



Creating the right environment for people to flourish

# A word from our Chief Executive



Welcome to our annual self-evaluation which brings you up to date information on Linc's performance and ambition through our OneLinc business plan. To support the delivery of our business plan we launched our new purpose, 'Creating the Right Environment for People to Flourish' and our new values of Passionate Ambitious and Respectful. We aim to contribute to a prosperous and healthier Wales, a great place to live and work, now and in the future.

## Creating the right environment for people to flourish.

We recognise our responsibility in meeting the ambitions of Welsh Government, and we will keep the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act and its seven goals at the forefront of our minds as we shape our ambitions and priorities. Creating outcomes with our colleagues from public and private sectors will help us deliver a range of Welsh Government objectives.

Part of a healthier Wales includes high-quality green space, which can lead to improved physical and mental health, social cohesion, a healthy environment and a positive sense of space as well as contributing to reducing the loss of biodiversity. Our Natural Resources Wales funded project, 'Growing Green Spaces' has supported 10 areas to improve their access to green space so far, working with over 25 different partners and enabling over 30 community led events across South Wales.

Our commitment to building new affordable homes continued at pace. As we look to grow our business, we'll be utilising new and innovative methods of construction while designing homes around the wellbeing of our customers. In this period, we have completed an additional 159 homes and welcomed our new tenants and residents into their new homes.

Working with our tenants remains a key priority. Our tenancy scrutiny bootcamps continued hearing the voices of tenants across Wales on how we can further improve our services. Several tenants presented their findings back to our Board of Management who unanimously agreed with the recommendations.

The end of this reporting period has brought unprecedented challenges for us all, following the impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19). The commitment from colleagues to support tenants and residents has been invaluable and continues to make a big difference. There have been many wonderful examples of the amazing community spirit that exists with so many tenants and residents providing help and support to neighbours, friends and family.

The year ahead will undoubtedly challenge us all. We are ready and prepared to support residents, tenants, colleagues and partners to help play our part in keeping everyone safe and well and rebuilding the future to adjust to the requirements of communities and businesses post Coronavirus (COVID-19).

**Scott Sanders**



# Introduction



Established in 1977, Linc Cymru is a Housing Association and Care provider. It's what we do but is only the beginning of our story. At Linc, we believe in creating the right environment for people to flourish. The homes we build and the natural environments that support them contribute to improving people's quality of life, and as a care provider we work with Local Authorities and the NHS to address the needs of our ageing population. We are a socially responsible business focused on building a prosperous and healthier Wales, a great place to live and work, now and in the future. All profits are reinvested for the benefit of our customers rather than being distributed to shareholders.

In a recent survey 91% of our staff said working at Linc makes them want to do the best they can. 565 passionate, ambitious and respectful people currently work at Linc. We are working to create the right environments for people to flourish across ten Local Authority Areas, providing 4,500 homes and services to over 9,000 people. Our three nursing homes provide dedicated care and comfort to 211 older people in Cardiff and Newport. We also run nine extra care schemes, providing safe and secure independent living to 388 older people, with further schemes on the way.

## Our Purpose and Values

Our Purpose is to create the right environment for people to flourish. To do this we will be:

**Passionate:** We take pride in everything we do and are driven by a positive, infectious attitude. This fuels our desire to work together to create environments where people can flourish and a happier, healthier Wales.

**Ambitious:** Our Passion drives our sense of Ambition. It makes us curious, encourages us to find ways to challenge 'the norm' and embrace new ideas that will provide great experiences for our customers and colleagues.

**Respectful:** Our Ambition is based on Respect and listening. We value our customers and staff and listen to and learn from them; we never create change for the sake of it but use insight to help us respond to their needs.

Together we will live out these values, so that as OneLinc we behave and communicate clearly and consistently to all our audiences and will enable us to achieve our purpose.

## What is self-evaluation?

Effective self-evaluation is one of the ways in which a Housing Association can be accountable to tenants, service users and other stakeholders. It is how we continually review our performance to make sure we are demonstrating that we are well governed, financially viable, provide good quality services and that we strategically plan for business and sector risks.

## How do we self evaluate?

Throughout the year we gather information and monitor our performance to drive and support our corporate planning and learn from our experiences in order to continue to improve our services. Each year we complete a self-evaluation against our Strategic Objectives and the Welsh Government's Regulatory Performance Standards.

