

TCUK HOMES

Annual Report 2021-22

CHANGING LIVES

TOGETHER WE ARE CHANGING LIVES



WELCOME

Welcome to TCUK Homes' eighth Annual Report to our residents.

This report identifies the commitments that we make to our residents and confirms the standards and the range of services you can expect to receive. It provides you with a summary of our achievements for the year ending 31 March 2022 and the plans in place for the following 12 months.

TCUK Homes is a Registered Housing Provider regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing and a Homes England Investment Partner.

The Regulator has set national standards within their regulatory framework and we are expected to update you annually on how we are performing and meeting these standards.

Where we are not fully compliant we will tell you and confirm what we are doing to work towards being so.

ALEX SHIEL

Chair, TCUK Homes Board

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OUR VISION

**TO HELP PEOPLE IN FINANCIAL
HARDSHIP TO ACCESS GOOD QUALITY
AFFORDABLE HOMES TO RENT AND
THEREBY HELP TO RELIEVE POVERTY.**

Our vision keeps everyone at TCUK Homes focused on providing the best possible services to our residents.

Our objectives:

- » Deliver an excellent housing service
- » Run an efficient business
- » Invest and grow our business
- » Relief of poverty in local communities

How are we doing?

How do you think we are performing against those objectives? We'd love to hear from you. Email us:

tcukhomes@changing-lives.org.uk



ABOUT US

TCUK Homes is a subsidiary company of Changing Lives. We became a registered housing provider in 2013 and qualified as an investment partner with Homes England.

TCUK Homes is a passionate, honest and diverse organisation which is committed to respecting and empowering people.

Homelife

Homelife is the name of our empty homes programme. We manage affordable homes in seven local authority areas. These are Northumberland, Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland and Durham. We have completed the delivery of our empty homes programme and have no immediate plans to deliver any more.

Our Properties

As of 31 March 2022, TCUK Homes has 84 affordable rented homes in management. We also manage 56 non-social rented housing on behalf of Changing Lives, bringing our total homes in management to 140.

In addition, there are 275 supported housing units in management in the North East and in York.

Changing Lives

Changing Lives is a registered national charity that provides specialist support services to people facing the most challenging of circumstances. We believe that everyone deserves a safe home, a rewarding job and a life free from addiction or abuse. We know that given the right support, anyone can change their life for the better.

Our Board comprises experts from across the field of housing and social exclusion, bringing a wealth of management expertise to help us deliver the best service we can.



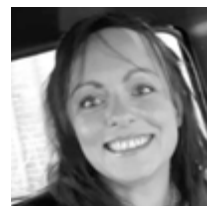
ALEX SHIEL
CHAIR OF BOARD
Head of IP / IT,
Ward Hadaway



**STEPHEN BELL
OBE**
Chief Executive,
Changing Lives



JAMES WALDER
Executive Director
of Finance and
Business Support



MEL SMITH
Senior Housing
Manager YHN



GERALDINE KAY
Former CEO of
Derwentside
Homes



NEIL BAIRD
Director of Housing
Operations,
Changing Lives



**ANTHONY
FELLOWS**
Director of
TCUK Homes



CLARE KNOX
Project Lead, The
Fells, Changing
Lives



**OLIVIA
HETHERINGTON**
Housing Manager,
TCUK Homes

● BOARD MEMBER ● STAFF MEMBER

How are we performing?

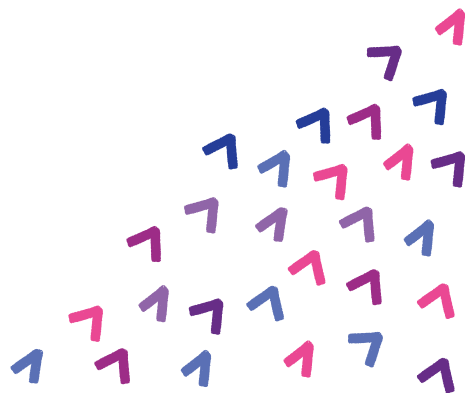
Our performance is important to us as it indicates how well we are doing as an organisation and more importantly, how well we are delivering services to you, our residents.

We set targets every year and monitor our performance against them. This helps us to highlight performance - good and bad - and to focus our attention on any areas that require improvement.

Our Board members monitor our performance to ensure that we meet standards and legislation, and deliver the objectives in our Strategic Plan. They also scrutinise our budget and assets to make sure that we provide you with quality homes and services. In addition, they help us to plan and deliver improvements to our services and deliver value for money.

There has been a deterioration in rent arrears and void performance in 2021-22, which is not unexpected due to the very difficult operating environment caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in delays in letting our properties and tenants failing behind with their rent payments. Reducing the number of empty homes and improving our performance in rental income will remain a priority over the next 12 months.

