



# Our way forward

# Chair's report by Steve Kerridge

Firstly, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of our staff and tenants for their strict adherence to the public health guidance published by the Government and the NHS. I would also like to offer my deepest condolences to those families who lost loved ones or who have been impacted in other ways as a result of the virus.

In spite of the successful vaccination programme in the UK and the gradual easing of public health measures, we must continue to remain vigilant to ensure the health and well-being of all of our tenants, staff and visitors to our schemes. We will continue to operate services and adhere to measures that work towards the prevention and control of COVID-19.

Despite the pandemic, we continue to provide vital support to our tenants and as of 31 March 2021, just over three-quarters of tenants had had an up-to-date support plan – a slight improvement on the previous year.

We achieved our targets for improvements and upgrades, replacing the planned numbers of kitchens, bathrooms and boilers. In addition, we completed all aspects of our major repairs programme, which included:

- the second phase of communal refurbishment works at Evelyn Rogers Court
- fence renewals, and
- exterior electrical lighting upgrades.



We continue to meet our statutory and regulatory obligations in relation to health and safety, and to follow our journey to ensure that our tenants are not digitally excluded. We have installed Wi-Fi in Blackmore House and Bertha Hollamby Court, with an ambition to provide Wi-Fi in our remaining schemes by the end of 2022.



Last year, I reported that we needed to investigate, how we, as an Association, can communicate more effectively with our tenants. The Government published its White Paper in November 2020. The White Paper puts forward a number of proposals that will change how social landlords must operate. This includes new tenant satisfaction measures, an improved complaints process and, importantly, we must treat tenants fairly and with respect, and if things go wrong there should be a swift and effective means of redress for tenants. The White Paper also seeks to establish a new Charter for social housing tenants.

Whilst we wait for the legislative and regulatory changes to be introduced, we have begun the process of reviewing our policies, procedures, survey methods and processes to ensure we continue to listen and provide opportunities for tenants to have their say. At the same time, we will assess the use of digital tools to help us understand our tenants' needs and find ways we can improve our service.

The theme of last year's annual report was Going Green, where we committed to provide a better environment for all. It is clear that this will continue to be a major theme for many years. With this in mind, this year we will be commissioning a report to understand what we need to do to meet the Government's target to achieve net zero carbon by 2050. This will enable us to create an

*Bright new look at Evelyn Rogers Court.*

investment and asset management strategy, clearly setting out our approach and the costs involved.

A further pressing issue is the proposed switchover from analogue telecommunications to a digital platform. This will affect our call systems, fire and smoke alarms, call buttons in our lifts and phone lines. Whilst the changes will not happen before 2025 we need to understand the impact for the Association and prepare, plan and budget for this.

It goes without saying that the last 18 months have been some of the most challenging and difficult times for everyone. With the rollout of the vaccine and the relaxation of restrictions, I hope that we can slowly and cautiously begin to return to more normal times.

I would like to thank the Board for being fully engaged in discharging its governance functions during these challenging times and the staff for their resilience and dedication.

I cannot finish without thanking and praising Angela George (the Chief Executive) and all the team at CSHA who have continued to provide a great service for all our tenants throughout the last year, ensuring that CSHA continues to be an excellent example of a small association focused on providing a caring, personal and quality service to our tenants.

**Steve Kerridge**

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# Our way forward

## Through COVID-19 and beyond

Managing and maintaining services has been our key focus, in spite of the pandemic, which presented us with challenges.

We managed successfully to adapt the way some of our services were carried out, with a view to minimising the risk of transmission of COVID-19, and to ensure the safety and well-being of tenants and staff. In March 2020, we put in place a pandemic action plan, which is regularly reviewed and updated. We also updated and reviewed our approach to risk management, to ensure risks associated with COVID-19 were included and monitored. Despite the pandemic, we met all of our regulatory obligations, and the Board has discharged all of its governance functions.

### Our digital journey

We continued to move forward with our digital inclusion strategy, which involves installing Wi-Fi in all of our schemes. We are aware that many of our tenants have been digitally excluded and the pandemic has heightened the need for tenants to be able to communicate and interact with others without reliance on traditional face-to-face methods.

Instead of this project taking an estimated three to four years, all of our schemes will now be equipped with Wi-Fi by the end of 2022. The decision to speed up this process is because it is essential for us to prevent social isolation and to improve the means by which we communicate and interact with tenants.

From 2025, there will be a migration of analogue systems to digital. We currently operate a telecare warden call system within our schemes, with Tunstall being our main provider. We need to ensure we can assess the impact on the telecare services provided, know how the switchover will affect current systems and understand the options going forward.



### Going green

The theme of last year's annual report was going green. We made a number of commitments to use more sustainable products and supplies, and to improve our surroundings and office functions. I am pleased to report that the commitments made in these areas have been met. We will also be developing our strategy on the 'journey to net carbon zero', in line with the Government's world-leading goal of cutting emissions to virtually zero by 2050.

#### Our strategy will address:

- current legislation in respect of meeting the 2050 net zero target to decarbonise our homes
- how we can access the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund
- our options for the replacement of kitchens bathrooms, boilers and roofs
- how to meet the Zero Carbon Government target by 2050, and
- the creation of an investment strategy/asset management strategy detailing our approach moving forward.

## Social Housing White paper

Against the terrible backdrop of the tragic fire at Grenfell, the Government published its anticipated Social Housing White Paper on 17 November 2020. The core theme of the paper is that a home should provide safety, security and dignity, regardless of who a tenant rents from.

The new Charter for social housing sets out what every social housing tenant should expect, and is summarised as follows:

- **To be safe in their home.** The Government will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.
- **To know how their landlord is performing,** including on repairs, complaints and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.
- **To have complaints dealt with promptly and fairly,** with access to a strong Ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.
- **To be treated with respect,** backed by a strong consumer regulator and improved consumer standards for tenants.
- **To have their voice heard by their landlord,** for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its Board.
- **To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in,** and homes should be kept in a good state of repair.
- **To be supported to take the first step to ownership,** so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should circumstances allow.

We have already begun working on many of the recommendations arising from the report.

We have updated our complaints process and complied with obligations set out by the Housing Ombudsman. We will bring forward revised policies and proposals which set out how we intend to communicate with you in future.



