



USING OUR RESOURCES MORE EFFECTIVELY
THE JRHT VALUE FOR MONEY REPORT

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It's not easy providing high-quality, affordable housing and high-quality care. We want to keep rents low, pay our staff a living wage and make our housing and the services we provide a good example for others to follow.

Because money and resources will never be limitless, we have to be smarter, more efficient and more effective. We have to give great value

for money in everything we do.

So we've taken a close look at how we work and what we can do better. We've put together a long report called the JRHT Value For Money Self Assessment 2015. This booklet is a shorter version that explains what we've done – and are still doing – to improve value for money and the quality of all our services.

“ We aim to make the best use of the resources available to us and gain maximum impact from our role as a community service provider, research funder and national influencer. ”

Changing lives for the better

Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust is a registered housing association and care provider in York and north-east England, working to inspire social change. We were set up more than 100 years ago by Joseph Rowntree to provide affordable, high-quality housing alongside the work of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, which tries to get to the root causes of poverty and come up with solutions. Our aim is a prosperous, poverty-free UK.

We work with individuals and communities, and private, public and voluntary organisations to develop new ways of providing services that give communities more choice and more chances in life.

CREATING REAL COMMUNITIES

- We own and manage 2,454 homes – 1,490 let at social rents for all ages, 602 low-cost home ownership or leasehold schemes for the elderly and 362 made up of care homes and extra care.
- Of the 2,454 properties, 879 homes are for older people, along with independent living accommodation for people with learning disabilities.
- Our 24-hour care service employs 643 people – 75 per cent of our total staff.
- We own 14 shops, two farms, Little Rowans pre-school, the Folk Hall, sports fields, allotments, a nature reserve and New Earswick swimming pool.
- In 2015, we spent £636,000 on community grants and projects – up from £594,000 in 2014.

Our purpose is to realise our vision of a prosperous, poverty-free UK

TO SEARCH

Investigating the root causes of poverty and disadvantage, understanding the experience of people and places in poverty, and identifying and developing solutions.

TO DEMONSTRATE

Taking the evidence from research and experience, and using it to deliver high-quality services in mixed neighbourhoods, developing innovative models of service provision and pioneering new forms of developments.

TO INFLUENCE

Using the evidence gained from research and the experience of developing and providing services to influence positive, lasting social change.

And apply this to our strategic aims

INDIVIDUALS AND RELATIONSHIPS

- How individual and collective actions can prevent or reduce poverty;
- The role of relationships in reducing poverty in communities;
- Empower communities to be rich in positive relationships.

WORK AND WORTH

- Employers recognising the business and social case for better pay and jobs;
- Reduced debt and increased employment, education and training among JRHT residents;
- Public policy based on our evidence about future and nature of work, and the value of contributions beyond paid work.

PLACES WHERE PEOPLE LIVE

- A vibrant, strong, healthy and poverty-free New Earswick;
- More affordable, sustainable, high-quality housing;
- Economic growth that benefits people and places in poverty.

Themes that run through all our work
Digital Diversity Power Partnerships

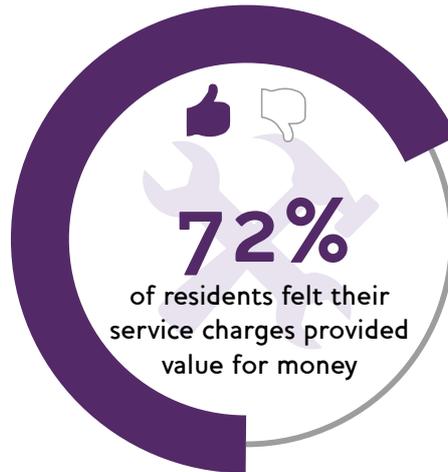
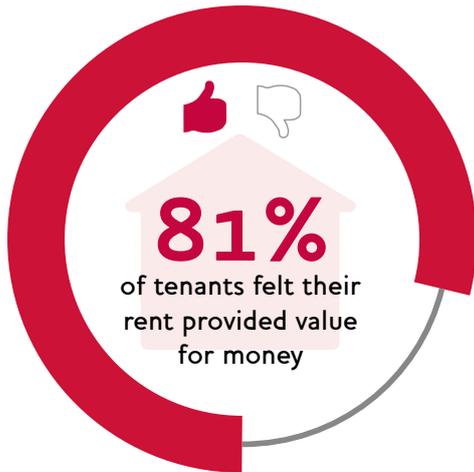
WHAT DOES VALUE FOR MONEY REALLY MEAN?

