



LINKGROUP

Annual review 2019



OVERVIEW OF SUBSIDIARIES



Horizon Housing Association provides affordable housing and services to enable people, irrespective of impairment, to live full, independent lives in their community. It owns or manages 878 properties in 12 local authority areas across the central belt, including housing to meet the specific needs of wheelchair users. Horizon also delivers Care and Repair services for North Lanarkshire Council.



Larkfield Housing Association is a Registered Social Landlord based in Greenock. It owns and manages over 1,000 properties, including Link Group's tenancies in Inverclyde. Larkfield is committed to providing quality affordable homes and services, meeting local needs and supporting community regeneration.



Link Group owns the organisation's housing stock and other assets. It provides core functions for the group, including asset management, business support, business development, communications, community investment, corporate services, housing development, finance, health and safety, human resources, and information systems.



Link Housing Association provides housing management services to over 6,700 tenants in social rented and retirement accommodation. Link Housing also manages the City of Edinburgh Council's Private Sector Leasing scheme and provides accredited advice services to help customers with a range of benefits, welfare and money issues.

Link's commercial activities, which include factoring services to owners, administration of the Scottish Government's Help to Buy and Shared Equity schemes across Scotland and the management of Link's mid market rent portfolio, are also included in Link Housing.



LinkLiving provides socially inclusive care, support, employability and volunteering services which help people who have a wide range of needs, including mental health issues, homelessness and vulnerabilities associated with older age. It also supports people who are experiencing significant transitions in life, such as young people leaving care.



Link Property is Link's in-house trades team. It delivers property maintenance services to Link, Horizon and Larkfield. Link Property also provides support to Linkscape, our environmental engagement team.



Lintel Trust works with voluntary organisations and local communities. It is the only charity in Scotland with a focus on the provision of small grants to help social housing and community-based projects.



West Highland Housing Association operates in Lorn and the Inner Hebridean Islands where it owns or manages 787 homes. It is committed to providing and maintaining high-quality, affordable housing, in partnership with Argyll and Bute Council, the Scottish Government, Link Group and others.

As always for Link, 2019 has been a year of growth.

There have been many changes happening across all eight companies within the group – not least the retirement of our long-standing CEO, Craig Sanderson.

When Craig retired after 44 years' of continuous outstanding service in January this year, it was a huge moment for gratitude and reflection across our organisation. Thank you Craig, on behalf of the Board, for developing and nurturing the Link family. We wish you all the very best in your retirement.

Jon Turner, our new CEO, has hit the ground running, building on Craig's legacy, with that same social impact focus in his heart. Jon is working with the Board and his team to ensure we make the most of the incredible pool of talent which he has inherited.

Jon is also leading on the development of Link's strategic vision, within the context of our collective desire to deliver inclusive growth through the homes and support which we provide for the people who continue to matter most to us – our tenants and service users. As we begin this next chapter, it is great to see the organisation is in good hands.

In my second year as Chair of Link Group Ltd, it has been fantastic to see the organisation continue to thrive and deliver excellent, and in many cases award-winning, services to more than 15,000 people across Scotland.

I have been particularly pleased to see the organisation continue to put our people at the centre of everything we do – both within the staff team and across our wider tenant and customer group. We have had some great insights from engagement with our tenants and customers as we undertake our strategic services review. We shall ensure these conversations continue.

Of course, nothing stands still, especially with technology, and we have worked hard this year to embrace changes which further improve our service delivery and also our wider interactions with our tenants and service users.

I hope you enjoy reading this review of what has been another terrific year.

Ross Martin
Chair Link Group Ltd



WELCOME FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Firstly, welcome to our annual report for the year.

I joined Link in January 2019, and a key factor in making my decision to join the team was that the organisation has always held at its heart the welfare and quality of life of its customers and the communities in which it works. It is an amazing heritage and one we are hugely passionate about.

As a result, I am delighted to be able to present another fantastic year with outstanding levels of performance across the group.

High-quality engagement is central to everything we do. It is extremely important we continue to listen to our tenants, service users and staff. I firmly believe we can only truly succeed if we build our organisation with our customers to ensure they receive the services they want, when and how they need them.

