



## **Welcome to Viridian's annual report for 2012-13**

We provide social housing to over 30,000 residents spanning across London and the south east, the Midlands and West Sussex.

We work in partnership with local authorities, organisations and residents to create safe, sustainable communities. We aim to support our residents and help them to make the most of opportunities in their lives.

The organisation from which Viridian emerged was founded in 1945, since when we have grown and developed, touching many peoples' lives along the way. We are focused on helping our residents and colleagues make the most of their lives.

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# 1. Introduction

Over the last year we have been working hard to improve the service and support that we offer to our customers.

After 2012's incredible and unforgettable summer we were recognised with a commemorative plaque from Metropolitan Police for our work housing visiting police officers during the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Our Customer Services Centre was awarded the prestigious Investors in Excellence (IiE) accreditation, which recognises its continuous improvement and covers all key business areas including leadership, people and customer satisfaction.

In September, Viridian was one of the first three organisations to be accredited by the Housing Quality Network for our approach to co-regulation and resident involvement. A new involvement framework has been developed to progress this work with three separate streams for residents to impact the way we work; through the Board, through monthly service reviews and through an independent Resident Scrutiny Board. There are details later in this report. However, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members, past and present of the National Residents' Forum in giving us such a strong platform to develop our customer service from.

Satisfaction with our customer service has increased from 77% to 80% and with our repairs service from 76% to 85%.

We have outsourced our out-of-hours emergency call services to an independent provider, which is helping us to deliver a more efficient customer service to the more than 16,000 households in our homes.

The past year was a challenging one for residents with a number of changes to the benefit system. We are putting a significant effort into ensuring that every affected resident really understands what these changes mean for them and their families. We have completed home visits for all customers affected by the 'bedroom tax' and the benefits cap' so that we could explain these changes to them in detail.

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Residents need our support more than ever in this area and to provide this we have set up a new Financial Inclusion team. These are benefit specialists who are focused on helping customers to make sure they are receiving the benefits to which they are entitled. We have also set up partnerships with other organisations to ensure that our customers have free access to money and debt advice services.

We continue to invest in new developments that reflect the needs of our residents and customers; Halton Court in Greenwich is a landmark development that sets a new benchmark in accommodation for people aged 55 and over. This scheme provides 170 spacious apartments of really high quality, attractive housing for older people wishing to 'downsize' offering a housing option that they might really want. We don't think that older people should be pressured or forced into moving home, but believe that if we provide really high quality alternative housing for them, they will want to move of their own accord. We aren't wrong – lettings at Halton Court have been taking place twice as fast as we had anticipated!

We are currently reviewing the way in which we operate and how we provide services to our residents and have reviewed our mix of people, processes and technology to ensure that we have the best Operating Model for the next decade. We anticipate that the projects required to enable us to deliver the resulting "Target Operating Model" will take three years to deliver fully.

By the end of that time, we believe that we will have a more local service with a far greater knowledge of all of our residents and with residents able to access all of our services through the internet whenever they want.

This is a demanding time in the housing world but also an incredibly exciting one. We look forward to the shared journey with you in the year ahead.



*Hattie Llewelyn-Davies, Viridian Board Chair*

*Matthew Fox, Chief Executive*

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## 2. Performance highlights for 2012/13



### Customer Services

We asked over 2,000 residents about their experiences when contacting our customer services team.

- 80% of those surveyed said that they were satisfied with the service that they received, up from last year's 78%.
- We had a 14% increase in calls to our customer service centre in 2012-13 with a massive 139,443 calls in total.
- We answered 82% of these calls within 5 rings, up from last year's 81%.

### Resolving complaints

- 96.5% were satisfied with the way their complaint was handled, up from last year's 91.5%
- 95.4% were satisfied with the way their complaint was resolved, up from last year's 89.4%.

### Repairs and maintenance

In 2012 we surveyed 2,800 residents asking them about the repairs service they received.

