

Annual report 2022-23

irwell
valley
homes

50
irwell
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homes

Celebrating 50
years of enabling
people to live well
in their homes and
communities.



Our history 1973-2023

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50 years of Irwell Valley Homes



This year we celebrate our 50th birthday and it has been wonderful to mark this special milestone with customers in our communities over the last few months. Half a century on from when we formed, lots of things have changed but our core purpose is still the same – to enable people to live well in their homes and communities.

In 2022 we launched our Living Well plan, centred around delivering four priorities:

- To provide good quality homes and services.
- To make a difference in the communities we serve.
- To deliver more affordable homes.
- To support our colleagues to enjoy work, learn and grow.

Listening to and acting on customer feedback and experience ensures people are still at the heart of what we do – from the families who moved into our first nine homes in 1973, to the 20,000 customers across Greater Manchester who now call one of our properties their home.

Thank you for being a valued partner in our work. We know that by working together, we can achieve more. If you'd like to talk further about our shared priorities, please get in touch -

we'd love to hear from you.

Kind regards,
Sasha Deepwell, Chief Executive



Find out how
we've performed
against our Living
Well Plan this
year from **page 6**
onwards.



Playing a part in Irwell Valley Homes' story

It's been an exciting time to be involved with Irwell Valley Homes as the organisation celebrates 50 years in business. I've been lucky enough to be able to attend some of the birthday events. Meeting customers in their community and hearing that they feel supported and safe in their homes, makes me feel proud to be involved.

I was eager to join Irwell Valley Homes' Resident Scrutiny Panel as I saw it was a genuine opportunity to work with other customers within a group with real influence - ensuring customers receive good homes and services. Allowing staff and customers to work in partnership gives customers a real opportunity to influence decisions that affect them. It also helps that every member of staff we meet is genuinely interested and invested in ensuring this happens.

Christie Finegan, Chair of Resident Scrutiny Panel and resident board member.

This year has been challenging for the organisation and the housing sector, given the volatility and pace of change in our operating environment.

I am proud we have maintained a high level of service to our customers and made significant progress in delivering our corporate plan which is focused on enabling people to live well in their homes and communities.

This is the same mission we formed with back in May 1973 with just a handful of homes in Salford. Over the years we have remained true to our social purpose whilst diversifying to offer new tenures and types – from supported housing and independent living to shared ownership and rent to buy opportunities. This annual report shows us to be in a strong position to continue building on this legacy as we look ahead to the next 50 years of Irwell Valley Homes, and beyond.

Niki Stockton,
Chair of the Board.

Our journey from 1973 to 2023

Our timeline charts some of the key milestones which have brought Irwell Valley Homes to where we are today.

1970s

9th May 1973

Family Housing Association (Salford) is formed with just nine homes.



1979

Irwell Valley Housing Association is born.

1980s

1980

Irwell Valley Housing Association now has more than 1,000 homes across Salford, Bolton and Bury.



1981

The first Resident Involvement Panel is launched. By 1992, the organisation has more than 500 members.

1987

Irwell Valley Housing Association wins a Shelter award for its work tackling homelessness.



1989

The association enters the digital age with the introduction of an integrated computer system and a quarterly tenants' newsletter is launched.



1991

By now the association has 3,000 homes across Greater Manchester, housing around 300 new tenants a year.

1990s

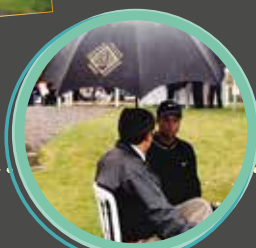
1995

The first Shared Ownership scheme is launched, with 20 two and three-bedroom homes in Farnworth, Bolton.

Work begins on Greenbank, our supported housing scheme for homeless young people in Trafford.

1985

Irwell Valley Housing Association takes over the management of the New Urban Housing Association – homes include Seymour Court in Stockport and Alderfield House in Chorlton, both independent living schemes. In 1990 the homes of New Urban are officially transferred to Irwell Valley Housing Association.



