



**ANNUAL REPORT
2019 – 2020**



**Providing quality community housing
across Northern Ireland**

Vision Statement

“More than just a Landlord”

We know that being a great landlord is more than just providing the ‘bricks and mortar’ or providing a home to rent. We perform a much wider range of functions to support our mission including roles as developer, employer, partner and advocate.

To help us achieve our mission, therefore, we have developed the following vision for the future:

“To be more than just a landlord, to put our tenants’ voice at the heart of what we do and to deliver great homes and services, supporting communities and improving lives.”

Values

Our values are very important to us; they are our guiding principles driving what we do and how we work. They set standards that our customers can expect from us. They also help us to manage performance, recruit new staff and recognise and reward good work. Our values are what will help us to achieve our strategic and business plan objectives.

They are as follows:

Caring: We care about our staff and tenants and will help and support them in achieving their goals.

Fair: We celebrate diversity and are committed to treating everyone fairly.

Open: We are open with our staff, tenants and partners about what we do, how we work and our decision-making.

Honest: We are honest with ourselves and others and will keep our ‘promises’.

Professional: We demonstrate high standards of conduct and a ‘can do’ attitude – solving problems and continuously improving.

Respectful: We show others the respect we would wish to receive.



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Combined Chair and Chief Executive Statement



Angela Clarke
Chairman
South Ulster
Housing Association

*"This is my first year as
Chair of South Ulster
Housing Association.
I am delighted to be taking
over from the outgoing chair
Colin McCusker"*

Kieran Matthews
Chief Executive
South Ulster
Housing Association



We are delighted to present this year's annual report for South Ulster Housing Association. The year under review 2019-20 has been another excellent year for our Association and is year 2 in our new 5 year corporate planning cycle.

We have had a successful year in delivering on our business plan and we are grateful for the hard work and support of staff, business partners, the Board of Management, the Department for Communities and other stakeholders in achieving that success.

Building on the successes achieved over the life of the previous 5 year plan the Association continues to deliver more homes and provide all our tenants with the highest possible standard of service.

Covid-19

Before we set out the analysis of performance for the year it is necessary to make reference to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which commenced just prior to year-end March 2020 and which has continued subsequent to year end.

Though presenting difficulties for the Association, the pandemic has not had an effect on the Association's ability to maintain operations, continue its level of service to tenants or its ability to maintain bank covenants.

In response to the crisis the Association carried out a comprehensive risk assessment, has identified the risks and put in place an action plan to mitigate those risks. The Association now maintains a specific Covid-19 risk register and has updated its budget for the year ended 31st March 2021 to reflect the anticipated financial impact of the crisis.



Homes under construction at Glen Road, Glenavy

The risk register reflects the Association's primary focus to protect the welfare of its Tenants, staff and the staff of third party contractors during the crisis. It also covers the maintenance of Governance arrangements and the financial risks. The assessment of financial risk has been informed by the financial impact of the crisis on Tenant wellbeing and incomes and the Association has put in place support measures to assist Tenants that need it. Feedback from a survey of Tenants confirms the Association is performing well in the provision of that support.

The Covid 19 pandemic has had a significant impact on Society and on our way of life. It has resulted in changes in behaviour in general life, in the way that we conduct business and in the financial circumstances of our tenants. There will be an impact on the financial performance of the Association as a result. However the Association is confident in its ability to continue to maintain services to Tenants within the statutory guidelines.

Performance 2019-20

This report sets out our performance for 2019-20 which the Association measures against the business objectives and targets set at the beginning of the year. Our financial performance was strong and we delivered an operating surplus on ordinary activities of £970k. Turnover for the year was £7.35m, up 5.8% on 2018-19 (excluding gift income of £546k received in 2018-19). Loan interest paid was £1.09m and property loans outstanding at year end stood at £23.8m. At year end the Association was in a healthy financial position and over the year operated comfortably within the covenants contained within the loan facility agreements with our private funders.

In the year the Association contributed 72 homes to the Social Housing Development Programme, providing much needed homes. This represents a total investment of £9.2m in social housing, supported by £5.4m receivable in Housing Association Grant. We are committed to consistently deliver a minimum of 50 homes each year for the Social Housing Development



83%

Properties
re-let in
3 weeks

90%
of tenants surveyed
would recommend
the Association to
family and friends

Programme and our future tenants. The delivery will be through the development of traditional new build schemes, competitive land, design and build and the acquisition of new off the shelf properties. To meet our goal of delivering social housing we continue to maintain effective working relationships with the key stakeholders.

Efficient and effective financial management has allowed the Association to deliver excellent services to tenants that included improvements and major works to properties throughout the year at a cost of £1m.

This work contributed to achievement of our corporate objective of improving neighbourhoods and maintaining our reputation as a leading provider in social housing.

