



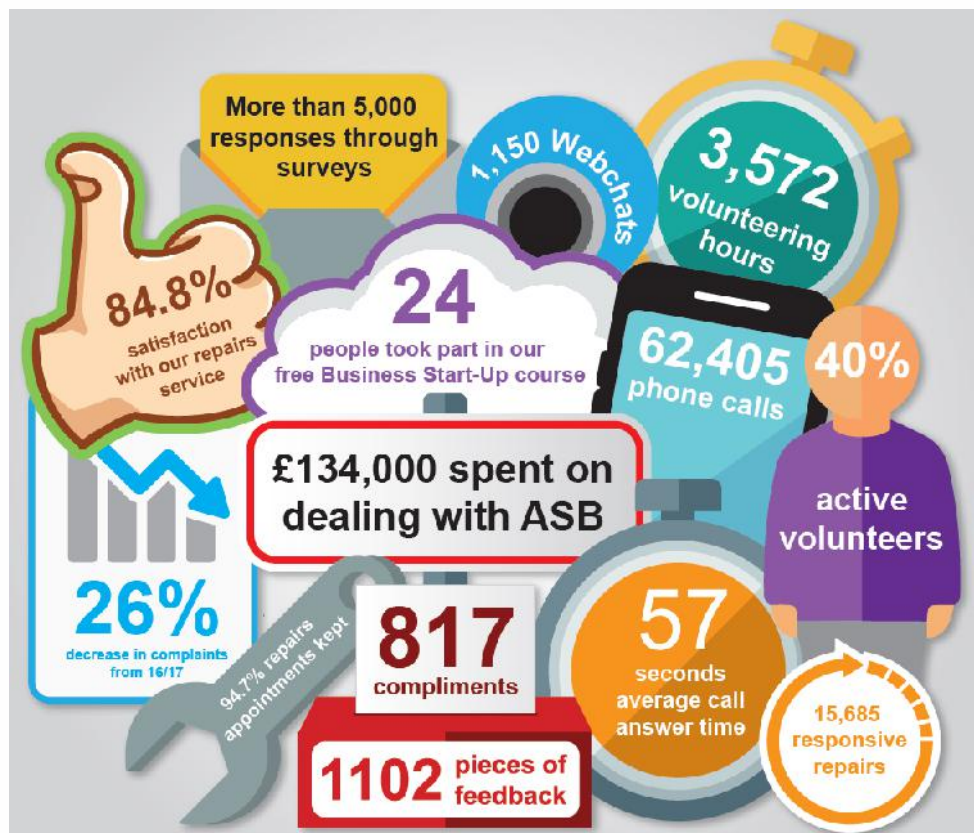
## Our Annual Report for 2017/18 - put together with customers, for customers

Before we get into the detail of our last financial year (1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018), here is a snapshot of our main performance areas. We've put together this short summary, so that you can see how we've done at a glance.

### Introduction

Welcome to our Annual Report for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. Each year, we produce an Annual Report so that we can look back over our achievements and summarise our performance in key areas of the business. Our Regulator also expects to be able to see how we've done and understand a bit more about us.

As a tenant-led organisation, we share as much information as we can, in a way that is meaningful and interesting for our customers, which is why we worked with members of our Customer and Community Insight Group (CCIG) to design this format so that we can detail performance in areas that they find particularly interesting. This customer-designed format gives a snapshot picture of the main areas and then includes more commentary later on.



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## Help and support for customers

- **24 people took part in our free Business Start-Up course**
- **£6,000 spent supporting new businesses**

Our Community Investment and Relationship Management teams support customers and community members in different ways, which develop all the time.

One of our most popular and successful initiatives is our free Business Start-Up course, which we run in partnership with Enterprise Cube. Last year, 24 people came to this free course, where they learnt how to set up their own business – and again it was a resounding success! At the end of the 8 workshops, they had an opportunity to pitch their business idea to a panel of judges and many received funding to help them get their business up and running.

With a pot of £6,000 set aside to award those businesses with the most potential, the fourth Business Start-up programme is now open for applications!

Alongside this course, we also held a Pop-up Business School to provide support to those looking to start a local enterprise. The course was a major success, running from a space in the town centre to ensure easy access for the public.

In the last year, we invested almost £32,000 on our start-up business initiatives.