Tenants to vote out the council



1999

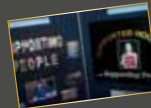
Residents of the Sale West estate in Trafford vote 'yes' on a postal ballot for Irwell Valley Housing Association to take over 1,630 homes from Manchester City Council.



2000s

2000

The Sale West estate is taken over and a three-year, £25m programme of work to improve and regenerate the homes and estate is launched.

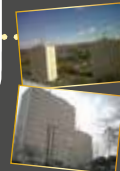


2003

Shore Green, supported housing for those with dementia, is opened by Princess Michael of Kent. The same year Queensberry Place in Bury is opened offering accommodation for young people with additional needs.

2005

Around 900 homes in Haughton Green are transferred from Manchester City Council, including the three iconic high-rise blocks.



2010

The Resident Scrutiny Panel – which feeds into the Board of Management – is formed, giving tenants a voice at the highest level of the organisation.

2019

The refurbishment and refit of two 3-storey properties in Greater Clowes Street creates the Moving on Up Project – a supported housing project for those with autism and ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder).



2020

A 5-year development strategy is approved, and the Sale West regeneration is launched.



2021

Irwell Valley Homes becomes an early adopter of the Together with Tenants Charter – a sector-wide initiative focused on strengthening the relationship between residents and housing association landlords.



2023

Irwell Valley Homes celebrates its 50th birthday.



Putting people at the heart of what we do

Our customers and the communities where they live have remained at the heart of Irwell Valley Homes over the last 50 years.

Today we are still focused on driving up the quality of our homes and services, delivering more affordable homes, and making a difference in the communities we serve.

Working together with customers

Working with over 3,300 customers, we created standards we are accountable for in relation to four key areas.

These set out our offer around:

- Looking after our homes.
- Keeping customers informed.
- Listening and responding to customers.
- Getting in touch and accessing services.

We report on our performance against these four standards every three months on our website. This annual report provides a summary of how we've performed overall this year as we've delivered our Living Well plan.



New consumer standards

The Regulator of Social Housing, our industry watchdog, is introducing new consumer standards which customers and the government can use to track and check our performance.

The standards haven't been fully finalised yet, but the draft proposals cover four key areas – safety and quality; transparency, influence and accountability; neighbourhood and community and tenancy.

We've worked with our Customer Offer Panel and our Resident Scrutiny Panel to get their feedback on the new standards. A big thank you to those customers who gave their time and views to help shape our response.

As part of the new standard there will be a new way for customers to rate the landlord services they receive. The new Tenant Satisfaction Measures cover a wide range of services, and all housing associations will have to seek tenants' views and publish their results. Going forward, the results of these surveys will allow customers and stakeholders to compare our performance with other social landlords to see where we are doing well, and where we need to improve.

We'll be sharing more information about the consumer standards and the TSMs (*Tenant Satisfaction Measures*) on our website once the detail is confirmed, so visit www.irwellvalley.co.uk for the latest updates.


Our impact last year...

- We spent **£12.1m** repairing and maintaining our homes. 
- Our rent was on average **41%** cheaper than the market rate. 
- **483** new customers moved into one of our homes, **213** of these were previously homeless. 
- We built **72** new homes and started building another **22** to meet the growing demand. 
- We provided supported housing to **319** people with additional needs and supported **457** older people to live independently in their community. 
- We invested **£7.7m** improving our homes. 
- We investigated **381** cases of anti-social behaviour. 
- We supported customers to access **£168,859** in extra income and created our own Cost of Living Support Fund which issued **£18,000** in vouchers to help with living costs. 
- **2,322** customers completed surveys giving us valuable feedback to act on. 
- **281** customers engaged with us to help us improve our services, including reviewing our policies and taking part in one of our customer groups. 
- We received **905** compliments  and **547** complaints. 
- We worked with **84** voluntary and community groups to support our communities. 
- We had the highest grading for governance (**G1**) from our regulator, proving that we are a well-managed organisation. 
- We collected **£35.7m** in rent and service charges. 
- For every **£1** of rent and service charges here's how it was spent: 
 - **34p** Repairing and maintaining homes
 - **13p** Neighbourhood management
 - **19p** Finance and loan repayments
 - **18p** Depreciation*
 - **9p** Service costs (*e.g. maintenance of communal areas; grounds work, cleaning*)
 - **7p** Future investment

* Depreciation is the reduction in the value of our assets over time as they get older or as wear and tear occurs.



