



Annual Report For Residents

For The Year Ended 31 March 2025



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WELCOME

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I am Maxine, I joined Hightown on 1 April 2025 as Chief Executive and I am delighted to welcome you to our 2024/25 Annual Report for Residents.

Inside you will find out more about Hightown, read about our highlights, see our year-end performance and receive information on how we are supporting our residents and communities.

Hightown has a strong mission of 'Building homes. Supporting people' and you will see from this report that it has been another busy year for Hightown in working to achieve this aim.

Despite the impact of the economic challenges, for example rising costs and higher interest rates, during 2024/25, we:

- Delivered social housing to over 19,000 people
- Invested in our existing homes. This included undertaking building and fire safety works and replacing components such as, kitchens, bathrooms and windows
- Developed new homes, taking 364 completed homes into management.

We know many have experienced the impact of the cost-of-living increases and we are committed to helping our residents sustain their tenancies and live well in their homes. As part of this commitment in 2024/25, we supported 384 residents through our Tenancy Support team, this included assisting with claims for over £664,000 in welfare benefits, issuing 111 foodbank vouchers and helping people to access other organisations and services.

The social housing sector has experienced an increase in complaints over the past year and Hightown is no exception. One of our key values is to put our residents first but we know that we don't always get our service right first time and sometimes we fail to meet our service standards and

our resident expectations. To enable us to further improve our complaint handling, in October 2024, we created a central Complaints team. The team have ensured our information on how to complain and escalate a complaint is clear. Our complaints process is managed effectively and we use complaints as an opportunity to learn and change.

On behalf of everyone at Hightown, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our panel members for their time and commitment and for the hugely important contribution they make. Thank you also to all our residents who have engaged in our work or provided valuable feedback over the past 12 months.

I am sure 2025/26 will be another busy year for Hightown. We have delivered so much already but we know there is still more to do to ensure we consistently provide great services to our residents.

Over the coming 12 months we will be sharing more of the work we will be delivering to increase customer service and experience, including on plans to invest more in our existing homes, increasing our capacity to respond to reports of damp and mould, using

resident data to help us shape our service offer, especially to support residents with diverse needs and how empowering our staff is a priority in helping us respond to more residents at the first point of contact.

These key areas of work alongside the development of our new resident strategy will be pivotal in taking forward our future commitment to our residents and I look forward to working with the whole team at Hightown, our residents, partners and stakeholders in making this happen.

Maxine Espley MBE
Chief Executive

“

We are committed to helping our residents sustain their tenancies and live well in their homes.

Maxine Espley

”

About Hightown

Hightown is a charitable housing association, operating in Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire, aiming to help people who need support and care or who cannot afford to buy or rent a home at market values. We do this by building hundreds of much needed new homes and providing care and supported housing services for a wide range of people.

Our mission

Building homes.
Supporting people.

Our values

-  Put residents and service users first
-  Treat people with respect
-  Be cost effective
-  Don't compromise on standards or safety
-  Develop passionate and committed teams

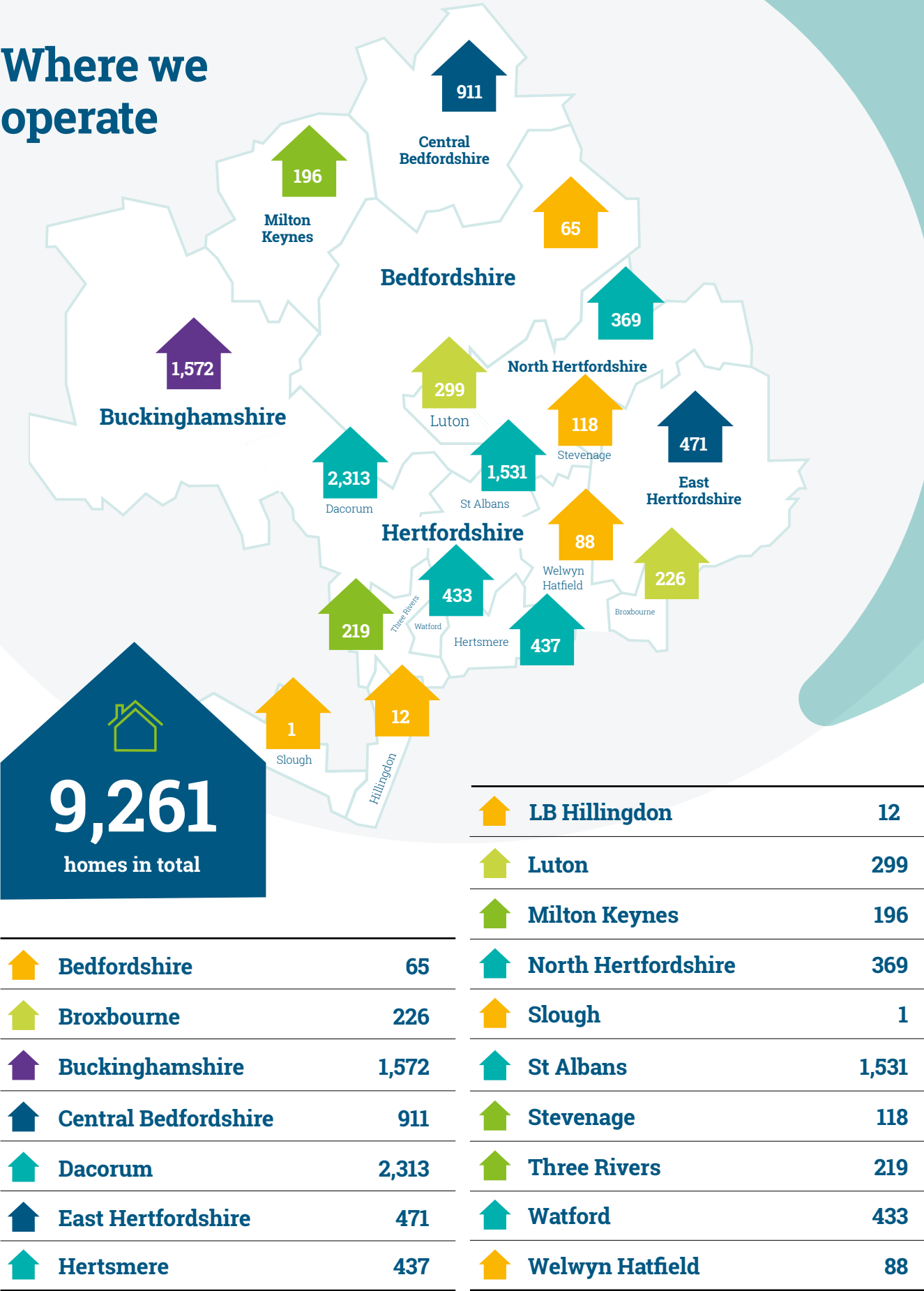
Our culture

Hightown's culture aligns with our values and social purpose. We are supportive, inclusive and responsive and share an ambition to learn and to develop for the benefit of current and future residents and service users.