Our performance in repairs has been good despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. It is important that all of our gas boilers are checked and serviced every year and it is really important that residents keep appointments and allow access so that CP12 certificates are renewed on time.



Performance table for TCUK Homes

Key Performance Indicator [KPI]	31/3/21	31/3/22	Target for 2021-22
Voids %	10.3	12.7	6.3
Total Arrears £ [of net rent]	167,906	522,750	156,347
% Emergency Repairs [completed on time]	94	90	100
% Urgent Repairs [completed on time]	96	86	95
% Routine Repairs [completed on time]	100	89	95
% Repairs [completed on first visit]	96	95	75
% Properties with valid CP12s	98	98	100

Move-Ons Performance

Key Performance Indicator [KPI]	31/3/21	31/3/22
Entered a long stay hospital or hospice	4	5
Returned to previous home	9	14
Staying with friends or family	36	57
Bed and Breakfast	4	1
Supported Housing	46	125
Sheltered Housing	0	9
Private rented tenancy	33	40
Social/RSL/LA tenancy	33	70
Other planned move on	28	44
Total completed Move-Ons in the year	193	365

Key Activity This Year

Our main activities this year included a redevelopment of a 50 bed hostel at Elliott House in Newcastle to create 36 one bedroom apartments funded by a £2.2M Move On grant from Homes England.

The scheme was completed in May 2021 despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. It was shortlisted in several awards ceremonies and awarded The Lord Mayors Special Design Award for 2021. The scheme was selected by Homes England for a compliance audit and achieved a 'green' audit assessment of full compliance. Changing Lives owns the freehold for Elliott House, which, following its redevelopment, was renamed 1-4 Bentinck Terrace. It has been leased to TCUK Homes on a 60-year agreement.

TCUK Homes has continued to work in partnership with Changing Lives in the delivery of its dispersed accommodation model to support and rehouse people experiencing homelessness. However, plans to grow the service have been put on hold due to the higher than expected number of empty homes.

Affordable Rents

We follow Government guidelines to keep rent and service charges affordable and our Homelife Tenancy Management Team is on hand to contact if you are struggling to make payments.

We also work with Citizens' Advice Bureau and other partner agencies to provide advice and assistance in accessing welfare benefits that you may be able to claim to maximise your household income.

Homelife Performance 2021/22

During the last 12 months our main priority has been to let our empty properties and reduce rent arrears.

Homelife operates in seven local authority areas. The number of properties per local authority are:

- » Durham: **7**
- » Gateshead: **25**
- » Newcastle: **39**
- » Northumberland: **22**
- » North Tyneside: **15**
- » South Tyneside: **23**
- » Sunderland: **8**

Finances

Despite the challenges posed by Covid-19, frontline services to residents have been sustained with a continuation of both housing management and support, and central services adopting agile working practices.

Following a successful pilot, TCUK Homes joined Karbon Homes' cost sharing vehicle Karbon Solutions in April 2021, transferring the delivery of its out of hours repairs service.

In September 2021, gas servicing and gas boiler repairs were moved over. The transfer of both services has been professionally managed and will facilitate the delivery of cost-effective services, helping to mitigate the risks associated with gas servicing and boiler repairs.

There has been an increase in rent arrears during the period and our Housing Officers have worked in partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureaus and other debt counselling agencies to provide advice and support and encourage residents to pay something rather than nothing.

Void performance throughout the year for Affordable Housing is just above target despite the additional challenges posed by the pandemic. Current tenant weeks in arrears remains a concern, but the Homelife Tenancy Management Team continue to monitor rent arrears and provide tenants with financial inclusion advice and support.



Finances continued

The regulations introduced by the government in response to Covid required a period of 6 months’ notice on any new Section 21 notices and an extension to the ban on evictions. At the time, this restricted the Housing Officers’ ability to initiate possession proceedings and resulted in some tenants choosing not to pay their rent or reduce their arrears.

There has been higher than expected void losses for supported housing particularly in our dispersed accommodation projects due to delays in receiving nominations and in the letting of properties.

The results show that although rental income grew because of taking more properties into management, there were higher than expected empty properties and repair costs. Our bad debts totalled **£206,654**, which is **£50,307** above target.

The table below shows TCUK Homes’ financial performance in 2021/22. TCUK Homes generated a surplus of **£17,658**.