We also held our very first Job Fair in April 2017 as part of our approach to encouraging inclusion and wellbeing. We saw more than 30 employers attend and over 300 people come along to find out about local employment. It was so successful that we had more than 80 people get job interviews as a result. We held another Job Fair in September 2017, with even more success, as more than 50 employers joined in and more than 700 people came along! Plans for the September 2018 Job Fair are already in progress...

As well as the Business Start-Up course and our Job Fairs, we also work with customers, as much or as little as they need it, to give them budgeting advice and put them in touch with other local organisations such as the One Can Trust who can support them with things like food banks. Helping our tenants and their families to manage in tough economic times is really important to us and at Christmas, we also delivered food hampers to more than 100 households to help them through this seasonal time.

## Volunteering and people

- **40+ active volunteers**
- **3,572 volunteering hours**

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- **25 ways to get involved**
- **49 decisions and changes made**

Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do at Red Kite. Last year, our volunteers donated an amazing 3,572 hours of their time to help us improve the community. They played an important part in selecting new staff, conducting surveys and helping make important decisions about the direction of the organisation. Red Kite is a tenant-led organisation and we are constantly working to include our tenants, volunteers and members in every possible way. To get our customers even more involved, we launched a dedicated members' online portal in 2018, which has introduced our new Springboard Fund – a selection of community-based organisations that put forward their ideas for proposed community projects which are then chosen by our members. This means that our tenant members have the power to take decisions that impact on their local community.

## **Repairs**

- **84.8% satisfaction with our repairs service**
- **£106.29 average cost per repair job (including VAT)**
- **15,685 responsive repairs**
- **94.7% appointments kept**
- **85% jobs completed on time**

Repairs are the busiest part of our business and where we spend a significant amount of money, so it is a very important area for our customers.

It is also where we work in partnership with our customers to make sure that we maintain their homes to a high standard. Over the last year, satisfaction has been at an average of 84.8% and we've been able to complete jobs on time in 85% of cases. This number has gone down since the last year, which is disappointing, so we have put measures in place to bring it back up again – most notably, we have changed our repairs contractor in 2018 which in next year's Annual Report, should reflect the improvements that new partnerships will bring.

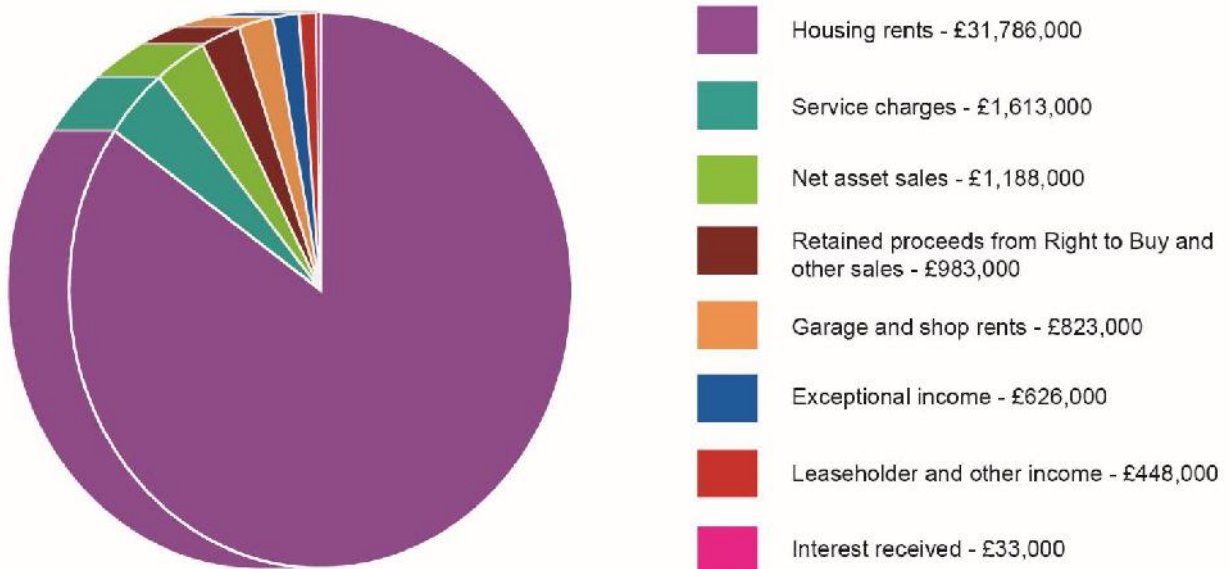
We use an independent company to carry out surveys that measure our customers' satisfaction, which they do in a variety of ways including email, text and phone. We contact about 10% of the people who have had repair jobs each month and they can also choose to talk about their experience in more detail. This means that we can really understand what our customers think of our service and learn from it to get better.



