

# Our annual report for Customers

2022-23

irwell  
valley  
homes

50  
irwell  
valley  
homes

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



This annual report has been uploaded to our website [www.irwellvalley.co.uk](http://www.irwellvalley.co.uk) where you can use our accessibility tool to read.

The tool will allow you to translate into your preferred language; increase / decrease the font; change the font type and spacing; change the colour contrast or have the content read aloud.



Click on the icon to open the tool and select what you need.

If you need us to communicate or provide services in a particular way, please let us know. Email [contact@irwellvalley.co.uk](mailto:contact@irwellvalley.co.uk), call us on **0300 561 1111** or discuss with your Community Co-ordinator.

To jest Twoje ostatnie zestawienie czynszu i biuletyn z Irwell Valley Homes. Zeskanuj kod QR, aby przeczytać go w języku polskim, korzystając z narzędzia ułatwień dostępu na naszej stronie internetowej.

Irwell Valley Homes هذا هو أحدث بيان إيجار ورسالة إخبارية من امسح رمز الاستجابة السريعة ضوئياً لقراءته باللغة العربية. باستخدام أداة الوصول الموجودة على موقعنا.

Irwell Valley Homes بين آخرین بیانیہ اجاره و خبرنامه شما از را اسکن کنید تا با استفاده از ابزار دسترسی در وب QR است. سایت ما، آن را به فارسی بخوانید.

ઇરવેલ વેલી હોમ્સ તરફથી આ તમારું નવીનતમ ભાડું નિવેદન અને ન્યૂઝલેટર છે. અમારી વેબસાઇટ પર સુલભતા સાધનનો ઉપયોગ કરીને તેને ગુજરાતીમાં વાંચવા માટે QR કોડ સ્કેન કરો.

Irwell Valley Homes کا نیوز لیٹر ہے۔ ہماری ویب سائٹ پر ایکسیسیبیلٹی ٹول کا استعمال کرتے ہوئے QR کوڈ کو اسکرین کریں۔ QR ہونے اردو میں پڑھنے کے لیے

Our history  
1973-2023

**Page 3**

Our impact  
this year

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Your local  
news

**Page 13**



# 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.

## *We'd love to hear from you -*

If you are interested in sharing your views on the work we do, please get in touch. By doing this, you can shape the future of our services for customers.

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.

This year I have presented the findings of our review of the cleaning and grounds maintenance services and the service charge communications to the Directors at Irwell Valley Homes and the Board of Management. Having our voices heard at the highest level gives us confidence that customers will see improvements.

*You can read more about the progress this year in this annual report.*



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

# 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

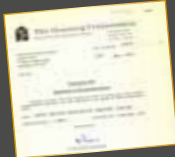
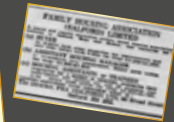
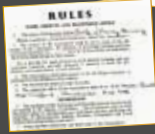
**9th May 1973**

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.

**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.



**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.

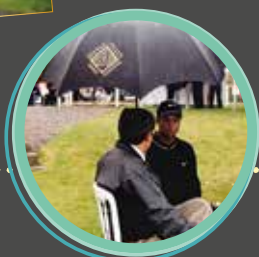
## 1990s



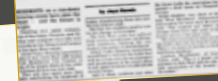
**1995**

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.



**Tenants to vote out the council**



**1999**

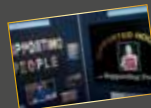
Residents of the Sale West estate in Trafford vote 'yes' on a postal ballot for Irwell Valley Housing Association to take over 1,630 homes from Manchester City Council.



## 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.



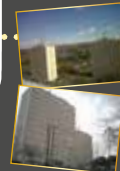
**2003**

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.



**2018**

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.





## 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 you 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](http://www.irwellvalley.co.uk) for the latest updates.

# 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 to you around:

- Looking after your home.
- Keeping you informed.
- Listening and responding to you.
- Getting in touch and accessing services.

our offer  
to you



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.



# 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 **£96,251** 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

## 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. Over the year we improved the number of repairs which were fixed 'right first time' – exceeding our target of 85%.

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

Our repairs team received positive feedback from customers who said they are polite, explain the issue and do a good job.

But we know from your feedback that we need to do better at keeping you informed about your repairs once you've reported them to us.

### Going forward we'll:

- Keep you better updated about repairs.
- Identify why you need to call us more than once so we can deliver a better service.

