

Vision

Creating confident communities



2016

Working towards our 2020 milestone -
an enterprise with social impacts

Proud of our achievements



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“
Our Vision
is to ‘create
confident
communities’
”

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Welcome

2016 marks the first year of our journey towards becoming an enterprise delivering social impacts. As we look to the future and achieving this by 2020 – our road to success will not be without challenges.

Having already reviewed our planned activity for the coming years, the next 12 months will see us manage the impacts of both Universal Credit and rent reductions for the first time.

To help us mitigate the impact of these changes, we are working to accelerate the development of our joint ventures, products and services – Care Link, WDH Solutions and Bridge Homes are all invaluable assets we can look to build upon.

Considering our next milestone, and where we are today, it is essential we continue to build upon our strong foundations and outstanding reputation.

Last year we were named European Business of the Year at the EFQM Excellence Awards, and this year we are taking steps to become a ‘digital business’ - embedding new technologies throughout the business.

We have now achieved a customer satisfaction level that’s on par with some of the biggest and best businesses in the country, and we are leading the way in the housing sector through initiatives such as our cost-saving repairs and



“ We won the European Excellence Award 2015 ”

maintenance alliance, Northern Shared Services.

To continue reinvesting back into the Wakefield district we must remain a streamlined and efficient business. Our health and wellbeing offer, social investment activity, digital and new build programmes are all important elements of our work, and are vital assets we can draw upon as we work towards achieving our overall Vision to ‘create confident communities’.

To help tenants get online and enjoy the benefits of digital platforms, last year we unveiled our ‘Digital Angels’. Today they have already supported 7,000 people and will continue their work in our

service access points and through an ongoing offer of one-to-one support.

As we adapt to the changing housing landscape, we continue to deliver significant impacts right across the Wakefield district. Our plans will see us build more homes than ever before, we will continue to offer a full range of effective support services, and will work towards becoming a thriving enterprise delivering social impacts.

K. Dodd

Kevin Dodd
Chief Executive

Creating confident communities...

Our commitment to improving lives is clear. In our Vision we state, through partnership working we will:

Build a more competitive knowledge economy by:

- supporting entrepreneurship;
- encouraging local innovation; and
- developing an educated, skilled and flexible workforce.

Improve economic prospects by:

- reducing deprivation and inequality; and
- improving health and tackling crime.

Promote self sufficiency by:

- sustaining investment; and
- developing future leaders.

Improve the quality of the environment by:

- investing in housing;
- promoting respect; and
- improving green and open spaces.



“ Our next milestone is to become an enterprise with social impacts ”

Milestone to 2020

Our 2020 milestone towards our Vision will be progressed by becoming an enterprise with social impacts. This will be achieved by:

- maximise the social dividend of our landlord services under reduced revenues;
- develop investment portfolio of Outright Sale, Shared Ownership, Social and Market Rent properties to meet the needs of the district;
- ensure all our tenants benefit from being online; and
- meet the wellbeing needs of our tenants.

The following pages show what we achieved in 2015.

Maximising the social dividend of our landlord services

Our activities and investment both in and outside of the Wakefield district help us continue to be much more than just a landlord.

Through one-to-one support, budgeting advice and help to access suitable grants and benefits, our Cash Wise service, Wellbeing Caseworkers and Debt Team are able to help an ever-growing number of people to become debt free and manage their finances better.

In 2015 our Debt Team carried out 40,000 visits, and their work has helped tenants secure over £250,000 in discretionary housing payments along with thousands of pounds in other grants.

To help tenants back into work, we employ three Community Employment Advisors who run work clubs across the district. Attendees can get support with CV writing, interview preparation and finding courses that will improve their job readiness. Last year the team engaged with 1,048 people, referring 462 into employment-related training and supporting 428 into employment.

