

# The Barnet Group

## Annual Review

# 2020-21



The Barnet  
Group

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# The Barnett Group



# Tim Mulvenna, CEO The Barnet Group

Welcome to our 2020-21 Annual Review. The twelve months this review covers was like nothing many of us will experience in our lifetimes.

As individuals and as a business, we've worked tirelessly to keep those in our community safe and well, and provided invaluable support to those who are most vulnerable.

The Barnet Group continues to adapt in this new environment as we have done in the past. 2020 was a landmark year for Barnet Homes as we brought the resident repairs service back in-house to provide better solutions to our residents. As a business which is constantly growing and adapting, we continue to look for new ways to improve our service for our customers.

After seven dedicated years, it is with regret we say goodbye to John Davies who stepped down as Chair of the Performance Advisory Group (PAG).

John has been an invaluable advocate, working with Barnet Homes to help improve services for all residents. John also acted as Gas Service Resident Champion, attending contractor performance meetings, ensuring the customers' voice was always heard. John has played a key part in guiding Barnet Homes on measures to take that lead to improve resident satisfaction. John will be missed by his fellow PAG colleagues, the Board as well as staff and colleagues he worked closely with. On behalf of Barnet Homes, we wish John all the best and thank him for all his hard work over the years in representing the voice of residents and supporting The Barnet Group.

We welcome Aruna Bhatt as the new chair of the Resident Board, and we're looking forward to working with her.

I'm proud of the role The Barnet Group has played in helping the community come together during these difficult times. It has been truly inspiring to see how the whole borough has rallied around to help each other.

This annual review will focus on the person centred approach Barnet Group staff have embodied in serving our community over the 12 months from April 2020. I'm delighted to be able to share it with you.

Tim Mulvenna  
CEO, The Barnet Group





# The Barnet Group's Strategic Plan

## 2019-2024



Pictured: A young person at Beat The Curve - Urban Gamez's 2020 event

The Barnet Group's Strategic Plan sets out our five-year vision from 2019-24 for how we will continue to deliver good services whilst supporting our customers and Barnet Council through the challenges they face. The objectives we have set are based on our review of the external environment, the needs of our customers and employees, and our own strengths and weaknesses. This plan is complemented by a strategic action plan of priority activities that support our aims and will ensure we reach our goals.

By 2024 we want The Barnet Group to be seen as a leader in the sectors in which we operate, and for our customers to be our biggest advocates. To do this, we will need to be more innovative in

the way we deliver services and to make continual and sustained change. We must also attract the best staff by being a great place to work. If we are to realise our ambitions, we must continue on our journey to transform and modernise.

We must ensure we achieve the greatest impact from everything we do, including our financial decisions, the way we deliver our services, what we expect from our people, and the investments we make in systems and technology. We will make sure that operations across the Group's diverse range of activities meet the high standard expectations of customers, regulators, and our stakeholders and partners. We will focus our efforts on driving value for money in all our activities.

We are committed to supporting the Council in investing in fire safety and implementing best practice fire safety measures in our high-rise blocks. As a result of a review of our approach, we will continue to prioritise and enhance the safety of our customers, and will engage with residents and increase awareness.

We will provide excellent services in our core areas of operation, and will seek to maximise potential outcomes and achievements and ensure appropriate skills and resources are shared by continuing to work with partners, as we have in the Welfare Reform Task Force, BOOST, and Love Burnt Oak. We will support customers who continue to be affected by welfare reform. In order to address the wide range of issues that can be linked to homelessness, we must continue to find ways to address the growth in demand and deliver early intervention.

We will develop and adopt more flexible and efficient services, focusing on the priorities of our customers, and providing choices to meet their needs and aspirations. We will review and simplify our service delivery, aiming for resolution at the first point of contact. We will aim to optimise our processes with a view to increase digitisation and offer increased choices to customers who prefer to access services in this way.

We will grow and transform the services within Your Choice (Barnet) to deliver efficiencies whilst ensuring improved outcomes, increased effectiveness, high customer satisfaction, and the promotion of greater independence and choice.

The provision and management of housing, homelessness, and adult social care services are why The Barnet Group exists; however, the growth of our business over the past 3 years has had the added benefit of acting as a catalyst to achieve savings, improve services, and retain and develop quality staff. We therefore intend to achieve further growth in future years in order to sustain our core services.

We will continue to grow and potentially diversify our Registered Provider Opendoor Homes and our private lettings company Bumblebee, adopting innovative service models in order to achieve positive outcomes and deliver effective and efficient services. We will also continue our ambitious development and acquisition programmes in order to increase the housing supply within the borough and help to meet growing demand across different tenures.

We recognise that our staff are our greatest asset. We will focus on employee wellbeing and engagement to make The Barnet Group a great place to work, and to attract, develop, and retain the best staff. We will continue to find ways to deliver social value, including providing apprenticeships and training. We will also invest in technology that supports our staff to deliver effective services and provides positive outcomes for customers, and will focus on realising the benefits of this investment.

We will continue to be transparent and accountable to our customers for the decisions we make and the services we provide. We will be responsive to changes within the housing and adult social care sectors and mindful of the current economic climate, but will continue to make long-term strategic decisions for the benefit of this and future generations.

Through our ambitious growth and development of new homes, arising opportunities in Adult Social Care, and our robust approach to supporting Council initiatives and other services over recent years, we have supported the London Borough of Barnet to overcome many of its challenges. We believe we have developed a proven model for local government delivery where more is achieved with fewer resources.

By the end of the life of this strategic plan we will have outperformed our peers, our customers will experience easy-to-use services and increased positive outcomes from their engagement with us, and our staff will be proud of our accomplishments.

# The Barnet Group to 2024

Having developed a successful track record of improvement and demonstrated our organisation's competence, we are confident in and excited by the prospect of continuing this growth over the next five years. Ultimately, however, success is

not just measured through figures, and we remain focused on the experience of our customers and the outcomes we achieve through working together.

**If you are a customer** you will be satisfied that your services are being delivered reliably to a good standard, with a concern for your wellbeing. You will feel that our staff are friendly, approachable, and have your best interests at heart. You will find services inclusive, easy to access, and appropriate to your needs, and you will feel confident that we will get things right when you contact us. You will be treated fairly and with respect.

**If you are a tenant or leaseholder** you will feel safe and connected in your community, and proud of your home. You will have opportunities to be meaningfully engaged to improve services and decision-making, and enhance local cohesion. You will receive services that are delivered in a manner to enable and empower you. You will have increased opportunities to access key services online so that you are able to have your needs met in a way and at a time that is convenient for you.

**If you use our Care and Support services** you will be satisfied that your services are provided in a way that ensures you are kept safe and your welfare is safeguarded. You will be treated with kindness, dignity, and respect, and in a caring manner that puts you, and your goals and ambitions at the centre of how your support is delivered. You will receive services that achieve good outcomes and support you to maintain a high quality of life, delivered by staff who are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to provide positive and individualised support.

**If you are an employee** you will perceive The Barnet Group as a great place to work, and an organisation of which you can feel proud. We want our customers and partners to feel our passion, and for our staff to feel empowered to be their best. You will feel highly engaged and will both understand and support the objectives of the Group and how you contribute to our aims, and you will feel confident that your efforts will be supported and recognised. It will be clear that the diversity of our employees makes us stronger and better-able to help our customers.

**If you are a stakeholder** you will think of The Barnet Group as a trusted partner. You will feel confident that the Group is a financially robust, high-performing organisation that is able to deliver on its promises. The Group's ability to innovate and effectively bring other organisations together to achieve the best results for the borough and its residents will provide assurance to stakeholders that it can be trusted to grow and diversify.



# **Our commitment to equality**

## **The Barnet Group's Race Equality Action Plan**

The Barnet Group's Race Equality Action Plan sets out how we aim to improve equal opportunities related to race to both our staff and customers.

The Race Equality Action Plan shows our commitment to creating a more equal and inclusive working environment regardless of background. It includes over 65 initiatives which cover the following six themes:

1. Inclusion
2. Representation
3. Recruitment
4. Employee development and opportunity
5. Diversity and Awareness
6. Service provision

### **Service provision**

One of the key successes relating to our customers within the action plan has been implementing monitoring of service access and take up by protected characteristics across different services. This action allows us to identify who is accessing our services, any over or under representation of different groups, potential trends which can prompt further investigation and any barriers to accessing our services.

### **What do these changes mean?**

This means that we will be able to gather more meaningful data which directly represents our customer base. This allows us to tailor our work to support and include all diverse areas of our community.

To give an example, our income collection team

have modified their arrears report to include diversity characteristics, meaning that we are now able to identify any trends or over-representation from certain groups which will allow us to further investigate and tackle the various factors which could be influencing the results found. It will also allow the opportunity for discussions on how to address any over-representation and improve the experience for customers by providing them with the necessary help.

### **How customers can help drive our equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives**

Our customers play a crucial role in informing and shaping our policies and decisions through the feedback they provide. Completing satisfaction surveys is a great way of giving us valuable insight into experiences and the services they may or may not be satisfied with.

Understanding our customers' needs, priorities, and perception of the services we deliver is key in tailoring our services, especially relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. We strongly encourage customers to participate by providing feedback when given the opportunity.

# Our customers



## **Celebrating Barnet with our 2020 community awards**

We hold our Community Awards awards once a year, but the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic meant we were not able to meet in person this time around.

However, that does not take anything away from the incredible achievements of those nominated for an award. During what has been a difficult year, those nominated have stepped up in so many ways to support their neighbours and their communities.

These awards are usually for customers and service users of The Barnet Group, but in recognition of those who have given so much over the last year, we extended the awards to the wider Barnet community.

Nominations for community awards were submitted by residents and community partners who appreciate the contribution their fellow neighbours and friends make in their communities.

Our Your Choice Barnet (YCB) service users make great strides in their personal development and in the contributions they make, and it's always an extremely difficult task to decide on the award winners – they are truly all deserving. We hope that these awards go some

way towards recognising their progress and contributions.

This year, we introduced special “Covid-19 Inspirational Person” awards, to celebrate those who have gone above and beyond since the beginning of the pandemic.

Congratulations to all our nominees and winners – it is you who make the biggest contribution to the services we deliver.

## **The Barnet Group Customer Award Winners 2020**

### **Barnet Homes**

#### **Covid-19 Inspirational Person**

Janet Matthewson

#### **Good Neighbour Award**

Carlos-Ricardo Luis Foster-Gomes

#### **Group of the Year**

Burnt Oak Women’s Group

#### **Charity of the Year**

Dementia Club UK

#### **Volunteer of the Year (Over 25)**

Kay Gray

#### **Volunteer of the Year (Under 25)**

Anthony Quelch

#### **Social Value Contractor of the Year**

Vallectric

### **Your Choice Barnet**

#### **Making Progress Award**

Narayan Purja

#### **Creative Excellence Award**

Popo Kuch

#### **Carer Contribution Award**

Tom and Patricia Beisty

#### **Covid-19 Inspirational Person**

Aaron Lewington

#### **Staff Choice Award**

Govind Patel





Vallectric staff

### **Vallectric named Barnet Homes' Social Value Contractor of the Year 2020**

At The Barnet Group, we are grateful for the ongoing support we receive from our contractors year on year, especially with the sponsorship of this year's awards event and their investment into a new Covid-19 Recovery Fund for the new year, that assists in supporting our residents and the communities they live in.