## During 2022-23...

• 21,812 repairs carried out.

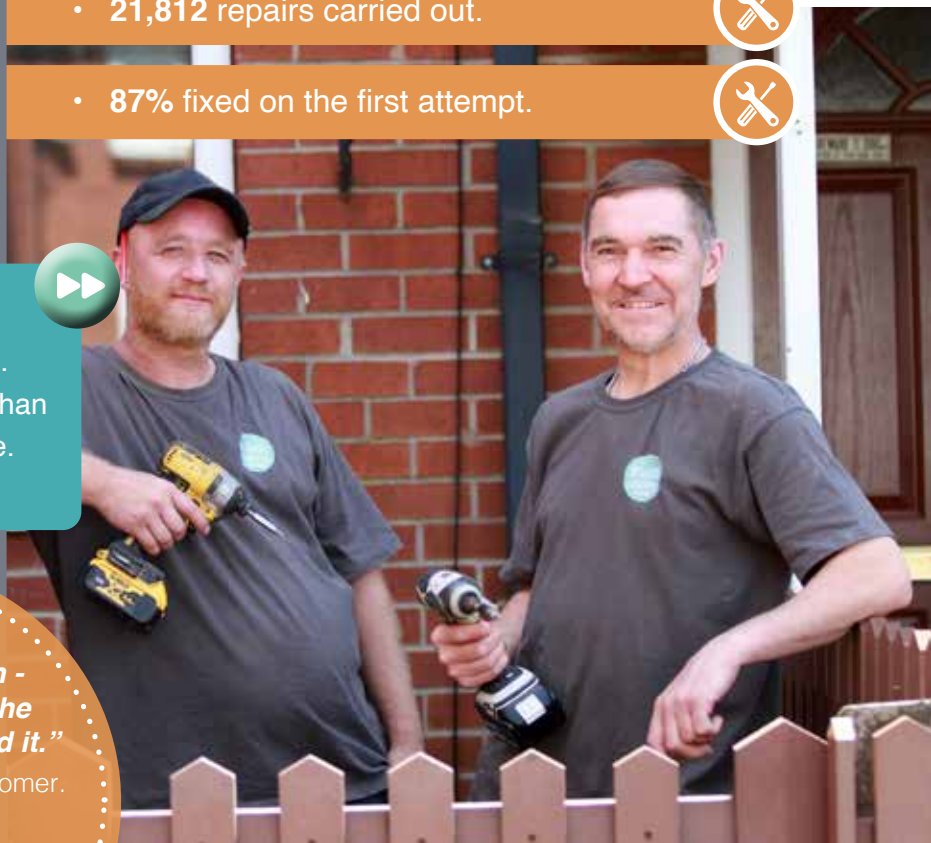


• 87% fixed on the first attempt.



*"Lovely young man - he explained what the problem was and fixed it."*

Mrs Atkinson, Bolton customer.





# Improving homes

We understand that home improvements are a priority for our customers.

## During 2022-23...

- 1,175 homes had fixed wire electrical tests. 
- 308 homes got a new kitchen. 
- 253 homes got a new bathroom. 
- 153 homes got new windows. 
- 337 homes got new doors. 
- 84 homes got new roofs, including the third and final high-rise building in Haughton Green. 
- 33 homes underwent major adaptations, working in conjunction with our local authority partners, to ensure customers can live independently. 
- 20 homes got a new heating system. 
- A self-testing lighting system was installed at one of our independent living schemes, offering greater efficiency and value for money whilst also helping the environment. 

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

For information on how we keep you safe in your homes as well as helpful safety advice, visit our website: [www.irwellvalley.co.uk/for-customers/your-safety](http://www.irwellvalley.co.uk/for-customers/your-safety).



Last year we spent £7.7m improving and maintaining our homes.

We also worked with an independent company to review the condition of 2,800 homes, helping us to understand where to prioritise future improvement work.



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.



Providing affordable, safe and good quality homes and services



## Knowing our customers and communities and responding to your needs.

This year we carried out a programme of neighbourhood inspections and introduced community newsletters giving local news, updates and events relevant to your area. Find yours on our website or check your inbox!

We updated the information we hold about our customers to help us understand their needs and deliver services to meet them. Thank you to everyone who completed the 'customer census' - look out for it again in December to update your details.

