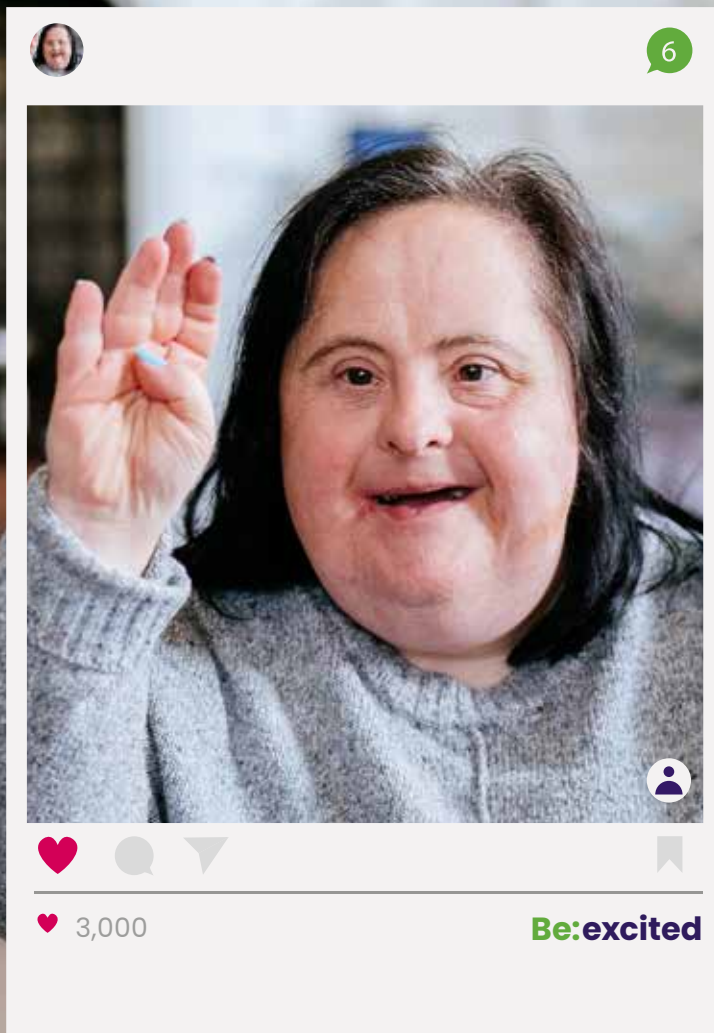


Spring 2022

# Annual report to tenants 2021



# Welcome to our Annual report to tenants

**This report looks at our performance and what has been happening across BeST during our last financial year, October 2020 – September 2021.**

You can find more information on our performance in our Annual Report and Financial Statements 2021, available for download at [www.bestha.co.uk/reports.php](http://www.bestha.co.uk/reports.php)

The year was a difficult one for everyone due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff had to work from home and we had to quickly adapt and change the way we worked. The safety and wellbeing of our tenants, staff and partners was the most important thing and we did our best to help and support everyone whilst following the government guidelines.



**We worked closely with local authorities, support providers and other organisations to house 314 tenants. We have 1771 units, with a mix of specialised supported housing and residential care. We now provide homes for over 1200 people in over 300 properties.**

Over the year, we introduced our tenant engagement strategy and worked through our tenant involvement action plan.

We have continued to meet with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) every quarter. We have had regular staff training and have been updating and reviewing our documents, policies and procedures.

Thank you to everyone that has helped us during the last year, in every aspect of the Charity and with this annual report. We hope you continue to support us in our improvements as we go forward.

**Shelley Hobbs  
Managing Director**

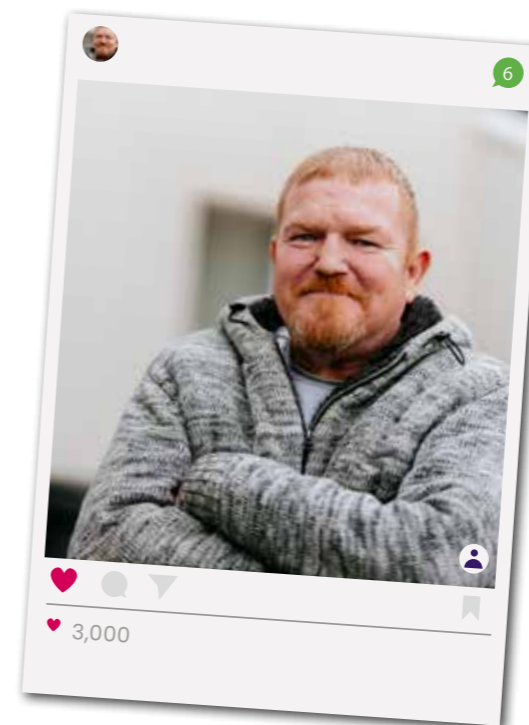
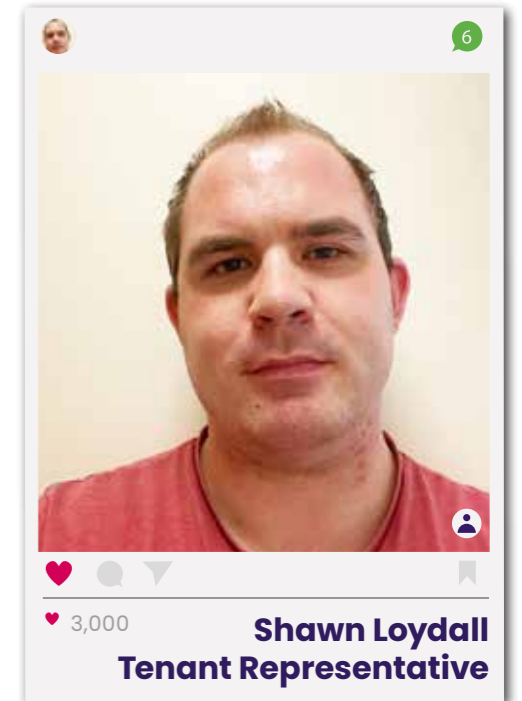


# Welcome from our tenant representative

“The last year has been challenging for all of us due to COVID but it’s been very exciting as I moved to my new flat in May 2020 and joined tenant engagement in September. It was amazing to be asked if I would like to join tenant engagement and I had to say yes so that I could look at things that could benefit tenants. One of my first events was co-chairing scrutiny sessions and since then, I have helped Casey with Snippets and reviewed documents, including the creation of easy reads. I look forward to seeing what will happen for me personally in the next 12 months and welcoming more tenants to tenant engagement as it is very rewarding and there are a couple of exciting things potentially in the pipeline.

I would personally like to thank all the tenants and support staff who have given their time to meet with us. We hope to meet more of you this year and hope you enjoy reading this report.”

**Shawn Loydall  
Tenant Representative**



# Meet our staff

## Our Executive Team

BeST is led by our Executive Team, which oversee our day-to-day operations and report to our board members.