The Association exceeded response time targets and achieved high levels of satisfaction with Contractor performance. Overall achievement against Corporate Plan, Key Performance Indicators, has been strong and our planned maintenance works programme was completed on time and within the contract sum. Most importantly, 95% of our Tenants were very satisfied with the contractor's performance.

The Association completed the following planned works in the second year of the new 5 year planning cycle.

- 24 kitchen replacements
- External Cyclical Maintenance on 110 homes
- 45 Heating upgrades
- 20 bathroom upgrades
- 20 window/door replacements
- 10 roof replacements
- Fire upgrade works to 40 apartments

Continuing our commitment in the year ahead, almost £1 million will be invested in Planned Maintenance works focussed mainly on kitchens, window and door replacements, heating upgrades and External Cyclical Maintenance.

In 2019-20 the Association processed 6,000 repair orders spending over £700k on response maintenance to meet our service provision to Tenants. Quality assurance checks were carried out on completed orders to ensure that work is carried out to the appropriate standard and to the satisfaction of Tenants.

Honouring our commitment to ensuring that Tenants can continue living in their homes the Association carried out disabled adaptation work on 37 properties in 2019-20, quality checking all of the works carried out.

Reflecting the Association's commitment to supporting the provision of care in the community, the Association is pleased to have worked, throughout the year, in partnership with Praxis Care and Inspire Wellbeing.

The Association's housing management team worked throughout the year to sustain tenancies, allocate void properties on a timely basis, maximise rental income, minimise arrears and strengthen our relationship with our tenants.

83% of properties were allocated in 3 weeks resulting in a rental loss of just 0.35% (excluding Long-term voids) of annual rent and rates receivable. We have in place a Tenant Participation Strategy which is designed to increase, as appropriate, levels of tenant participation and provide more opportunities for meaningful engagement as well as a range of levels of involvement to suit tenant's lifestyles.

Other tenant support initiatives focussed on developing projects and partnerships with external organisations to provide additional housing related support to our tenants who require it.

The Association values its staff and thanks them for their hard work and dedication throughout the year and is in indebted to them for rising to the many challenges and ensuring that the Association consistently and effectively meets the needs of our tenants, particularly in this time of Covid 19.



Looking ahead, notwithstanding the impact of Covid 19, there remain other challenges, in particular, the need to manage the impact of welfare reform, political and economic uncertainty and the increasing threat from cyber crime.

In response to the challenges we will continue to seek to ensure Value for Money is achieved from both the services received from suppliers and in services provided to tenants. Where appropriate the Association will look to diversify and to take on and manage more risk. The Association is adapting to meet tenant expectations in the changing economic environment and remains clear on its social objectives.

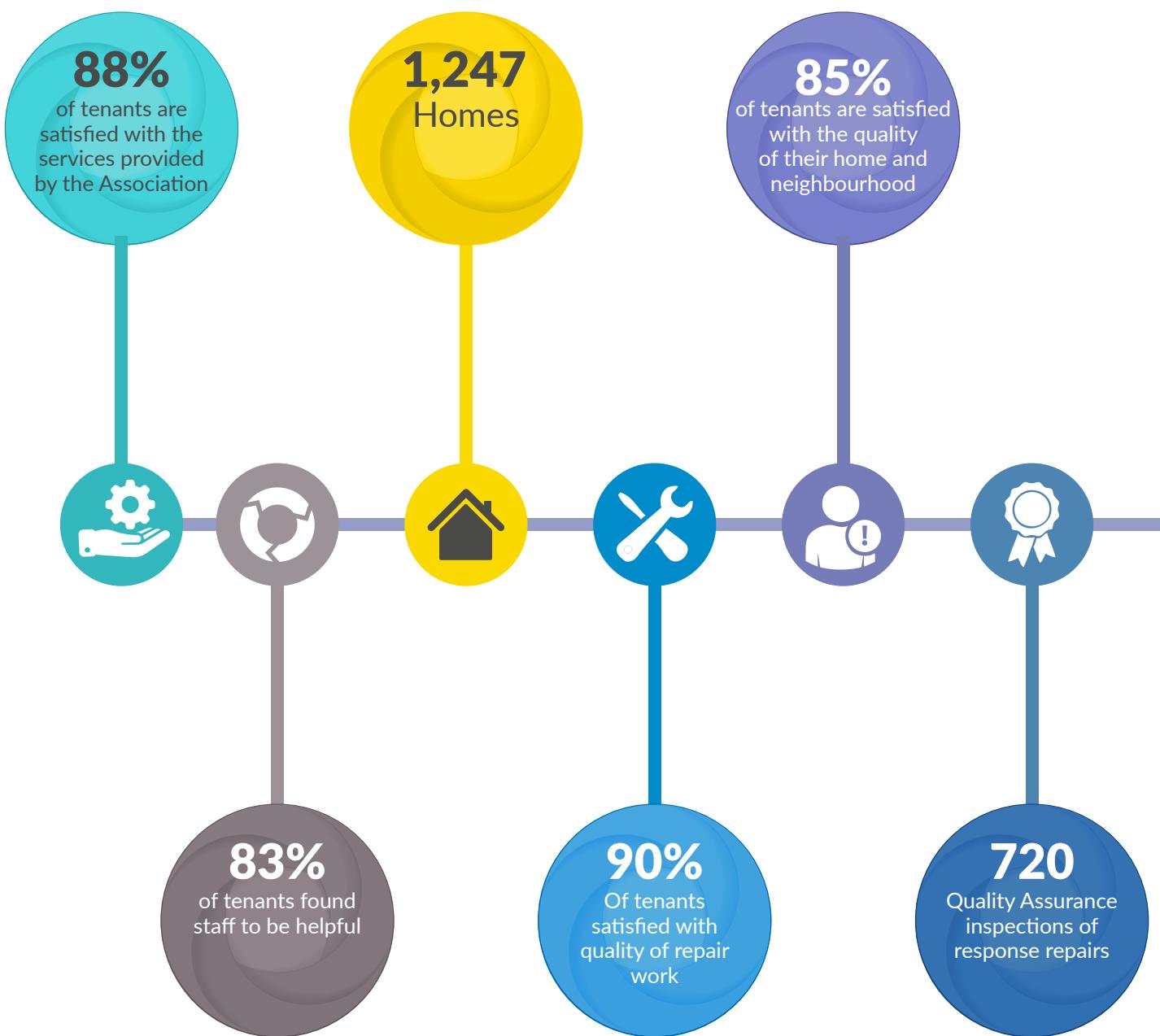
Our current five-year Corporate Strategy reflects our desire to make a positive difference to our tenants and their local communities. It reflects our commitment to growth and continuing support to tenants through the provision of high quality services.

