



# CBHnews

SUMMER 2020



**Annual Report \*SPECIAL\***  
**Our Chief Exec is retiring**  
**Working towards a 'better normal'**

**FREEPHONE 0800 408 0000 VISIT [www.cbh.org](http://www.cbh.org)**



# Our Chief Executive is retiring

**On the 9 August 2020 our Chief Executive, Paul Stephenson, will be retiring after 15 years with CBH.**

Paul has successfully steered CBH through some of the most volatile times for social housing and tenants in generations and led the company to achieve many significant milestones.

He will be leaving the company in a strong position, with a clear and bright future and a passionate workforce of amazing colleagues, who have demonstrated their commitment and professionalism during the current Covid-19 crisis.

As sad as this is for CBH we are very happy for Paul and wish him the very best on his retirement, when it gets here.

Given the increased challenges that everyone is currently facing due to the coronavirus outbreak, our Board approved an interim solution which has the full support of Cheltenham Borough Council.

This approach will maintain a fully functioning Executive Team, with huge experience in the housing sector, and who live and breathe CBH. It has also allowed for a period of handover to the Interim Deputy CEO, Steve Slater; who took on this role from 1 May. He will soon be taking on the full CEO role on an interim basis following Paul's retirement in August.



Paul Stephenson



Steve Slater

This overall approach is ensuring a smooth transition through the current crisis as we move into a more 'normal' situation to make sure that our Aims and Values for the future will continue to be delivered.

**COVER PHOTO:** Going the extra mile, Martin Isherwood from our Building Services Team helps to deliver prescriptions to people who are shielding or vulnerable

## Could YOU be our next TSIP member?

### Ever wondered what it would be like to be a part of our Tenant Scrutiny Improvement Panel (TSIP)?

By becoming a member of this influential group you can make a difference to your community by helping us improve the way CBH is run.

Find out how joining TSIP has made a difference to Lisa by reading her story below:

“ I first became aware of TSIP through some people I met who were a part of it. I joined TSIP because I was and am so grateful to CBH for everything they've done for me and I wanted to give something back.

TSIP investigate certain procedures and services within CBH and give feedback on behalf of the community/tenants. We work with CBH staff to bring about constant improvements that benefit both the tenants and CBH. I enjoy being a part of TSIP because I get to find out lots of interesting things that CBH do. I have met some lovely people who are very friendly and welcoming.”

The group meet every month at Hesters Way Community Resource Centre where they help shape the way that we deliver our services to you, our customers.

**See page 17 of this edition of CBHnews to find out what TSIP have achieved in the past year.**



If you would like to be involved or want to find out more please email [CommunityInvestment@cbh.org](mailto:CommunityInvestment@cbh.org) or call 0800 408 0000 and ask to speak with the Community Investment Team

## It's all systems go for new homes

**Following a short pause due to the coronavirus outbreak our contractors E G Carter & Co Ltd and J Harper and Sons are now back on site and delivering works that will provide 35 new affordable homes across two new build schemes.**

**Our scheme at the former site of Holy Name Hall has just passed a significant milestone with the completion of the timber frame.**

Everyone's safety is critical and we have been working closely with our contractors to consider what changes they would need to make in order to plan a safe return to work. Both contractors reviewed the government guidelines for building sites to set up their own specific Site Operating Procedures. These set out the specific steps put in place to make sure that guidelines are followed. Some of the measures include additional wash hand basins, staggered breaks and temperature checks for contractors' staff.

We are continuing to have regular meetings with our contractors to make sure that they, alongside our colleagues, can continue to work safely on and off site.

Both schemes are part of the Council's £100m commitment to housing in partnership with Cheltenham Borough Homes to create quality homes and thriving communities in Cheltenham.



# Our Covid response and working towards a 'better normal'

As the coronavirus crisis broke and lockdown began we adapted quickly to keep our customers and colleagues safe, while continuing to deliver essential services. We also identified those people who needed extra support during these difficult times, and we enhanced some existing services and also set up new ones in response to that.