**Shelley Hobbs**  
Managing Director



**Steve Boyd**  
Commercial Director



**Irene Bailey**  
Finance Director

## Our Management Team

BeST has six key departments which are managed by:



**Marlene Wride**  
Head of Finance



**Richard Lowthian**  
Head of Housing



**Chris Dale**  
Head of Asset Management

## Our Management Team (continued)



**Peter Whitehead**  
Head of Revenue and Benefits



**Denise Jolley**  
Head of People Development



**Andy Bowler**  
Head of Development

## Our Housing Officers

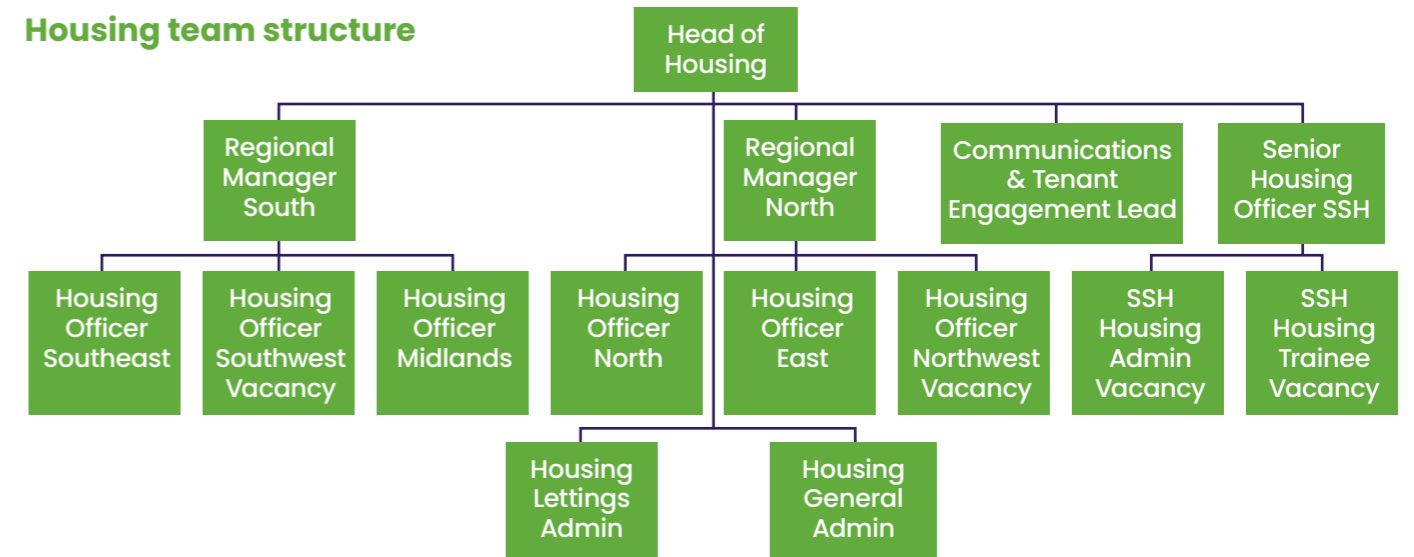
- John Saunders
- Hannah Mansfield
- Tim Bray

- Jay Johal
- Lauren Downes
- Anoushka Ritchie
- Siobhan Boyd

## Tenant Engagement and Communications

- Casey Willis

## Housing team structure



# Meet our board

Our board members are also known as our board of trustees and meet monthly with our executive team. They are a group of people who make the final decisions about BeST. They are responsible for helping us make and agree on plans and make sure everything we do is within the law and regulations.



**Tom Miskell**  
Board of Trustees Chairman



**Andrew Bailey**  
Board member



**Phil Elvy**  
Board member



**Steve Close**  
Board member



**Paul Carhart**  
Board member

# Performance overview

## During the last year we:

- Spent more than £3.5m on repairs and maintenance.
- Supported 314 new tenants moving in their BeST home.
- We agreed on key performance indicators (KPI's) for maintenance, health and safety, housing management, human resources, finance and complaints.

BeST focused on developing health and safety performance indicators and we worked with our contractors to improve performance. This was one of the areas for improvement highlighted in the regulatory notice and supports our key objectives in providing a safe and secure environment for our tenants.



**Spent more than £3.5m on repairs and maintenance.**



**Supported 314 new tenants moving in their BeST home.**



# Customer Service

**The COVID-19 pandemic changed how we worked. Our staff worked from home and we had to adapt and improve our systems to make sure that we could still deliver the best customer service.**

In June 2021 we introduced our new and improved phone system which helps us to deliver high-quality customer service from home or in the office. There is now a queue system so when you call up you know what position you are in the queue and we also record our calls for training and monitoring purposes.

Since we went live, our average wait time improved month on month, from 27 seconds to 13 seconds.

We averaged 1037 calls per month, of which 809 were for repairs and maintenance.

## Tenant satisfaction

In summer 2021 we asked housing consultant and tenant satisfaction and research specialists, Acuity, to carry out some tenant profiling surveys. We had a 25% response rate and this feedback allowed us to understand tenants wants and needs better and to ensure that the information we held was accurate and up to date so that we could improve our customer service. Everyone who completed a tenant profiling survey got entered into a prize draw and 6 winners were randomly selected to win a £20 shopping voucher of their choice.

We worked on improving our communication with tenants and support. We invited tenants to talk to us and tell us how they feel. We want tenants to be heard and feel that BeST is listening and acting upon their views.

Our next tenant satisfaction survey will be rolled out in June 2022.



**Two-thirds of tenants (63%) are satisfied with the services they receive.**



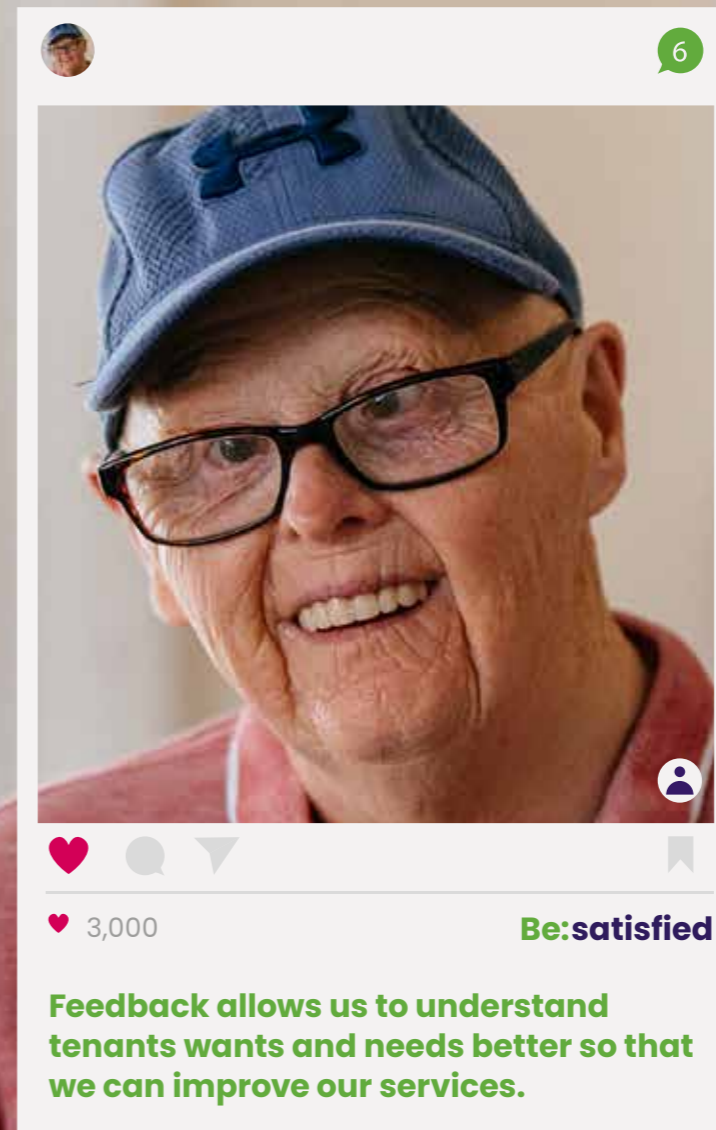
**Satisfaction with overall services is highest in the North area (82%), the next most satisfied area is the Midlands & Wales (70%). Least satisfied are those in the South East (51%) and particularly the South West (45%).**



