



**Ark**<sup>®</sup>

People  
Housing  
Care

# Business Plan 2020-25

[arkha.org.uk](http://arkha.org.uk)



With head  
& heart.



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**Welcome to the Ark Business Plan. This for us is a clear statement of intent which we have taken time to develop and comes on the back of a wide ranging consultation with stakeholders, Board of Management and Management Teams.**

It is a bold programme, presented under a new organisational brand and format with vision and mission reviewed and reaffirms the values core to the organisation, as established some 43 years ago.

Despite the economic and social challenges, Ark is in a strong financial position. As such we consider that this is the right time to set out a clear plan that is both exciting, and will allow us to continue to invest and provide the best quality care and housing.

**Graham Mitchell** Chair

Graham joined Ark's Board in November 2016 and was elected in to the role of Chair in September 2018.



# Welcome

**This Business Plan describes Ark's ambitions as an organisation and our intention to positively impact the lives of our community.**

The plan describes who Ark is; an organisation rooted in its social purpose and the organisation we aspire to be; a provider of the highest quality of housing and care to our customers.

Over the life time of this plan we will continue to invest in our people; in our housing and in our care services to ensure we realise our new vision and mission and so help create Good Lives.

We believe this plan sets out an exciting future for Ark and I am privileged to be leading the work of such a fantastic organisation; whose people make such a positive difference to so many customers every day.

**Bobby Duffy** Chief Executive Officer

Bobby joined Ark in 2014 and was appointed to CEO in February 2019.



# 1.0

**This Business Plan has been developed to lay the foundations of a long term strategy that will see the transformation of Ark over the next 5 years and beyond.**

The plan identifies our strategic aims as a provider of both housing and care and an employer of over 900 people, who contribute to the excellent work of Ark every day. Within this plan we are delighted to set out a new vision and mission for Ark and new values that will ensure all behaviours and relationships are based on values that respect who each and every one of us are as individuals, in this organisation.

## Introduction

**Right** The Business Plan gives voice to the ambitions of our people.

PEOPLE EMPLOYED

 900+



This plan articulates a clear direction and strategy for the next 5 years. The strategic focus of this Business Plan has been built incrementally over the past 12 months; by the leadership of Ark proactively engaging with around 600 tenants, supported people and colleagues where we asked a simple question – what is important to you in your life with Ark, however you are connected with the organisation?

This unprecedented level of engagement gave our key stakeholder group the opportunity to share their views and tell us what is important to them and their future in Ark. We listened very carefully and believe we have set out strategic objectives that will deliver the future our stakeholders told us is important to them.

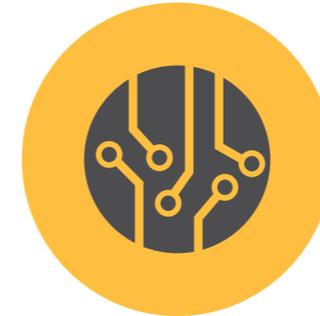
**The aim of this Business Plan is to create an organisation that will:**



**Have a reputation for excellence and be recognised as a high quality provider of housing and care.**



**Be known as an excellent employer where employees will enjoy rewarding careers.**



**Build our technological and digital capability to support a successful business.**



**Have in place leadership to create a culture of excellence throughout the business.**



Our stakeholder group agreed that having a strategic focus on these aims, will lead to the type of transformation that will make a real positive difference to them in their lives.

We have also spent a considerable amount of time with our Board of Management, discussing the future and together agreeing what our strategic focus should be. Our Board of Management have a whole range of skills and experience in a variety of business sectors and this became crucial when we were finalising the key aims of the plan. As a result we have agreed strategic objectives that when delivered, will achieve the positive change everyone in Ark expects.

**Right** Ark colleagues helping shape the strategic aims of the Business Plan.



The level of engagement across Ark, with contributions from tenants; supported people, support workers; care and support managers; housing teams; senior teams and the Board of Management means we have a plan that:

- ▲ Clearly sets out a new vision, mission and values, aligned with our charitable objectives and social purpose as an organisation
- ▲ Sets a strategic direction which is fully understood and supported by the Board, management and our people
- ▲ Confirms our commitment to achieving value for money and demonstrating this in a way that is meaningful to our customers
- ▲ Demonstrates how we identify and mitigate corporate risks

- ▲ Is aligned to our Asset Management Strategy, which will drive the continual improvement in the quality of housing we provide and the sustainability of our housing stock
- ▲ Confirms our commitment to continuous improvement and achievement of excellence across our customer facing services
- ▲ Demonstrates how good financial planning will support delivery of the key objectives in this plan.

**Graham Roberts**

Tenant, Forfar

'Ark acted very quickly when me and my family needed to find new housing. Finding and viewing the new house happened faster than we had expected, and the move went smoothly. It's reassuring to know that Ark are at the end of the phone to help and support us with any maintenance needs should anything go wrong. We're looking forward to life in our new home'.



'My ladies help me do my knitting and we go on walks together. I am happy in my home'.

Sheila, Buckie.



# 2.0

## Foundation and structure

Ark (Housing Association) Limited is incorporated under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 and is registered by the Financial Conduct Authority. We are a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and a registered charity, founded in 1977 under a Memorandum of Association which established our objects and powers.

Ark was founded to provide an alternative to institutionalised care for people with learning difficulties and in particular to support people to lead ordinary lives in their local communities. Key to achieving this was to ensure that the organisation had the ability to provide care and support to people who may have complex needs and be able to access and manage suitable housing.

Left Ark helps build good lives for our community.



Since 1977 Ark has grown to become one of the larger national not for profit care providers in Scotland in terms of turnover, and we provide a range of daytime and 24 hour care and support to adults and young people who have complex and enduring needs. As a housing provider and developer we are one of the smaller associations.



We are considered a specialist housing provider as many of our properties are specifically designed to accommodate people with a range of learning difficulties and physical disabilities; however, we also provide housing to tenants who do not require social care. Geographically we are spread across 13 Local Authorities on the Western Isles, east coast, borders and central belt.



**Left** Ark creates opportunities for collaboration within our community, ensuring leaders focus on important issues.

Ark is governed by the Board of Management which is elected by members at the Annual General Meeting. Membership is open to anyone over 18 who wishes to contribute to furthering the ambitions of the organisation. Tenants, who can apply for membership from age 16, are particularly encouraged to become Members.

The Board of Management normally meets 6 times each year and operates within the Scottish Housing Regulators (SHR), Regulatory Framework for RSL's. It delegates detailed scrutiny of organisational performance to the finance and housing sub committees and urgent decision-making to the Executive Committee.

In order for us to undertake a wider range of specialised housing products and services, a wholly owned subsidiary company called Ark Services Limited was established in 2000.

Ark is the sole shareholder and the relationship between this subsidiary and its parent body, Ark, is managed through an intragroup agreement. The day-to-day management arrangements are operated in accordance with a Service Sharing Agreement established between both organisations.

We also repurposed a former care home in Edinburgh to provide accommodation for students in the city and created a wholly owned subsidiary, Ark Commercial Investment Limited, for this purpose.

Our key regulators are the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) who regulate Ark's compliance with the 7 regulatory standards of governance and financial management for RSLs and the Care Inspectorate who regulate Ark's compliance with the Health and Social Care Standards for care providers. Both ensure that all our operations and financial investments benefit our customers who use our services and our tenants.

# 3.0

## Vision, Mission and Values

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### 3.1 Ark's purpose

As a not-for-profit charity and registered social landlord, Ark is driven by its social purpose which is to:

**Provide for the relief of those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage through the provision, construction, improvement and management of land and accommodation and the provision of care.**

In practical terms the Board and Leadership of Ark are charged with providing social housing that is affordable, of good quality and contributes to tenants well-being and to provide care and support to individuals to help them achieve their personal outcomes and to live a good life. Every activity that takes place in Ark is designed to meet this responsibility.

## 3.2 Vision

Inclusive communities where quality of housing and care enable people to thrive and live a good life.

Ark works every day to break down barriers for the people we serve, our tenants and supported people. Through our housing teams we work to ensure our tenants are not financially excluded by mitigating the impact of welfare reforms and keeping rents affordable and mitigating the impact of rising fuel costs by ensuring our housing is energy efficient.

We provide care and support to one of the most marginalised and vulnerable groups of people in society and our vision is that through our work and the work of others, this group will be enabled to become active citizens in the communities in which they live.



Right Ark's community working together to set the new vision and mission.

## 3.3 Mission

Create the best possible customer outcomes through our highly skilled people, the provision of high quality affordable homes and excellent care.

Good quality housing and high quality care are essential to enable Ark to achieve its vision. We will invest in improving the quality of housing we own through the implementation of our Asset Management Strategy; we will invest in our people and ensure they have the skills and personal qualities to enable Ark to provide the best possible customer service and we will invest in a continuous improvement approach that places at the centre the expressed wishes of our supported people.



## 3.4 Values

Ark's values are true to the core purpose of the organisation and the services we deliver. They determine our behaviours towards one another and what we should expect in our relationships with one another.

Working within the following values will guide and help us deliver our vision and mission of Ark being an organisation where everyone is equal:



### Trust

We have confidence in our people to deliver excellent services and trust in them to do so. We will develop trusting and honest relationships and our customers will feel assured that they can rely on us to deliver.



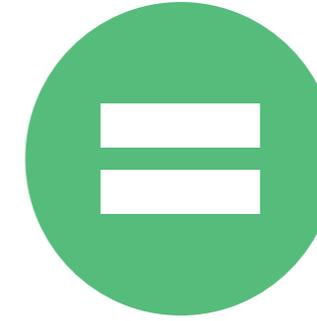
### Respect

We treat everyone fairly and we listen. We are respectful of each person with whom we come into contact and expect our people to respond professionally and treat others as they would wish to be treated.