## The new services included:



Helping customers and residents across the town who are vulnerable or shielding from the virus, by working closely with our partners at Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council to support the Gloucestershire Community Help Hub to co-ordinate and deliver prescriptions across Cheltenham



Joining forces with P3 and the Springbank Community Food Bank to deliver food parcels and hot meals by the Long Table



Carrying out welfare calls to identify tenants without a strong support system in place and who need help with accessing food, prescriptions, emergency repairs, benefit and money advice. This includes weekly contact to those who need to hear a friendly voice, putting their mental and social wellbeing first



## Essential services we maintained included:



Delivering emergency and out of hours urgent repairs, making sure we followed government guidelines and used Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to keep our colleagues and customers safe



Keeping our tenants safe by increasing our cleaning services throughout communal spaces



Continuing to keep homes safe by carrying out essential gas safety checks and emergency gas repairs

## Essential services we maintained included (continued):



Keeping services going, even when we couldn't meet with customers face to face, by using new IT functionality and developing new processes, for example:

- Continuing to provide emergency lettings
- Providing additional benefit and money advice to customers affected financially by the coronavirus
- Live virtual coffee mornings - on our Facebook 'What's On' Groups to help keep communities and people in contact and reduce social isolation



## Returning to a better normal

**As the situation eases for us all we are keen to get as many services as we can back up and running as quickly as possible - but this will be done with a safety first approach!**

We are carrying out thorough risk assessments across the business and considering what adaptations we need to make to minimise risks to customers and colleagues. The new ways in which we have to work, may cause some slight delays so please try to be patient with us, we are trying to get the balance right in terms of delivering the service in the right way and keeping people safe.

As we do this we are looking carefully at the changes we had to make during the crisis - we don't want to miss opportunities to adopt new ways of working that make things better. We are aiming, not just for a return to normal...but a return to a better normal!



Our routine repairs service is now up and running again with new safety measures in place.



The county-wide choice based lettings system, 'Homeseeker Plus', is now back up and running and our lettings team is now operating a full service, but with some changes to process, to minimise risk of spreading the virus



Planned works with some of our external contractors has already started and more will be beginning. We are working closely with contractors to make sure that they are doing this in a safe way



We are exploring new ways of keeping in touch with you and our communities online while our usual event schedules cannot be delivered face to face. Follow us on social media to find out more



We're planning to re-open our area offices safely and at the right time but our cash halls will remain closed - if you need pay your rent in cash, call us on 0800 408 0000

**If you're struggling and are in need of extra support and help from CBH let us know by calling our Freephone on 0800 408 0000**

# How are we doing?

Last year we received over a thousand responses to our successful quarterly telephone survey, carried out on our behalf by Acuity.

This new approach is not only giving us a better understanding of how happy you are with our services (see below), it's also giving us a better idea of where we're not doing so well and most importantly, why! This gives us the opportunity to try and resolve any issues where we can, so that we can continue to improve our services based on your feedback. **See page 16 of the annual report to see how you have influenced services for the better!**



**90%** of people said that overall they are happy with CBH



**77%** satisfied that we listen to views and act on them



**85%** of people are happy with the quality of their home



**81%** satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service



**93%** of people thought their rent was value for money



**92%** of people feel safe in their home



**88%** of people found it easy to get hold of the right person

## These results are pretty impressive!

When we look at the results for the same questions asked by other housing providers they show that we're performing above average in all areas, and we are in the **top 25%** of providers in the country for overall satisfaction with CBH, VFM of the rent and that we listen to your views and act on them.

It is great that so many of you are happy with what we're doing, but there's always room for improvement, and we're always happy to hear your views! **So, if you get the call from Acuity - please let us know your thoughts, they really do matter!**

Find out more about the changes we have made following your feedback on page 16

# Your 2019/20 Annual Report

The past year has seen us successfully deliver one of the most significant projects we have ever undertaken. Several years' of work culminated in the overhaul of our entire IT infrastructure; this included the replacement of several housing and property management systems with one main system!