This year several of our contractors went above and beyond in supporting us and our communities. We would like to thank them all for their time and investment.

This year we recognise and award Vallectric as our Social Value Contractor of the Year.

Like so many of our contractors, they have provided financial assistance to support those most in need but have also exceeded our expectations with their social value commitment by;

- appointing one of our very own young people from Barnet onto a four year electrical apprenticeship
- working with their supply chain of local businesses to provide a combined £7.5k investment into our new Covid-19 Recovery Fund
- engaging with us to offer more employment opportunities to our residents as they arise
- committing to design and install a new community garden space for residents on one of our estates

- receiving high levels of satisfaction with their work and their engagement with residents on Upper Fosters and Longford Court estates, as they continue to deliver important fire safety works on our behalf.

We would like to thank Greg Slater, Jason Oakford and Bob Wilde for their ongoing support and again thank all contractors for their continued investment into communities across Barnet.

After receiving the award, Vallectric said: “Vallectric are incredibly proud to have been awarded the Social Value Contractor of the Year Award 2020, from our valued client Barnet Homes.

“After working closely with Barnet Homes’ BOOST team we have delivered on our bid stage commitments and hopefully contributed something tangible back to the Barnet Homes residents. We will continue to strive to improve on our service, whilst always seeking to support those most vulnerable in our society.”

*Pictured from left to right: Bob Wilde (Social Value Coordinator / Sales Executive), Greg Slater (Managing Director) and Jason Oakford (Operations Manager)*



# Barnet Homes' year



Just some of Barnet Homes' new fleet of repairs vans



# Performance - Service Areas

These indicators help us monitor our performance as we strive to make our services better for all of our customers.

	2019-20	2020-21	Year on year progress
<b>Resident satisfaction</b>			
Overall tenant satisfaction with service provided by Barnet Homes	77%	71%	▼
Tenant satisfaction with the repairs service received	84.3%	83%	▼
Tenant satisfaction that the repair received was completed right the first time	Not measured	82%	N/A
<b>Resident safety</b>			
% Compliant domestic properties that require a Landlord Gas Safety Record	99.99%	99.93%	▼
% Compliant domestic properties that require an electrical safety test	90.24%	94.6%	▲
% Scheduled fire risk assessments completed on time	100%	92.8%	▼
% High priority fire safety actions completed on time	100%	99.9%	▼
% Communal areas surveyed for asbestos	100%	100%	►
% Compliant properties that require a communal water facilities risk assessment	99.43%	99.81%	▲
% Passenger lifts with a compliant test	100%	100%	►
<b>Customer contact and complaints</b>			
% Customer Contact Team calls answered	86.3%	85%	▼
% Complaints responded to on time	94%	84%	▼
<b>Income, tenancy and neighbourhoods</b>			
Rent arrears as a percentage of all rent due	3.72%	3.96%	▲
Number of tenancy failures including evictions	14	0	▼
Number of anti-social behaviour cases per 1000 homes in management	3.3	3.2	▼
<b>Reducing &amp; Preventing Homelessness</b>			
Overall number of Barnet households living in temporary accommodation	2,467	2,399	▼
Number of interventions resulting in homelessness being prevented	1,221	1,264	▲
Number of rough sleepers in Barnet	Not measured	11	N/A

*Note: some of these measures have been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, and associated lockdown measures*

# Our Resident Board

Over the past 11 years, the Performance Advisory Group (PAG) has influenced and challenged the way we provide services. PAG is a group of volunteer tenants and leaseholders who monitor and scrutinise our housing performance. They meet every six weeks and make recommendations for improvement directly to our board and to the service areas themselves. They also monitor customer satisfaction and standards of our services, provide input into our annual report and much more.

The group of twelve residents has received on-going training, and we have supported their personal development through 1:1 sessions, away days and networking events. Being on PAG requires a high level of commitment; residents have to submit an application and go through an informal interview process before being appointed.

More recently, PAG was involved in supporting the Customer Experience Programme, working hard to help us shape the new in-house repairs and gas services to best meet the needs of our customers.

PAG is the voice of the residents. The group ensures resident's perspectives are always at the forefront of decisions we make that affect them and enables us to truly be 'person-centred'.

Over the past 12 months, the Barnet Group Board's structure has changed, providing PAG with the opportunity to be part of the formal governance structure as a Resident Board.

The changes to a Resident Board will bridge the gap between both boards by creating a direct link between residents and the decisions being made at a strategic level.

Over the past eight months, we have been consulting with PAG on a new approach, and the benefits it will bring. The members have been attending development sessions to prepare for their transition into the Resident Board to ensure the relationship with the Group Board is as strong as it can be.

The Resident Board will take an active role in overseeing our customer strategies and monitoring the housing management performance of Barnet Homes, taking over the performance scrutiny that currently sits with the Group Board, escalating matters as required through the Chair of the Resident Board – who will have a place on the Group Board.

We welcome Aruna Bhatt who assumed the role of Chair in June 2021.

# Barnet Homes' response to Covid-19



## Barnet Homes' response to Covid-19

Even now, we struggle to measure Covid-19's impact be it at home or at work, with many serious implications for all of us. For some Barnet residents though, many have lost their income and have struggled financially, lacking daily essentials or food with which to feed their families.

We've been working with the Barnet Together Partnership and a task force of charities, faith groups and businesses to support the vulnerable. The Community Help Hub provides a network of local support to help keep our communities resilient in the face of the pandemic, with support for adults, children and families and access to foodbanks.

## Keeping safe and delivering services

In spite of the challenges face by the pandemic, Barnet Homes has still delivered its services to residents with the help of significant changes. Staff and contractors have worked in bubbles to reduce the risk of infection even if some staff have had to self-isolate.

These are just some of the changes brought in:

**Customer Contact Team:** We expanded our Customer Contact Team so that they can respond to calls and emails more quickly and effectively, with the technology to work remotely, so were able to respnd to calls even during the lockdown period.



**Gas servicing:** Annual gas safety checks continued as planned although visits did not take place if residents were self-isolating or showing Covid-19 symptoms.

**Out of Hours emergency service:** Continued as normal providing operatives to attend for carpentry, electrical, heating, plumbing, jetting and roofing emergencies only.

**A new IT system to allow remote technical surveys to take place via video link:** We still visited properties for a technical survey where absolutely necessary and safe to do so, in line with Covid-19 risk assessments including the wearing of PPE.

**Property Services:** Some of these checks required access to communal areas only, for example, inspection and servicing of passenger lifts and asbestos surveys, and operatives were wearing PPE in all these situations. Programmed works such as kitchen and bathroom renewals and window replacements were unfortunately delayed.

**Estate Services:** Barnet Homes concentrated on the cleaning and sanitising of high traffic areas such as door handles, communal entrances, intercom systems and lift panels. This was done to reduce transmission of infection at these high-volume touch points. The Health & Safety checks undertaken by caretakers continued as normal.

- The Grounds Maintenance team continued with their normal winter schedules which consisted mainly of leaf clearance across estates.
- The Bulk Refuse team operated at full capacity, particularly in light of the large increase in fly tipping.

**Evictions:** the government banned evictions from taking place during the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. Barnet Homes used this time to work with residents to help clear their housing-related rent arrears and establish repayment plans where applicable.

**Support for residents:** Barnet Homes does everything it can to support our tenants who find it difficult to pay their rent as a result of the pandemic. We will continue to support our residents with help regarding benefits and maximising their income.

## **Supporting the community**

During these unprecedented times, we saw community groups come together and help the most vulnerable in their societies. Just one of these groups is OneStonegrove, based in Edgware.

The group, run by the Stonegrove Community Trust, continues to help their neighbours by providing:

- 2,749 meals (1,777 to 12 community organisations and 972 meals to households)
- 131 food bank parcels
- almost £2,000 raised on a GoFundMe page
- 50+ turkeys or crowns to families
- 35 boxes of bananas
- 650 smoothies
- 120 litres soya milk
- 4,800 eggs
- 150 loaves of bread
- 2,000 portions of baby food
- nappies, sanitary products etc.

Barnet Homes contributed to OneStonegrove's response by providing a new chest freezer, and offering next day delivery.

Barnet Homes has been supporting its customers and the wider community during the Covid-19 pandemic. We have also backed local charities such as the St Barnabus Church Foodbank with a £500 donation.

Barnet Homes has been part of a borough-wide steering group, with Young Barnet Foundation, Groundwork UK and Inclusion Barnet who have set up a Community Response Fund, which supports trusted local organisations to provide front line support.

## **Support from contractors**

Barnet Homes and our contractors, led by WG Wigginton, Vallectric and Wates, have each donated £1,000 towards the Fund, with Re-Gen making £250 available too.

This year several of our contractors have gone above and beyond in supporting us and our communities. We would like to thank you all for your time and investment.



Two volunteers, part of the Barnet Covid-19 response

## **Reflections from the front-line - Sheltered Housing and Floating Support**

John Oyewole is a Barnet Homes Floating Support Officer. He said: "It has been a difficult and challenging year for our vulnerable service users. We keep on supporting our clients digitally using all possible means to keep them inclusive and not isolated, we use mobile phones, emails, text messages and Skype to communicate with them and meet with them at their local food banks. We drop off food rations to some clients isolated at home."

Susan Blackburn, Barnet Homes' Sheltered Housing Manager, said: "It's been hard trying to keep our 400-plus tenants, all in the 60-plus age group, safe and Covid-free but our team has done fantastically well. The dedicated team have been at the frontline throughout the whole pandemic supporting our older and most vulnerable tenants and enabling them to continue living a safe and healthy life. I am very proud of what they have achieved."

Tracy Johnson, Outreach Barnet's Generic Floating Support Co-ordinator, said: "Overcoming the challenges of working during Covid-19 over the past year for staff and our customers has proved how valuable our Floating Support Service really is. We have had to quickly change the ways in which we worked and adapt so that we could continue to deliver much needed support to vulnerable residents in Barnet. We have continued to support various departments to ensure Barnet residents are still and always will be our main focus. This could be via completing Housing Benefit forms online whilst speaking to the customer on the phone, dropping food parcels off on the doorstep, obtaining keys to properties to name a few examples.