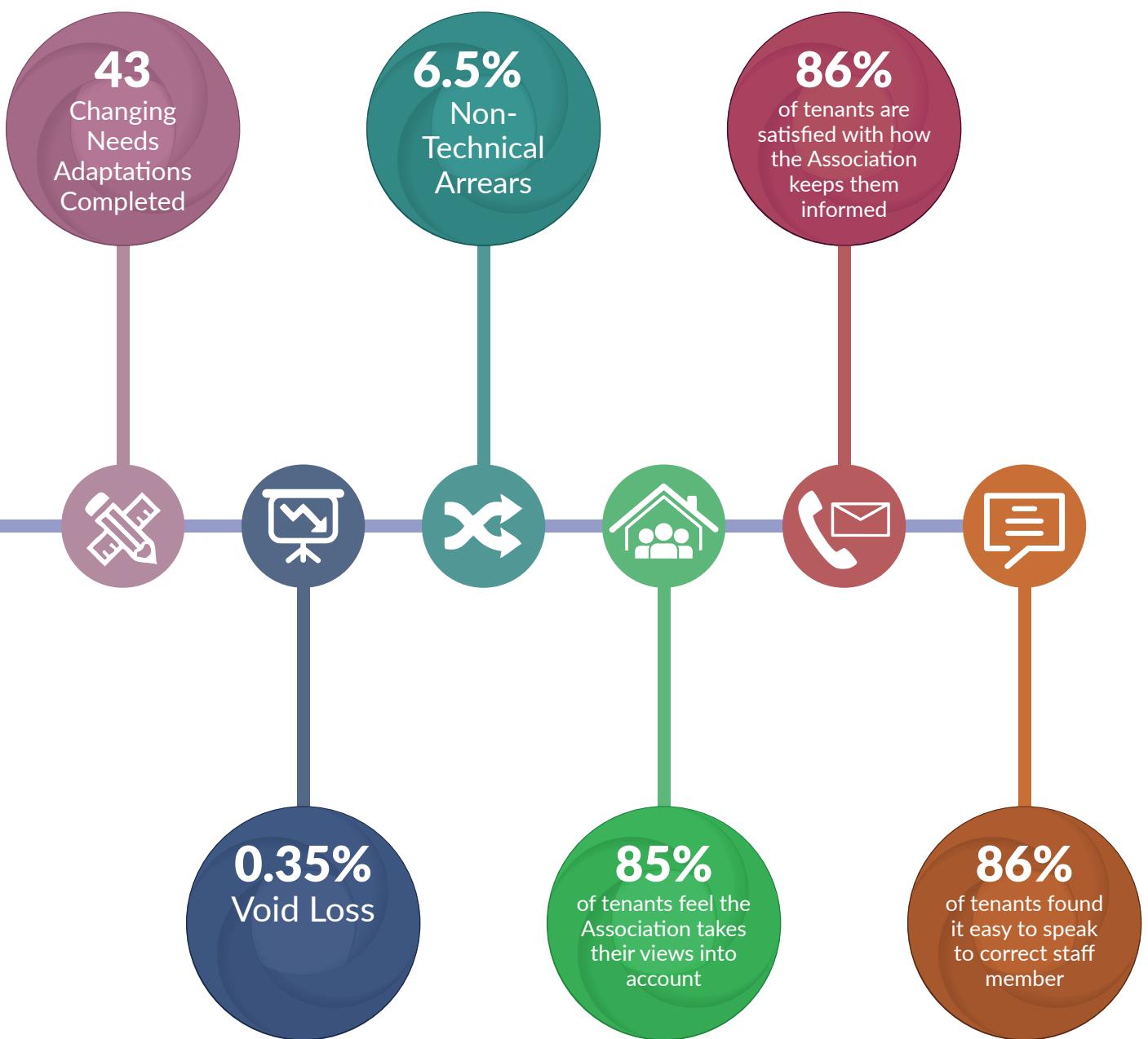
We will continue to take steps in achieving value for money and through the professionalism and dedication of our staff, are committed to continuous improvement.