Even though 90% of our customers are satisfied with the services provided by CBH, these improvements will help us to be more effective and responsive to your needs so that we are able to resolve your queries as efficiently as we can.

Over the year we have continued to invest in existing homes to make sure they are safe and secure and to supply new homes to help meet the demand for affordable homes in Cheltenham.

But we're so much more than bricks and mortar, at CBH people come first and we have continued our work to create stronger communities and support those people who need it the most.

This is all thanks to the invaluable support from our inspired colleagues, partners, tenants and leaseholders who continue to go the extra mile.

Read on to find out more about some of our top highlights and achievements over the past year:



## INSPIRED PEOPLE

Anyone can go through difficult times. Our employees really do care about people and they try hard to spot where this may be happening by giving people the support they need to help them.

Our Help2 project is an example of this. This initiative was set up by our colleagues to help people going through significant hardships.

*"Please forward our most grateful thanks to all at CBH, and an especially big thank you from our young people, they are all extremely grateful and so very excited"*

To support the scheme, teams across the business:



Volunteer to make a real difference to people affected by traumatic events



Work closely with local partners to secure donations of food, clothes, baby packages and household items



Replace white goods and beds



Repaint properties from top to bottom

## Last year we ran a Help2 Christmas Appeal which was a huge success and provided:



131 toys and gifts



59 hampers of food for our vulnerable tenants and their families



1,212 coats donated to our #keepcheltwarm campaign to help keep vulnerable adults and children warm over winter



2 Christmas fayres offering support and advice from local organisations including food and Christmas gifts



Our colleagues are pretty amazing at helping our customers, but sometimes they need looking after too. We recognise the importance of maintaining good mental health and this is why we have a number of colleagues qualified as Mental Health First Aiders.

Our top team help to provide advice and guidance directly and signpost people to further support elsewhere. This is why we have a top team of **15** CBH employees trained in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) so that those experiencing Mental Health issues can get the help they need to thrive both at work and at home.

## STRONGER COMMUNITIES

We are committed to helping create stronger, safer and more resilient communities across Cheltenham. We do this by helping people to meet one another and learn new skills, by responding to anti-social behaviour and supporting people to remain in their home and improve their quality of life. Read on for some highlights of our work!

### Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the community:



Introduced out of hours working to support our work in specific areas and reassure local residents

187

ASB cases successfully resolved



100% satisfaction following the outcome of their ASB complaint



We always try and work with people to understand and help them to solve underlying issues

## Our ASB Team support the Police by:



Helping to tackle issue of anti-social motorcycle riders in Cheltenham by joining forces with police lead scheme 'Operation Endurance'



Providing a visible presence in the communities during the days around Bonfire Night to ensure the safety of residents

## Providing people with the right support to improve their quality of life:

Following the launch of our new computer systems, last year we enhanced the way that we carry out tenancy visits to work even more closely with partners to provide support for those people who are struggling with their mental and emotional wellbeing.

### During 2019/20 we visited 4,576 homes and provided advice and support for:



People struggling with hoarding issues. We have been working closely with tenants and other local partners to put in place individual plans to support them, to free up space and make their home safer



Provided additional advice and support to tenants looking to move to a smaller home that better meets their needs. Volunteers from our Help2 scheme have helped those dealing with hoarding issues, to make it easier for them to downsize to a suitably sized home



Tenants with mental health issues. We have been proactive at helping people to find the support they need with local partners. We care and by building on these relationships we are able to make sure our tenants remain safe in their homes

The first of its kind to be led by a housing provider in the country - we teamed up with other community organisations to lead a successful pilot project to tackle the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) within our communities. The scheme was put in place to help tenants and their families identify and tackle the trauma they have experienced.

We have worked closely with several young people to provide them with the support needed, to help them return to education following long periods of time away from school.

This successful project received winning recognition at the recent **No Child Left Behind** awards.





70

Number of people we came across during our visits who could've been at risk of losing their tenancies. We are happy to report that we helped them to keep their homes and improve their quality of life.