We use an embedded approach to continuous improvement with each business area of Linc being fully involved in the self-evaluation by owning their own data and submitting it at regular intervals. This information is based on performance management information, internal audit and assurance, business continuity and risk information and benchmarking against the sector. This information is also tested against significant staff and tenant engagement to see if we are meeting our targets.

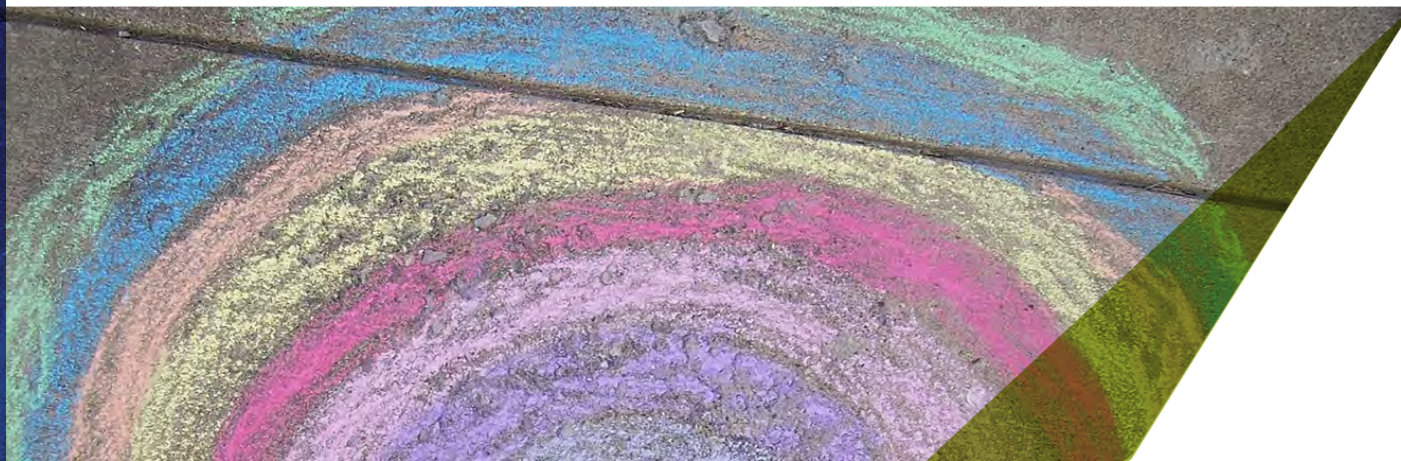
Every year, we work with an external research company to contact tenants to find out more about the service they receive from us. Over 500 tenants are contacted each year. The Welsh Government Regulator sets 9 questions that we must ask and we add a number of additional questions to ask tenants to help us improve our services.

We have also involved tenants and elders in the design of this process and plan a full review of the process and the information reported on for 2020/21 which will also include a more comprehensive stakeholder review.

This document is a summary of some of the key findings from our self-evaluation. It provides an overview of our performance, highlighting what we are doing, comparing against our previous performance and the Welsh Housing Average and sharing some of the things we plan to work on next.



# Responding to the Coronavirus (COVID19) Crisis



The final month of this reporting period includes our initial responses to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Crisis. This has been a time of adaptation and adoption of new ways of working to make sure that our staff and tenants have everything they need to continue to deliver essential services under challenging circumstances.

## What have we been doing?

- In line with our business continuity plan we set up an internal senior team that met every morning to review the latest Welsh Government/Public Health Wales guidance and plan our business response.
- We advised all staff to work from home where possible.
- Non-essential visits and activities with tenants and residents were postponed including schemes and nursing homes.
- Head Office is closed to all but essential visitors.
- Emergency repairs only for tenants.
- A nursing care leadership group met every morning to refine and implement practice. Particular emphasis was placed on the provision of guidance for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Our Procurement and Value for Money Manager has been working closely with colleagues across the business and sector to source PPE.
- Core services were identified and continuously reviewed, ensuring sufficient staff resources were available.
- Contingency plans are in place regarding staffing to ensure we can continue to deliver high quality care even when our standard care workforce may be severely reduced. This is achieved in part by accessing a new staff volunteering bank to cover care shifts and essential tasks.
- We have written to all tenants to signpost them to the range of support and services they can access in their area.
- Whilst our staff are not physically visiting tenants, they are still offering support, guidance and signposting in other ways such over the telephone and virtually.