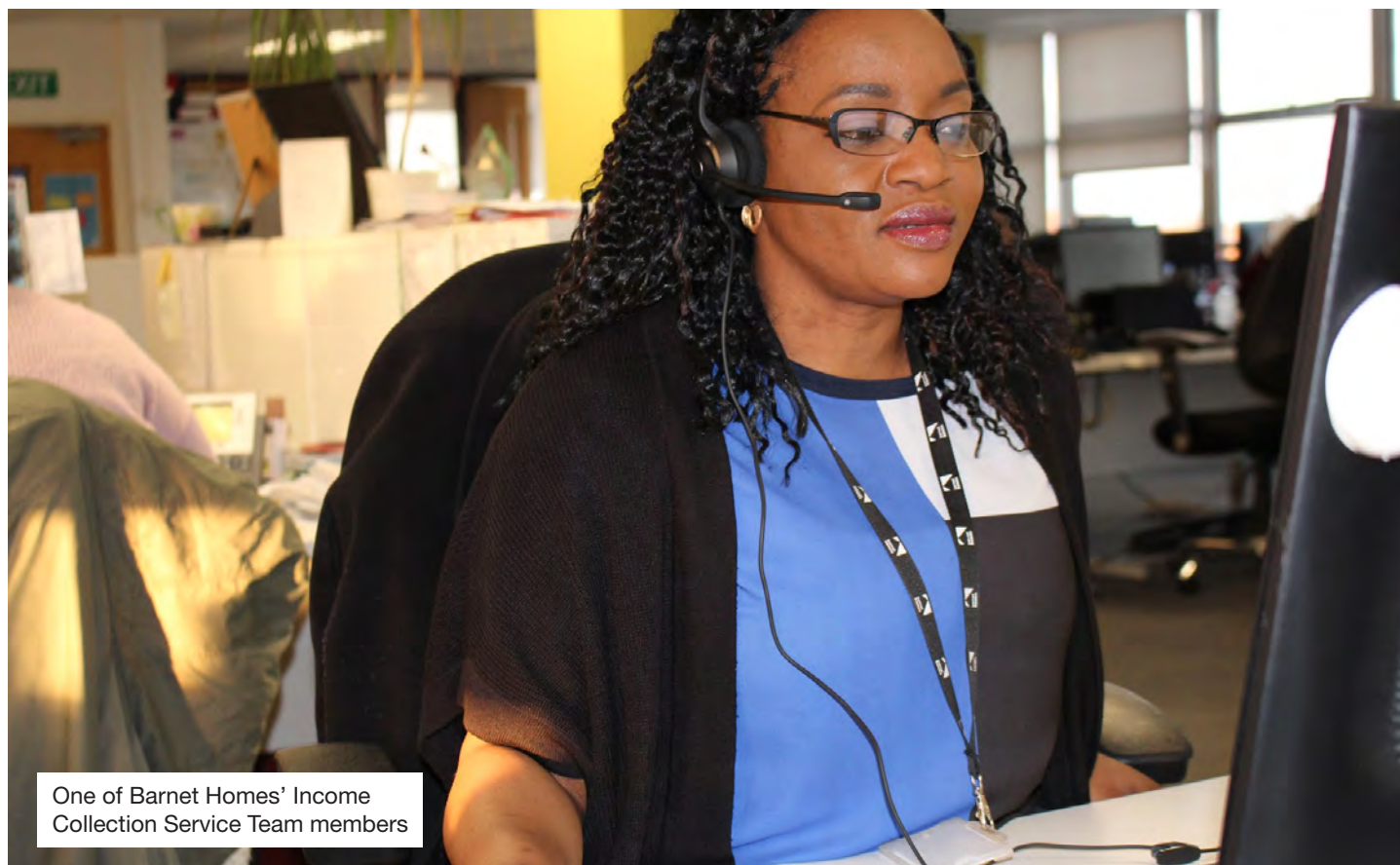
We have ramped up our wellbeing support to ensure our clients have not been isolated with weekly phone calls and a listening ear and developed and delivered practical, focused workshops.”

Antony Karumba, Outreach Barnet Mental Health Floating Support Co-ordinator, said: “As for me I had to adjust and adopt new ways of working to tackle the additional challenges, especially supporting the most vulnerable clients. Using PPE and maintaining social distance I managed to reach out to clients who were at most risk. One included buying a cheap phone so that we can continue support over the phone. For group workshops I had to support clients to download basic Skype on their smartphones so that we can run online classes and for the staff I encouraged the team to talk and reconnect with one another using the support systems around – MS Teams and Skype.”

Jane Loizides, Barnet Homes Sheltered Housing Project Co-ordinator, said: “It’s been a very challenging year, supporting our very vulnerable sheltered housing tenants in these strange times, trying to keep them safe and also ourselves. It’s been made easier by the help of everyone in our team especially my manager. Let’s hope soon we will be able to thank everyone in person.”

Lydia Oyeniran is also a Barnet Homes Floating Support Officer. She explained how the killing of George Floyd in mid-2020 and subsequent global protests encouraged her to join TBG’s Race Equality Steering Group. She added: “Being a black woman myself, I felt I needed to see if I could be part of the conversation and hopefully part of the solution in providing an actively inclusive workplace. The Race Equality Steering Group has been led and supported by different departments and has already proactively encouraged conversations around ‘white privilege’ and ‘unconscious bias’ and other issues around race. I would like to say a big thank you to all those involved in driving change.”

# Income collection service



One of Barnet Homes' Income Collection Service Team members

## **Working together to keep residents in their homes**

The Covid-19 pandemic forced many to assess their spending, and meant many people were suddenly out of work. The Income Collection Service worked with residents to ensure essential bills were budgeted for and paid.

The service showed incredible resilience in the face of the pandemic, immediately switching to working remotely.

The service changed their ways of working, focusing on supporting customers through financial difficulties, and dealing with an average of 200 calls per day.

With a national ban on evictions announced by the government, the income collection service assisted many tenants to clear their arrears through discretionary housing payments, and made sure tenants would be in a good financial position coming out of the pandemic.

# Fire safety



**Cllr Dan Thomas,  
Leader of Barnet  
Council, issued a  
statement to mark the  
third anniversary of  
the Grenfell disaster**

Cllr Thomas said: “Three years on and the Grenfell Tower fire remains a tragedy that casts a long shadow. We remember those who sadly perished, and our thoughts and wishes are with their families and friends on this difficult day.

“We are doing everything in our power to prevent a similar tragedy ever happening in our borough. Barnet, like many other local authorities, has done a great amount of work in the past three years, ensuring additional fire safety measures are in place to try and ensure we never encounter an incident of this scale and devastation ever again.

“Following Grenfell, we immediately commissioned a full programme of fire safety works across our council housing including the installation of sprinklers and alarm systems. We have also removed ACM cladding from three of the borough’s high-rise tower blocks. We will continue to deliver this programme of works to ensure the safety and peace of mind of our residents.”

**Barnet Homes’  
fire safety works  
programme**

Since the Grenfell Fire in 2017, Barnet Homes has been working to ensure the safety of its residents through its fire safety works programme.

Barnet Council has invested £52m in fire safety improvement works

across council housing stock, including installing sprinklers and alarm systems in tower blocks, sheltered housing schemes and hostels.

In the immediate aftermath of the fire, ACM cladding was removed from three tower blocks at Granville Road and replaced with an A1 rated system, ahead of time and under budget. Work to install sprinkler systems at Granville Road is beginning in July 2020.

In addition to the range of fire safety works already completed, Barnet Homes' dedicated Fire Safety Team is working through a five-year programme of works, which includes:

- high priority fire safety works at some of Barnet Homes' largest estates. These works include new electrical rising mains, sprinkler systems, new heating systems and new fire doors
- sprinkler and alarm installation at Longford Court in Hendon. This work began in January 2020 and is progressing well. Work also began in March 2020 at Prospect Ring and Norfolk Close in East Finchley and at Whitefields in Brent Cross, with Upper Fosters in Hendon starting in May 2020
- replacing 5,000 non-compliant front doors to homes
- working in partnership with the London Fire Brigade to ensure resident safety, and communicating regularly with our residents to ensure they are aware of what they can do to keep their homes fire safe, and what they should do in case of a fire. We produced fire safety videos for our residents in collaboration with the London Fire Brigade. We are also working closely with residents through a continuous process of fire safety checks in tower blocks and responding to any concerns raised about fire safety. Barnet Homes' resident satisfaction surveys include questions about building safety to make sure residents feel safe and secure in their homes
- in-depth fire risk assessments (Type 4) carried out by expert consultants; 189 assessments have been carried out so far across our whole stock. Any urgent works resulting from these assessments are treated as priorities.



# Repairs



One of Barnet Homes' repairs operatives

## Resident repairs service brought back in-house

Barnet Homes brought its repairs service back in-house to deliver a better and more value-for-money service for customers in 2020.

We have been working with residents and leaseholders to improve our customer service and experience through our Customer Experience Project. During this process, customers raised concerns around the repairs process, so following an options appraisal with external consultants, we decided to terminate our contract with Mears and bring the repairs service for Barnet Homes and Opendoor Homes properties in-house.

The repairs service covers internal and communal repairs for tenants and communal repairs for leaseholders. The service also repairs void (empty) properties before they are re-let.

### Why we made this change

We spoke to both tenants and leaseholders through surveys, phone calls and face-to-face sessions, and established some areas of the service which are not up to the high standard we aim to deliver, including customer service and the repairs themselves. We believe that by bringing repairs in-house, we can focus on managing a service that is better for our customers. We will prioritise:

- **Appointments:** We will do our best to ensure appointments are

given when residents call us and at times that are convenient for them, which are adhered to by operatives.

- **Customer service:** We will address inconsistency in the customer care provided throughout the repairs experience. We will ensure requests are listened to fully, and that customers are shown respect.
- **Repairs:** We want customers' repairs to be carried out right, at the first visit. While this is not always possible, we will do our best to inform customers of the next steps and make sure all necessary parts are available for the next visit.
- **Efficiency and value for money:** The new repairs service will reduce waste and increase efficiency, providing better value for money. It also reduces our risk and reliance on contractors in what can be a volatile sector.

While we hope to address as many of these issues as quickly as possible, they will not happen overnight and there may be some teething issues with such a big change to the service. We are working with Mears to ensure service delivery remains at a good standard during this handover period.

After the successful in-sourcing of the repairs service, the gas service (previously managed by Mears) was brought in-house on 1 October 2020.

## The first year of the repairs service

**32,000**

Repairs completed

**8,600**

Gas services completed

**560**

Empty properties refurbished

**83%**

12-month rolling average for customers who feel their repair was completed "right first time"

**37%**

Reduction in repairs complaints in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20

**225**

New heating systems installed

**85%**

12-month rolling average customer satisfaction

**97%**

Of repairs passing quality assurance checks

**150**

Compliments received in the three months to July 2021 alone

**100%**

Gas service compliance

# Our Barnet Community



## The flower show goes on!

The show must go on, and it did: our Finest Flowers competitors could not be held back! This year's competition was intense and all gardeners that took part can be proud of themselves as there were beautiful examples in all categories.