- 80% of those surveyed said that they were satisfied with their repair, up from last year's 79%.
- A number of measures are in place to improve satisfaction rates in order to achieve our target of 90% satisfaction in 2013/14, including:
  - Speaking with residents who state that they are dissatisfied with the service they have received in order to identify areas for improvement.
  - Conducting more detailed analysis of all of our satisfaction surveys to improve services and drive up performance.
  - Recruiting new, highly qualified staff to improve the speed and quality of maintenance jobs.
- We completed 92% (38,500) of repairs on the first visit out of a possible 42,000 in 2012, up from last year's 90%.
- We completed 97% (5,202) of emergency repairs within 24 hours.

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Our gas servicing compliance was 99.91% for the year.

### **Dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB)**

In 2012 we resolved 91% of all ASB cases and our average time to resolve ASB cases reduced to 18 weeks, exceeding our target of resolving cases in less than 30 weeks.

## **3. Involving our residents**



### **Background**

In September 2012, Viridian was one of the first three organisations to be accredited by the Housing Quality Network for our approach to co-regulation and resident involvement. However, we didn't rest on our laurels and during 2013 we have undertaken a detailed review of our involvement framework to increase the range of opportunities for customers to influence how we serve them.

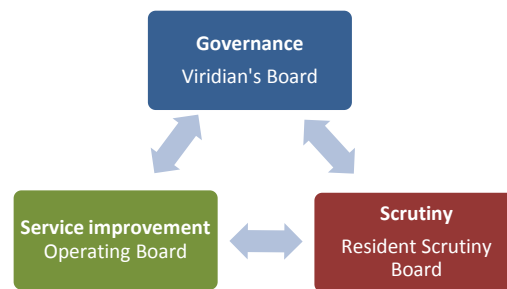
Since 2008 the National Residents' Forum (NRF) has acted as the over-arching resident body with a wide remit including policy development and reviewing performance.

As the range of co-regulatory activities grew, it was difficult for a small group of individuals to provide the time and skills necessary to manage the varying needs of the business.

### **Review of how residents are involved with Viridian**

This review was carried out by a working party made up of members of the NRF, Viridian's Board and the management team. The group looked at what structure was needed to provide independent scrutiny and challenge. Supported by an independent facilitator, the working party developed a new involvement framework with three separate streams of activity; governance, service improvement and scrutiny to ensure independence between them.

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**Viridian's Board** – Two residents sit on the Viridian Board to contribute to the strategic direction of the organisation, monitor performance and take key decisions.

**Resident Scrutiny Board** – This is a group of eight residents working with an external facilitator to provide independent challenge to Viridian. This board looks at performance trends and commissions detailed pieces of work by the Resident Auditors and Resident Service Inspectors.

**Operating Board** - Two residents and members of Viridian's Leadership Team (Senior Managers) sit on the Operating Board to monitor performance closely and tackle any blockages to service delivery.

Recruitment to these formal groups was undertaken using a process of matching skills and experience against a person specification for each role.

We surveyed 10,000 residents to find out how they would like to be involved with Viridian and what type of reward and recognition they thought they should receive for their involvement. The survey suggested that Viridian should provide varying opportunities for residents to get involved, without being out of pocket financially. This feedback was used to develop the new Involving Residents policy and procedure which details Viridian's approach to incentives and expenses.

### What's next?

With the new structure in place, the Resident Scrutiny Board and Operating Board will review each other's performance and successes after 12 months to ensure they are both achieving what is expected. The progress of these groups will be shared with residents through regular articles in Link (our quarterly newsletter), Viridian's website and the annual report for 2013-14.

If you would like further information on the involvement framework or are interested in finding out more about getting involved, please contact Jane Jolly, Resident Governance Manager, on 0330 123 0220.

## 4. Resolving complaints



### Introduction

At Viridian, we see complaints as an important way for us to find out how our residents feel about the services we provide and provide valuable insight in how we can improve. Complaints tell us when we have made mistakes and give us the opportunity to work with residents to put things right and learn important lessons to improve the way we work.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with the service we have provided or an action we have taken, or a failure to take action which has a negative impact. Our complaints process has two stages, the investigation stage and (if a complainant is unhappy with how their complaint was investigated) the review stage.

