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**ANNUAL REPORT
2016/17**



2008



2009



2010



2011



2012



2013



2014



2015



2016



2017

welcome

Shropshire Housing Group celebrates its 10th birthday this year.

Formed in 2007 with the coming together of the new Meres and Mosses Housing Association and the already well established and highly regarded South Shropshire Housing Association. The new group got off to a flying start and hasn't looked back since.

Almost immediately the group began meeting promises to tenants by improving their homes and bringing them up to the very latest Government standards. We have recognised that

maintaining homes that are appealing and meet the changing needs of tenants over time is central to great customer satisfaction. This is why the Group have replaced nearly 7,000 windows and doors and fitted over 5,600 kitchens or bathrooms as well as ensuring that, through our own contractor, Total Response Ltd, the Group have provided a high quality responsive service to customers.

The Group haven't just been maintaining existing homes. As a rural housing specialist with a national reputation for innovation and serving our often remote customers along the Marches, the Group have been growing too, building new homes where they are needed. The Group have built over 400 new homes at the heart of rural communities right across Shropshire and north Herefordshire with 80% of these serving settlements with fewer than 3,000 residents.

10 YEARS

Jake Berriman
Chief Executive



Tim Ralphs
Chair, Shropshire
Housing board

New homes continue to be built in locations where they are needed most and where they can enable communities to thrive and allow local people to live in the area they grew up in, rather than moving away.

Working alongside local communities is something that comes naturally to the Group, and we have often said that we are of the community and for the community. With this in mind in 2014 we set up the Marches Community Land Trust Services consultancy to help those in the community, to be more involved in the development and management of new affordable homes.

With our focus on three returns on investment – business, customers and communities. We have successfully injected over **£250,000** in to local groups and charitable organisations through the Community Development Fund. This has helped with equipment for a pre-school, help for people who want to get back in to work, provision of skate park ramps for teenagers and funding for dementia friendly film screenings. The recipients have told us that the grants have been a life line for many projects that would otherwise have struggled.

By supporting our customers and communities, our business has grown over the years. Like other housing associations, we have felt the impact of the changes to welfare benefits and have helped our tenants. We have changed with the times and in 2013 we said goodbye to Martin Holland, our Chief Executive since 1991 and welcomed Jake Berriman. Martin built a solid foundation and a strong legacy for the Group. Martin and the first Group chair, Shena Latto were supported by MMHA Board chairs, Gordon Hodgkiss and Stephen Donkersley, SSHA Board chairs, Neville Stephens and Tim Ralphs, and Total Response Board chair, John Stringer. Tim Ralphs took over as Group chair in 2014.

We are most proud of the work we do with the more vulnerable in society, being young people that find themselves homeless. The Ludlow Foyer is a specialist service that supports young people aged 16-25 that have become homeless through their personal journeys by providing one to one support and give them access to specialist support as and when required. The young people can also access training and education opportunities to help them in to employment.

The Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service supports people fleeing domestic abuse, providing refuge accommodation and outreach services for those in most need, along with workshops on gaining confidence, and specialist groups for children.

In our time together, Shropshire Housing Group, has gone from strength to strength, guided by our shared passion for being well run, working for sustainable communities, providing an excellent service and providing more homes and more choice to all our customers.

As we look back in celebration it is also appropriate that we look forward too. A new era is beginning with the formation of Connexus, a joint venture with colleagues, customers and communities across Shropshire and Herefordshire. Together we will meet the new challenges and opportunities.

New Era, New Name

With the merger of Herefordshire Housing and Shropshire Housing Group, a new name has been decided upon. Shropshire Housing Group will now be called Connexus. Each housing association within the Group will keep its own individual branding, but the Group's branding has changed.

10 YEARS



Connexus

People > Places > Partnerships



New Homes, New Choice

One of the top priorities for the newly formed Shropshire Housing Group in 2007 was the provision of great quality homes for local people. On the first day of the Group forming, building started in Shawbury of 8 homes to rent and 2 for shared ownership. We have been building every year since, completing over 400 homes across Shropshire and Herefordshire.

