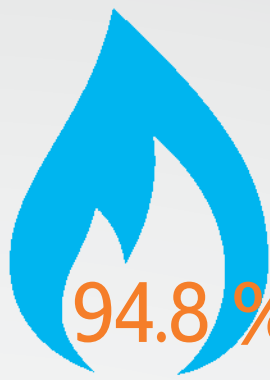
Satisfied with the Careline Service - **98.6%**

Represents value for money **98.3%**

33,500 connections across the UK



of our customers gave us a rating of **9/10** or **10/10**
when thinking about **recommending us to**
a friend



Gas Servicing

4693 / appointments made

99.8% appointments kept

94.8% were satisfied with our Gas servicing

Our lettings team

have let **556** new properties / successfully helped to

downsize



tenants.



People

Work Club has helped

177

people get back into
employment

3956

visited the
Work Club

Number of calls

79,786

99.7%

would recommend
the service
to a friend.

HHL Connect Team

Average waiting time **11** seconds

Satisfied with the service **97%**

Calls resolved at first contact **91.99%**



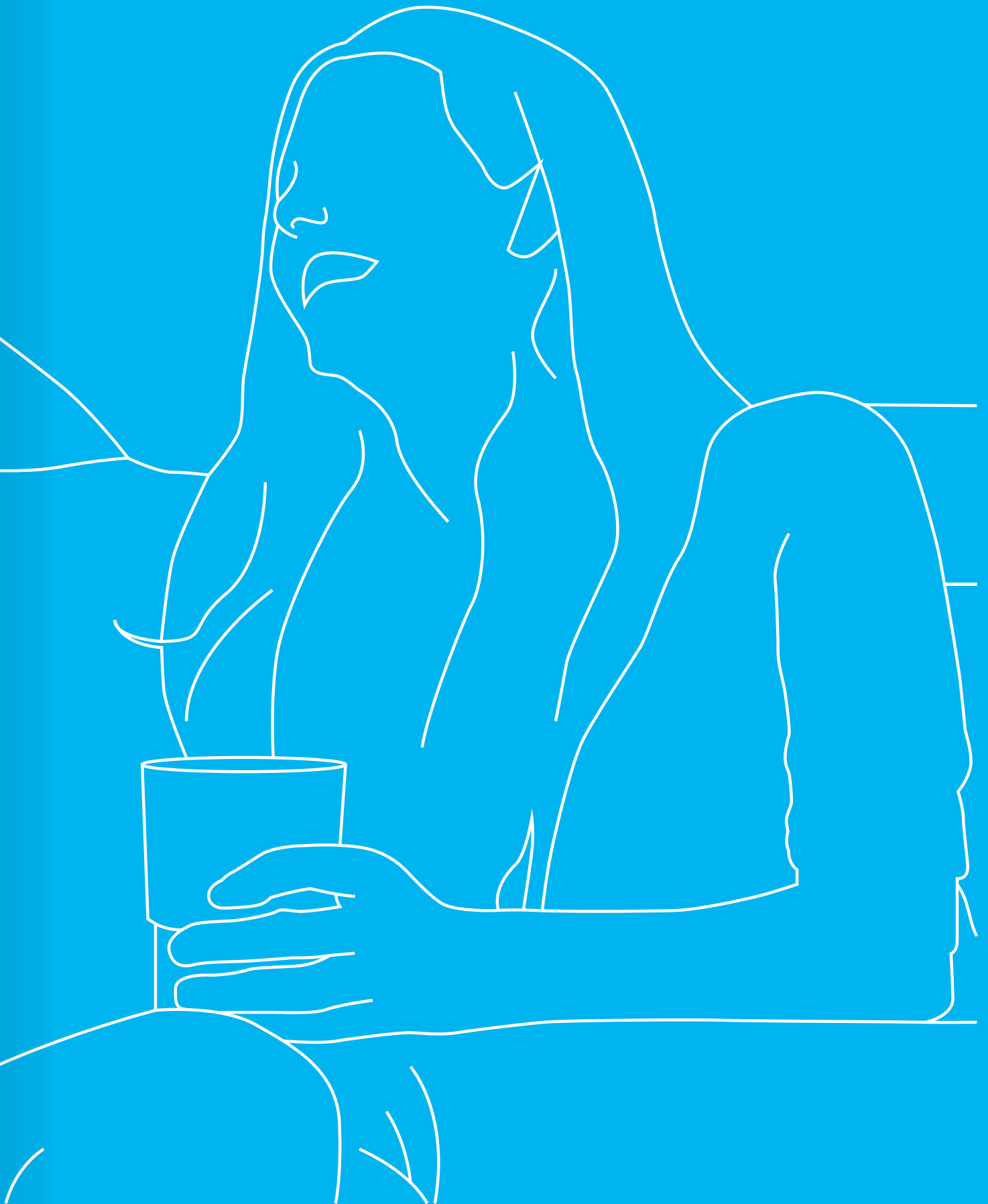
Home Improvements Team

customers were **90%** satisfied with our home improvements service.