### Our goal

The team continued to build on its success from the previous year. At the beginning of 2013 the team was restructured so that the role of the officers handling complaints also includes supporting the formally involved residents. To reflect this broader role, the team name was changed to Customer Liaison team. The team now consists of five officers and a team leader though the complaints process has not changed.

Each month we measure the satisfaction of the users of our complaints process. At the end of the year 2012-13 the team achieved an impressive 95.5% satisfaction with complaint handling (target 90%) and 95.3% satisfaction with resolution of complaints (target 85%).

### What did we do and did it work?

During the year, the team dealt with 587 complaints under Viridian's complaints process.

Of the complaints received during the year, seven progressed to the review stage of the complaints procedure and of these; three were referred to the Housing Ombudsman Service for investigation. One complaint has now been investigated and the Ombudsman was satisfied that Viridian took appropriate action to resolve the case satisfactorily. As of the time of writing (September 2013), the two remaining cases are still being reviewed by the Ombudsman.

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## You said, we did!

Examples of how we have used complaints to make improvements are:

**You said:** You told us that you were unhappy with our caretaking service at the beginning of 2012-13.

**We did:** As a result, the caretaking managers carried out more onsite inspections to ensure the best possible standards. This has significantly reduced the number of repeat complaints about the service provided.

**You said:** You would like to be reminded via text message about repairs appointments.

**We did:** We now send a text message to the residents for whom we hold mobile numbers to remind them of repair appointments.

## Results

### Received complaints

	2012-13
Allocations & Lettings	8
Anti-social Behaviour	20
Commercial Services	24
Estate Services	17
Homeownership	36
Other	6
Rent & service charge	8
Reinvestment	45
Service contracts	2
Resident involvement	1
Repairs & maintenance	296
Staff and customer service	26
Supported Housing	21
Tenancy management	77
<b>Total</b>	<b>587</b>

Review stage complaints	
Anti Social Behaviour	2
Commercial services	1
Home ownership	2
Repairs and maintenance	1
Tenancy management	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>



## Looking forward

During 2013-14 we will continue to build on the success of the team and successfully resolve the complaints we deal with. Our target has been increased to achieve 90% satisfaction with the complaints process and handling of complaints. We achieved this last year and aim to do so again in the coming year.

Our main focus will be on learning lessons from complaints and embedding these in the business to prevent repeat complaints about the same issues. We hope that this will start reducing the number of complaints we receive.

## 5. Planned Maintenance Works



Viridian Housing replaces the large and expensive parts in our homes outside of the day to day responsive repairs service through our planned maintenance programme. This ensures our homes continue to meet the decent homes standard. Between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013 we did the following works in our homes;

<b>Planned maintenance works completed 2012/13</b>	<b>Number of Each</b>	<b>Total Value</b>
Kitchen Replacements	692	£3,230,948
Bathrooms Replacements	419	£864,816
Level Access Showers Installed	211	£1,051,413
Windows and Door replacements	268	£1,061,944
Electrical Rewires	617	£764,463

As with the previous years planned maintenance programmes customer satisfaction remains very high. We carried 607 customer satisfaction surveys in 2012/13 and 97% of customers were satisfied with the works carried out.

In 2013/2014 we expect to undertake the following works;

<b>Planned maintenance works programme 2013/14</b>	<b>Number of Each</b>
Kitchen Replacements	661
Bathrooms Replacements	413
Level Access Showers Installations	495
Windows and Door replacements	460
Electrical Rewires	429

## **Aids and Adaptations**

Sometimes we have customers who require alterations to their homes when they become infirm or have an illness. Residents can apply for Aids and Adaptation works to their home with a supporting doctor's letter, this work typically is for things like showers, handrails and stair lifts. In 2012/13 we completed 201 aids and adaptations alterations, this was worth £400,261.

## **Refurbishing empty homes**

In 2012/13 we also refurbished 742 homes between tenancies; we spend on average £2,545 on every home before a new customer moves into it ensuring its safe and in a reasonable condition.