### Understanding

We will operate with empathy and compassion and approach each situation with an open mind. We will question and challenge to ensure we achieve the right outcomes for customers and our people.



### Equality

We believe everyone is equal and expect our people to create positive experiences where everyone feels valued and included.



### Integrity

We will do the right thing and take responsibility for our actions. We will work together to uphold the highest standards of behaviour and practice.

## 3.5 Equalities

Whilst we do not rate the importance of any of our values above the other, equality has a wider legal framework around it and as such this particular value is supported by a range of internal policies and procedures. We are taking equalities into account in the way we go about our business when acting as an employer, service provider, policymaker, procurer of services and a decision-maker.

We are committed to integrating equalities into our business, using tools such as Equality Impact Assessments (EIA), and by ensuring that equalities feature explicitly and proportionately in business planning, Board or other decision-making.

Section 149 of The Equality Act 2010 introduced a new Public Sector Equality Duty. It has three parts which must be complied with.



It requires public bodies such as Ark to have due regard (or to consciously consider) the need to:

- ▲ Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ▲ Advance equality of opportunity between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not
- ▲ Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Our vision, mission and values and our legal and cultural commitment to equalities sets out our declaration of the organisation we wish to become, to ensure we deliver for our community; our people; our tenants and our supported people. This Business Plan will demonstrate the steps we will take to transform Ark into a modern, future focused organisation.



**Neil Armstrong**

**Area Manager, Edinburgh/Moray**

'My job is strategic and involves a lot of policy work, so while I'm not hands-on caring for supported people the impact I make behind the scenes benefits many of the people supported by Ark. We have a very person centred focus and there is a genuine care for our employees and supported people. I get a buzz from ensuring that Ark continues to be an exceptional provider of care and housing services'.

# 4.0

## Business focus

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**As a provider of both housing and care, Ark's business environment is complex, as we operate within a range of regulatory standards and respond to multiple strands of policy requirements.**

We are intentional and strategic in our efforts to influence the sectors in which we work and those which have a significant impact on our business. Our focus is to ensure that we are present and contribute proactively in national and local policy setting forum, representing the interests of providers whose supported people and tenants require solutions to the challenges they face in life.

Our main industry membership organisation is the Coalition of Care Providers Scotland (CCPS) with whom we are actively involved, in promoting to the Scottish Government evidenced good practice and feedback particularly on the funding status of care in Scotland and the impact on the national workforce. The main challenge to our business is the viability of care funding arrangements and it is crucial that Ark's view helps shape national policy.

We publish our Business Plan at a time when we continue to deal with the impact of Covid-19 and a time when the critical role social care plays in our society is recognised more than ever. Ark's commitment is that we will work with partners and Government to ensure that social care is never again seen as an easy option for funding cuts; it must continue to be valued and funded appropriately for the critical service it is.

As a member of the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) and alongside our specialist housing provider peers we are contributing to discussions to amplify the importance of specialist providers. The sector has a large revenue turnover and is significant in terms of the provision of housing to people with particular needs.

We have been and continue to be, proactive in the management of our pensions deficit through liaison with the SHAPS Employers Committee. We seek to ensure we advocate for the care providers in the housing sector who have larger workforces and, therefore, greater liabilities and share of the Scheme deficit.

## 4.1 Governance

The Ark Group Board meets regularly throughout the year. Each subsidiary (whilst ultimately controlled by the Ark Group Board) has its own Board of Management which is responsible for ensuring it satisfies regulatory and other standards of good governance and financial management. The composition of both the main Board and Sub Board's reflect the skills and experience required to discharge their responsibilities. Senior management representatives are also in attendance at Board meetings. Members of the Sub Boards are appointed by the Ark Group Board.

An important responsibility of the Board is to ensure member and customer involvement in policy, proposals and decisions which may affect them. At a governance level the Hub group, comprised of supported tenants, provides the vehicle for scrutiny.

The Ark Group Board annually agrees corporate objectives and these are incorporated in this Business Plan, with detailed action plans being in place. The subsidiaries provide regular reports on their activities and performance to the Ark Group Board through minutes of meetings.

## 4.2 Annual Assurance Statement

The new SHR Regulatory Framework introduced a self assessment process, where Housing Associations are asked to publish a statement assuring compliance with the regulatory standards. Ark took a very diligent approach to the self assessment and established an assessment framework that enabled us to provide evidence against each of the standard guidance statements, thus evidencing compliance with the regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework. This includes that we:

- ▲ Achieve all the standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter for tenants, people who are homeless and others who use our services
- ▲ Comply with our legal obligations relating to housing and homelessness, equality and human rights, and tenant and resident safety
- ▲ Comply with the Standards of Governance and Financial Management for Registered Social Landlords.

The Board of Management considered that they had seen sufficient evidence which gave them assurance of compliance with the Regulatory Framework. The Board approved the Annual Assurance Statement at its meeting on 24th October 2019.

Ark will take a continuous improvement approach to the Annual Assurance Statement, and will progress quality improvement work to enable us to provide even more robust evidence of compliance in future.

## 4.3 Corporate risk

Ark regularly assesses a range of risk areas relative to our business operation and we monitor delivery of our mitigating controls to ensure we are managing corporate risks effectively, through the comprehensive Strategic Risk Register. We have identified 5 key risks, for which we have a number of mitigating controls in place to ensure the risks do not increase and negatively impact the business.

We have also taken the opportunity to implement a continuous improvement approach to risk management and identified a number of mitigating controls to develop, ensuring our overall approach to risk is robust. The following key organisational risks have been identified:

- 1 Failure to comply with SHR Regulatory Standards resulting in a Regulatory Status of Statutory Action and the SHR using statutory powers to address non compliance
- 2 Failure to ensure financial sustainability of the Group
- 3 Low level of stakeholder satisfaction with the quality of care and support, resulting in the intervention of the Care Inspectorate and Local Authority Commissioners
- 4 Poor quality of services to our tenants
- 5 Failure to recruit and retain skilled, qualified and competent staff to deliver the objectives of the business.

The Strategic Risk Register is one planning tool we use to monitor and manage risks; however, through the staff performance framework and annual objective setting, we also identify specific objectives to be achieved that will ensure the development work is completed and a robust approach to risk management is achieved. We are confident that we have identified the key risks to the organisation and we have in place or under development, mitigating controls to ensure the risks remain manageable and are reported to the Audit Sub Committee.

## 4.4 Housing

We currently own and manage 278 self contained homes, all of which are for social rent. We also have 54 lettable non self contained units (i.e. shared) with a total of 182 spaces for supported tenants and 14 spaces for students.

We operate a fair and objective allocations policy which prioritises people in greatest housing need. The student accommodation is allocated and managed by a property management company on Ark's behalf.

In addition we own and manage 51 properties in Aberdeen, for which Ark Housing Association is registered on the Scottish Government Register of Letting Agents (LARN1910010).

### 4.4.1 Current development plans

We do not have a large development portfolio; however, year 1 of the Business Plan should see us take forward 2 small scale developments. One in Penicuik, where we will develop 12 properties, and one in Livingston, where we will develop 20 properties.

The current development programme has been tested with all known cost information, revised grant allocation and potential private finance requirements.

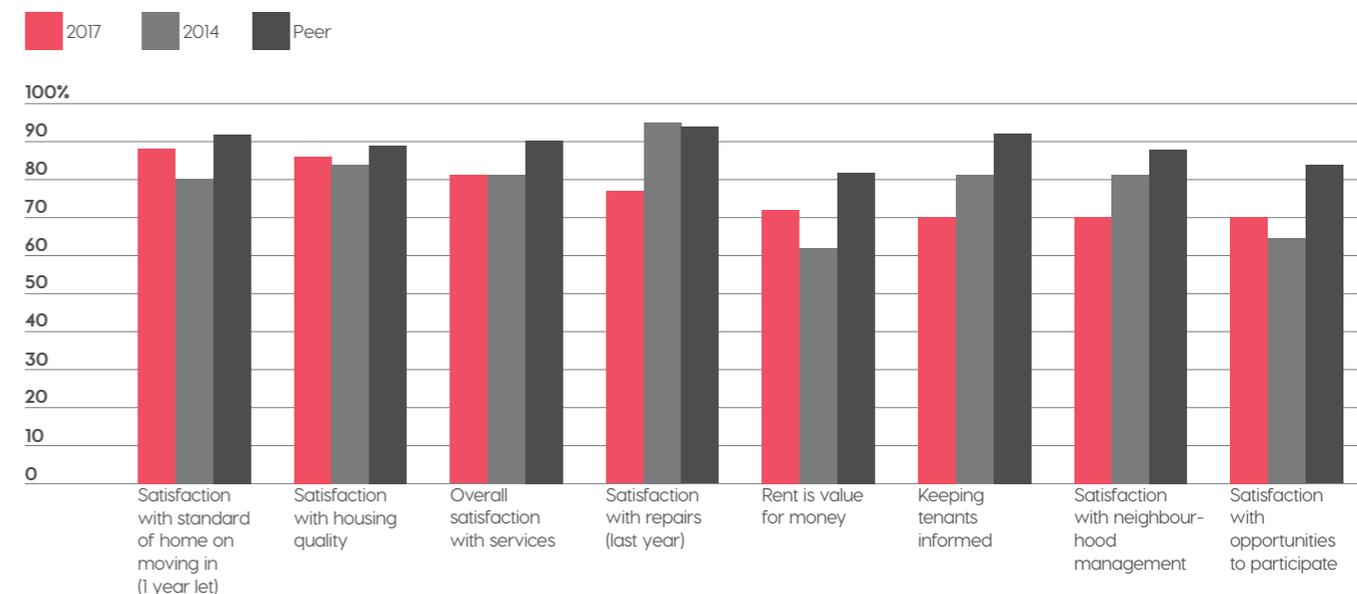
In addition, development projects are fully appraised by a robust risk management process at pre-acquisition and pre-tender stage, both of which are subject to Finance Sub Committee approval.