Our purpose

Hightown's aim is to provide as many homes as we can at below market rates and a wide range of housing and support for people who are vulnerable and / or disabled. Hightown's history over more than 50 years shows our continuing focus on our strong social purpose.

Where we operate



Hightown strategy 2024-27

Our strategy is built around four key areas and serves as our roadmap for delivering on our mission: 'Building homes. Supporting people.' It outlines how we will continue to grow, improve our services and make a lasting impact in the communities we serve.

The four pillars of our strategy



Service

To focus on our residents and service users through positive engagement and co-design of standards, delivering well-maintained homes and high-quality services in diverse communities.



Needs

To increase the supply of quality, affordable and sustainable homes and services – enhancing community resilience and reducing homelessness.



Viability

To safeguard Hightown's future through strong governance and effective financial controls and risk management – maintaining the agility to learn and adapt to change and challenge.



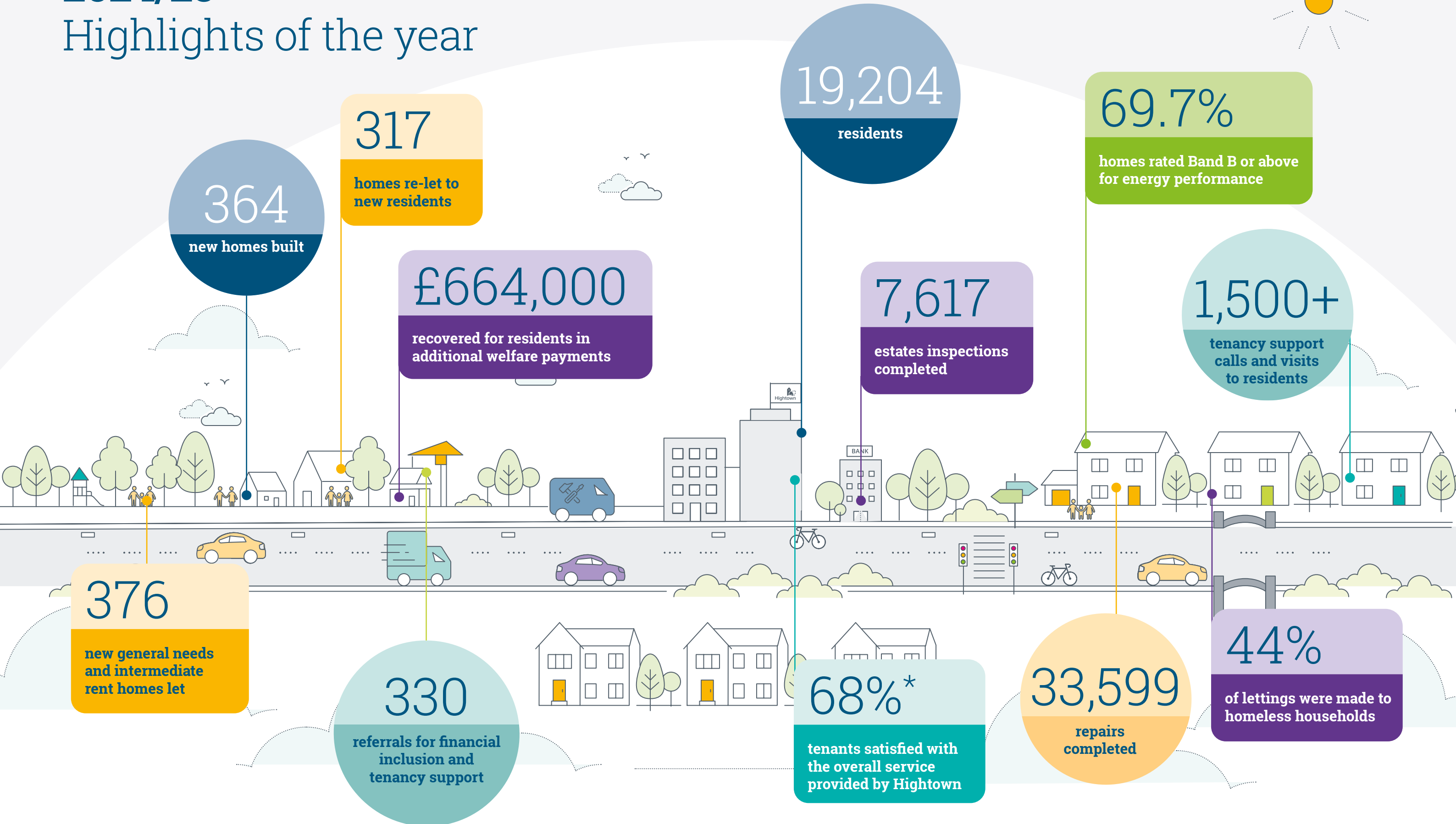
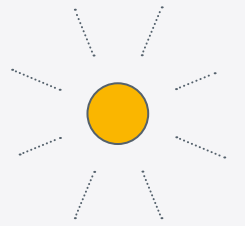
People

To maintain a high performing working culture through values-based recruitment, fair pay, specialist training and refining our wellbeing and recognition offer.



2024/25

Highlights of the year



*Source: Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey

Hearing **your** voice

At Hightown, resident involvement is not just best practice - it's a vital part of how we deliver meaningful, high-quality services.

By working in partnership with our residents, we can:

- Respond more effectively to the real needs and priorities of our residents
- Drive continuous improvement by acting on honest, lived feedback
- Build transparency and trust through open dialogue and shared decision-making
- Deliver more inclusive services that reflect the diversity of the people we serve

Resident involvement helps us stay connected, accountable and focused on what matters most - our residents.

Hearing the voice of residents is key to delivering excellent services, improvements and stronger communities.

In 2024/25, residents were involved in the following:

✓ Residents' Voice & Scrutiny Panel	✓ Housing Officer Meet & Greet events on estates
✓ Participation in the recruitment of Hightown's new chief executive	✓ Summer events on estates
✓ Complaints Scrutiny Group	✓ Focus groups
✓ Repairs satisfaction surveys via post and email	✓ Resident job search workshop
✓ Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Scrutiny Group	✓ Consultations
✓ Anti-Social Behaviour webinar	✓ Recruiting Independent Resident Members to Hightown's Operations Committee (the committee focuses on the performance of Hightown's services to its residents and service users)
✓ Anti-Social Behaviour door knocks	
✓ Festive open day	
✓ Mystery shopping	



Residents' Voice & Scrutiny Panel

The Residents' Voice & Scrutiny Panel (RVSP) continues to play a vital role in shaping and scrutinising Hightown's services. Comprised of and chaired by residents, the Panel meets quarterly with senior managers and a member of Hightown's Board. The Panel reviews performance, policies and resident-focused initiatives.