## Support and advice on benefit and money matters:

Met with **1,061** people over the year to provide advice to tenants in need of financial help

Over **£1m** the amount that we helped tenants claim in additional benefits



"Thank you so very, very much for the help and support you have given me throughout what has been a very difficult period in my life"



"Your staff have been brilliant in their response and communication and they have made a huge positive impact for such a vulnerable woman through a very traumatic time"



**£3,500**  
funding secured

We work very closely with the Illegal Money Lending Team to raise awareness of the risks of using Loan Sharks. Following information we supplied, two people have been arrested



Our Benefit and Money Advice Team were shortlisted for the 'Welfare Wise' category at the 24housing awards for the life-changing service they provide



To provide additional help to tenants in need of extra support, our Benefit and Money Advice Officers completed training in mental health

## Our Housing Options Team provides housing and homelessness services for the whole of Cheltenham

Our new Housing Interventions Officer is providing support to the most vulnerable households, helping them secure a long term home that they can sustain.



**600**

homes provided with advice and assistance to prevent them from losing their homes

**£1.5m**

in additional benefits we helped families claim

**400**

applicants housed in Cheltenham

## Helping people into work, training and education:

We worked alongside Pittville School and All Saints' Academy to deliver our award winning Thrive programme to inspire young people to stay in education.



Working closely with local schools and contractors, our employment experts developed the scheme to deliver six months of alternative provision to young people who are at risk of exclusion from mainstream education.



Provided training and work experience placements with some of our main contractors, including Travis Perkins



6 young people learned practical skills for the building industry/sector



Crowned the winners of Travis Perkins 'Employment and Community Skills' Award for the amazing work the scheme does with young people in Cheltenham - securing **£5,000** to enhance the employment and training service we offer

## Our employment and training experts helped:



**96%**  
increased confidence



**97%**  
increased employability

**Our work club attendees reported:**



**99%**  
satisfaction with CBH

Last year we used our ASDAN training status to provide the following:



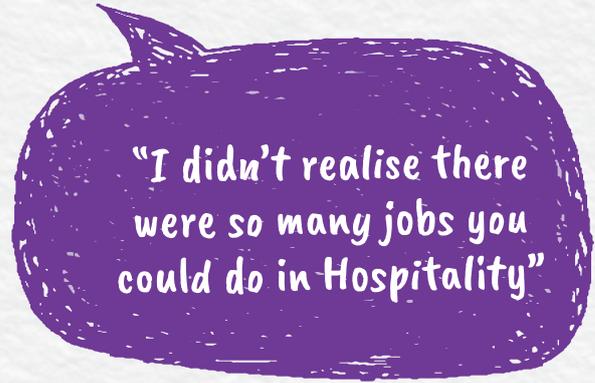
**CSCS**  
(Construction Skills Certification Scheme)



**Hospitality and Food Hygiene**



**Living Independently and Employability Skills**



### Bringing the community together:

The health and wellbeing of people and their families is important, which is why we offer a vast array of activities for all ages to help reduce isolation and loneliness; including opportunities for residents to get involved and connect with their community.

### Our Community Investment Team achieved the following:

**1,857**

fun activities delivered alongside our local partners to bring people together



**1,968**

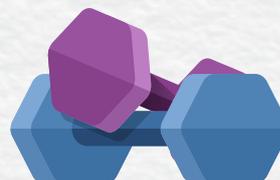
people supported across Cheltenham - reducing isolation

**17,900**

times our popular training sessions and events were attended over the year, these included:



**Opportunities to learn new skills**



**Health and wellbeing initiatives**



Activities to keep the kids entertained



Volunteering opportunities to get involved



Getting creative with crafting sessions



Worked closely with partners to help provide healthy activities to **900** children over the summer across Cheltenham - to support Cheltenham Borough Council's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) campaign

**4,180** hours volunteered

by tenants who have helped out with the running of CBH activities and events. Thanks to their help we've been able to develop our community allotment scheme which has seen tenants come together to develop their gardening skills, including growing their own vegetables and plants.