Although we have seen a decrease in the number of tenants impacted by both the bedroom tax and household benefit cap, support continues to be offered through outreach programmes and information days. Going forward, more of our tenants will require support

as the household benefit cap is lowered and the local housing allowance cap is introduced. With Universal Credit now beginning to be rolled out in Wakefield, our learning from the Direct Payment Demonstration Project and from other landlords has enabled us to make the necessary organisational changes to support our tenants' health and wellbeing, limit rent arrears and ensure tenancy sustainment.

“
Our current tenant arrears equates to just 2.67% of our overall rent roll
”



Case study - Cash Wise

In 2013 we launched Cash Wise - a programme designed to support tenants to maximise their income, reduce arrears and sustain their tenancies. Initially funded as a pilot project thanks to a Big Lottery grant, the service has developed into one of our standout initiatives because of its sustained success and steady growth.

Now funded entirely by WDH, the Cash Wise team has supported over 1,800 people to improve their circumstances. As a testament of the Team's devotion to their work and ability to consistently engage people in need, last year the service was highly commended at the

national BITC awards - beating initiatives run by national businesses.

In just three years the team has helped tenants to access more than £950,000 worth of grants and benefits, all the while maintaining one-to-one support sessions, the provision of dozens of emergency food parcels and appropriate ad-hoc support to ensure participants stay on track.

Having already developed a dedicated website, getcashwise.co.uk and with an app and new tools in the pipeline, the service looks set to continue building on its proven model for success.

Maximising opportunities for people in our tenancies who are not in employment, education or training

To support young people into work we run a wide range of initiatives.

Over the last 10 years, through an annual apprenticeship scheme, 118 apprentices have been brought into the business to learn on the job whilst undertaking a professional qualification. By providing regular work experience opportunities, hundreds of young people have also been supported to secure valuable experience in the workplace. Last year we helped 71 individuals do this.

In 2015 our Training for Employment programme supported 40 people to develop a work record and skills for the workplace. This involved undertaking skills training to enable them to build fences in our neighbourhoods. The WDH Academy has also proven an effective way to help people develop their employability skills. By providing paid employment for a fixed period of time, the scheme has been a stepping stone for many young people, giving them the confidence to go and secure further employment.

Our Foundation Grant scheme is another successful vehicle used to help young people boost their skills and find work, supporting among others, NEETs who are keen to undertake training to improve their employability or to continue their further education. To date 79 people have benefited from almost £20,000 worth of funding.

“
We have
**recruited over
100 apprentices**
”



Case study - Apprentices

Since 2005 we have been leading the way with our apprenticeship offer, providing on average 10 opportunities every year.

Mixing practical experience with classroom studies, 118 trade and office-based apprentices have graduated from the scheme so far, with every person going on to find work.

To encourage young people to consider an apprenticeship, we offer a competitive starter salary along with some of the best training available in West Yorkshire. Our award-winning apprenticeship scheme provides trade recruits with training in their chosen specialism as well the opportunity to develop closely

related skills, ensuring they are able to complete multiple jobs on site and in tenants' homes if required.

In 2015 an annual open evening was introduced to encourage local people to consider an apprenticeship with WDH. The event provides potential applicants with the chance to see and hear first-hand what the job involves. Last year the event attracted over 600 attendees.

This year, as part of plans to further enhance our offer, a construction training centre and trade store was opened. The facility will further improve the way apprentices develop, enabling current and future intakes to learn in a modern, fit-for-purpose facility.

Develop investment portfolio of our landlord services under reduced revenues

We are committed to building and acquiring more properties than ever before. To meet the needs of the Wakefield district we offer a variety of housing options. These include homes for social rent, outright sale, Shared Ownership and Rent to Buy.

As well as having responsibility for managing a stock of over 31,000 properties, thanks to our own in-house construction team we are also now local developers. This year our Homebuilder Team reached a significant milestone completing their 75th property, which is located on Newlands Gardens in Normanton.

In addition to building homes directly, we have also completed the sale of 156 Shared Ownership properties and helped 86 aspiring homeowners to save for a deposit through the government's Rent to Buy scheme.

