



# Annual Report 2021-2022

*Norton Housing and Support is a registered provider of social housing number 4676, registered charity 701800, company number 01870880*

# 1. Our Services

A landlord in its own right, Norton Housing and Support (NH&S) also works in partnership with Paragon Asra (PA) Housing - <https://pahousing.co.uk/>, for whom we manage 6 shared homes and one flat.

## 1.1 Mental Health and Learning Disabilities

- Shared, supported housing for up to 38 adults with mental health needs or a learning disability. Support is provided daily, Monday-Friday and is, subject to individual eligibility, funded by our contract with Leicester City Council.
- 14 warden supported flats.
- Personal Assistant support. This service is open to those living in their own home, or to those living in one of our supported schemes who require additional input. The hours of support offered are based on individual need and are paid for either via a personal budget, or by the individual themselves. 15 people were supported during 2021-2022.

In addition to the above, as of April 2022, NH&S will begin offering drop-in services to those with mental health needs. This development follows the closure of local charity, and our former Conduit Consortium partner, You in Mind. Whilst we were sorry to see the charity close, we were delighted to be selected by their Board as a suitable organisation to take forward their much-valued drop-in services and are excited to develop the service going forward.

## 1.2 Women at Risk of Homelessness

As of February 2022, Norton Housing and Support has expanded its service for women at risk of homelessness and their children, by opening a second scheme in conjunction with a local private sector landlord – doubling the number of places available to a total of 14. Intensive housing management is provided to help residents maintain their licence agreement and secure safe and appropriate long-term housing.

## 2. Chair's Introduction

Jan Moore is currently Chair of NH&S's Board of Trustees. She is a qualified Social Worker, who worked extensively in the field of mental health for over 20 years. As part of her role, Jan also had a special remit for working with asylum seekers, and now works with the Red Cross.

Jan has expertise in the areas of safeguarding and professional boundaries.

*As the current Chair of Norton Housing and Support (NH&S) it is my pleasure and privilege to write a few words for our 2022 annual report, and to offer a glimpse of this year. None of our achievements would have been possible without the continued support of all our stakeholders, both from within the Charity, our Trustees, our staff, all our residents and their loved ones, and our external stakeholders, so a huge 'thank you' to all for the work achieved, the work in progress and ideas still in formulation.*

*As for everyone, the fallout from the pandemic has been an ongoing challenge but during the last twelve months we have successfully recruited new Trustees, with huge expertise in Housing and Finance, both of which are fundamental to underpinning our financial security and the development of appropriate and supportive accommodation. To that end, we hope to develop a 15 bedded unit on the outskirts of Leicester and the second homeless women's scheme is now up and running. In the next year we are also looking to introduce a fund-raising strategy to further stabilise our financial future so that we can not only maintain good quality accommodation and support but continually improve on that.*

*Our residents remain at the heart of what we do; their lived experience, their collaboration and feedback is crucial to ensuring that we maintain our integrity for all, remain person centred, respectful and inclusive, that we co-produce all that we deliver in order to achieve best practise, and enable all to achieve whatever personal goals are possible.*

*Sadly, I also want to pay tribute to two of our longstanding residents, who passed away this year. Both had big personalities, were great advocates of the Charity, very appreciative of the support NH&S provided but also very modest about what they gave back in return in their relationships with us. Both reminded me of why NH&S came into existence 38 years ago and the importance of addressing health inequalities and the potential impact on the quality of life, which can be devastating, but what can also make a positive difference too, when appropriate support is available.*

*Thank you once again to all for the hard work that continually goes on to support the work of NH&S.*

Jan Moore

Chair of Trustees

### 3. Our Trustees

You may hear them referred to as ‘the Trustees’ or ‘the Board’ but this group are the people who share ultimate responsibility for governing NH&S and directing how it is managed and run. They are led by the Chair, who you read about in Section 2, and meet together regularly throughout the year. You can read more about the Trustees below:



**Wal Holynski – Treasurer**

During his career, Wal worked as a team manager and service manager for adult and older persons’ mental health services, and on secondment to the NHS, as a mental health commissioning manager. He is now retired. As NH&S’s Treasurer, Wal works closely with other members of the Board and Operational Management Team, to safeguard the organisation’s finances.



**Sarah Johnson**

A qualified Occupational Therapist who has worked in the field of general and forensic mental health for over 35 years. As Secretary, Sarah takes a lead on governance issues and is the Trustee representative on the equality, diversity and inclusion working group.



**Pete Frost**

Managing Director and Founder of one of the fastest growing digital marketing agencies in Leicestershire. Over the past year, Pete has been involved in the fundraising and business planning working groups.



**Steve Fallow**

A retired Consultant Psychiatrist who formerly worked within the Leicestershire Partnership Trust Treatment and Recovery Service treating those with chronic mental health conditions. Steve is responsible for reviewing the organisation’s handling of complaints and ensuring that the process facilitates continuous quality improvement. He also takes a particular interest in service user involvement.



**Vincent Gaten**

Vin has been a fundraiser for over 15 years, recently being appointed as Director of Development at a leading independent school, where he will be leading a team raising philanthropic income for capital projects and bursaries. Vin is working closely with the Head of Business Development and the fundraising working group, to renew our fundraising strategy.



## Nick Sedgwick

During 2021-22 NH&S were keen to recruit a Board member with a housing background. We were therefore delighted to welcome Nick, a housing management and policy professional who now specialises in advising landlords on supported housing.

## Mohamed Takolia

As a qualified accountant with 30 years' experience in the public sector including in housing, the NHS, transport and higher education, Mohamed brings a wealth of financial expertise to the Board.

