



**annual review**  
**02/03**

**Our Vision**

## ARK PROMOTES THE RIGHTS AND ASPIRATIONS OF PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES, AND OTHERS IN NEED, THROUGH THE PROVISION OF INCLUSIVE AND FLEXIBLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOUSING, SUPPORT AND OTHER SERVICES WHICH ADVANCES COMMUNITY LIVING.

2002/03 was an extremely busy year for ARK, possibly its busiest ever. The year was dominated by the need to take advantage of changes in Government funding - Transitional Housing Benefit (THB) - for support for people with disabilities.

That we had a successful year was only possible because of the close working relationship between the staff and the committee. The committee trusted the staff to secure the best outcomes for both tenants and ARK. The excellent outcome proved that that trust was fully justified.

Although THB was primarily a funding mechanism to improve support services we also saw it as an opportunity to free us from the constraints imposed by our community houses. In taking advantage of this opportunity we have built up the largest development programme ARK has ever had. We are well on the way to injecting an investment of £4m into our properties over the next couple of years; have widened our rental base and set up conditions that will reduce the draw on our cyclical maintenance reserve.

ARK Services, our charitable subsidiary opened its first two developments in Aberdeen, a total of 13 units, and work started on a scheme comprising a further 15 units at a cost of £1.2m. There are a further two sites under investigation which together will represent an investment of £3m.

Housing Management coped not only with THB issues but with the other major change in the year, the new Housing Act. All mainstream tenants have now received individual visits and have been signed up for the new Scottish Secure Tenancy. The sign up followed an extensive period of consultation which represented the start of a more interactive style of housing management. A major refurbishment of our mainstream flats at Hoseasons in Edinburgh was also started involving adding external insulation, and installing new kitchens and windows.

HR saw their work dominated by recruitment issues especially given the increased staffing levels which tend to flow out of THB. New approaches to recruitment were also successfully tried with radio and press advertising being linked to Job Centre open days.

Returning to our support services, in summary 16 projects were completely deregistered and all the tenants moved on to THB; in 3 projects there was an element of deregistration; applications were made to have 8 further projects considered under the pipeline system where the Scottish Executive will treat them for funding purposes as if they had been eligible for THB even although they will only be reconfigured at some point in the future.

It was a year not only of a great volume of work but of intense decision making in uncertain circumstances which has added to the stress. I am sure that the thing which has kept people going has been the prospect of providing better accommodation and support for people. It has been rewarding therefore to get feedback that where people have moved from communal to single or small shared accommodation the positive change it has had on service users has been instantaneous, and that ultimately - constantly striving to improve services - is central to ARK's philosophy

**Douglas McRae M.B.E**  
Chairman  
ARK Housing Association



THIS YEAR WE WANT TO SHOW WHAT EACH DEPARTMENT HAS ACHIEVED WITHIN THE EXPECTATIONS OF OUR FOUR MAIN ORGANISATIONAL AIMS

## **CONTINUALLY IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF HOUSING, SUPPORT AND OTHER RELATED SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND OTHERS IN NEED.**

### **COMMUNITY NETWORKS**

When the opportunity arose to support people to lead more independent lives by using the funding available through Transitional Housing Benefit and Supporting People, we supported our tenants and service users to take full advantage. This was a huge amount of work but as much of it was guided by planning with our service users the success has been in the positive changes for them.

Consequently, the services we offer look very different and we are able to support people in a much more meaningful way to self determine and contribute.

Many of our tenants and service users are now living away from group housing in individual tenancies. Those who wish to continue to share accommodation are being supported to think about who they want to live with.

We want to feel confident that what we support people to do is always what they want. There are many different things that we must do in order to continue to achieve this:

- *Show how the underpinning values drive our work at every level.*
- *Listen to and learn from the people who use our services.*
- *Ensure our staff are motivated and competent.*
- *Create and respond to opportunities that will promote the rights of people who are socially isolated or excluded.*

Within these areas we will be focusing on how the organisation listens and learns. Nationally our staff are all working hard to continually develop better ways of hearing what our service users say and we want to highlight this as a priority.

We are setting up action learning networks that will support all levels of staff to regularly hear about what works and what doesn't work for our tenants and service users.