Value for money means using the money we have effectively, efficiently and wisely for the benefit of our residents. It means making the best use of our income, properties and equipment, and

giving our people the tools and training they need to work well.

In 2015, for example, 81 per cent of residents said their rents were value for money and 72 per cent said their service charges gave them value for money.

We're aiming to get those figures to at least 85 per cent and 80 per cent.



Source: STAR Survey

Providing the best for less

- **Economy** – careful use of resources to save expense, time or effort.
- **Efficiency** – providing services at a lower cost, in less time and with less effort.
- **Effectiveness** – delivering a better service or getting a better return for the same amount of expense, time or effort.

WHO KEEPS AN EYE ON VALUE FOR MONEY?

We think about value for money in everything we do. The JRHT board and trustees steer our work and the leadership team oversees development and improvement of services. But all our staff – and residents too – monitor costs and look for ways to improve services.

The Resident Scrutiny Panel carries out audits of our services and

recommends improvements to the JRHT board; residents at Hartrigg Oaks meet to monitor performance against budgets; and residents at our leasehold sheltered and extra care schemes review accounts and spending plans.

We regularly get feedback from residents in addition to the annual survey and residents don't hold back on revealing the problem areas. They

come up with lots of suggestions which we turn into real improvements.

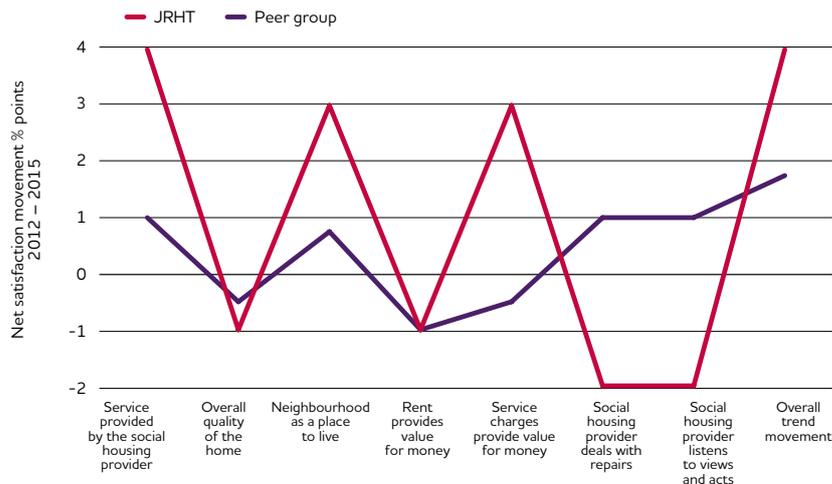
The VFM group and managers are working on more than 30 projects. Some are modest but some will lead to major changes for the better; bringing in more income or reducing costs to give us an extra £250,000 to spend on services. Some are already underway, and others are planned for this year and beyond.

HOW DO WE KNOW IF IT'S WORKING?

We compare ourselves to others to see where our performance, cost and quality are strong and where there's room for improvement. We use a range of reports and standards from other organisations as benchmarks to get an outside view of how we're doing.

Housemark, which is one of the benchmarks we use, shows that the cost of providing housing management services remains low, and our performance on repairs and re-lets is better than average. Unfortunately, 2015 hasn't been all good news. There's room for improvement in our arrears performance and in our customers' perception of the services we provide – despite all the work we've put into anti-poverty and getting residents involved.

Trend movements – residents' satisfaction 2012-2015



Source: Housemark

HERE'S HOW WE'RE GETTING BETTER

The following sections give you more information about how we're making improvements to give residents more value for money. Each section describes some of the work we've already done and our aims for the rest of the year and beyond.

A LANDLORD THAT CARES

Last year, we spent £2.47 million on improving homes. Many houses had new kitchens or bathrooms, and high-efficiency gas condensing boilers, double-glazed windows or wall insulation to keep residents warmer and cut energy bills. In 2014, we spent £3.1 million on improvements, and there's still £3.23 million in the pot for improvements over the next three years.