**Two-thirds (62%) of tenants are satisfied with the repairs service.**



**Half of tenants feel that BeST listens to their views and acts upon them (51%).**



**Feedback allows us to understand tenants wants and needs better so that we can improve our services.**

# Be:satisfied

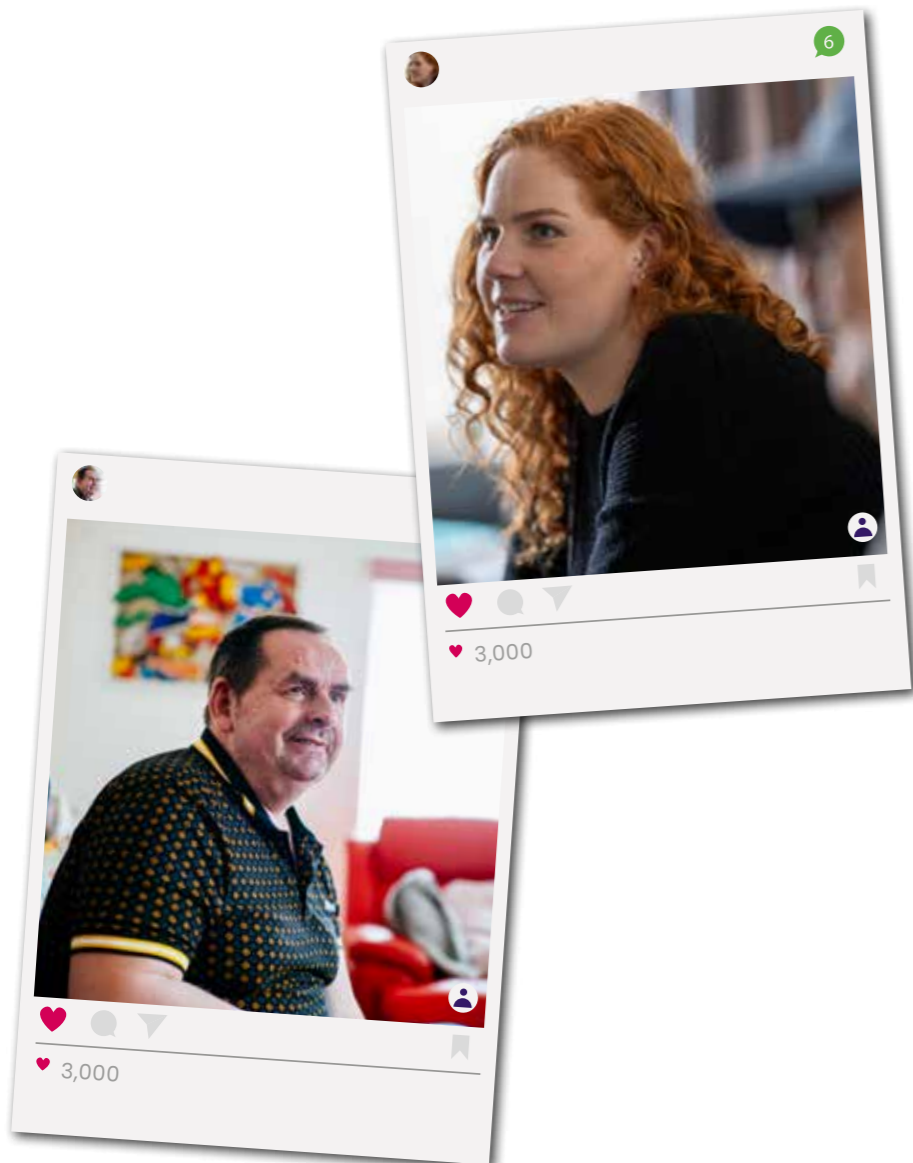
# Customer Service (continued)

## Complaints

The Housing Ombudsman issued a new Complaints Handling Code which means we have to deal with complaints quickly, respectfully and fairly.

We introduced our new complaints policy and made it easier to make a complaint. You can now make a complaint through our website, by phone, or email.

Our repairs and maintenance team received the most complaints. With an average resolution time of 32 days, out of a target of 28 days.