### **OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2004/05 YEAR ARE TO:**

- 1. Expand our person centred outreach support services.*
- 2. Introduce community link outreach for children with learning difficulties.*

## HOUSING MANAGEMENT

Last year saw the majority of ARK tenants sign up to the Scottish Secure Tenancy. We also worked closely with our legal advisors to produce an Occupancy agreement which maximises rights to people living in shared accommodation. By embracing the opportunity of Transitional Housing Benefit (T.H.B) a number of our tenants moved into individual tenancies, with the assurance of appropriate levels of support to enable them to sustain their tenancy. This has had an impact of clarifying the role between housing management and support staff, with tenants being supported to actively report repairs, manage their rent accounts and participate in the formulation of the association's Tenant Participation Strategy. These functions previously being actioned directly by support staff.



Durham Square, Edinburgh

The Housing Management team has also expanded with a number of new faces in the team. This has had a positive effect in all areas including rent arrears, allocations and voids and responsive repairs.

## PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

We continue to invest in our properties through Planned maintenance programmes such as kitchen and window replacements and central heating upgrades. We are also working closely with our tenants to ensure that our approved contractors are delivering an excellent responsive repairs service by promoting customer feed back through customer satisfaction surveys.

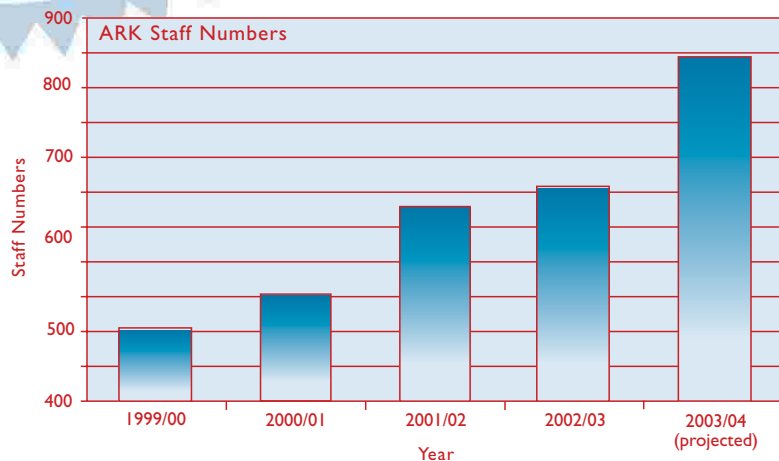
## DEVELOPMENT

During last year work commenced on ARK's strategy to provide our tenants with more individualised housing by reconfiguring our community houses into separate flats. Work commenced in our Inverurie and Forfar community house. We also managed to create a new flat within the Macduff project.

We continued to adapt our properties to meet the individual needs of our tenants, through Stage 3 adaptations, including creating shower rooms and specialist bathrooms for people, to allow them to continue to live in their own home.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

The main focus for the HR Department has been recruitment, with additional staff needed to provide the individualised support required by service users moving out of community houses into their own tenancies. Various different recruitment approaches were implemented with success e.g. open days at local job centres and radio advertising in rural areas.



We administered recruitment of 261 new staff including 12 for the Priory. The Admin team sent out over 2000 application packs. This is an overall increase in recruitment of 33%.

A key piece of legislation affecting our sector was the introduction of the process for obtaining details of criminal records (past and pending) for potential employees. These are known as Enhanced Disclosures. We now obtain disclosures for all new employees and for existing staff changing job. This is a very useful check especially with the move to individualised services where staff work more on their own. However we do have a policy on the recruitment of Ex-Offenders and a criminal record is not necessarily a bar to employment.

We have also developed new policies on Flexible Working, Paternity Leave, Adoption and Maternity Leave and review our existing policies on an ongoing basis.

Although staff numbers increased there was a decrease in staff turnover with fewer staff leaving.

## PROVIDE SERVICES OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY IN A COST EFFECTIVE MANNER.

### HOUSING MANAGEMENT

We endeavour to provide an early interventionist arrears policy by contacting people at the earliest possible opportunity regarding outstanding rent. We also liaise with a number of local authority housing benefit sections to ensure our tenants access to benefit is maximised. We continue to invest in training for our staff to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out a full generic housing management service.