During 2016, we'll be completing changes to the way we do maintenance work by introducing multi-skilled teams. We're starting to monitor jobs completed first time and we've already seen an improvement – 88 per cent of

residents are now satisfied with the repairs service and 89 per cent are satisfied that the job was done right first time.

Our plans for 2016

- Improve homes to make them more attractive and comfortable, reduce costs and make them easier to keep warm;
- Support residents through benefits changes, while ensuring rents are paid;
- Speed up the programme of electrical safety to reduce call-outs;

- Complete at least 95 per cent of all jobs on time;
- Text residents to confirm repairs appointments;
- Help 100 households reduce their energy costs;
- Review the landscape maintenance service for our sites and ensure residents know what services they can expect;
- Review the information we give residents about the cost and quality of services;
- Ask residents about what services they want us to provide and where we could save money.

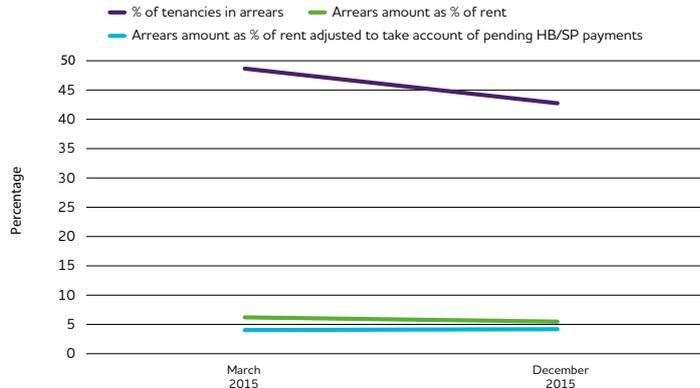
BENEFIT CHANGES AND PAYING THE RENT

Because we're an anti-poverty landlord, we do everything we can to help residents living on low incomes.

In 2015, changes to the benefits system started to affect our residents – arrears hit nearly six per cent of rent due, but income went up by just a fraction of a per cent. Lots of housing providers faced the same problem, but we seemed to feel the effects more strongly.

We set to work to offer more debt and finance advice, revise how we tackle serious rent arrears and monitor cases more tightly. We also streamlined our reminder processes for residents who can pay but won't.

By March this year, we'd managed to get arrears to below five per cent. We're now aiming to reduce arrears to three per cent, offering more support for residents, including our affordable credit scheme, which helps households to avoid loan sharks, get their budgets back under control and increase their disposable income.



A BUSINESS WITH HEART

JRHT has to operate as an effective business. We want to provide good services at a reasonable rent and be a good employer.

We're not just a landlord; we want to change things for the better. We provide excellent care that recognises everyone as an individual, we pay our staff the Living Wage, we support our residents and we create communities, not just houses. All of this adds to our costs compared to some other providers.

That's why it's so important that we make best use of our resources and assets and manage our finances in a way that's sustainable for the long-term.

We compare our financial performance to others and, when we're not up to scratch, we find out why so that we can improve.

In 2015, the overall amount we spent meant we didn't compare

as well as we'd like. But we can see where we spend more than others and that means we can look at how we could be more efficient.

For example, we've appointed one supplier for most materials for our repairs team to reduce costs and site storage; we've developed multi-skilled maintenance teams; we've reviewed our vehicles; and we've made many changes to modernise and streamline our repairs services.

We want to carry out more planned maintenance work, which should cut the need for ad hoc repairs and save us money. By 2017, our target is for emergency and urgent works to be less than 30 per cent of maintenance work, and for all other jobs to be completed as routine by appointment with the resident, or as planned maintenance.

Some of our plans for 2016

Set up a new contract for the 2017-2019 programme of property modernisation and improvement to reduce costs and increase community benefits.

- Save £75,000 on materials through the single-supplier maintenance contract and cut the cost of reactive repairs by three per cent;
- Look at how we use computers to help residents get access to services and to help staff in their work;
- Halve the number of vacancies in our residential care homes;
- Review and analyse what we're spending on repairs, especially where demand is unusually high;
- Use our access to better rates for those areas of the business which are reliant on loans;
- Give staff who manage budgets more control and more responsibility.

A THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOOD

By providing the buildings, the services and the support, we help people to create communities which are good to live in – neighbourhoods where people can meet and share ideas and where neither loneliness nor isolation exists.