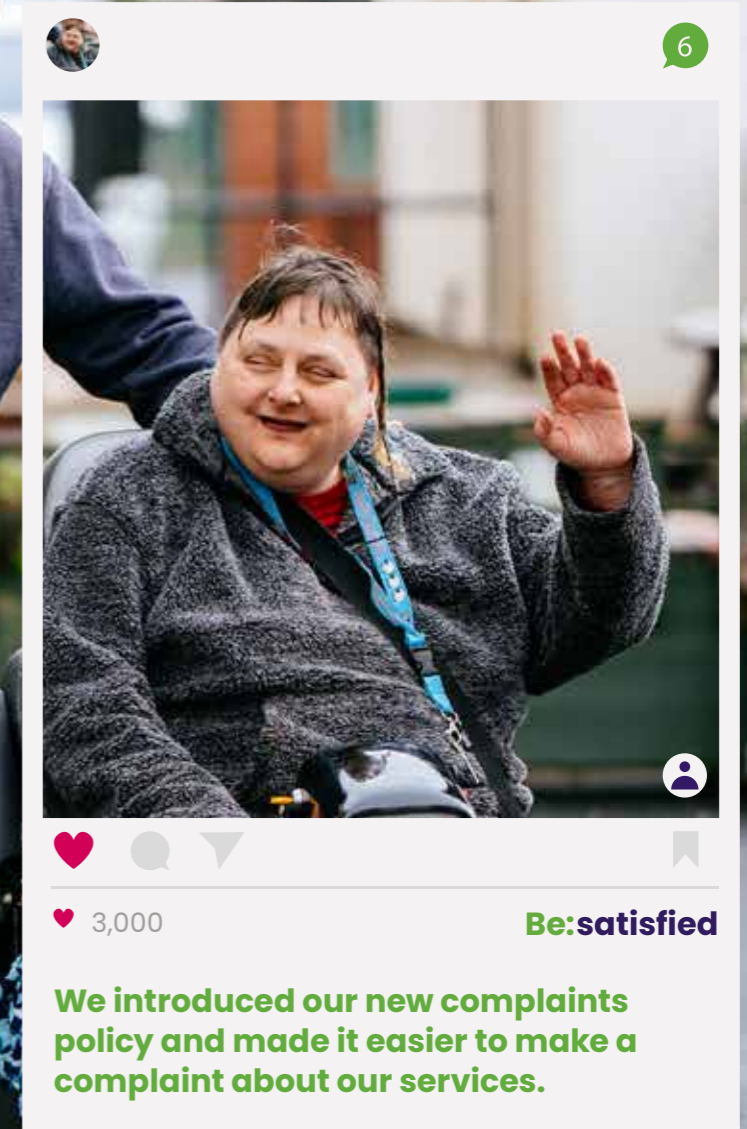
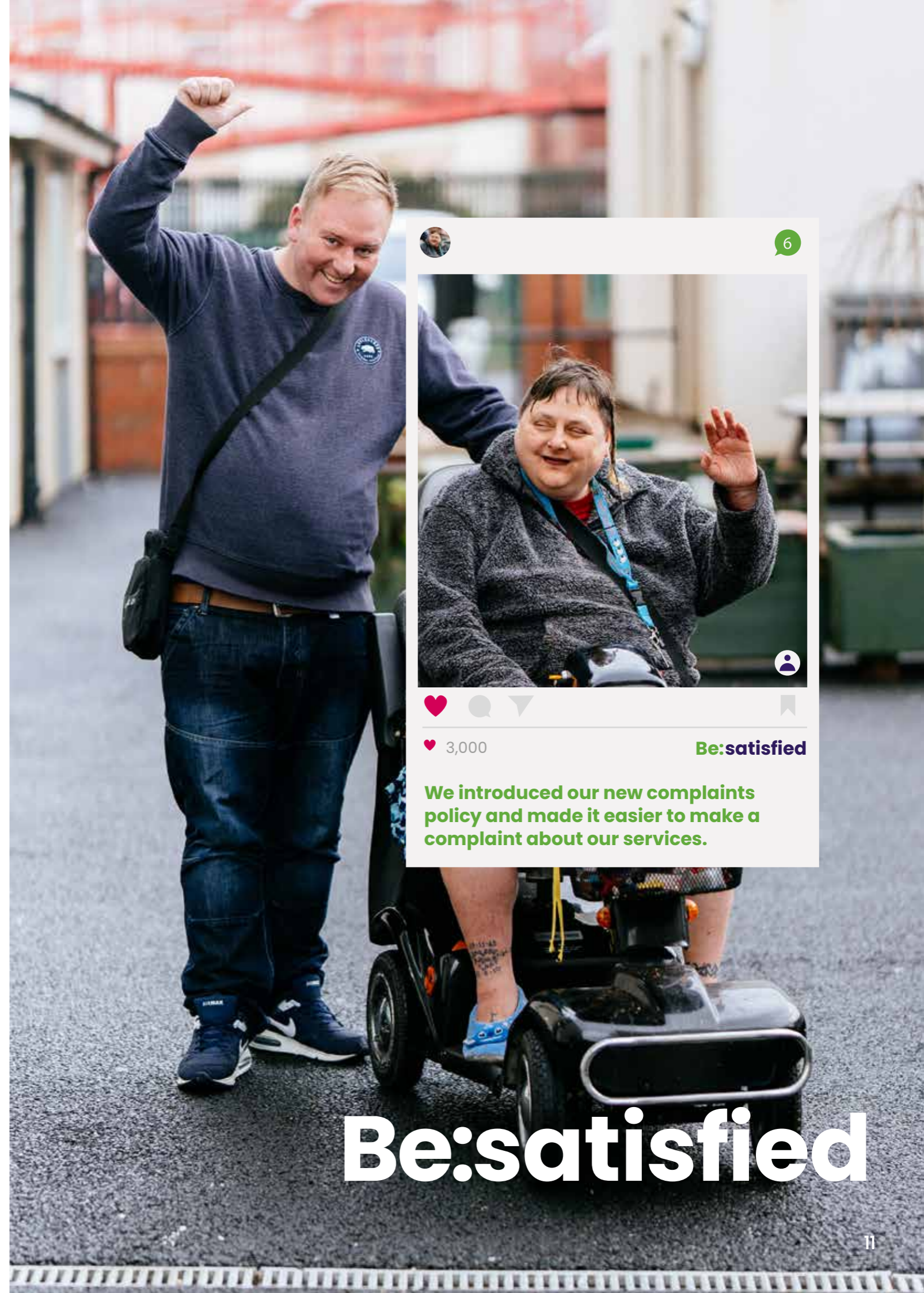
A fifth of tenants (20%) said they had made a complaint to BeST.



Two thirds of tenants (68%) said they know how to make a complaint.



Of those who had made a complaint, over half (57%) said they were satisfied with the way their complaint was handled.



# Be:satisfied

# Tenant Engagement and Involvement

## Get Involved

**We want tenants to be involved in what we do and help us improve the way we work and our services. We launched an appeal for tenants to 'Get Involved' in a way best suits them.**

We sent surveys to all tenants to find out who is interested in getting involved.

65 tenants responded and said they would like to get involved in some way.

Once restrictions eased, we started visiting tenants to find out how they would like to be involved.

## In 2021 we

- Introduced our new tenant engagement strategy and tenant engagement and empowerment policy.
- Made improvements to our website following meetings with tenants and support. Including the ability to report a repair and make a complaint through our website.
- Introduced our new complaints and compliments policy and procedure, anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance policy, aids and adaptations policy and asset, repairs, recharges and void management policy.
- Introduced new easy reads including, how to report a repair, how to get involved and a tenancy agreement example.
- We worked with tenants on our Snippets newsletter and published 2 editions which included lots of information and competitions.