### PROPERTY

We continue to carry out a number of Pre and Post inspections on work carried out for the association by contractors to assess quality and value for money.

### DEVELOPMENT

ARK's development team continue to explore new and innovative ways of procuring services, most notably through "Partnering" with builders and consultants. It is expected that this procurement route will lead to more flexible working practices, robust design planning and most importantly increased value for money.

### HOUSING MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2002/3

#### RENT ARREARS

Underlying rent arrears reduced during the year *from £15,893 to £15,751*. Rent arrears will continue to remain a high priority and overall arrears are expected to reduce further..

#### VOIDS AND RELETS

*We relet 17 properties last year*

As the majority of our properties were let to person requiring support, this had an impact on the relet times. We will continue to work with local authorities care managers and support providers to minimise rental loss for the organisation. However we will ensure that appropriate support packages are agreed with prospective tenants before giving tenants the responsibility of a tenancy.

#### RESPONSIVE REPAIRS

Our performance in responsive repairs increased this year. We also conducted a thorough review of our approved contractors. Customer feedback through customer satisfaction surveys remains our prime focus to ensure continuous improvement of the service.

## RESPONSIVE REPAIRS FOR THE YEAR | APRIL 2002 TO 31 MARCH 2003

	TOTAL NO. OF JOBS	COMPLETED ON TIME	NOT COMPLETED ON TIME	PERCENTAGE
EMERGENCY	228	224	4	98%
URGENT	490	460	30	93%
ROUTINE	274	264	10	96%

The establishment of a settled and experienced housing management and maintenance team will contribute to the ongoing improvement in providing a high quality pro-active service to all our stakeholders.

### COMMUNITY NETWORKS

Over the past three years, ARK has been striving to ensure that all our staff are familiar with and competent in the use of person centred approaches and community building. We have now built up a significant core of expertise and along with people who use our services, we have developed ongoing staff development programmes that revisit values, challenge and develop practice.

We are also implementing a programme of explicitly values led, person centred management to support the person centred approaches used by frontline staff. We have agreed values led benchmarks for all our decision making processes.

Development will be a major area for attention and we are recruiting a new Business Development Manager to take forward collaborative practice and service development.

### OUR PRIORITIES THIS YEAR ARE TO:

1. *Improve our methods of communication with people who use our services.*
2. *Develop our person centred performance management system.*

### HUMAN RESOURCES

The increase in staff numbers also increases the day to day workload of the HR section with more staff to be paid, more changes to be processed etc. To help us meet the increase in workload we recruited another HR Assistant, Helen.

We also recruited an Admin Co-ordinator, Yvonne, to take over responsibility for Admin and provide support to Community Networks. Yvonne has been working with the team to ensure the Admin service provided continues to be efficient and cost effective.

We participated in 2 external audits of our Health and Safety systems, one by Employers in Voluntary Housing and one by TIAA. We passed both with some minor recommendations for improvements, which we are implementing.

## PROMOTE INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND OTHERS IN NEED, IN NEW AND EXISTING COMMUNITIES.

### HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

Staff within Housing and property ensure that our tenants are consulted and given the opportunity to contribute to any changes which may effect them including providing a model for tenants in community houses to assist with the understanding of reconfiguration process. Staff also work in Partnership with local authorities and Communities Scotland to provide new homes which are part of communities. ARK development staff have worked with ARK's subsidiary company ARK Services Ltd. to commence work on a new 16 unit development Torry Aberdeen for people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Extensive consultation was carried out with existing residents and neighbours regarding the development to ensure that the development is seen as having a positive impact on the area and the prospective tenants have the opportunity to feel part of the wider community.

### COMMUNITY NETWORKS

You will notice that we have changed the name of ARK Community Services to ARK Community Networks.

The reason for this is to let people know what we mean by supported living services. It is more than providing person centred support to live independently. We want to find ways for communities to welcome people who feel isolated and to support these people to contribute and feel valued in the communities where they live.

We see it as a two way process. As well as ensuring that people are supported to lead the life of their choice and to build friendships and acquaintances, our staff will aid local people to see how they can build their communities to include people who experience being marginalised.

This is the key area of our work and we want to work in partnership with local community activists, planning and development agencies to promote it.