During my first eight months as chief executive, I have been particularly impressed with the passion and enthusiasm our teams display for delivering quality services to our customers. The way society engages is changing rapidly and as we look into the future, we will continue to challenge ourselves to make sure we have effective communications channels for all our service users.

Pleasingly, the overall levels of performance across the organisation are also high and climbing. Re-letting times, for example, are at the lowest they have ever been. This is a great reflection of the way the housing and void teams have changed how they work, allowing us to help people access homes faster than ever before. At the same time, we have also delivered some of the highest customer satisfaction scores I've seen. Our repairs and maintenance services received a market-leading 98% customer satisfaction.

The quality of our tenants' homes continues to be a priority. This year alone we have spent more than £10 million in modernising our homes and that for me is hugely important because it shows we are committed to the communities in which we work. We have also delivered 146 new homes during the year; that's 146 families now in houses they didn't have at the beginning of the year.

Safety remains an absolute priority. We have put in place annual tenancy visits which mean we are able to speak to all our tenants and check homes are safe and secure. We have invested in ensuring gas boiler replacements and electrical checks are completed and monitored. In addition to this, our adaptations team has worked with 275 tenants to ensure their homes meet their needs.

The work we do to support and enrich the communities we operate in is similarly impressive. Our various community investment initiatives have benefited a wide variety of groups across a range of localities. I am also proud of the important work our Private Sector Leasing (PSL) service has delivered in housing homeless people across Edinburgh – including 350 Syrian refugees.

LinkLiving had another fantastic year supporting over 1,500 people. When considering the fantastic feedback received from the service users involved, you can see we are really improving people's lives.

Of course, there have been challenges throughout the year. Universal Credit is making people's lives very difficult. We're well placed to help and continue to develop our services to provide additional support. For example, this year alone, our advice and tenancy sustainment teams generated a total of £3 million in financial gains for tenants. We will continue to focus on how best to support people, as ultimately that is why we are all here.

To close, it's been another strong year and I think we're in a fantastic place to make an even bigger difference moving forward. I am delighted to have been able to join the group and I look forward to working with all my colleagues as we work to improve the lives of those who need it most.

Jon Turner
Link Group Chief Executive



MISSION STATEMENT

We strive to be a provider of choice and excellence in the delivery of a wide range of socially inclusive regeneration, housing and support services.

This is underpinned by our mission statement, which in turn guides our strategic objectives and the structure of this annual review:

PROVIDING HOMES

We are committed to ensuring our homes are well-maintained, safe, efficient to heat and adaptable as people's needs change.

We also seek opportunities to build high-quality and affordable homes in a variety of tenure options.



BUILDING COMMUNITIES

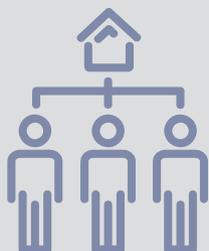
We aim to work with people to improve their communities and support social enterprises through our purchasing choices.

We also provide help to organisations that share our social enterprise principles.

VALUING PEOPLE

We aim to find out what our customers want and use these insights to drive service improvements.

We also support and encourage our employees, volunteers and board members to reach their potential.



WORKING TOGETHER

We aim to use our networks to learn from and influence others and use our knowledge and experience to maximise impact.

QUALITY, SUSTAINABLE HOMES

This year alone, we have spent more than £10 million in modernising our homes.



During 2018/19, Link Property completed the replacement of:

244 KITCHENS
247 BATHROOMS

To comply with Scottish Government standards, Larkfield carried out:

96 GAS CENTRAL HEATING REPLACEMENTS
13 ELECTRICAL CHECKS



West Highland received

OVER £800,000

from the Scottish Government to deliver a low-carbon heating solution **for more than 150 homes in Taynuilt and Oban.**



PROVIDING HOMES

SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO LIVE IN THEIR HOMES

A total of **275** adaptations were completed in 2018/19.

Link delivers adaptations using a one-stop-shop model in which its Inclusive Design team engages directly with tenants. The adaptation is then designed to meet their needs and Link Property carries out the work. This approach has cut adaptation waiting time by seven days.

Link Property's stage three adaptations team completed **60 major installations** during its first year of operation.