**31 tenants said they were interested in a cuppa and a chat**



**3 interested in a Zoom**



**3 interested in being on a panel**



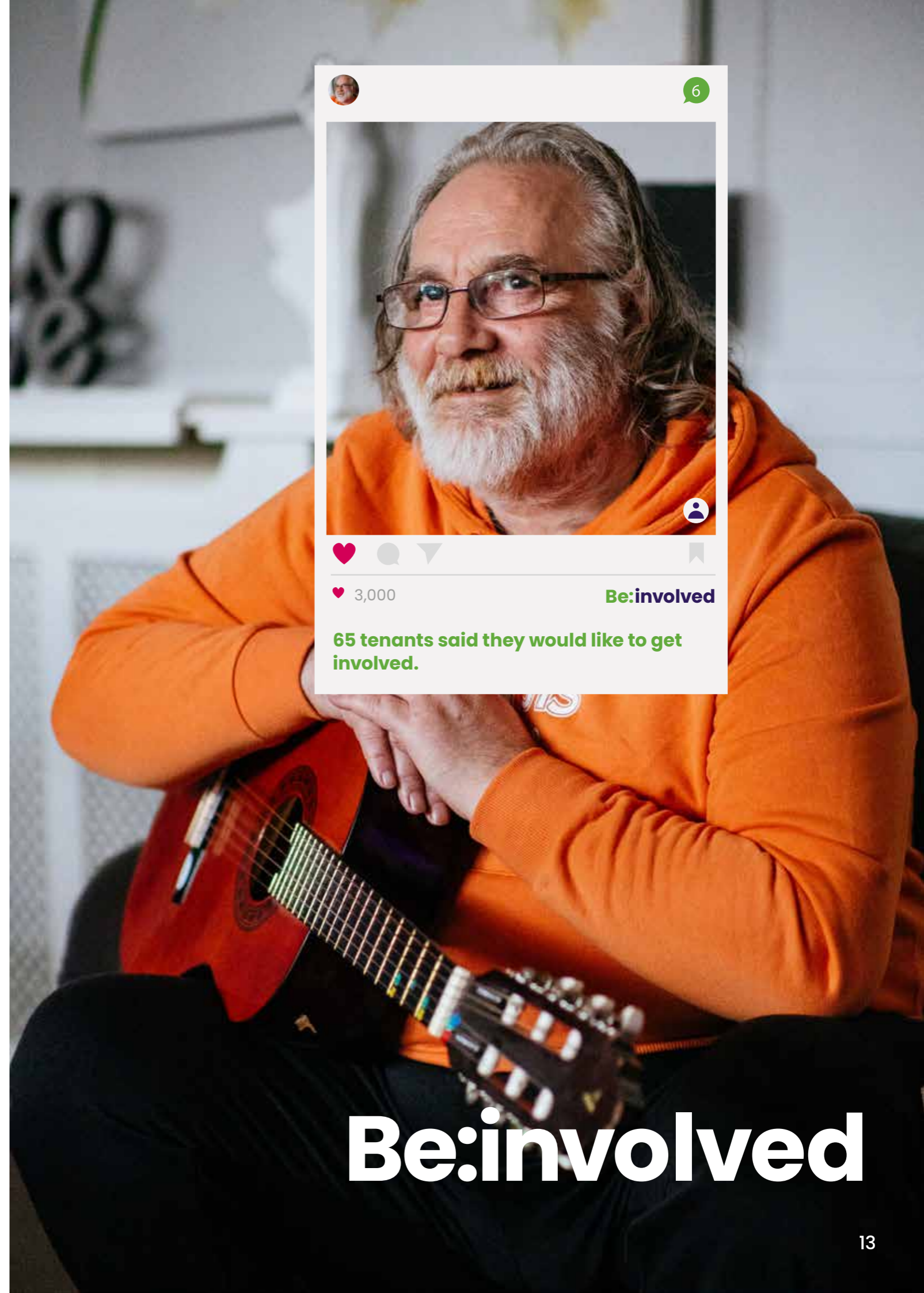
**10 interested in being a tenant representative**



**8 interested in being a tenant inspector**



**6 interested in helping with snippets**



# Be:involved

# Tenant Engagement and Involvement (continued)

## Tenants got involved in:

- Designing and editing our Snippets Newsletter
- Creating our tenant annual report
- Developing easy-read policies
- Reviewing our website
- Competitions
- Scrutiny sessions
- Focus groups and meetings
- Having a cuppa and a chat with us
- Surveys

## We set some objectives:

- To co-create a new engagement strategy and framework with tenants, staff and other stakeholders
- To embed tenant engagement across the Charity and make it part of our organisational culture
- To deliver a new engagement strategy and framework including a menu of engagement and tenant empowerment training programme
- To measure and demonstrate the impact and value of tenant involvement activity for tenants, the organisation and the wider community each year



## Tenant events

We contributed to some tenant events, including an Elvis tribute night.



## Scrutiny sessions

In September 2021, to kick start National Scrutiny Week, we held our first ever scrutiny session with tenants. Our tenant representative, Shawn, co-chaired the meeting. Tenants and their support joined us on Zoom to talk about communication and customer service issues.

The session was a great success so we introduced monthly scrutiny sessions.

**On the last Monday of every month tenants and support are invited to come and scrutinise BeST.**

We sometimes do a focus topic, such as our repairs service or our website, or we just do an open discussion.

**Interested in getting involved, or want to find out more?**

Email [communications@bestha.co.uk](mailto:communications@bestha.co.uk) or phone/text/WhatsApp 07525277308

## BeST tenants

Our tenant representative, Shawn, meets with us weekly and contributes to our service improvements. Shawn has been vital in developing and reviewing our tenant engagement functions and activities.

Amongst many of his achievements, Shawn introduced a survey for tenants to find out what they like about their home, the services we provide, and what they don't like.

To help Shawn participate, we gave him a grant for a laptop.

Thank you, Shawn, for all your hard work and support. We look forward to continuing this partnership and the improvements and benefits this will bring to all tenants.

Our tenant volunteer, Tilly, has worked with us on our Snippets newsletter and made some fantastic contributions.

Thank you, Tilly, for your help and dedication.

"The best thing that happened to me last year was when I started working for BeST and meeting new people and learning new things what BeST does and how they help other tenants. I want to learn a lot more about BeST and what we can do to help other people."

## Tilly Rogers Tenant volunteer

A warm welcome to our newest involved tenants, Marcel and Charlotte. Thank you for all your efforts so far and we look forward to seeing what incredible things we can achieve together.

## Tenant competitions

We ran competitions throughout the year:

We asked tenants to design their own Easter creations for our Easter competition.

Our winner, Victoria, made a fantastic Easter bonnet and won herself a £50 Primark voucher which she chose as her prize.



## Our Easter winner, Victoria

We also did an online Zoom Eggstravaganza where tenants came to showcase their creations.

We asked tenants to send a photo of their best Christmas tree or best Christmas card.

Our winner's from Skipton Place, chose a £50 Argos voucher as their prize and their tree went on our 2021 Christmas card.



## Our winner's from Skipton Place



# Repairs and maintenance

We worked with our key partners, Renov8 and Myshon to deliver our repairs and maintenance service.


In June 2021, we partnered with Astraline who now manage our Out of Hours.



We made it easier to report a repair, tenants and support can now report a repair on our website, at any time, from anywhere.

We worked with Voyage Care and spent £925,000 refurbishing 32 schemes across the country.