## 4. Voice and Influence

### 4.1 In This Together

NH&S became official adopters of the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants Charter in 2020. Following consultation with residents, a new involvement group *In This Together* was formed.



The group, facilitated by Claire De Francesco (Housing and Community Officer) and Sue Cowling (Chief Executive), meets regularly to discuss issues that matter to them. They also give NH&S feedback on its performance and get involved in plans for the future. The group aims to offer a supportive forum where participants can build their confidence and skills. Any interested resident can join.

During the year, the group has been involved in reviewing the organisation's business plan and evaluating our residents' survey feedback.

Whilst the *In This Together* Group will form a key part of NH&S's involvement strategy going forward, we understand that not everyone has the time or inclination to join. That is why we offer residents other ways to let us know their thoughts via our house and tenant meetings, as well as through our annual survey.

### 4.2 House and Tenant Meetings

We aspire to offer every resident in a group home the opportunity to attend a house meeting at least every three months, and tenants in our supported flats the same every six months. As of March 2022, we had achieved this in 70% of our properties, with staff leave and capacity issues contributing to why our target was not met. We are working hard to ensure we meet our target in the next year.

We try to listen to the suggestions and ideas residents give at house meetings and record how we put them into practice – we call this 'you said, we did'. During the year some of the actions taken that were a direct result of resident feedback were:

**You said** – The garden needs sprucing up

**We did** – Staff accompanied residents to a local store. Utilising the house gardening budget, resident chose some plants for their garden.

**You said** – I feel unsafe on the stairs

**We did** – We arranged for a handrail to be installed.

**You said** – We could improve the garden and reduce our waste if we composted.

**We did** – We provided a wooden compost bin.

### 4.3 The Annual Survey

Our annual survey is a real opportunity for us to get detailed feedback on how our residents feel about a range of issues, including the standard of accommodation and support we provide.

The 2022 survey was distributed to 50 residents living in supported accommodation or in a warden supported flat. 43 surveys were returned, giving a response rate of 86% - a decrease from the previous year when 94% of surveys were returned. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete it.

As part of the survey, we asked some questions about involvement, the results were as below. In all areas we set ourselves the target of achieving 90%:

**80%**

of those who answered, agreed that NH&S listens to their views and acts upon them - slightly less than the previous year's result when 83% agreed

**87.5%**

of those who answered, agreed that NH&S gives them opportunity to make their views known - slightly less than the previous year's result when 89.5% agreed.

**92%**

of those who answered, agreed that they are given opportunities to get involved the organisation's decision making process. This is an increase on the previous year when 89% agreed.

Whilst we were pleased to hear that a high proportion of residents felt involved in our decision-making processes, we know we have a little way to go to hit our ambitious targets on consultation. During 2022-23 we will be working with residents to help strengthen our feedback mechanisms.

More of the survey results are contained throughout this report, and an Action Plan has been put together to address key issues raised.

As part of our survey, we also asked residents what three words they would use to describe NH&S – some of the responses were:



#### 4.4 Complaints

We encourage residents, as well as relatives, carers, representatives, referrers and other involved health and social care professionals, to give us feedback on how we can improve, and to let us know if our services have fallen short of expectations, so we can make things better. To facilitate this, we have a complaints process. If you would like to see this, please speak to a member of staff or look on our website. <https://nortonhousingandsupport.org.uk/complaints/>

In July 2020, the Housing Ombudsman introduced a new Complaint Handling Code to help landlords respond to complaints effectively and fairly. In light of the code, NH&S's complaints process was reviewed, and a number of improvements made. The Ombudsman has recently updated the code, and NH&S will carry out a new self-assessment later in 2022 – the results of which will be published on our website and included in the next annual report.

## Summary of Complaints

During 2021-22, two complaints were raised formally. When compared to other supported housing providers via the Acuity benchmarking club, the rate of complaints is less than average.

Complaints as a % of tenancies (NH&S) 2021-2022	3.39
Complaints as a % of tenancies (NH&S) 2020-2021	3.39
Complaints as a % of tenancies - average of other supported housing providers via Acuity (2021-2022)	4.61

Both complaints received in the period were resolved at stage 1 of the process and within the target time of 10 days. This was quicker than the previous year when one complaint, due to its complexity, took 41 days to resolve.

One complaint this year came from a family member/ carer on behalf of a resident, the other was raised by a resident directly.

As part of our Annual Survey, we ask residents whether they are aware of our formal complaints procedure. This year, 84% of respondents were aware – this is slightly less than the previous year when it was 88.5%. We also asked those who had made a complaint if they were satisfied with the process – 75% said that they were.

## Wider Learning and Improvements

As a result of feedback from complaints, we have taken steps to ensure we communicate effectively with our contractors and send the right contractor out to jobs to minimise the need for revisits.

Going forward, we are keen to:

- Actively encourage our residents as well as relatives, carers, representatives, referrers and other involved health and social care professionals, to let us know when they are dissatisfied with our services.
- Increase staff awareness of what constitutes a complaint, to ensure that all complaints are correctly identified and recorded.
- Increase awareness of the Housing Ombudsman scheme and Complaint Handling Code amongst our staff and residents.
- Ensure our complaints process is easy to understand, accessible, fair and effective. This will be reviewed as part of our complaint handling code self-assessment process.



## 5. Home

### 5.1 Decent Homes Standard

Providers of social housing like NH&S, are expected to provide homes that at least meet the 'Decent Home' standard. This means they must:



- meet the current statutory minimum standards for housing and be free from any hazard that poses a serious threat to residents' health and safety
- have reasonably modern facilities and services
- be in a reasonable state of repair
- have sufficient heating and insulation

In 2021-2022, all NH&S owned schemes met this basic standard, but we strive to maintain a higher quality of accommodation.