Using our small land bank, we will aim to complete some 32 homes in the five year financial plan. This demonstrates our small, but continued, commitment to affordable housing provision in Scotland.

Expenditure over the five years will be £4.5 million including £2.26 million of Scottish Government grant if both planned developments go ahead.

### 4.4.2 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a very important indicator of how the housing teams and the services we provide are performing. The last large scale survey was undertaken in 2017. The results from the 2017 and 2014 surveys are shown opposite. In the 8 key indicators, Ark's satisfaction levels increased in 4 areas, decreased in 3 areas and stayed the same in 1 area. In all areas, apart from 1, we performed lower than our peers. We implemented an Action Plan after the 2017 results and have been working on improving satisfaction levels across all areas. We plan to undertake another survey in 2020.



### 4.4.3 Rents

The rent tenants pay is a fundamental measure of how our housing business is performing overall, as we aim to keep rents affordable to our tenants whilst continuing to invest in improvements in our properties throughout the year.

We utilise a fixed point in time to determine rent increases and, in preparing the budgets, refer to forecasts of what the average rate of inflation will be in the forthcoming financial year and what income is required to fund our planned activities.

A full consultation on the 2020-21 rent increase, including a feature article in the tenant newsletter, took place and the outcome was a decision to increase rents by 2.4% from April 2020.

#### 4.4.4 Asset management

The overall purpose of the Asset Management Strategy is to provide a robust framework within which informed decisions can be made that ensure the long-term future of our stock while contributing to sustaining communities in which they are located.

During 2020 we will create a new Asset Management Strategy to plan, measure and optimise the performance of our affordable housing stock. A significant focus in the Asset Management Strategy will be energy efficiency and plans to ensure compliance with Energy Efficiency Standard in Social Housing (EESH) beyond 2020.

#### 4.4.5 Value for money

Value for money is defined as high when there is an optimum balance between relatively low costs, high productivity and successful outcomes. The SHR consistently demand that RSLs can evidence that they are providing value for money as defined by its tenants.

In terms of our tenants, VFM means:

- ▶ Delivering maximum value to the customer while minimising costs. This means understanding the customer's definition of value and focusing on the right things
- ▶ Providing an effective and high quality service which meets the needs and expectations of our tenants as efficiently and cost effectively as possible. Although it is about keeping costs and wastage low, it is not just about the bottom line at any cost as effectiveness and responsiveness are crucial
- ▶ Making the best use of available, or limited, resources. Working effectively and efficiently while maintaining, and improving, the service to our customers
- ▶ Ensuring a clear correlation between transparent and well understood costs, and the quality and level of service provided.

Ark is committed to offering value for money and equally committed to collaborating with our tenants to set out the Ark tenant's definition of value for money; during 2020 we will create a new Value for Money Strategy, which will focus upon how we work in partnership with our tenants and how we will meet their definition of value for money.

#### 4.4.6 Scottish Housing Quality Standards

We delivered on our commitment to achieve the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by March 2015. There was, however, a list of exemptions and abeyances which required notification to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). In our 2019-20 Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) we identified 13 properties for exemption and 1 property for abeyance. A further 45 properties did not meet the standard and will require a number of improvements.

By the end of 2019-20, all non exempt property will have achieved the standard or are at a stage where all reasonable and viable measures have been taken. These will then be reclassified as exemptions.

#### 4.4.7 Energy Efficiency Standard in Social Housing

While maintaining the SHQS, the challenge ahead is to meet the Scottish Government's Energy Efficiency Standard in Social Housing (EESH), which will require energy efficiency in certain dwellings to meet higher standards than the SHQS. The EESH regulations were launched in March 2014, following a number of consultations and refinements to the standard. The EESH sets a number of minimum standards and measures that socially rented properties will have to meet by 2020.

Housing Associations reporting on EESH Compliance relate to what are classed as Self Contained Housing Stock / Scottish Secured Tenancies, of which we currently have 278 properties. Only these properties are reported on to the Housing Regulator for EESH Compliance.

Currently, our properties have achieved 230 Passes (82.7%) and 48 Failures (17.3%) i.e. did not meet new standard. Of these 48 Failures, 16 were classified as exemptions, leaving 32 properties with achievable EESH compliance upgrades.

OUR FIVE YEAR AIM IS TO COMPLETE

 32 HOMES

Additionally, it is intended to look further at the exemptions with a view to identifying any possibilities of reducing the cost of compliance in order to attempt to eliminate these exemptions where practically and financially possible.

## 4.5 Care and support

**We have developed hugely since our establishment in Edinburgh in 1977, and retain our focus on adding benefit to the lives of individuals and communities, and to safeguard the rights and aspirations of people who require care and support.**

Today, we provide services in 12 local authority areas; we provide around 17,000 hours of support per week to approximately 410 people and we employ around 900 staff within care and support.

Our care and support services provide support ranging from a few hours a week to 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year and are offered wherever people live, whether this is their own home or in rented or shared accommodation.

We currently specialise in supporting adults over the age of 16 who have complex and significant care requirements. Including, people who have learning difficulties and autism, early onset dementia, Prader-Willi Syndrome and other physical or psychological conditions such as forensic mental health needs.

There are a number of key policy drivers that influence how we operate and develop our provision.

### 4.5.1 Integration of Health and Social Care

The Integration of Health and Social Care is the key national policy that sets out to deliver the whole system approach for health and social care services.

Each health board area has in place Integrated Joint Boards (IJB), who are responsible for health and social care across both Health and Local Authority boundary areas; they have integrated services and teams and produced strategic plans designed to organise health and social care over the next few years.

Part of the challenge we see is that whilst strategic responsibility for the provision of health and social care is now that of the IJB, at commissioning and procurement level, Local Authorities still have lead responsibility for social care.

We have reviewed IJB strategic plans and most have focused upon Self-Directed Support (SDS), of sorts, as the key initiative to deliver social care services of the future. This will become a significant focus for us through our SDS Strategy.

### 4.5.2 Self-Directed Support

Care and support is working towards providing more personalised services and finding ways to improve on the great work we are already doing across Scotland. One way is by ensuring we can provide care and support through the different options of SDS.

SDS continues to be the Government's key policy position in the delivery of social care services. We will continue to build on the work we have begun in East Lothian where we now offer support under SDS option 2; we will use our learning from this and develop proposals to roll out SDS option 2 across the country.

Through the implementation of the Social Care (Self-Directed Support (Scotland) Act 2013) the Scottish Government has set in law that SDS is the way that social care is to be provided in Scotland. It gives people the choice about who manages their care and support budget and who provides their care and support.

SDS is, therefore, not a choice for Local Authorities or providers but it is acknowledged it will take time for all Local Authorities and providers to be able to understand, advise on, and offer the range of options that can be made and to put these into place. Without such choice and control, social care will continue to be 'done to' individuals, rather than in collaboration.

### 4.5.3 Health and Social Care Standards

The Health and Social Care Standards are applicable to anyone who receives a health or social care service.

They set out what we should expect when using health and social care services in Scotland; are designed to provide better outcomes for everyone and ensure that individuals are treated with respect and dignity, and that the basic human rights we are all entitled to are upheld.

- ▲ For people we support, the new standards focus on people; they are person-led; about individual personal outcomes and will help everyone focus on what really matters – the experience of the person who uses care.
- ▲ For our people, they are designed to be owned by people using and working in care; they are outcome focused which means services can be more flexible with the ability to innovate and develop in the future.
- ▲ For care and support, they will support us to meet our objective of ensuring people we support live a good life through specific guidelines for how to achieve a good life.

Since the introduction of the Health and Social Care Standards in April 2018, Ark's care and support business has seen a steady and consistent improvement in average grades. This is an excellent result and demonstrates that the management teams and support staff in care and support are delivering good outcomes for people we support.

#### 4.5.4 Care Inspectorate

All our support services are inspected by the Care Inspectorate using a grading system to give a measure of quality and compliance with the standards and when they produce inspection reports they use the six-point scale, see right, to describe the quality they see.

Ark's care and support business currently has an average grade score of 4.81 across all inspection themes and registered services. This performance demonstrates consistent provision of high quality services that can evidence a range of strengths in service provision.

Inspection report six-point scale	
Rating	Description
6 Excellent	Outstanding or sector leading
5 Very good	Major strengths
4 Good	Important strengths, with some areas for improvement
3 Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
2 Weak	Important weaknesses – priority action required
1 Unsatisfactory	Major weaknesses – urgent remedial action required

ARK'S AVERAGE  
CARE INSPECTORATE GRADE

**4.81**



#### 4.5.5 Delivering outcomes

One of the key areas that the Care Inspectorate have identified as a strength is our support plan delivery system called Good Life Support Plans (GLSP), Ark's bespoke Outcome Framework. The GLSP is a collection of core and supplementary tools and processes that have been created and aligned to ensure we explore, identify and capture essential information about people, their wishes and the support they need to achieve their goals. Together these are referred to as the person's Good Life Plan.

Individuals' outcomes will fall within themes which are linked to the Scottish Governments National Outcomes Framework (Talking Points) and evidence that we are delivering against the national outcomes.

They are also linked to the outcome focused Health and Social Care Standards. To ensure the service provided to people is delivering what we set out to, we carry out service reviews, which offer people the opportunity to amend and direct their support to fit their specific requirements. When appropriate, we ensure people have access to independent advocacy to support them to communicate their views.

As part of each service review, people provide feedback about progress they are making towards their outcomes and about the quality of service provided by Ark. Feedback collated during 2019-20 is summarised on the next page.



