

2023-2024



ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



Chair's Welcome



Welcome to our Annual Report 2023/24

This is my first year as Chair of Arches Housing and one which I have really enjoyed. I have been struck by just how determined staff and Board Members are to deliver on our commitments to our customers, through what has been a challenging time for everyone involved.

This year has seen an in-depth review of Arches, something called an IDA, by the Regulator of Social Housing. All Housing Associations have an IDA every few years.

I am pleased to say that Arches received the highest possible rating from the Regulator, which is a G1/V1 rating. This despite quite rightly toughening standards and a difficult operating environment, which has seen costs increase quite significantly. I want to take the opportunity to thank staff for their work here. I know we will all strive to continue to improve on this performance going forward.

This strong performance could not have been achieved without the work of Members who have now retired from the Board, including my predecessor as Chair Kay Dickinson. Members work hard to support and challenge staff, and I have been pleased by the productive working relationship that exists.

We understand that there have been significant economic and indeed social challenges, putting many families under a lot of pressure. We will continue through our tenancy support teams and through working with our many partners, to continue to do what we can to support those impacted.

I have had the opportunity, first hand to see Arches staff out in the community, really going the extra mile to help people in ways that go a long way beyond simply keeping the house in good condition.

We have increased investment in our housing, in particular in our older properties and are advanced in our action to increase energy efficiency, thereby lowering gas and electricity bills for customers. Many customers have commented on how helpful this has been.

We have also invested in ensuring that we fully understand the condition of all our homes, so that we can take action to address issues that have impacted us and other housing associations, such as damp and mould. The Board is committed to ensuring everyone lives in a safe and decent home. We would encourage all customers to quickly report any issues that you may have.

The Board really wants to make sure that all its decisions are made fully with the interests of customers in mind. As such we are stepping up on our efforts to give all customers the chance to be involved. For example, I have been very grateful to customers who have helped conduct a review of how we deliver repairs, which has resulted in a number of actions to improve our service. If you can help in any way, please let us know. Getting your views, is the best way to help ensure we continue to improve our services.

Looking ahead, 2025 will be a particularly exciting one, as it will be Arches 50th Anniversary. We are busy planning a multitude of events to celebrate this important milestone.

Many thanks

Alan Long

Chair



Priority One

Inclusive homes, services and support

Resident Engagement - Listening to you

- Customers scrutinised our allocations and lettings process, looking at the standard of our void properties, and how we allocate them. Recommendations were made to our Board, and actions agreed which are currently being implemented.
- The Neighbourhood Network, which is the group providing a link between tenants and the board, has gone from strength to strength. There are now six members on the group who have had four meetings so far covering such topics as the Tenant Satisfaction Measure results, the outcomes from our tenant scrutiny panels and how planned maintenance works are prioritised.
- We consulted with residents in Dinnington and Wensley regarding the suggested new standards from the social housing regulator to ensure our customers had their say on some of the most important changes in our sector.

Community Support

- We once again supported the Abbeyfield Festival in Burngreave, helping to support the event and attending to talk to customers and potential customers.



- Foodbank donations – staff collected and gifted food and donations at Christmas to the Burngreave and Dinnington foodbanks.
- We sponsored the 14th annual football tournament by i-Aspire foundation – an event aimed at breaking down barriers between communities and promoting cohesion and good health through sport.



- We carried out an Easter Egg drop in Wickersley to talk to residents about how they felt about their neighbourhood.

Support for Residents

- We continue to provide support to customers to help them sustain their tenancies which has resulted in our tenancy turnover rate being 7.09% against a target of 8% in 2023/24.
- A customer who had been homeless was working part-time but struggling to fund household appliances and carpets. Through our work with the customer, we were able to support with fridge, microwave and partial carpet in the property through the Tenant at Risk budget.

Supporting our Customers



We help our customers in many ways, and in 2023/24 we supported them with:



We made **42** customer referrals to partnership agencies in 2023/24



We helped secure **£5,000** in external grants for our customers



We obtained **3** white goods appliances from external grants/schemes for customers



14 emergency household vouchers were issued to help support tenants



2 households were supported with new flooring after damage



5 beds were provided to help support customers in need



2 households were supported with gardening equipment



£20K from our own Tenants at Risk budget

Case 1 – A customer was struggling financially and needed support to access furniture for their home as well as support with paying their rent.

We successfully supported them with a Discretionary Housing Payment of £549. We were also able to award the family an additional £80 through the Household Support Fund to enable them to buy much-needed supplies. We also referred the family to external organisations to help them with white goods for their home.