Through Bridge Homes, a joint venture with Wakefield Council, we have committed to building at least 172 new properties. The first site to be developed is in Stanley, and work is already well underway. As at March 2016 nine of the 30 homes planned have been reserved for purchase with WDH taking on a further nine affordable homes later this year.

To ensure our existing stock of homes remain affordable for our tenants, last year we completed external wall insulation on 147 properties, installed loft or cavity wall insulation in 224 homes and fitted 704 new energy efficient boilers.

“
We have
completed the sale of more than 150 Shared Ownership properties
”



Case study - Shared Ownership

When it comes to buying a house, saving for a deposit can be a major stumbling block – especially with rising prices. To help more people get on the property ladder we offer a range of home purchase options including Shared Ownership.

As supporters of the government's scheme, we've already completed the sale of over 150 properties, helping keep costs affordable for aspiring homeowners who are unable to purchase a property on the open market but are able to purchase a minimum 50% to a maximum 75% share (with a mortgage and small deposit).

Through Shared Ownership people can rent the remaining share of a property at a discounted monthly rent. When and if they are able to, 100% ownership can be taken up.

Last year we sold 36 homes through the scheme, and this equates to over £2.6 million worth of housing.

Income generated through such initiatives is used to help us to build more home and sustain our core business – the management of our 31,000 properties and the support provided to our tenants.

Ensuring all our tenants can benefit from being online

Being online is now an essential part of everyday life. It enables us to apply for jobs, access a range of money saving deals, and also keep in touch with family and friends much more easily.

Two years ago we launched the WDH Hub, which is located in heart of Wakefield City Centre at the Bull Ring. As a digitally-led service access point it offers tenants and residents free internet access to help increase digital skills. In total, last year, 21,512 people accessed it!

In 2015 frontline employees and volunteers from across the business were trained up as 'Digital Angels' to further support residents to get online.

To date our Angels have supported more than 7,000 people to learn more about the internet, enabling more people to get online with greater confidence.

Over the past year we have made a number of enhancements to 'Your Account', our online tenant portal. Any tenant can register with the service to check their rent balance and make a payment, request a repair, change their personal details, and request permission for home improvements. This year we have launched our paperless offer, where tenants can opt to start receiving letters from us electronically rather than through the post.

Last year we also announced a ground-breaking partnership with Community UK to help introduce free WiFi across the district as part of plans to ensure tenants can access the internet in the future. In 2016 we are planning to run technical trials of the WiFi network in a small number of areas so we can test the technology. If this is successful we then intend to roll the network out across all our estates from 2017.

“ We have as many people using their online account as visit all our service access points (2000 a week) ”



Case study - Developing online accounts for tenants

With more and more social housing tenants going online, there is a growing and pressing need to embrace digital technologies and embed them throughout the business.

As part of our work to encourage tenants to actively use online services, last year a schedule of online improvements was developed. Today, much has already been agreed and many actions progressed.

To ensure tenants make best possible use of their online account, this year, new and upgraded functionality was introduced to enable account holders to have a greater say over the way we interact with them. Tenants can now update

their preferred communication methods as well as opt out of paper-based contact.

To increase both account sign-ups and usage a new tenant e-newsletter has been developed. The first edition was successfully emailed to more than 10,000 tenants in March this year. As well as achieving a 168% increase in registrations to online accounts, within the first week of the e-newsletter being sent, 106 tenants also chose to go paperless.

As we prepare to introduce free WiFi across the district this work will ensure our communication channels, digital services and online offer are all fit for purpose.

Meeting the wellbeing needs of our tenants

To support our tenants we provide a range of health and wellbeing services. This includes supported accommodation, telecare solutions, home visiting, mental health and wellbeing support as well as home adaptations.