We know this year has been tough for our customers, with the cost-of-living crisis hitting households hard. Our rent support and tenancy sustainment teams helped people to access extra support through grants and benefits, and provided information about other partner organisations who can offer support.



### Going forward we'll:

- Repeat our customer census.
- Launch a new online service where people can update their circumstances.
- Create dedicated pages on our website for the different communities we serve with key information and local contacts. Our first is for Haughton Green and is available by scanning this QR code.

scan me



## During 2022-23...

- We supported customers to access **£96,251** in extra income.



- We introduced a new accessibility tool on our website offering functions to make information more inclusive, including translation, large font, colour contrast and read-aloud tools.



- Every Community Co-ordinator issued community newsletters.



- **1,945** customers returned our census survey.





# Here for you when you need us – however you choose to get in touch

## We offer a range of ways you can reach us.

This year we streamlined the menu on our main phone line to get you through to a team member quicker.

We also worked with customers to launch a new website, making information easier to access.

## Going forward we'll:

- Introduce a new online service where you can log repairs, anti-social behaviour and other queries, with new features like live chat, the option to add videos and personalised notifications about your account.
- Trial electronic noticeboards at our high-rise buildings to share key information.

## Listening to you

Our Living Well plan puts customer experiences at the heart of what we do, and we use your feedback to help shape our services going forward.

We know that during the year our cleaning and grounds maintenance services have not been up to scratch. So, we have involved customers in appointing a new temporary cleaning contractor and choosing a new company to deliver communal cleaning going forward. This allowed customers to review the standards proposed and costs involved.

We completed training with our Resident Scrutiny Panel (RSP) and appointed a new chair, Christie. The panel reviewed the cleaning and grounds maintenance services and the communications we send out about service charges. Their feedback fed into the cleaning and grounds maintenance improvement plans and into our service charge letters.

We also launched a Building Safety Forum, encouraging customers who live in high-rise buildings to share their experiences to help us manage their buildings safely.



Last year our Customer Service Team team handled:

- **88,009** phone calls.
- **16,302** emails
- **8,402** contact forms and **2,059** Live Chat queries on our website.
- **7,449** contacts through our app.
- **1,035** direct messages through social media.

## This year...

- **2,332** customers completed a survey about a service they received from us.
- The average satisfaction rate across all services was **4.2 out of 5**.
- Customers scored us **4.2 out of 5** for treating them with dignity and respect.

## Going forward we'll:

- Share the RSP's findings into their damp and mould policy review.
- Recruit a new resident board member – find out more on **page 15** to see if it's an opportunity you're interested in.
- Grow our Building Safety Forum with more customers and launch a new Customer Communications Panel.



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 massive improvement on my studies - I am able to work from home, meet deadlines easily and bring my equipment into uni. Thank you so much for the support in providing help 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/](http://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



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.**



## 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.



# Celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> birthday with our customers

Thank you to everyone who joined in and marked this special milestone with us.

## 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.



# 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 at Mersey Court and Heaton Court in Sale and Northleigh House in Old Trafford 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!”*



## Commemorative tree planting at Magnolia Court

To celebrate the official birthday of Irwell Valley Homes, on 9th May 2023 we held a tree planting celebration at Magnolia Court on the Heatherway estate.

Some 50 years to the day that the founding document was signed, colleagues from across the organisation came together to plant flowers and a magnolia tree in the grounds of the building.

The team also worked across the estate clearing litter and giving the neighbourhood a spring clean.

Shannon Walsh, Community Co-ordinator, said:

*“It was a great way to kick-start our 50th celebrations and hopefully the tree will remain as a lasting memento of our special birthday.”*



*“It was lovely chatting to customers while we worked and great to hear how appreciated the new plants and flowers were.”*

**50** years  
irwell valley homes  
1973-2023

of enabling people to live well in their homes and communities



# Support with the cost of living

We know it's difficult right now, so we urge anyone who is concerned about their finances to contact us so we can see where we or our partners can help.

Greater Manchester Combined Authority's Helping Hand web pages include details of how to access a wide range of help, both across the region and in your local area.

From support with food and energy costs, to help accessing childcare and employment, as well as details of the various hardship funds offered by different local councils, the site highlights the help available if you're affected by the cost-of-living crisis.



Visit [www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/helping-hand](http://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/helping-hand) or scan the QR code.



