

**Easy Read**  
Version

Promoting Independent Living

# ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016



**Ability**



Jeff Skipp is the new Chief Executive of Ability.

He says, "Welcome to our Annual Report!"

The Annual Report tells you what we did last year.

### Good things that happened

We held a lunch party in the garden at Hayes Park Lodge.

The party was for everyone who uses our Hillingdon services.

We now support 135 people in Hillingdon.

Quentin from Hamlet Lodge came. So did his Support Worker Johann.

Quentin says, "I like how Ability work".

We re-opened The Lodge in Farnham.

The Mayor of Waverley came to the party.

The Lodge now has 4 flats.

Colin has moved in. He says, "It's like a palace. I'm so happy living here!"



Johann

Quentin



Colin

### THE TEAM

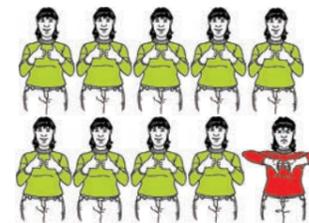


Carron with the award



Andy

Nick



The Q-Team won an award for being excellent tenant inspectors.

We won another award for training staff to use Makaton. This was a Q-Team idea.

**Makaton uses sign language and pictures to explain things.**

Carron Cleversley of the Q-Team said she was very happy to be an Ability customer.

### Your home

We chose the Morgan Sindall company to do our repairs.

Nick and Andy repair Ability homes. Nick says, "I know some of the customers really well".

Morgan Sindall carried out 2,109 repairs for us.

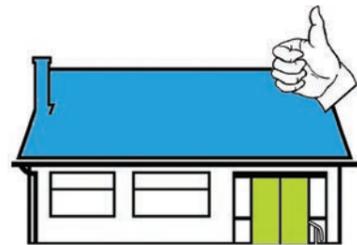
9 out of 10 customers were happy with their repair.

We were sorry repairs went badly to start with.

Too many repairs were not finished on time.

■ Only 8 out of 10 emergency repairs were finished in 24 hours.

## Your home continued

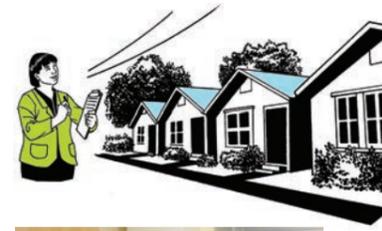


- Only 4 out of 10 urgent repairs were finished in 7 days.
- Only 5 out of 10 routine repairs were finished in 21 days.
- Nearly every home had a gas safety check.

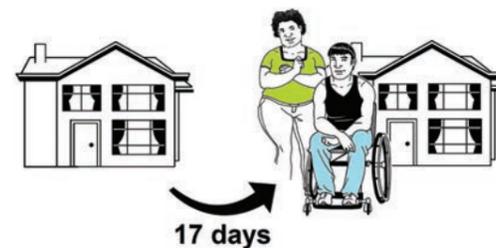
We are working with Morgan Sindall to improve things. It is our number 1 priority!

Your homes all met the Decent Homes standard set by the Government. We have our own standard which is better. When homes were empty we replaced old kitchens and bathrooms and boilers.

- This year Morgan Sindall will work on other properties. They will:
- test the electrics
  - replace old kitchens
  - fit new heating
  - replace old doors and windows
  - decorate outside and in communal areas.



Dan Wrixon from Morgan Sindall carrying out a recent property MOT in Waltham Abbey.



We gave properties in Worthing, Essex and St Albans a special check over. We call these checks Property MOTs. Customers and their relatives helped us do the checks. We will check other properties this year.

Soon your repairs person may ask what you think about your repair. You will be able to give your feedback using their hand-held devices.

## Your tenancy

We house 698 people in 33 local authority areas. We let our homes as fairly as we can.

We cut the time it takes us to re-let empty homes. It took us less than 17 days on average. Our target was 10 days. Our new Revenue and Lettings Officer is now trying to let homes faster.

## Your tenancy continued



Will moved to Wishbone Way in September.

He says: "It was very stressful when I first came here because it was such a big change. But now I've settled in and I like it."