### 5.2 Resident Feedback

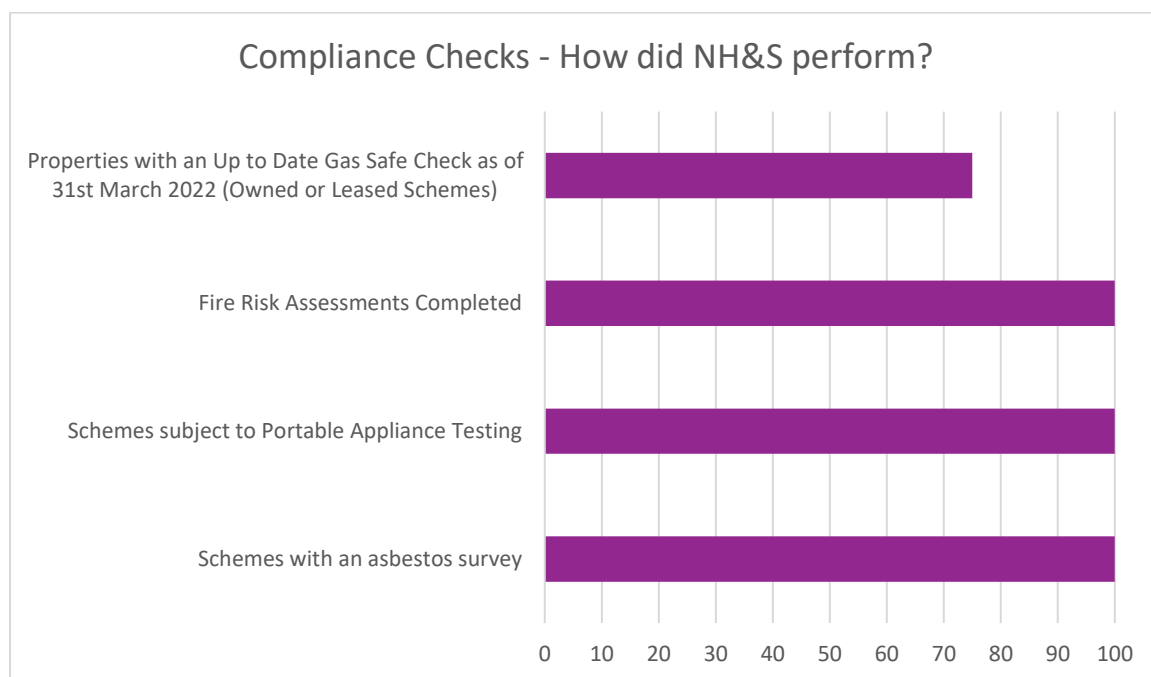
In our survey, we asked residents some questions about their home. We were pleased to find that 95% of those who answered were satisfied with its overall quality - a significant improvement from the previous year's result of 87%

### 5.3 Health and Safety

We take the safety of residents very seriously, and a range of compliance checks are carried out to ensure our properties are as safe as possible, including:

- Weekly fire alarm checks by staff, as well as regular fire drills and maintenance checks by contractors.
- Annual gas checks on appliances connected to gas.
- A check of the building's electrics every 5 years (called an Electrical Installation Condition Report)
- Portable appliance testing of electrical appliances, such as kettles.
- Regular flushing of taps that are not used, to reduce the risk of legionella.
- Fire risk assessments to help ensure the risk of residents being harmed by fire is minimised.

In properties owned by Paragon Asra (PA) Housing, some of these things are carried out by them.

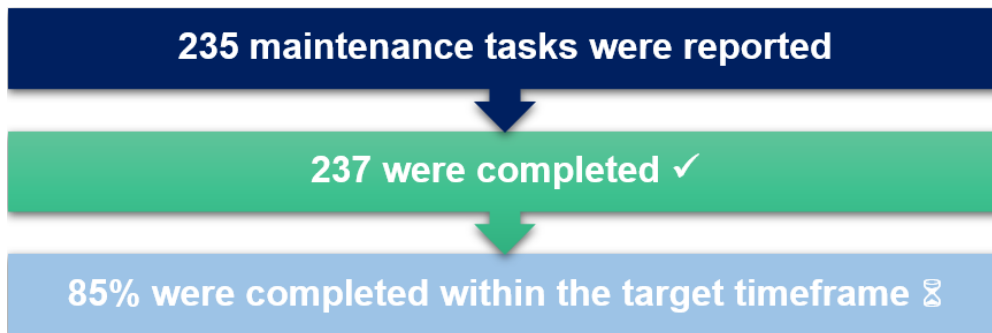


Whilst three gas safe checks were outstanding at the end of the year due to scheduling and access issues, as of writing this report we are pleased to confirm that all owned / leased properties have an up-to-date gas safety check in place.

As part of our annual survey, we asked our residents whether they felt they had enough information about health and safety and understood their responsibilities. Of those who answered, 88% agreed that they did. This is a slight improvement on previous year when 87% agreed. We will continue to raise awareness by discussing health and safety at our house and tenant meetings and via our In This Together Group.

## 5.4 Repairs and Maintenance

Some of our homes are owned by Paragon ASRA Housing, meaning some repairs will be addressed by them, and some by NH&S. When NH&S is dealing with a repair, it is given a target timeframe for completion, based on how urgent the issue is. The most urgent tasks we aim to resolve within 2 days, and most other tasks will be addressed within 2 weeks. Some low urgency or mainly decorative tasks will be completed within 2 months. In 2021-22: -



Some of the jobs completed were reported within the previous year.