87.8% of all adaptations were completed within the target timescale.

Horizon completed **56 stage three adaptations** this year – 92% of which were completed within 12 weeks of approval.



PROVIDING HOMES

DELIVERING NEW HOMES



During 2018/19, we **completed 146 new homes** across seven sites.



12 sites were acquired during the year, which will deliver **954 new homes**, while a further four sites containing **190 homes were primed to begin construction**.

	Social rent	New Supply Shared Equity	Total
Total homes completed	134	12	146



	Social rent	Mid market rent	New Supply Shared Equity	Total
Total homes under construction	627	556	72	1,255

At the end of March 2019, **1,255 new homes** were under construction across 11 sites – an increase of **34%** from the previous year.



PROVIDING HOMES

SCOTLAND-WIDE IMPACT

Link is also developing several large-scale regeneration projects, which have achieved significant milestones:

DUNBEG, OBAN, PHASE 3

Started on site in November 2018 and will deliver **300 new homes** by March 2021.

DALMARNOCK, GLASGOW

Started on site in May 2018 and will deliver **128 affordable** and **89 private sale homes** by March 2021. The entire project will deliver **562 homes** over the next six years.

RAVENSCRAIG, INVERCLYDE

We have completed a masterplan for **198 homes** over two phases and attained planning approval in March 2019.

UPPER ACHINTORE, FORT WILLIAM

We completed another significant masterplan for the delivery of **319 homes** over the next four years and submitted planning applications in February 2019.



Link's Commercial Services team **helped 3,946 customers purchase new homes** throughout the year.

To meet housing need in Argyll and Bute, West Highland agreed to develop **14 family homes** (six for affordable rent and eight for sale) for completion in 2020.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES

LOCAL IMPACT

During summer 2018, the Link Tour visited our communities. **150 tenants attended to discuss important local issues** and meet their neighbours.

In August 2018, West Highland held its annual **Brew, Burger and Blether event**. This gave tenants the opportunity to meet and provide feedback on services.

West Highland was delighted to **support a local community group** in Port Appin to develop an outdoor community facility.

In December 2018, Horizon held a **Big Blether tenant conference** to gather valuable feedback on repairs, maintenance and its rent setting policies.

It also **donated £2,500** to New Start Oban to provide starter packs for people moving into housing.

It also held **six Tea in the Car Park events** to engage with tenants.



BUILDING COMMUNITIES

SERVING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

During 2018/19, Lintel Trust worked with voluntary organisations and local communities throughout Scotland. Key achievements included:



£16,313 OF FUNDING

was delivered to 14 projects.

£130,000 OF FUNDING

was distributed between 13 projects as part of the Community Benefit Fund (on behalf of the Scottish Procurement Alliance).



EXTENDED SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

signed to continue managing the Community Benefit Fund until 2022.

RAISED £5,518

by holding a charity golf tournament.



BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Link continues to work with community groups and this year:

- We supported Kirkshaws Neighbourhoods' Centre to utilise the Community Land Fund to purchase the building they rented from the local authority for over 18 years
- We also supported the procurement of a design team, who are now working with Kirkshaws to refurbish the building to a high standard
- We worked with North Lanarkshire Council and Petersburn Development Trust to hold a participatory budgeting event for the Petersburn and Craigneuk communities in Airdrie



In September 2018, LinkLiving and its clan of tartan-clad walkers took to the streets of Edinburgh to conquer the Kiltwalk, **raising more than £2,000 to help improve the lives of those most vulnerable and isolated in the community.**

During summer 2018, LinkLiving delivered its **fourth social café in Fife**, bringing older people affected by social isolation together.



VALUING OUR TEAM



**THERE ARE 635 STAFF WORKING
ACROSS THE GROUP**

Link ranked

**25TH IN THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
DIVERSITY'S UK TOP 100 INDEX 2019**



We were reaccredited as

HEALTHY WORKING LIVES GOLD

Link Property's first three apprentices successfully completed their apprenticeships and are now working as

**FULLY QUALIFIED PLUMBERS,
ELECTRICIANS AND PAINTERS**



VALUING OUR CUSTOMERS

Link's Advice Services team worked with tenants to provide guidance on benefits and money matters. During the year, they gained accreditation to Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers and achieved:

2,155

£2.7M

£19K

INTERVENTIONS

OF BENEFIT GAIN FOR TENANTS

OF BACK-DATED BENEFIT FUNDS SECURED



Horizon's tenancy sustainment service **supported 151 tenants with issues** such as welfare benefits checks, budgeting and assistance to claim grants.