Last financial year, the RVSP has:

- Scrutinised performance across key service areas, including lettings, rent arrears, tenancy support, anti-social behaviour, repairs and gas servicing
- Assessed the impact and value for money of Hightown's resident involvement programme
- Provided feedback on the findings of an independent review of the damp and mould service
- Commissioned an independent review of Hightown's approach to engagement with residents
- Reviewed resident bids for estate improvements and allocated a pot of money to carry out improvements requested by residents

The RVSP Chair and Vice Chair were actively involved in the recruitment of Hightown's new Chief Executive. The Chair also took part in interviews for three new Independent Resident Members of the Operations Committee. Having residents on the Committee will greatly improve our understanding of what it is like to live in our properties and identify which aspects of our services would benefit from more focus. It enhances residents' involvement in our governance structure.

We are very grateful to the Panel for their dedication, feedback and valuable contributions throughout the year, including their input into the development of this report.

Meet the Residents' Voice & Scrutiny Panel members



Kathryn Hallett - Chair



Tahlia Carter - Vice Chair



Maria Peel



Shevon Fearon



Samantha Trafford



Cara Shanks



If you're passionate about making a difference, improving our services and meeting new people, we would love for you to join the RVSP.

To find out more or to express your interest, please email involve@hightownha.org.uk

Meet Elaine Rixon Hightown's Resident Involvement Officer

Elaine joined Hightown as the Resident Involvement Officer in September 2024 and has focused on building strong relationships with residents and creating more accessible pathways for involvement to make it more flexible and inclusive, encouraging participation from a broader range of residents.

Elaine updated Hightown's 'Get Involved' resident involvement menu, which outlines the variety of ways residents can engage with Hightown, along with the time

commitment each option requires. Residents can select options which suits them.

Elaine is passionate about empowering residents to influence decisions and improve services. She looks forward to continuing this work in the year ahead, supporting even more residents to scrutinise and influence Hightown's services.

“It's been a real privilege to work alongside our residents. I've seen first-hand how powerful the resident voice is in shaping the services we provide. I'm excited to keep building on this progress and support even more residents to get involved.

Elaine Rixon





Looking ahead

We have launched an action plan to make it easier for residents to get involved, share their views and influence and scrutinise the services we provide. By strengthening these channels of communication, we aim to ensure that our services are more responsive to residents' needs and shaped by you.

These changes reflect new national standards and our ongoing commitment to putting residents at the heart of everything we do.

In 2025/26, we are launching a new 'Thriving Together' group, designed specifically for residents with lived experience of disability. This group provides a platform to share insights, offer feedback and work with us to improve accessibility, deliver services which meet the diverse needs of our residents and enhance the overall resident experience.

We will be holding a new 'Let's Talk' webinar series to give residents helpful information and a chance to ask questions on a range of topics, including paying your rent and support to manage your rent account, damp and mould, energy efficiency, understanding your tenancy, health and safety checks and building and fire safety. We will send out emails with links to sign up - please look out for these and we look forward to seeing you at any of the session of interest to you. You can also share with us topics you would like us to discuss.

You can view our events page here: www.hightownha.org.uk/my-home/resident-involvement/events-for-residents/



Working together to improve communication

Twice a year, members of the Residents' Voice & Scrutiny Panel and the Care and Supported Housing VoiceBox (service user involvement group) come together to take part in workshops. Last year, the residents and service users reviewed and suggested improvements to Hightown's website. They shared valuable feedback and practical suggestions to help make the site more user-friendly and accessible for all residents.

In addition, the group worked together to design a new complaints leaflet, which explains how residents can make a complaint and outlines the steps involved in investigating and responding to complaints, making it easier for everyone to understand Hightown's complaints process. You can view the leaflet here www.hightownha.org.uk/contact-us/compliments-complaints-and-feedback/

The consumer standards – **what do they mean** for you?

The Regulator of Social Housing has introduced new Consumer Standards for social housing providers. The new standards came into effect on 1 April 2024 and aim to ensure that you have a safe and well-maintained home, clear communication and support from your landlord and that landlords listen to residents and act on their views. We have plans in place to ensure we meet all these requirements.

The four consumer standards are:



Neighbourhood and Community standard promotes partnership working with external agencies in relation to shared spaces, including addressing anti-social behaviour and supporting victims of domestic abuse.



Safety and quality standard aims to ensure that homes are good quality, safe and well maintained.



Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard sets out that landlords should provide information, listen and act on residents' views, be transparent about performance and have clear processes for residents to raise complaints.



Tenancy standard sets out how landlords allocate and let homes and manage tenancies. This includes supporting residents to maintain their tenancy and supporting eligible residents to carry out a mutual exchange.



How we are performing

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Each year, social landlords provide information to the Regulator to meet the requirements of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures. This includes two key components:

- A perception survey, which gathers feedback directly from tenants and shared owners
- Landlord performance data, our compliance and performance across several key service areas as of 31 March. Some of the key areas include repairs, building safety, neighbourhood management and resident experience.

Hightown carries out an annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) survey.

The results of the survey are used to develop an action plan, in partnership with the Residents' Voice & Scrutiny Panel, to improve services and satisfaction

In 2024, the Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey results showed an increase in satisfaction across most areas compared to the previous year:

- 68.3% of tenants reported being satisfied with Hightown as their landlord - a 2.1% increase from 2023/24
- 41% of shared owners expressed satisfaction - a 4.9% increase from the previous year

These results reflect ongoing efforts to improve service delivery and strengthen relationships with residents.

The measures are split across the below themes:



Keeping properties in good repair



Maintaining building safety



Respectful and helpful engagement



Responsible neighbourhood management



Effective handling of complaints

1. Keeping properties in good repair

Homes not meeting the Decent Homes Standard

0

Satisfaction with repairs services

78.9%

Satisfaction with time taken to complete their most recent repair

76.5%

Satisfaction that their home is well maintained

73.5%

Non-emergency repairs completed within target timescale

93.7%

Emergency repairs completed within target timescale

97.8%

2. Maintaining building safety

Satisfaction that their home is safe

73.6%

Tenants

59.9%

Shared Owners

Gas safety check compliance

100%

Fire safety check compliance

95.2%

Asbestos safety check compliance

92.2%

Water safety check compliance

98.3%

Lift safety check compliance

96.7%

How we are performing



You can read more about the positive changes we have already made and what we are planning to do on our website.