We will be revising the measures used to assess satisfaction with our services, as set out by the Government. We will be reviewing other performance measures such as repair monitoring and measures that show we are keeping our homes in a good state of repair.

# Value for money report

Chislehurst and Sidcup Housing Association (“the Association”) is a Registered Provider of social housing and we are required to publish a Value for Money (VfM) report. This report includes our approach to making decisions on the use of resources to deliver our objectives. Our principal assets are our homes.

Our main activity is the provision of accommodation and support services to older people.

The Association is regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing and our mission is to provide cost-effective, efficient and caring services that meet needs in new and existing areas of operation and enable people who require housing with support to live as normal a life as possible in the community. We were formed for the benefit of the community and our purpose is summarised through our mission.

We are a not-for-profit organisation and any surpluses made are reinvested into new and existing homes and services, for the benefit of our tenants. This in turn assists us in providing:

- Good quality, affordable homes
- High quality services
- Support to promote independent living
- A responsive asset management and repairs service

In order to make decisions on the use of our resources to deliver our objectives, this report includes the return that is generated by our assets and the plans we have for optimising future returns on those assets.

We have four strategic objectives, which are:

- 1. Strategy** – To provide excellent support and services that meet the needs of our tenants and our local communities.
- 2. Service delivery** – To provide excellent service to tenants and service users.
- 3. Finance and growth** – To ensure that the Association remains financially viable and that our strategies address this.



**4. People** – To invest in staff to ensure that every staff member has the skills to meet the needs of our tenants and to pre-empt the future needs of CSHA by forward planning.

Our approach to managing our resources and assets is strategically linked to our strategic objectives. This value for money report summarises the activities we have undertaken in the past year to achieve this aim.

## Strategic focus on Value for Money (VfM)

Our Business Plan includes three key strategic objectives, each of which focuses on value for money.

### **1. Investing in technological developments, to improve efficiency in the business and create greater choices for our tenants**

Being digitally capable can make a significant difference to individuals. For individuals, this can mean cutting household bills, finding a job, or maintaining contact with distant friends and relatives. For organisations, going online can provide ways to reach more customers and reduce operating costs. The internet also provides broader benefits, by helping to address wider social and economic issues like reducing isolation and supporting economic growth. This has been particularly emphasised during a pandemic in which face-to-face contact and interaction have been dramatically reduced. The key aims of our digital inclusion strategy are summarised as follows:

- To reduce digital exclusion amongst tenants living in our sheltered housing schemes.
- To maximise digital opportunities for our sheltered housing tenants via the provision of affordable Wi-Fi to each flat.
- To empower and equip tenants living in our sheltered schemes to be digitally included.
- To identify and train staff/tenant digital champions to be competent in the delivery of digital training and advice to tenants.
- To review digital platforms that can assist in service delivery and tenant involvement.
- To ensure that the needs and abilities of all tenants are taken into account when introducing digital platforms.

#### **This year we have:**

- installed Wi-Fi in two out of six schemes – by the end of this year, we will have installed Wi-Fi in four out of six schemes
- enabled remote working for all staff and provided the necessary training
- moved to online meetings for staff and the Board, which has resulted in reducing our carbon footprint for travelling and reducing the amount of paper we use, and
- increased productivity as a result of reduced travel time.

### **2. Ensure plans for growth are linked to realistic targets, are assessed on a scheme-by-scheme basis and do not compromise the financial viability of the Association**

We intend to utilise available reserves and borrowing capacity to grow the number of homes in ownership. Our Business Plan and negotiations with lenders have identified that we can grow our stock by 20-25 homes over the next five years. We will continue to seek development opportunities to realise this objective, by taking into account:

- **Desirability** – the degree to which each option meets the strategic objectives and priorities of stakeholders and the Association.

- **Viability** – the degree to which each option is financially viable and sustainable.

- **Feasibility** – the degree to which each option can be implemented.

This year has been challenging, as we have had to focus on our core business of letting homes, as a result of the pandemic. However, we have strengthened the skill set of our Development Committee by recruiting new Board members. We have also reviewed our development strategy.

### **3. Improve our performance against our competitors in relation to value for money performance indicators**

We have continued to meet our regulatory and legislative requirements, in spite of the pandemic, as well as continuing to deliver all of our services, taking into account public health restrictions. We continue to benchmark our performance against that of our competitors and our performance is set out later on in this report.

To ensure that our resources are appropriately deployed, we are committed to finding efficiencies where we can, whilst maintaining quality. These efficiencies are considered as part of our budget-setting process. Last year we developed specific key performance indicators for our support service and we are pleased to report our support service indicators under the measuring social value section of this report. Now that we have developed such indicators, we hope to be able benchmark our performance against that of our competitors, with the ultimate aim of ensuring that this service continues to provide value for money for our tenants.

### **Our approach**

The business operates within a five-year strategic planning framework. Our approach to delivering value for money is to ensure the following.

- We are governed by an experienced Board who make decisions to ensure that we meet our strategic objectives and remain financially viable – and that strategies address this.

- We provide excellent support and services that meet the needs of our tenants and our local communities, because giving tenants the best possible service is at the heart of what we do.
- We continue to employ Sheltered Housing Managers to manage our buildings and identify, in consultation with tenants, any needs they may have, or support or advice that they may require, with a view to working with tenants to achieve appropriate outcomes.
- We continue to outsource our repairs services in order to achieve value for money. This means that we pay for the cost of repairs only and not the costs associated with employing repairs operatives.
- We will be reviewing the ways we seek feedback from tenants in light of the new Charter for Social Housing.

The Board has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that we achieve value for money whilst safeguarding the Association's assets. The Board continues to discharge its governance function effectively and efficiently, and to carry out its governance arrangements in accordance with its Terms of Reference. The Board reviewed its Code of Governance and Code of Conduct and carried out a robust assessment of its collective performance. Board Members do not receive any remuneration.

The Audit and Risk Committee was established by the Board to ensure formal and transparent arrangements for considering how the Association ensures financial viability, in accordance with its governance arrangements. The Audit and Risk Committee effectively discharged all of its duties and carried out its business in accordance with its Terms of Reference.