Due to health and safety measures imposed by Covid-19, the competition took place virtually, and gardeners submitted their photos to us for six different categories, to be judged remotely.

The panel of judges, which included two residents and two members of our staff, undertook the job of deciding the worthy winners for 2020. Below are the winners in each category:

**Best balcony** – Victoria Grove

**Best sheltered site** – St. Johns Close

**Best communal garden** – Bittacy Court

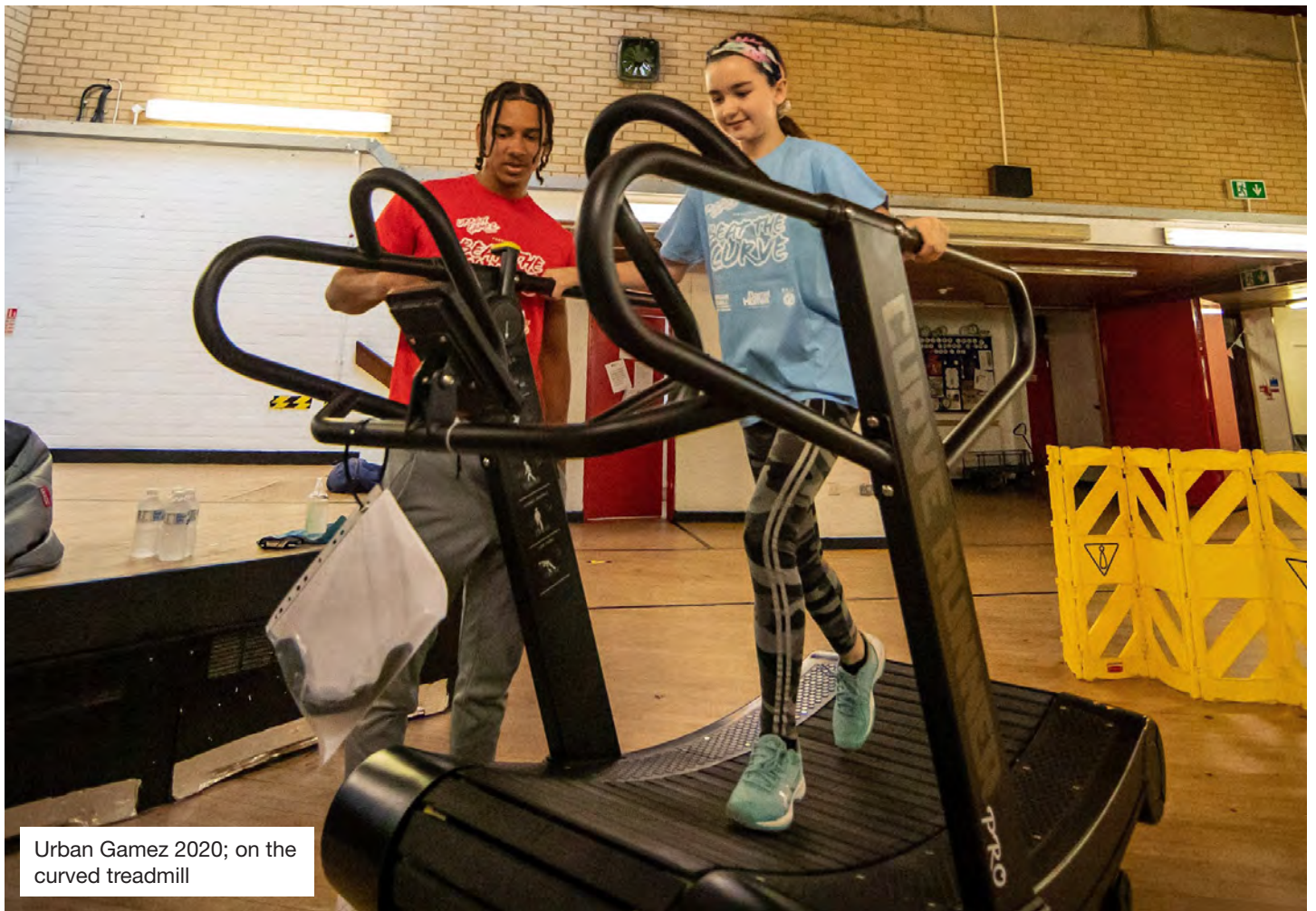
**Best new gardeners** – Pursley Road

**Best front/back garden** – Deans Road

**Geoff Bedingfield Award** – Poplar Grove

The Finest Flowers competition gives residents a real platform to take pride in their homes and the surrounding areas. This, in turn, makes a huge difference to our communities and Barnet Homes appreciates the efforts that our residents make to create these beautiful gardens and balconies. Thank you and well done to all our residents and garden club members that took part in this year's competition.





## Urban Gamez 2020

Barnet Homes' Urban Gamez event is one of the highlights of the summer on the Grahame Park Estate in Colindale, and this year it was no different, despite the pressures presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The 60 metre running track which usually lines The Concourse was exchanged for a cutting edge self-powered curved treadmill. Children and young people of Grahame Park were invited into the Community Centre over two days, following social distancing guidelines, to take on the challenge of sprinting 60 metres on the treadmill in the quickest time.

After a couple of minutes of practice to get to grips with the new machines, contestants were off to a flyer, clocking up some impressive times. As is the tradition at Urban Gamez, some of the parents had a go on the treadmill too, but it quickly became clear that the running should be left to the younger generation!

After two days of intense competition, the winners collected their medals and prizes on Friday 28 August, presented by The Worshipful The Mayor of the London Borough of Barnet, Cllr Caroline Stock.

The celebrations extended out onto The Concourse on Friday too,



with Living Way Ministries providing a BBQ and a chance for local residents to have a catch up with people they may not have seen over months of lockdown.

Barnet Homes would like to thank Morgan Sindall Property Services for their continued sponsorship of the event, as well as F.U.S.E Youth Project, whose youth workers were crucial volunteers over the three days, and the Colindale Communities Trust, for the use of the Community Centre.



Urban Gamez 2020



# Housing Options



## **Housing Options staff member secures more affordable accommodation for customer**

The affordability of offers of accommodation can make a huge difference to customers across the Barnet Homes customer journey - from approaching as homeless to being tenants.

A Housing Options customer was struggling with the affordability of living in temporary accommodation recently, meaning it would be difficult to continue living in the local area. However, up stepped our Housing Options team, who advised that the customer should look for employment to make her accommodation more affordable.

The customer managed to find employment, which also meant she was no longer subject to the benefit cap. As a result, we were able to find long-term accommodation in Barnet, which will be much more affordable and suitable for the customer.

The customer wrote in to say, “I’m highly excited about the quality of service rendered through my case officer; she is one of a kind. She was assigned to my case, and I’m still enthralled by the professionalism and swift response she provided. Thanks to her and the Barnet Homes temporary accommodation team, my kids and I have been assigned a better housing unit and look forward to greater things.”

Accommodation Solutions Manager Alex Manaseh added: “The case officer embraced all The Barnet Group’s values and behaviours and is applying them in everyday work. She took ownership of the case, showed empathy as well; she managed the client’s expectations well.

# Rough sleepers



## **Supporting rough sleepers during the Covid-19 pandemic**

At the start of the Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020, Barnet Homes housed 88 rough sleepers into private sector self-contained accommodation in just one week. This was following a request from the government to house everyone sleeping rough or staying in hostels and night shelters. This number rose to 141 families or individuals as the initial lockdown period went on.

The accommodation has been funded by central government, and we will continue supporting these people the best we can.

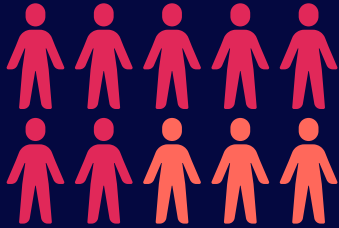
We worked closely with a number of partners, including Barnet Council and Homeless Action in Barnet (HAB) to individually assess each person we provided with accommodation. This ensured that we were able to provide suitable and sustainable housing to keep them off the streets in the future.

We will continue to work with HAB to ensure the health and safety of rough sleepers throughout the current pandemic.

# BOOST

2020/2021 REPORT

26 416 Total interventions



16 752 total employment interventions

9 664 total housing and benefit interventions

What can I say apart from I am so proud of what the team has achieved over the last year. These numbers speak volumes, but behind them is the effort everyone has put in to keep things running and adapting to new ways of working. Their commitment and resilience has amazed me and continues to do so.

To accept and deal with change has been difficult for both clients and staff but working together we have supported each other to stay positive and overcome barriers. I know that we are a stronger team as a result and are ready to continue providing the support which is needed more than ever now.

BOOST looks very different now from one year ago. The team has grown both in numbers and in the range of services offered. This time last year we had no JETS project, KICKSTART and Apprentice programme, web referral process or online training. I believe that we still have a long road ahead of us when it comes to helping people affected by COVID, but we are ready for that challenge and will carry on looking at ways to support Barnet residents whether they are virtual or face to face or a blend of both.'

- Lawrence Graham, BOOST Manager



362  
Webinars



51  
Households  
supported with  
COVID-19  
Winter Grant  
Scheme



72  
Young  
People  
signed up



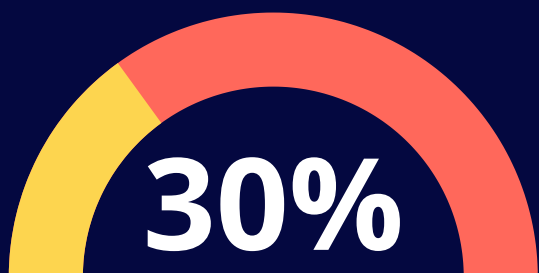
32  
Rough  
Sleepers  
signed up



# BOOST

## Employment Support

BOOST support not only job-ready Barnet residents but all those who are unemployed or want a change in career. This includes rough sleepers, graduates, people with disabilities, those furthest from the job market and those who lack confidence or motivation. Everyone we work with is different so we use a tailored, person - centred approach that helps clients to overcome their own barriers and get ready for employment



148 out of 487 people  
into work in 2020

27% of clients who went into work  
were Barnet Homes tenants.