- This support includes;
- Our Community Engagement team have fast-tracked community grants to support remote communities and self-help groups, explored digital solutions to those who are socially isolated and distributed craft packs across a range of communities.
- Our Housing team have been phoning all tenants to identify those who may need support or advice if they are in financial crisis.
- Our Strive team have linked up with Fareshare and supermarkets to organise food parcels for any vulnerable tenants.
- Our Community Safety team has prepared information for people suffering domestic abuse.
- Our Board of Non-Executive Directors continue to meet and receive all pertinent information to safeguard the business.

## What do our tenants think?

- The individual feedback has been positive particularly around financial advice and support.
- We will be gathering other views on our response in the coming months.

## What are we planning?

- We have been capturing our work in real time so that all our actions are recorded, and lessons learnt in due course.
- We continue to learn and adapt and we are already looking at the changes to the business and how we deliver our services to see what will also work after the crisis.
- We will gather tenant and stakeholder views on our response in the coming months.



# Our Homes



We create homes where people can flourish and focus on what matters to them. We recognise our responsibility in meeting the ambitions of Welsh Government, and we will keep the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act and its seven goals at the forefront of our minds as we shape our ambitions and priorities. Our new and existing homes and the support we provide tenants are vital to improving wellbeing.

## What have we been doing?

	2018/2019	2019/2020	
Tenant arrears (including general needs and Independent Living)	1.56%	2.40%	
No of tenants in receipt of Universal Credit	487	836	
No of tenants evicted	5	9	 Sustaining tenancies is our top priority and evictions are a last resort.
Time to let a new home	17 days	24 days	 We are spending more time to improve the letting standard of our homes before tenants move in.
Reported cases of Anti-Social Behaviour	608 cases (including STRIVE cases)	438	The 2018/19 figure includes tenants supported via strive and is therefore not comparable with 2019/20 figures.
No of tenants being supported by Strive	129	145	
Number of calls taken and % of 1st point of contact resolution	35,479 calls / 71.12%	33,247 calls / 70.86%	

## Baneswell Housing Association and Linc Cymru Transfer of Undertakings

Baneswell Housing Association (BHA), established in 1973, owns and rents 70 homes in the Baneswell area of Newport City. In October 2018, the tenants of BHA, indicated their preference to find a partner to work with going forward. Following a robust process that saw five housing associations express their interest, Linc were thrilled to be awarded preferred partner status.

BHA is built upon strong community relationships and has been pivotal within the local area. For this reason, Linc focused upon preserving the BHA brand and its unique qualities, keeping it at the forefront of the community, whilst putting in place a governance structure that meets the expectations of Welsh Government and supports the ambition of BHA to continue to invest in its homes.

Linda Williams, Baneswell Housing Association, said:

*"It was apparent from the outset that the organisational cultures of Linc and BHA were extremely compatible, focussing on delivering great services to communities, safeguarding future investment and delivering robust governance in a fast-changing world. We are confident that combining forces creates an enhanced outcome for tenants, through a shared desire to provide top class services through local service delivery and great partnerships, this will be extremely powerful."*

We look forward to continuing to work together with BHA and its tenants and to continue to invest in its homes and the Baneswell community.

## What do our tenants think?

	Welsh Housing Avg.	2018/2019	2019/2020	
Percentage who think Linc treat them with dignity and respect	n/a	n/a	88%	
Percentage of tenants who feel safe in their community	n/a	83%	88%	
Percentage who agree with the way we deal with anti-social behaviour	67%	69%	59%	
Percentage who agree Linc are providing the service tenants and residents expect	74%	76%	75%	
Percentage who are satisfied with the service provided by Linc	86%	83%	76%	

• NB the figures for 2019/20 do not include extra care

## What are we planning?

- Developing a Tenancy Sustainability Strategy to guide us over the next 3-5 years to improve services and support more tenants to maintain successful tenancies
- Explore how we offer more services to tenants utilising new and emerging technology
- We are working to understand reasons why tenants contact us and how we can resolve their queries without needing to call in. We will review this as we work continually to improve the service to tenants and residents and give them further options to contact us.

# Building and maintaining our homes



Most of our assets team are based out in the community, supported by our onsite contractors. We are committed to ensuring our property standards are high, and we take health and safety extremely seriously.