**Key performance indicators (KPI's) agreed by the board and what has been achieved against the target.** 

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Emergency same day repair 96% out of a target of 99%</b> | <b>Routine repair within agreed timeframe 96% out of a target of 99%</b> |
| <b>Urgent 24 hours repair 96% out of a target of 95%</b>    | <b>1st time fix 95% out of a target of 95%</b>                           |

We issued 5490 repair jobs including:



- 1481 same day



- 1965 24 hour emergency



- 2044 routine 3-10 working days



- 95% were fixed first time

# Health and Safety

We worked closely with our partner, Myshon, to help keep tenants safe in their homes.

We carried out annual safety inspections on all of our properties and spent £318,000 on keeping tenants' homes safe.

## Asbestos

82 homes are on our asbestos list and all of them have had an annual inspection.

## Electrical safety

All of our homes, have current electrical safety certificates.

## Portable appliance testing

We have 383 PAT testing certificates for our homes.

## Water safety

We carried out 289 legionella risk assessments.

## Fire safety


We completed 291 fire risk assessments. In excess of £80,000 was spent on fire safety upgrades on 49 homes.

## Gas safety

All of our homes that have gas supply, have up to date gas safety certificates, 436 in total.

## Specialist equipment

There are 24 items of specialist equipment in tenants homes. We have inspected and ensured the safety of all these items.

**Key performance indicators (KPI's) agreed by the board and what has been achieved against the target.** 

- Asbestos certification 100% out of a target of 100%**
- Legionella certification 99.7% out of a target of 100%**
- Fixed wire certification 100% out of a target of 100%**
- CP12 (Gas) certification 99.8% out of a target of 100%**
- Portable appliance testing (PAT) 93% out of a target of 100%**
- Fire risk assessment 100% out of a target of 100%**

# Value for Money

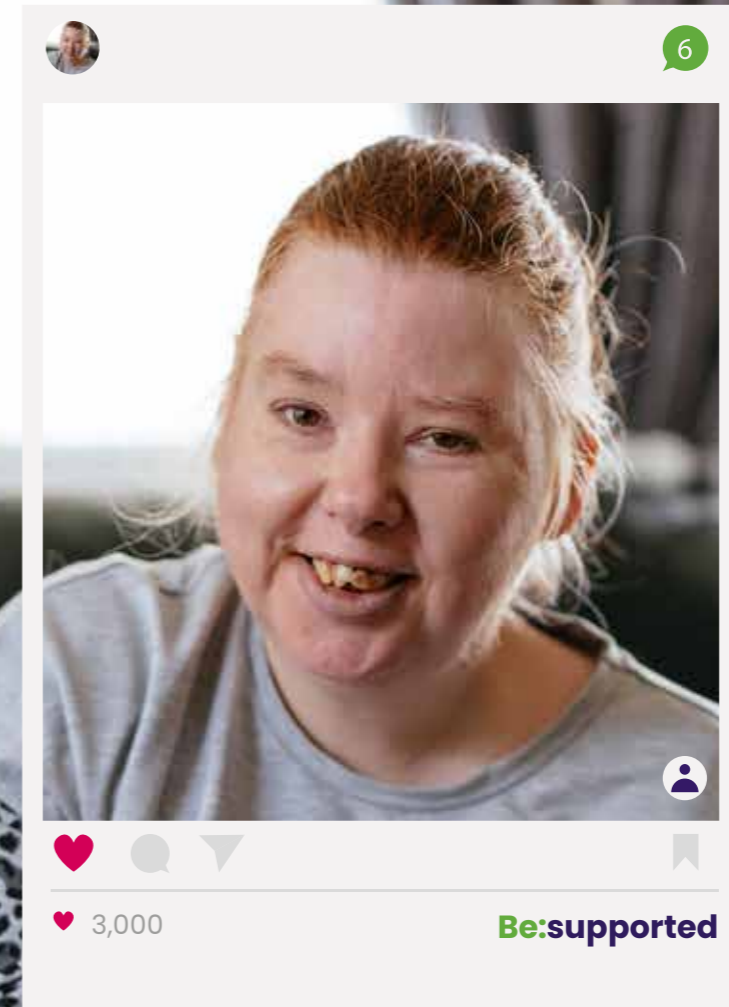
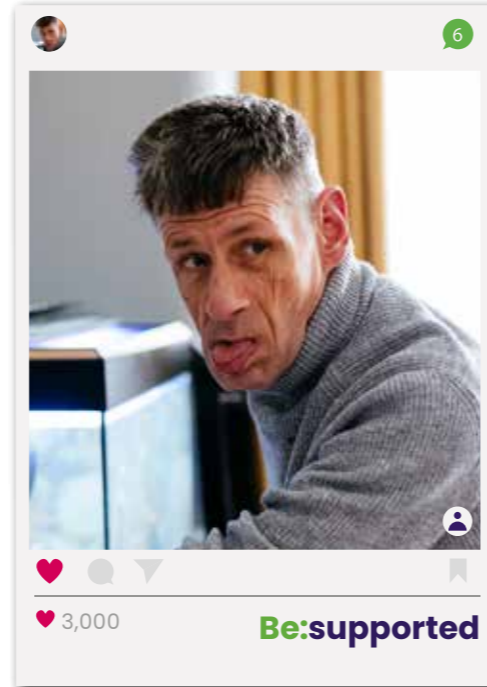
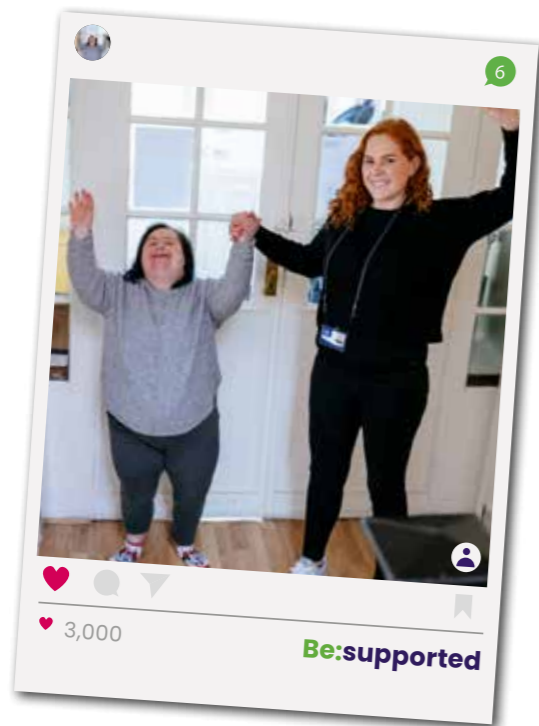
**Value for money is about making sure we spend our money in the best way possible. We consider Value for Money in everything we do to achieve our objectives.**

**Our three key objectives are:**

- To meet and maintain compliance with the Regulatory Standards
- To improve operational efficiency whilst delivering a high quality service to tenants
- To establish and maintain a financially viable position

We are reviewing our processes to look at how we can be more efficient whilst making cost savings and delivering good value for money.

BeST has focused on Health and Safety compliance and additional works following the stock condition surveys which meant that maintenance costs were higher than budgeted. Lease costs also increased and the number of units dropped since 2020, however, the turnover has increased.