**'To me Ark means looking after one another. Staff help me to get ready in the morning. What I love most is karaoke time in the house!'**

Raymond, Grangemouth.

Feedback about achieving outcomes	Have we helped you to achieve your outcome?			Has your support helped you to make progress in this area?	
	Outcome area	Yes %	Ongoing %	No %	Yes %
Feeling safe and secure	45	55	0	99	1
Keeping well and staying healthy	40	59	1	99	1
Doing as much as possible for myself	39	61	1	98	2
Having interesting things to do	41	58	1	98	2
Being connected with family and friends	46	52	2	97	3
Feeling good about myself	37	60	2	98	2

Feedback about your Ark service	% Respondants who scored their Ark service as 'Always' or 'Mostly'
I am happy with the support I get from Ark	97
Ark staff listen to me	93
Ark staff treat me with respect at all times	98
Ark staff act on my ideas and suggestions	92
Ark staff do what they say they will do	94
The Ark service makes a difference to my life	98
I'm involved in the planning of my support	95
I know how to contact Ark if I need to	91
I feel safe and secure when supported by Ark	98

#### 4.5.6 Regulation of the Social Care Workforce

Over the last number of years Ark and other social service providers have been gradually registering our workers with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The SSSC is the organisation, set up by law, to protect the public by registering and regulating social service workers in Scotland. They set national standards of practice that all social services workers must follow in their daily work and can take action if the standards are not met.

When workers register with the SSSC, they become part of a skilled, qualified workforce similar to teachers, doctors and nurses. This means the people they support and care for know what to expect from them and can have confidence and trust that they are working to a high and consistent standard.

Ark has implemented a process for all existing employees who have joined the organisation before October 2017 to become registered with the SSSC before the September 2020 deadline. All new employees that join Ark need to become registered with the SSSC within their first six months of employment.

#### 4.5.7 How we provide support

We have a long history of working successfully with people who present behaviours that can challenge services. We take a positive approach to peoples behaviours and seek to understand those behaviours, so we can respond constructively.

We have introduced specific Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) training, which is also the standard baseline training during staff induction and further developed the suite of new employee tools to include: PBS support plans; motivational assessment tools and sensory profiling.

Within our care and support services we recognise peoples lives are dynamic: they make choices which change their routines; external factors mean they may need more or less support in a given week; their health needs change (both progressively and suddenly) affecting the support they need and risk factors change. Additionally, our teams are not static: turnover, recruitment and absences all impact on continuity.

Continuous assessment and regular reviews provide opportunity to reflect on peoples current and future needs and to develop critical support and contingency plans for unplanned changes.

SUPPORTED PEOPLE SATISFIED WITH SERVICE



We take a considered approach to service design in relation to capacity. We have developed a flexible approach to resourcing our services to enable us to respond to planned and unplanned absences.

**4.5.8 Continuous improvement**

Ongoing feedback is very important to the continuous improvement of any business and we have developed a range of opportunities for people to have meaningful engagement and contribute to the improvement of their service and the organisation.

SUPPORTED PEOPLE AND GUARDIANS



Survey question	% Respondants who 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree'
I am supported to take part in my community and to meet with others, in the way I prefer	91
People speak and listen to me in a polite and respectful way	96
I am listened to and taken seriously if I have a complaint or a concern about Ark or about myself or other people	92
The space where I live meets my needs	90
I feel secure and safe where I live	93

**Magda Vieira**  
Support Worker, Broomhouse Edinburgh

'I moved from Portugal to Scotland in 2016 and knew I wanted to work within the Social Care sector, I'm passionate about people living good lives. It's been a privilege to watch the individuals I work with grow and achieve their goals. My passion and dedication have been recognised within Ark and I've recently been promoted – I feel valued within my team.'

This includes people attending local forums and forums attended by our Board Members and Senior Management.

Supported people, carers and professional stakeholders are invited to complete satisfaction questionnaires on an annual basis. Action plans are created as required and an easy read report is prepared for supported people, which summarises feedback and actions.

Within care and support we adhere to the Ark Charter which draws on, and is aligned to, various governance documents and standards, establishing a series of promises under the following headings:

- ▲ Being supported and valued as an individual
- ▲ Being supported to have choice and control over your life and relationships
- ▲ Being supported to be part of the community
- ▲ Having a say in Ark and the decisions it makes
- ▲ Your housing and your support.

We conduct annual stakeholder and supported people surveys to measure our performance against the Ark Charter.



# 5.0

In order to achieve our strategic objectives, we have developed a detailed 5 year financial plan that will support access to key resources of finance, people, physical assets and ICT systems.

## Resources

## 5.1 Finance

### 5.1.1 Income and expenditure account – Housing business

This demonstrates a steady level of contract surplus generation across the first five years of the Business Plan.

It has been prudent with the increasing level of income generated from the first new development coming on stream, increased rental charges and increased levels of Housing Association Grant (HAG) release arising from the new developments used in the base scenario.

Expenditure rises in line with scenario assumptions and the increased rental income.

Over the next five years it is planned to spend some:

- ▲ £2.3m on major repairs (e.g. kitchens, bathrooms, boilers, windows etc.)
- ▲ £1.1m on cyclical repairs (e.g. gas and electrical safety, legionella testing etc.)
- ▲ £2.3m on reactive maintenance (e.g. small repairs)

### INVESTMENT IN PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT (NEXT 5 YEARS)

**£6m**

Income and expenditure – Housing	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
	Year 1 20-21	Year 2 21-22	Year 3 22-23	Year 4 23-24	Year 5 24-25
<b>Income</b>					
Rental income	2,598	2,650	2,703	2,757	2,812
Less voids	22	22	23	23	24
Service charge income	370	378	385	393	401
<b>Total rental income</b>	<b>2,991</b>	<b>3,050</b>	<b>3,111</b>	<b>3,174</b>	<b>3,237</b>
Grants released (HAG)	205	205	205	205	205
Grants released (HAG – Development)	24	55	75	75	75
Other grants released	18	18	18	18	18
<b>Total income</b>	<b>3,238</b>	<b>3,328</b>	<b>3,410</b>	<b>3,472</b>	<b>3,535</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Cyclical repairs	(210)	(216)	(223)	(229)	(236)
Reactive repairs	(434)	(447)	(461)	(475)	(489)
Service charge cost	(337)	(347)	(357)	(368)	(379)
Depreciation	(499)	(485)	(469)	(454)	(437)
Other costs (Housing)	(550)	(597)	(634)	(650)	(668)
Management and admin (Housing)	(420)	(432)	(445)	(459)	(472)
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>2,450</b>	<b>2,525</b>	<b>2,589</b>	<b>2,635</b>	<b>2,682</b>
<b>Contract net surplus/(Deficit) in year</b>	<b>787</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>821</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>854</b>

### 5.1.2 Income and expenditure account – Care and support business

Again, this demonstrates a steady level of contract surplus generation across the first 5 years of the Business Plan. It shows the increasing level of income generated from the negotiations with local authorities over funding the Scottish Living Wage increases.

Income and expenditure – Care and support	£000 Year 1 20-21	£000 Year 2 21-22	£000 Year 3 22-23	£000 Year 4 23-24	£000 Year 5 24-25
<b>Income</b>					
Supported living	16,465	16,959	17,468	17,992	18,532
Short breaks service	150	154	159	164	169
Community houses	905	933	961	989	1,019
<b>Total income</b>	<b>17,520</b>	<b>18,046</b>	<b>18,587</b>	<b>19,145</b>	<b>19,719</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Salary costs	(13,294)	(13,294)	(13,693)	(14,104)	(14,527)
Pay rise	0	(399)	(411)	(423)	(436)
Non Salary costs	(1,972)	(2,031)	(2,092)	(2,155)	(2,220)
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>(15,266)</b>	<b>(15,724)</b>	<b>(16,196)</b>	<b>(16,682)</b>	<b>(17,182)</b>
<b>Contract net surplus/(Deficit) in year</b>	<b>2,254</b>	<b>2,322</b>	<b>2,391</b>	<b>2,463</b>	<b>2,537</b>

### 5.1.3 Balance Sheet

The table below shows a summary of the key lines in the Balance Sheet.

Balance Sheet	£000 Year 1 20-21	£000 Year 2 21-22	£000 Year 3 22-23	£000 Year 4 23-24	£000 Year 5 24-25
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Total fixed assets	23,385	25,207	26,409	26,426	26,473
Investments	1,849	1,849	1,849	1,849	1,849
Total current amounts receivable	2,323	2,323	2,323	2,323	2,323
Total cash and bank	3,956	2,936	2,310	3,010	3,704
Total current payable	3,365	4,296	4,903	4,903	4,903
Total long term payable	11,869	11,515	11,138	10,760	10,380
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>16,280</b>	<b>16,505</b>	<b>16,850</b>	<b>17,945</b>	<b>19,066</b>
<b>Reserves</b>					
Revenue reserves	16,160	16,385	16,730	17,825	18,947
Designated reserves	0	0	0	0	0
Restricted reserves	45	45	45	45	45
Revaluation reserve	74	74	74	74	74
<b>Share capital</b>					
Share capital	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Reserves and share capital</b>	<b>16,279</b>	<b>16,504</b>	<b>16,849</b>	<b>17,944</b>	<b>19,066</b>

The Net Asset position has significant movements, as follows:

- ▲ Total Fixed Assets: increase due to new developments
- ▲ Total current payable: increased levels of HAG due to development
- ▲ Provision for liabilities and charges (pension): increase due to technical adjustment for interest accrued on pension scheme – no cash involved.

#### 5.1.4 Cash flow

In any organisation the level of cash held is very important and we are no different. The planned level of cash retained in the organisation after all of the movements in income, expenditure and other movements is shown opposite.