3. Respectful and helpful engagement

Satisfaction that Hightown listens to tenants' views and acts upon them

59.1% | 29.9%
Tenants | Shared Owners

Satisfaction that Hightown keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them

65.7% | 44.3%
Tenants | Shared Owners

Agreement that Hightown treats tenants fairly and with respect

74.2% | 52.4%
Tenants | Shared Owners

4. Responsible neighbourhood management

Satisfaction that Hightown keeps communal areas clean and well maintained

62.7% | 35.4%
Tenants | Shared Owners

Satisfaction that Hightown makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods

54.8% | 29.4%
Tenants | Shared Owners

Satisfaction with Hightown's approach to handling anti-social behaviour

51% | 23.4%
Tenants | Shared Owners

Number of anti-social behaviour cases opened per 1,000 homes

36.4

Number of anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents opened per 1,000 homes

0

5. Effective handling of complaints

Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints

30.9% | 17.3%
Tenants | Shared Owners

Complaints received per 1,000 homes (Stage 1)

42.4 | 32.6
Tenants | Shared Owners

Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales (Stage 1)

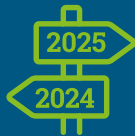
74.1% | 75%
Tenants | Shared Owners

Complaints received per 1,000 homes (Stage 2)

8.4 | 8.9
Tenants | Shared Owners

Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales (Stage 2)

60.3% | 41.7%
Tenants | Shared Owners



Looking ahead

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures action plan following the 2024 survey has been co-produced with the Residents' Voice & Scrutiny Panel. Progress will be monitored and reviewed throughout the year by the Residents' Voice & Scrutiny Panel and Operations Committee to ensure accountability and continuous improvement.



Complaints

At Hightown, we aim to provide excellent services but acknowledge that sometimes things go wrong. We are committed to listening to our residents – especially when things don't go as expected.

Last year, we strengthened our approach to investigating and responding to complaints by creating a new centralised Complaints and Resolution team, making it easier for residents to raise concerns and help us respond more quickly and effectively. Already, we're seeing improvements in how complaints are handled.

Our focus is on resolving issues as early as possible - putting things right and learning from every complaint to improve the experience for all residents.

We have also made sure our complaints process meets the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, which became a legal requirement in April 2024.



Over the past year, we've:



Reviewed and updated our complaints policy and procedure



Refreshed our complaints leaflet and website information

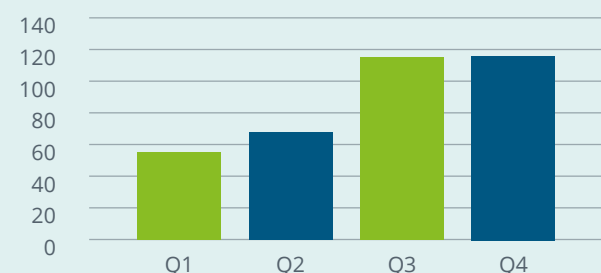


Completed the Ombudsman's Annual Self-Assessment and Annual Report and Service Improvement Plan

We have a two stage formal complaints process. In 2024/25, 354 complaints were logged at Stage One, including complaints raised by residents who live in our care and supported housing schemes and receive a landlord service. 77 of those complaints escalated to Formal Stage Two.

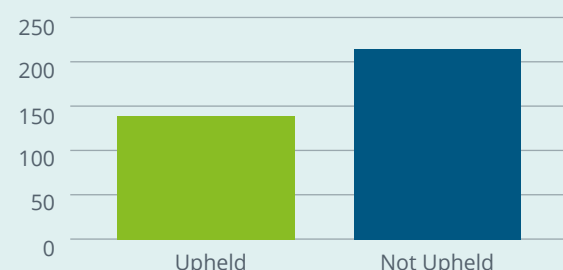
The graph below indicates the quantity received each quarter.

Stage 1 Complaints Logged 2024/25



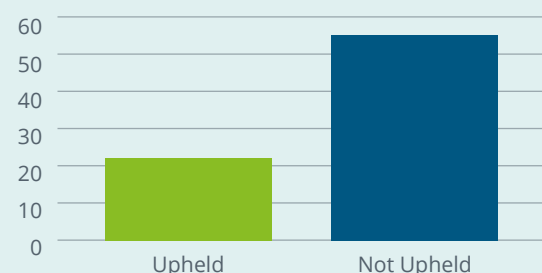
The graph below indicates the outcomes of complaints received at Stage One of the Hightown complaints process.

Stage 1 Complaints Upheld



The graph below indicates the outcome of the Stage Two complaints during the year.

Stage 2 Complaints Upheld



Last year, we saw a 35% increase in the number of complaints received. Most of this increase happened after we introduced our new centralised Complaints and Resolution team.

We also responded to more complaints within our 10-day target, which is a positive step. However, we know there's still work to do to make sure every complaint is handled promptly. We are working on continuous improvement in complaints handling.

Our new approach focuses on sorting out complaints at the earliest opportunity, so we can improve your experience and make things right without delay.

We'll continue to track how well this is working through our regular quarterly complaints' reports. These reports help the Hightown leadership team spot patterns, identify areas for improvement and ensure we're always learning and getting better at what we do.

You can find out more about our complaints process and read our self-assessment against the Ombudsman's code here www.hightownha.org.uk/contact-us/compliments-complaints-and-feedback/



Lessons learnt from complaints



Over the last year, our Residents' Complaints Scrutiny Group has played a key role in helping us improve. They've reviewed how we share information about making a complaint, looked closely at how we are performing and helped shape how we learn from complaints.

Some of the lessons learnt are internally focused as well as external, however, all of them are helping us deliver a better experience for everyone.



You said



There is conflicting information to residents / homeowners regarding doorbell cameras and whether they are permitted or not.



The process for the end of defects for new homeowners was not clear.



It is not clearly stated in all communal storage areas that residents' property left there is not insured against theft or damage by Hightown.



A number of complainants advise they do not know who to contact to get an update following a complaint resolution.



We are doing



The use and installation of doorbell cameras is being reviewed and once agreed, the policy and guidance will be made available on the Hightown website.



The homeowner user guide has been updated to make sure the requirement to report defects throughout the year is clearer. This will now be a generic guide and not bespoke to any particular property. Plus, there will be a one-page information schedule document which gives specific information about the development / property.



Hightown's estate standard will be updated to specify signage to be installed to clearly set out to residents that items stored in communal storage areas are left at the owner's own risk.