ADVICE AND SUPPORT PROVIDED BY HORIZON RESULTED IN A TOTAL FINANCIAL GAIN OF £210,975 FOR THOSE USING THE SERVICE.



VALUING PEOPLE

SUPPORTING OUR CUSTOMERS

Link's tenant participation team works with and **supports 13 registered tenant organisations.**

Link, Larkfield and Horizon worked together and with tenants throughout the year to review some key policies. Highlights included:

More than **800 tenants participated in Link's lettings policy consultation** in October and November 2018.

More than **300 tenants took part in Link's anti-social behaviour consultation** between April and May 2018.

During 2018/19, **Link's PSL team procured 100 new properties for families** in Edinburgh. It also completed **675 new tenancies** and **8,848 tenancy engagements.**

LinkLiving supported 1,563 people to gain better outcomes in life.

LinkLiving's housing support and care at home services in Edinburgh and Fife grew significantly over 2018/19 and provided **2,160 hours of high-quality support per week.**

Edinburgh Young Persons' Visiting Support (EYPVS) service exceeded its target outcomes, with **94% of young people (against a target of 70%) remaining settled in their accommodation** when their support with EYPVS came to an end.

The service was also **awarded grade sixes (excellent) from the Care Inspectorate** for the second inspection in a row.

VALUING OUR CUSTOMERS

The Supporting Our Young Adults (SOYA) service delivered trauma-informed **support to 10 young people** with a history in care.

Funding to deliver a Help to Stay at Home service was awarded by Fife Health and Social Care Partnership.

This service aims to reduce isolation and loneliness for vulnerable older people living at home.

LinkLiving's recognised expertise in providing support to people over 16 who have been affected by childhood trauma was acknowledged through additional **funding for its trauma support service**, Better Than Well. This service is funded by the Scottish Government and Fife Health and Social Care Partnership.

LinkLiving's personal development programme, Steps to Resilience extended its provision from 16 to 25-year olds to work with 14 and 15-year olds who are not attending school due to mental health issues.

The first pilot programme successfully **supported young people back into school**.



VALUING PEOPLE

PROVIDING VALUABLE ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Link's digital participation efforts generated several benefits for our tenants and customers.

21 PEOPLE GAINED ACCESS
to a low-cost WiFi voucher at our West Bridge Mill facility in Kirkcaldy.

89 PEOPLE COMPLETED
the Basic ICT City & Guilds qualification in 2018/19.

52 HOUSEHOLDS GAINED ACCESS
to low-cost, high speed internet.

90 TENANTS GAINED ACCESS
to a laptop through our Laptop Loan scheme.



LINK HOUSING, LARKFIELD AND HORIZON WORKED WITH THEIR TENANTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR TO DEVELOP CUSTOMER SELF-SERVICE APPS WHICH LAUNCHED IN JULY 2019.

TENANT SATISFACTION LEVELS

Link recorded another successful year for tenant satisfaction. Key statistics included:

- **89.44%** of tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided
- **97.62%** of tenants are satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in decision making
- **87.9%** of tenants are satisfied with the management of their neighbourhood
- **99%** of tenants who received a service from Link Property were satisfied
- **100%** of tenants who received an adaptation from Link's Inclusive Design team were satisfied with the service

West Highland surveyed a sample of tenants and reported:

- **89.3%** of tenants are satisfied with the overall service delivered
- **96.7%** of tenants think West Highland was good at keeping them informed
- **88.1%** of tenants think West Highland provided good value for money
- **95.7%** of tenants are satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service

During 2018/19, Horizon saw a rise in tenant satisfaction levels across its services:

- Overall satisfaction rates rose to **98%**
- **99%** of tenants are satisfied with planned maintenance works
- Repairs satisfaction increased to **86%**
- Quality of homes satisfaction grew to **92%**