Providing affordable, safe and good quality homes and services



"The engineer was on time, friendly and efficient." Miss Roberts, Bury customer.

Everyone deserves a safe and decent place to call home, at a rent they can afford.

Last year our teams continued to work hard to provide this for our tenants across Greater Manchester.

During 2022-23 we...

- Carried out **21,812** repairs, with **87%** fixed on the first attempt.



- Spent **£7.7m** on improvements to our homes, including new kitchens, bathrooms, doors, windows, roofs and heating systems.



- Worked with an independent company to review the condition of **2,800** homes, helping us to understand where to prioritise future improvement work.



We invested £450,000 improving fire safety, including new fire doors and compartmentation work. We also fitted new smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.



We continued with our multi-million-pound regeneration of the Sale West estate in Trafford where we handed over the first new homes for social rent, continued to improve existing homes with new roofs, kitchens and fencing, and carried out wider improvements to the estate with new play areas, footpaths, parking and more.

💬 *It's a very nice kitchen - so much better than the last one. Everyone involved was really good.* 💬

Mrs Jones, customer in Trafford.

Knowing our customers and communities

This year we also took steps to get to know our customers and communities better so we can understand and respond to their needs more effectively - including the support they need in the challenging economic climate.

Listening to our customers and using their feedback to help us improve and shape our services going forward also remained a top priority.

During 2022-23 we...

- Conducted a 'customer census' during which **1,945** customers updated information about their personal circumstances. 
- Supported customers to access **£168,859** in additional income. 
- Launched local Community Newsletters and an accessibility tool on our website to make information more inclusive. 
- Completed training of our Resident Scrutiny Panel and appointed a new chair. The panel has reviewed the cleaning and grounds maintenance services and the communications we send out about service charges. 
- Launched a Building Safety Forum, encouraging customers who live in our high-rise buildings to share their experiences to help us manage their buildings safely. 
- Involved customers in the tender process for a new cleaning contractor. 
- Scored on average **4.2 out of 5** in surveys completed by **2,332** customers about one of our services. 





Making a difference in the communities we serve

We are committed to supporting the communities we serve.

This year we set up two new partnerships with charity Emmaus, giving customers priority access to low-cost furniture and emergency furniture bundles, and launched a cost-of-living support fund issuing vouchers to help with energy, food and other household costs.

The Oasis, our Community Resource Centre in Tameside, hosted **5,600** visits, with customers accessing support with everything from benefits and employment to mental health and addiction.

Irwell Valley Homes colleagues also gave their time to volunteer **616** hours, supporting **84** community groups and charities doing great work within our neighbourhoods.



"The laptop has made a huge difference to my studies - I am able to work from home, meet deadlines easily and bring my equipment into uni. Thank you so much for helping towards a better future for me and my son!"

Kerry, who received funding from the Irwell Valley Foundation for a laptop.

"The HITZ programme helped me believe in myself – it was definitely a turning point."

Jayden, who received funding from the Irwell Valley Foundation to take part in the HITZ employability course which helped him secure an apprenticeship.



scan me

WATCH.

Visit www.irwellvalley.co.uk/our-foundation/about-us/ to hear from customers and community groups about the difference funding from the Irwell Valley Foundation has made.

During 2022/23 we...