10 YEARS

Some of the 400 homes the Group has built



Rocks Green, Ludlow



Park Meadow,
Minsterley



Chapel Road, Hadnall



Station Road, Hodnet



Temple Lane, Kington



Onny Fields, Onibury



Station Road, Dittton
Priors



Kitchen Hill, Orleton



Ley Gardens,
Church Stretton



Wingate Way,
Park Hall, Oswestry

Leading the Way

The Group has become one of the leaders in rural housing innovation. Both Chief Executives of Shropshire Housing Group, Jake Berriman, and formerly Martin Holland, have contributed to the national advisory body on rural housing and Jake has chaired the Rural Housing Alliance, which comprises over 40 specialist rural housing associations, for the last 2 years.



Community Led Approach

2013 brought about changes in the approach to building new homes in small communities. As a result of this, the Group began the Marches Community Land Trust Services consultancy. This new approach means that projects follow a long term stewardship/ownership model based on a collaborative approach between the local community, parish and town councils, Shropshire Housing Group and local authorities.

The local community is invited to join a project board and take an active part in decision making about the design, build and ownership decisions guided by the vast experience Shropshire Housing Group has to offer.

The Group received an initial grant of **£1.3m** to support the community led approach from the Homes and Communities Agency. This provided 68 new homes for local people throughout South Shropshire and north Herefordshire. These projects included:



Kitchen Hill, Orleton

10 homes for rent and 4 homes available for shared ownership. The community project board worked hard to decide the look and feel of the homes, and decided that Shropshire Housing Group would own and manage the site on their behalf. The homes are subject to a local lettings plan which means residents need a local connection to Orleton to be able to live there. The parish council then determines a local connection application. The community project board receives reports and updates on the management of the scheme.



Park Hall, Whittington

Wingate Way offers 14 homes for rent and 4 homes for shared ownership. The community project board, made up of local residents and parish councillors, worked hard with local residents. This helped to to allay concerns about the impact of the scheme being situated on the edge of the village. They also made choices about materials used to build the homes. The parish council decides on the local connection details for applicants for the homes, and receives reports on allocations and housing management.

Developments this year:



Oak Avenue, Wem



Orchid Meadow,
Minsterley



Sycamore Way,
Market Drayton

Completed developments this year

Sibdon Fields, Craven Arms.

19 homes for rent and 6 homes for shared ownership

Oak Avenue, Wem.

10 homes for rent and 2 for shared ownership

Barnard Street, Wem.

6 homes for rent

Ranford Way, Wem.

(Part of the Westlands redevelopment) 4 homes for rent

Orchid Meadow, Minsterley.

19 homes for rent and 5 homes for shared ownership

Sycamore Way, Market Drayton.

8 homes for rent

Developments due for completion this year (Apr 2017-2018)

Sweetlake Meadow, Shrewsbury.

16 homes to rent and 6 homes for shared ownership

Ebnal Close, Leominster.

4 homes to rent

Pollys Lock, Newport.

26 homes to rent and 7 homes for shared ownership

Beech Gardens, Ludlow.

(Independent Living scheme) 26 homes to rent for those with a sheltered housing need



Charlotte Broxton and Luke Baker enjoying their new home

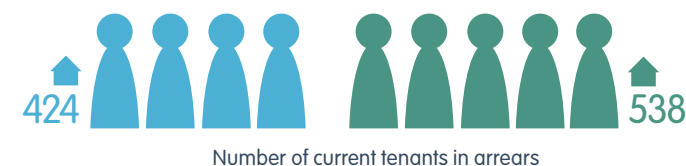
Coming right up to date, one of our most recent developments is at Sibdon Fields in Craven Arms. The £2.8m development is made up of 19 homes to rent and 6 homes for shared ownership for local people. This development is now home to Charlotte Broxton, her partner Luke and new baby Tobey. She said, 'We are really pleased with our new home particularly the attention to detail, spacious rooms and beautiful views of the surrounding area. It was really important for me to stay close to relatives and renting from the association has made that possible.'

Performance Information (at 31.03.17)

SSHA

MMHA

- ▲ Better performance than last year
- ▼ Worse performance than last year
- ▬ Same performance as last year



Community

Since Shropshire Housing Group was formed, it has supported local communities in improving local areas, providing homes for local people and supporting local groups. The Group has been proud to work closely with its tenants' groups, the Tenants Association of South Shropshire (TASS) and the Tenants and Residents Communities Association (TARCA) to support communities.