## **Mechanical and electrical work**

In 2012-13 we installed 283 high efficiency condensing boilers creating up to 30% of energy savings for residents. Our gas servicing and maintenance team was shortlisted for the National Housing Maintenance Forum "DLO of the Year Award" for its excellent approach to delivering Viridian's servicing programme and in house boiler installations. The team carried out 7,000 repairs and completed 8,500 services. In addition we installed 6 new lifts to our retirement homes for our most vulnerable residents. The new lifts, which cost about £70,000 each, are MRL (machine roomless - in these lifts the machine is mounted within the lift shaft) and 50-70% more efficient than hydraulic lifts.

Our in-house repairs team deliver all day to day repairs to our residents. The team delivered 42,000 repairs across our portfolio. Satisfaction with the service peaked at 86% during 2012-13. We also attended over 99% of emergency repairs and 95% of non urgent jobs within target. Our first time fix rate was 93%.

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## Environmental Performance

Viridian joined the likes of Sainsbury's, BT Group and Marks & Spencer in winning the Sustainable City Award for its exceptional work on tackling climate change. Organised by the City of London Corporation, the Sustainable City Awards acknowledges the UK's foremost green organisations. Viridian was acknowledged for its efforts to engage colleagues and customers as it plans to cut energy use by a third over the next five years.

## 6. Social Impact



Having created the Social Impact team in 2011-12, in 2012-13 the team was recruited and work to increase our social impact got underway.

The team has established a programme of activities working across four themes:

- Education, employment and training
- Health and wellbeing
- Safer communities
- Financial inclusion

In 2012-13, the team:

- Started a customer-led project in St John's, to give customers the chance to improve their lives and their community. This project will run for the next two years and already over 83% of customers in the area are involved.
- Trained customers to get online and tackle digital exclusion. Following the pilot this will be rolled out nationally.
- Grew the number of welfare advisors. There are now five advisors working across all recognised who can offer customers support on benefits and financial matters
- Established a partnership with Step Change, offering all customers priority access to debt relief advice.
- Worked with Wandsworth Council to set up a Homes to Work partnership, offering five young people the chance to receive a home and support to get into employment.
- Supported the South London Jobs Fair which gave residents the chance to find out job opportunities in their area.

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- Supported CHISEL Kids, an initiative run by one of our customers to help young people into work. There were 26 starters on the CHISEL Kids programmes of which 19 signed off Job Seekers Allowance and 4 successfully completed BTEC level 2 Peer Award.

Also in 2012-13

- 18 customers received emergency financial support and contributions to help receive training and education.
- 58 Supported Housing and Retirement schemes received funding for training, health and wellbeing, and developed initiatives.
- 21 customers had the chance to volunteer in our offices and gain vital skills and experience to help prepare them for work.
- 32 colleagues gave a day of their time, volunteering to improve the homes of customers.
- Three young customers embarked on the Duke of Edinburgh Awards and will be going to Buckingham Palace in 2014 to receive their awards.

Next year we will:

- Launch an apprenticeship scheme, giving customers a chance to start their careers at Viridian.
- Improve our response to Domestic Abuse, helping victims by training colleagues to identify domestic abuse and raising awareness in our communities.
- Start a national roll-out of our digital inclusion scheme.
- Offer more opportunities to customers to find work, working in partnership with other Housing Associations.
- Continue to prepare customers to respond to Welfare Reform.
- Start new projects to give support to young families and older people.
- Expand our volunteering programme to give more customers a chance to get involved in their community or learn new skills in the workplace.

## 7. Commercial Operations



Our Commercial Operations team is made up of student housing, alternative housing (i.e. shared ownership, market rent and temporary accommodation), hostels and key worker accommodation. We provide a variety of accommodation for customers, from as far south as Southampton and right up to Kettering in Northamptonshire with lots in between. As well as housing students and key workers, we also offer shared ownership and manage three hostels in Greater London.