- Issued **£18,000** to customers through our support fund, helping with the cost of food, energy and household costs. 
- Contributed towards the running costs of **10** warm hubs across Greater Manchester. 
- Funded Citizens Advice sessions in our neighbourhoods, helping people to access specialist support and unlock extra income. 
- Prepared **1,500** home-cooked ready meals for delivery to vulnerable customers, thanks to funding from Our Sale West. 
- Served up **2,785** free school meals and **900** children's breakfasts at our community café, using funding from Our Sale West. 
- Supported **22** food poverty projects across our communities. 
- Supported **1,831** residents towards work. 
- Helped **255** residents develop in existing roles or find new employment. 
- Hosted **38** work experience placements in the Sunshine Café. 
- Supported **24** apprenticeships. 
- Awarded **£16,835** in grants from the Irwell Valley Foundation to customers living in our homes. 
- Issued **£41,181** in grants to groups and charities working within the communities where we have homes. 
- Became a principal partner in Greater Manchester Poverty Action, playing our part in tackling poverty across the region. 
- Distributed **500** winter wellness packs for older customers over the colder months. 





Providing more affordable homes



Everything is different now; our lives have changed so much.

Mum Sophie had been living in temporary accommodation with her young daughter for eight months before moving into one of our new homes for affordable rent in Bury.

She said having a new home of their own had 'changed everything' and the difference in her three-year-old daughter Lilly-Rose had been 'amazing'.

"Since we moved here, she's flourished," Sophie said.

"She's come on so much in so many ways – her confidence, her language. Everything is different now; our lives have changed so much."

New homes at Morris Street...

- 16 two and three-bedroom homes let at affordable rent – 80% of the market rate for the area.



- 9 homes for shared ownership, giving people their first step onto the property ladder.



- Green features including air source heat pumps, mechanical ventilation, solar panels and electric vehicle charging points to benefit the environment and help customers with energy bills.



We're committed to building 734 new affordable homes, including homes for those with dementia, adults with additional needs and accessible ready homes, over the next seven years.

We know there is a real lack of available affordable homes, so we are committed to delivering more to meet the growing demand.

This year we completed 16 new homes at Morris Street in Bury - providing two and three bedroom homes for affordable rent which is 20% cheaper than the market rent.

On the Sale West estate in Trafford, we completed the first 46 new homes for social rent – with many being let to existing customers who had outgrown their home and needed something more suitable for their needs.

Overall, this year we invested £8.3m building new homes and were successful in attracting more than £3m in grant funding.





Supporting
colleagues to
enjoy work,
learn and grow

Good, stable employment is key to living well.

That's why this year we have continued to support people to be their best, in a role that is fulfilling and rewarding, whilst ensuring we retained talented people who can serve our customers in the way they need.





Despite the increased costs we are facing, we recognised the pressures our colleagues are also dealing with around rising household bills. Everyone received a pay increase, with the package weighted to benefit the majority of colleagues the most.

"I feel valued as an independent person at work and all the barriers have been removed to allow me to do my job."

Kieran, who is registered blind and works as a Customer Services Advisor.



During 2022-23 we...

- Paid all colleagues the real living wage, with **82%** of colleagues living within Greater Manchester. 
- Achieved the **Silver Accreditation** in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS), recognising our commitment to Armed Service Veterans and Reservists. 
- Supported apprenticeship and training opportunities across the business. 
- Provided financial education for colleagues and promoted our colleague hardship fund. 

"I've enjoyed the step up from being an apprentice to now making my own decisions and having more responsibility. I feel like I've grown as a person."

Josh, a former apprentice who is now working as a gas engineer.



Celebrating our 50th birthday with our customers

Here's a round-up of just some of the special events we've celebrated with customers in our communities across Greater Manchester.

Aloha sunshine! Hawaiian-themed bash went with a bang

Despite the heavy rain in July, we were incredibly lucky to welcome sunshine and clear skies to our 50th birthday celebration at the Moving On Up Project in Salford.

The team there did an amazing job transporting customers to a tiki-themed party featuring tropical mocktails, a bouncy castle, limbo challenge, barbecue and DJ.