Our regular estate inspections, along with our responsive, reactive repairs team and planned maintenance programme (such as new kitchens, bathrooms, boilers and windows) helps keep your home in top shape, and most importantly you and your family safe.

As we build more affordable homes and look to grow our business, we will be utilising new and innovative methods of construction while designing and maintaining our homes around the wellbeing of our customers.

## Between the 1st april 2019 – 30th march 2020 we completed 218 new homes

Family Homes	73
Extra Care Schemes	22
Sheltered Housing Schemes	74
Supported Housing Schemes	4
Intermediate Rent	45
Shared Ownership	-4
Home Buy	-4

## What have we been doing?

Reactive Maintenance	2018/2019	2019/2020	
Number of day to day repairs carried out/average cost per repair (reactive)	11,269 (average cost per repair £207)	9,737 (average cost per repair £205)	

Planned Maintenance Component	Target for 2019/2020	2019/2020	
Kitchens	210	211	
Bathrooms	80	75	
Windows	25	25	
Doors	64	94	
Boilers	65	91	

## Health and Safety

**The importance of reporting accidents** - The number of accidents per 100 employees is low at 0.43.

**Audit Completion** - The planned site-based audits and desktop audits target was 145, 135 were achieved, 10 desktop audits were postponed as a result of Coronavirus (COVID-19) as the site inspections took priority. The desktop audits will be completed in April 2020 with any associated actions posted on the accident and incident system.

**Health and Safety Training** - All staff complete critical health and safety training across all areas of the business. The target is 92% completion rate and a completion rate of 90% was achieved. The completion of the new ladders course and an extension of the e-learning asbestos awareness to more staff contributed to the target missed as the completion of the courses by staff members has been slower than expected.

**Asbestos Processes and Procedures** - The asbestos review has been completed and we have undertaken 85% of surveys. Remaining surveys were halted due to Coronavirus (COVID-19) and will shortly recommence.

**Electrical Fixed Wiring Improvement Programme** - The Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) was completed with 97% undertaken in the 2019/20. The additional reports are being managed by Linc's contract manager with full monthly updates given to Head of Assets.

**Legionella Testing Programme** - The annual programme of legionella testing achieved 97.8% against a target of 95%.

**Gas Safety and Smoke Detection** - We were 99.23% compliant for gas safety and smoke detection inspection against a target of 100%.



## Housing Futures

We're pleased to announce our CEO Scott Sanders, has been appointed to sit on Community Housing Cymru's (CHC) Housing Futures steering group.

The group consists of 15 people representing housing associations across Wales with complementary skills and experience.

As part of his role, Scott will have oversight of the Housing Futures programme in Wales as it progresses, and at each stage will have specific decision-making responsibilities including:

- **Deciding what the Welsh challenge is**
- **Overseeing the Greenhouse team over the 16-week placement at CHC's offices in Cardiff**
- **Supporting the impact phase of the programme**



## What do our tenants think?

	Welsh Housing Avg.	2018/2019	2019/2020	
Percentage that are happy with the overall quality of their home	85%	75%	76%	👍
Percentage that are happy with the way Linc deal with repairs and maintenance	80%	64%	61%	👍
Percentage who think services are easy to access and open to all tenants and residents"	n/a	n/a	84%	👍
Percentage who think their home is in a convenient location	n/a	83%	94%	👍

- NB the figures for 2019/20 do not include extra care

## What are we planning?

- Creating 1,700 new homes by 2026 that provide a safe and secure home and environment for tenants.
- Providing homes for sale to support our ongoing investment in affordable housing.
- Extending our use of modern methods of construction to create environmentally conscious and sustainable developments such as our plans for a new development in City Road, Cardiff.
- Partnering to deliver solutions that meet health, housing, leisure and workplace needs particularly illustrated at our Wellness Village in development in Sunnyside Bridgend.
- We will be working with our new Procurement and Value for Money Manager and our active tenants to procure several new contracts including planned maintenance, and grounds maintenance.

# Community Engagement



Over the last year we continued to deliver a range of tenant and community led programmes of engagement, ensuring tenants have a voice on the range of services they receive from Linc and within the community.