The purpose of the Development Committee is to consider and scrutinise development opportunities in accordance with approved strategies. As part of its role, it has the duty of appraising new opportunities and the scrutiny of all costs, in accordance with the Association's scheme appraisal model. This year, the Development Committee formally approved its process of self-assessment, and reviewed and recommended a revised development strategy for Board.

The Association operates in accordance with its

various policies and procedures, and seeks to achieve value for money at all times. These policies and procedures are: Financial Regulations and Standing Orders; Financial Procedures; Tender Policy. Together, they provide a robust framework covering the tendering of works, placing of orders, and commitment to, and authorisation of, expenditure.

## Good quality, affordable homes

We have 198 homes available for rent. All homes are let at social rents.

Maintenance is one of our main areas of spend. We spent 9% of our rental income, compared to 8.93% the previous year, on planned maintenance (major repairs) and 21.13%, compared to 22.61% the previous year, on routine maintenance. The Association has managed to maintain spend in this area.

### Planned maintenance works included:

- the final phase of communal redecoration at Evelyn Rogers Court
- lighting upgrades at Lingwood
- fire risk assessment works
- Legionella works, and
- fence renewals.

The expenditure under planned and routine maintenance does not include kitchen and bathroom refurbishments and boiler replacements. These items are classed as components, and their costs are capitalised under component accounting rules.

*Lingwood benefited from lighting upgrades.*



### This year, we:

- replaced seven kitchens at a cost of £48,740
- replaced 12 bathrooms at a cost of £68,791
- replaced two boilers at a cost of £10,500, and
- replaced four electric hot water cylinders at a cost of £8,148.

Our total expenditure on these works was £136,179. The previous year, we spent £136,077.

## High quality services

Our approach to learning whether we provide high quality services is for our tenants to tell us so. Previously, we carried out an annual survey to assess our performance against agreed service standards, and a tenant satisfaction survey every two years. These surveys were used to assess how we have performed and to assess service quality.

Following feedback from our tenants, we have decided to combine the questions set in the two surveys and seek tenant satisfaction feedback every two years. However, some of the information used to assess our performance against some of the agreed service standards, which is not in question form, will continue to be reported and assessed on an annual basis. For the purposes of this report, we refer to this as annual service standards performance information (see page 17).

In light of the Social Housing White Paper and the draft recommended tenant satisfaction measures, our next tenant satisfaction survey has been delayed until autumn 2021. We continue to report the most up-to-date information available to compare our performance with that of our peers.

We measure our performance using a set of indicators agreed by our Board. This allows us to demonstrate delivery of VfM to our tenants and to compare performance externally with comparable organisations. We compare our performance with Smaller Providers Benchmarking (SPBM), which is the national benchmarking network for smaller housing providers (facilitated by Acuity in partnership with Housemark). It is made up of housing providers with up to 1,000 homes.

We also compare our performance with the Housing for Older Persons benchmarking club, which is a specialist sheltered housing benchmarking club. Comparisons can be found in our performance benchmarking report (from page 18).



The chart on page 10 gives tenant satisfaction comparisons. As our next two-year tenant satisfaction survey is due to be carried out later in 2021, we continue to report our last survey figures for year end 2018-2019. However, we have updated the HfOP average and the SPBM average in order for comparisons to be made.

Overall satisfaction levels remain high and are comparable to our peer group in the areas of:

- satisfaction that rent provides value for money
- satisfaction that service charges provide value for money, and
- satisfaction with how we deal with repairs and maintenance.

There are two areas where our performance is slightly weaker than that of our peers. These are:

- satisfaction with the overall condition of homes, and
- satisfaction with the overall services we provide.

In terms of satisfaction with the way CSHA listens and acts upon the views of tenants, we are keen to investigate how we can communicate more effectively. This year, we will be looking at other ways and forums to gain feedback from tenants, by exploring the use of digital tools and examining the existing traditional methods in place, to ensure they are fit for purpose. We will also be reviewing tenant engagement in light of the new Charter for social housing.

Please note that our peer group provide services in different ways. For example, most of our peer group do not contract out their repairs and maintenance services, they are much more diverse in terms of geographical spread across the country, and the number of homes in management varies widely from 41 units to more than 400.

## Tenant satisfaction levels

	CSHA tenant satisfaction results at year end 2020-21	CSHA tenant satisfaction results at year end 2018-19	Housing for Older Persons Average 2020-21	Smaller Providers Benchmarking Av. 2020-21
Satisfaction with the overall services provided by CSHA	N/A	91%	96%	96%
Satisfaction with the overall condition of homes	N/A	91%	96%	95%
Satisfaction with neighbourhood as a place to live	N/A	93%	95%	96.5%
Satisfaction that rent provides value for money	N/A	94%	96%	95%
Satisfaction that service charges provide value for money	N/A	91%	90%	88%
Satisfaction with how CSHA deals with repairs and maintenance	99%*	99%*	94%	94%
Satisfaction with us listening and acting upon the views of tenants	N/A	77%	83%	80%

\*Satisfaction with how the Association deals with repairs and maintenance is assessed annually. Last year's reported figure was 99%.

## The support we provide

The Association is very proud to maintain the support of permanent, scheme-based staff across our six sheltered locations and 193 sheltered properties. Our Sheltered Housing Managers provide a person-centred support and advice service, are key as the first port of call for tenant emergencies and queries, and are essential in ensuring the health and safety of our homes and communal areas.

During a very strange year of COVID-19 restrictions, our stance was to continue day-to-day support by working on formalised support plans, continuing to record any tenant need for support and advice that we identified, and drawing up associated action plans. In 2020-21, 77% of tenants completed a support plan in comparison to 76% in 2019-20 and 69% in 2018-19. All of those who completed a support plan reported they were satisfied with it.

However, we did need to change our ways of working in order to maintain the safety of tenants and staff during the pandemic.

We produced a Pandemic Action Plan to set out what needed doing and to record progress. Steps around supporting tenants included the following.

- Sheltered Housing Managers (SHMs) were onsite for reduced hours with minimised face-to-face contact with tenants, but increased contact with a wider group, e.g. carrying out daily welfare calls by intercom or telephone to all tenants to ensure wellbeing and establish whether they were developing Covid-19 symptoms.
- SHMs assisted tenants to place online food orders, where required.
- We built up a 'food bank' of non-perishable goods at each scheme, for tenants with no next of kin and who were isolating or shielding.
- We brought in restrictions to the use of communal facilities, e.g. communal kitchens were locked and there were restrictions on the use of laundry facilities and lounges.
- The website was updated with current news and we issued regular letters to tenants on the latest restrictions and guidance.