The expenditures on new developments and normalised past service deficit contributions impacts negatively on the first three years of the plan but significantly recovers by the end of year 5.

#### 5.1.5 Interest rates

The market expects low rates for some considerable time. However, it does not actually mean that this is what will happen and interest rates can move very unexpectedly and very quickly. The Scottish Housing Regulator has an expectation that we would manage interest rate risk through the use of fixed rates. Currently around £0.3m of our £1.0m loan book is on fixed rates, leaving some £0.7m open to variability. However, these are currently at just 0.5% above base interest rate.

### NEW PROPERTY INVESTMENT

£5m

Cash flow	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
	Year 1 20-21	Year 2 21-22	Year 3 22-23	Year 4 23-24	Year 5 24-25
<b>Net surplus/(Deficit) in year</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>1,095</b>	<b>1,121</b>
Housing net surplus	787	804	821	837	854
Care and support net surplus	2,254	2,322	2,391	2,463	2,537
IHM income	125	129	133	137	141
Past service deficit pension contributions	(1,365)	(1,406)	(724)	0	0
Central overheads	(2,162)	(2,227)	(2,294)	(2,362)	(2,433)
Total other items	420	603	18	20	23
<b>Cash flow</b>					
Add back depreciation	499	485	469	454	437
Capital major works/component replacement	(431)	(443)	(457)	(470)	(485)
Movements in investments	0	0	0	0	0
AHA investment in property – Penicuik	(898)	(607)	0	0	0
AHA investment in property – Livingston	(540)	(1,256)	(1,214)	0	0
HAG income – Penicuik	449	304	0	0	0
HAG income – Livingston	270	628	607	0	0
Loan capital repayments	(75)	(77)	(78)	(80)	(82)
Other balance sheet movements	(247)	(278)	(298)	(298)	(298)
<b>Movement in year</b>	<b>(912)</b>	<b>(1,020)</b>	<b>(626)</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>694</b>
<b>Cash b/f</b>	<b>4,869</b>	<b>3,956</b>	<b>2,936</b>	<b>2,310</b>	<b>3,010</b>
<b>Cash balance c/f</b>	<b>3,956</b>	<b>2,936</b>	<b>2,310</b>	<b>3,010</b>	<b>3,704</b>

# 6.0

Through the development of the Business Plan, we have created the opportunity for many conversations across Ark which led to an unprecedented level of engagement. Many Ark stakeholders told us about what is important to them in their life with Ark and we have set out a Business Plan that we believe will deliver many of the priorities we heard about.

We wanted to take the opportunity to review the strategic focus of Ark as part of this process and considered this amongst the many priorities we heard about. As stated earlier we have developed a new vision, mission and set of values for Ark which we believe serves all of Ark's communities and sets a direction where achieving excellence is what we aspire to.

## The future



We have developed four strategic aims for Ark against a backdrop of knowing there will be a new long term housing strategy for Scotland from 2021 called Housing to 2040; whilst still having the requirement to comply with the SHR Regulatory Framework and achieve SHQS and EESSH by the end of 2020.

There remain significant challenges within Social Care and we have set out plans which we believe will strengthen our care and support provision and prepare Ark for future development of this business.



The main themes we have developed in response to all of the feedback we have received are of quality and achievement of excellence.

These ambitions run through all of our thinking and we believe the following strategic aims will deliver for the communities we serve in Ark:

- ▲ Have a reputation for excellence and be recognised as a high quality provider of housing and care
- ▲ Be known as an excellent employer where employees will enjoy rewarding careers
- ▲ Build our technological and digital capability to support a successful business
- ▲ Have in place leadership to create a culture of excellence throughout the business.

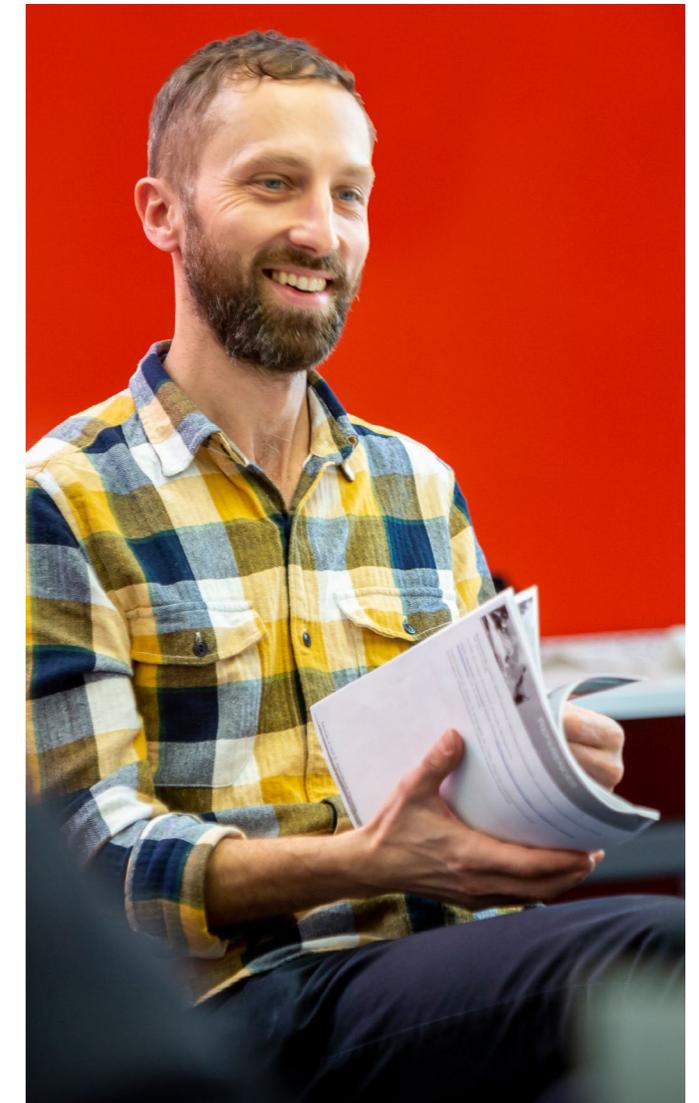
This is a long term plan, we will have a specific focus for the years 2020-2025, but our ambitions for this organisation run beyond that.

The level of transformation we wish to achieve will take time and we believe the strategic objectives we have set out in this first Business Plan will prepare the ground for the transformation of Ark and deliver the change our community told us they want to see.

### Tammy Carter

#### Housing tenant, Clermiston

'I was expecting my daughter last year and Ark found us a new home in a nice community in Clermiston. Ark seem to think about who they place where to build communities. Diana from Ark spent a lot of time with me and introduced me to a lot of support services that I didn't know about to help me find furniture and the things I needed for the baby'.



## 6.1 Delivering for our community

We spoke to 600 tenants, supported people and people we employ in the summer of 2019 and they all had clear views about what is important to them in their life with Ark.

### Our tenants told us they want:

- ▲ Good quality energy efficient homes
- ▲ A responsive repairs service
- ▲ Major fixture replacements to be completed timeously and be of good quality
- ▲ Customer service that is responsive and addresses their needs
- ▲ Better quality and individual housing for supported tenants living in shared accommodation
- ▲ Rents that are affordable and offer value for money
- ▲ A safe and well maintained local community to live in
- ▲ To be connected using digital technology and better informed about what Ark is doing and how it will benefit them.

### Our supported people told us they want:

- ▲ Personalised support that they control
- ▲ Opportunities to enjoy new experiences that are not simply about support
- ▲ To live in good quality homes
- ▲ To be welcomed and be able to participate in their local community
- ▲ To be better connected using digital technology, to have the same access and benefits as the wider community
- ▲ To be kept safe and be treated equally and with respect
- ▲ To live a good life.

### Our people told us they want:

- ▲ Improved salaries and opportunities for career progression
- ▲ Opportunities to be involved and informed about what is happening in Ark
- ▲ A focus on recruitment and retention to minimise vacancies and reduce workload
- ▲ Flexibility in working patterns to contribute to a positive work-life balance
- ▲ To be developed, coached and supported in their roles
- ▲ Approaches and initiatives that focus on their well-being
- ▲ Recognition and praise for a job well done.

Our community has set us a number of significant priorities and our commitment is that we will work with them over the coming years to deliver what they have told us is important.

# 7.0

## Delivering high quality housing and care

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7.4 Ark Group	66		



Ark aims to build a reputation for excellence and be recognised as a high quality provider of housing and care; this will take time, planning and investment.

The development of the business and improving quality are essential to the future of Ark.

## 7.1 Care and support

**The care and support operation makes up 86% of Ark's business; however it operates in a very volatile environment where income is dependent on achieving good rates from local authorities who purchase our services.**

Our strategic objective is that:

**"We will develop the care and support business; deliver excellent services and create opportunities for people to achieve their outcomes".**

Our aim is to continually improve the quality of services we provide; grow and diversify the care and support business to ensure we secure support services and jobs for people now and in the future.

We will achieve this by ensuring that our current portfolio of services operates within sustainable financial models and that we can redesign our provision to offer supported people more choice and control. We will build our reputation and credibility as a service provider which will enhance opportunities for diversifying our business into other care groups; all of which will be underpinned by evidence based models and approaches designed to deliver for the very specific needs of vulnerable supported people.

## CARE AND SUPPORT



**86%** of Ark's business

We have identified the following objectives that create the framework for meeting this strategic objective:

- ▲ We will develop a care and support portfolio analysis and create local development plans to build on existing profitable services
- ▲ We will implement Ark's evidenced based model of Self-Directed Support
- ▲ We will demonstrate the efficacy of our services through peoples' experience and outcomes and develop our evidence base
- ▲ We will research emerging practice to inform our models and approaches
- ▲ We will develop a key focus on young adults in transition, out of area placement and delayed discharge
- ▲ We will assess our capabilities and competencies as a provider and assess our capacity for diversification.