## Our money

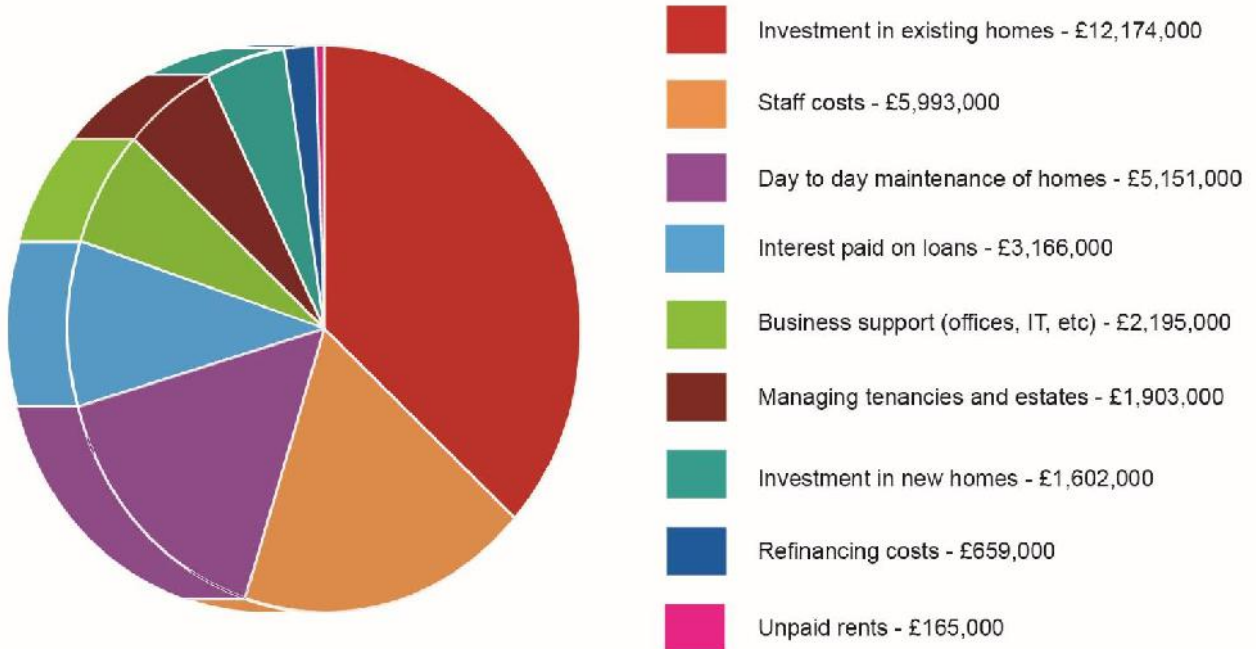
When it comes to our money, we want to be honest with our customers and the regulator about where it comes from and also how it's spent. We've captured our income and expenditure in two simple pie charts to show this.

### Income (money we receive)





## Expenditure (money we spend)



Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, we received £36,981,000 and spent £33,008,000, generating a surplus of £3,973,000. This surplus was planned and the change from the previous year largely relates to the number of excess sheltered properties sold last year, refinancing costs in 2017/18 and other savings identified within the business. This will be used to fund further investment in our current properties and building new homes.

We have invested £13,291,000 in the improvement of homes and £485,000 in developing new homes to be delivered in the community.

## Empty homes

- **27.2 days** – the average number of days to re-let a standard empty home – (time between one tenancy ending and another starting)
- **Re-let 279 homes** (these are standard re-lets\*)
- **£2,801 average cost to repair an empty home (including VAT)**
- **91% of new tenants satisfied with the re-let service**

As with our money, this information is something that our regulator is keen to know about. Empty homes – which we call voids – are important to keep an eye on because the performance in this area tells us how quickly we are able to re-let a home to a new customer after it becomes empty. It also gives us an idea of how much rent is not collected while the home is empty.