At New Earswick, for example, we manage and maintain the Folk Hall, which has a café, social hall and meeting rooms for local groups and the parish council. We started refurbishing it in 2014, incorporating design features to make it dementia-friendly. Last year, we welcomed more than 40,000 visitors to the Folk Hall.

Our early years base at New Earswick provides pre-school places for 17 children and we made a £35,000 grant last year to New Earswick Primary School as a contribution to staffing resources as well as paying ten per cent into the school's repair and maintenance budget.

In fact, there's a long list of brilliant community projects – loaning iPads to help residents get online, allotments and community gardening, classes in everything from tai chi to singing and much more.

Last year, JRHT spent £636,000 on community-based projects. But how do you know if that's money well spent? Hard as it seems, we had to find a way to put a figure on 'social value' so that we could tell whether we were giving value for money or not. We use the Housing Association Charitable Trust social value calculator to help us do just that.

Here's just one example. We spent £147,000 on New Earswick swimming pool in 2015. It's used by a range of local groups, including the New Earswick disabled people's swimming group, Hartrigg Oaks and Red Lodge residents and the primary school. The pool is open for



78 hours a week and is used by more than 500 people. The measure we use showed a social value of £1.7 million.

Our plans for 2016

- Develop a community investment strategy so we can make sure our money and resources are used in the best ways;
- Gather more and better information on the social value of the projects we support, and use the social value calculator more effectively.

BUILDING NEW HOMES

How we design our new homes and who we work with to get them built is all about getting value for money. They have to be high-quality, affordable to rent, affordable to heat and easy to adapt for future needs.

We always look for the best possible price for the design we've specified and aim to share the risk and reward with the developer. We learn from each project so that we can do more of what works and less of what doesn't.

Derwenthorpe is a great example of how value is woven into everything we do. It's a joint scheme with David Wilson Homes to build more than 500 homes and it'll be completed by 2019. Sixty per cent of the homes are for sale and 40 per cent will be owned and managed by JRHT. By early 2015, 97 households had already moved in. As well as being lovely homes in an attractive setting, they're designed to keep running costs down.



Our plans for 2016

- Plan and design 55 new homes at Derwenthorpe;
- Develop ideas for a possible “self-build” scheme;
- To progress New Lodge, our new-build extra-care scheme to be built in New Earswick.

A FAIR EMPLOYER

JRHT is an anti-poverty organisation, so it's natural that we want to pay our staff a wage they can live on. While that costs more money, the value we get is worth it. Paying at or above the Living Wage means we can recruit and keep better staff and bring more money into the local economy.

Last year, far fewer people left us but costs related to staff sickness are still higher than we would want. We already offer health screening, stress management, an employee assistance programme and a healthcare plan, but we need to do more to help our people stay well.

We're also making great progress in providing opportunities for people to start work for the first time. Last year, we had seven paid interns on longer contracts, employed 12 apprentices and offered six-month placements for black and minority ethnic graduates. All our interns, apprentices and PATH

trainees are paid at or above the Living Wage.

The real measure of success, of course, will be how many of these placements and new jobs lead to new permanent members of the team.

We started a management leadership programme last year and this will be even better in 2016, with all managers getting the chance to learn and improve their skills. Some of those who've already been through the programme are now working on innovative projects looking at how we can make the communities we manage more self-sustaining.

Our plans for 2016

- Monitor and manage staff attendance sensitively with the aim of reducing absence overall and supporting our staff to stay well;
- Review and promote our employee benefits package;
- Review performance so that we're always providing the best services;

- Start the next phase of the management leadership programme.

SO, HOW ARE WE DOING ON VALUE FOR MONEY?

We've made some progress on repairs, on supporting residents to make ends meet and on valuable social projects in our neighbourhoods, but some changes are taking longer than we'd like. We're determined to make residents happier with their services and improve our ratings in the annual resident survey.

It's a time of change and we're busy getting to grips with the areas of our work that aren't performing as well as they could. Overall, though, we're confident we give good value for money – and we're committed to improving that further, for the benefit of all our residents.



If you'd like to see our full report JRHT Value For Money Self-Assessment 2015, please email information@jrht.org.uk or call customer services on 0800 587 0211. It's also available to download from www.jrht.org.uk