Whilst completion times have fallen short, we are pleased to say that our survey suggests resident satisfaction with maintenance has increased, with 79% indicating they were satisfied with the way NH&S deals with maintenance – an increase of 7% from the previous year. This is possibly a result of an increase in the frequency and quality of garden maintenance. Going forward, to increase satisfaction further, we believe we need to work towards faster response times and improved communication with residents.

In 2021-2022, NH&S spent £47,521 on maintenance and compliance. This is an increase of £9,083 on the previous financial year when £38,438 was spent. This covers the costs of the health and safety checks described above, visits from the handy person, as well as any more substantial work. In 2021-2022, our largest project was the refurbishment of Avery House.

## 5.5 The Environment

NH&S intends, wherever possible, to make continual, measurable progress in its environmental performance and to reduce its environmental impact, whilst maintaining residents' quality of life and the organisation's economic viability.

As part of this commitment, we have decided to relaunch our residents' environmental group, which will be called the 'Green Team'. The group will meet regularly to discuss practical ways to be more environmentally aware, with reducing energy consumption being a top priority.

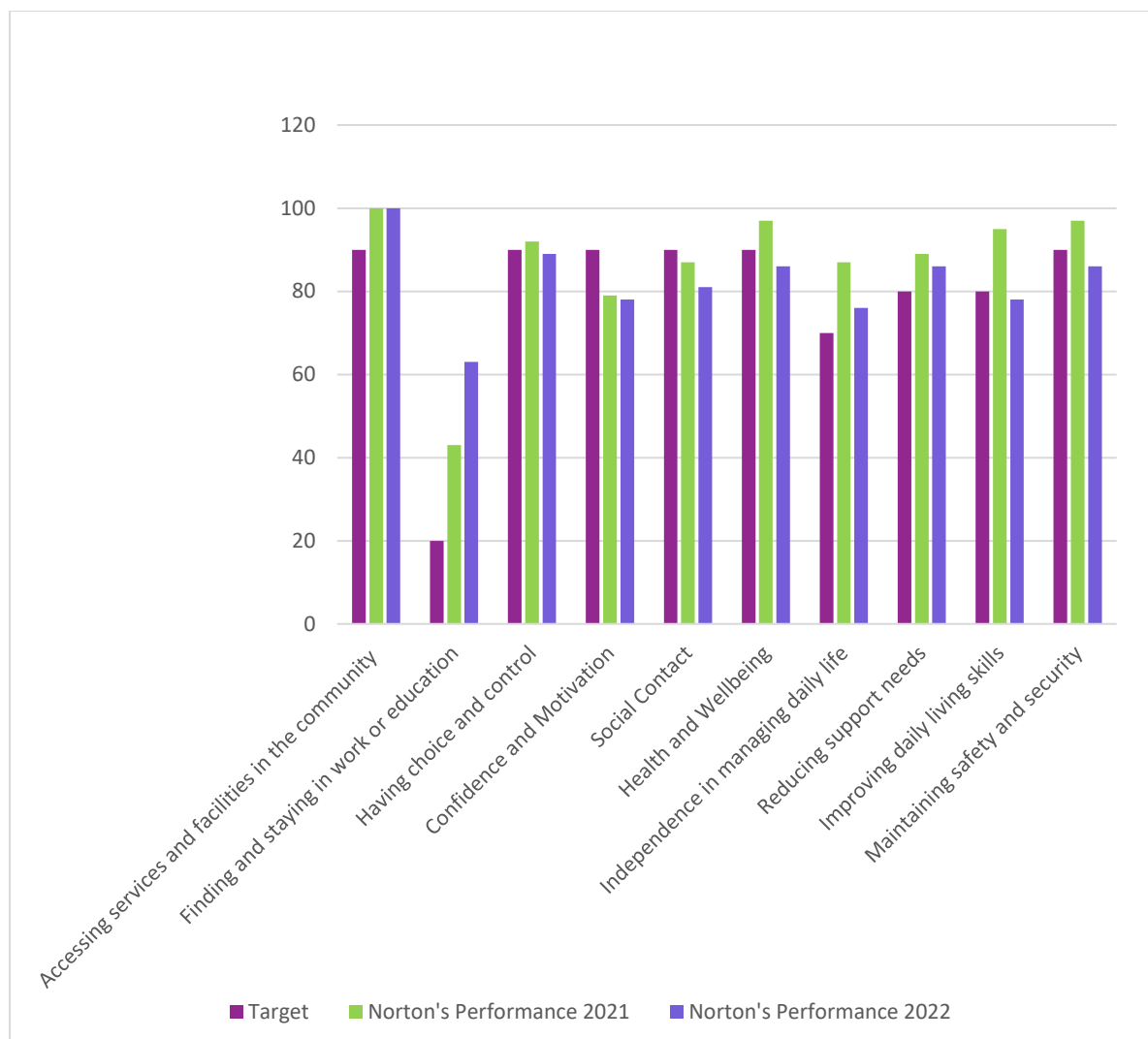
In our survey, 92% of those who answered, agreed we help them to be environmentally aware.



## 6. Support

### 6.1 Outcomes

As part of our contract with Leicester City Council, we are set targets to monitor how well we are supporting residents in our mental health and learning disability group homes. The chart overleaf shows how our performance compared to the target set and to the previous year, as of March 2022.



Overall, a lower percentage of residents achieved their outcomes than at the same time the previous year. This is disappointing, but we believe understandable, as we emerge from the pandemic. A number of our residents are struggling with their health and wellbeing as well as their motivation, and we are working hard to support them to make progress.