13 581

Total interventions including:

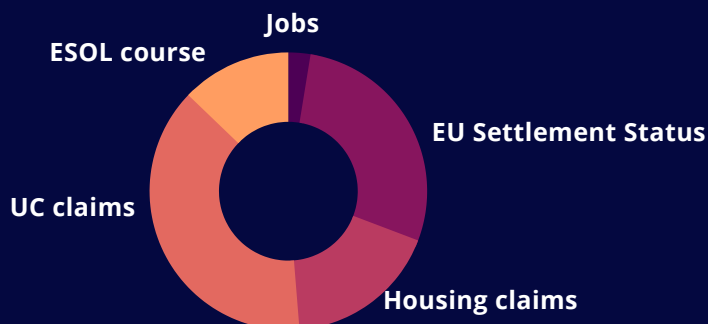
10 464

Employment  
interventions

3 117

Wellbeing and translation  
support

32 Rough Sleepers:



Valerijus

### Case study:

'I met Valerijus in The Stay Club three months ago. He has been homeless for over 10 years and was one of over 250 people housed into temporary accommodation by Barnet Homes during COVID-19. When I first met Valerijus he had no documents to identify himself so my first priority was to get him a passport. This allowed me to assist him with applying for EU Settlement and he now has Indefinite Leave in the UK – Settled Status. After that I was able to help him open a bank account and to claim Universal Credit. As Valerijus is not able to work due to a health condition, he will continue visiting his GP and I will assist him to apply for PIP in the future.'

Employment Support Officer (Rough Sleepers)

# BOOST

## Housing and Benefit Support

The Housing Support team played a vital part during what has been a challenging year for Barnet residents. The pandemic saw many residents fall out of work and have their health impacted by the barriers of lockdown. We started to see a shift in the type of clients approaching BOOST. Our clients now included business owners, home-owners and those on furlough. Our call centre and mailbox demand had nearly tripled by the end of the year

# 12 835

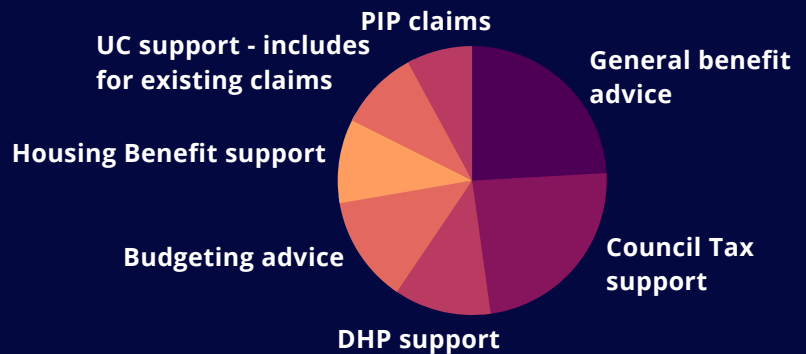
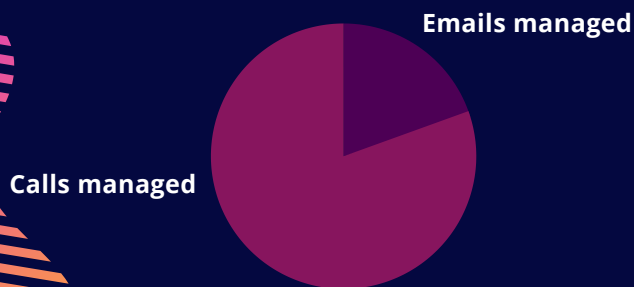
Number of intervention including:

## 8 195

calls & emails

## 1 469

welfare benefit advisor appointments



**1,037 Discretionary Housing Payments awarded with a value of £2.53m**

Many clients sought financial advice and support, significantly including many who were claiming benefits for the first time and others who had been affected by the Benefit Cap as a result of the increase in Universal Credit.

We saw an increase in demand for Discretionary Housing Payments and Council Tax Support. The Housing Support team strengthened their partnership working with colleagues in the Discretionary Housing Payment, Council Tax & Housing Benefits teams as well as Barnet Homes Housing Options and other partners.

Many residents have found it a challenge to access benefits, due to barriers around IT literacy, language needs and a lack of understanding of the welfare benefit system. However, the team have worked to overcome these barriers by intervening at an early stage, working in partnership developing webinars and advice sessions and taking time to reassure residents that they're not on their own.

### Testimonial:

*'I wish to say a huge Thank You to your Housing Support Manager whose support and professionalism eased a distressing situation. I feel it is important to acknowledge those who go the extra mile to make a positive impact on the lives of others'*

### Case study:

One of our clients is a pensioner who was unable to afford the shortfall in his rent and was referred by a DHP officer. DHP was paid whilst we supported the client to apply for Attendance Allowance. However the application was refused and the client didn't want to go through the hassle of challenging the decision. We persuaded the client to do so by referring them to a Welfare Benefit Adviser. The DHP award was extended while this claim was ongoing and a week after the Adviser submitted the mandatory reconsideration it was successful.

# BOOST

Young People  
16-24 year  
olds

Employment opportunities for 16 - 24 year olds have been badly affected by the pandemic. We have started to see an adverse impact on their ambitions for education and careers and their motivation and mental health. Providing support through these difficult times has been challenging but BOOST has been consistent in offering support throughout the lockdown. We have delivered bespoke one to ones to help individuals overcome barriers, online workshops and webinars, as well as brokering new support offers with partners and working with employers to source opportunities. We will get through this together.

83

Signed up young people with BOOST

33

Employment



33

Education



63

Attended BOOST  
workshops



6

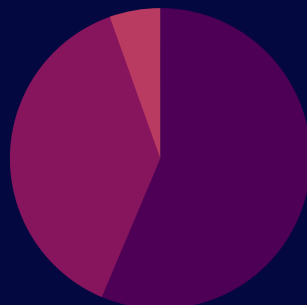
Traineeships and  
Volunteering



Volunteering

Work or apprenticeship

Training or education



## Testimonial:

*'I really appreciate BOOST help and I wouldn't be in my current position without them so I am very grateful and thankful. I recommend anyone who was in a similar situation to me to give BOOST a go, because they can do great things and help people.'*

Chris

## Case study:

I recently began working with R. who wanted to find work to start earning some regular money, but lacked experience and direction. R. was always late to appointments and sometimes smelt of marijuana, which was frustrating, but other than this was very easy to work with and was engaging and willing.

I came to realise that there were other issues that could prevent R from getting and keeping a job. R. came from a culture of benefits where none of their family had ever worked. R required a lot of mentoring and emotional support to help get past previous traumas. R was also very insecure and shy – another thing we had to address and build in time for any potential interviews.

Together we created a CV, covering letter and I arranged a job screening. The job screening went well and R left a good impression with the recruiters. R was then invited for an induction in a retail store following the screening. R went on to pass the induction day and was offered the job as a retail assistant. This was a huge accomplishment for R. who had never worked before and was the first in the family to do so.

# BOOST make it click

## Make it Click Programme

94

Clients enrolled



"Make It Click" is part of Learn My Way, developed by Good Things Foundation and made possible through funding from Google.org. This project is a collection of online learning resources to help people build their digital skills. It includes courses, tools and templates carefully picked from established websites with a track record of providing reliable digital skills content.

BOOST were successful in gaining funding to deliver Make it Click in Barnet. In a difficult year for training delivery we are pleased to have hit our target of 94 clients enrolled and supported in at least two sessions.

### Testimonial:

*'Very interactive, excellent host, friendly and informative'*

Make it Click helps adults to achieve positive outcomes around employment by supporting them to grow digital skills and giving them practical confidence. The pandemic has meant we couldn't use our face to face training room so have had to adapt our offer through providing a regular series of webinars and giving one-to-one telephone and video appointments. All clients are registered with Learn My Way and we guide them through the 200+ resources on the site and importantly use it to track their progress.

We have been hosting fortnightly webinars on different topics.

So far, we have delivered 14 webinars with 445 sign-ups and 258 attendees.



445 people signed for webinars

258 people attended the webinars



70% of people said the webinars improved their skills



9.4 out of 10 people would recommend to their friends



# BOOST

## JETS

Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) is a government initiative to help people made unemployed during COVID. In 2020 Boost sub-contracted with Shaw Trust to deliver employability support interventions to eligible Barnet residents as part of the JETS programme.



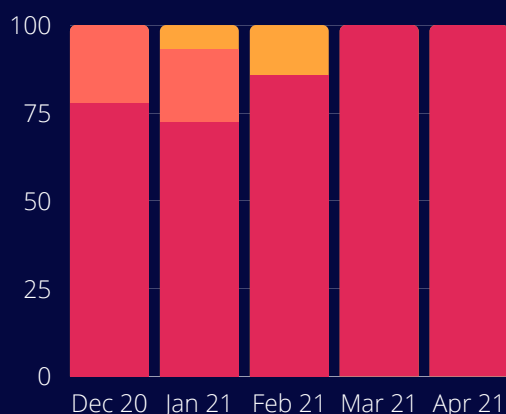
760



770

Working as a team we've been able to draw on a diverse range of skills and experience to create a suite of more than 30 presentations covering Employability, Wellbeing and Digital skills. Our passionate and dedicated Employment Coaches have delivered over 760 workshops and webinars on employability, digital upskilling and personal wellbeing attended by over 770 participants.

Shaw Trust have conducted a customer satisfaction survey and we are delighted to say we have achieved 94.3% rated Excellent or Good by our Participants and we have not received any negative comments.



Survey review

Excellent

Good

Average

### Testimonials:

*'My consultant was so upbeat, positive, compassionate, understanding, supportive, resourceful and I came away with some doable action steps which until now I have felt a bit stuck'.*

JETS Client

## 30 Job outcomes



In a Shaw Trust customer satisfaction survey **94.3%** of clients rated BOOST as Excellent or Good

# BOOST

## Apprenticeships

*'In September 2020 seven Apprentices started their 14 month learning journey with Barnet Homes. In a joint initiative between The Barnet Group and LBL Skills roles were created in Finance, Complaints and Compliance, Income and Revenue, Contact Centre, Gas Team and BOOST.*

*'Their keen desire to soak up the knowledge and experience presented to them has been commendable. In fact the students have already completed a Level 2 qualification in the Principles of Customer Service and, even more significantly, the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Level 2 Certificate in Housing Practice. Well done to everyone and all the best over the coming 6 months'*

Oliver Henry, LBL Skills



### Testimonial:

*'The apprenticeship has been extremely rewarding considering the circumstances. This is mainly because of the amazing support I have received from my managers and colleagues which has allowed me to be hands on with the work I am doing, even if it has been from home. I am also learning a lot about housing through the training we are receiving once a week.'*

Stella Cooper

### Mentoring:

*'Learning a new job and studying has been difficult during the pandemic and has emphasised the need for strong support from managers and for in-work mentoring. This year was extremely difficult year for the cohort of Apprentices, mainly because a lot of them have had to do remote working. Normally I would say that some people can be more productive working from home, but when studying a level 2 in CIH (Chartered Institute of Housing) and not being able for most of the year be together as a group when it came to their study day was tough on some of them if not all of them.*