KPI	Actual £
Gross Rent & Service Charges	4,067,434
Void Losses	741,903
Bad Debts	206,654

Our year in numbers

£3,325,531
is our net rental income

£17,658
is our surplus for the year

£306,586
is the amount spent on routine maintenance costs

Our Value for Money Statement

TCUK Homes is committed to delivering value for money to its residents through the provision of good quality affordable homes and services. Value for money means making the best use of resources and includes the following:

- » managing finances well, optimising costs to support business viability
- » efficiently managing performance through lean processes and systems
- » effectively delivering services to the satisfaction of our residents and service users
- » providing good quality affordable homes aligned to the needs of residents, service users and local communities in which we work
- » robust asset management processes to strengthen the value of our assets
- » contributing to the charity’s social return

How we apply this:

- » clearly defining and managing a service level agreement for the provision of maintenance and facilities services
- » measuring key performance indicators against stretching targets that compare well when benchmarked against a peer group of organisations
- » seeking feedback from residents and service users, ensuring there are high levels of satisfaction for the services provided
- » maintaining an effective process for procuring goods and services
- » through a comprehensive asset management strategy including 30-year planned maintenance plans implemented through annual delivery plans
- » providing support to residents and service users to maximise benefit entitlements and access training, employment and other progression opportunities
- » joining Karbon Solutions to access their out of hours emergency repairs, gas servicing and boiler repairs services and generate efficiency savings

Resident Involvement

We are committed to working with and listening to you, our residents.

Homelife properties are dispersed over a very large geographical area, encompassing seven local authorities from Durham to Northumberland. Because of the sparsity of properties throughout these areas there is not much opportunity for social events or get-togethers. This was made harder again due to the restrictions of the Covid lockdowns.

Instead, we think the best way of encouraging resident involvement is by seeking feedback on Homelife services and working with our residents to focus on the work of our projects. During the past year, we have sought ongoing feedback from residents on our repairs performance together with their views on the project as a whole.

This exercise has provided a lot of useful information to help inform ongoing improvements to our repairs service.

As the customer satisfaction feedback was undertaken during the first and second Covid lockdowns, we anticipated negative responses from residents, given that the repairs service was restricted to emergency and urgent repairs only. It was encouraging to note that feedback remained relatively positive.

During the forthcoming year, we will be reviewing our approach to resident involvement. The Regulator of Social Housing is undertaking a consultation on a proposed new resident satisfaction measures. The Government is also proposing to introduce a Charter for Social Housing Residents.

This will be designed so that:

- » landlords ensure that homes are safe
- » residents are updated on performance in repairs, complaints handling, health and safety and spending
- » complaints are dealt with promptly and fairly
- » all residents are treated with respect and landlords listen and act on your concerns

TCUK Homes will update its approach to resident involvement to take account of these changes and fully comply with the regulatory standard. We will keep you informed of any significant proposed changes.



Resident Involvement and Empowerment Standard

We aim to keep our residents informed, using a variety of methods tailored to their needs. We will seek to involve our residents in decision-making, respond promptly to complaints and treat all residents fairly and with respect.

Getting involved brings lots of rewards...

Contribute to the decisions made about your home.

Make your area a better place to live.

Understand how we work

Learn new skills.

The Fells

The Fells provides accommodation for men aged 18+ who have experienced homelessness in County Durham. Our purpose-built accommodation centre can accommodate up to 45 people at once, with both intensive support units and semi-independent living using a three-tier model.

The people accessing our service may have issues and needs to overcome around substance misuse, offending, physical and mental health, unemployment and debt. All residents are assigned a keyworker on arrival who will work with them throughout their journey, providing tailored support for any interconnected issues that may act as a barrier to living independently and building a brighter future.

Our Approach

At the heart of our support is a belief in our residents, often when they can't believe in themselves. We help everyone accessing the service to work on their personal goals, with every achievement one step closer to a happy and healthy future.

One of our main focuses is improving support and care for the people accessing our service with mental health issues.



Mental Health Hub.

The Fells has been assisted by Durham County Council commissioners in securing a £150,000 bid to support residents with their mental health.

This is a twelve-month pilot, and the funding will create up to four new roles for a mental health team within the project, as well as provide extra mental health support and care for the people accessing our service.

Cost of Living Crisis

Staff have been working hard with the people we support and the credit union to help our people with the cost-of-living crisis before they move on into the community.

The credit union has been working with our people to change their spending habits, discuss money saving opportunities, how to deal with debt and other support available in the Durham area.

"I'M GRATEFUL FOR THEIR HELP AS I HAD IT ROUGH ON THE STREETS. I NOW HAVE HOPE. IT'S A GREAT SERVICE, THANK YOU"

Liam's Story

Liam (not his real name) was admitted to Lanchester Road Hospital under the mental health act after suffering a mental health crisis. While he was in hospital, he was diagnosed with depression and began treatment to enter recovery. When he was due to be discharged, he had nowhere to stay.

Changing Lives received a referral from our commissioner and after assessing Liam's referral, he was admitted to The Fells.