It was fantastic to see the young people who live there enjoying the celebration and really getting into the spirit of the occasion.

Tolu Oguntimehin, who manages the scheme for young people with autism and ADHD, said:

"It wasn't quite Waikiki beach weather but luck was certainly on our side after all the rain, and it was brilliant being able to enjoy the activities outside in the sunshine."

"There's a fantastic community here at MOUP and it was wonderful to see everyone coming together to celebrate 50 years of Irwell Valley Homes and having a great time."



A new home for Endeavor and their valuable work

We're proud to have signed a new lease with Bolton charity Endeavor, giving them a new base in the heart of one of our neighbourhoods.

In our 50th birthday year, we're delighted to be continuing our legacy of supporting organisations which really make a difference in the communities we serve.

The charity, which supports people affected by domestic abuse and their pets, will lease the premises in Great Lever from us at a peppercorn rent.

The Calvert Road premises will become the Endeavor Together Hub which will enable them to expand their counselling service and increase the group work they offer around empowerment, confidence building and coping mechanisms.

Jill Caldwell, Chief Executive of Endeavor, said:
"Bolton is a broad and beautifully diverse community, and we hope to develop the Together Hub to have something to offer for everyone."

"Having a base within the heart of the community gives us and other agencies the chance to develop new services as we believe collaborative working brings about the best outcomes and opportunities for everyone."

Beverley Oliver, our commercial property manager, said: *"For 50 years we've worked in partnership with local groups and charities because we know that together, we can have a greater impact. The work of Endeavor is so important and we're delighted to be playing a small part in what they are working to achieve."*





Double reason to celebrate at community play date!

There was double reason to celebrate in Sale West this spring, when we organised a community play date to mark our special birthday and officially opened the new natural play areas.

Ice creams were licked and the sun shone as we officially cut the ribbon on the largest play area on Chepstow Avenue.

It is one of four new spaces created across the estate using funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and has lots of great features with a focus on developing balance and encouraging creative play.

Residents enjoyed cricket demos, a limbo challenge and a target throwing game, as well as free ice creams, balloons and bubbles. The celebrations continued later at one of the new play areas on Hurst Avenue.

Sasha Deepwell, our chief executive, said: *"It was wonderful to see customers enjoying these new play areas."*

"Throughout our consultation on the regeneration, we've heard how important play areas are to residents, so we're delighted to have delivered them in our 50th year as part of a host of other improvements and enhancements to the estate."

Thank you to all the families who came along to celebrate with us, thanks also to the leader of Trafford Council, Councillor Tom Ross, and Manor ward councillors Rob Duncan and Rupali Paul for joining us."



Playing our part in Broomwood partnership

We were proud to be invited to join others in the Broomwood Partnership to work on their Environmental Day this spring.

Colleagues worked with other local groups to give the woods and play area a little TLC.

They laid new woodchip paths; cleared litter and removed low branches from trees – returning these community assets to their former glory.

We were delighted to join in and help make a difference during our 50th birthday year. We are a long-standing supporter of the partnership, in particular the G-Force café – which is based in one of our properties and is a valuable hub for local people.





Team effort delivers a Rockbank revamp!

Colleagues from our trades team came together for a 50th birthday volunteering day giving the outside space at one of our Salford blocks a revamp.

Plumbers, plasterers, joiners and electricians all mucked in and made a difference at Rockbank in Lower Broughton.

As well as clearing, trimming and jet-washing the outside spaces, two new areas were created using funds from the Irwell Valley Foundation.

One resident applied for a grant from the 50th birthday funding pot and our teams volunteered their time to get the work done.

It includes new planters and decorative gravel outside the front of the building to give a welcoming first impression, as well as a new bench and flowerpots near to the laundry room – giving customers somewhere pleasant to sit and wait for their washing.

Residents were invited to see the finished results and enjoy a slice of birthday cake with our colleagues.