## Brand new space for young people in Hesters Way!



We launched Fuel Tuesdays alongside our partners The Cheltenham Trust and The Wiggly Worm to offer the young people of Hesters Way a safe and fun space to go after school.

Here they can learn about healthy eating, play team games and relax with friends.

The scheme is well attended with 15 -17 young people coming along to take part in social activities. There is also the opportunity for them to learn how to cook a 2 course healthy meal that they can enjoy with their peers at the end of the session.

# GREAT HOMES

Each year we carry out thousands of responsive repairs and planned works to make sure that the **4,500** homes we manage are safe and we are also supplying more affordable homes to help meet demand in Cheltenham - we are building new, acquiring existing and freeing up larger homes.

## Repairs to your home:

We spent **£4m** on responsive and cyclical repairs to your home, and achieved the following:

**99.6%** of over **11,200** emergency, urgent and routine repairs were completed on time



**81%**

of tenants were satisfied with the repairs carried out



We responded to **507** emergency repairs at night or over the weekend

## Supplying more homes for Cheltenham



Acquired **27** homes and re-let them making fantastic use of the money received from right to buy properties



Started building works for **35** new high quality, affordable homes at Monkscroft Villas and Holy Name Hall

Last year we invested **£15m** in the new homes programme we are delivering with Cheltenham Borough Council

## Maintaining and improving your home:

Last year we spent **£8.8m** to maintain and improve homes by carrying out the following:

Delivered year 4 of our successful **6** year windows and doors programme, we've fitted:



**1,025**  
new windows



**510**  
new doors

**We carried out the following works to improve energy efficiency in the home and reduce fuel bills:**

Installed

**373**

energy efficient boilers to help lower tenants' energy cost

Upgraded the roof, walls, windows and doors to

**37**

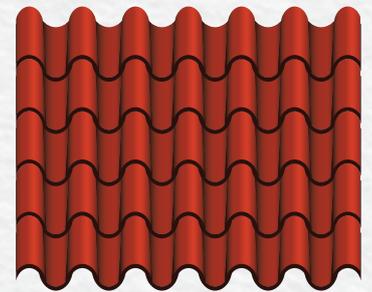
of our non-traditional Cornish homes making them more energy efficient to save on tenants' fuel bills



Renewed  
**51** kitchens and  
**43** bathrooms



**710** homes were repainted as part of our redecoration programme



Installed new roofs to **151** homes

**Downsizing and providing homes for those in need:**

Our successful downsizing project helped tenants move into smaller homes that better met their needs releasing:

**11**

three to four bedroom homes for families in Cheltenham



# YOUR VOICE COUNTS

As mentioned on page 6, our quarterly surveys have been brilliant at capturing your feedback about our services. We have been busy making great use of this to re-think how we do things and below are some examples of how your voices have directly influenced the services you receive:



Many of you fed back to say you weren't happy with how our Housing Support Officers (HSOs) were distributed across all Sheltered Housing schemes. Thanks to your input, we have now **redesigned how our HSOs operate** to make it easier to maintain contact, provide support and guidance. Each scheme now has it's own designated HSO who will be on site 9-5pm Monday to Friday



You told us you weren't happy with how long it was taking to get through to us on our freephone number. Your feedback helped us to focus our efforts on this area and **we have significantly reduced the call waiting times** for tenants with **92%** of calls answered in under **60** seconds!



We have listened to concerns you had about our repairs service. In response **we have invested in further trade resources and also updated the settings on our repairs booking system**, to allow us to be more efficient in the way appointments are booked to complete more works on a first visit



Your feedback influenced the change to our out of hours calls provider to **reduce the amount of time it takes for you to report an emergency**

As you can see, your input really does help us to change and improve our services - **please keep talking to us!**



## Dealing with your complaints:

We don't always get things right and when this happens, we want to try and make it easy for you to tell us about this. Your input matters to us as it gives us an opportunity to resolve the situation and respond quickly to your feedback



**64**  
Compliments



**50**  
Complaints  
and we upheld **46** of these

On average it took us **9.06** days to respond to each stage 1 complaint - we were able to close **96%** of these at the first stage



# GET INVOLVED

We make sure that there are a variety of ways that you can get involved to share your ideas from having an efficient complaints process, to carrying out surveys and feedback groups.