*I must say that they have been exceptional and have exceeded what I thought was possible, they have all submitted up to now all four assignments required to pass the CIH part of the apprenticeship and are now working towards their portfolio and case study. They have been supportive of one another and continue to grow and develop as individuals, I believe after have many meetings with them their tutors and their managers, they would have a great chance at the end of this apprenticeship to be successful in the job market and hopefully can continue and stay on within The Barnet Group.'*

Lawrence Graham – BOOST Manager

70 hours  
spent on  
Mentoring  
Apprentices



# BOOST

## Website and Social Media



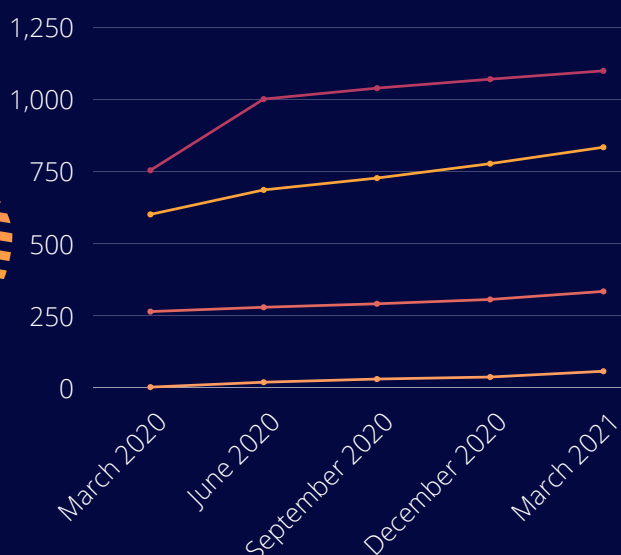
Like many other businesses when the first lockdown began in 2020 we had to suspend our face to face meetings and find an alternative way to engage with clients. We developed and launched our website - boostbarnet.org.

In 2019 our services saw footfall of 12,000 visits so moving offers online and maintaining the BOOST person-centred approach was no easy thing but digital tools soon became one of our primary contact points with clients and created new ways to serve them better.

The BOOST website now allows people to register themselves with us or refer a client, there are lots of resources helping with employment and benefits as well as details of upcoming events and training offers. From the website our clients can get our weekly job bulletins and find job vacancies around Barnet.

We knew from the start that social media would help us reach those people who could no longer drop in to one of our venues as well as help us spread the word to the many new clients impacted by COVID.

### Social Media followers growth in 2020/2021



#### Instagram (755-1100)

Instagram is the fastest growing platform in terms of followers. We publish daily CV tips on Instastories and save them on highlights.

#### Twitter (602 - 835)

This is our main platform to keep in touch with our partners, repost their news and keep updating them about our events. Recently we noticed a growth of individual followers (and not only organizations).

#### Facebook (265 - 335)

We created one generic Facebook page for BOOST Barnet, we joined and have been actively engaged in 15 Facebook groups around Barnet Borough including Barnet Families, Barnet Mums and London Borough Of Barnet Businesses.

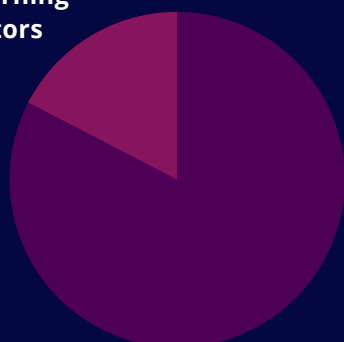
#### LinkedIn (3 - 58)

We started to be active on LinkedIn by posting weekly Happy Friday-Happy News from our team, which slowly became a very popular post among our followers.

# 5 578

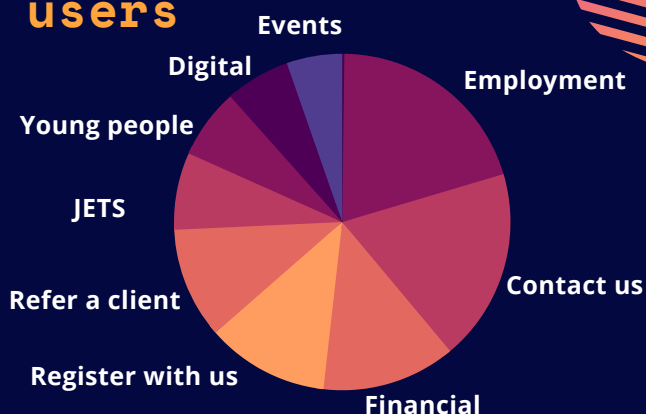
### Website users

Returning visitors



New visitors

#### Audience overview



#### Top pages



# Growth & Development



Four new homes built at Mayhill Road



# Development - New homes



## **Another landmark year for Opendoor Homes**

2020/21 was the most successful year for building new homes since building began under Opendoor Homes in 2015.

145 homes were completed, including larger schemes at the former Burnt Oak Registry Office, The Croft and Sheaveshill Court delivering 97 homes alone.

Opendoor Homes also started purchasing homes on the open market. Therefore, it meant that Opendoor increased its stock seven-fold from 56 homes to almost 400.

In addition, Opendoor also began its first mixed tenure scheme at Hermitage Lane which will deliver 53 new homes including 15 at London Affordable rent and 6 for shared ownership in Autumn 2022.

## **Eight homes handed over at Bamford Court**

Eight new homes for affordable rent have been completed at Bamford Court.

The flats, built off Norfolk Close will provide much-needed accommodation for Barnet residents.

## **Two homes completed at Crispin Road**

The two-bedroom houses at Crispin Road in Burnt Oak were built on the site of some disused garages.

The homes were designed to fit in with the surrounding homes, and are an excellent addition to the community. Solar panels on the roofs will keep costs down for residents, while having a positive impact on the environment.

## **Four bungalows mark completion of phase one**

Four bungalows for affordable rent at Valley View in Barnet have now been completed, marking the end of phase one of Opendoor Homes' microsites programme.

The bungalows have all been built to a high, wheelchair-accessible standard.

They were built on the sites of previously under-used garages, and the programme has delivered ten homes across five microsites in Barnet.

## **Our ambitions**

Opendoor Homes is not ready to rest on its laurels, and has massive ambitions:

- to be the Council's preferred development partner delivering quality new homes across a range of tenure types
- to create the capacity and expertise to deliver significant estate redesign and regeneration schemes
- to develop further innovative more commercial models to create revenue benefits for LBB
- to receive industry recognition for quality and innovation in our approach to development
- delivery of 3,000 new build or acquired homes by 2030 within Opendoor Homes.



**BUMBLEBEE**

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT | LET ONLY | GUARANTEED RENTS

BRITISH  
PROPERTY  
AWARDS  
2020 - 2021  
★★★★★  
GOLD WINNER  
LETTING AGENT  
IN NW9

This year has been challenging for us all, that's why we want to say  
a special thank you to all our landlords and tenants.

Thank you for trusting us.

We promise to keep providing a service that makes you proud.

Barnet  
Homes  
PROPERTY CENTRE

BUMBLEBEE

## **Bumblebee continues to expand**

Set up in 2018, The Barnet Group's private lettings agency continues to go from strength to strength, offering a range of different services and not just the traditional landlord/tenant model.

Bumblebee is providing a service for a new generation of renters who use online and social media and who have exacting demands about the type of property they want.

In its second full year, Bumblebee continued to establish itself despite the market pressures caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bumblebee was also a gold winner in the British Property Awards for 2020-21 in the NW9 area, showing what fantastic work the team have achieved in such a short space of time!

# Your Choice Barnet







Diana Isaacs (left) and Shirley Sanderson

## Reflections from the frontline - Flower Lane

Diana Isaacs runs the Flower Lane Autism Service. She said: “People living with autism find it difficult to organise and plan, so routine is a big part of their lives. As an autism service we did our best to remain open through lockdown, but due to having to maintain social distance we could only provide for 15 clients. This was a very difficult decision. Because we couldn’t go out into the community, our new programme became largely centre-based – iPad sessions, gym activities, catering sessions. As we look forward to the lifting of lockdown, we hope to support the return of more clients. We sadly lost some clients to Covid-19 but as an autism service we always have new clients coming from schools and colleges.”

Paul, who also works at Flower Lane, said: “I have worked the entire time throughout Covid. At the beginning we didn’t know what to do, having to deal with anxieties from parents, carers, service users and staff as well as having to manage our own worries, concerns, and we have had losses both personally and professionally. It has been a tough time for us all, but we pulled together as a team and we put things into place to make us all as safe as we could. As part of the senior team here at Flower Lane we put our heads together and we put a plan in place; we changed the activity programmes, the layout of the rooms, transport, we put safety signage up, increased the cleaning schedules and got used to wearing PPE all the time to ensure that we could stay open and support our families. Because of

so many changes we didn't expect the service users to cope as well as they have but they have been so truly amazing; they have adjusted and with our support they have just got on with it like we have all had to. The staff team have been amazing, we have had highs and lows, lots of changes, and some people working in different locations. But the determination, kindness, strength, courage, vision, care, support, teamwork, and selfless acts to ensure everyone is safe have not gone unnoticed and is truly commended."

Fellow Flower Lane colleague Sharon added: "This time last year I was ready for my holiday to Jamaica only for it to be stopped by Covid. From then onwards it's been a very unsettling year, shielding for five months felt like I was in prison in my own home, just as well I have a garden and a touch of good weather to keep me sane. Not forgetting Facetime, it's been my saviour! Lockdown also came with sadness, sickness and madness! Thank goodness, I'm still here to tell the tale. I was overwhelmed when lockdown was lifted in August and I could get back to work as I missed the staff and service users so much. Then Covid sent me back into shielding again in December two days before Christmas. I felt really \*?#%\* off. This time shielding was harder as the sky was dark and grey, talk about feeling low. I ploughed myself into DIY, painting and hanging out with my mum. I'm going to be free again on 1 April so I can get back to Flower Lane and work for my pay at the service I love dearly... and get to go on holiday so I can move the suitcases that have been haunting me day and night."



# Flower Lane and Supported Living



Flower Lane service users

## Supported living celebrate VE Day

There was cause for reflection and celebration in May as our Your Choice Barnet services took part in VE Day celebrations.

At Flower Lane, our service for people with Autism, staff and customers came together for a celebratory BBQ (pictured above).

At Agatha Court and Harold Court, our Supported Living services, staff combined the residents' tenancy meeting with a talk about the 75th anniversary of the end of World War Two.

Residents enjoyed making their own bunting and raising a toast to commemorate those who have sacrificed so much.



Supported living service users

# Your Choice Enablement

P E R S O N   C E N T R E D

### **Enablement service adapts to continue to support customers during the pandemic**

As front-line workers, the Enablement team, who provide home-from-hospital care, have strived to ensure they continued providing their essential service, and keeping customers, families and staff members safe.