Homes Team Manager Rachel Heard said: *“It was a fantastic team effort which really transformed the space and lifted everyone’s spirits.*

“It was wonderful to show customers the results of our hard work over a slice of birthday cake. I hope the newly created areas will make a difference and are a lasting legacy of our 50th birthday.”



Getting into the groove with 50th birthday grant

Throughout our 50th year, we’re encouraging customers and communities to apply for a grant from our £50,000 Irwell Valley Foundation birthday funding pot to improve their community or bring local people together.

Successful applications so far have included the Mature Movers dance group in Eccles, who received funding for the dance classes which are a weekly highlight for their members.

The group also visits local care homes to perform their routines, much to the enjoyment of residents there.



Digging in with customers at birthday gardening workshop

Customers and colleagues came together for a gardening workshop organised to celebrate our 50th birthday with residents in Bolton.

Customers could choose to plant either a hanging basket or flowerpot to take home afterwards, with others donated to community groups in the area as well as our nearby independent living schemes.

Colleagues from different teams across Irwell Valley Homes worked together with residents and members of the local allotment group who offered their gardening expertise and advice.

Community Co-ordinator Avery Santoro said: *"We spent a lovely couple of hours creating things and the finished results looked fantastic."*

"The baskets and pots have brought a splash of colour to the local neighbourhoods, while others have supported the work of local community groups and our nearby independent living schemes."

"A big thank you to everyone who joined us, to Great Lever Connected allotment group for their gardening knowledge and to Slaterfield Community Centre who allowed us to host the event in one of their rooms."



New mental health garden for Haughton Green



In the week of our 50th birthday we were delighted to officially open a new community garden in the heart of our Haughton Green estate.

The mental health garden outside our Oasis Community Resource centre in Tatton Road offers a place for quiet time and reflection close to nature.

The new space features plants and wildflowers which appeal to the five senses, as well as two benches where people can sit and enjoy the area.

One of the benches is dedicated to the memory of Stephen Shaw, one of Irwell Valley Homes' estates officers who looked after the Haughton Green estate for many years.

We were honoured to welcome Marion, his wife, to cut the ribbon to officially open the new area.

She said: "It's very touching to see this bench dedicated to Stephen's memory."

"He loved working on the Haughton Green estate – it was his baby and he liked to see the place looking pristine. It is so nice to have this special place to come to and remember him. I hope others from the community he loved so much enjoy it too."

Feeling Zen at new Morris Court garden

A 'zen garden' which promotes mindfulness and relaxation will be enjoyed long into the future at our Morris Court supported housing scheme for people with long-standing mental health issues.

Using funds from the Irwell Valley Foundation, the space has been specially designed with plants, flowers and features which help to reduce feelings of stress and promote relaxation.

Colleagues from across Irwell Valley Homes gave their time to transform space into a place which can offer real benefits to the residents there, now and in the future.

Supported housing manager Cath Gorman said:

"This is a wonderful new space which we're delighted to have completed during our special birthday year."

"Our customers at Morris Court will benefit not only from spending time outside in the garden, surrounded by nature and fresh air in the middle of Manchester, but they will also have the satisfaction of maintaining and developing the space over the months and years to come."



Garden makeover and afternoon tea!

It might have been a soggy start to the summer holiday season, but at least the gardens at our independent living schemes were looking their best ready for when the sun reappeared!

Between May and July we hosted gardening days and afternoon tea celebrations at our 12 independent living schemes across Greater Manchester, in honour of our 50th birthday.

We weeded and pruned; planted and jet-washed and got the green spaces and outdoor areas looking fantastic for our customers. New hanging baskets and bedding plants added to the finished results.

We also hosted afternoon tea with residents to celebrate – with the menu featuring some seventies staples like cheese and pineapple on sticks, prawn

cocktail and Twiglets, taking us back in time to 1973 when we launched.

Hayley Waltham, Independent Living Manager, said:

"Colleagues have really enjoyed working together to revamp the gardens at our independent living schemes and it's been great fun getting customers and colleagues together to enjoy retro afternoon tea, 1973 style!"