Along with complaint responses, the relevant service email contact is added into the response, as well as the complaint details being sent to that person / department.

Compliments

When residents tell us about great service, it helps us understand what really makes a difference. Positive feedback shows us what is working well and highlights the behaviours and actions that residents value most.

By learning from what we are doing well, we can share best practice across teams and keep raising service standards for everyone.

Department	Number of Compliments
Income Recovery	42
Repairs	30
Housing	16
Home Ownership	10
Estates	4
Lettings	2
Communication	1
Sales	1



I am really pleased with Hightown as an Association. Repairs are always done on time whether that is in three days or 20 days and the Repairs team provide regular updates. I am very happy.



[Hightown has] been very helpful and understanding during my phone calls with them. They were sympathetic, nice and polite. They listened, acknowledged my problems and made me feel that I had been understood.



I have been very happy and impressed with the support that I have received from Hightown overall [...]. Thank you [...] for all your support and helping me get set up in my new home.



I would like to say thank you [...] for how quickly [you] resolved my concerns such as the bin shed and the positive changes within the communal area.

Tackling anti-social behaviour

Hightown is committed to the safety of communities. That’s why we have a dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Officer who works closely with our Housing team and key partners such as the police, mental health services and environmental health.

Working in partnership is essential to tackling ASB effectively and ensuring your neighbourhood remains a safe and welcoming place to live.

We regularly take part in multi-agency meetings, where professionals from different organisations come together to share information and take coordinated action. We also part fund a dedicated Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) for Hemel Hempstead town centre to help strengthen community safety.

In 2024/25, we achieved many positive outcomes in our work to tackle ASB. We applied for six ASB Injunctions – with five of these successfully granted, we also supported the police to obtain two full closure orders, which led to possession action to end the tenancies, we also served two notices to end tenancies due to serious ASB.

Door knocks

Between April 2024 and March 2025, we carried out hundreds of face-to-face door knocks across 16 estates, working alongside the police to give residents the chance to raise concerns about anti-social behaviour and receive helpful information. For residents who were not home, we sent out surveys to give everyone the opportunity to share their views.

*We send residents a link inviting them to sign up. If you would like the link, please contact your Housing Officer.

Residents responded positively to this joint approach, especially the increased police presence and on-site visibility. As a result of these efforts, we’ve seen more police patrols to deter crime, active ASB investigations and enforcement and support referrals for those who need help.

To report any ASB concerns, please contact us using any of the below channels:

- Via **Hightown’s website**
- Using your **My Hightown** account
- Contacting your Housing Officer during office hours on **01442 292300**
- Leave a message out of hours on our 24-hour messaging service by calling 07768 286694.** This is a message service only; a member of staff will contact you within two working days of the message being received
- Using the ASB App*** which you can download on Google Play or App store

To find out more about our work on ASB, please visit our website www.hightownha.org.uk/ASB

Tenancy support

Our Tenancy Support team is here to help residents sustain their tenancies and live independently. The team includes two Financial Inclusion Officers, two Tenancy Sustainment Officers and a Tenancy Support Supervisor, all working closely together to meet a wide range of support needs.

During the year, we've seen a rise in the number and complexity of support needs, particularly relating to mental health. Around 70% of referrals to our Tenancy Support Service now involve some form of mental health concern. In response, we have improved how we record and understand support needs, so we can offer more tailored and effective help.

We have also:

- Strengthened partnerships with local services and specialist organisations to offer more targeted support
- Introduced bite-size learning sessions for frontline staff to help them identify signs of hardship, abuse or other support needs
- Worked more closely with safeguarding forums like Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), Child Protection and Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) to support residents with complex needs



330 cases referred



124.8 Average days each case is open



Support residents to claim over £124,000 in unclaimed Disability benefits



111 foodbank vouchers issued



628 phone appointments completed



321 home visits



Some of the fantastic work carried out last year has led to excellent outcomes, including helping residents claim unclaimed benefits, which boost household income and helps sustain tenancies.

In addition to financial inclusion support, the team has provided help with a wide range of issues, offering practical advice, emotional support and referrals to specialist services, including:



Provision of carpets or essential white goods



Access to mental health support



Access to localised support for marginalised communities



Mattresses



Vacuum cleaners



Support with obtaining ID



Home security



Home clearance



Making referrals for additional support to agencies such as Adult and Children's Services, mental health and debt agencies



Challenging and appealing benefit decisions and resolving benefit issues



Supporting with hoarding and deep cleans for vulnerable residents



Case Study **Lisa's* story**

After growing up and living a life surrounded by drugs, one of our residents, Lisa, has turned her life around and continues to positively progress with the support of Hightown and its Financial Inclusion Officers. Lisa has experienced several forms of hidden homelessness from sofa-surfing to living in temporary accommodation and dangerous environments.

After eventually settling at her auntie's house, she was able to begin bidding for a permanent home. It was important for Lisa to be housed in her local area with the support system she has around her all based there.

After initially speaking with Hightown regarding her now home, Lisa said:

"From the second I started speaking to Hightown, it's just gone from strength to strength. Every single person I've spoken to on the phone has been amazing. It was a quick process, it only took about four months and I had been waiting 10 years for this moment."

Speaking on the support she received from our Financial Inclusion Officer and Tenancy Support Supervisor, Lisa said:

"Anything that I needed, they said they would help me with and they really did. When I first moved in I had very little, they even helped me get things like a Hoover through charities and food parcels and a Christmas hamper. I had a long list of things that needed doing, they took my list away from me and dealt with everything for me. I've been lucky to have the support from the Financial Inclusion Officer; she's like my guardian angel!"

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Hightown's Financial Inclusion Officers also support residents like Lisa with setting up utilities and bills for first tenancies, supporting them to claim the correct benefits as well as providing support and resources for their mental health.

Having permanent housing doesn't just provide stability and safety but can improve mental wellbeing. She said:

"Nobody can ever ask me to leave or tell me to get out, it's all mine. I was completely broken before I moved in here. I'm slowly getting myself back together again. Having this place, this home has almost made me whole again."

Lisa is looking forward to the future, with plans to eventually return to work caring for the elderly and to carry on creating a positive improvement in her life.