### OUR PRIORITIES IN 2004/05 ARE TO:

1. *Support communities to involve people who feel marginalised, as valued contributing citizens.*
2. *Use our expertise in person centred approaches and community connecting to offer our services to other people who experience feeling marginalised or excluded.*

## CONTRIBUTE TO LOCAL AND NATIONAL HOUSING AND COMMUNITY CARE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES.

### COMMUNITY NETWORKS

As a major national provider of support services we are committed to promoting these as part of the national building communities and social justice agenda. We are well placed to help drive policy into practice in these areas.

Our intention is to work along side people who, with support, wish to become part of the grassroots community planning and development movements in their local areas. As an organisation, we can bring our learning to local and national planning fora, but our main aim will be to ensure that people who felt excluded before will be supported to be present and have their views heard.

### HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

ARK housing and property staff have attended local authority forum meetings as part of their preparation of their Local housing Strategies. Representatives have also attended Scottish Federation of Housing Association forums where local and national issues are discussed.



The start of works at Dubford, Aberdeen, for ARK Services Ltd.

CONTRIBUTE TO LOCAL AND NATIONAL HOUSING AND COMMUNITY CARE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES.



THE FINANCIAL INFORMATION RELATES TO ALL THE MAIN AIMS OF THE ORGANISATION.

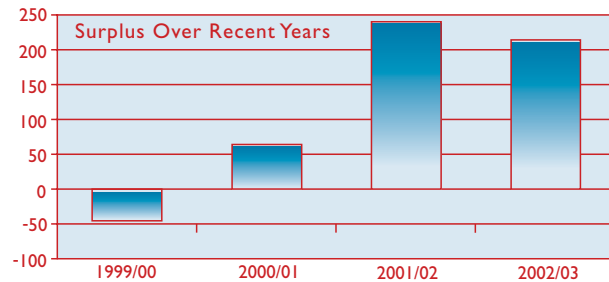
## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### HOW DID WE PERFORM OVERALL?

ARK's income was greater than costs by £211,000. This is slightly down on the previous year's surplus of £234,000. Total income for the year was £9.8M. This is an increase of 9% on the previous year's income of £9.0M.

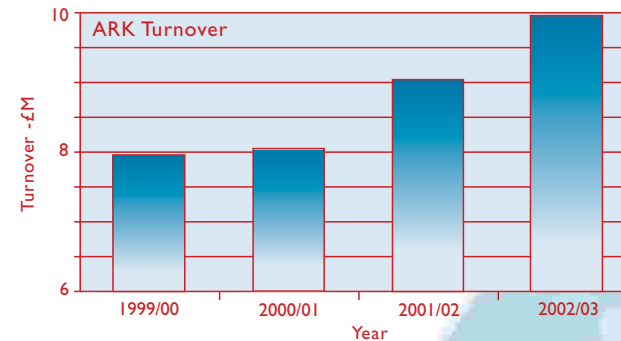
### HOW DOES THE 2002/2003 SURPLUS COMPARE TO PREVIOUS YEARS?

The finances of ARK have steadily improved over recent years. In 2000/01 a three year strategy aimed at stabilising the finances of ARK was introduced.



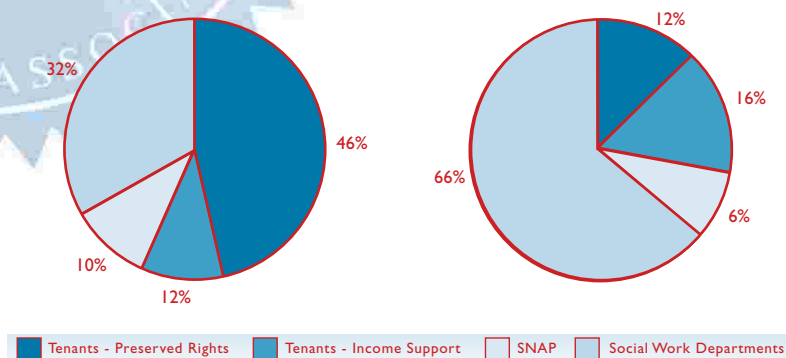
Since making a loss in 1999/2000 ARK has succeeded in making sure that costs have been kept within the income provided by purchasers of support and tenants. Now that this stability has been achieved the challenge for the future is to take advantage of the new funding arrangements described below.