## What have we been doing?

### Working with Community Groups

- Seven new residents groups were set up.
- A total of 38 community volunteers were supported throughout the year.
- Residents in Maesteg got together to develop a Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO) project to reduce loneliness and isolation and were granted £26,000.
- We allocated £5,000 to a range of community groups and schemes for gardening and health and wellbeing projects.
- We have been adapting our usual ways of working in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) and have produced resources and information to support our tenants.

### Hearing more voices

- We created our new Tenant and Community Engagement strategy with input from our Tenant Panel and Branching Out Club with a new aim to hear more voices.
- We held our first Tenants and Residents Strategic Group meeting in February 2020. This is a small group of up to 8 tenants who will act as a voice for tenants to feed into strategic matters. The group replaces the Tenant Panel which was disbanded in November in order to develop a new and more meaningful framework for engagement based on hearing more voices, data and research.
- We held a mini conference and scrutiny bootcamp. Recommendations on reducing evictions were provided and approved by Linc's Board.
- Recommendations from our Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny were approved by the Board.
- Recommendations from our Health and Safety Scrutiny Session were approved by the Board.
- We received 97 responses from tenants on reducing evictions.
- We consulted 6 focus groups on the development of our Tenancy Sustainability Strategy.
- We produced over 46 digital stories of tenants sharing their stories.

## Partnership working

We continued our work collaborating with over 30 partners and we have:

- Produced a video, together with Baneswell HA capturing and recording their heritage, showing how valuable this is to their members.
- Been a key partner, involving our tenants in the making of the Mosaic Project in Newport celebrating the lives of women as part of a community arts project.
- Worked on our Heritage Lottery Funded project 'Loving the Lysaght' which has been busy engaging with schools, local organisations and communities.
- Successfully launched the BG Reach project, which is a collaboration between The Open University, Aberbeeg Community Group and Linc. Funded by the UKRI, (UK Research and Innovation) the project will deliver a series of outreach sessions in the community and will link up with our Care schemes to capture the stories of local residents.

## Awards

Working with our tenants we won two Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) awards, one for our work around engaging tenants in digital engagement and another for our work under the category of Equality and Diversity. We were also shortlisted for three CIH Awards and won the Valuing Equality and Diversity in Housing Award.







### What do our tenants think?

	Welsh Housing Avg.	2018/2019	2019/2020	
Percentage of tenants and residents who believe we listen to tenants and residents' views and act on them	72%	64%	68%	👍
Percentage who think Linc provides an opportunities for tenants to have a say	n/a	73%	76%	👍

- NB the figures for 2019/20 do not include extra care

### What are we planning?

- Continue to work with the Tenants and Residents Strategic Group to set up a task and finish group to look at our self-evaluation, to feed into the modernisation process, to take part in business planning and establish a range of groups to take a deeper look at the matters affecting all tenants. This group will report into our Board.
- Continue to explore new tools for engagement to reach those we engage with the least. We want to support the many committed tenants already involved with Linc but find new and innovative ways of hearing even more voices.
- To launch a number of special interest tenant groups.
- Reconsider our approach to our tenant satisfaction survey, by simplifying and reducing the number of questions asked.

### We achieved the Investors in Diversity Award

Recognised as the national equality standard, the Investors in Diversity Award, supports organisations to improve and develop practices that promote equality and diversity.

At Linc we believe in creating the right environment for people to flourish, where the principles of FREDIE, fairness, respect, equality, diversity, inclusion and engagement, are promoted throughout the organisation. Our staff and customers really engaged with the process of achieving the award and we are seeing them promote the FREDIE principles in our day to day work. We are thrilled to have been recognised by the National Centre for Diversity and will continue to embed a strong belief in equality and diversity within our culture.

Solat Chaudhry, Chief Executive of the National Centre for Diversity, said:

*"I would like to extend our congratulations to their leaders, staff and tenants on their success to date. Achievement of the National Centre for Diversity's Investors in Diversity Standard demonstrates that Linc Cymru has not only committed to building a culture of fairness, respect, equality, diversity, inclusion and engagement (FREDIE), it also shows that it can evidence this in a practical way."*



# Community Regeneration



We want to support our tenants in what matters to them. Our Community Regeneration team work with a range of expert partners to provide work experience, employment opportunities and greening projects for our tenants across Wales, as well as providing community benefits associated with our procurement, particularly our asset and development contracts.