Liam had a cocaine addiction before he was admitted into hospital. He had started misusing substances after the passing of his grandad, which hit him hard. Liam had a close relationship with his grandad due to being his carer at the time of passing and he is still grieving. Whilst in Hospital, Liam began to engage with drug and alcohol services, Humankind. He managed to stop using cocaine and begin the next part of his recovery journey.

Being

Liam came to live within our 45-bed accommodation after being discharged from hospital. He was engaging with Humankind through telephone appointments, which he felt more comfortable with than face-to-face appointments as he struggled to discuss his substance issues in person.

He had a few lapses with substance use whilst residing at The Fells and was offered support from a keyworker who encouraged him to engage with Humankind more.

Liam already had a Durham Key Options Account active prior to residing at The Fells. He had bid on a property and was awaiting signing for his tenancy but he wanted to reside at The Fells to solve the temporary issues he was having and to actively engage with the support to build up his resilience before entering the community.

Becoming

Once he had settled in and gained trust with the staff, Liam engaged well with his support worker, attending regular sessions. He came to us in crisis a few times, opening up about his feelings and family issues, but said that he felt safe and could trust speaking to his keyworker who would actively listen and offer him support until he felt ok to be on his own.

Liam began making his own appointments, demonstrating he had the motivation and ability to take responsibility over his recovery. He began looking for employment and gained a volunteering opportunity that enabled him to make meaningful use of his time. He also signed up for a university course in construction to broaden his knowledge and skill set.

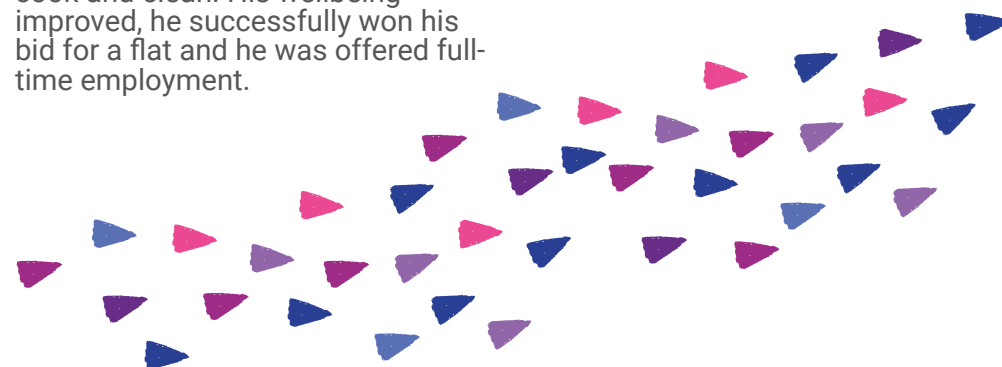
Liam learnt some new independent living skills whilst at The Fells, including how to manage his money, cook and clean. His wellbeing improved, he successfully won his bid for a flat and he was offered full-time employment.

Belonging

Liam demonstrated determination and a good work ethic. He did have times where he struggled but with continued support, he managed to implement and achieve his goals. He successfully moved into his own flat and is now living independently, working full-time and doing well with his mental health.

Liam was grateful to have somewhere safe to stay while he was working toward living independently and reaching his full potential in the community. He engaged well with our service, developing good relationships with other residents, trust in staff and positive changes in himself.

Liam's story shows the importance of having a safe and secure environment to call home and that the support model Changing Lives has can benefit individuals to engage and flourish.



Hedley House

Building on their successful outcomes for young people in previous years, the staff at Hedley House continue to actively encourage resident participation within the service.

The team hold regular resident meetings to ensure that the young people we help understand their rights and responsibilities and have a say in their ongoing support and accommodation needs. Within these meetings the young people requested a 'day trip' so that staff and residents could have a day out together to have fun.

Staff took on board what the young people requested and began to raise funds to provide more 'fun' opportunities for young people rather than just supportive services.

Fundraising in the Community

Staff went out into the local community to explain our services and the support. As a result, Hedley House joined forces with several local shops and businesses and has been holding bake sales to fundraise for the purchase of annual tickets to Beamish Open Air Museum.

Being able to purchase these tickets meant a lot to the young people, who were very excited to visit a local educational attraction that has been inaccessible to them in the past.

The staff at Hedley House are always proactive regarding exploring opportunities to raise additional funds and two of the team members even signed up for a sponsored sky dive to raise some much-needed funds for the festive period.

Hedley House Dispersed

Many of the young people who move on from Hedley House do so into one of our seven dispersed properties. Young people moving on into these properties are supported by a dedicated outreach worker from Hedley House and remain part of the Hedley House family, welcome to call in if needed and attend any events or workshops happening in the service.

Excellent Outcomes

Despite young people struggling with the rising cost of utilities and travel, they have achieved some truly excellent outcomes this year. All seven recently dispersed residents are in work, training, or education. Two young people secured their own housing association tenancy and a further two are looking to access the private rented sector.