2019-20 has been a successful year for South Ulster. We are in good financial health and our Board and management team possess the necessary skills and experience to make decisions which are in the long term interests of all our tenants and other stakeholders.

Finally, we would like to record our appreciation of the contribution made by those members of the Board retiring this year.

2019-2020 HIGHLIGHTS







High Quality Service Provision

HOUSING MANAGEMENT REPORT

Homes under construction at
Garvaghy Road, Portadown



HIGH QUALITY SERVICE PROVISION

At South Ulster Housing Association our aim is to put our tenants' voice at the heart of what we do. To succeed in achieving this aim, we ensure that the services provided to all our tenants are at a consistently high standard and tenant engagement is fundamental in achieving and maintaining this standard.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT REPORT

Our Housing Management report demonstrates our exceptional performance in challenging times throughout 2019–20 and illustrates the high standard of service provided with a commitment to continue to deliver such exacting standards.

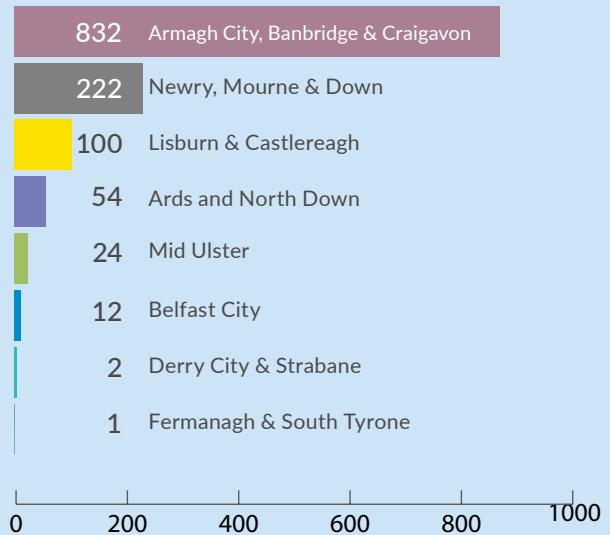
**Rent Collection from
1st April 2019 to
31st March 2020**

**Rent Charged:
£6,368,260**

**Rent Collected:
£6,257,219**

98.2%

Housing Stock by Council Area



Allocations 2019–2020

118 properties were allocated in 2019–20 and the Housing Department recorded a strong performance on rental loss through void properties achieving 0.35% (excluding Long term Voids) of annual rent and rates receivable and narrowly missing corporate target of 0.25%.

(available for letting
@ 31st March 2020)

13 voids

General Needs Allocations 109

No of new lets allocated 30

No of re-lets allocated 70

Supported Units Allocated 9

Properties re-let in 3 weeks 83%



House Sales

3 properties sold in 2019-20.



Arrears

At 31st March 2020, the Association had current and past tenant arrears totalling £230k. Past Tenant arrears to the value of £30.5k were written off during 2019-20.

	Non-Technical	Actual %	Association Target	DfC Target
Current Tenant Arrears	182k	6.5%	6.0%	5.00%
Past Tenant Arrears	42k	0.74%	0.4%	-

The Housing Department has worked effectively to maximise rental income and minimise rent arrears. Arrears were higher than both DfC targets and Corporate target for both technical and non-technical arrears. The Association acknowledges that some tenants find it difficult to pay their rent and coupled with the impact of welfare reform we would encourage all who are experiencing difficulties with their rent/benefits to contact the Housing Department for advice and assistance as soon as possible.