These objectives will transform Ark's care and support provision and deliver:

- ▲ Intelligence that will inform decision making about the future of existing provision
- ▲ A care and support business where no service will lose money after all costs have been allocated
- ▲ Social care provision that is verified by the Care Inspectorate as being of a high quality and evidence of delivering good outcomes for supported people
- ▲ A significant increase in numbers of Ark supported people in control of their service via SDS option 2
- ▲ New support approaches introduced in existing services to deliver improved outcomes for supported people
- ▲ Business development plans created to grow and diversify the care and support business.

## 7.2 Housing development

**Ark's housing business has well established maintenance and improvement programmes to continue improving the quality of our housing and meet our EESSH targets. We are ambitious in what we wish to achieve with our stock and for all our tenants.**

Our strategic objective is that:

**"We will develop an Asset Management Strategy to support the delivery of high quality social housing and discreet, integrated community living options".**

Taking into consideration regulatory and accessibility standards we will establish a minimum quality for all Ark properties that will be of good quality and energy efficient. We will collect information about the standard of all our properties and we will put in place plans for every property to meet the Ark minimum standard for quality.



**Kevin Bunting**

**Care and Support Manager, Glenrothes**

'I always encourage support workers to strive to empower supported people to live as independently as possible and to develop the new skills they need to live independently. Training is a huge part of that ethos and I encourage colleagues to speak to me about how they can become even better at delivering care services'.

We will take decisions about properties that will never be SHQS compliant or meet EESSH targets and we will carry out a substantial review of all our shared living accommodation, and put in place long term plans to offer supported tenants the type of accommodation they have told us they want. We will progress the new build developments and continue to increase Ark's social housing portfolio.

We have identified the following objectives that create the framework for meeting this strategic objective:

- ▲ We will develop a framework against which we will carry out a Property Portfolio analysis (including 3rd party leased)
- ▲ We will produce an Asset Management Strategy.

These objectives will provide Ark with the framework to implement long term housing improvement plans and deliver:

- ▲ A database that identifies the quality of every aspect of every property and will inform investment decisions for the coming years
- ▲ Quality housing which will meet all SHQS and EESSH standards
- ▲ Disposal of properties that will never meet SHQS or EESSH
- ▲ Increase in the number of single units available to supported tenants currently in shared accommodation
- ▲ A housing improvement programme that will meet the standard set by Ark.

## 7.3 Innovative housing and care solutions

**As a provider of housing and care Ark is well placed to offer whole solutions to local authorities who seek to commission housing and care services. We have excellent knowledge and experience in designing care services with accommodation and we must capitalise on our relatively unique position within the markets we operate.**

Our strategic objective is that:

**“We will create opportunities which enable us to be forward thinking in our delivery of Housing and Care and Support”.**

We wish to create housing and care solutions that are innovative, offer customers different choices are based upon latest research on emerging approaches and modern housing development.

We will seek out and create strategic partnerships to build knowledge and capability within the organisation on the latest thinking in housing and care, and we will establish a portfolio of alternative funding sources to enable us to invest in housing and care developments. We will evaluate IJB strategic plans and be proactive in engaging with strategic commissioning to offer whole solutions to IJB's.

We have identified the following objectives that create the framework for meeting this strategic objective:

- ▲ We will innovate and create opportunities for housing and service developments
- ▲ We will research alternative funding sources for housing and service developments
- ▲ We will develop partnerships which enhance our ability to meet our objectives.

These objectives will provide Ark with the capability, resources and relationships to deliver:

- ▲ New build or refurbished properties which use the latest innovations designed to make the tenants life better, no matter their abilities
- ▲ Funding opportunities that allow Ark to take forward development plans
- ▲ Acquisition of additional properties from partners enabling Ark to offer improved housing to existing tenants
- ▲ A new model of housing and care provision that will deliver a single tenancy for the individual, shared social space and the ability to share services and achieve financial efficiency.

These strategic objectives will ensure that Ark has a focus upon improving the quality of housing and care we provide through this and subsequent business plans.

This is a long term strategy and our aim is to build the knowledge, expertise and resources in the organisation to enable us to deliver this transformational agenda.

These strategic objectives will make a significant and long term contribution to the lives of our customers and will contribute to offering solutions to strategic partners in pursuit of their own objectives.

Housing and care is our core business and the Board and leaders in Ark are very committed to put in place plans that secure our properties and services for customers of the future. Our social purpose will ensure Ark's focus will remain rooted in delivering housing and care based on our values and desire to do social good; how we achieve this will be based on modern business development principles and professionalism.

## 7.4 Ark Group

**Ark Group is made up of Ark Housing Association, the parent company, Ark Services Limited (ASL) and Ark Commercial Investment Limited (ACIL), the subsidiary companies. This structure offers Ark different development opportunities and we are keen to develop these, through intentional priorities within this Business Plan.**

Our strategic objective is that:

**“We will develop the Group Subsidiaries to further Ark’s Strategic Objectives”.**

Ark Services has great potential for growth, not only in its existing sites, but by expanding the business model with existing partners and seeking out new partners for whom we could provide housing as part of an overall care service.

Ark’s social purpose extends beyond our delivery of care services, but extends to creating local capacity for other providers where there is demand.

ACIL, constituted as a commercial company, offers wider business development opportunities for Ark that fall outside our charitable purpose. In today’s business environment we must be alert to wider business development opportunities, such as the opportunity to develop student accommodation in an ex care home. Both subsidiaries are good examples of how we can use Ark’s resources to generate additional income, to be reinvested in pursuit of Ark HA’s strategic objectives.

### GROUP ANNUAL TURNOVER

**£22.3m**

**Right** Ark’s Board provides the oversight to ensure robust Governance.

In the first instance the leadership of Ark will present business development proposals to the Boards of both Ark Services and ACIL, where we will detail the business development opportunities and the steps we will take to develop both businesses.

We have identified the following objectives that create the framework for meeting this strategic objective:

- ▲ Grow Ark Services and increase the financial contribution to Ark
- ▲ Develop ACIL to become a vehicle for business development that falls out-with Ark’s RSL and charitable purpose
- ▲ Create a Business Plan for Ark Services and ACIL.

These objectives will enable Ark to deliver:

- ▲ Growth of the two subsidiary companies and increase in the financial contribution they can make to Ark, the parent company.



## 7.5 Creating strategic partnerships

**Strategic partnerships are essential for any organisation that has a growth strategy, whether it's to acquire knowledge, resources, and access to new markets or locality. Our growth strategy and housing development strategy will be dependent on Ark developing strategic partnerships where we can access additional housing, land and funding.**

Our strategic objective is that:

**"We will create strategic partnerships that will support Ark Group's business development strategy".**

Ark has a number of key partners with whom we already work and this has made a positive contribution to Ark in the past. We will build on these where possible, such as in Ark Services; however our growth strategy is national, where we seek to redevelop shared accommodation across the country.

The Scottish Government's Housing Development Strategy for 50,000 new affordable homes has generated new investment and opportunity for organisations like Ark to develop partnerships and acquire the housing necessary to support our development plans.

### Shane Hepburn

#### Housing tenant, Peterhead

'My social worker introduced me to Ark and I'm now living at Arkdale, which offers me the freedom to do my own thing. Nicola, Joy and Lynn nag me 24/7, but that's just to make sure I'm OK and am doing my cleaning, shopping and to manage my finances. Arkdale is a nice place and the staff are all very friendly'.

We will review all Strategic Housing Investment Plans and assess where housing developments are taking place that can support our own development plans.

We have identified the following objectives that create the framework for meeting this strategic objective:

- ▶ Implement a robust environmental scanning analysis to identify potential partners
- ▶ Develop a database of key partners aligned to business outputs
- ▶ Implement a relationship management approach.

These objectives will provide Ark with the data to create a proactive engagement plan with housing developers and deliver:

- ▶ Access to housing via 3rd party lease arrangements, that we can use to create targeted movement of tenants in our existing stock
- ▶ Vacant Ark owned properties and sites that we can redevelop.





Rachel Smith

Care and Support Manager, Buckie

'My role doesn't involve direct interaction with supported people, but by liaising with other social services and working behind the scenes to ensure that the needs of our supported people are always exceeded, it means I always feel I have achieved something positive at the end of the day. Our commitment to training plays a huge part in our team at Ark delivering care packages that make our tenants and supported people happy.'

## 7.6 Reshape the Ark Group Business Model

**Presently Ark's income streams come from two main sources, local authority funding for care and support and rental income from tenants. Both income streams present challenges to Ark; funding for social care is controlled and influenced by local authority budgets and purchasing. As local authorities come under financial pressure, this is reflected in rates they are willing to pay for social care.**

Similarly, rental income and annual rent increases have to be considered carefully; we are committed to keeping rents affordable at social rent levels, whilst costs increase and we are required to demonstrate tenants are getting value for money.

Our strategic objective is that:  
**"We will re-shape Ark Group's business model to attract new funding sources to invest in strategic objectives"**.

We will initiate a proactive process where we will research the variety of funding that may be available, which we could align to our strategic objectives and consider which business outputs could attract additional funding to help the development of the business.

By growing our subsidiaries we will reduce the total percentage of Group income reliance on the core funding, and we will research grant and trust funding that we could attract to develop start up projects with the aim of them becoming financially sustainable.

We have identified the following objectives that create the framework for meeting this strategic objective:

- ▲ Develop a portfolio of alternative funding options for key Ark outputs
- ▲ Align alternative funding to current business outputs for each directorate
- ▲ Secure new funding streams to support new models or outputs.