There have been several changes since the subsequent lifting of restrictions as per the Government's roadmap out of lockdown. The Association produced its own roadmap, including:

- measures to increase the number of tenants permitted in indoor communal areas such as the laundry and lounge in line with current restrictions; e.g., increasing laundry capacity from one person and increasing lounge capacity from one person accessing IT provisions, to group gatherings
- measures to reverse the closure of communal facilities at the appropriate time
- measures to increase the number of tenants permitted in external grounds in line with current restrictions
- moving from remote forms of contact with tenants to safe face-to-face contact
- reversing the closure of guest rooms, and
- reviewing social distancing measures and wearing of face coverings within our schemes, in line with current restrictions.

Other measures we have put in place, to ensure continuation of the service we provide, include:

- purchasing IT equipment to enable head office staff to continue to work from home should future restrictions be brought in, and
- instructing our telephone provider to install a VOIP telephone system in readiness for the 2025 switchover from digital to analogue lines.

These two measures also mean that any staff working from home can continue to answer tenant queries on our head office telephone number.

### Meeting the changing needs of our tenants

Following the publication of the Tenants' Charter: Social Housing White Paper, in November 2020, we are looking to better understand the needs of our tenants. This will include reviewing the ways we engage with tenants and seek their feedback on issues that matter to them. We intend to hold sessions with tenants to talk about these issues.

To continue to get feedback on our service, we are also updating our tenant satisfaction survey and service standards questionnaire. We pose questions that follow the tenant satisfaction measures in the Social Housing White paper and make these easier for tenants to complete. We aim to reduce the number of questions, make them more relevant and review the best way to collect information, as we have previously only used printed copies.

Furthermore, we carried out some work in March 2021 to identify who our tenants were in order to



understand their needs. This means that when we let our properties, we have an awareness of changing demographics to guide us.

Our results were as follows.

### Ethnicity

Overall, 80% of our tenants identified as White British. However, our results showed that we make our lettings to a diverse range of other ethnicities including White Irish, White Other, Black African, Black Caribbean, Black Other, Asian Indian, Asian other and Other.

There were differences noted across schemes by borough: 84% of tenants living in schemes in both Bexley and Bromley were White British, with the next highest ethnicities being White Other and Black African (each 5%) in Bexley, and Other (6%) in Bromley. Other ethnic groups each represented 3% or less in these boroughs. By contrast, there was most diversity within the Borough of Lewisham, where 27% of tenants were Black Caribbean, 20% were White British and those of Black African and Black other ethnicities each described 13% of tenants.

### Disability

Overall, 41% of tenants described themselves as having a disability.

Of those with a disability, 51.7% lived within the Borough of Bexley, 47.1% within the Borough of Bromley and 1.1% within Lewisham.

### Age

Our sheltered housing has a minimum age criteria of 60 years. The average age of our tenants was 74 years, with ages ranging from 62 to 95.

There was little variation between the average age of tenants in Bromley and Bexley (74 and 73.5 years respectively). However, the smaller group of tenants in Lewisham had an average age of 76.

## Income

The Association has a criterion that applicants must not have in excess of £50,000 in capital to qualify for our housing. Eligibility for assistance with rent currently depends on age, working status and income/savings.

Among our tenants, 34% did not receive Housing Benefit, but 66% did. In all, 42% received full Housing Benefit, 21% received partial Housing Benefit and 3% had benefit directly paid to them. Tenants in receipt of full Housing Benefit represented the highest percentage of income status in all boroughs and schemes.

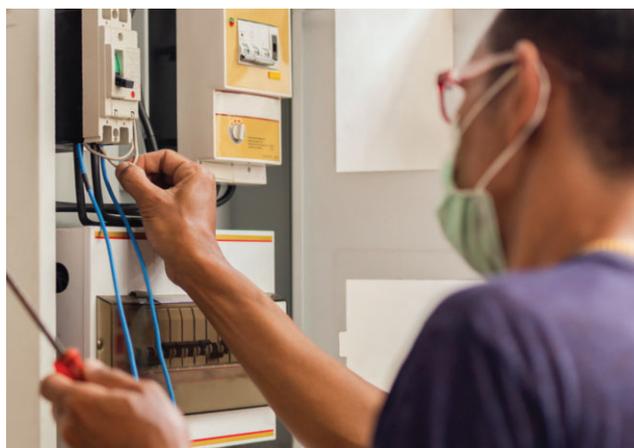
## Responsive asset management and repairs service

This service is managed by our directly employed Building and Maintenance Surveyor. His role includes preparing works specifications, placing orders, quality monitoring and managing our contractors. This is a vital resource and, unlike many of our counterparts, we are able to retain a qualified Building Surveyor rather than buying in services, which is much more expensive.

Repair services continue to be outsourced, as we do not operate an in-house labour force. We have contracts with all the contractors we regularly use.

### These include contracts for:

- communal gas boiler maintenance and servicing
- electrical maintenance and servicing
- gardening maintenance, and
- the servicing of fire protection equipment.



In terms of routine maintenance, we continue to operate a local schedule of rates and, as contractors are bound by contractual terms, the cost of routine maintenance increases by inflation each year.

In the year 2020-21, the Association reviewed its Tender Policy and Procedure. The main changes were increases in the figures for competitive quotations and tender. These had been the same for around 10 years and the low levels were affecting our ability to procure. The increases will also have a positive impact on void turnaround times, as less time will be wasted whilst waiting for quotes to be returned. The amount for competitive quotations for work not exceeding £20,000 (previously £15,000) has been increased. For works over £20,000, we go out to formal tender.

Below is a summary of our performance in 2020-21. Our contractors were unable to complete 43 repairs within target time for a number of reasons, including needing additional materials and parts, and having problems gaining access.