Supported Accommodation

South Ulster Housing Association in partnership with PRAXIS and Inspire Wellbeing provide supported accommodation as well as a comprehensive support service to our residents in these jointly managed schemes.

The Association provides 55 units of supported accommodation in the Craigavon, Newry & Mourne, Belfast, Mid-Ulster, Derry City and Fermanagh & Omagh areas. Support is provided to residents throughout their tenancy to develop the necessary skills to maintain their own accommodation within a community setting.



Tenant Engagement Report

South Ulster Housing Association is committed to ensuring that Tenants receive the best service possible by engagement with tenants at every opportunity, monitoring levels of tenant satisfaction and providing a range of platforms for tenants to engage and provide appropriate feedback on provision of services.



Homes under construction at Redcar Street, Belfast

► Tenant Participation

The Association is committed to ensuring that all tenants receive the best service possible and to achieve this will provide a range of real opportunities for tenants to contribute to and influence decisions and the service delivery of the Association, placing tenants at the centre of our decision making process and to build upon our existing good practices and level of tenant involvement.

The Tenant Participation Strategy is designed to achieve increased levels of tenant participation, provide more opportunities for meaningful involvement as well as a range of levels of engagement to suit tenant's lifestyles.

If you would like further information on tenant participation or would like to get involved

please contact us on
028 3833 9795 or email
housing@southulsterhousing.org



Tenant Projects

South Ulster Housing Association recognises the benefit of developing partnerships with external organisations to provide additional housing related support to our tenants who require it. We work with a number of organisations to provide additional support to our tenants. APAC is one such organisation that works with people to help address problems that have led to difficulties with their neighbours and wider community and to help tenants sustain their tenancy with the Association. BCM Housing Support is another organisation that provides additional support for our older tenants which include practical tasks as well as emotional support, signposting to relevant agencies, advocacy, sustaining their tenancy, access to health services and safety and security in property.

South Ulster Housing Association has continued to support an initiative which allows people with learning difficulties and communication barriers to ask for an extra minute of patience when in customer service situations. The JAM card/app is a discreet way of telling people that sometimes they need a little extra time and patience. We are delighted to be part of this initiative as we are committed to designing our services around the needs of our customers.

South Ulster Housing Association has engaged with our Tenant Representatives to carry out 179 Joint Scheme Inspections covering the majority of the Association's housing stock with during 2019-20. Tenant Representatives provide the tenant perspective on a range of services provided by the Association in the areas in which they live and their requests and views are considered and actioned by staff following inspections. These requests covered provision of seating areas, planting, communal cleaning, communal landscaping and one off repair requests.

All our eligible new tenants have availed from a Starter Pack. The Starter Pack Scheme is managed by the Council for the Homeless NI (CHNI), funded by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Public Health Agency NI. The scheme facilitates the transition from temporary accommodation to permanent housing by providing essential items for eligible Full Duty Applicants. This helps ensure that tenants are starting off with the basic items that help to make a house a home and to guarantee the best possible start to their tenancy with the Association. Each starter pack includes bedding, towels, microwave, slow cooker, kettle, toaster, iron and ironing board, cutlery, crockery and cleaning equipment.

The Association linked in with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust's Community Health Improvement Officer and Support Workers to promote safer homes/communities. The role of the Home Safety Champion is undertaken by the Estates Compliance Officers and their function is to cascade the home safety messages in line with awareness campaigns to the general public and specifically families and carers of those children aged less than 5 years and adults over 65 years.



They are able to advise tenants on:

- Home safety in context,
- Causes of home accidents,
- Cost of accidents,
- Who is at risk
- Maintaining a safe environment
- Effective accident prevention interventions
- Risk assessment
- Evaluation
- Action plan

Vibrant Communities

The Association supports efforts that help members of our communities to live happy and healthy lives. The Association supports communities to encourage tenant opportunities and promote well-being and engage with others, to improve and maximise outcomes for tenants and the community in which they live. Events celebrated include:

- Participation in The Big Lunch
- Celebration of Portuguese Day
- Supporting REGENERATE "Taste of the Annagh"
- Provision of play area for a housing scheme in Bangor

Tenant's Forum

The Association has a Tenants' Forum consisting of representatives from Tenants Associations and Tenant Representatives. The purpose of the Tenants Forum is to participate in and inform improvement in the delivery of Housing Services, Property Services and organisational wide services to all Tenants.

Tenants who are elected onto the Tenants Forum receive relevant training, organised by the Association. This training is designed to ensure that the tenants involved have the necessary skills to actively engage in the Tenants Forum and the Tenant Participation process.