**Key performance indicators (KPI's) agreed by the board and what has been achieved against the target.** 

**Total arrears £940,000 out of a target of £1.25 million**

.....

**Current arrears £960,000 out of a target of £1.07 million**

.....

**Units in full payment 98% out of a target of 99%**

.....

# Be:supported

# Value for Money (continued)

## Rent collection and rent arrears



- Collected 95.3% of rent owed



- The average rent for the last year was £272.92 per week

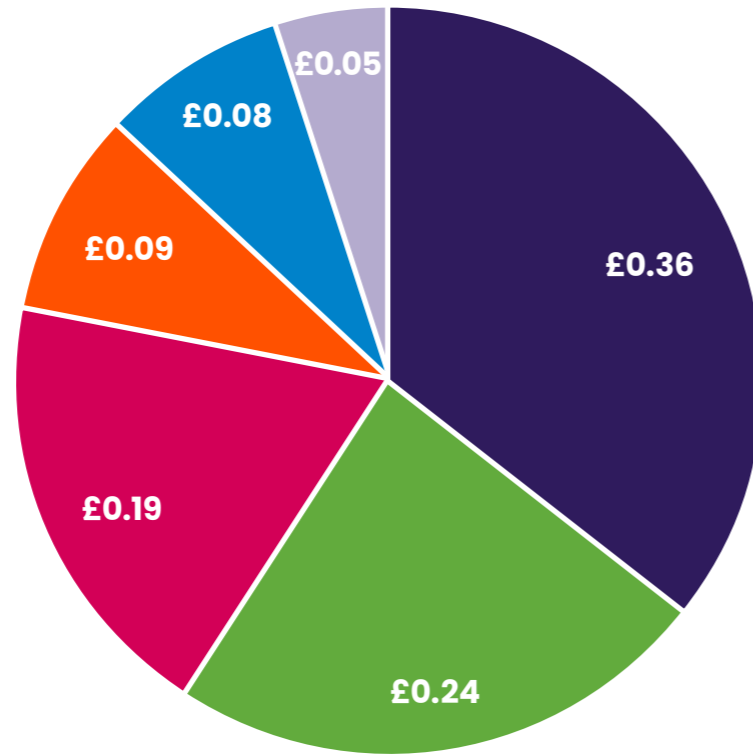


- Spent more than £3.5m on maintenance



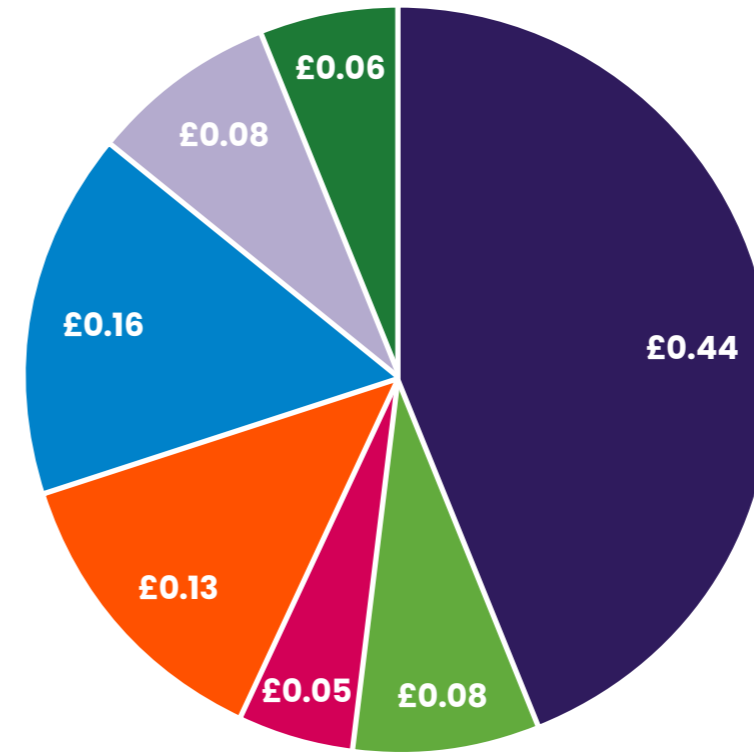
- We helped tenants to get over £350,000 of extra benefit income they were entitled to

## How we spend each £1

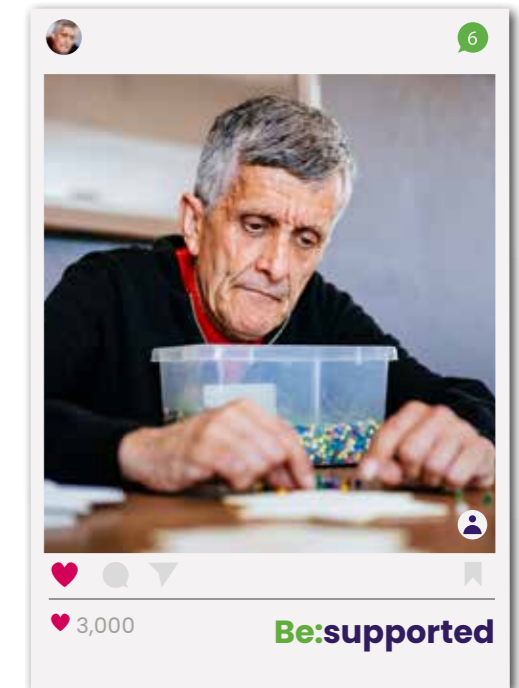
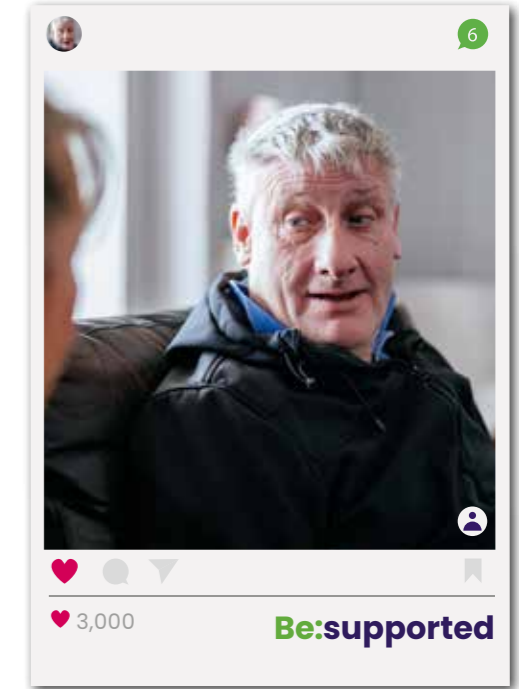


- Rent to another landlord for leased properties
- Finance lease payments and interest
- Property maintenance including major repairs and compliance work
- Staff costs
- Property services - window cleaning, gardening etc
- Overheads

## How we spend each £1 on maintenance



- Emergency repairs and callouts
- External window cleaning, gardening, internal decoration and furniture
- Pest control, health and safety, fire fighting equipment, waste disposal and cleaning
- Major works
- Statutory compliance testing/contracts and servicing
- Void works
- White goods



# Housing management

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we carried out 164 service level contract visits. These visits are to see if the support provider is adhering to our service legal agreements.