Larkfield recorded another successful year for tenant satisfaction. Key statistics included:

- **95%** of tenants are satisfied with their overall repairs and maintenance service
- **96%** of tenants are satisfied with the quality of their home
- Overall satisfaction with Larkfield as a landlord was at **95%**
- **97%** of tenants reported Larkfield was good at keeping tenants involved
- **100%** of tenants agree Larkfield provided opportunities to participate
- **85%** of tenants reported their rent and service charges provided good value for money
- **99%** of tenants are satisfied with the management of their neighbourhood

WORKING TOGETHER

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

At the end of 2018/19, there were 11 Link projects delivering community benefits on site.

Link's Community Benefit team worked with various contractors to deliver:

86 WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS

46 NEW JOBS

42 CURRICULUM SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

39 TRAINING PLANS

2,018 TRAINING WEEKS



SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES ACROSS SCOTLAND

We worked in partnership with Developing the Young Workforce Glasgow and became the Education Business Partner of St Mungo's Academy in Glasgow.

This has resulted in the delivery of over 100 hours of supported programme activity, including on-site delivery of technical lessons, resulting in four young people gaining employment with McTaggart and sub-contractors.

West Highland worked with Mull and Iona Community Trust to support the development of two local properties in Ulva.

As part of its ongoing partnership with hospital discharge staff from the Voice of Experience forum, Horizon's Care and Repair North Lanarkshire service facilitated 45 hospital discharges.



Horizon's Residents' Improvement Group was a finalist in the CIH Scotland Excellence in Scrutiny Awards 2018.

Horizon worked in partnership with consultants North Star and the CIH to publish Still Minding the Step, a report outlining housing need among wheelchair users in Scotland.

In partnership with Link, Larkfield held a Christmas party for the residents of Link's Juno Terrace development. The event gave residents the chance to meet their neighbours and find out more about the services available.

WORKING TOGETHER

SUPPORTING LOCAL INITIATIVES

To ensure its tenants had access to a range of tenancy support services, Larkfield continued to fund and support the following projects:

FINANCIAL FITNESS

providing benefits, budgeting and money advice.



INVERCLYDE STARTER PACKS

supporting new tenancies.

TENANCY SUPPORT SERVICE

delivering one-to-one support packages for tenants who are struggling to sustain their tenancy.



ENERGY ACTIVATORS

providing energy advice and upcycling services through community workshops.

FUTURE SKILLS

promoting digital inclusion and household budgeting.



ستصدر Link هذه المعلومات عند الطلب بطريقة برايل وشريط صوتي وطباعة عريضة ولغات الأقليات. لمعرفة المزيد يرجى الاتصال بالرقم 0330 303 0124.

Link এই তথ্যাবলীকে অনুবোধক্রমে ব্রেইল, অডিও টেপ, বড় হবফের মুদ্রন ও কমিউনিটির ভাষাগুলিতে প্রস্তুত করে থাকে। আরো জানার জন্য অনুগ্রহ করে, 0330 303 0124 নম্বরে কল করুন।

Link 将以盲文、录音磁带、大号字体和社区语言的要求提供此信息。欲了解更多详情，请致电 0330 303 0124。

Na żądanie, Link może udostępnić niniejsze informacje w wersji pisanej alfabetem Braille'a, na taśmie magnetofonowej, w formie dużego druku oraz w językach używanych przez mieszkańców społeczności. Aby uzyskać więcej informacji, prosimy zadzwonić pod numer 0330 303 0124.

ਬਨਤੀ ਕਰਨ 'ਤੇ Link ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਬ੍ਰੇਲ, ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0330 303 0124 'ਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਕਰੋ।

درخواست کرنے پر Link ان معلومات کو بریل، آڈیو ٹیپ، بڑے پرنٹ اور کمیونٹی کی زبانوں میں فراہم کرے گا۔ مزید جاننے کے لیے برائے مہربانی 0330 303 0124 پر کال کریں۔

Link will produce this information on request in Braille, Audio Tape, Large Print and Community Languages. To find out more, telephone us on **0330 303 0124**.



LINKGROUP