10 YEARS

From the start TARCA hit the ground running with tours of the north Shropshire area, in towns and villages to gather views from tenants of the newly formed Meres and Mosses Housing Association.

TASS, who are heavily involved in gathering tenant feedback, made a move in to new offices due to the success of the service provided. All tenants of SSHA are able to access the free computer and internet that are provided in the resource centre. The offices were visited by Philip Dunne MP shortly after the official opening.

TARCA began a scheme of recommending projects to the board of management that would benefit MMHA tenants. These projects included funding at local primary schools for gardening equipment, children's play park equipment and exercise classes for older people.

TASS sponsors a yearly fishing competition held at Froggatt's Pools, just outside Ludlow and awards a memorial cup in memory of Tom Lewis, a valued TASS member for many years. They also hold an annual kurling competition to raise funds for local charities.



TARCA tours of north Shropshire



New Resource Room for TASS



Funding of sports equipment for Fairfields in Action (Inset) Children's play equipment in Whitchurch



Past fishing competition winners

"£5,000 grant scheme continues to support the local community"

Community Development Fund



Young people learning new skills to aid employment

The Community Development Fund was launched in 2013. This meant that community groups, clubs and projects could apply for a grant of up to **£5,000** to support the work they do to benefit tenants, and the local community.

One of the first projects to benefit from a grant was Fordhall Farm Skills project. They were awarded **£5,000** to work with schools in north Shropshire to provide a range of activities that gave young people at risk of exclusion the opportunity to learn manual skills.



New tables and chairs

Burford Pre-school was awarded **£2,335** for new furniture and equipment that brightened up the interiors and gave the children more opportunities to learn through play.

Community Development Fund 2017

This year, the Community Development Fund has continued to support local community projects with over **£40,000** worth of funding handed out to many different community projects across Shropshire.

Projects supported this year have included:

£730 for a project in Ludlow, Bishops Castle and Bucknell that taught young people conservation skills and responding to place with poetry.

£2,500 Wem Town Hall Community Trust for dementia friendly film screenings. Classic films are shown with comfortable sound levels, warm lighting, and an interval with tea and biscuits.

£1,600 for Get Together Fridays craft group at the Rockspring Centre, Ludlow. The group aims to develop confidence and practical skills for its members.



Conservation skills for young people in Bishop's Castle



Dementia friendly film screenings



The Get Together Fridays craft group

Community Projects

In the last 10 years the Group has sponsored or supported many large community projects including the Grow, Cook, Share project which began in 2009 and culminated with the project leasing the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, in 2014, from Shropshire Housing Group.

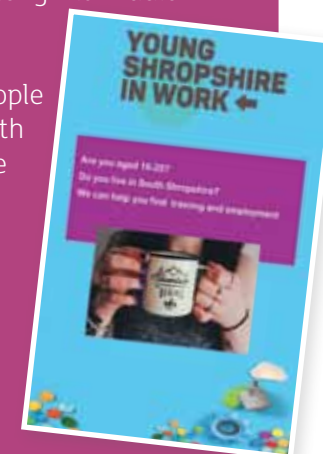
Grow Cook Share has evolved in to Grow Cook Learn, and from its permanent base, it now runs workshops and more formal training, as well as developing the valued local tourist resource that SHG acquired from Shropshire Council in 2014.



Learning centre at Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre

Another community project, Young Shropshire in Work is a mentoring scheme that helps young people take steps into work. This is a project set up by former Mayor of Ludlow, John Aitken who identified the need for young people in south Shropshire to access mentoring, training and work experience in sectors relevant to the area.

Young Shropshire in Work has worked hard to forge links with Job Centre Plus, and Herefordshire and Ludlow College, along with Ludlow Foyer to help young people in the south Shropshire area.



The young Shropshire in work leaflet









Home Improvements

Shropshire Housing Group prides itself in providing homes to tenants that are of good quality and that people can call home.

Investment in properties continues from year to year to ensure properties continue to meet the Group's lettable standard.

10 YEARS

Since 2007 we have fitted:

	Kitchens	2,722
	Bathrooms	2,888
	External doors	5,773
	Windows	1,102
	Gas Boilers	1,846
	Ground/Air source heat pumps	230
	Storage heater replacements	33
	Roofs	434



When MMHA came into being in 2007, a **£30m** property enhancement project also began. By July 2009 the 500th kitchen had been fitted. Tenant, Denise Shuker (left) from Woore was the lucky recipient and was presented with a food processor by Head of Assets, David Challinor.