## What have we been doing?

### Supporting the implementation of Community Benefits activities

- 22 Community Benefits engagement events with a wide range of partners.
- Working closely with Y Prentis to help young people obtain work experience on site with our contractors (Jehu and Pendragon). We also facilitated a successful learning session for the Y Prentis Apprentice Advisory Panel that included presentations and a site visit to our Modular Build Extra Care Home in Aberaman.
- In October we had a successful audit with our Community Benefits work passing with reasonable audit assurance.

### Developing partnerships with organisations who can deliver employability support to tenants

- Provided 23 tenants and community members with one to one employability skills, including supporting with CV's, job applications, attending careers fayres and job interviews.
- Supported 8 tenants and community members into work and worked with 5 existing contacts to maintain their employment.
- Supported 12 tenants and community members to obtain work experience.
- Met and worked with 15 employability partners.
- Facilitated a jobs fayre in partnership with DWP and Communities 4 Work in Aberdare Job Centre with over 70 application forms given out for roles associated with our new extra care development in Aberaman.
- Supported 4 new student placements including (MA in Arts Psychotherapy students and Creative and Therapeutic Arts students in Glyn Anwen, Wellwood House and Capel Court).

## Delivering the Growing Green Spaces Project and Environmental Work

- We co-organised and enabled 16 community engagement meetings or planting events.
- We have worked with over 22 different green and environmental partners.
- We are proud to be working with Cynnal Cymru to develop a consortium of 22 other Housing Associations to form Carbon Literacy Cartrefi Cymru, a new organisation that will develop training to raise carbon literacy awareness across the housing sector in Wales.
- We designed and delivered a workshop at the Community Housing Cymru One Big Housing Conference.
- We designed and delivered a successful Growing Green Spaces Good Practice Conference and launched a Good Practice Guide on Greening Projects for Housing Associations which featured in 24Housing Magazine's Green Special.
- We accessed £3,000 additional funding from Natural Resources Wales for Urban Greening at Cragside Close, St Mellons and Barrack Lane.
- We planted hedges with community members at both the Lysaght Institute and a 40 ft hedge in partnership with Keep Wales Tidy with St Martins Church Caerphilly as part of community benefits associated with our development on Mountain Road with Jehu Construction. In total the Community Regeneration Team and Community volunteers planted over 256 trees in November and December 2019.
- We have recycled a large amount of office furniture including desks, chairs and cabinets, as well as two hospital beds, 15 hoodies and two boxes of clothes. This is part of our ongoing work to recycle furniture and reduce landfill, as well as making connections with schools, community groups and business start ups.

## Awards

Working with our Growing Green Spaces project partners we were shortlisted for a Sustainable Academy Award and a CIH Welsh Housing Award.



## What do our tenants think?

	Welsh Housing Avg.	2018/2019	2019/2020	
Percentage that are happy with their neighbourhood as a place to live	85%	85%	83%	👎

- NB the figures for 2019/20 do not include extra care

## Lysaght Institute receives coveted Green Flag Community Award

Located on the grounds of the Lysaght Institute, the community garden received a Green Flag Community Award. The Green Flag Award programme is delivered in Wales by environmental charity, Keep Wales Tidy, with support from Welsh Government. It is judged by green space experts, who visit applicant sites and assess them against criteria including biodiversity, cleanliness, environmental management and community involvement.

Established in December 2018 with support from our Growing Green Spaces project, the community garden is tended by local residents, who volunteer by maintaining the garden and putting on community events. The vegetable patch, wildflower meadow and educational events all contributed to them achieving the Green Flag Community award.

Caroline Jeremiah, local resident and community garden volunteer, said:

*"It's exciting to be able to get together with my neighbours and local community to do something different. It's lovely being out in the open air in a green space, and great having a product from our vegetable patch at the end of it too!"*

Lucy Prisk, Keep Wales Tidy Green Flag Coordinator, said:

*"I am really pleased that the Lysaght Institute has been successful in reaching the high standards required to achieve the Green Flag Community Award. It's the first year we have awarded any sites in Newport and the Institute is now one of only two community sites in Newport with this prestigious Award, so quite an achievement. I would like to thank all the volunteers involved at the Institute for their hard work in creating such a lovely green space for everyone to enjoy."*



## What are we planning?

- We are working to support the staff environmental working group and its outcomes, including exploring carbon accounting, green dragon accreditation and looking at developing our new environmental strategy.
- A review of our Community Benefits policy and procedures linked in with our new Procurement Manager.
- Working on Corporate Social Responsibility and community projects.
- Exploring funding to expand the greening work to continue the success of the Growing Green Spaces project.