Whilst we have not been able to attain all the ambitious targets set by our commissioners, we are pleased to say that the majority of our residents are very satisfied with the support they receive - in this year's survey 98% were satisfied with their Support Worker or Warden. We also asked residents how they felt NH&S had helped them. The top three answers were:

1. Improving mental health and wellbeing
2. Developing daily living skills
3. Improving quality of life

## 6.2 Healthy Body, Healthy Mind, Healthy You!



During 2021-2022 our *Healthy Body, Healthy Mind, Healthy You!* initiative enabled our residents to access additional support from a Healthy Living Co-Ordinator. As well as regular newsletters, the project offered a walking group and workshops on pertinent themes including portion control, sleep, exercise, calories, heart health, diabetes and budgeting.

In our survey, all those who had used the service found it helpful.



## 7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

During 2021-22, our commitment to EDI has been taken forward by our new equality, diversity and inclusion working group. The primary functions of this group are to:

- Consider and share good practice from elsewhere.
- Identify equality, diversity and inclusion challenges facing NH&S.
- Develop a draft work plan for consideration by the Board of Trustees.
- Raise the profile of equality, diversity and inclusion within NH&S, positively driving forward the agenda.

Membership includes a representative from the Board of Trustees and the Group is chaired by the Chief Executive.

As part of this work, an EDI calendar was distributed amongst staff and residents, listing a range of celebration and awareness days, both religious and secular. Our staff have been taking it in turns to hold events and distribute information, to help raise awareness of these days. It has also been a great opportunity for residents and staff to begin meeting and socialising again after the difficult period of covid lockdown!



Work has also been undertaken to help to ensure easy and fair access to services as well as to improve our recruitment process.

## 8. Staffing

Our annual staff survey gave staff the opportunity to feedback on topics including the organisation, training, meetings, managers and job satisfaction. The survey is anonymous to encourage staff to be honest about their thoughts.

	Target	Performance	
		2021	2022
Percentage of staff who feel NH&S is a good place to work	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of staff who feel NH&S in an open & inclusive organisation	100%	95%	100%
Percentage of staff who feel their line manager is supportive and encouraging	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of staff who enjoy their work	100%	100%	100%

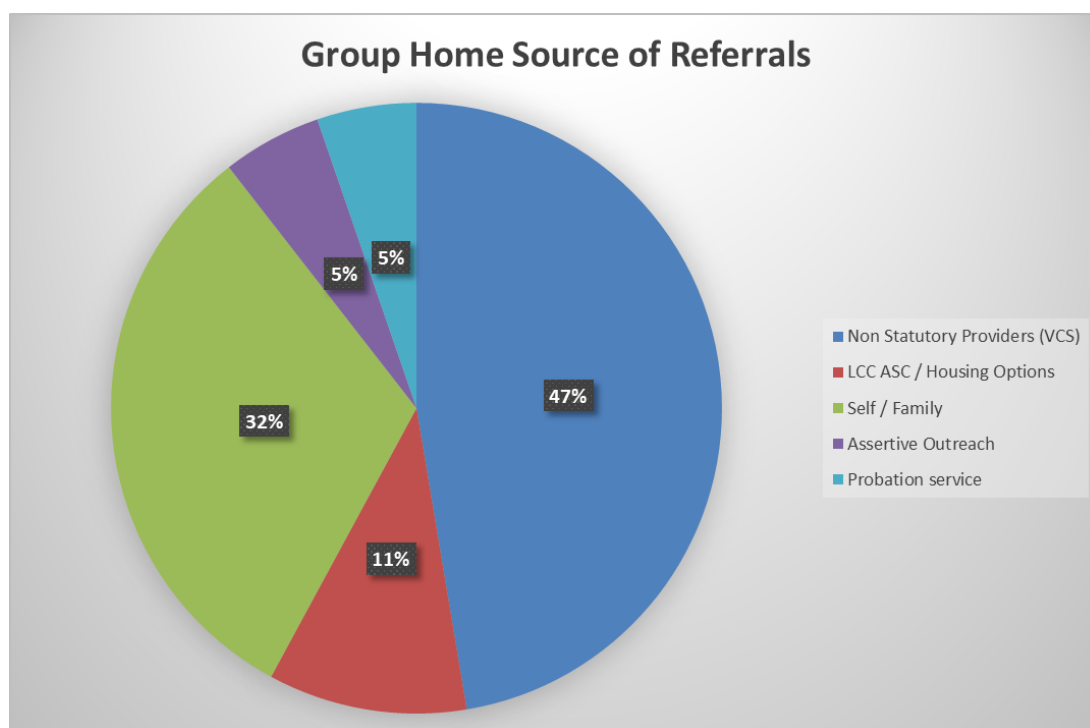
During the year, NH&S lost an average of 5.86 days to sickness per (full time) staff member, which was higher than the 3.52 in the previous year and a little over our target. It is also a little higher than the average amongst other supported housing providers.

Our staff turnover was 12.77%, again a little over our target of 10% but much lower than average amongst other supported housing providers.