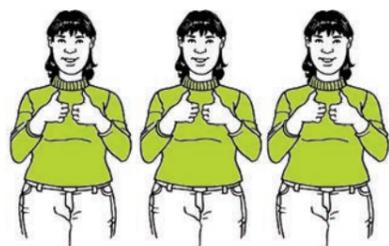


Hannah-Kate, Helen and Theresa are our 3 new Supported Housing Assistants. They can give extra support with things like:

- paying rent
- getting repairs done
- claiming Housing Benefit
- making a budget.

Tanya is pleased that Helen is her Supported Housing Assistant.

She says, "I find it really easy to talk to Helen and ask her questions"



We will employ another 3 Supported Housing Assistants this year.

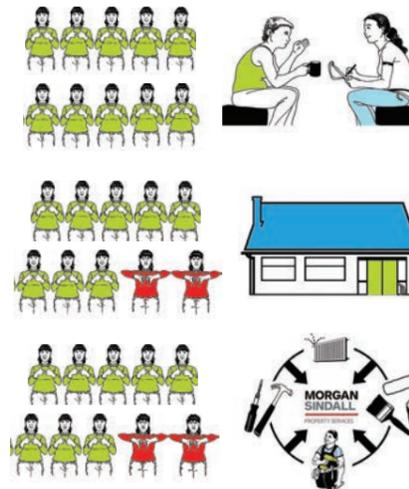
## Your neighbourhood and community

We want you to live somewhere nice and clean and safe.

We worked with customers to create local business plans in 7 areas.

43 tenants and 30 Care & Support customers told us what they think of our services.

- All the Care & Support customers were happy with their service.
- 8 out of 10 tenants were happy with their home.
- 8 out of 10 were happy with the repairs service.



This year we will draw up local business plans in:

- St Albans
- Essex
- Merton
- Hillingdon.

The plans will help us make the best use of our properties.

We want you to be more satisfied with our services.

We want to find ways to house and support more people.

## Your neighbourhood and community continued



The Customer Panel agreed to grants from our improvement fund.

- Genesis House in Staines got garden furniture and a barbecue. Ramon lives there. He says, “The furniture was definitely money well spent!”
  
- Elva Court in Bexhill-on-Sea got garden furniture.
  
- Four services in Talbot Village in Poole got benches for their gardens.
  
- Cavell House and The Lodge in Farnham got pots and plants and raised beds for their vegetable garden.



Stuart Rees is the Chair of the Customer Panel. Jane Harrison is Chair of the Ability board.



James and Aroona, Q-Team members visiting Hamlet Lodge.

## Involving you

We try to involve customers as much as possible. We found new ways to involve customers last year.

- They helped with our Property MOT home checks.
- They helped choose our new Chief Executive.

The Customer Panel held meetings and met with board members.

- They checked our performance and services.
- They helped us think about ‘co-production’. This is where customers, staff, families and neighbours work together to provide services.
- They decided we should try out a peer support scheme.

The Q-Team met customers from:

- Cavell House and Farnham
- Fiddlers Green
- Hamlet Lodge.

# Involving you continued



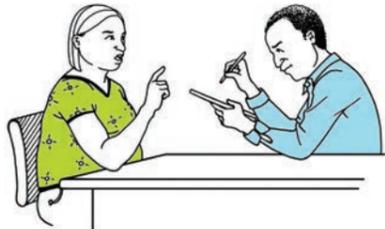
They collected feedback and made recommendations.

They took part in training in how to talk to people who have autism or Aspergers.



We worked with the Customer Panel to make it easier to complain.

We explained our new system to our staff and Morgan Sindall repairs people.



Our staff heard 20 complaints.

They sorted most of them out within 10 working days.

4 complaints were a bit more serious. They were all sorted out by senior staff.



9 out of 10 housing complaints were about slow repairs.

6 were about repairs started by our old contractors.

We will survey all our Hillingdon services.

We will use different formats including Easy Read.

We will make the letters we send to customers easier to understand.

We will train support workers in working with people who have autism or Aspergers.



## New services



# Your support

We continued to support customers to live as independently as possible.

We won new contracts in Hampshire and Hillingdon.