We have invested **£6.2million** in improving
residents homes

Supporting People

Welfare Reform Support	10
Our First Enhanced Living Scheme - Henffordd Gardens	11
Mental Health	12
Careline	13
Support for Families Programme	14
Job Club	15
Apprentices	16
Homeless Prevention Support	17
Digital Inclusion Project	18



A woman with red hair is looking upwards, her face partially obscured by white laundry hanging in the foreground. The background shows a building with windows and a blue sky.

Welfare Reform Support

It has been a year of change for us and our tenants. Government reforms on welfare have taken full effect and we have not been idle. Our Financial Inclusion Officers have been working hard with tenants to help them understand what the reforms mean to them and their families. Since April 2013 the team has helped **1,265** customers with advice on benefits, benefit reform and the bedroom tax. The bedroom tax has been a great concern and we have worked with **277** individuals who were affected by it; we've helped them to understand the changes, provide support and advice on how to plan for the future.

As additional support, we've also set up a hardship fund. This works on a referral system from our Incomes Team where a panel (made up of HHL colleagues) assess cases and can allocate one off grant payments. To date, the hardship fund has reviewed 6 cases and allocated £1,000 of funding.

We also offer support and advice to those who find downsizing their homes due to welfare reform a reality. This year we have helped **59** people downsize their homes whilst supporting their needs •

Our First Enhanced Living Scheme

- Henffordd Gardens

We believe that everyone should have a choice and access to high quality homes, services and support which meet their needs. As part of our commitment to offer Total Wellbeing to our customers, this year we opened Henffordd Gardens - an Enhanced Living Scheme, which offers flexible support for people with dementia.

The scheme enables us to provide individually tailored care and support packages within a safe and secure environment.

Centred around 30 high quality apartments, in a prime city location, the scheme provides

- Accessible accommodation
- Individually tailored Care and Support packages
- The very latest assistive technology
- On-site concierge
- Wi-fi and the latest digital technology

It's one of the most advanced schemes of its type in the country, and fully demonstrates Herefordshire Housing's commitment to becoming a leading provider of Total Wellbeing Services •





Mental Health

Through our Mental Health Programme, our teams are supporting people with severe mental health issues to take the next step into independence. Working in partnership with other agencies we are actively making it easier by providing suitable accommodation with support; helping them to move back into community living. The programme gives an individual a tenancy, something their illness would stop them achieving normally; a home to be proud of, and with all white goods as standard so that they can live independently almost immediately. This year we have helped 18 people in total. The aim of the programme is to help people sustain a tenancy and remain independent wherever possible •



Careline

Our Careline service is growing rapidly and we're now providing **33,500** connections across the country. As well as having grown the alarm monitoring element of the service, we've also expanded the lone worker monitoring and currently provide this service to **1050** customers and we've been receiving great feedback on our work too. Through our customer survey we were told **98.6%** of customers were satisfied, **98.3%** thought that what they paid for the service was value for money and a massive **99.7%** would recommend our service to a friend •



Support for Families Programme

Last year our Social Development Team successfully secured DWP/ European funding to run a programme to support local families to develop their skills, find work and generally improve their life choices. The programme actively seeks to identify the different barriers that keep individuals out of

employment so that these can be addressed. The Support for Families Programme has been running for over 12 months and to date we have had 199 customers sign up to access our training, help and support. Through the programme we are building on our existing employment services by providing enhanced training, work placements, and one-to-one support. 40 of the people we have helped have secured employment •

Job Club

As part of our Back to Work support, we run a dedicated Job Club every week at Hinton Community Centre in Hereford. The club, run by our Social Development Team, doesn't just help people get back to work; it helps to enhance people's confidence and life skills. This year the club has had 3952 people attend and we've helped 177 people secure employment. (Jan 2013-May 2014).

We also launched 'budget buster' cooking classes where volunteers created meals for under £10 for the entire work club. This helped to enhance people's confidence and social interaction skills, which in-turn will all help in their quest to return to work •



Apprentices

We're committed to giving people, especially our tenants, a good start in their careers, and are proud to currently offer apprenticeship schemes in Business Administration, Customer Services and Trades (one of Electrical, Plumbing, Gas or Carpentry). We aim to enable our apprentices to "earn while you learn", giving them plenty of training and support, both on the job and in their college work. We have strong working relationships with local training providers, and all of our apprentices follow an Apprenticeship Framework which leads to nationally recognised qualifications.