Renewable Heating Transforms Sheltered Housing Scheme

In 2012 work completed on Haslehurst Close in Clun to bring a new heating system to the sheltered housing site. The Ground Source Heat Pump system replaced the outdated and expensive to run electricity heating system. The 17 homes and communal facilities continue to benefit from the environmentally friendly system that uses warmth taken straight from the ground to heat the properties above. TV builder, Tommy Walsh from BBC's Ground Force celebrated the successful completion of the work by planting a tree with tenants on the scheme grounds.

The renewable home energy project at Haslehurst Close went on to win the National Housing Maintenance Forum's award in the Best Client category.

Investment this Year

In the last year the Group has spent **£3.4m** on investments in our homes. We have fitted:

	Kitchens	152
	Bathrooms	105
	External doors	152
	Roofs	37
	A rated heating boilers	164
	Air source heat pump systems	36



Head of Assets, Dave Challinor and Bernard Quinn, Investment Manager picking up the award for Haslehurst Close



Tommy Walsh and tenant, Cliff Witton celebrating the completion of the Haslehurst project

Adaptations

Since 2007 Shropshire Housing Group has helped people stay in their own homes for longer by providing adaptations, where possible. This has included over 60 stair lifts, more than 350 level access showers and more than 110 minor works, that include hand rails next to doors, entry ramps to homes and hand rails over baths.



A kitchen adapted for a wheelchair user



Modular ramp that can be removed when no longer required

"Residents are benefiting from renewable heating and home adaptations"



Anthony Bridges

Mr Bridges has lived in Millbrook Drive for 19 years but was knocked off his motorbike 3 years ago which has left him with limited mobility.

Initially he was hoping that his mobility would improve, but after a couple of years decided to ask his Occupational Therapist about changing his bathroom to a wet room. This would make life a bit easier and give him more independence.

Six weeks after the grant was signed off by Shropshire Council the bathroom was complete. Mr Bridges said, 'We were overwhelmed with the professionalism of the Total Response operatives who fitted the bathroom. There was minimal disruption and nothing was too much trouble. They gave us choices where they could, and they went above and beyond.'

Performance Information (at 31.03.17)

SSHA
MMHA

- ▲ Better performance than last year
- ▼ Worse performance than last year
- ▬ Same performance as last year



Emergency repairs completed in target %



Average time to complete a repair (days)



Properties with a current gas safety certificate %



Appointments kept %

Supporting Tenants and Tenancies

The Group has worked hard throughout the last 10 years to support tenants and gain feedback on its services.

This work has included holding fun days for tenants and their families, supporting the most vulnerable in our communities and giving advice and support, when needed, on a variety of topics.

10 YEARS

2009/10



Facepainting fun in 2010

In 2009 and 2010 the Group held resident challenge days at Sundorne Sports Village in Shrewsbury. This was a chance for tenants to not only enjoy a fun filled family day out, but to also give their views on the services provided, and find out about the new national and local standards the Group is regulated under.



Fun and feedback in 2009

2011



Ludlow Foyer's catering team

Ludlow Foyer was named Charity of the Year in 2011 by the Mayor of Ludlow. This meant that our supported housing project for 16-24 year olds received almost **£10,000** through various fundraising events, including an evening of entertainment hosted by the Mayor and staffing car parking sites during the town's many festivals. The funds raised went towards welcome packs for the young people who often come to live in the Foyer without basic items. Ludlow Foyer also had the opportunity to cater at different events in Ludlow, giving work experience to the residents trained with catering qualifications.

2012



2012 saw the start of the Government's welfare reforms. The Group did a lot of work to highlight the changes to tenants and support them through those changes. This has included supporting over 500 tenants through the 'bedroom tax', with over 200 tenants downsizing to smaller homes, and over 150 moving back in to work as a way of funding the difference.

2015

Whitchurch Wise, every Friday
(Right) Drayton Wednesdays



In 2015 the Group started weekly support drop-ins at several sites throughout Shropshire. These are a chance for tenants and the local community to gain advice and support on a range of subjects including benefit entitlement, assistance in to work including free computer access, advice on money worries and understanding letters. Through working with other agencies, such as the National Careers Service and CAP Debt Help, visitors can access a range of services in one place. Tenants and other members of the community have been helped through the weekly drop-in sessions. The outcomes from assistance received include increases in benefit payments, tenants moving into work from long term unemployment, and rent arrears reduced.