Case 2 - One family of five had no access to beds or blankets in their home and were using blankets to sleep on the floor. Utilising our tenant at risk budget, we were able to provide the family with five much needed beds and mattresses.

Case 3 - A Customer was needing help and support with their rent and household bills. We liaised with Universal Credit to advocate on customers behalf and successfully received a backdated rent payment which helped with their rent arrears. We were also able to apply to the Council Tax support fund to successfully maximise their overall household income.

Case 4 - One Customer had signed a new tenancy with Arches following a stay in temporary homeless accommodation. The Customer worked part time but was struggling to fund household appliances and carpets in their property. By assessing the customer's needs, we were able to support them by purchasing a new fridge, microwave, and partial carpet through our Tenant at Risk Budget.



Priority Two

Properties and Neighbourhoods where people are proud to live



Brienburg Court celebrates it's first birthday:

Brienburg Court in Sheffield celebrated it's first birthday in style. Following its extensive refurbishment last year, Brienburg Court's resident joined together for a street party.

The development is made up of 12 homes specifically tailored to the needs of older, vulnerable members of Sheffield's Black and Ethnic Minority community.

Arches Home Standard:

Maintaining our homes to meet the Arches Homes Standard remains a top priority for us.

Working together with our residents and contractors **99%** of our homes are compliant with the Arches Home Standard.

In the last year our £1.3m programme completed:

How many	Type
20 Properties	Bathrooms
34 Properties	Kitchens
87 Properties	Boilers
30 Properties	Windows
14 Properties	Roof/Roof Works
80 Properties	*Other Works



*Other works include boundary walls and fencing, brick work repairs and rainwater goods. We also fully refurbished two older properties that had been converted into larger properties from two smaller ones

Asset Health and Safety:

Health and Safety of all our residents is always a major priority to us, and we continue to ensure all our homes are safe and secure for everyone.

Asset Management Performance	Performance		Target
Properties with a Valid Gas Safety Certificate	100%	✓	100%
Properties with Valid Electrical Safety Certificate	100%	✓	100%
Properties with a Valid Fire Risk Assessment	100%	✓	100%
Properties with a Valid Water Hygiene Assessment	100%	✓	100%
Properties with a Valid Asbestos Management Survey	100%	✓	100%
% of Homes that Meet the Arches Home Standard	99.18%	✓	100%
% of Day to Day Repairs Completed on Time	90.49%	✓	90%

Priority Three



Energy Efficient Homes

Energy Performance Works:

Ensuring our homes are as energy efficient as possible is of great importance to us. Over the last 12 months we have worked on raising the Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) in a number of our properties.

Our EPC upgrade plans for 2024/25 continue to show our commitment to improving the energy efficiency of our homes, helping to drive down the costs of heating your home.

In 2023/24 we:



Replaced windows in **25** properties



Topped up loft insulation in **21** properties



Topped up cellar insulation in **12** properties



Insulation to room in the roof in **6** properties



Insulated external walls and carried out associated works in **6** properties

Photos from our recent Energy Performance upgrades:

BEFORE



Darnall, Sheffield

AFTER



ROOF REPLACEMENT

BEFORE



Wincobank, Sheffield

AFTER



Ellesmere, Sheffield

BEFORE



Tinsley, Sheffield

AFTER





Priority Four

More high-quality homes for rent and sale

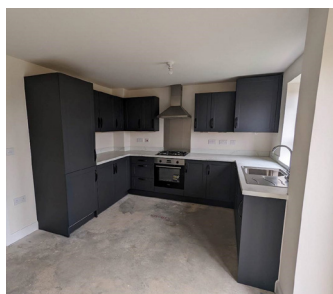
New homes completed:

In 2023/24 we took handover of 14 new homes. This is slightly below our target of 20 new homes per year, we are however, projected to take ownership of 64 new build properties over the next two years.

We have a pipeline of around 120 properties, subject to final agreements, and are well on track to hit our long-term targets.

Inkersall Road, Staveley, Chesterfield – 28 homes

This scheme by Barratt David Wilson (BDW) will deliver 28 affordable homes for Arches - 17 for rent and 11 for shared ownership. The first four homes were handed over in March 2024 and another four homes followed in May and a further two in June.



Inkersall Road, Staveley, Chesterfield – 11 homes for shared ownership

In addition to our main development, we agreed the purchase of a further 11 homes, which are supported with grant funding from Homes England. Six homes were purchased in June 2024 with the remaining five homes are due in summer 2025.