## 9. Referrals and Voids

### 9.1 Referrals for Supported Housing (group homes)

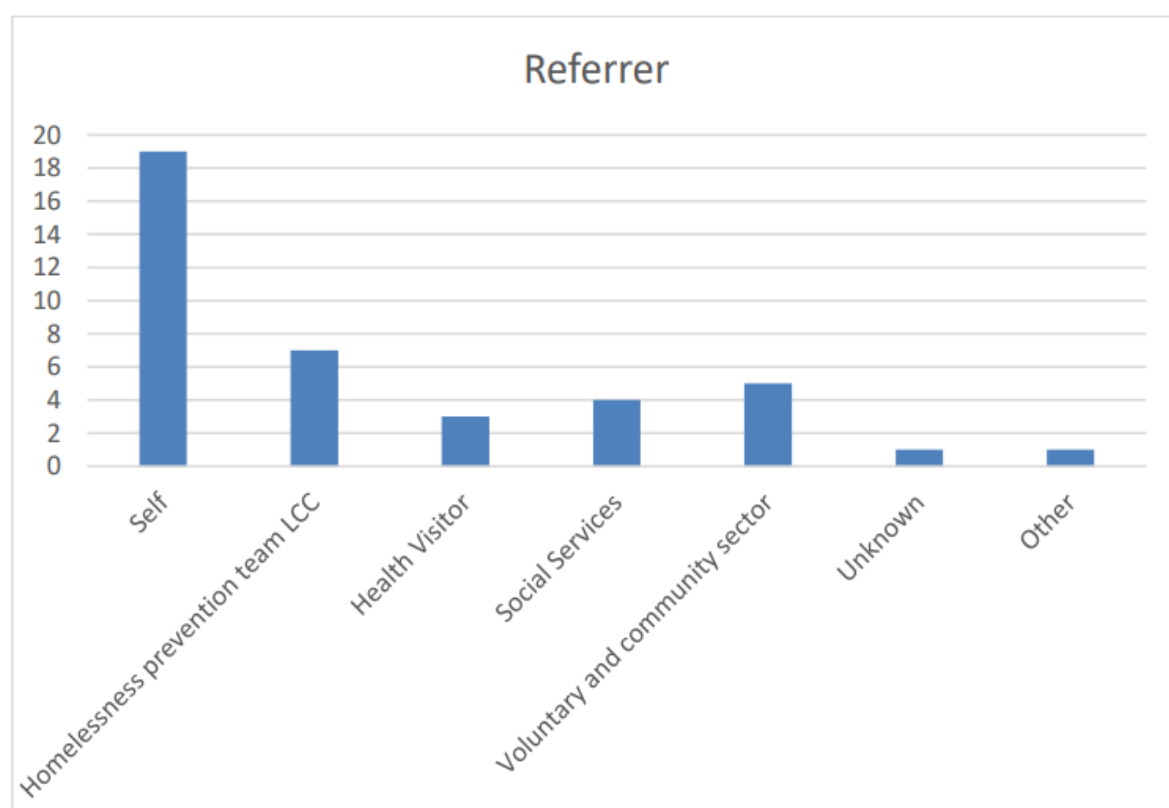
During 2021/22, 19 referrals were received. Compared to the previous financial year, the number of referrals has increased by about a third, but this increase is likely due to the easing of Covid-19 restrictions.



## 9.2 Referrals to our Women’s Service

Between the 1st April 2021 and the 31st March 2022, Norton Housing and Support received 40 referrals to its women’s schemes, almost double the number from the previous year. This is in part due to increased capacity with the opening of our new scheme, Avery House.

The most common source of referrals was from women themselves, with 46% self-referring. There were also a significant number of referrals directly from the City Council’s Housing Options (Homelessness Prevention Team) and from other voluntary and community sector providers (other charities or not for profit groups).



## 9.3 Voids

At the end of March 2022, there were 3 voids (spaces) in our supported housing service. 3 spaces were also available at the newly opened Avery House. During the year, 2.54% of rent was lost through dwellings being vacant – our target being to keep this figure under 4%.

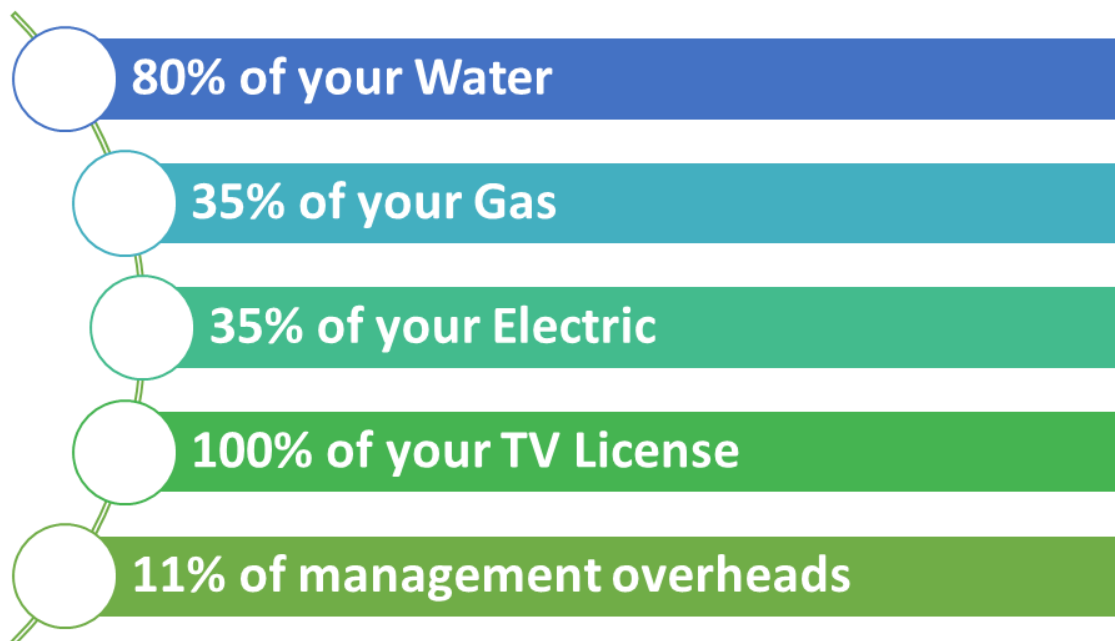
We are always keen to ensure that any vacant rooms are offered to someone in need as quickly as possible. However, we also know that moving can be a stressful and anxious time. For this reason, those moving into our supported housing are offered a phased move so that they can get to know their new Support Worker and fellow residents. This contributes to the

time it takes us to fill a space across our services, which in 2021-22 was 158 day – this reflects one new letting. The difficulty filling the vacancy was partly due to it being declined by two applicants. Vacancies in the women scheme were filled much more quickly with the average relet time being 43 days.