Dispersed Accommodation

Sanctum

Sanctum provides safe, temporary, supported accommodation to a variety of people experiencing domestic abuse who cannot access mainstream services. Accommodation is dispersed and community-based.

Support is tailored to people facing multiple challenges, and those who by demographic cannot access mainstream refuge provision, such as male, trans and non-binary people. Our aim is to provide a different offer to people in need, reduce repeat victimisation, alleviate reasons as to why people stay in abusive relationships, foster engagement with health and well-being services and support people to find permanent, safe, sustainable accommodation following a period of intensive support.

The model started in Sunderland in May 2019, in partnership with Gentoo where we were able to acquire a number of community based properties which provided a safe, temporary home for individuals and families fleeing abuse.

Sunderland Dispersed

We began delivering dispersed, community-based accommodation in 2018, in Northumberland. This model focuses on giving people their 'own front door' and provides a different offer to many people who struggle with communal living for a variety of reasons.

Dispersed properties allow for a sense of community whilst still offering the lifeline of visiting support and the offer of 24/7 phone lines to keep people connected. Our dispersed accommodation can be accessed as a first offer to people in our services but can also be offered as Move On accommodation.

In March 2020, we received a grant from Sunderland City Council as a response to Covid, to expand. This service mobilised quickly to support the increased number of people facing homelessness as a result of the pandemic. TCUK manages a number of dispersed properties throughout Tyne and Wear.

Athena

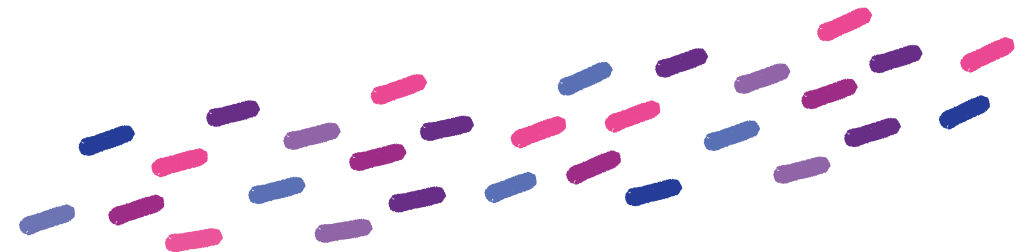
Athena is an eight bed supported accommodation for vulnerable women with complex needs.

This may include women who have been experiencing homelessness, who are coming out of custody, living in unsuitable accommodation, experiencing domestic abuse or who may have additional needs. The service has been funded by Sunderland City Council until 31st December 2022.

Durham Dispersed

TCUK now has dispersed properties across Durham for individuals, providing year-long tenancy opportunities, as well as short-term properties for people facing multiple challenges.

Residents receive support from specialist support workers and additional support can be provided through our partnerships with organisations like Citizen's Advice Bureau and local food banks.



Harbour View

Harbour View is a supported accommodation service in Sunderland for young people from the age of 16. Young people can access the service if they are a Looked After Child, leaving local authority care, or if they are experiencing homelessness at 16 or 17 years old.

Young people usually live at the service from nine months to a year but they can be supported up to the age of 25 if needed. The service opened on 1 April 2021 and is one of TCUK Homes' newest. It is staffed by a dedicated team of support workers 24 hours a day and aims to help young care leavers develop their independent living skills in a caring, homely environment.

The service has nine ensuite bedrooms, a shared kitchen on each floor, a yard and a cosy communal room for key work sessions, movie and games nights, or just somewhere people can get together.

The Support Journey

At Harbour View, we support all young people using a tried and tested 'support journey'. The key aims of this include consulting with the young person and involving and empowering them to make their own choices about their options and future. We support them to make positive changes that they can sustain by helping them set and achieve weekly goals.

The support journey isn't always easy as many of the young people have several presenting needs on arrival, which can include substance misuse, mental health issues, physical health issues, risk of or being exploited, estrangement from family, bereavement, and often a lack of confidence in themselves.

We work with the young people to overcome these challenges by starting with small, achievable goals initially that can help them build up the necessary skills and confidence to achieve their long-term goals, such as going to university or entering employment.

Settling In

In the first 24 hours of a young person arriving to our service, we aim to address their immediate support needs, which could include ensuring they have access to both finances and food.

It is also important that the new young person moving in spends some time with their keyworker to ensure they fully understand their rights and responsibilities as a resident at Harbour View, and to learn what they can expect from their keyworker and the service.

The new resident is then introduced to the other young people at the service and members of staff. All new residents are also invited to our fortnightly resident's meetings and are made aware of any activities available in the coming weeks. All new residents are encouraged to help prepare and share a meal with other young people as an excellent way to get to know one another and develop independent living skills.