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Our sheltered homes have taken longer to let than other homes. Research carried out by the County Council shows that there are more sheltered homes than needed in the District and this is something reflected by our own experience. We will continue to look at how we can better align our housing stock to meet the demand from customers.

We also work hard to keep the costs down when we get an empty home, while continuing to provide quality homes that customers want to live in. Our 'lettable standard' says that where a home is designated for older people, we will carry out redecoration where required. This commitment to quality and the frequency at which homes in sheltered schemes become available for re-let, means that our average void cost is higher than it otherwise might be.

(\*For information, standard voids include homes that are sheltered, general needs and temporary accommodation, and which don't require major work).

## **Adaptation wait times**

- **11 weeks – average time to complete an adaptation**

Adaptations are the modifications that some of our customers need in their homes, such as grab rails and wet rooms, so that they can continue to live independently. We try to match our homes to customer needs as much as possible, to reduce having to adapt where we can.

## **Antisocial behaviour (ASB)**

- **63 reported cases of antisocial behaviour**
- **£134,000 spent on dealing with ASB**
- **87.5% customers satisfied with our ASB case resolution**

Antisocial behaviour (ASB) is a serious issue that can have a significant impact on people's lives. As a tenant-led organisation, we continue to take robust action to tackle it wherever possible.

Our aim is to always work to resolve issues where we can, avoiding evictions where possible. Sometimes though, they are necessary to stop these problems affecting the local community. We always encourage our customers to report instances of antisocial behaviour so that we can help resolve the situations and improve the lives of everyone. We recommend that neighbour disputes are referred to Mediation Bucks – a local, independent dispute resolution service – as it helps our residents to live peacefully within their neighbourhoods.



Since we know that ASB is such an important subject for our customers, we have been exploring ways of managing it much more efficiently in the future. As part of setting up a new charitable company to manage some of our homes from September 2018, we have been exploring ways of managing ASB differently, as we will have opportunities to do things differently within this company. As these plans develop, we will share more information with our customers.

## **Community work and partnerships**

- **21 new partnerships started**
- **£131,188 spent on community initiatives**

During 2017/18, we formed lots of new and exciting partnerships with local businesses and organisations, which all help to strengthen our links with people across the area. Through our Community Investment stem, we have formed partnerships with people like Wycombe Youth Action, Fit & Fed, Boommfutures, Beechview Community Hub and Wycombe Sound. To realise the potential in our communities, we explore as many avenues as we can when it comes to putting people in touch with new opportunities.

We have also continued working in collaboration, strengthened and invested in many local organisations, such as Bucks New University, Chiltern Rangers, Wycombe Wanderers Sports and Education and many more. Since our last Annual Report, we have introduced a new initiative called the Springboard Fund, which we launched in April 2018. We've set aside £100,000 for this year, and it's now up to our members to decide where the money goes. Our Community Investment stem are also enthusiastically exploring innovative ways to get involved in the community and other aspects of the business and look forward to working with local businesses in partnership to create exciting opportunities for the community including great events.

Our Environmental Improvement Group is made up of Red Kite customers and members of this group consider applications from our residents for improvements, and then decide whether to allocate funds to the proposed project. As a result, we've made some great improvements – such as parking and communal gardens to benefit local neighbourhoods, as seen here:

- Off-street parking at Barrowcroft sheltered housing scheme
- Additional parking spaces in Loudwater
- Improved parking at Laburnum Road



- Improving the courtyard at one of our sheltered schemes, turning a plain concrete courtyard into a beautiful flower garden with creative architecture, imaginative planting and new garden furniture, all of which helped transform the space into a popular social area for residents



## Rent debt

- **£39,822 reduction in rent owed to us**
- **6 evictions because of unpaid rent**
- **£514,676 owed in underlying arrears at 20<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

Rent collection and reducing customer debt have been another big success story of the Relationship Management stem in the last year. Overall, we have been able to reduce the amount of money that customers owe us by £39,822, which is another annual reduction of debt.

We've been able to achieve this with one of the lowest eviction rates in the country, with 6 customers evicted for rent arrears. This is our main objective to reduce customer debt whilst sustaining tenancies by working with our customers.

In the coming years, we will see many changes to the way our customers pay with the onset of Universal Credit. The work and support we provide to customers through these changes will enable us to minimise debt and to increase financial capacity of our customers.