Our award-winning telecare service, Care Link, helps over 15,000 customers to enjoy an independent lifestyle with the peace of mind that support is available at the touch of a button. Our Home Visiting Service also continues to grow offering a daily visit (Monday to Friday) to people who might need a little more help at home. With a 94% satisfaction rate among Care Link customers and contracts with a range of partners, such services provide

a vital lifeline for many families in the Wakefield district.

To support people experiencing mental and physical health issues, last year we ran a pilot project in partnership with both Wakefield Clinical Commissioning Group and South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. Addressing low-level mental health needs in the district, over the last 12 months 218 tenants were engaged by our Mental Health Navigators. In most cases those seen were supported helping those whose needs do not meet the necessary criteria for input from secondary services.

Our Wellbeing Caseworkers also successfully engaged 511 tenants, with people seen

primarily requesting support relating to their emotional wellbeing, mental health and physical health. Such work has proven vital in preventing tenancies from breaking down.

As part of our ongoing work to support older and vulnerable people with their housing needs, we have also completed improvement work at two independent living schemes - Halberg House in Pontefract and Church Court in Ossett.

“
94% of our Care Link customers are satisfied with the service they receive
”



Case study - Care Link

Last year Care Link celebrated 25 years of supporting more than 15,000 Wakefield residents to live independently in their own homes through telecare support. Care Link also became the umbrella brand for our health and wellbeing services.

For the sixth consecutive year Care Link retained its Telecare Services Association (TSA) accreditation whilst the service also launched a new website, marketing literature and advertising to successfully help more people understand the range of support packages available. Having trebled the amount of traffic to the Care Link website and attended 21 events across the district, over

the course of last year the service generated 5.2% more private customers.

In 2015, 94% of customers surveyed said they are satisfied with the service they receive.

Looking to the future the service is hoping to work with partner agencies to develop telehealth services in the Wakefield district. Telehealth is the delivery of health related services and information through telecommunication technology. It enables customers with long term health conditions to self-manage their conditions and their well-being.

Our year in pictures



April 2015 - Dozens of people visited Croftlands Independent Living Scheme to find out what it has to offer.



May 2015 - Footballers in their bright red strip bought with our Community Grant.



June 2015 - Three of our projects are recognised at the 2015 BiTC Business Awards.



July 2015 - Our specially trained employees are volunteering to teach people basic internet skills.



August 2015 - Our 10th Anniversary Family Fun Day was a roaring success!



September 2015 - With our help Standbridge Lane Community Centre are ready to cook!



October 2015 - We won the EFQM Excellence Award 2015.



November 2015 - Local residents helped mark the completion of Homebuilder's 50th property.



December 2015 - We launched partnership with CommunityUK. net to introduce free WiFi across the Wakefield district.



January 2016 - A 30,000 square foot state-of-the-art construction training centre and trade store has been opened.



February 2016 - We have provided over 1,000 hygrometers to tenants to help them manage damp and condensation in their own homes.



March 2016 - Over 200 people attend our Apprentice Open Evening.

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You can find
the latest
information on
our performance
at www.wdh.co.uk
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Looking forward

For more than a decade we have been driving positive change within the Wakefield district. By putting our tenants at the heart of everything we do we've been able to help bring people out of unemployment, raise aspirations and reduce deprivation.

Today our accolades prove we are one of the best businesses in Europe and we deliver programmes of work out in the community that are equal to those of leading brands and retailers.

This year we will continue to build upon our fantastic track record, taking our first steps towards achieving our next milestone.

Over the coming year we will:

- progress our plans to introduce free WiFi across the district and launch a WDH app;
- support tenants impacted by welfare reforms, mitigating the impacts of rent reductions;
- take steps to grow our services, building or acquiring at least 300 properties; and
- work towards achieving a customer satisfaction score of 83 or more.

2016 brings with it change, new challenges and opportunities. We look forward to starting a new journey, becoming an enterprise with social impacts.



Vision

to create confident communities

Mission

to inspire, transform and promote excellence

Values

to be creative, inclusive and work with integrity

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delivering promises, improving lives