To help scrutinise and challenge us we have a Tenant Scrutiny Improvement Panel (TSIP), and an independent Board, with tenant and leasehold, council and independent members to provide leadership, scrutiny and challenge to the business.

## Your TSIP:

TSIP make sure that tenants have a voice and a say in what we do, and how we do it to enhance the way that our services are delivered so that we can continue to improve them.

## Some of the areas that the panel have influenced include:



Reviewing the way that we carry out our Tenancy Management visits - increasing the communication and contact we have with our tenants so that they have a better understanding of the process and to remind them that we're here to provide support and help them with their tenancy



Improved awareness of TSIP within communities, at events and online, to further connect with tenants and promote the vital role that the group play in shaping CBH services



Attended a Board and Committee meeting at CBH to get a better understanding of the important behind the scenes work that is carried out by Board members and understand how involvement from tenants is crucial to the success of the business



Contributed to the review of Customer Services, which included call handling and mental health training for our Customer Service Officers. The feedback they provided was very positive with only a few minor recommendations to further enhance the service

## Your CBH Board:

Board is made up of tenant representatives, independent and council appointed members. It provides strategic direction, scrutiny and challenge at the highest level.

Board have been working closely with our Executive Team in arriving at our future direction and the goals we will deliver to achieve this. They make sure that our standards remain high and that our tenants and leaseholders stay at the forefront of every decision.

If you feel you have the skills and desire to be part of our Board please contact [Rhian.Watts@cbh.org](mailto:Rhian.Watts@cbh.org)

For more information about our Board visit [www.cbh.org](http://www.cbh.org)



## FUTURE PLANS

**Despite the difficult times we have all been through lately CBH has always had one eye on the future. We still have clear Aims to provide Great Homes and create Stronger Communities, and plans to deliver on these. But after the significant disruption of recent months we are re-visiting these plans.**

We are doing this to make sure that we plot our route back from that disruption carefully and safely, and that we don't miss any opportunities - some of the urgent changes we had to make to how we work in the short term may make us better in the long term.

Your feedback through our quarterly surveys has also generated extremely valuable insight, and we are re-visiting this, too, to make sure that your voices are helping to get our priorities right.



As ever, right at the heart of our plans is the promise to make sure we look after you, deliver high quality services that you need, and make sure that your home is safe and secure



We will be supplying even more affordable homes for Cheltenham, helping to meet local housing demand



We will be continuing to focus on enhancing our approach to Customer Services, making it easier for you to contact us and access the services you need



We know the importance of having strong and resilient communities. We are Cheltenham through and through and we will continue to support you and our communities

# OUR FINANCES

Every year your rent is paid into a pot of money called the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The income generated in this account enables us to:

- deliver enhanced services
- maintain and improve your home
- provide more affordable homes

We set clear budgets and targets every year and monitor closely how we are doing throughout that year to make sure we spend money in the best way to maximise the delivery of the services you need. **CBH doesn't make a profit**, any surplus is re-invested back into providing services, maintaining and supplying homes.

## During 2019/20

The HRA spent a total of £20.3m and every £1 of income received was distributed across the service areas in the following way:



**Homes**  
improving your home:



**Homes**  
maintaining and repairing your home:



**Homes**  
providing new homes:



**People**  
delivering services:



**Communities**  
involving residents:



**Communities**  
maintaining neighbourhoods:



**Business Support Services:**



**Interest on amounts borrowed:**



**If you have any concerns about a loan shark  
and you need confidential support or  
information, you can:**



**call the 24/7 helpline  
on 0300 555 2222**



**text a report to  
07860022116**

**or...**



**Contact us via live chat at:  
[www.stoploansharks.co.uk](http://www.stoploansharks.co.uk)**

**Mondays - Fridays 9am-5pm**

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