These objectives will enable Ark to develop a database of funding streams which we can target and deliver:

- ▲ Alternative funding sources for existing outputs and plans
- ▲ Reduced reliance on core funding streams
- ▲ Access to funding that will enable us to innovate in either housing or care developments.

## 7.7 Rebrand Ark

Ark has been operating since 1977 and our legacy is one of a caring organisation who has made a positive difference. Historically parents and carers may have been grateful that their loved one was in receipt of support or had a home to live in and that may still be the case today; however, supported people, tenants, family and carers now have much higher expectations of Ark.

Our image should be one of a modern, professional, high quality provider of housing and care. We operate in a very competitive environment and how we look and what we stand for is very important to stakeholders who wish to purchase our services, to our customers and our regulators. It is also very important to Ark to build our profile within our operating environment.

Our strategic objective is that:

**“We will build Ark’s identity, brand and profile through a focused marketing approach”.**

Our starting point is to take a professional approach to rebranding and we will engage the services of an expert brand and marketing company to support us with this work. Our aim is to re-brand Ark as a modern, future focused organisation that remains rooted in its social purpose. We will develop a brand that reflects who Ark is in 2020 and who we wish to become in the future.

We will build our profile as an organisation through the leadership being proactive in the environments we operate and supporting peer organisations to affect positive change for our customer group and the sectors we operate in, and we will be an organisation whose brand and image instils confidence in our stakeholders that we will make a difference to the people we serve in our community.

We have identified the following objectives that create the framework for meeting this strategic objective:

- ▲ Engage a professional marketing and rebranding company to support Ark’s marketing approach
- ▲ Build Ark’s profile across sectors we operate in
- ▲ Ensure leaders are proactively engaged across the sectors in which Ark operates
- ▲ Ark develops key messaging to promote the organisation
- ▲ Support peer organisations to further significant issues that will benefit our community.

These objectives will create the opportunity for Ark to refresh our public image and build our profile within the sectors we operate and deliver:

- ▲ A rebranded, modern looking organisation
- ▲ Increased profile of CEO and Leaders in the organisation, across issues that are important to our community
- ▲ Opportunities to promote key messaging that serve our social purpose as an organisation
- ▲ Our name and identity aligned to high profile initiatives in our sectors
- ▲ Ark influencing and shaping the sectors we operate in.

The strategic objectives we have described will provide the focus, structure and energy for Ark to achieve the transformation we desire; however, this can only be achieved by having the right people, technology and culture within the organisation where we are all committed to achieving excellence.

# 8.0

## Ark as an excellent employer

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Our aim of being an excellent employer where employees will enjoy rewarding careers is fundamental to who we are in Ark. Our people are essential to any ambitions and success we have as an organisation and it is incumbent upon the leadership that we create an organisation where people can flourish and enjoy a good career; where people feel valued and recognised for the difference they make every day; where we have in place family friendly policies that support people to remain in employment and where we ensure the well-being of our people by offering support for their health and well-being.

These are the policies not only of modern organisations, but are policies of Government and in Ark; how we treat our people must reflect the societies we live in.

## 8.1 Working in partnership

**Ark belongs to us all. Every day we come to work we will make a decision that will have an impact, no matter how great or small and these decisions are what shapes Ark. Therefore, every one of us is Ark and the leadership will spend time working with our people across the organisation to create a culture where we all have a sense of ownership and pride in what the organisation is achieving, through its people. We will achieve this by working in partnership with our people.**

Our strategic objective is that:

**“We will work in partnership with our people to ensure they feel valued and are able to be the best they can be”.**

There are practical objectives we will implement that will create the opportunities for partnership working, but it's that sense of being an equal, no matter what level within the job hierarchy you operate at in Ark, that will create the culture we seek. We want our people to feel confident in delivering their role and we want them to be clear about what's expected of them and have the skills and competencies to meet those expectations.



Through the implementation of the new values our people will be clear about what they can expect in all professional relationships in Ark, which will contribute to their personal sense of being valued as an individual.

We have identified the following objectives that create the framework for meeting this strategic objective:

- ▲ Develop an employment framework that ensures our people have the skills and confidence to deliver their role
- ▲ Ensure all job outlines provide our people with clarity on what is expected of them in their role
- ▲ Maximise learning opportunities across Ark through a training delivery model that is aligned to our business

**Left** Ark's people will continue to see their influence grow through this Business Plan.

- ▲ Create organisational development initiatives to support people to operate in line with organisational values

- ▲ Implement a National Partnership Forum.

These objectives will deliver:

- ▲ Employees who are skilled and equipped to deliver their role
- ▲ Employees who are clear about what is expected of them and that they have the resources to meet those expectations
- ▲ Employees who are engaged in the wider organisation
- ▲ Employees whose well-being is a central focus for Ark as an employer.

## 8.2 Ark as an attractive employer

We want Ark to be a good place to work. Where people feel valued and can enjoy their career. We know that salary is a very important factor when prospective employees are considering whether to come to Ark and we continually review our salary levels to ensure we are as competitive as we can be. We also offer a wider benefits package which is valued by our people and this too is continually under review.

It is important that we not only attract good candidates but candidates who can demonstrate the values of the organisation. We face fierce competition for good candidates in the sectors we work in, which is why our overall employment package, including the working environment, will make Ark an attractive employment proposition.

Our strategic objective is that: **“We will become a more attractive employer through employment approaches that attract candidates who reflect Ark’s values”.**

As stated we do face competition across the sector to attract the right people to Ark and we can learn from what other employers are doing, to market ourselves as an attractive employer – to create modern recruitment approaches that are efficient and aligned to social media, initially our processes require to be less formal and time consuming for candidates.

We also need to think local; our employment pools are different across the country and our approaches must reflect the demands and opportunities within local job markets.

We have identified the following objectives that create the framework for meeting this strategic objective:

- ▲ Modernise Ark’s recruitment approaches to respond to the internal and external challenges that Ark face
- ▲ Define a measurable set of key performance indicators enabling Ark to measure recruitment performance internally and externally
- ▲ Use learning from performance data to implement new organisational development initiatives to improve recruitment success
- ▲ Ensure Ark has a voice in sector wide initiatives through networking and participation in national projects.

## STAFF RECRUITED IN THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR

 140

These objectives will enable Ark to improve our recruitment approaches and deliver:

- ▲ Reduced number of vacancies and less time to fill vacant posts
- ▲ Improved choice and quality of candidates for recruiting managers
- ▲ Increased success in converting applicants into employees
- ▲ Access to sector intelligence we can use to refine and improve our own processes.

## 8.3 Retaining our people

Whilst we are keen to modernise our recruitment approaches, if we improve our retention rates we reduce the number of roles we need to recruit to and reduce the risk of being unable to recruit into vacant posts.

The reasons people decide to leave Ark can be multiple and complex but we must understand it better. We know that salary, career progression, work-life balance, positive working environment, recognition and feeling valued are very important to our people and if we as an employer fail to pay attention to these factors, it is likely that our people will seek to continue their careers elsewhere.

Our strategic objective is that: **“We will ensure that our people want to stay with Ark by creating a positive working environment where they feel empowered and engaged”.**

We want Ark to be a place where people come and enjoy a good career; one which has positive benefits to their well-being.

We must understand why people choose to leave Ark, through having in place a robust exit process that we take learning from and implement improvements; equally we must understand why people choose to stay with Ark and build good employment policies and practice that reflects what is important to our people.

### EMPLOYEE TURNOVER RATE



21%

To achieve this we must build our intelligence and ensure we are using the information to implement policies and practice that delivers positive employment outcomes for our people.

We have identified the following objectives that create the framework for meeting this strategic objective:

- ▲ Improve retention rates and create a more stable workforce through effective engagement approaches
- ▲ Complete implementation of the Making Connections work streams that focus upon issues that our people have told us are important to them
- ▲ Review organisational employment structures to create career opportunities that offer salary levels that are competitive with the relevant job markets
- ▲ Implement initiatives that support the welfare of our people and respond to a changing employment environment.

These objectives will improve Ark employee's careers and deliver:

- ▲ Reduction in the numbers of people leaving Ark
- ▲ Employment structures where people can get promotions to higher grade posts
- ▲ Different types of posts, so people can vary their career
- ▲ Employees who know that their well-being is important to Ark as their employer
- ▲ Increased employee satisfaction and morale.

# 9.0

## Build our technological and digital capability

**At Ark we aim to build our technological and digital capability to a level where it will support the business to be successful. Increasing our use of technology to provide our people with better tools to do their jobs, will lead to improved results and services across the business.**

Embracing technology to implement more efficient and cost effective business processes will mean more effective responses to internal and external stakeholders and better use of organisational resources and value for the money we spend.

Implementing new technologies to improve communication and engagement and sharing information with our broad customer group will lead to them being better informed, included and connected with the organisation in a way that has positive benefits to them as Ark customers.



Our strategic objective is that:  
**“We will improve our technological and digital capability”.**

We already use a range of technologies in Ark; however, technology continues to develop at a pace where new solutions regularly come to market that can benefit organisations like Ark. We will assess our current technological solutions against our strategic objectives and determine whether they are fit for purpose.

We will use technology to create more mobile and efficient models of service provision and break down accessibility barriers for part of our customer group, that are largely excluded from the digital evolution, and we will ensure our tenants can be better connected with Ark using digital and technological solutions – to improve inclusion and communication in matters and issues that are important to them as tenants of Ark.

INVESTMENT IN  
NEW TECHNOLOGY

£1.5m

We have identified the following objectives that create the framework for meeting this strategic objective:

- ▲ Implement the Ark Information Management System and enhance the technical capability of our people and customers
- ▲ Improve our current business processes using technology
- ▲ Re-design Ark’s website to support business needs
- ▲ Increase Ark’s social media capability to support business needs.