The team quickly adapted to new ways of working with personal protective equipment, and supporting people who were recovering from Covid-19. During the pandemic, customers and their family members were often very anxious, frightened and overwhelmed, isolated from each other and in need of reassurance - this is something the team has in abundance.

The Enablement team have worked with staff in social services and the NHS, ensuring safe discharges for patients from hospital, all while delivering a person-centred service.

The team has taken on these challenges with professionalism, adapting to provide a consistent service both individually and with partners.



# Rosa Morison



Rosa Morison staff and service users

## **Rosa Morison re-opens after Covid-19 closure to support Service users**

Rosa Morison, Your Choice Barnet's day service for adults with profound and complex learning and physical disabilities, reopened after an initial 100-day closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Staff made sure their service was Covid-safe; from social distancing reminders to implementing additional cleaning measures. They also worked together to decorate the building, making the space welcoming for service users after an extended time away.

The team are working tirelessly to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of service users and staff by following stringent risk assessments, wearing PPE and socially distancing.

The day services are important to the people we support in so many ways. For example, Rosa Morison has the equipment to support wheelchair users to stand upright, which is, of course, vital for circulation and muscle strength.

# CommunitySpace

## **CommunitySpace staff adapt to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions**

The team at CommunitySpace are renowned for their efforts in providing the best possible service to the service users at their day centre. However, the Covid-19 pandemic meant that the service had to close for a short period of time, meaning staff were re-deployed to other front line services within Your Choice Barnet.

The staff jumped in with all their usual enthusiasm, learning on the job but most importantly, continuing to provide that person-centred care.

## PA Choices

### **PA Choices continue to provide vital support**

For teams at The Barnet Group like PA Choices, our Personal Assistant service, the Covid-19 pandemic meant real changes to ways of working. Our PAs go out and about in the community to support people in receipt of Personal Independence Payments, something made increasingly difficult with lockdown restrictions and social distancing measures.

But the team stepped up to support those in need. Service manager Helen Young said “I am so proud of how many of the YCB teams have come together at this very challenging time. So many are putting themselves out, going the extra mile and working in areas outside of their comfort zone.

“I am especially grateful to all the Personal Assistants that have continued to support as many vulnerable people as possible, and carrying on with their normal support. In some cases, this means supporting people at home instead of their usual activities in the community, or just picking up groceries and prescriptions for them and their families.”



Ansell Court

## **Ansell Court shortlisted for design award**

The Barnet Group's service for older people, Ansell Court, was shortlisted for a Housing Design Award.

Ansell Court is a dementia-specific, housing with care development comprising 53 one and two-bedroom apartments and communal facilities. The development is situated in a prime location in Mill Hill, offering easy access to a range of local amenities. The building has a fresh contemporary quality which is sensitively integrated into its setting.

The design responds to the urban grain of the adjacent residential properties creating what appears as a series of semi-detached brick dwellings. Traditional architectural features such as gable ends, brick detailing and pitched roofs create a building that is well-proportioned and respectful of the adjoining conservation area. The detailing is a modern interpretation of the stone and brick features of the more notable Victorian buildings in the area. Ansell Court provides tenants with the very best in independent living and the peace of mind that onsite care and support is available.

Communal amenities include a shared lounge, café, private dining room, activity room, hair salon, laundry, guest suite and two shared gardens which include a potting shed, seating and raised beds. The communal spaces, located on the ground floor, are flexibly designed and engage with the street frontage, advertising the various amenities



to the wider public. Located on the most prominent corner of the site, the café attracts parents from the local primary school promoting intergenerational interaction for the residents.

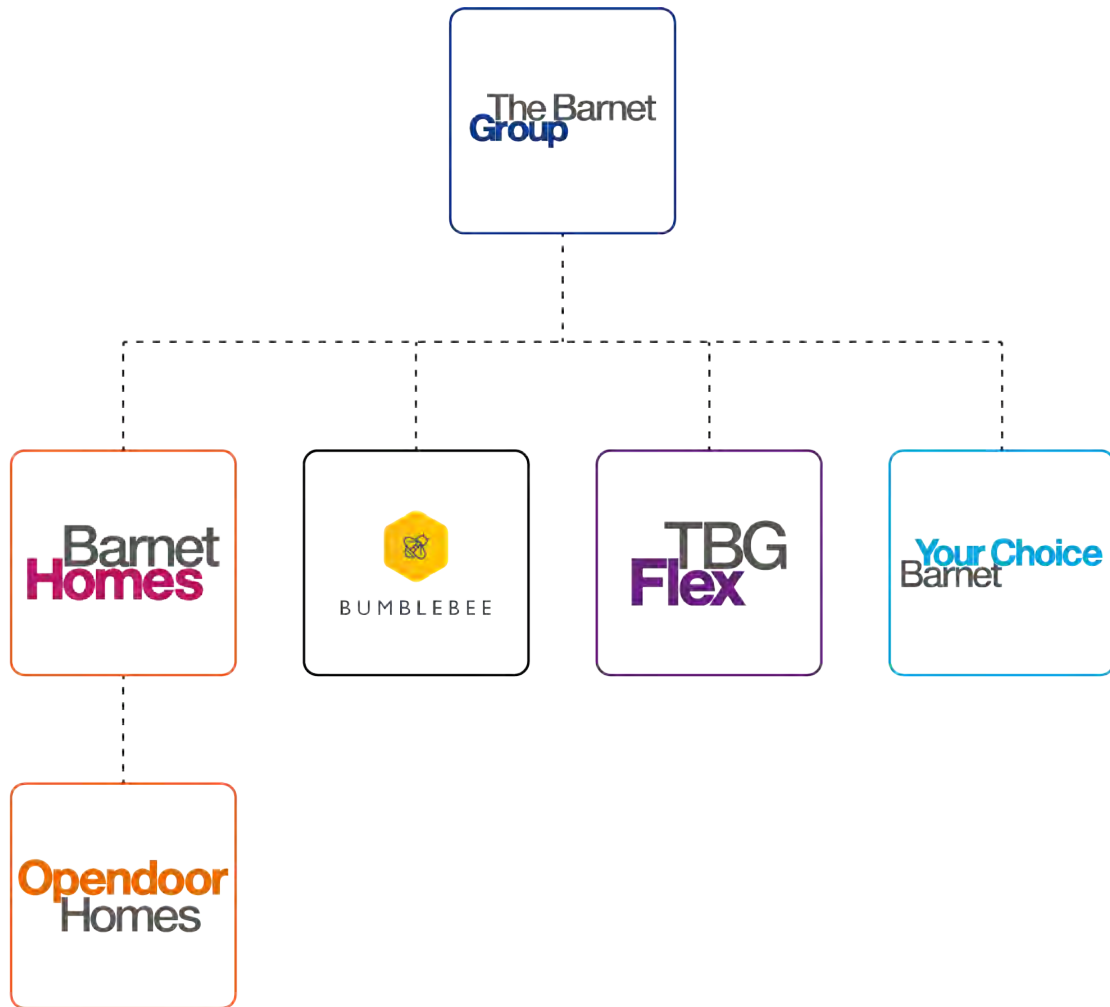
A simple plan form has been created with generous circulation spaces and frequent views to the communal garden. Window seating creates points of interest along the circulation routes encouraging incidental social interaction. These reflect the dementia focus of the building, aiding orientation and way-finding within the building whilst providing an abundance of natural daylight.

The garden design further supports the specialist dementia focus with intimate seating areas connected by pathways through a rich palette of sensory planting.

Many of the HAPPI (Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation) design recommendations have been embraced, in particular, the apartments have generous space standards, open plan living and large private balconies or patios.

The project achieved BREEAM (Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method) 'Very Good', for a fabric first approach with photovoltaic panels.

# About The Barnet Group



## The Barnet Group

A parent company, wholly owned by the London Borough of Barnet.

## Barnet Homes

An Arms-Length Management Organisation with a ten-year management agreement from 1 April 2016 to deliver housing management and homelessness services within Barnet. Also includes the sub-brands: Assist, BOOST, Let2Barnet and Welfare Reform Taskforce.

## Bumblebee

An online-only estate agent set up in 2018, operating in the private lettings market. It uses the experience and expertise of Barnet Homes' Let2Barnet service.

## Opendoor Homes

Opendoor Homes is a subsidiary of Barnet Homes and was created in order to gain Registered Provider Status from the Homes and Communities Agency. It has an ambitious house-building programme in the borough and strengthens the group's housing management foundations.

## TBG Flex

An employment arm within the Group, offering flexible benefits and supplying new employees to other companies within the Group.

## Your Choice Barnet

An adult social care company delivering services across a number of schemes and services, with a renewed five-year management agreement from 1 February 2017. Took on the running of three care homes in 2019, almost-doubling its size.

In 2004 Barnet Homes was established as an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) for the London Borough of Barnet (LBB) to manage approximately 15,000 council-owned properties within Barnet. In 2012 Your Choice (Barnet) was created to receive the transfer of Adult Social Care services from LBB, and The Barnet Group, a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) was created as the parent company to both Barnet Homes and Your Choice (Barnet). Later in 2012 the Council's Homelessness service, Housing Options, transferred to Barnet Homes.