## Repairs completed on target 2020-21

	Number of repairs reported	Number with no response date	Target number of days	Number completed on target	Number completed outside target	% completed on target
P1 Emergency	35	0	1	31	4	89%
P2 Urgent	263	0	5	246	17	94%
P3	194	0	10	181	13	93%
P4	294	1	20	286	8	97%
P5	8	0	40	7	1	88%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>751</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>94%</b>

## Analysis of our performance

- The total number of repairs increased by 105.
- 751 out of 794 repairs were completed within their target times.
- 43 out of 794 repairs were completed outside of their target times. (5.4%).
- Satisfaction with how the Association deals with repairs and maintenance has improved. This year, 99% of tenants were satisfied.
- The percentage of all repairs completed within target times dropped by 1% to 94%, as opposed to 95% the previous year.

## Return on our assets

The Association has performed better than expected in actual surpluses made against budget over the last four years. We generated a surplus this year of £180,381 as opposed to the expected budgeted surplus of £66,841. After adjusting non-monetary items, this represented an increase to our cash and bank balances of £87,207, compared to £63,976 in the previous financial year.

In addition, the Association achieved the following.

- It generated £16,176 in interest received on its principal investment, compared to £19,089 in 2019-2020. The reason for the lower rate of return is due to the fall in value of the original investment, exacerbated by concerns with Brexit, in addition to volatility in the equity markets. The objectives of the Association's Treasury and Investment Policy is for long-term reserves to generate a return in excess of inflation, which it has achieved.
- It met its planned spend on maintenance and major repairs despite the ongoing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It spent 13.4% of rent collected on routine repairs, compared to 13.96% in the previous financial year.
- It spent 4.8% of rent collected on cyclical and communal repairs, compared to 7.45% in the previous financial year.
- Our staff are also assets. There was an increase of 2.44% in staffing costs, compared to 5.55% in the previous financial year.



## Measuring social value

Value for money is at the centre of everything we do. This means providing our tenants with the best combination of quality services and affordable pricing.

However, as a social landlord and specialist provider of sheltered housing, we take a holistic approach and can therefore also measure social value, such as the wider economic and social effects of our service.

## The value of falls prevention

Public Health England (2020) reports that falls and associated fractures amongst older people are both common and a serious health issue. People aged 65 and older have the highest risk of falling at least once a year, with half of those aged over 80 doing so. Not only can falls cause distress and pain, but they can also lead to loss of confidence, severe injury, loss of independence and, in worst cases, mortality.

The National Falls Prevention Coordination Group (NFPCG) highlighted that the pandemic has had a significant affect on falls as a result of physical deconditioning, worsened mental health, and reduced access to health, care and leisure services. In addition, falls prevention services ceased for large parts of the pandemic and/have been constrained by infection control.

This emphasises the significance of findings by Demos (2017), which concluded that sheltered housing plays a key role in reducing the financial impact (by an estimated £295.9 million annually) on the NHS and social services through falls prevention. This can include adaptations present in sheltered housing, e.g. the placement of hand rails in communal areas and our bathroom replacement programme, which installs showers

with adaptations, such as grab rails and seats, where these are required.

Through continued tenant engagement in support planning, our Sheltered Housing Managers are also able to work with individuals to identify changes in health conditions, issues within homes and communal areas (e.g. trip hazards), and other circumstances that may contribute to falls.

In fact, in the course of 2020-21, only 31 falls were reported across all of our schemes, in comparison to 32 in 2019-20. The majority of these incidents were alerted to the Sheltered Housing Manager or out-of-hours telecare service.

Following falls, our managers can discuss the cause of the fall with the tenant, especially if it is a recurring issue, and assist them to liaise with health and social care providers such as social services, care agencies and doctors. Where the tenant needs aids, they can be assisted to obtain occupational therapy and can opt to receive a daily welfare call whilst they recover.

### Reducing hospital stays

Recently, 41% of our tenants identified as having a disability. According to ONS figures (2018), time spent in good health after the age of 65 is around 9.9 years for men and 9.8 years for women. Whilst the likelihood of being disabled or experiencing multiple chronic and complex health conditions rises with age, not all those with such conditions class themselves as having a long-term significant impact on their lives (ONS, 2018). However, some older people may have no diagnosed long-term conditions, but still be defined as frail or “less able to cope and recover from accidents, physical illness or other stressful events”, due to the natural effects of aging, such as unintentional weight loss or reduced muscle strength (NHS England, 2018).

Frailty and co-morbidity (or having two or more long-term conditions that can be managed rather than cured), are associated with higher risk of hospital admissions. Given this, findings by Demos (2017) are significant in estimating that sheltered housing saved the NHS and social services an estimated £300 million per year in reduced in-patient hospital stays in 2017. According to the NHS (2018), longer stays in hospital pose a risk of functional decline that increase with age amongst



older people. Almost 40% of people delayed in hospital could have been discharged using different, usually lower-dependency, pathways and services more suited to meeting their needs (NHS, 2018).

Amongst all of our tenants, 414 days of hospital stays were recorded, from 56 admissions in 2020-21.

The support of our Sheltered Housing Officers can assist to both prevent hospital admissions and support tenants once they return home. We can assist in seeking appropriate care and support when information from tenants themselves, or patterns of accident reports, suggest a tenant is at risk. Our daily welfare calls and emergency call system offer peace of mind.

### Dementia

Dementia is an umbrella term for a range of progressive conditions that affect the brain. Alzheimer's Society (2021) estimates that there are 850,000 people in the UK with dementia, with one in 14 people aged over 65 affected.

It is therefore likely that some of our tenants will display symptoms of dementia during their time with us; symptoms are wide-ranging from problems with concentrating, planning or organising, visuospatial skills (e.g. judging distances) and orientation.

We saw an increase in incident and accident reports relating to tenants with a diagnosis of dementia between 2019-2020 and 2020-21. This is supported by findings of a 2020 survey by the Alzheimer's Society, which found an increase in reported symptoms in 80% of individuals during COVID-19. This included a loss of confidence in going out and doing things, memory loss, difficulty concentrating, agitation/restlessness and stress or

depression. Over half of all respondents reported meeting with family/friends outdoors since the easing of lockdown rules, but those who lived alone were less likely to and reported being less confident in doing so.

A daily welfare check to tenants can provide both reassurance and an opportunity to discuss any worries or concerns. Our staff receive training and guidance on dementia and so can then use this training to identify how tenants who are experiencing difficulties can access the best sources of support via the support planning process. This may include accessing a memory test, arranging a care needs assessment with Social Services, or simply identifying ways in which a tenant can increase the quality and quantity of social interactions safely during the pandemic. Where a tenant's needs are no longer being met, our managers are best-placed to liaise with the tenant, family, Social Services and other agencies to obtain the best outcome in our tenant's interests.