Harbour View Dispersed

In addition to the nine bedspaces at Harbour View, the dedicated support team also provide floating support for five young people who live in properties across Sunderland.

All our accommodation is in line with decent homes standard and is furnished to a high specification. All the furniture is provided by Changing Lives and although we standardise the furniture packs, we do offer some choice to the individual and support them in decorating their space how they prefer it.

"WE WOULDN'T BE WHERE WE ARE WITHOUT YOU..."

Erimus Dispersed

We currently manage 22 dispersed properties within the Middlesbrough catchment codes of TS1-5. These properties are available to single young people, young people wishing to share, and young families who are 25 years or younger at referral.

Young people living in these properties are supported by staff from hub service Erimus House, which is not part of TCUK. Young people can live in these properties for around two years. All properties have come online since April 2021. They have been finished to a high standard and include many extras to ensure that the young people have a good start as they embark on their independent living journey.

The staff from Erimus visit the property weekly to ensure the young people are managing their properties well and provide support to access training, education or employment if they are ready for it.

Independent Living Skills

In the first year of operation, we suffered from particularly high voids across our Middlesbrough dispersed properties as we found that many young people referred were not ready to live out in the community and they had to first move into our hub service to further develop their independent living skills.

We also had to work very closely with partners in Middlesbrough to tackle issues such as drug misuse and exploitation, which we have found to be happening in several of the streets on which we have properties. But we have had two successful Move Ons from our dispersed accommodation, with the young people moving into their own private rented tenancies.

Positive Pathways

We have taken significant learning from the high number of voids we carried this year in Erimus dispersed. In future, we would not look to take on dispersed properties until the hub project has been open for six months.

This allows time for young people to develop their independent living skills and Move On as part of a positive pathway. Plans are also in development for more young families to move into our dispersed accommodation as well as a trial whereby Middlesbrough refuge will take on responsibility for three of the properties to house women who experience difficulties living in a more typical refuge setting.



“THANK YOU DOESN'T SEEM BIG ENOUGH”



Haley's Terrace

Haley's Terrace is part of the Resettlement Pathway in York and provides supported accommodation for two individuals. Ownership was transferred to TCUK in 2017. The accommodation is accessed via Single Access Point referral and people typically stay between three to nine months.

Changing Lives offers safe, secure accommodation accompanied by a support package tailored to the individual needs of the people living in the property. We also provide a robust package of Housing Management, including the Health and Safety provision, repairs and ongoing maintenance.

The residents integrate fully into the local community and they have built good relationships with their neighbours and other people living around them. In general, the people staying in the property usually move on to living independently by securing their own tenancies via the City of York Council.



Bentinck Terrace

Elliott House closed its doors in 2019 to make way for a new model, a new way of delivering support. Changing Lives realised that 52 rooms for people suffering various degrees of trauma was no longer suitable.

The effect on residents, staff and the local community meant it was time for change. Change came in May 2021 when Bentinck Terrace opened its doors. Residents of Bentinck Terraced moved into brand new fully furnished self-contained flats with their own front door. Gone were the days of tiny bedrooms, sharing toilets and kitchens.

The hard work started with filling all 36 flats, rebuilding connections with the residents' association, police, and all members of our multi-cultural community.

Building connections and skills

We are proud to have established ourselves and built further connections with other service providers whilst accommodating social work students and counselling students.

We've also arranged onsite training courses for our residents to provide over 100 people with qualifications in different areas including health and hygiene, environmental studies and warehouse operations.

"BENTINCK TERRACE AND CHANGING LIVES HAVE HELPED ME IMMENSELY. THEY FUNDED MY MICROLIGHT EXAMS AND MADE MY DREAMS COME TRUE. I CAN NOW FLY AND HOPEFULLY TEACH OTHERS. THE POSITIVE IMPACT ON MY MENTAL HEALTH IS SOMETHING I NEVER THOUGHT COULD HAPPEN, THE STAFF ARE AMAZING"

Our Community Standard

We aim to keep the neighbourhood and any communal areas clean and tidy, and work in partnership with local councils and the police to tackle and prevent anti-social behaviour.

TCUK Homes delivers important benefits for local communities. Our Homelife project brings empty homes back into use and helps to address a lack of affordable housing in some locations.

This contributes to more stable communities by working in partnership with agencies such as Homes England and local councils to make best use of the existing housing stock in their areas. The outlook of local neighbourhoods is considerably improved and enhanced with fully refurbished and occupied homes replacing neglected, vandalised and abandoned properties, providing much-needed affordable housing to local people in need.

We seek to provide employment and training opportunities in the refurbishment of our empty homes, working in partnership with Changing Lives' Employment Team to identify ex-clients and service users to access work placement opportunities. This holistic approach enables TCUK Homes to support local communities by helping to break long-term cycles of unemployment, homelessness and social isolation.