### What we did in 2012-13

- Following feedback from Middlesex University students during the 2011-12 academic year regarding the provision of recycling facilities, Viridian worked with Barnet Council to improve facilities for recycling on site as well as with the 2012-13 arrivals, encouraging greater use. We began to monitor the amount of waste that was recycled and will be able to measure performance as we develop the recycling facilities in the halls of residence further.
- We participated in 'Student Switch-Off', an initiative to create energy use awareness which was run at 51 institutions, reaching 130,000 students of which 22,000 were engaged through Student Switch-Offs Facebook fan-pages, pledge schemes and events.
- At our student halls in Eastbourne and Southampton, we replaced a number of wardrobes, chairs and desks and as a result, various charities benefited from our refurbishment works.
- We achieved 100% customer satisfaction at our student halls in Southampton and Eastbourne and 92% for our halls in North London. We also achieved just over 97% satisfaction at our Key Worker residences and 99% at our three hostels in London.
- Our key worker accommodation at Chertsey continued to remain very popular with NHS staff, with average 96% occupancy. The scheme benefitted from continued investment with works to shared kitchens, the installation of various new heating systems, the commissioning of new fire alarm systems and improvement of some communal garden areas.
- In our hostels, we improved our reception areas for residents and visitors to make them more accessible, attractive and user friendly.

## **What we plan to do in 2013/14**

- To continue to meet the needs of our customers, at our key worker accommodation in Kingston we have commenced our en suite bathroom refurbishment programme, which will continue over the next three years, when properties become vacant.
- We have also commenced a refurbishment programme to our shared bathrooms at Park House hostel in Earls Court.
- At Welkin Halls of Residence, we plan to introduce Wi-Fi and laundry cards for the on-site Laundrette benefiting all our student residents.
- At Lucia Foster Welch Halls of Residence, we plan to set up a student social committee and organise pool competitions for our student residents.
- We are actively working with our partner, Ashford & St Peter's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust in Chertsey to review the potential redevelopment options for the improvement of the current accommodation.
- At our Middlesex Halls, we have been working with the student union and student engagement teams and have arranged for a program of activities including table tennis competitions, speed dating and introductory trips into London and the local area during intake week. This will both occupy the students and give them the opportunity to begin making new friendships.
- We will be bringing on 20 new shared ownership units at Viridian's new flagship development in Kidbrooke, which offers an outstanding choice of quality, sustainable new homes and apartments.
- We have 19 remaining Settled Homes Initiative (SHI) units to be delivered as part of the joint initiative with the South East London Housing Partnership delivering quality homes in the boroughs of Lewisham, Bromley, Southwark and Greenwich. The SHI is temporary accommodation evolving to General Needs in the long term.

## **Did you know?**

- The inaugural Viridian Scholarship, 'Making a Difference' was awarded to a student who started her studies for a BA in Sociology with Criminology. The award paid for her accommodation fees at Usher Hall for the academic year. For the coming academic year the scholarship has been renamed Study4Success.
- Lucia Foster Welch, our halls of residence in Southampton which provides accommodation for students at Southampton Solent University, achieved a Gold Award by Green Impact, a national environmental accreditation programme run by the NUS as well as 'best overall residence experience' for the second year running.

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- As a result of our refurbishment and student departures in Welkin Halls of Residence, The Salvation Army benefited with 320 duvets and pillows for their work with the homeless and people in need. Additionally, the Eastbourne Food Bank benefited with over 81kg of food to local people in need.
- Welkin Halls of Residence has achieved UUK accreditation and retained its Visit England 4 star award.
- We are one of the largest providers of student accommodation in England.

## 8. Development



Viridian is committed to building new homes that provide much needed affordable accommodation for the communities where we operate. The Viridian Board has decided that we should concentrate this growth in the London region, as outlined in our 2012/16 Corporate Strategy.

The demand for new affordable homes in London far outweighs the supply which has been further hampered in recent years by the general down turn in the housing market. Viridian has remained active during this period, working with our Local Authority and Developer partners to find ways of continuing to invest and build new affordable homes.

2012/13 was a very busy year for the Development and Sales team. A dedicated sales team was recruited to manage the sales process for our new shared ownership homes. That team is now well established, with processes in place and excellent customer feedback with 100% of those responding to our survey stating they were happy with the sales process.