*Name has been changed to protect identity



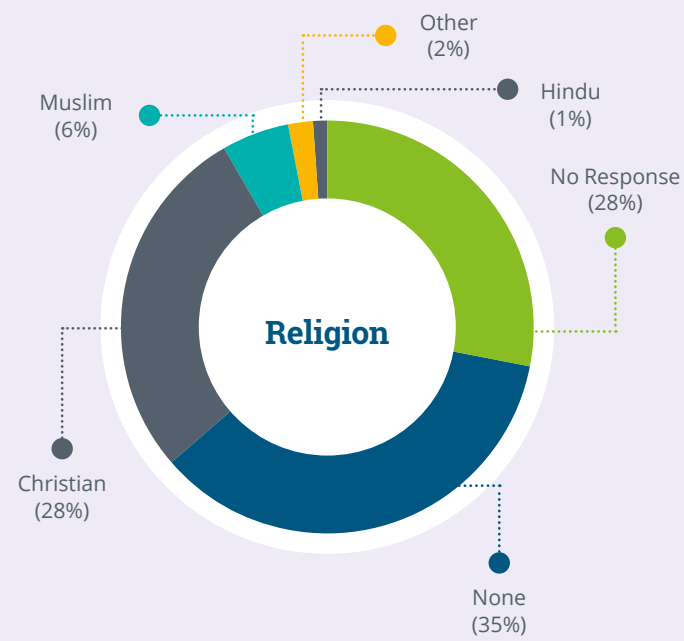
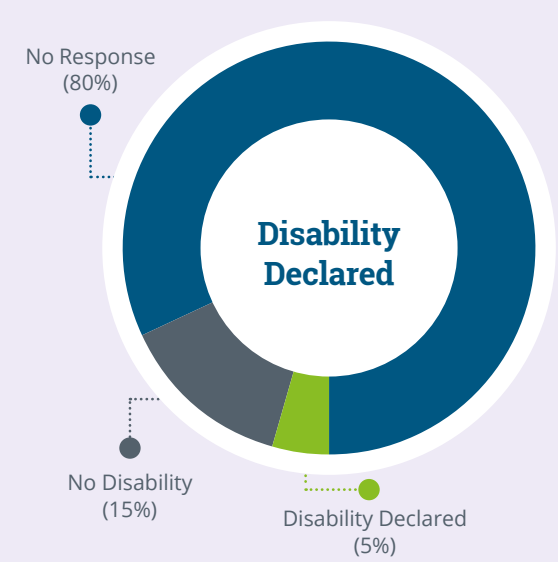
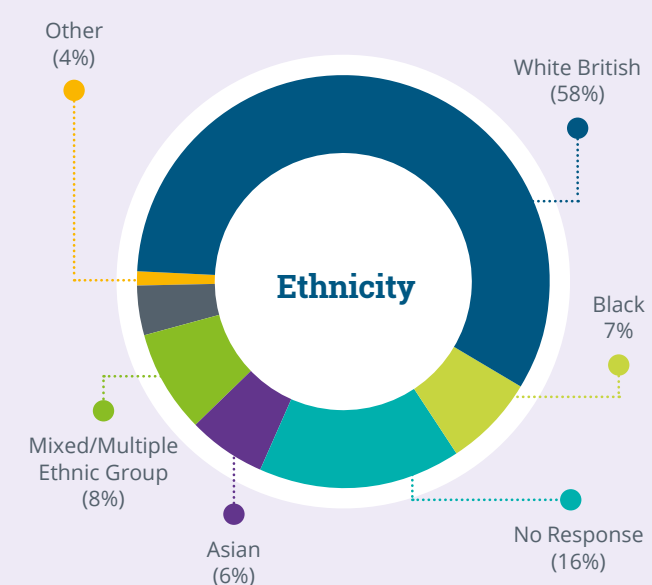
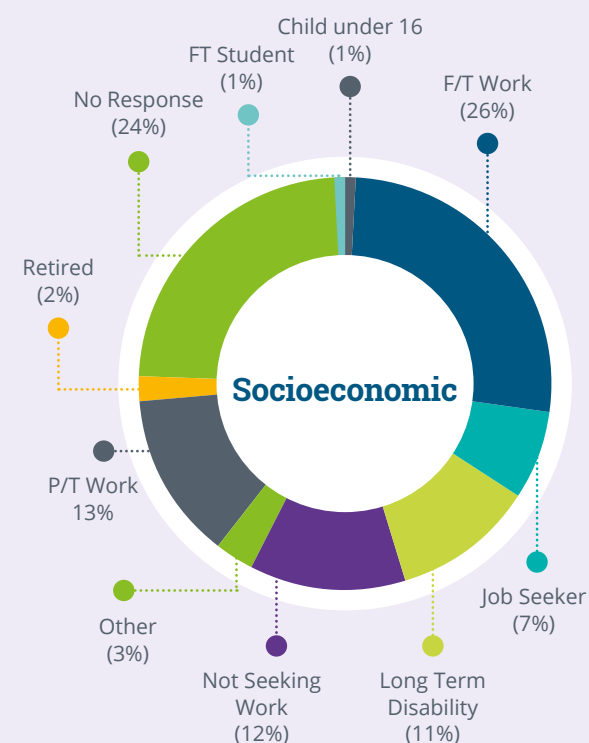
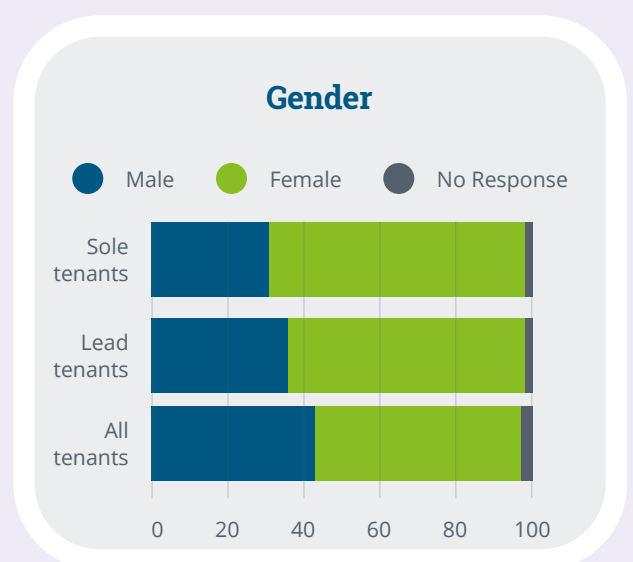
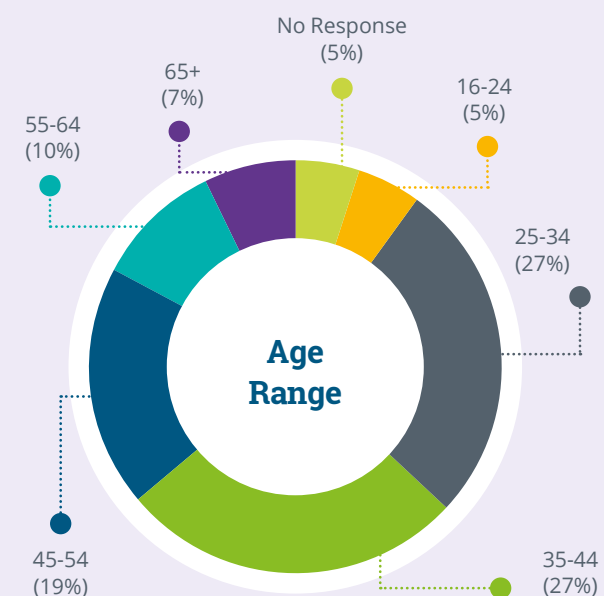
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We believe that everyone should be treated fairly and with respect regardless of their background, identity or circumstances.