Membership of the Tenants Forum increased by 100% in 2019-20; this was achieved through a series of Tenant Engagement events held to promote both tenant involvement and the role of the Forum. The Tenants Forum held 6 meetings during the year. Forum Members identified and agreed issues important to tenants and requested that these issues were incorporated into the Annual Tenant Satisfaction Surveys undertaken in March 2020. Issues agreed to be addressed were:

- Welfare Reform
- Universal Credit
- Money Management

Tenant Satisfaction Surveys

South Ulster Housing Association values feedback from our tenants on the services we provide. The results of our 2019–20 survey illustrates high levels of satisfaction levels across all our services. The purpose of the surveys is to allow tenants an opportunity to effectively assess the services we provide and give them an opportunity to identify areas for improvement which the Association takes on board and undertakes appropriate action. Tenants engagement is vital to ensure that tenants are kept informed of our services and that their views are taken into account.

We continually welcome our tenants to get on board and advise us of areas where we could improve or suggest changes that we could make by contacting us by phone, email info@southulsterhousing.org or by calling into the Office and discussing it with a member of staff.

The survey gave tenants an opportunity to advise the Association of areas that they consider a priority and some of the highlights from our Tenant Satisfaction Survey are:

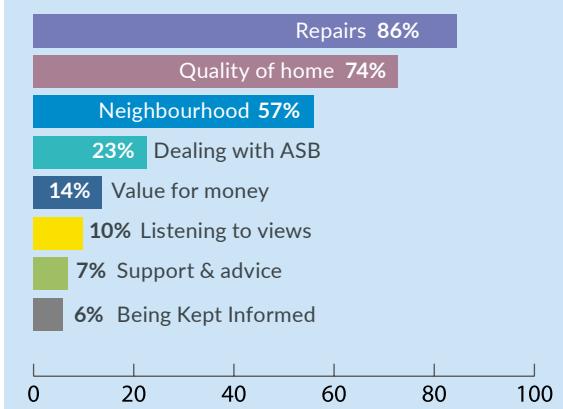


Overall Quality of Accommodation
85% satisfied

Rent
86% satisfied

Neighbourhood
85% satisfied

Priority Services for Tenants





Customer Journey Mapping Exercise

A Customer Journey mapping exercise was undertaken between December 2019 and January 2020 for the purpose of informing the development of a framework for insight, feedback and control and aid service design and innovation of the moving in process. South Ulster Housing Association commissioned Empowering Communities to carry out the customer journey mapping exercise with all tenants at a new build scheme in Belfast. Overall the tenants were very happy with their customer experience of moving into a new property and provided insightful feedback on their experience which has shaped future allocation processes to achieve the ideal customer experience.



Provision of quality homes,
services and neighbourhoods

PROPERTY SERVICES REPORT

Delivering quality homes, services and neighbourhoods

South Ulster Housing Association is committed to providing a first class property maintenance service that meets our tenants' expectations and future aspirations.

MEASURED TERM CONTRACTOR PERFORMANCE

Category	No. completed on time	Total No. completed	KPI Target %	Completion Performance %
Emergency (24 hrs)	1,851	2,005	85%	92%
Urgent (4 days)	1,813	2,099	85%	86%
Routine (28 days)	1,713	1,896	85%	90%
TOTAL	5,377	6,000	85%	90%

As part of our commitment to Quality, 100% of repair works over £500 were post inspected prior to payment with an additional 12% of lower value orders inspected to ensure high levels of workmanship.

100% of Change of Tenancy and Disabled Adaptation Works were post inspected prior to payment.



Belfast Road, Comber

Aids & Adaptations

In 2019–20 South Ulster Housing Association completed 43 Disabled Adaptation requests including ramps, level access showers, lift installations and grab rails. This element of our repairs service is key in ensuring our tenants can remain living in their home.

Planned Maintenance

South Ulster Housing Association invested £1 million in our planned investment programme in 2019–20 including:

20 Window/Door Replacements

45 Heating Upgrades

20 Bathroom Replacements

24 Kitchen Replacements

External Cyclical Maintenance to 110 homes

32 Major Internal Works

Quality Assurance Inspections were carried out following completion of the project and we are pleased to note that 95% of our tenants were satisfied with how the contractor completed the works.

DEVELOPMENT REPORT



Completed homes at Gibson Street, Belfast

The Development department contributed to the success of South Ulster Housing Association during 2019-20 with a contribution to the Social Housing Development Programme of 72 Homes. 27 homes were completed and handed over within the year and 61 homes are under construction.

£9.2m

total investment
in social housing

£5.4m

receivable in Housing
Association Grant

ONGOING DEVELOPMENTS

Homes Completed In 2019-20	
Scheme	Units
Gibson Street, Belfast	5
Kings Lane, Warrenpoint	6
ESPs	8
Belfast Road, Comber	8
TOTAL	27



Fully refurbished homes at Fort Street, Banbridge

Homes Under Construction	
Scheme	Units
Redcar Street, Belfast	12
Glen Road, Glenavy	23
Garvaghy Road, Portadown	12
Causeway End Road, Lisburn	14
TOTAL	61

DEVELOPMENT REPORT

► New Build Development

In 2019–20 the Association started five schemes on site, three through Land Design and Build Competitions.