Total Response

The repairs and maintenance company, Total Response Ltd was established in 2007, as part of the newly formed Shropshire Housing Group. In 2008 the company expanded to take on the repairs and maintenance of Meres and Mosses Housing Association to all of its properties, providing a direct service to all MMHA tenants.

Across the years the company has become more efficient in the ways it delivers its services to MMHA, SSHA and other customers. This has included the use of PDAs (personal digital assistants) for each operative to allow work to come straight to their handheld computers rather than having to come to the office for the day's work. Trackers fitted to operatives vehicles has also meant that attendance for emergency works has been quicker and more efficient by being able to send the operative closest to the property.

10 YEARS

In 2010 the Group agreed a maintenance standard for all of its properties, allowing a clear policy to be available for its tenants. This meant a consistently high standard of service wherever they live. The results were clear in our 2015 tenants' survey, showing 83% of tenants were satisfied with the service. Satisfaction with attitude of staff was a huge 95%.

Training with the Future in Mind

Total Response operatives are encouraged to continue training throughout their career with the company. This has meant that Total Response has also been able to expand its services. In 2011 a number of operatives achieved the City and Guilds qualification in Solar PV Technology and Total Response then received the official Microgeneration Certification Scheme standard to carry out solar panel installations.



Bryn Martin, Electrical Engineer

Total Response has a long running apprenticeship programme. Since 2007 the company has employed 12 apprentices for them to become fully qualified electricians, plumbers, gas engineers and carpenters. Many apprentices have gone on to work long term for Total Response, including Bryn Martin who started as an electrical apprentice 13 years ago. He qualified and later went on to do a course to learn to be an Electrical Fire Alarm Engineer. Bryn said, 'I have gained so much valuable experience and have worked all over the county.'

"Consistently high standards from our Total Reponse team"



Connor Rew, newly qualified Electrical Engineer

Connor Rew joined Total Response four years ago as an electrical apprentice. He qualified after 3 years and is now completing a one year training course to become an electrical improver. Connor said, 'Total Response is a good place to work and a great learning environment. All of my colleagues are really supportive.'



The TREAT team in 2013

2013 saw new accreditations for Total Response. They were awarded the ISO14001 international standard that encourages environmentally friendly practices. The standard is awarded to companies that take steps to reduce the impact their operations have on the environment, comply with laws, regulations and other environmentally orientated requirements. TREAT, the Total Response Environmental Action Team continues to ensure the accreditation is being adhered to, and carry out annual audits required to remain accredited.



Taking care of our green spaces



New vans for Total Response

The environment was still on the mind of Total Response in 2015 when an agreement was made with a local farmer to take grass clippings from the Grounds Maintenance team. The team produces 135 tonnes of clippings every year that is now used as fertilizer for crops that will be made into bales.

Total Response also works for clients that are not part of the Group, these include other landlords and homeowners. In the last year, the number of smaller jobs for other clients has increased, and generated a profit for Total Response that is put back into the Group. This profit then enables the Group to build new homes and continue to improve the quality of existing homes. Total Response has also been able to upgrade its fleet of vehicles.

Regulatory

10 YEARS

Code of Governance

Shropshire Housing Group follows the National Housing Federation's Code of Governance.

This sets out good practice in issues such as board conduct and effectiveness, recruitment and remuneration, probity and openness. Each year the Group reviews compliance with the main points of the code. The regulator, The Homes and Communities Agency takes this self-assessment into account when assessing whether the Group meets its national standard on governance and financial viability. Shropshire Housing Group has been awarded a G1 rating by the Homes and Communities Agency, the highest rating it gives for governance.

Risk Management

The Shropshire Housing board is responsible for ensuring that the Group has clear and strong arrangements to manage the risks we face.

The Group's risks include financial, operational, reputational and health and safety risks. Risks are reviewed regularly by senior managers, and are reported to, and considered by the boards. Risks are also reviewed regularly by the Audit and Risk Committee. A separate group, which includes senior staff and specialist advisors, oversees arrangements for health and safety. The Group's controls to manage and limit risks, are set out in the annual internal controls assurance statement, which is reviewed and approved by the Shropshire Housing board.