We are dedicated to placing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) at the core of everything we do - both in the way we support our residents and in how we collaborate as a team.

By embedding EDI across our services and workforce, we aim to create welcoming communities and a workplace where everyone feels valued and included.

The graphs provide a visual representation of the demographic of our residents. This insight plays a vital role in shaping our services to be more inclusive and responsive.



Looking ahead

To better understand our residents and tailor our services to meet diverse needs, one of our key priorities for 2025/26 is a resident data collection project. This will give you the opportunity to update the information we hold on you and members of your household to make sure that it is correct.

We encourage all residents to take part and have set up a cross-departmental working group that will guide the project and ensure it's carried out thoughtfully and securely.

This is part of our wider commitment to following national recommendations and improving how we collect, manage and use resident data.

Residents' events

Our summer events are a highlight for both residents and staff. In 2024, we welcomed over 60 residents to events held across Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

These events were a great opportunity for residents to meet Hightown staff and partner agencies like the police and fire services, share feedback and enjoy family-friendly activities with a sustainability theme.

Children and families had a fantastic time with face painting, games and flowerpot decorating amongst other activities. Residents also had the chance to learn more about sustainable living and how small changes can make a big difference.



In December 2024, we welcomed residents to a joyful festive open day at Adeyfield Free Church on Maylands Avenue in Hemel Hempstead.

The event was packed with seasonal cheer and activities for all ages. Children were especially excited to meet Santa, feed the reindeer and take part in arts and crafts sessions.

We were also joined by Better Homes, Better Health, who shared helpful advice on how to stay warm and well during the winter months.

Residents used the summer events and festive open day as an opportunity to provide feedback on our services. Hightown staff addressed residents and estates queries and issues such as bins sheds, recycling, anti-social behaviour, ground maintenance and parking concerns.

Your home

Hightown is committed to making sure your home is a place where you feel safe, secure and comfortable. We work to maintain high standards across all our homes - carrying out regular checks, responding to repairs promptly and investing in improvements.

Building safety and stock condition

To help keep our records up to date and our homes in good repair, Hightown carries out a programme of Stock Condition Surveys, which involves inspecting properties at least once every five years. These surveys help us assess the condition of your home and plan future maintenance and investment.

We have been working throughout the year to increase the number of homes surveyed and are taking this forward into 2025/26. This helps us stay on top of repairs, plan improvements and ensure your home continues to meet safety standards.

We are continuing to build on this progress to ensure every home meets the highest standards of safety and comfort.

If you have any questions or concerns about building safety or the safety of your home, please email building.safety@hightownha.org.uk



Damp and mould



Looking ahead

In October 2025, Awaab's Law will come into effect, requiring all social landlords to attend to reported damp and mould cases within specified legal timescales.

We will continue to support residents by providing clear guidance on how to reduce condensation and prevent damp, sharing educational materials at events and through home visits and offering practical advice on heating homes efficiently and reducing energy costs.

What is Awaab's Law?

Awaab's Law aims to ensure that social landlords are held accountable for addressing dangerous living conditions, particularly damp and mould, in rented accommodation. It requires landlords to repair emergency hazards within specific time frames.



561
inspections
carried out



£76,000
invested in
remedial works

Sustainability

Alongside our commitment to providing good quality, affordable homes, we also recognise the importance of reducing our environmental impact.

We're continuing to invest in improving the energy efficiency of our homes - helping to lower carbon emissions, reduce energy bills and support residents in living more sustainably. This work aligns with government strategies to create greener, more energy-efficient housing across the UK.

In 2024/25, we invested **£527,835** to improve energy efficiency across existing Hightown properties, an increase on the previous year.

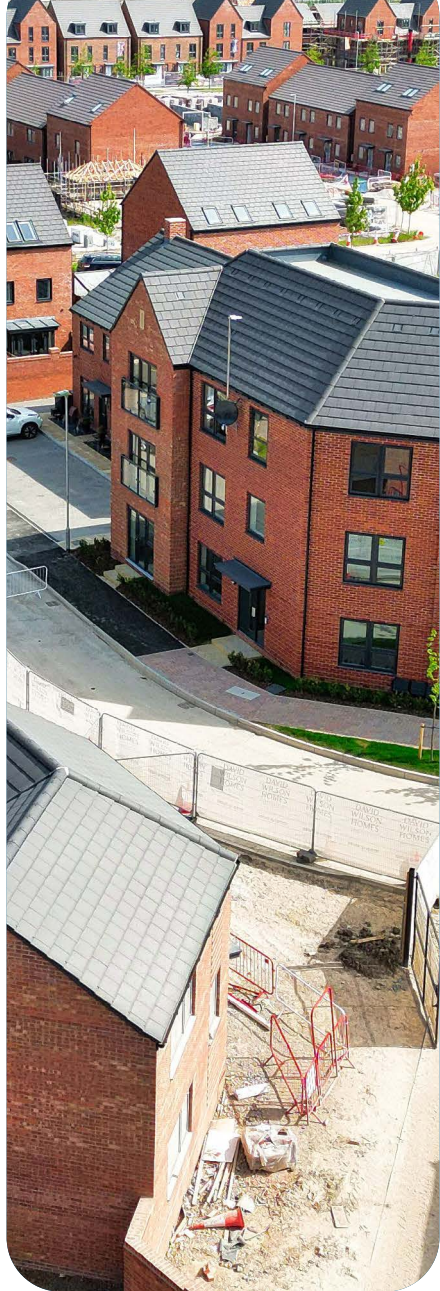
69.7% of our homes are rated Band B or above for energy performance. Our general needs properties have an average energy performance certificate (EPC) rating of 81.35%. 59.9% of new homes completed this year include rooftop renewable energy systems, such as solar panels. These improvements are part of our long-term sustainability strategy to create warmer, more energy-efficient homes for our residents.

By upgrading energy ratings and exploring eco-friendly improvements, we're working to ensure our homes are not only comfortable and affordable - but also better for the planet.