Artists impression Mimosa Court, Derry

Homes Delivered to the 2019-20 SHDP

Scheme	Units
Fort Street, Banbridge	3
Kilwilke Road, Lurgan	15
ESPs	3
Sloanhill, Lurgan	24
Mimosa Court, Derry	27
TOTAL	72

2020 and Beyond

South Ulster Housing Association anticipates an onsite start within 2020-21 on four new sites, three to be delivered through Land, Design and Build competitions and one acquisition and works rehab scheme. We also aim to start the final phase at Ogle House, Canal Street, Newry.

South Ulster continue to build on the strong finish to 2019-20 with plans for 2020-21

Start onsite College Square, Belfast	48 Homes
Start onsite Newtownards Rehabs	4 Homes
Start onsite Belfast Road, Newry	21 Homes
Start onsite Buncrana Road, Derry	98 Homes
Start onsite Ogle House, Newry	10 Homes

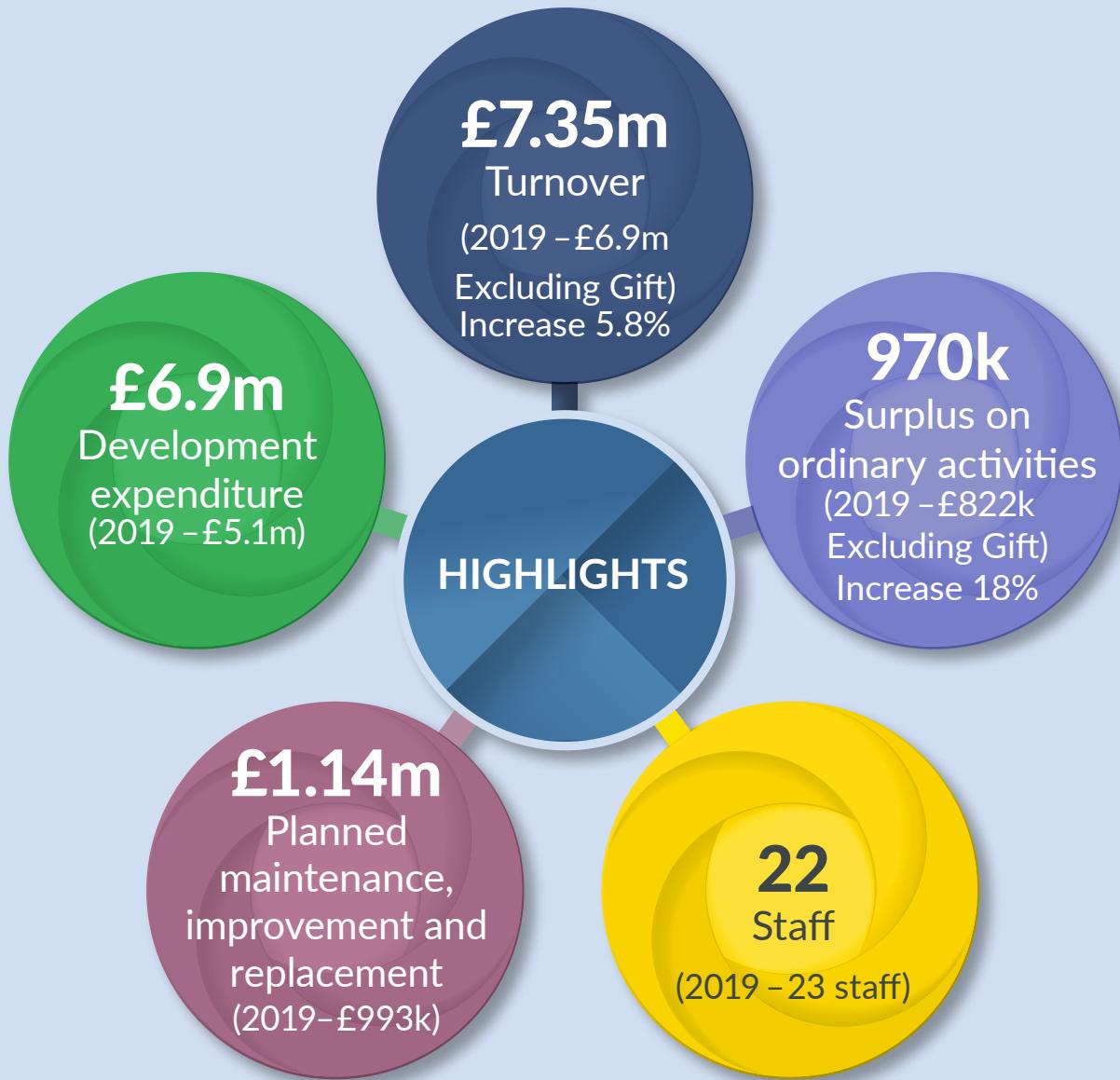
All in all, Development aim to start a total of 181 properties, to add to the Company portfolio by end 2020-21 financial year. These properties will be In Belfast City, Newry, Mourne and Down and Derry and Strabane District Council Areas.