Our Commitment to Equality and Diversity

We treat all our tenants fairly and with respect. We ensure that our policies and procedures are fair and transparent.

We try to gather information to understand the make-up of our tenants and staff. The purpose of collecting this data is to:

- » demonstrate that we're complying with the law and treating people fairly
- » help to identify demand or potential new services
- » allow us to gather satisfaction levels from different groups of tenants

TCUK Homes is fully committed to, and supports, equality of opportunity, and as such seeks to create a culture of fairness, dignity and respect.

The company encourages an environment which is inclusive to all and free from discrimination.

Homelife

Homelife provides homes for people who might otherwise struggle to access private rented or social housing tenancies due to a lack of availability or affordability.

Because of our key lettings criteria, Homelife is often the first port of call for referral agencies working with people with specific needs and vulnerabilities. The Homelife project manages both social and private tenancies. Although there are slightly different rent structures, both social and private residents have the same rights and responsibilities.

Rents are set in accordance with the Rent Standard published by the Regulator of Social Housing, with increases capped to Local Housing Allowance rates so that tenants in receipt of full housing benefit or universal credit housing costs can have their rent fully covered, subject to household size.

In letting properties our Homelife Tenancy Management team prioritise:

- » People who have been homeless or are at risk of being made homeless
- » People who are in recovery from drug and/or alcohol addiction and, in particular, those who have been abstinent for over six months and are at risk of homelessness
- » Men and women fleeing domestic violence
- » Veterans who are experiencing homelessness

A great deal of the Housing Officers' work focuses on supporting residents to sustain their tenancies, whether by helping those who are dependant on benefits to maximise their incomes, or by working with other agencies to support those who are more vulnerable.

Over the past year, this has become increasingly important as residents and others have experienced the negative health and societal outcomes from the Covid pandemic. The rising cost of living is also having a detrimental impact on household incomes. Our Housing Officers continue to work closely with other Changing Lives projects as well as outside of the organisation to provide support.

As a relatively small housing association, it is important that we maximise our rental income and keep the periods that properties are vacant between tenancies to a minimum. Changes to benefits, particularly the roll out of Universal Credit, continue to have a significant impact upon our residents. As a consequence, a number of tenants have required additional support during the year.

Our Tenancy Standard

We must let our properties in a fair, transparent way and work with local councils to meet the housing needs in their area.

We aim to help people access affordable homes.

We minimise the amount of time properties are empty.

We offer affordable tenancies in our Homelife properties that meet all legal requirements relating to tenancies.

Family L's Story

'Family L' is made up of Miss N, Mr J and their two young sons. They were referred to TCUK Homelife by Blyth Job centre. Previously, they were living in a privately rented property in Birmingham but had to leave their home of 18 years when their landlord decided to sell the property.

Mr J and Miss L have two young sons both under the aged of ten. Mr J works part-time and cares for their two sons as Miss N suffers with a chronic illness and is undergoing hospital treatment.

Family L felt they had to leave Birmingham after their landlord decided to sell as they had no other friends or family in that area. They drove to Blyth to be with family members that had moved to the area two years prior.

The family member that they came to live with resides in a privately rent two-bed property with three children, meaning this property became severely overcrowded with three adults and five children.

After eight weeks, the family member had to ask Family L to leave as it was also a breach of their tenancy agreement to have them all live there. During Christmas 2021, the house was inspected by the landlord and Family L had to hide themselves and their belongings as they had nowhere else to go.

Family L registered with the Council for housing but were only assessed as Band 2 so weren't given priority housing. They also presented themselves to the Homeless Team at the council to be told they couldn't help as the family hasn't had a local connection in the area for more than 5 years. All the council could offer this family was the expenses to send them back to Birmingham.

After struggling for several weeks, the Job Centre provided Family L with TCUK Homelife's number and we provided them with our application form for housing. We also advised Family L to contact a local MP who managed to get them into a hostel temporarily and put them in touch with mental health support and children's services as the situation was having a big impact on the family.

On reviewing their application, TCUK Homelife found Family L a suitable property. They came to view it and instantly wanted to move in. A full financial assessment was undertaken regarding affordability to ensure that the family could afford to live within our property.

On signing up, we helped Family L hire a removal van to retrieve all their belongings from storage in Birmingham and supported them to set up their rent with Universal Credit so that they had one less thing to worry about.

It has now almost been eight months since Family L's tenancy commenced and their conduct of tenancy has been exemplary. They continue to engage with us and other support agencies and show great enthusiasm in keeping on top of their Universal Credit.

They have made great progress setting into their tenancy, making their property into a beautiful home where they can feel safe and secure.