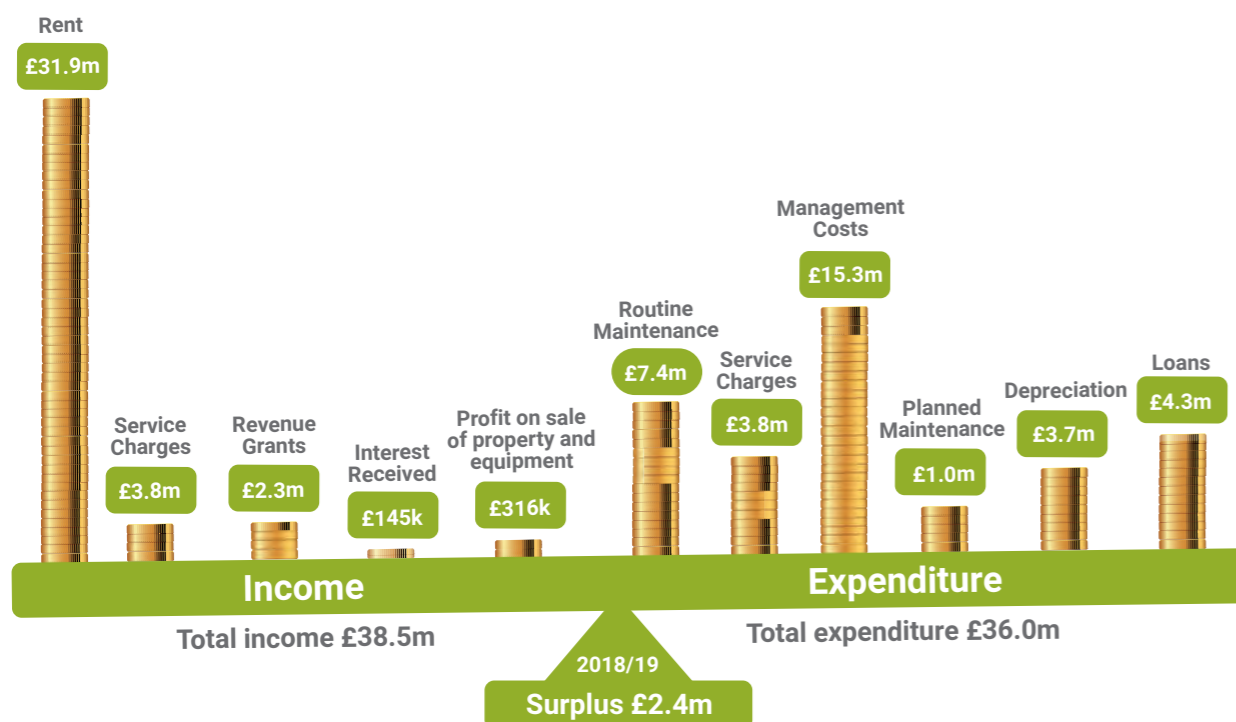
# Managing our Finances and Value for Money



We are committed to delivering services that meet the needs of our tenants and residents to ensure that we achieve value for money in all that we do. The aim is to make best use of our central services to support the teams delivering good quality homes and services for our tenants and residents.

## What have we been doing?

- We work closely with our staff, tenants and Board members to focus on reducing the costs of our services, while maintaining high levels of service delivery and ensuring we get value for money, in both our assets and our contracts.
- We regularly compares our financial performance against 33 other housing associations in Wales.
- We have a strong, stable and resilient financial position, we can progress with confidence, knowing we have the capability and capacity to deliver our ambitious plans for growth and re-investment in existing communities.



## What do our tenants think?

	Welsh Housing Avg.	2018/2019	2019/2020	
Percentage of tenants who think the rent provides value for money	82%	85%	87%	👍
Percentage of tenants and residents who trust us	84%	81%	80%	👎

- NB the figures for 2019/20 do not include extra care

## What are we planning for the future?

- Supporting the social and economic ambition of customers
- Involving our customers, listening, learning and acting on their views
- We are continuing to focus our efforts creating value for money in all services
- Delivering a modern governance framework
- Embracing technology to enhance our digital services
- Reviewing our approach to service charges



# Customer Service Excellence Quality Mark



It is important to us that we provide a great customer experience to all our tenants, and we are proud to have received the Customer Service Excellence quality mark.