South Ulster Housing Association Development Team will continue to build strong relationships with local estate agents in areas of need, as identified in the Commissioning Prospectus for Social Housing Development Programme. Also the team will continue to forge strong links with both the Planning Departments for New Builds and DPG.

Should you have any opportunities you are aware of, please contact:

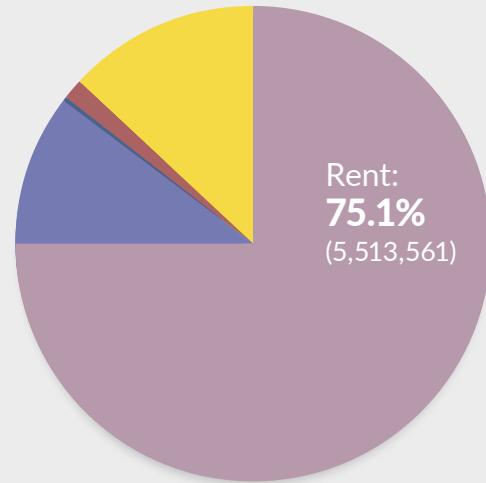
Development Department
on 028 3833 9795 or email:
info@southulsterhousing.org

FINANCE REPORT



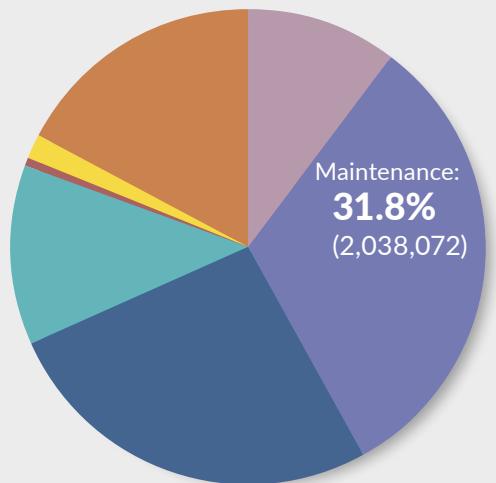
Turnover analysis

	£	%
Rent	5,513,561	75.1%
Rates	748,145	10.2%
Affordable Housing	14,549	0.2%
Tenant Services	117,101	1.6%
Non-social housing activities	0	0
Income from Housing Association Grant	950,371	12.9%
Income from other grants	2,088	0.0%
Total	7,345,815	100.0%



Cost analysis

	£	%
Property Management	661,070	10.3%
Maintenance	2,038,072	31.8%
Depreciation	1,698,729	26.5%
Rates	778,748	12.1%
Other social activity costs	28,890	0.5%
Tenant Services	117,101	1.8%
Interest Costs	1,104,230	17.0%
Total	6,426,840	100.0%



FINANCE REPORT

Statement of Comprehensive Income

Turnover	7,345,815
Operating costs	5,322,610
Operating surplus	2,023,205
Surplus arising from sales of housing property	92,487
Transfer to disposal proceeds fund	(49,679)
Interest receivable and similar income	10,518
Interest payable and similar charges	(1,089,832)
Other finance loss	(17,000)
Surplus on ordinary activities	969,699
Actuarial loss in respect of pension schemes	(38,000)
Retained surplus for the financial year	931,699
Retained surplus brought forward	15,538,697
Retained surplus carried forward	16,470,396

Statement of Financial Position

Fixed assets	
Housing properties - depreciated cost	92,639,207
Other tangible fixed assets	694,388
	93,333,595
Current assets	
Debtors	1,617,396
Cash at bank and in hand	2,264,494
	3,881,890
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(3,716,940)
Net current assets	164,950
Total assets less current liabilities	93,498,545
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(76,188,051)
Pension liability	(840,000)
Net assets	16,470,494
Capital and reserves	
Called up share capital	22
Capital reserve	76
Revenue reserve	16,470,396
Total funds	16,470,494

Creditors over 1 year

Loans	22,675,227
Housing Association Grant	53,303,436
Other	209,388
Total	76,188,051



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Industrial and Provident Societies Registration Number IP224
Charity Commission NI Registration Number NIC102344