"NOW MY HOUSE IS A HOME"





Maintenance and Repairs

We undertake planned and reactive maintenance to all of our property portfolio.

Planned maintenance includes planning for annual renewal and inspection of gas safety certificates (CP12s), portable appliance testing (PAT) for electrical appliances, emergency lighting and fire alarm systems. It also includes identifying larger planned maintenance work for properties as part of our commitment to improving property standards in the 30-year framework period within our Asset Management strategy.

Reactive maintenance covers anything from repairs to locks to plumbing related issues and everything in between. This includes liaising with sub-contractors for repairs that we can't undertake ourselves, including roofing and electrical repairs.

Routine maintenance issues

- » vandalism (non security risk)
- » minor roof repairs
- » guttering and soil pipe repairs
- » sticking door or window
- » laundry equipment
- » key cutting (suited system)

Urgent maintenance issues

- » re-lamping of fittings
- » toilet not flushing
- » key cutting (non-suited system)
- » minor repairs to electrics
- » security faults
- » survey of dampness/mould growth

Emergency maintenance issues

- » any fault which would endanger lives or put public safety at risk
- » gas boiler emergency - full breakdown of heating or hot water system

Referral agencies who wish to submit housing applications on behalf of the people they support are encouraged to contact Homelife Housing Manager Olivia Hetherington to discuss their needs and circumstances.

olivia.hetherington@changing-lives.org.uk
07802 884 108

In the past year, our maintenance team have carried out

101
emergency repairs
of which 90%
completed on time

144
urgent repairs
of which 86%
completed on time

585
routine repairs
of which 89%
completed on time

See it, Sort it, Report it!

Whether you're at home or out and about, knowing what to do in an emergency could save lives.

There is an out of hours response service for emergency repairs, which is available to all residents. Karbon Homes delivers this service on our behalf. Emergencies will be attended to be made safe in the first instance, and repairs will be done there and then if possible.

Follow on work, if necessary, will be attended by our internal maintenance team or one of our contractors on the next working day, to maintain a consistent approach and standard.

The emergency contact number is operational on weekday evenings 4pm-8am, and on weekends from Saturday 8am-Monday 8am, including Bank Holidays.

For emergency repairs outside of normal hours (4-10pm Monday to Friday, 8am-10pm Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays) please contact our emergency repair Maintenance Team on **+44 131 677 1034**.

If you live in a block of flats that has communal areas please comply with the following requests:

- » Fire doors should be kept shut when not in use
- » Residents or their guests should not tamper with self-closing devices
- » Residents should report any faults or damage immediately to TCUK Homes

In October 2020, customer satisfaction surveys were introduced for repairs and up to 31 March 2022, a total of **68 customers were contacted and provided an overall satisfaction rating of 87%**

If you suspect a gas leak, **do**:

- » open doors and windows
- » turn off the gas at the mains tap, usually near the meter
- » move the handle a quarter turn until it's at 90 degrees from the pipe to shut off the gas supply
- » leave the property
- » phone the National Gas Emergencies on 0800 111 999 - the number is free and available 24hrs a day, only use a mobile phone outside the property
- » follow the advice given by the emergency adviser
- » wait outside for a gas engineer
- » if you are feeling unwell, visit your GP or hospital immediately and tell them you may have been exposed to a gas leak or carbon monoxide poisoning

If you suspect a gas leak **do not**:

- » smoke, light a match or use any other naked flame
- » turn electrical switches on or off
- » use doorbells, mobile phones or any other electrical switches which could cause a spark

About **200 people** in the UK die each year from accidental fires at home.

The risk of dying in a fire is four times greater without a working fire alarm

Faulty electrics and overloaded sockets cause around 6,000 home fires each year

Two fires per day are started by candles

We are all responsible for fire safety. Contact your local fire service to find out more about keeping yourself and your home safe from fire.

Performance targets for The Fells

Emergency	24 Hours
Urgent	3 working days
Routine	10 working days
Performance targets for Homelife	
Emergency	24 Hours
Urgent	5 working days
Routine	21 working days

Our Homes Standard

We aim to sustain our properties at the Decent Homes Standard set by the Government, provide a cost effective repairs service, achieve a right-first-time service, demonstrate value for money and comply with all regulatory requirements including health and safety.

TCUK Homes

T: 0191 273 8891 E: tcukhomes@changing-lives.org.uk

**CHANGING LIVES CENTRAL OFFICE
UNIT D13 MARQUIS COURT TENTH AVENUE WEST TEAM VALLEY GATESHEAD NE11 0RU**

www.changing-lives.org.uk

CHANGING LIVES

Changing Lives is the operating name of The Cyrenians.
Registered charity number 500 640 and registered company number 995799 in England.

TCUK Homes is registered provider number 4756.
Registered charity number 1197888 and registered company number 08385555 in England.