We currently have 8 apprentices working with us here at Herefordshire Housing across the organisation. Our Business Administration apprentice Amy Jones has been undertaking her apprenticeship since 2012 and says;

"I began my apprenticeship with Herefordshire Housing in November 2012. Since I started I have learnt a lot about myself and have gained skills and knowledge about working in a business environment. With the help and encouragement from my colleagues at HHL I recently completed my level 2 and 3 Business Administration qualifications. Every day I learn something new and HHL encourage me to work with different departments to gain more knowledge and understanding of the organisation and the business world in general. I would really recommend doing an Apprenticeship with Herefordshire Housing because I receive so much support from colleagues, everyone is really friendly and if I need any extra training it is arranged for me."



Homeless Prevention Support

We're continuing to deliver the homeless prevention contract on behalf of Herefordshire Council. We provide support, information, advice and guidance to individuals, couples and families who are threatened with a homeless situation within Herefordshire. Our Homeless Prevention team work closely with people to try to eliminate the risk of homelessness; this is often a holistic approach to sustaining accommodation as well as seeking alternative

accommodation via the private sector or HomePoint. Early prevention is key and this year we have received a total of 430 referrals. The work we carry out is dependant on the individual's situation, their needs, vulnerability and household make-up. This year we helped 101 individuals remain in their homes, 40 we assisted to secure suitable private rented properties and 35 to gain a social tenancy with a housing provider. Our team also made 230 referrals for people to receive additional support from other organisations e.g. the food bank and families' programme •

Digital Inclusion Project

With the Government's target to move all benefit reform access online by 2017, increased use of online job application forms and the need for computer skills in daily life, our Digital Inclusion team have been working hard to ensure that all communities have access to the digital world. Our Digital Inclusion Project gives residents the skills to enable them to engage with others online, source information independently and have access to online benefits and discounts. Recent research has shown that Social housing tenants are still the least likely to have internet access in the UK and we're working hard to change this for our tenants.

11 of our 13 sheltered housing schemes now have digital hubs with internet access, laptops, printers and other equipment available for them to use for free.

Since January 2013 we have run weekly courses on computers and on using the internet and have trained 90 people •



Enhancing

Homes

Improving Homes	20
Adapting Homes	20
Maintaining Homes	20
Servicing Homes	21
Letting Homes	22
Efficient Homes	22
HandyPerson+	23
Complaints	23
Building a brighter future	24
Oval Regeneration - building a community	26



Improving Homes

We're committed to ensuring that your homes are maintained and refurbished to a high standard and this year we've invested **£6,142,536** in improving your homes.

Customers have been really pleased with the difference this has made and satisfaction with our improvement programme is high at **90%** •

Adapting Homes

A number of our customers need support to be able to remain living independently. At HHL, one of the ways we support this is through completing adaptations and installing disability aids. During 2013/14 we carried out **462** adaptations for our customers to help retain their independence. It can transform someone's life and satisfaction with this service is high at **91.1%** •

Maintaining Homes

We spent **£1,754,609** completing **13,906** repairs to your homes. **99.9%** of repairs were completed on time and **88.9%** of responsive emergency repairs were repaired at first visit. We made **13,762** appointments with you and kept 100% of them •

Servicing Homes

The gas servicing team have completed 4,693 visits to your homes and 94.8% of you were satisfied with the service •

Letting Homes

We are the largest registered provider of social housing in Herefordshire and in 2013/14 we let **556** properties to people across Herefordshire.

Efficient Homes

As fuel costs have risen again over the past year we have continued with our programmes to improve the energy efficiency of your homes, helping you save money and feel warmer. This work has been spread across the county and we have spent over **£1.5million**. This year we have installed the following:

The largest programme has been external wall insulation systems to our most inefficient housing stock. These have been to **22** properties at Churchill Place and Metcalfe Close, Ross-on-Wye, **11** properties at Hagley Park Bartestree and **42** flats at Ross Road Hereford. The work also included renewing the roof and windows and installing a new ventilation system. To help us complete these works we were awarded a grant of **£200,000** through Energy Company Obligation •

2

solar hot water
systems linked
to storage
heaters

394

Gas
condensing
boilers

11

Air source
Heat Pumps

75

External wall
insulation
render
systems

133

Double
glazed
windows

HandyPerson

In 2012 we launched our Handyperson+ service for our residents, homeowners and leaseholders across Herefordshire. The service has been well received and in 2013-14 we carried out a total of **298** jobs •

Complaints

Everybody makes mistakes and here at HHL we are no different. We love complaints as it means we can assess the problems and learn from them and ultimately continue to provide you with excellent service. We are committed to learning from what went wrong. We monitor all of the complaints we receive and hold regular meetings where we can look at the lessons we can learn. For 2013/2014 we received a total of 16 complaints. These are split into the following areas;



Building a brighter future

We're building a brighter future by providing Herefordshire with quality homes for current and future residents. Our regeneration and development programmes are now well under way across the county.