Chapel Way, Kiveton Park, Rotherham – 43 homes

This development in partnership with Strata Homes will provide 23 rented and 20 shared ownership homes. The site is progressing well with the first Arches homes expected to be completed in late 2024.

Wentworth Way, Dinnington, Rotherham – 23 homes

The Wentworth Way development in Dinnington has so far delivered 18 brand new affordable rented houses for Arches customers, as part of Taylor Wimpey's wider development. The final five homes are due for completion in the 2024/25 financial year.

Looking to the future we are very hopeful of securing sites in Sheffield and expect to start on site on a new development in north Sheffield in 2024/25. We continue to seek insight and opportunities for learning via the South Yorkshire Housing Partnership (SYHP), which includes numerous housing associations in South Yorkshire, all four local authorities and has Homes England as a key partner.

Priority Five



A well governed, financially strong, ambitious agile organisation

Arches Annual Report financial report:

Statement of Comprehensive Income	2023/24 £'m	2022/23 £'m
Turnover	7.5	6.9
Surplus	0.8	0.5
Statement of Financial Position	2023/24 £'m	2022/23 £'m
Fixed Assets	65.2	64
Net Current Assets	(1.0)	(0.5)
Long term Creditors	47.4	47.4
Reserves	16.8	16.1
Properties (units)	2023/24	2022/23
Total owned and managed	1,324	1,316

VfM finance metrics	2022/23 Housemark peer group (median)	2022/23 Arches Actual	2023/24 Arches Actual
Reinvestment% (including development spend)	6.50%	5.29%	4.71%
New social housing units supply delivered %	1.28%	1.90%	1.05%
Gearing %	41.99%	37.98%	37.62%
Headline social housing cost per unit	£4,418	£3,730	£3,965
Operating Margin (overall)	18.00%	19.92%	21.84%
Arches Metrics			
Customer Satisfaction	85.71%	80.00%	76.74%
Rent as Value for Money	88.16%	88.24%	88.16%

We have maintained a steady financial position in 2023/24 despite the turbulent economic environment.

Income has continued to grow with the addition of 14 new properties. Expenditure on repairs and reinvesting in our properties, a priority through

the Arches Home Standard, totalled £3.56m in 2023/24.

We continue to compare well to our peers in terms of providing value for money, keeping our 'core' administration costs low and maximising spend on our housing stock.

To read our financial statements and our Value for Money performance, including details of the Board and governance arrangements, please visit our website - www.archeshousing.org.uk



Value for Money (VfM)

Value for Customers

To assess whether we are delivering Value for Money (VfM) for our customers we always ask ourselves three important questions:

Is my rent good value?

On average our rents cost **65.3%** of the rents charged in the private rented sector at a local authority level. All of our rents are below the Shelter living rent calculation for the UK.

Is my home affordable to run?

At Arches we are committed to investing in our homes to increase their energy efficiency. By increasing their efficiency, we will help our customers to reduce the running costs associated with their homes.

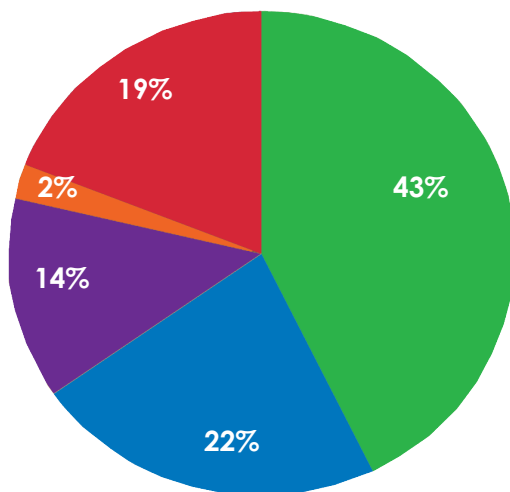
In 2023/24 we spent **£767k** on energy improvement works in our properties. This has resulted in **93%** of our properties achieving an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) level of 'C' or above.

Is my rent well spent?

By introducing a stronger customer focus, we are committed to providing better information to make this assessment more transparent to our customers and other stakeholders.