The amount of business carried out by Ark has grown significantly, and despite the pressure of managing the increased levels of business, costs have been controlled resulting in a surplus over the last three years.



Over the last five years the main source of funding for ARK Community Networks has switched from benefits to Local Authorities. In March 1998, 32% of the funding of ARK Community Networks was from Local Authorities and by March 2003 this had risen to 78%.

Community Networks Income 1997/98    Community Networks Income 2002/03



## HOW DID ARK COMMUNITY NETWORKS PERFORM IN 2002/2003?

2002/03 was a year of change for ARK Community Networks with a significant shift of funding from the benefit system to Local Authorities. The year started with the transfer of "Preserved Rights" benefits from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to Local Authorities, and finished with the transfer of "Transitional Housing Benefit" from the DWP to Local Authorities.

The main factor underlying the increase in ARK Community Networks surplus and increase in turnover was an increase in the number of service users who were funded by Transitional Housing Benefit. The majority of this new funding was gained in the last quarter of the year and so will have a greater impact on the result for next financial year.

## HOW DID ARK HOUSING PERFORM IN 2002/2003?

During 2002/2003 ARK embarked on a programme to remodel its hostel style Community Houses into smaller flats that would allow tenants to live as individuals or in smaller groups, and £200,000 was spent on this work as consultants were employed to help draw up plans and work was started on site. The funding for this work is coming from a combination of ARK's own cash, Communities Scotland grants and a bank loan.

ARK Services Ltd., which is a subsidiary of ARK Housing Association, continues to put up new buildings, and tenants moved into new properties at School Drive and Springhill Road, Aberdeen, and work started on site at Balnagask Circle, Aberdeen.

*The primary financial statements - the Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet are shown overleaf.*

## BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2003

	2003	2002
	£ 000	£ 000
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	3,421	3,260
CURRENT ASSETS	1,737	912
CREDITORS AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	(1,484)	(694)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	253	218
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	3,674	3,478
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR	(892)	(907)
NET ASSETS	<u>2,782</u>	<u>2,571</u>
CAPITAL AND RESERVES		
SHARE CAPITAL	-	-
DESIGNATED RESERVES	1,737	1,143
RESTRICTED RESERVES	-	475
REVENUE RESERVES	1,045	953
	2,782	2,571

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2003

	2003	2002
	£ 000	£ 000
TURNOVER	9,783	9,016
LESS: OPERATING COSTS	(9,524)	(8,735)
OPERATING SURPLUS	259	281
INTEREST RECEIVABLE AND SIMILAR INCOME	14	18
INTEREST PAYABLE AND AND	(62)	(65)
SURPLUS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR	211	234
REVENUE RESERVES BROUGHT FORWARD	953	697
TRANSFERS FROM/ (TO) DESIGNATED RESERVES	(594)	22
TRANSFERS TO RESTRICTED RESERVES	475	0
REVENUE RESERVES CARRIED FORWARD	1,045	953

## MANAGEMENT, AUDITORS & CONSULTANTS

AS AT 31 MARCH 2003

### MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**Miss Morag Donaldson**

**Mr Graham Duncan**

**Mr William Duncan**

**Mr James Johnston**

**Dr. Alexander Frame**

**Mr Douglas M<sup>c</sup>Rae** (Chairman)

**Mr Paul Merchant**

**Rev. Dr. David Molyneaux**

**Mr James Rigby**

**Mr Alexander Rougvie**

**Mr Alastair Wallace**

### AUDITORS

Baker Tilly,

23 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH12 1JY

### SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

**Sandy Milroy** Chief Executive

**Ian Wanchope** Finance Director

**Catherine Cook** Human Resources Director

**Neil M<sup>c</sup>Night** Housing & Property Director

**Mary Jo Barker** Acting Community Services Director

### SOLICITORS

Shepherd & Wedderburn,

Saltire Court, 20 Castle Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2ET

TC Young,

Melrose House, 69 George St, Edinburgh, EH2 2JG

### BANKERS

Royal Bank of Scotland PLC



Scottish Federation of  
Housing Associations



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