"Everyone was very polite and helpful through the whole process. Very professional, great service."

"I would recommend Viridian Housing"

"From start to completion all the way through, James and Alasdair were very helpful"

We sold 47 homes during the year raising £3.8 million of income, exceeding our target.



As well as selling new homes we built quite a few as well. During the year we completed the construction of 207 new homes at a cost of £42 million and received £14.9 million of grant funding from the Greater London Authority. 121 of those homes were available to rent and 86 for shared ownership.

Our new homes survey told us that 92% of our new residents were satisfied with their home.

Our programme for 2013/14 will see the completion of 213 new homes including our first new Senior Living scheme, Halton Court, at Kidbrooke in Greenwich.

### **Some highlights from the year:**

Lavender Avenue in Merton saw the construction of 58 new homes including 11 five bedroom houses for larger families. Built from a timber frame construction, the scheme is of high quality with solar panels on the roof providing electricity for the communal areas. A communal allotment was also created, making great use of some space on the site that would have otherwise been left as unneeded landscape areas. A GP surgery has been provided on the ground floor in one of the blocks bringing vital services into the heart of the community. The scheme has been short listed for best large development at the National Housing Awards 2013.

We were also active in helping families in difficulty with their homes through the Mortgage Rescue programme. One resident said that without the scheme his family would be on the streets. We continue to be active in this programme and are helping seven families at present.



## 9. Financial Performance



	2012- 13	2011- 12
<b>Income &amp; Expenditure Summary</b>		
	£ million	£ million
Turnover ( <i>see below</i> )	107.1	105.0
Operating Costs ( <i>see below</i> )	(84.3)	(85.7)
Operating Surplus	22.8	19.3
Interest	(11.3)	(11.2)
Sale of properties and write downs	(2.2)	(0.3)
Surplus	9.3	7.9

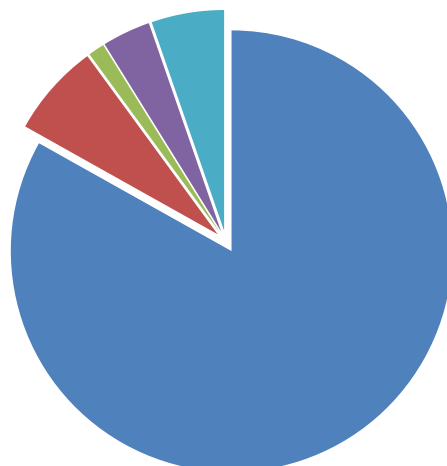
### Where our money came from

	£ million	£ million
Rents	89.0	87.5
Service charges	7.3	6.6
Supporting People income	1.3	2.2
Shared ownership initial sales	3.8	0.1
Grants, fees & other	5.7	8.6
Total	107.1	105.0

### What we spent our money on

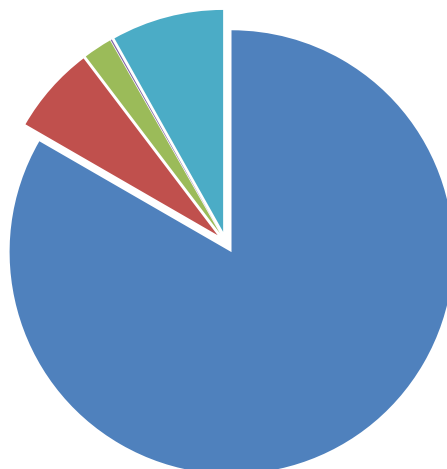
	£ million	£ million
Service charges	7.0	5.5
Supporting People costs	1.0	1.4
Repairs and maintenance	11.8	15.0
Employees	33.5	35.1
Property and utilities	9.4	12.1
Depreciation	8.4	10.2
Other	13.2	6.4
Total	84.3	85.7

**Where Our Money Came From  
2012-13**



■ Rents	■ Service charges
■ Supporting People income	■ Shared ownership initial sales
■ Grants, fees & other	

**Where Our Money Came From  
2011-12**



■ Rents	■ Service charges
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