Major works completed 2024/25

Type	Quantity
External decorations	364
Door replacements	245
Heating and hot water replacements	98
Window replacements	74
Internal communal areas	59
Kitchen replacements	52
Electrical works upgrades	38
Bathroom replacements	35
Communal area flooring replacements	0
Other (including roof replacements and works to paths and paving)	41



Our repairs and maintenance expenditure



Routine maintenance

£5,143,832



Planned maintenance

£743,496



Major repairs

£4,581,225

Your neighbourhood

In the last financial year, we carried out **7,493** estate inspections - an increase on the previous year. We invested **£19,080** in improvements at five estates, based on resident-led bids for neighbourhood upgrades.

You said, we did. Estates improvements

In 2024/25, our Residents' Voice & Scrutiny Panel allocated funding for several estate improvements based on requests from residents. We delivered:

-  CCTV installation at four estates to enhance safety
-  Secure by Design post boxes to protect mail and additional trades button access to improve convenience and security



Money matters

Directors' remuneration and management costs 2024/25:

	Total	Homes owned and managed	Cost per home
Remuneration paid to the highest paid Director	£361,497	9,261	£39
Remuneration paid to Directors	£1,118,714	9,261	£121
Management costs	£11,016,000	9,261	£1,190

How we spend our income per £1



Meet our Board members



Qadeer Kiani OBE, Chair
 Joined Board in 2024
 Member of the Remuneration Nominations Committee



Cordelia Pace, Vice-Chair
 Joined Board in 2017
 Member of Remuneration & Nominations, Operations and Investment Committees



Alan Head
 Joined Board in 2018
 Chair of the Development Committee and member of the Risk & Audit and Remuneration & Nominations Committees



David Matthews
 Joined Board in 2020
 Member of the Risk & Audit Committee



Sarah Barton
 Joined Board in 2021
 Chair of the Risk & Audit Committee and Member of the Remuneration & Nominations and Investment Committees



Charmaine De Souza
 Joined Board in 2021
 Member of Remuneration & Nominations and Operations Committees. Board lead for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. Designated Board member for Whistleblowing



Chris Ellmore
 Joined Board in 2023
 Member of the Risk & Audit Committee



Zeena Farook
 Joined Board in 2023
 Member of the Investment and Operations Committees



Olayinka Bolaji
 Joined Board in 2024
 Member of the Investment and Operations Committees



Leslie Channon
 Joined Board in 2024
 Member of the Risk & Audit and Operations Committees

Meet our Executive leadership team



David Bogle
Chief Executive
(retired on 31 March)

Years with Hightown: 31
Years in Role: 31
Years in Sector: 41



Maxine Espley
Chief Executive
(From 1 April 2025)



Andrew Royall
Director of Development

Years with Hightown: 22
Years in Role: 8
Years in Sector: 33



David Skinner
Director of
Financial Services

Years with Hightown: 16
Years in Role: 16
Years in Sector: 28



Amy Laurie
Director of Care &
Supported Housing
– job share

Years with Hightown:
7 plus 5.5 years previously
Years in Role: 3.5 years
Years in Sector: 21



Gemma Richardson
Director of Care &
Supported Housing
– job share

Years with Hightown: 20
Years in Role: 3.5 years
Years in Sector: 20



Natalie Sturrock
Director of Housing

Years with Hightown: 16.5
Years in Role: 3 years
Years in Sector: 16.5



Carol Lovell
Director of
Corporate Services

Years with Hightown: 1
Years in Role: 1
Years in Sector: 21

Your online portal

MyHightown, the resident portal, has been upgraded to a new and improved version.

We have listened to feedback from residents about how the portal can be improved and have decided to use a new system with better functionality.

You can use our online resident account portal anytime, anywhere to:

- pay your rent, view your statements and recent transactions
- report a repair and track progress
- check your balance
- update your details
- make a complaint or compliment



Signed up yet?

Visit: myaccount.hightownha.org.uk



Useful contacts



Hightown resources

Hightown main switchboard	01442 292300	housing.services@hightownha.org.uk
Did you know you can look up the contact details for the officers responsible for your home on MyHightown? Log in at myaccount.hightownha.org.uk		
To report a repair during office hours	01442 292301	maintenance.services@hightownha.org.uk or on MyHightown at myaccount.hightownha.org.uk
To report an emergency repair out of office hours	0845 160 0077 0203 701 3525	
To talk to your Housing Officer about anti-social behaviour	01442 292300	housing.services@hightownha.org.uk
Report nuisance neighbours (Text or phone)	07768 286694	www.hightownha.org.uk (Text or phone) or on MyHightown at myaccount.hightownha.org.uk
Having difficulty paying your rent, or to set up a direct debit	01442 292 387	www.hightownha.org.uk
Pay your rent with your Allpay swipe card	0844 557 8321	www.allpayments.net or on MyHightown at myaccount.hightownha.org.uk
Report subletting / fraud	07768 286694	housing.services@hightownha.org.uk
To join an inspection of your estate	01442 292300	property.servicesadmin@hightownha.org.uk

Additional resources

Reporting a gas leak	0800 111 999	housing.services@hightownha.org.uk
Housing Ombudsman	0300 111 3000	www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
My Home contents insurance	0345 450 7288	www.thistlemyhome.co.uk
The Money Advice Service	0800 138 7777	www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk
National Debtline	0808 808 4000	www.nationaldebtline.co.uk
Step Change debt charity	0800 138 1111	www.stepchange.org
Turn2Us - for help accessing benefits and grants	0808 802 2000 0203 701 3525	www.turn2us.org.uk
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111	www.crimestoppers-uk.org
Police (non-emergency)	101	
Homeswapper/options to move		tenants@homeswapper.co.uk
Samaritans	116 123	www.samaritans.org
Citizens Advice Bureau	03444 111 444	www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Women's Aid	0808 2000 247	www.womensaid.org.uk
Mind charity	0300 123 3393	info@mind.org.uk

More information regarding local services is available on the Hightown website.



We're here to help

If you'd like to know more about our services, the contents of this report, share feedback or make a complaint, we'd love to hear from you. Just use the contact details below to get in touch.

At Hightown, we want to make it as easy as possible for you to access information about how we work. We can provide printed copies of this report, our policies and other materials and we're happy to offer these in large print or Braille if needed.

If English isn't your first language, we can also arrange translations of this report, our policies and other information into your preferred language.

Just let us know what format or language you need and we'll do our best to make it happen.

Contact us

Call: 01442 292300

Visit: www.hightownha.org.uk

Write to: Hightown Housing Association,
Maylands Avenue, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 4XH