## 10. Rent

### 10.1 Our Charges

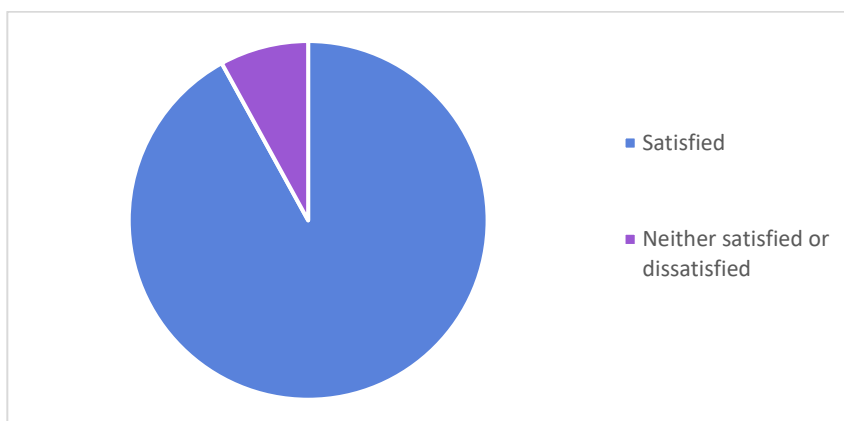
The majority of our residents are eligible for Housing Benefit, which covers most of their housing costs, including core rent and service charges. However, as required by Housing Benefit rules, a monthly charge is made to residents in group homes for housing costs including:



As part of our service, we offer residents support to claim the benefits they are entitled to, manage their bills and budget effectively. In our 2022 survey, we asked our residents if they were satisfied with the support they received to:

**Claim universal credit, housing benefit and other welfare benefits such as PIP**

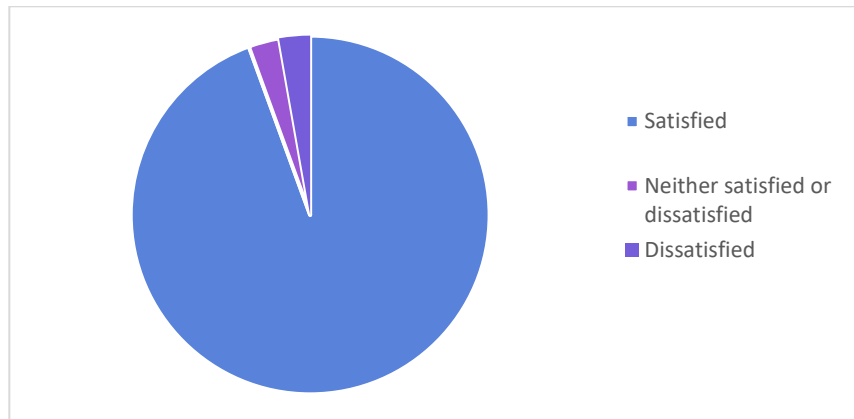
92% of those who answered were satisfied, with no respondents being dissatisfied.





### Manage their finances, and pay rent and service charges

94% of those who answered were satisfied, with 3% being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. 3% were dissatisfied.



## 10.2 Arrears

We are pleased to say that the vast majority of our residents pay their monthly charges on time. At the end of March 2022, ineligible charge arrears stood at £617.05, lower than at the same point in 2021, when they stood at £834.98.

For 2021-2022, arrears (excluding any arrears due to late housing benefit payments) represented 0.08% of the annual rent debit for the year. This compares favourably with other supported housing providers involved in the Acuity Benchmarking Club, where the average level of arrears for supported housing providers was 1.37% of annual rent debit. This suggests NH&S has an effective and efficient rent collection service.

## 10.3 Value for Money

As a provider of social housing, NH&S is required to comply with a number of regulatory standards, including the Value for Money Standard.

Value for Money is often described using the '3 Es':

- **Economy** –the cost of providing a service that reflects not just price, but its sustainability. For example, the salary costs of employees, material costs of a repair, payments made to contractors and consultants.
- **Efficiency** – How much you get out, in relation to how much you put in. Efficiency involves carrying out activities in a timely manner, and with minimum waste.
- **Effectiveness** – looks at the impact achieved and whether desired outcomes are met.

As part of a commitment to delivering value for money, NH&S has been developing a Value for Money Strategy to outline its approach. This will cover seven key ways in which value for money is delivered across the organisation, as follows:

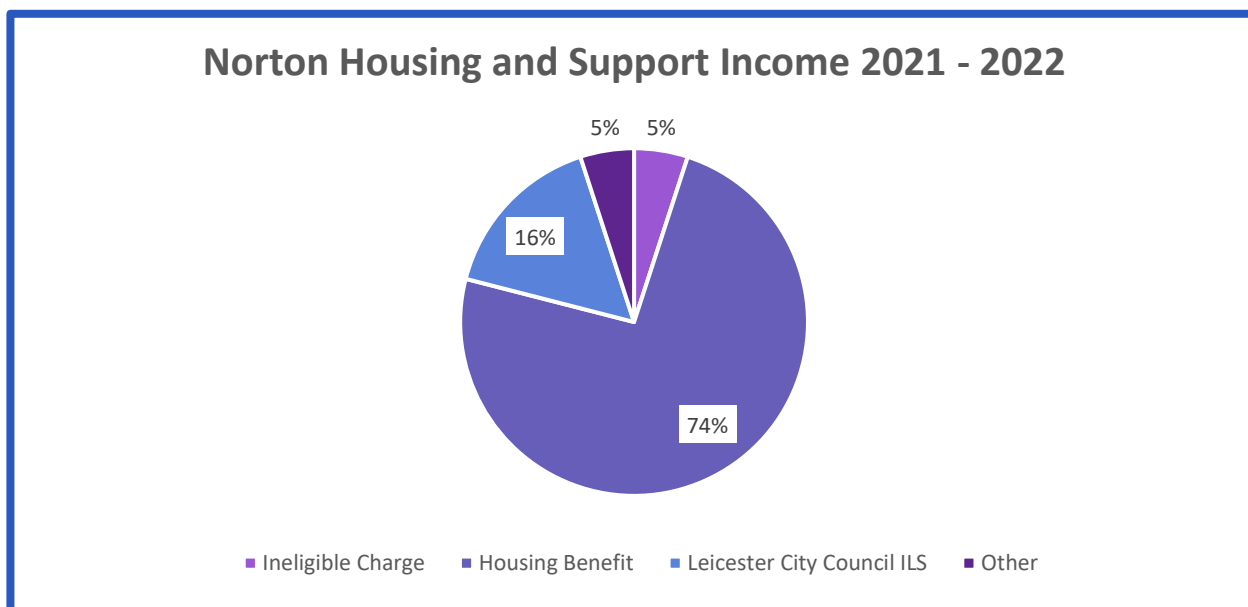
- 1) **Governance** – developing a Board-led Value for Money culture, and ensuring that it is entrenched in the organisation's Strategic Objectives.
- 2) **Embedded approach** – making sure staff understand Value for Money, why it is important and how they contribute to delivering it.

- 3) **Customer Focus** – ensuring that the services provided are shaped around the needs of residents, that residents understand our aims and how we deliver Value for Money.
- 4) **Monitoring Performance** – Ensuring an effective system is in place to monitor our performance and benchmark this against other similar organisations.
- 5) **Financial Stewardship** – setting budgets, understanding costs and sources of income and regularly reviewing returns.
- 6) **Procurement** – buying goods and services at the optimum price, whilst protecting safety and maintaining quality to an agreed acceptable standard.
- 7) **Investing in Staff** – Ensuring staff receive the tools and support they need to do their job to the best of their ability. Retaining skills and experience within the Organisation.

## 11. Income, Fundraising and Donations and Training Services

### 11.1 Income Streams

The majority of NH&S's income comes from the charges it makes for its services. This includes rent and service charges for its properties (both of which are normally covered by Housing Benefit), as well as charges paid directly by residents (called 'ineligible charges'). The support provided in group homes is paid for separately, through a contract with Leicester City Council to deliver Independent Living Support (ILS). The chart below shows the breakdown of income for 2021-22. 'Other' income includes donations and grants, as described in 11.2.



### 11.2 Fundraising and Donations

Fundraising continues to be an important area to develop for the organisation and during the year, efforts have resulted in a total of £14,805.72 being received into the business. This can be broken down as £12,764 of restricted funds (for a specific or limited use) and £2,041.72 of unrestricted funds (money that the Charity may use for any purpose so long as it meets the aims and objectives of the Charity). Restricted funds included a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund towards the *'Healthy Body, Healthy Mind and Healthy You!'* project. The Board have agreed that fundraising should be a key priority for 2022-23.



In addition to monetary donations and grants, NH&S also received generous donations of goods and services - including a selection of plants and gardening supplies from Dominion Garden Centre. The plants went directly to our gardens to be enjoyed by our residents. We also received regular surplus product donations from Lidl, Aldi and Getir, the Neighbourly scheme. Not only does the scheme reduce food waste, but it allows us to offer a little extra help to those who use our services.

We would like to thank any organisations or individuals who donated to us in 2020-2021.

### 11.3 Training Services

Norton Housing and Support delivered training to several external organisations throughout 2021/22 via our in-house trainer, Aleena. This included Mental Health Awareness, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and Menopause training.

The feedback has been excellent for these courses and some of the comments we received were:

- ***“I found this course to be informative and thought provoking”***
- ***“Aleena was great - gave space for us all to voice our opinions and led us to have meaningful discussions on it within the context of our business.”***
- ***“A very informative course, Aleena was brilliant and got everyone engaged.”***

Sadly, the training service had to end later in 2022 as there were no sessions being booked. However, we remain proud of the training already delivered. Especially, that we had the opportunity to further spread knowledge of mental health and its impact, to a wider audience.

## 12. Looking to the Future

This financial year has seen NH&S review and revise its business plan – a key document that defines the organisation’s objectives (aims) and how it plans to achieve its goals between now and 2025.

An integral part of this work was a review of the organisation’s Vision, Mission, and Values which are now as follows:

**Vision:** To be a recognised leader in mental health and supported housing services in Leicester and Leicestershire.

**Mission:** We support both our residents and the wider community to achieve mental health and wellbeing, through the delivery of accommodation and support

## Values:

- Person-centred
- Empowers
- Partnership
- Integrity
- Respect
- Inclusive

NH&S's goals are:

- 1. To consolidate existing services – this means we want to continue to deliver excellent performance, whilst adapting our services, so that in the future we can continue to support our existing residents.**
- 2. To grow and diversify our services – either by providing more homes or by expanding our support services. However, it is vital that any expansion is a response to genuine need within the communities we serve and that we build our capacity to ensure we have the skills and resources to support our expansion.**

For updates on our progress why not check out our social media -



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