Housing



Help with money



Older people



Home safety



Get online



Energy and bills



Food



Mental health



Warm spaces



Childcare

## Help us to hear customers' views at the highest level.

Our work is overseen by a Board of Management and we're looking for a customer to join the team.

As a customer board member, you will help to ensure we deliver against our corporate plan and achieve value for money. You'll monitor our performance and make sure we're managing the organisation well and in line with our regulatory requirements.

We're looking for someone who can support and challenge our leadership team. Someone who can read and comment on reports, attend meetings, and make key decisions over the future of the organisation.

Most of all we're looking for someone who is passionate about homes and communities and acting in the best interests of our current and future customers. In return you will get paid £5,500 a year for this role.

You don't need any previous experience to apply. To register your interest email [involveme@irwellvalley.co.uk](mailto:involveme@irwellvalley.co.uk) by 6th November and let us know in your own words why you feel you'll be great in this role... you'll be in good company as we already have customers on our Board!



**Earn  
£5,500  
per year.**

# A better way to manage your home and tenancy is coming!

Irwell Valley Homes is launching a new service for customers offering a way to manage your home and tenancy online.

The portal will replace our Irwell Valley Homes app once it is live.

If we have an email address for you on file, we will send you a log in. If we don't have your email address now or you'd like to change the email address we use for this, please let us know.

Access  
neighbourhood  
services &  
report ASB

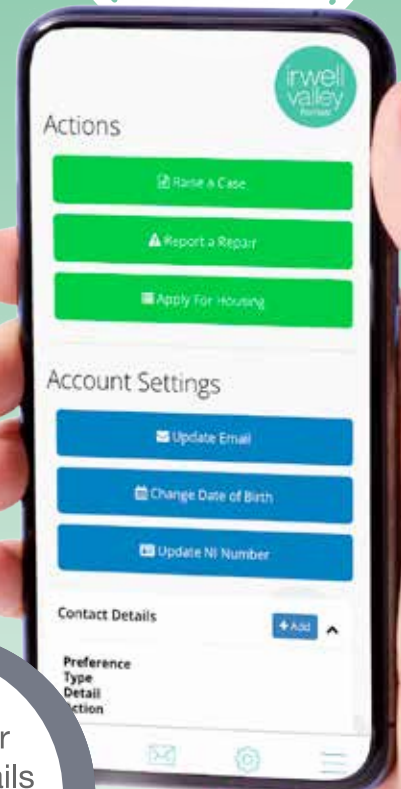
Order and  
manage your  
repairs

Check your  
rent account  
& make  
payments

Update your  
personal details  
any time



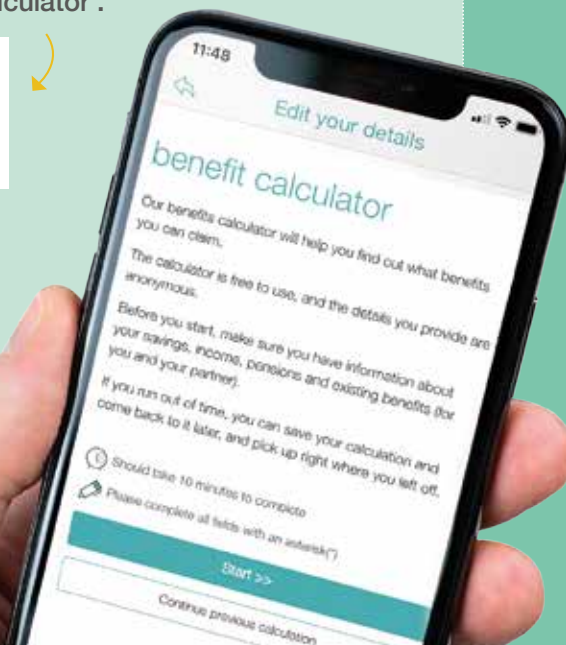
Find out more  
by scanning  
this code.



## Check you're receiving everything you're entitled to

Our easy-to-use benefits calculator takes just 10 minutes to do a quick financial check – searching for benefits, grants and other support you or your family may be entitled to.

Scan the QR code or search our website for 'benefits calculator'.



If you're struggling to cover your household bills, it's worth checking you're receiving all the benefits you're entitled to.

Last year  
we helped our  
customers to access

**£96,251**

in extra income.



#CostOfLiving