### Maintaining social involvement and networks

Our sheltered housing provides key opportunities to maintain and promote contact and relationships both inside and outside our scheme communities, which usually benefit from social events facilitated by staff in our communal areas.

However, we recognise that, in 2019-20, the pause in social events due to COVID-19 restrictions was felt keenly by our tenants. In 2019-20, we were only able to carry out four social events, in contrast to the 200 across our sheltered schemes in the previous year.

This is particularly poignant given that during national lockdown, our internal restrictions were also in the context of 'stay at home' orders preventing non-essential travel from home, social distancing, avoiding mix of households, restrictions on gathering, self-isolation, shielding, and the closure of shops and leisure venues.

In 2018, Age UK (2018) identified that social isolation, an objective measure of the quantity of social contact with others, was already a problem for a significant number of older people. However, more difficult to tackle still is loneliness, a negative feeling people experience when the amount or quality of relationships they have do not match up to those they would like to have. The

wider social value, as well as the importance for health and wellbeing, of preventing loneliness and isolation was highlighted by the appointment of a Government Minister for Loneliness in 2018.

It was therefore important for the Association to consider the ways in which we could keep our tenants socially connected during the pandemic.

Our Sheltered Housing Managers supported tenants in a variety of ways according to the current guidelines and restrictions.

#### **This included:**

- calling all tenants on a daily basis at the height of the pandemic, to check they had no symptoms and to offer a friendly voice
- promoting tenants phoning each other in place of the usual social events
- circulating phone numbers for support services such as telephone mental health services and befriending
- posting brain teasers, quizzes, joke sheets and scheme newsletters through tenants' doors
- arranging for delivery of free newspapers
- organising delivery of fish 'n chips
- encouraging tenants to get some exercise in the garden
- tenants being involved in outdoor activities such as gardening (planting, watering etc) and feeding fish in communal ponds and tanks
- socially-distanced 'name that tune' in the garden
- tenants bringing their own food, cutlery etc for socially-distanced meals outside
- encouraging activities such as puzzles and sharing knitting patterns, and
- encouraging attendance at socially-distanced yoga at nearby venue.

COVID-19 restrictions have also highlighted the importance of digital inclusion for our tenants, for example in keeping connected to family and friends via video calling platforms and social media.

In addition to having Wi-Fi in our communal lounges and providing internet access kiosks, we brought forward our programme of Wi-Fi installation in tenants' homes. This provides a low-cost alternative to personal contracts for individual tenants and the cost is recharged to tenants via their weekly service charge.

Currently, installation has been completed at two schemes, with installation at the remaining two due by the end of 2022.



## Support provided

As of 31 March 2021	2020-21	2019-20
Total number of tenants	208	209
Number of Support Plans in place	160	158
Number of people satisfied with their Support Plan	160	158
<b>Totals for entire year</b>		
Number of falls recorded	33	32
Number of hospital admissions recorded	56	52
Total number of hospital admission days	414	654
Number of dementia-related incidents recorded	31	7
Number of social activities	4	200

## Service quality

Each year, we assess our performance against published service standards. Below is our annual service standards performance information.

- We produced a newsletter in each quarter of 2020-21. Following on from our 2019-20 report, 'Going Green', we distributed the newsletter in accordance with tenant preferences of receiving a printed copy, accessing it on the website, receipt via email, or opting to access a paper copy in communal areas.
- All homes continue to be maintained in line with Government legislation and the most current Decent Homes Standards.

- In terms of maintaining and improving homes, performance levels were unchanged for one area, increased for two and decreased for another (see 'Performance benchmarking').
- Scheme inspections were carried out by Sheltered Housing Managers on a regular basis across all schemes in accordance with our policy and procedure.
- Information on how we have performed is set out in this annual report.
- We set a target of two tenants to sit on the Board, one of whom was previously a representative from the Tenants' Panel. Following disbandment of the Tenants' Panel and loss of our tenant Board member, there is currently no tenant representation on the Board. However, our service delivery and accountability strategy will be reviewed to take account of the Social Housing White Paper.
- We changed the timescales for acknowledging and responding to a complaint from three and 10 working days respectively to five and 10 working days, in line with the Housing Ombudsman's new Complaints Handling Code.
- This year, there were nine complaints and three compliments, which were all responded to within target periods, compared to three complaints and six compliments received in 2019-2020. To improve service delivery, all complaints were analysed and none resulted from the Association's policies or procedures.
- We will publish an annual newsletter report of all complaints to tenants to include the number, nature and outcome of complaints, which are also reported to the Board.
- The service standard "Apologise when we get it wrong and work hard to ensure that mistakes do not happen again" is a matter of course for the Association if appropriate. Among the complaints made, some covered a number of issues, of which two elements were upheld and two partially upheld following investigation.

## Environmental benefits

- 6.% of our bathrooms were improved using the most up-to-date Decent Homes Standards.

- 3% of our kitchens were improved using the most up-to-date Decent Homes Standards.
- 4.5% of boilers were changed creating greater energy efficiency.
- Staff and Board members reduced our carbon footprint by engaging in more online meetings. Although this was largely due to the pandemic, it is expected that there will be a blended approach to meetings in the future.
- We further improved the capability of all staff to work from home when appropriate to do so by investing in the necessary IT equipment and providing relevant training to facilitate this.
- We continued to invest in and replace lighting systems with LED, which is more energy efficient and produces a large amount of light on low wattage.
- We continued with digital investment, resulting in the provision of Wi-Fi for tenants at two of our sheltered housing schemes.
- The Association had sufficient liquidity to meet all of its debts should they become payable in one year.
- Our housing management cost per home of £1,819 is more expensive than any of our peers. Peer median stands at £556.64. This is because many of our peers do not employ full-time Sheltered Housing Managers, nor do they have the live-in onsite Sheltered Housing Managers that make up a large percentage of our management costs.
- Again, our overheads as a percentage of our turnover places us in the upper quartile for the year 2020-2021, at 11.3%.
- Our responsive repairs and void repairs cost per unit currently stands at £721. When comparing our performance to that of our peers, our costs are comparable with the average in our peer group.