Customer Service Excellence encourages organisations to focus on providing efficient, excellent and equitable customer service; where the customer is at the heart. It is a certification that can only be achieved through an assessment by the Customer Service Excellence certification body. We originally achieved the quality mark in 2018 and recently underwent a review to ensure we are still meeting the standards.

Of the 57 areas that we were assessed on, we were marked as 'compliant' for 55, meaning we met the standards needed for the Customer Service Excellence quality mark.

## Our strengths include

- Tenant Panel and Scrutiny bootcamps: The review has shown these as a key strength, as the diversity of our panel members helps to ensure that the views of all customers can be incorporated into policy and procedures to improve our customer service.
- Understanding Our Customers: The review showed that we are good at understanding the needs of our customers and are able to adapt our services to take account of the changing circumstances our customers experience. This includes using digital methods of providing customer service, such as social media.
- Community Safety Programme: Our community safety programme was highlighted as a strength because it focuses on supporting our customers and the needs of the wider community.

## Areas we will continue to improve

- The assessor noted that though our staff are customer focussed we do not evaluate people's individual and team commitment to customer service and would like us to include this in our performance management reviews.
- We have also been asked to publicise our customer service information, including the timeliness of our response and the quality of our customer service. Though we monitor these internally, we will now be looking at our process and will be working with our tenants to consider how best to share this information more widely.

Achieving this quality mark is a great way for us to make sure we maintain high standards of customer service and helps us to improve.

# Progress on our Business Plan

The OneLinc Business Plan 2019-21 features four distinct priorities, below are key highlights from our action plan to help us achieve our purpose, 'creating the right environment for people to flourish.' We will continue to work on these priorities to improve and provide an even better service to tenants in the year ahead.

Modern and excellent services	Status
Undertaking 'customer journey mapping' against 4 service areas	Completed
Undertaking an exercise to map out customer demand via the customer contact centre	Completed
Developing a data strategy and action plan	Completed
Developing a self-service board portal	Completed
Ensuring a dynamic CRM system is in place and a replacement finance system	Ongoing
Developing a new tenant engagement strategy	Completed
Supporting over 100 tenants to sustain their tenancies through support provided by our strive in house support team	Completed
<b>Prosperous Business</b>	
Appointing a procurement and value for money lead officer	Completed
Extending community benefit clauses across development and assets	Ongoing
Developing our Welsh language approach with a new Welsh language scheme and action plan	Completed
Achieving the 'investors in diversity' status through accreditation with the national centre for diversity	Completed
Mapping an Assurance framework utilised throughout Linc service areas	Completed
Reviewing the leadership and management of food hygiene across care and ensure system of assurance is appropriate for all environments	Completed
Reviewing the business performance of the nursing homes and develop effective strategies to maximise returns	Ongoing
<b>Wellbeing and personal development</b>	
Reviewing all staff terms and conditions	Ongoing
Delivering a Leadership programme for executive & senior leadership, line managers and modernisation project leads	Ongoing
Developing a health and wellbeing strategy	Ongoing
Signing the mental health 'time to change' pledge and develop an action plan to progress	Completed
Reducing the reliance on agency staff in nursing	Ongoing
Strengthening our approach to safeguarding	Completed
<b>New business and growth</b>	
Reviewing our funding strategy	Complete
Establishing a property sales subsidiary	Ongoing
Delivering an additional 210 new homes	Complete
Researching and reviewing models of extra care and community living for older people	Ongoing
Appraising all existing and planned developments to ensure clarity over alternative uses and options	Ongoing
Sourcing additional grant sources in addition to social housing grant and innovative housing programme	Ongoing
Planning for social care services development and identifying growth areas	Ongoing



**We would love to hear from you. Your feedback helps us to improve services for our tenants and residents, and make a difference in our local communities.**

Get in touch by emailing us at [contact.centre@linc-cymru.co.uk](mailto:contact.centre@linc-cymru.co.uk) or by calling us on 0800 072 0966/ 0737410024. You can also contact us through our Facebook page @LincCymruHA or via our Twitter account @Linc\_Cymru.

Or you can write to us at Linc Cymru Housing Association, 387 Newport Road, Cardiff CF24 1GG.