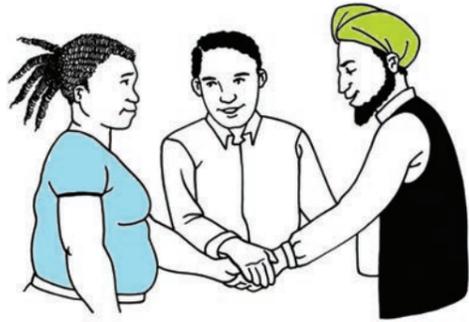
We re-opened Rosedene in Woking and The Lodge in Farnham.

We closed our service in West Sussex. We were sorry about this. The local authority could no longer afford to fund everyone.

The Care Quality Commission rated our services in Hillingdon and Slough as good.

Hillingdon Council said that Yew Tree Lodge is outstanding.

## Your support continued



We started a peer support service in Hillingdon. Peer support is when customers get together to organise activities for themselves.

A Hillingdon customer says, "We think it's great! It's got us out more and helped us to make new friends. It's really good for people who want to mingle and socialise."

Next year we will involve more customers in peer support groups.



Wendy moved to Rosedene in March, with 2 friends.

She says: "It was a big change coming here. It was hard at the beginning because I have never lived independently before. But I got lots of support to help me when I was settling in and I still get the support I need."

## Governance and finance

The board makes big decisions about what Ability should do next.



Last year the board chose Jeff Skipp to be our new Chief Executive.

Jeff has lots of experience. He used to run Deafblind UK.



We used our money well.

**£1.4m** We spent this money on developing and improving homes.



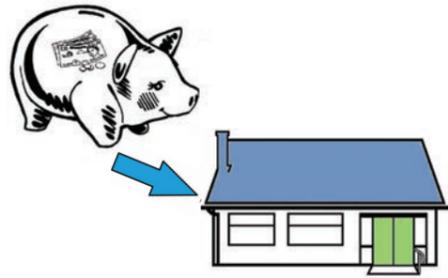
**£1,547** This is the average amount we spent on repairs to each home.



**£815** This is the average amount we spent on planned works to each home. Planned work is when we replace large items like kitchens or we do the decorating.



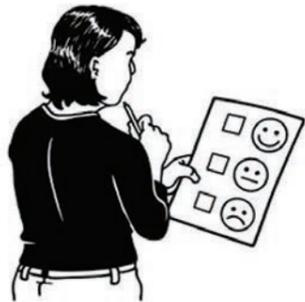
# Governance and finance continued



We found new ways to save money.

- We cut our running costs.
- We expect to save £1 in every £10 on repairs with Morgan Sindall.
- We sold a hostel and a shared flat that we no longer need.

The money we saved can be used to develop and improve more homes.



We have lots of plans for this year.

- We will survey our care & support customers to get their views.
- In the summer we will have a party to celebrate the opening of Wishbone Way.
- We will open a new service at Whitley Rise.



- We will compare our performance with similar landlords so we can learn from each other.
- We will keep running costs down.
- We will let empty homes more quickly so that we lose less rent.
- We will draw up a new plan to make sure we are making the best use of our properties.

### Board members

at 30 September 2016

Jane Harrison (*Chair*)

Wendy Crichlow

Ian Lines

Nicola Philp

Adrian Polisano

Vince Mewett

Jane Minter

Karen Hillhouse

Sally Reay

### Executive directors

Jeff Skipp

Donna Marshall

*Chief Executive*

*Finance Director and Company Secretary*

### Auditors:

Grant Thornton UK LLP

### Solicitors:

Devonshires

### Bankers:

Barclays Bank PLC

### Registered Office:

The Coach House, Gresham Road, Staines, Middlesex TW18 2AE

**Company Number:** 1261380

**Charity Number:** 271547

Registered with the Homes and Communities Agency, Number LH 2174

---

**We always like to hear from our customers, please get in touch...**



**0844 257 8118**



[window@ability-housing.co.uk](mailto>window@ability-housing.co.uk)

### By post



Ability Housing Association  
The Coach House, Gresham Road  
Staines, Middlesex TW18 2AE

**facebook**

Ability Housing  
Association

**twitter**

@AbilityHA

**Instagram**

ability\_pictures

[www.ability-housing.co.uk](http://www.ability-housing.co.uk)