The focus for 2021-2022 continues to be the provision of excellent services to tenants that represent value for money. We are committed to activities that provide a more efficient use of resources and minimise the harmful impact on the environment.

Our challenge continues to be finding economies of scale in the way we deliver our services. Delivering VfM is embedded within our culture and governance arrangements and is clearly measured by achievements relating to system improvements, growth aspirations and improved financial performance. However, the Board has a continued commitment to VfM and seeks to continually improve the unit cost of managing our homes, whilst simultaneously increasing the revenue generated from new business.

## Financial outcomes

- We generated a surplus this year of £180,381 as opposed to the expected budgeted surplus of £66,841. After adjusting for non-monetary items, this represented an increase to our cash and bank balances of £87,207.
- We generated £16,176 in interest received on our principal investment, compared to £19,089 in 2019-2020; a decrease of 15.26%. However, we still made a return on our investments of 1.33%, which is higher than inflation for the same period.
- The Association has interest cover of 3.95 times, this means we are comfortably able to cover our loan interest payments.

## Overall operating results

	CSHA 2020-21	Housing for Older Persons Median 2020-21	Smaller Providers Benchmarking Median 2020-21
Overhead costs as a % of turnover	11.3%	16.77%	16.73%
Responsive repairs and voids repairs per unit	£721	£762	£710
Housing management cost per unit	£1,819	£556.64	£440.02

# Performance benchmarking

We measure our performance using a set of indicators agreed by our Board. This allows us to demonstrate delivery of VfM to our tenants and to compare performance externally with comparable organisations.

We compare our performance with the Smaller Providers Benchmarking group (SPBM), which is the national network for housing providers with up to 1,000 homes, and facilitated by Acuity in partnership with Housemark. We also compare with the Housing for Older Persons (HfOP) benchmarking club, which specialises in benchmarking for sheltered housing.

## Summary

In comparison with other housing providers, some of our costs seem high. However, it must be noted that none of the comparison data included support charges, which leads us to assume that although a useful benchmark, we are not necessarily comparing like for like in terms of services provided. We will continue to assess our costs and services in line with other providers, and look to bring down our costs where we can.

The HfOP average figures and the SPBM figures relate to the year 2020-21.

## Maintaining and improving homes

	CSHA 2020-21	CSHA 2019-20	CSHA 2018-19	HfOP Average	SPBM Average
% Tenants satisfied with repairs/maintenance service	99%	99%	92%	95%	94%
% of repairs completed within target time	94%	92%	90.6%	96%	96%
Emergency repairs completed on time	89%	94%	90%	100%	100%
Urgent repairs completed on time	94%	91%	93%	98%	96%
Routine repairs completed on time	93%	95%	90%	95%	96%
Cost per property for major and cyclical works	£1,394	£1,630	£1,548	£1,203	£915
Cost per home of responsive repairs & void costs	£721	£164	£155	£762	£710
Properties with valid gas certificate	100%	100%	100%	99%	100%
Properties with overdue gas check	0%	0%	0%	0.75%	0%

**Note:** Only a small number of reported repairs were not completed on target. They were: four emergency repairs (out of 35); 17 urgent repairs (out of 262); and 23 routine repairs (out of 497). Our sheltered housing peer group and the SPBM operate different target times for urgent and routine repairs.

## Housing management

	CSHA 2020-21	CSHA 2019-20	CSHA 2018-19	HfOP Average	SPBM Average
Average weekly management cost per home	No longer reported	£35.04	£26.13	No longer reported	No longer reported
Overhead costs as a percentage of turnover	11.3%	8.1%	10.7%	16.77%	16.73%
Housing management cost per home	£1,819	£1,427	£1,359	£545	£389
Lettings as a % of stock	11%	9%	12.75%	10%	9%

**Note:** These figures exclude our general needs properties. Our housing management costs per home are higher than our peer group as they include the salaries of full-time Sheltered Housing Managers.

## Rent collection and arrears

	CSHA 2020-21	CSHA 2019-20	CSHA 2018-19	HfOP Average	SPBM Average
Former tenant arrears as a % of rent debit	0.1%	0.06%	0.1%	0.08%	0.08%
Rent collected from current tenants %	102%	101.07%	100%	100%	100%
Current tenant arrears as a % of rent debit	2.3%	1.8%	0.5%	0.9%	0.9%
Rent loss due to voids	1.2%	1.08%	1.02%	1.9%	1.81%

## Satisfaction levels

	CSHA 2020-21	CSHA 2019-20	CSHA 2018-19	HfOP Average	SPBM Average
Satisfaction with overall service	91%	91%	91%	96%	94%
Satisfaction with most recent repair	99%	99%	99%	95%	94%
Satisfaction with the support service provided	94%	94%	94%	N/A	N/A
Satisfaction that rent provides value for money	94%	94%	94%	96%	95%
Satisfaction that service charge provides value for money	90%	90%	90%	89%	88%
Satisfaction with quality of home	91%	91%	91%	96%	95%
Satisfaction with neighbourhood.	93%	93%	93%	95%	94%

**Note:** We carry out a Tenant Satisfaction Survey every two years. The next one will be carried out in autumn 2021.

## Value for Money metrics

As part of the requirements of the 2018 Value for Money Standard, the Association has a regulatory obligation to report on seven metrics defined by the Regulator.

One of the Regulator's key objectives in defining a set of standard metrics was to support transparency and allow providers to analyse their performance alongside that of their peers on a comparable basis.



We compare our performance with the Housing for Older Persons benchmarking club, which specialises in sheltered housing.

A review of the data above highlights our strong performance compared with our peers in a number of areas.

Our reinvestment percentage is lower than that of our peers. This is because we have developed fewer properties in the relevant period and replaced less components, as many of our homes already meet the Decent Homes standard.

Our gearing percentage is much higher than that of our peers. This is because we acquired more units in a seven-year period and consequently increased our debt to facilitate this.

Our headline social cost per unit is higher than our peers, because we retain some live-in Sheltered Housing Managers and all of them are employed full time. Both factors are not common amongst our peers.

Our interest cover is in a very strong position in line with our peers, showing that we have enough surplus to cover the interest on our loans.