Including making sure:

- key areas of health and safety processes are followed
- the right tenants are living in the right flats or rooms

They are also an opportunity for tenants to raise any specific issues.

**Housing Benefit (HB) Success** - We work closely with tenants to make sure any housing benefit is claimed on time. Last year we averaged a housing benefit application form turnaround time of 5 days. We processed 241 housing benefit applications.

We introduced a new standing order form for tenants who want to pay their rent directly to us and helped tenants set up standing orders.

We introduced a new safeguarding policy and procedure.

Ann Craft Trust [www.anncrafttrust.org](http://www.anncrafttrust.org) delivered training to all our front line staff on safeguarding and minimising the risk of harm and abuse.

We work closely with our support providers and commissioners to make sure all our tenants are safe.




Last year we averaged a housing benefit application turnaround time of 5 days.



We processed 241 housing benefit claims.



We logged, monitored and investigated 26 safeguarding incidents.

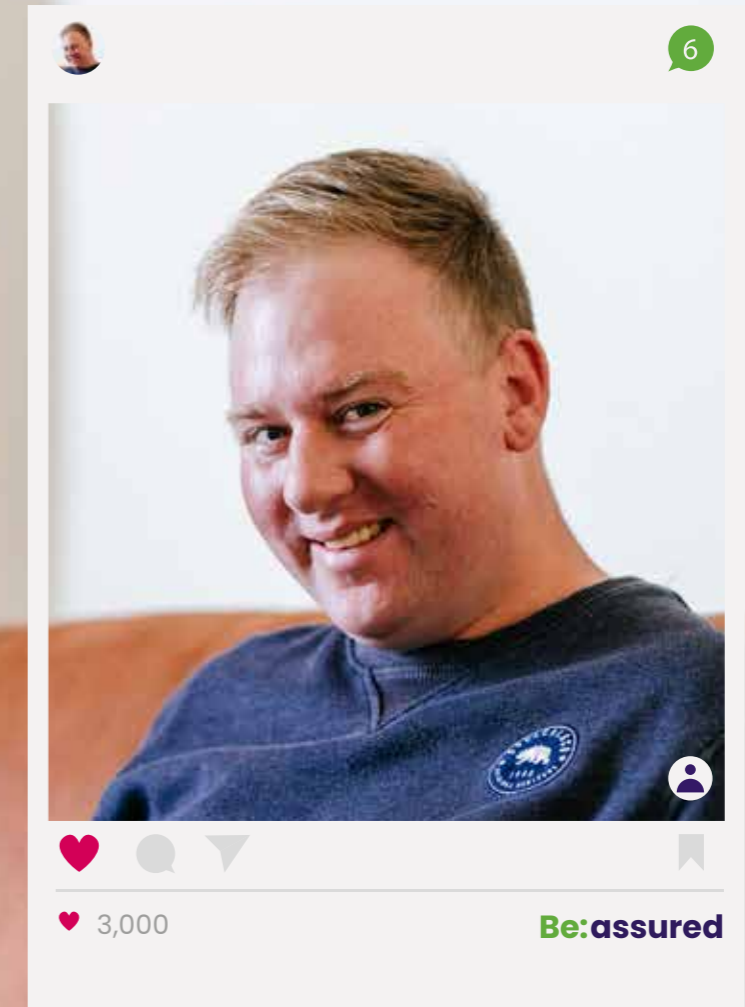
**Key performance indicators (KPI's) agreed by the board and what has been achieved against the target.** 

**Voided 15% out of a target of 15%**

**Occupancy 85% out of a target of 87%**

**HB turnaround 5 days out of a target of 7**

**HB claims in tribunals 1% out of a target of 1%**



# Be:assured



Thank you for reading this report, we hope you enjoyed it and found it useful.

If you have any feedback or would like to get involved in the production of next year's report, please contact us.

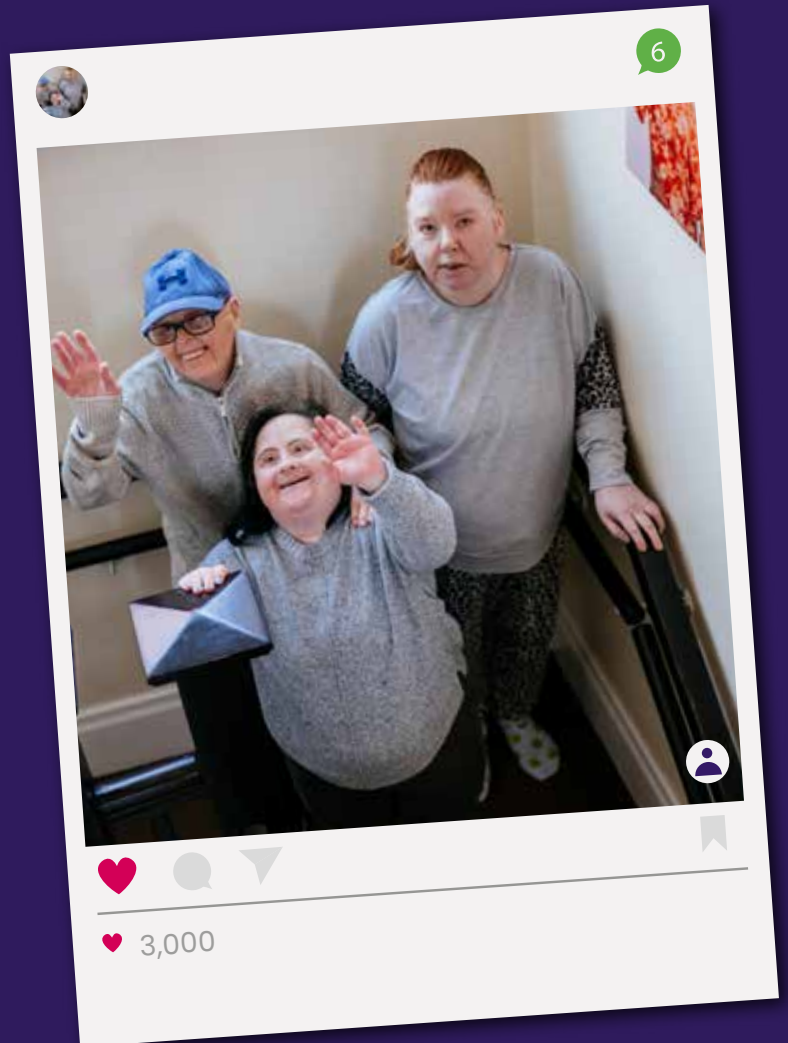
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We are proud members of the Housing Quality Network, TPAS, Northern Housing Consortium, Learning Disability England and Acuity.