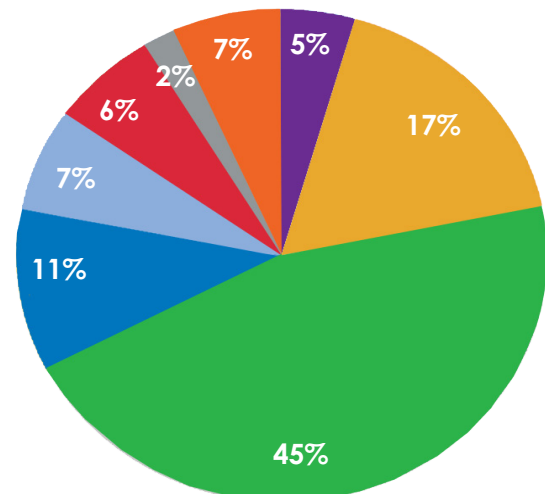
To help you understand more about how your rent and service charges are spent, take a look at our charts below which explain where your money goes:

How every £1 of your rent is spent:



Repairs & Reinvestment
Staff Costs
Office and Management
Tenancy Management
Interest Costs

How every £1 of your service charge is spent:

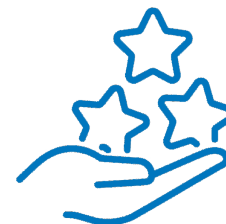


Communal Cleaning
Communal Gardening
Estate Charge
Refuse Removal
Communal Electricity
Communal Maintenance
Fire Safety Maintenance
Other

How does our CEO salary compare to salaries of others at Arches?







Our CEO to median worker pay ratio is 2.9 which is lower than other similar housing associations across the UK where the peer group median is 8.1.

Operational Performance



How we've performed

How we operate is really important to us. We want our residents to feel satisfied that we are working as best we can to ensure their queries are met. We continuously measure our operational performance against our annual targets and over the last 12 months we have achieved:

Operational Performance	Target	Performance	
Customer satisfaction with overall services provided by Arches*	82%	77%	
Number of customers that have been involved with us in the year and helped shape services for residents	200 residents	178 residents	
Property turnover	8.5%	7.09%	
Average number of days homes are empty	13 days	15 days	
The amount of rent collected that was due	100%	100.24%	
Rent arrears (Current and former tenants)	3.5%	3.08%	

Complaints

This year we have seen an increase in the volume of formal complaints received, whilst the escalation rate (complaints progressing to stage two or further where the process is complete) has returned to the levels experienced in previous years.

Complaints are important to us as they are a mechanism for us to ensure we are doing the very best we can for our customers, and they help us learn from instances where our service levels haven't been what we expect them to be.

Year	Stage 1	Stage 2	Escalation Rate
2022-23	37	1	3%
2023-24	36	6	16%

An annual review of complaints is included on the Arches website at www.archeshousing.org.uk including details of how we are learning from complaints to meet the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Knowing our Customers

Between **August 2023 and March 2024** we contacted all of our tenants to learn more about them and their families. Thank you to all tenants who took part in the process, we managed to speak to **70%** of tenants. From this we now know:



65% of our tenants are female



33% of our tenants are male



52% of our tenants identify as having Black, Asian or minority ethnic heritage



48% of our tenants identify as white British heritage



82% of tenants preferred language is **English**



6% of tenants preferred language is **Arabic**



4% of tenants preferred language is **Somali**



3% of tenants preferred language is **Urdu**



2% of tenants preferred language is **Punjabi**



38% of tenants are Muslim



38% of tenants do not have a religion



21% of tenants are Christian



3% of tenants have another religion



40% of our tenants have someone in the household with a vulnerability

What we are doing with this information?

We now know more about our tenants and those who live with them. We have updated our systems with this information and during 2024 we are improving the way we deliver services to meet customer's specific needs.

The greater understanding of our customers we have, the better services we are able to deliver, tailored to you and your family's specific needs.



The Board of Management:

Alan Long (Chair)
Ian Falconer (Deputy Chair)
Kay Dickinson (Retired 11th September 2023)
Ajman Ali
Lisa Bradley
Andrea Brough
Terry Gallagher
Brian Hamlin (Resigned 11th September 2023)
Mohammed Jamil (Retired 11th September 2023)
Andrew Liles
Mahara Haque
Adam Collin (Appointed 11th September 2023)
Alison Knowles (Appointed 11th September 2023)
Martyn Broadest (Appointed 11th September 2023)
Tracy Watterson (Appointed 11th September 2023)

Chief Executive & Company Secretary:

Paul Common



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/archeshousing



@archeshousing

- Regulator of Social Housing Registered No. **LH0884**
- Register of Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies **No.21451R** (Exempt Charity)
- Member of the National Housing Federation, PlaceShapers and BMENational

www.archeshousing.org.uk