Board and Committee Membership

Membership of the Total Response Ltd board, the Shropshire Housing Treasury Ltd board (SHTL), and the Group's two committees, Audit and Risk (A&R), Remuneration and Human Resources committee (R&HR) is drawn from the 10 board members who make up the Shropshire Housing, Meres and Mosses and South Shropshire Housing Association's boards.












The Floreat Development Ltd (FDL) board and the Floreat Living Ltd (FLL) board are also made up of members of the Shropshire Housing Board, with the exception of one member who only sits on the two Floreat boards.

Board members receive an annual allowance paid in recognition of their time, commitment and responsibilities as board members.



Board Members

10 YEARS

	Name	Shropshire Housing, MMHA & SSHA Board	Total Response Board	SHTL Board	FDL & FLL Boards	A&R Committee	R&HR Committee
	Tim Ralphs	✓ Chair		✓ Chair	✓		✓
	Jake Berriman	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Graham Biggs	✓	✓ Chair			✓	
	Sue Harrison	✓		✓			
	David Isaacson	✓					✓
	Gill Jones	✓					✓
	Chris Mellings	✓	✓			✓	
	Liz Walford	✓					✓ Chair
	James Williamson	✓ Vice-Chair		✓	✓	✓ Chair	
	Sonia Youd	✓	✓		✓ Chair	✓	
	Paul O'Driscoll				✓		

As of 31st March 2017

National and Local Standards

10 YEARS

Shropshire Housing Group has to comply with minimum regulatory standards.

These fall under the following headings:

- Tenant Involvement and Empowerment
- Home
- Tenancy
- Neighbourhoods
- Value for Money
- Governance & Financial Viability
- Rent

Tenants helped the Group to agree how they complied with the standards in 2010, when they were first introduced. Since then the Group has continued to work with tenants and partner organisations to meet the standards. The Shropshire Housing board also reviews the actions taken to meet or exceed the standards.

Tenants have regular updates through the tenants newsletters, news articles that highlight a contribution to a standard, and an annual update through the tenants, annual report.



Two of our newsletters that update our tenants, 4 times a year.

Annual Accounts

More information on Shropshire Housing Group's financial position can be found in the Financial Statements, found on our website at shropshirehousing.org.uk/financialstatements

10 YEARS

	2017 (£'000)	2016 (£'000)
Our income for the year	26,041	29,749
less the cost of running the group	(17,518)	(20,559)
Equals the operating surplus for the year	8,523	9,190
surplus on sale of property	882	290
Surplus/(deficit) on ordinary activities	9,405	9,480
add interest on cash balances	18	20
deduct interest payable on loans	(5,331)	(5,202)
change in value investment properties	0	0
Equals surplus for the year	4,092	4,298
taxation on surplus	23	(89)
Equals surplus after tax for the year	4,115	4,209
actuarial (loss) / gain for pensions	(213)	258
prior year adjustment		-
Surplus for the year	3,902	4,467

Balance sheet

	2017 (£'000)		2016 (£'000) (restated)	
Assets held on a long term basis				
Software		209		158
housing properties at original cost less depreciation		156,910		150,196
other property, plant & equipment		3,874		3,831
		160,993		154,185
investments/joint ventures				-
Current Assets				
assets held for resale	6,516		838	
stock of materials for repairs	262		238	
money owed to us including rent	1,764		1,905	
long term debtor improvements	10,277		11,261	
cash invested for at least 1 week	0		1,007	
instant access cash	3,215		5,377	
Sub Total	22,034		20,626	
money owed by us	(5,511)		(5,098)	
net current assets		16,523		15,528
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities		177,516		169,713
Creditors				
bank loans and improvements				104,442
provision for pension liability		107,146		3,808
Government grants		3,821		35,678
Capital and Reserves				
reserves		29,687		25,785
Total Bank Loans and Reserves		177,516		169,713



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

We recognise the damage that disadvantage and discrimination can cause. We are committed to equal opportunities and will take positive steps to ensure that you will not be treated less favourably than anyone else in your dealings with us because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, religion or belief, race, sex, sexual orientation or pregnancy & maternity. This document is also available in:



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