2013/14 saw many of our programmes taking shape including Chasewood View, Ross-on-Wye with almost half of the properties completed. The development, which is made up of two and three bedroom houses and one bedroom flats, offers a first for HHL – shared ownership homes. Out of the 30 properties being built, 20 will be for rent and 10 will be shared ownership. The shared

ownership houses enable our customers to get on the property ladder by buying a share in the property and paying rent on the remaining shares we own. This means that a smaller mortgage and deposit is required and enables families, who may not traditionally have been able to afford a larger mortgage, own their own home.

At Station Road, The Mead, Ross-on-Wye we have developed 10 new homes at a former ambulance station site. This has transformed the area and had a positive impact on the local community. Feedback from this development has been very positive and all 10 homes have been rented to local residents with a housing need •





Oval Regeneration - building a community

This year has seen the Oval Regeneration, the biggest regeneration project in the West Midlands, begin. We started work on the Vortex site, St Francis Church on Goodrich Grove and on Beattie Avenue, where existing properties were demolished and foundations for new homes created. Our Housing Management and Neighbourhood teams have worked with tenants in the area to minimise the disruption whilst work takes place and to decant residents whilst their new homes are being built. The entire redevelopment, which includes 194 three storey flats being demolished and local amenities refurbished, will be completed by 2017 •





Creating Respectful and

Caring Communities

Community Grant Funding (GAP) & activities	29
Outdoor Gyms	30
ASB -Respectful and Caring Communities	32
Rate your place	33





Community Grant Funding (GAP) & activities

Throughout 2013 we've been inviting community groups and individuals across the county to benefit from our grant fund. We have been actively

asking the community what they would spend money on to benefit everyone in their community. Applications are assessed against strict criteria by our Grant Assessment Panel (GAP), a group of fully trained residents and the funds are then administered for the benefit of our tenants. This year we approved 10

applications with £8,704.85 going to community groups. The projects we helped were wide ranging, from youth and adult sporting activities, relocating vital services such as the Hereford Food Bank and helping to ensure areas are tidy and well-kept within communities. Pictured FC Cosmos new sponsored kit •

Outdoor Gyms

By making sure our services deliver value for money it means we are able to invest in our communities. Last year we set our colleagues a challenge to raise £100,000 in value for money efficiency savings. These savings, after extensive consultations with local communities, were to be used to install two outdoor gym areas for the whole community to use. Our colleagues rose to the challenge and successfully reduced costs through activities such as negotiating prices, reducing print runs and finding cheaper alternatives for travel and accommodation for staff training.





The outdoor gyms, a first for Herefordshire, have been installed at Moor Farm, Herefordshire and at Tudor Ville, Ross-on-Wye and have equipment for all ages and abilities. The equipment works on individual strength and includes children's exercise bikes and equipment for disabled users.

The gyms are part of our Total Wellbeing commitment as they will actively encourage people to get fresh air and get fit for free, whilst being a resource for local school PE lessons and exercise classes too.

This scheme has been met with great excitement and anticipation and so next year we have set our colleagues the challenge of raising more money through value for money savings. •



ASB – Respectful and Caring Communities

Here at HHL we are committed to creating respectful and caring communities and our Neighbourhood Action Team work hard to help make sure this happens. The team focuses on early intervention and prevention as a way of ensuring that repeat Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) doesn't take place.

We work with both complainants and perpetrators to understand and address the causes of ASB, rather than just focusing on enforcement. This year we have dealt with in excess of **100** reported incidents of ASB with the majority focused around noise, verbal abuse, drug cultivation and misuse.

Noise related ASB has increased this year, however this is consistent with the rest of the UK and our team has addressed this issue by obtaining funding to buy extra noise monitoring equipment.

Where cases are deemed too serious (we have a zero tolerance to drug use) or individuals have persisted to cause a disturbance we have taken people to court. This year **7** cases have been taken to court, **4** individuals were evicted from our properties and **3** others have agreed terms to work with us to address their ASB issues. In **5** cases, individuals left the properties before they were taken to court •



Rate your place

We want to create communities where people feel safe, inspired and want to contribute to.

As part of this commitment we have begun to ask you to “Rate your Place” by completing a short postal survey. The feedback we receive will be used to shape our Neighbourhood Offers, so we can plan improvements to areas that need it most. This survey is being rolled out throughout our communities in the coming months •

Head Office

> Herefordshire Housing Ltd, Legion Way, Hereford HR1 1LN
> Telephone 0300 777 4321 > Email info@hhl.org.uk > Website www.hhl.org.uk

> Registered Charity Number 1105907 > Registered with the Homes and Communities Agency Number LH4353 > Registered in England Number 4221587