These objectives will provide Ark with new technologies and resources to deliver:

- ▲ Reduction in manual processes
- ▲ More efficient business processes
- ▲ Access to information and data to improve decision making
- ▲ Increased capability across the business using technology
- ▲ Improved communication and marketing opportunities using technology.

#### Diane Rhind

##### Housing tenant, Forres

‘Paul and Debbie from Ark are based on-site at Wellside Court and are making real improvements to the scheme. It’s reassuring to know that while I have been sheltering with my son in Edinburgh during the lockdown, Paul and Debbie have been keeping an eye on my home and have dealt with a few issues on my behalf. They are very responsive and nice people to deal with’.

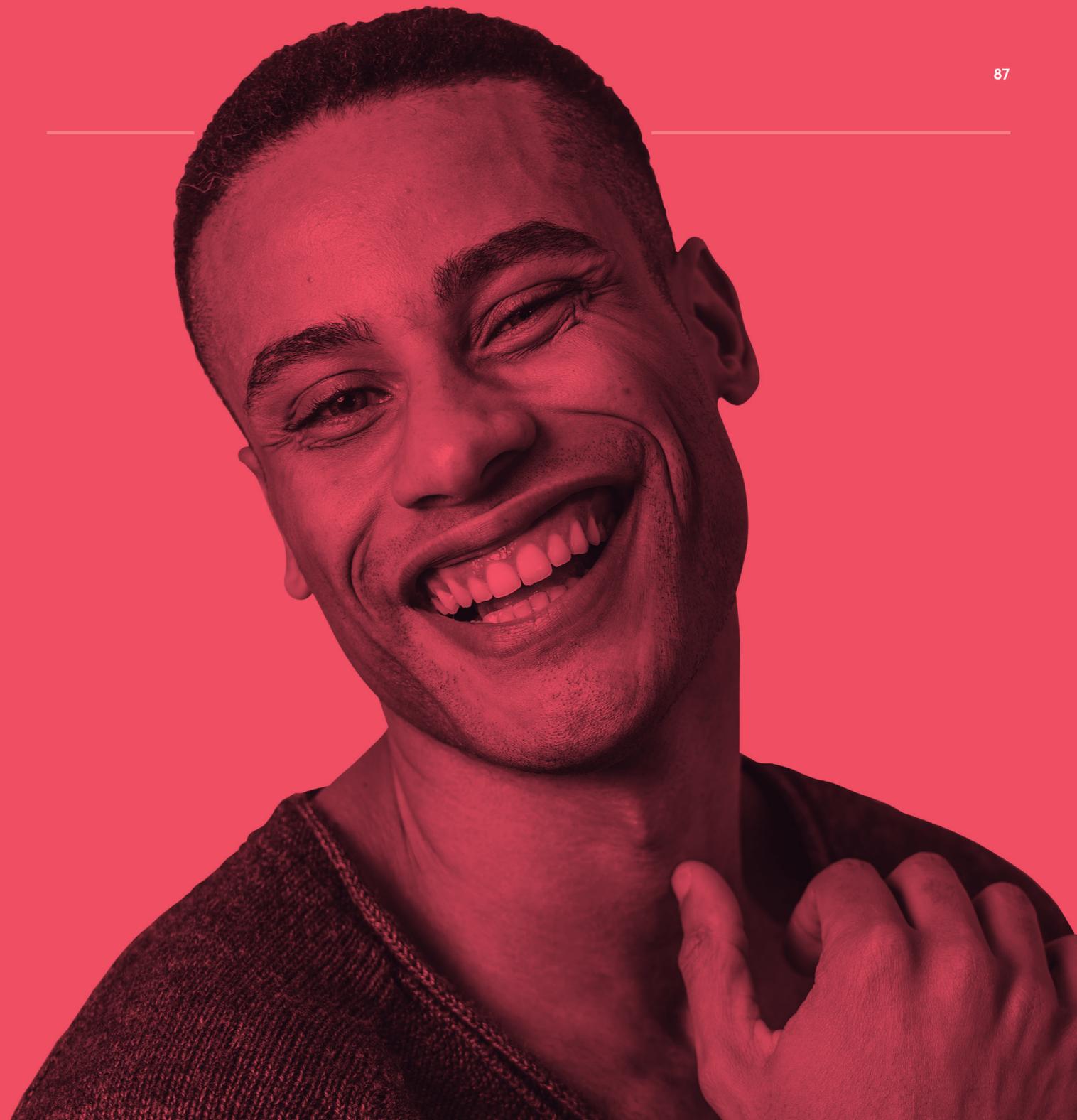
# 10.0

All organisations aspire to achieving excellence, which is possible through formal recognition as part of external validation processes. However, even this outcome is only possible if achieving excellence and a focus upon continuous improvement is at the forefront of everyone's mind employed by Ark.

This requires the leadership of Ark to be proactive with all our people across the organisation and the consistent message that excellence is what we should all be aspiring to.

Creation of this focus and culture is ultimately to the benefit of Ark's customers who would be in receipt of services that our people will be proud to be part of, as they will deliver the positive outcomes that are important to our customers.

## Creating a culture of excellence



Our strategic objective is that:

**“Ark’s Leadership will create a culture of excellence throughout the business”.**

We require the leadership of Ark to be dynamic in how we communicate our new vision and mission across the organisation and instil in our customers and our people that they are part of a continuous improvement process, that will lead to good lives and employment approaches that values our people.

Through proactive communication approaches, the leadership will engage directly with our customers and our people and share our vision of an excellent organisation and the role we can all play in achieving that. Through the systems and processes we implement; our focus upon continuous improvement will be measurable and be clear about expectations on our people to continually strive for excellence and success, and achievement of excellence will be recognised and celebrated and built into our organisational approaches.

We will achieve formal recognition of our continuous improvement across the business, which will be externally validated to demonstrate that Ark is an excellent organisation that delivers positive outcomes for our customers and our people.

We have identified the following objectives that create the framework for meeting this strategic objective:

- ▲ Enhance our continuous improvement activities to create a culture of excellence
- ▲ Provide Leadership across the organisation to drive the behavioural change necessary to achieve a culture of excellence
- ▲ Develop shared principles and approaches to continuous improvement
- ▲ Implement the new vision, mission and values throughout the organisation
- ▲ Achieve formal EFQM recognition.

These objectives will create the framework that will deliver:

- ▲ Systems and approaches that are tangible examples of continuous improvement
- ▲ Evidence gathering methodology that demonstrates delivery of continuous improvement approaches
- ▲ Employees focus upon continuous improvement in their role is measurable
- ▲ High quality services to customers
- ▲ High levels of customer satisfaction
- ▲ High levels of regulatory compliance
- ▲ Ark’s reputation as a high quality organisation
- ▲ High levels of compliance with Governance framework.



**Karen Arnot**

**Support Worker, Edinburgh**

‘I’m a chatterbox and love to have some banter with the people I care for. That said, it’s important to remember we are working in someone else’s home and they may not always feel like being chatty. Every day is different. The reward I get is knowing that I give the people I care for the same choices in life that everybody else has’.

# 11.0

**We have set out ambitious strategic objectives within this Business Plan, aimed to transform Ark over the next 5-10 years. In consultation with around 600 tenants, supported people and employees we have developed a clear focus as an organisation in terms of practical changes we wish to make.**

Through our new vision and mission we have clearly stated organisational and societal change we will influence and work towards for the benefit of our customers, and the new values describe how we will achieve our ambitions through the behaviours and expectations of everyone in Ark.

In the first year of this plan we will be realistic of what we can achieve to ensure that we deliver the commitments we make. It is important we deliver for all our stakeholders and bring a focus this year, on the issues they told us are important to them.

## Year one





For our **supported people**, we will complete the work on our Self-Directed Support pilot project, meaning we will have the evidence to implement changes to supported people's support packages, if they wish to and provide them with more choice and control over how they receive their support. We will continue to focus on delivering good outcomes and high quality care and support and continue to improve our inspection grades.

For **our people**, we will bring clarity to our expectations of them in their role and support and develop them to meet those expectations.

We will implement new recruitment and retention approaches to minimise vacancies and reduce workload on colleagues. We will continue to influence national policy and practice to ensure the employment conditions of our workforce can be improved, and we will implement employment approaches that focus upon the well-being of our people, ensuring Ark is a good place to work.

For our **tenants** we will ensure we continue to deliver property maintenance and improvements that ensure we meet SHQS and EESSH standards by the end of 2020; supporting our tenants with rising fuel costs. We will also create new Asset Management and Value for Money Strategies which aim to ensure we provide high quality housing, at rental levels that offers value for the rents we receive from tenants.

For all **our community**, we will implement communication and engagement approaches so they are informed and consulted. We will implement our new vision, mission and values and communicate an exciting future for Ark and our community. We will continue implementing new technologies to create a better connected organisation.

For Ark, we will create a new brand that reflects a business operating in 2020. We will create a new website that has increased functionality to be used as a marketing and communication tool, and we will build our social media presence to increase our profile and deliver improved outcomes for the organisation.

This Business Plan explains who Ark is and what we wish to achieve for our community. We are determined that quality and achievement of excellence will resonate in every action and decision we take across the organisation.

We have set out strategic objectives that aim to bring a focus on how we will develop and improve the organisation over the long term, and this will be underpinned by a range of management documents and enabling strategies.

We will ensure that our Governance approach is robust to oversee a well functioning organisation and we will bring a significant focus to how we attract, retain and develop our people, as without them we will not become the organisation we aspire to be.

### Kathleen Masson

#### Housing tenant, Forres

'My daughter Carol is autistic and finds things outside her usual routine quite distressing, but when she needed a new kitchen fitted in her flat Ark made sure the workmen knew all about Carol's autism and they worked around Carol's routines so that she could stay in her flat during the work. She even ended up making them their cups of tea. They were fantastic'.



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