## VfM metrics

	CSHA 2020-21	CSHA 2019-20	CSHA 2018-19	HfOP Average	SPBM Average
Reinvestment %	2.3%	2.1%	1.9%	2.6%	6.1%
New supply delivered % (social housing)	0%	0%	0%	0%	1.3%
Gearing %	9.2%	11.9%	9.9%	0%	33.8%
Interest cover %	395.4%	344.5%	304.1%	504.4%	196.1%
Headline social housing cost per unit	£5,852	£5,824	£5,808	£5,171	£4,023
Operating margin social housing lettings %	17.1%	14.7%	13.5%	12.25%	23.6%
Operating margin overall %	17.1%	14.7%	13.5%	10.2%	21.5%
Return on capital employed %	3.8%	3.2%	2.9%	2.2%	2.8%

Our operating margin for social housing lettings shows how strong our performance has been compared with both the previous year and our peers. It demonstrates how effective we have been in controlling our costs.

Our return on capital employed is stronger than that of our peers, and indicates that our capital is being used effectively.

## Other performance information

### Empty homes

During 2020-21, 23 properties became empty and 22 were let. Four of the let properties became vacant in 2019-20.

Of all the lettings:

- four were let to local authority (council) nominations
- 17 were from our waiting list to applicants who approached us directly, and
- one was let as a general needs property, after previously being licensed accommodation for a Sheltered Housing Manager.

### Lettings by ethnicity

■ Black African:	2	(9.1%)
■ Black Caribbean:	1	(4.5%)
■ White British:	18	(81.8%)
■ Other:	1	(4.5%)

## Complaints and compliments

We received nine complaints and four compliments during 2020-2021, compared to three complaints and six compliments during the previous year.

Following analysis of our complaints, we were able to confirm that no complaints were related to policies or procedures, and no policy or procedure had had an adverse impact on any of the complainants based on protected characteristics, as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

## Average weekly rents

Type	Number	Assured	Secure
Bungalow	4	£157.51	£170.50
One bedrooms	170	£155.48	N/A
Two bedrooms	17	£168.33	£209.00
Three bedrooms	4	£132.22	N/A
Four bedrooms	1	£122.26	N/A



# Our finances



## Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 31 March 2021

	2021 £	2020 £
TURNOVER	1,610,394	1,563,006
Less: operating costs	(1,335,230)	(1,332,728)
OPERATING SURPLUS	275,164	230,278
Interest receivable and similar income	16,176	19,089
Interest payable and similar charges	(110,959)	(115,649)
SURPLUS ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES BEFORE TAXATION	180,381	133,718
Tax on surplus	-	-
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	180,381	133,718
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		
Initial recognition of multiemployer defined benefit scheme	-	-
Actuarial losses in respect of pension schemes	(124,000)	139,000
	56,381	272,718
Unrealised gain/loss in investment	(6,502)	2,028
Transfer from share capital	-	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR	<b>£49,882</b>	<b>£274,746</b>

## Statement of financial position as at 31 March 2021

	2021 £	2020 £
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS		
Housing properties:		
Cost	8,894,929	8,800,296
Less: Depreciation	(2,834,412)	(2,695,130)
	6,060,517	6,105,166
Other fixed assets	45,322	39,737
	6,105,839	6,144,903
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	58,805	43,312
Cash and cash equivalents	1,298,023	1,210,816
	1,356,828	1,254,128
Less: CREDITORS Amount falling due within one year	265,322	254,523
NET CURRENT ASSETS	1,091,506	999,605
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	7,197,345	7,144,508
Less: CREDITORS falling due after one year		
Housing loans	(1,766,512)	(1,849,323)
Pension – deficit funding liability	-	-
Pension – defined benefit liability	(232,000)	(108,000)
Grant – deferred income	(2,407,707)	(2,445,941)
TOTAL NET ASSETS	£2,791,126	£2,741,244
CAPITAL AND RESERVES		
Revenue reserves	2,820,008	2,763,627
Investment revaluation reserve	(28,959)	(22,457)
Share capital	77	74
TOTAL RESERVES	<b>£2,791.126</b>	<b>£2,741,244</b>

# Board Members



## **Steve Kerridge** Chair

Housing Consultant with experience in local authorities, large and small housing associations, including as Assistant Director and interim Chief Executive.



## **Susan Clinton** Vice Chair

Head of Housing (London Region) Clarion Housing Group, also has experience in housing strategy, having worked for a larger London borough.



## **Helen Berg** Chair, Audit & Risk Committee

Chartered Accountant and Chartered Tax Adviser, advising clients in the social housing sector.



## **James Green** Chair, Development Committee

Chartered Building Surveyor with extensive work in social housing sector, in building and refurbishing homes.



## **Patsy Alexander**

Qualified Accountant and member of CIMA. Senior manager in the financial services sector.



## **Peter Brown**

Trained Architect working in housing since 1974. Experience with credit unions and as CEO for several housing associations. Supports consultants Campbell Tickell's work on affordable credit.



## **Joan Gatfield**

Education professional specialising in adult education in several local authorities.



## **Liz Hamlet**

Strategic housing professional with experience in resident services, community safety and regeneration. Experience in investment banking, coaching and mentoring, and is a company director.



## **Mark Hanson**

Development consultant and former Development Director with almost 50 years' experience of developing and constructing homes. Has a strong interest in zero energy homes and renewables.



## **Carli Harper-Penman**

Strategy & communication expert with significant social housing experience. Partner with Inflect Partners, a strategic communications & business transformation consultancy



## **Michelle Mansfield**

Experience in housing, including marketing and PR, as well as senior leadership roles in operations including complaints, business improvement and allocations.



## **Bruce Shelmerdine**

Qualified Chartered Account & Finance Director of mhs homes. Has extensive experience of working in the housing sector, with a number of registered social landlords.



## **Angela George** Chief Executive

# Staff

**Aimée Howard** – Housing Services Manager

**Kaye Payne** – Finance Manager

**Kym Regan** – Business Support Manager

**Paul Wenham** – Building and Maintenance Surveyor

# Company information

## Bankers

Barclays Bank PLC  
Corporate Banking, Bromley Group  
76a New Road  
Gravesend  
Kent DA11 0AF

## Solicitors

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## Auditors

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