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## Customer interactions

- **62,405 phone calls**
- **29,764 emails**
- **1,150 webchats**
- **10,687 items of post**
- **57 seconds average call answer time**

58% of the contact that we receive in our Contact Centre is repairs related, so a lot of focus in the year was given to repairs training.

This allowed us to equip our excellent Relationship Advisors with technical knowledge and empower them to make the right decisions at the first point of contact when diagnosing repairs with a customer. It also meant that we could focus on increasing customer satisfaction when booking repairs.

The training has improved how we record repair requests, which really helps to get the job done for each customer first time.

We've also been able to reduce the number of phone calls we get by a substantial 20%, which we achieved through reviewing our internal processes. With the additional capacity this has given us, we've been able to free up a member of staff to carry out more proactive work which has improved arrears and helped with booking in tenancy visits.

Webchat is an increasingly popular channel for our customers and we continue to promote it as a convenient way of getting in touch. All of our advisors are fully equipped to multi-task between phone and webchat, providing a high quality service to both.

The biggest change for us in 2017/18 was the introduction of a new software system, which has transformed how we collect and manage customer interactions. In the short time we've been using it, we've already been given a much clearer view of customer communication and our customer satisfaction figures have improved too!

## Home audits

- **762 Home Audits carried out**

Our 'Home Audit' programme which launched last year, has been going really well. These visits involve members of our Experience Team visiting customers' homes, checking on the condition of the home, confirming who lives there and identifying any support needs they may have that we could help with.



The visits give us the chance to update information about all our customers, as well as have a face-to-face chat about services that might help them and also to explain how they can get involved with us, if they want to help shape decisions at Red Kite. Overall, our Home Audit visits make sure that; our customers' homes are safe, secure and being maintained, that all our information is up to date and that we identify and prevent possible tenancy fraud.

With more than 760 carried out in the last year, we've had some great feedback about our colleagues and the way that the visits have been managed:

**“The lady that visited me was very polite and helpful answering questions I had”**

**“Trevor was such a lovely guy. Really helpful and friendly, a credit to Red Kite”**

**“Handled everything in a fantastic manner”**

**“Found Red Kite extremely polite and courteous”**

**“Lady who came out was lovely”**

**“Impressed with whole set up”**

**“Very polite and courteous, very helpful”**

**“Excellent and explained everything thoroughly”**

## Feedback

- 1102 pieces of feedback received
  - 285 complaints
  - 817 compliments
- More than 5,000 responses to our surveys
- 68% complaints resolved at the informal quick resolution stage
- 26% decrease in complaints from the previous year
- Lack of ownership was the single biggest cause of complaint during this period (this is when a customer feels that nobody takes responsibility for an issue)
- 64% complaints recorded related to repairs and improvements
- 61% compliments related to repairs and improvements – that's an 11% increase from 16/17
- Every month positive feedback outweighed negative



Our Knowledge and Feedback team make sure that all feedback received, whether positive or negative, is recorded and actioned in accordance with our Feedback Policy. The team work across all service areas to explore ways in which our customer's feedback can help shape improvements to our services. This includes looking at responses gathered from our satisfaction surveys, of which over 5,000 were completed in 2017/18.

Some examples of the improvements made because of our customer's feedback include:

- [Creating new ASB guidance for customers available on our website](#), to help give better information on how we handle ASB, particularly noise complaints
- Providing refresher training for our Contact Centre to ensure repair trends are spotted at the earliest possible opportunity and where further investigation might be needed
- [Created guidance to accompany our Notices of Seeking Possession](#) to give customers a clearer understanding of this legal stage
- A full manufacturer's review of the stairlifts we install for customers with an approved Occupational Therapy assessment
- Capturing more information inspecting our empty homes to improve our records and make sure accuracy when we advertise homes to let

Our digital repository for information, the **Knowledge Sphere**, also continues to grow, housing over 600 pieces of content; everything from policies, procedures, how-to-guides, forms and any other useful resources to equip staff with the tools they need to deliver excellent customer service at the first point of contact.

We welcome all feedback, which you can share in the following ways:

- On our website
- By email to [feedback@redkitechousing.org.uk](mailto:feedback@redkitechousing.org.uk)
- By phone on 01494 476100
- In writing or face-to-face at our offices:

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