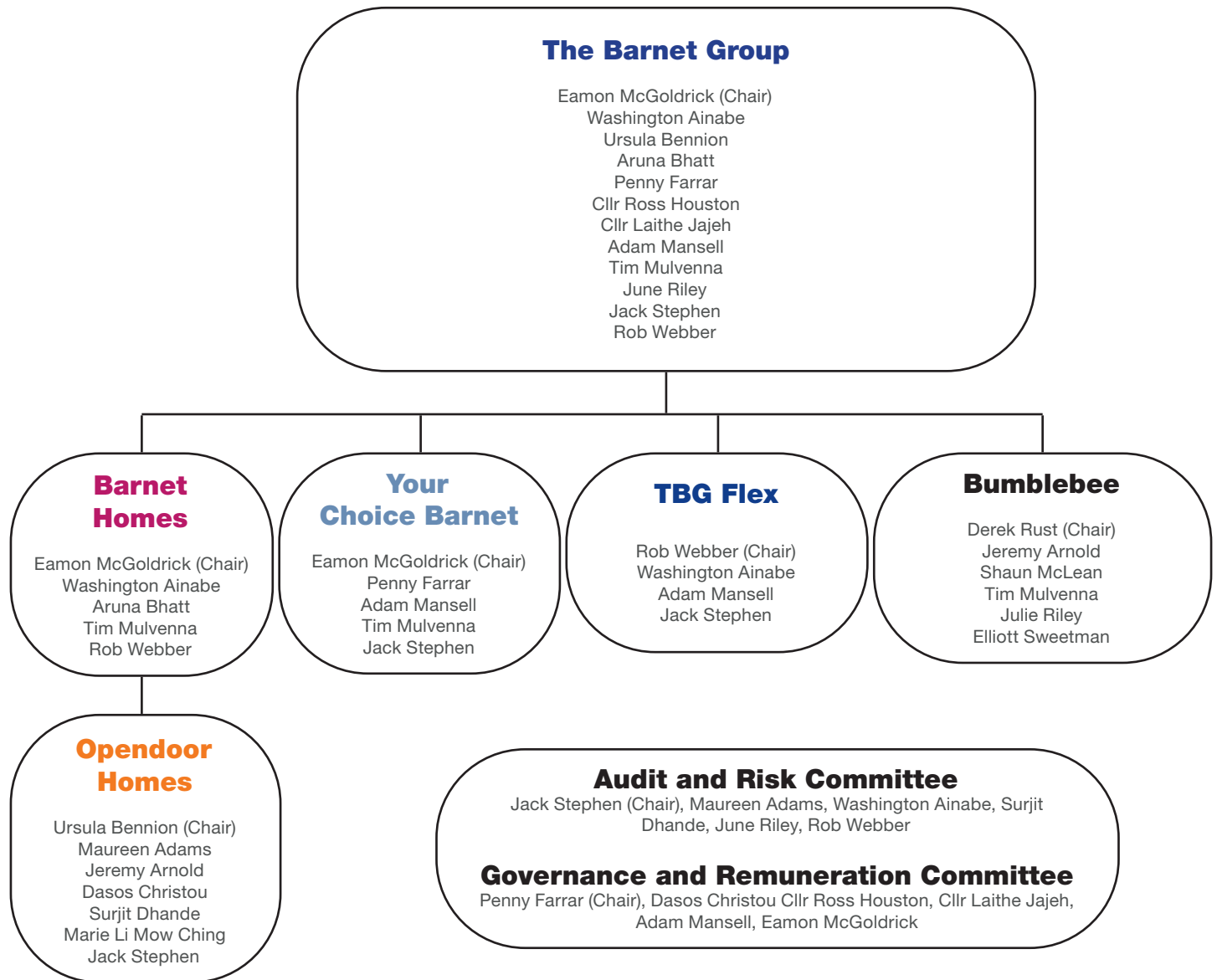
In 2013 The Barnet Group began the development of the first council housing to be built in the borough for 20 years. The first 3 properties were completed in early 2014, with another 40 in 2016 including 10% wheelchair-accessible accommodation, and 90 in 2018/19 including 53 Extra Care units. We have committed to fulfilling a development and acquisitions programme that will deliver 1,000 homes by 2024.

In 2015 TBG Flex was created to employ and supply new employees within the Group, offering more flexible terms and conditions of employment. We also created a new subsidiary to Barnet Homes, TBG Open Door ("Opendoor Homes"), which went on to become a Registered Provider with the Homes and Communities Agency in April 2017 and which supports the Group's ambitions for growth whilst providing much-needed Affordable rented housing within the borough. In May 2018, Bumblebee was launched to provide an online private lettings service in Barnet, drawing upon the success of the Group's Let2Barnet service.

Across the Group we employ over 800 staff, providing a range of services to people who live in Council-owned homes, people who are homeless or facing homelessness, Care and Support clients from Barnet and other local authorities, and private customers.



# Board structure



## The Barnet Group Board

### Eamon McGoldrick (Chair)

Eamon has over 40 years' experience in housing management, having started at the Greater London Council as a management trainee in 1977. He has worked extensively across housing in north London, and was Chief Executive of Homes for Islington from 2004 to 2012.

Eamon is Managing Director of the National Federation of ALMOs (arms-length management

organisations), of which Barnet Homes is a member.

He is also a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing, the Chartered Management Institute and the Housing Finance Institute.

### Washington Ainabe

Washington Ainabe is the board's leaseholder representative. He has had a long career in the

financial service industry in various capacities; as a management accountant (CIMA), management consultant and most recently in risk. He has lived in Barnet for 15 years (five years as a leaseholder) and is passionate about making a difference in the community. He believes providing quality conditions and good engagement is key to achieving proper standards and sustainability.

### **Ursula Bennion**

Ursula has been Chief Executive at Trent & Drove Housing since 2015.

Prior to joining Trent & Drove, Ursula worked at Housing Plus for nine years, leading on development and new business across Staffordshire.

Over a 25 year career in housing, Ursula has worked across the sector in a wide variety of roles ranging from her first job as a trainee housing officer to Director of Business Development and now as Chief Executive.

During this time, she has worked with both traditional housing associations and Large Scale Voluntary Transfer housing organisations, providing her with a wealth of experience in dealing with the challenges and opportunities facing the affordable housing sector. She has a track record of successfully working with key local stakeholders to ensure housing needs are met and projects are delivered.

### **Aruna Bhatt**

Aruna has been a resident Leaseholder in Barnet for more than 28 years. She has a management and training background and has been a volunteer advisor. Aruna has been involved as a volunteer member/Vice Chair of Barnet Homes' Performance Advisory Group.

Her involvement has a big impact on decision making on how to improve the service performance and surroundings of Barnet residents to increase overall customer satisfaction.

Aruna wants to see change in customer engagement of all residents services to be improved. She is passionate about making a difference in the community, providing quality conditions to achieve good standards and

sustainability and safer surroundings to live in, she believes it's a crucial part of shaping the future of Barnet.

### **Penny Farrar**

Joined The Barnet Group board as a non-executive director in April 2021. Penny brings diverse experience in organisational development and change gained through her work as a management consultant and manager in the public, private and voluntary sectors. She is a qualified executive coach and an experienced charity trustee chair. Penny's interest in housing and social care spans some 30 years from her early career as an urban planner through her work as a local government director to her more recent advisory work in the UK public sector.

### **Cllr Ross Houston**

Councillor Ross Houston is the Deputy Leader of the Labour Group and Spokesperson on Housing on Barnet Council. Ross is Operations Manager for a housing association. He is vice chair of a regeneration partnership and a trustee of the Third Age Project in Camden. Ross is chair of governors at Northside School in Barnet. He was appointed by London Councils to be a member of the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, where he chairs the Scrutiny Committee. His priorities are to ensure that Barnet Homes successfully manages its tenancies on the regeneration estates working with its partners; that Barnet Group oversees continued improvement in its service to tenants, leaseholders, users of its care services and to Barnet residents; and that Barnet Group successfully delivers its programme to build much needed new council homes.

### **Cllr Laithe Jajeh**

Laithe is the Conservative Party representative on the board, and is a local councillor for the Hale ward. He is Vice-Chair of the Council's Constitution and General Purposes Committee, and is also a part of the Council's Audit Committee and Environment for Community. He represents Barnet Council on the London Councils Transport and Environment Committee.

### **Adam Mansell**

Adam is an experienced adult social care professional, having spent over 20 years managing

services for adults with learning disabilities and complex needs for several leading care providers within the sector, including Sense, Dimensions, Certitude and the Westminster Society for People with Learning Disabilities. In recent years Adam has worked in Business Development, facilitating the provision of quality, affordable Social Housing and in a Technology company supporting Local Authorities with ASC Brokerage and Commissioning.

Adam has a sister who lives in a Supported Living service in Hertfordshire and is a proud parent of a son with Downs Syndrome who attends Oak Lodge, a SEN school in East Finchley.

### **Tim Mulvenna**

Tim joined the Group as CEO in February 2018 from London & Quadrant Housing Trust, where he was Group Director, Customer Services. Tim has also held senior customer service roles in the charity and telecoms sectors.

Tim has identified four priority areas for The Barnet Group: People, Customers, Growth and Technology. In the short term, his focus will be on two areas: Organisational Development – getting the best for the Group’s people and getting the best out of them; and Digitisation – in order to see big improvements in the customer service offer. Resources will be prioritised to deliver better outcomes for our people and our customers.

### **June Riley**

June is a CIMA qualified accountant with an MBA from Manchester business school. She has worked in housing at a senior level for over 18 years and is currently a finance director at One Housing Group. June was the finance director of a national homeless charity, following a career in the NHS as a senior directorate accountant where she started her accounting career as a graduate trainee.

June has been a non-executive board member on a number of public sector and charity boards, and was the vice chair of the audit committee of Newham Homes ALMO.

She is passionate about supporting vulnerable people and will continue to use her experience

and professional skills, in a voluntary capacity, to add value to organisations providing care and support to this customer base.

### **Jack Stephen**

Jack has worked for the past 35 years as an executive and non executive board member of commercial, banking and social housing organisations. He is also one of three people responsible for setting up the Fizzy Living private rental group and sourcing overseas capital investment. Jack worked at Thames Valley Housing Association as their Finance Director for 21 years up until retiring in June 2015. In his private life he has been committed to helping his community, having chaired the governors of a secondary school for 10 years, in the process taking it through the rebuild of the entire school, and chairing a homelessness charity for the past six years.

### **Rob Webber**

Rob is an experienced Executive and Non-Executive Director with a track record of improving profitability and a focus on customer service and all things IT and digital.

Rob’s career has spanned public, private and not-for-profit sectors in UK, Europe, USA and Far East. Latterly, he was Operations Director for a Housing Association, managing 17,000 homes across the south of England. In this role he was responsible for all aspects of the delivery of high quality customer services and maintenance of the properties.

As well as his role at Barnet Homes, Rob’s current Non-Executive roles include membership of the Boards at Crown Simmons Housing and Loddon Homes and membership of the Board and Chair of the Audit Committee at Bournemouth Primary MAT.



# Our Vision

## What we want to achieve

For customers to be our biggest advocates.

# Our Mission

## Why we are here

To make a real difference to every customer

We will achieve this and support our vision through our strategic aims of:

### **Providing customer-focused services**

- We will put our customers at the heart of what we do, and provide person-centred services that support their aspirations and achieve positive outcomes.
- We will meaningfully engage and listen to our customers to improve services and decision-making, and empower individuals and communities.
- We will deliver services in ways that are cost-effective, accessible, easy to use, inclusive, and offer choice to our customers, with a focus on digital and self-service where customers prefer this.

### **Developing and empowering our people**

- We will support, involve, and develop our employees, and empower and enable them to deliver great services to our customers.
- We will foster a culture of passion and pride in what we do, and make The Barnet Group a great place to work.
- We will develop a solutions-focused culture of joint-working and collaboration that is strengthened by the diversity of our people.

### **Sustaining our business through growth**

- We will sustain our business through seeking new opportunities that build on our existing strengths and capabilities and support us to achieve our vision.
- We will improve our financial strength in order to sustain our core services and increase our opportunities for growth.
- We will combine our expertise and ethos with insight, innovation, and technology to deliver efficient, effective, and consistent services individually and with our partners.

**The Barnet Group**

2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, London NW9 4EW

**Tel:** 0800 389 5225

**Web:** [thebarnetgroup.org](http://thebarnetgroup.org)

**Social:** @thebarnetgroup