



Golden Lane Housing

working in partnership with men-cap



**“Providing housing people can
build their lives around”**

Annual report 2011

Introduction

It is a challenging time both for housing providers and people looking for housing – grant funding has significantly reduced for new housing and people are struggling with rising costs, particularly those on housing benefit who may have seen a significant reduction in their entitlement.

Over the past year, Golden Lane Housing (GLH) has been rising to the challenge by developing new ways of working, including working with the private sector under the Great Tenants service, increasing its work directly with families through the Our House service and creating new sustainable shared ownership approaches.

By rising to the challenge in this way GLH has helped more people get access to housing they need and ensured that those already housed through GLH are safe and secure in their homes despite a changing environment.

In addition GLH has reaffirmed its commitment to quality by committing to invest over £2m in upgrading existing housing and restructuring to ensure that we can provide the very best service possible at the most affordable price.

GLH has also strengthened its joint working with Mencap ensuring that even more people can benefit from our close partnership and that GLH's voice is heard on important issues.



I would like to extend my thanks to all our staff, supporters and tenants - past and present - for their commitment and hard work, and particularly to Simon Parkinson who stepped down as Director at the end of 2010 having been instrumental in building GLH from its beginnings.

Under the helm of our new Director, Alastair Graham, GLH is now looking forward to building on its strong foundations and helping even more people with a learning disability live in a home they can call their own and build their lives around.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Neil McCall".

Neil McCall
Chair of the Board

Board of trustees and management team

GLH was established by Mencap as a registered charity (Registered Charity number 1071097) and also operates as a limited company (Company Registered Number 3597323). The board of trustees provides GLH with a breadth of experience and expertise, contributing their time to help set and oversee the strategic direction of the organisation.

Board of trustees

Neil Mc Call
Chair

Janet Brown

Rohan Jenson

Stuart Kelly

Manny Lewis

Hanifah Law

Jan Tregelles
Company Secretary

Management team

Alastair Graham
Director

Marilyne Davies
Strategic Finance Manager

Rod Dugher
Regional Business Manager (North)

John Verge
Regional Business Manager (South)

Melissa O'Donnell
Property and Customer Services
Manager

Tim Wotton
Marketing Manager



The landlord for people with a learning disability

GLH believes that everyone with a learning disability should have the right to suitable housing they can build their lives around.

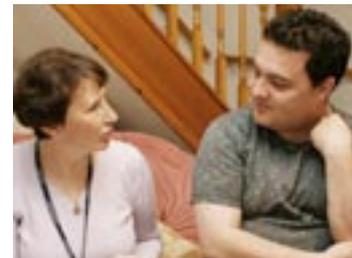
Since being established by Mencap in 1998 as independent charity, GLH have directly housed over 1,300 people and helps thousands more with information, advice and guidance on housing options.

People not properties

Unlike many housing providers GLH not only understand the needs of people with a learning disability, it always starts with an individual and tries to find housing to meet their specific needs rather than placing individuals into existing properties we own.

Partnership working

GLH works closely with over 50 different support providers, including Mencap. Whoever an individual is receiving support from - whether a registered provider or through an individual budget - GLH will liaise and ensure a joined up approach. GLH also responds to request for housing from support providers, whether for an individual, a group or a large scale project.



Providing specialist landlord services

GLH provides specialist landlord services to all its tenants helping bridge the gap between housing and support. GLH does not provide personal support, but works with Mencap and other support providers ensuring all our tenants are supported to maintain their tenancy.

How we work

GLH has always led the field, developing new approaches to housing for people with a learning disability, and has become known as the country's leading national housing provider for people with a learning disability.

Working throughout the country GLH values its flexibility to react to a changing environment. As an independent charity, rather than a registered state housing provider, GLH is proud that it has maintained its freedom to develop housing solutions both in areas of greatest need and in response to the specific challenges individuals face, rather than responding to political priorities. GLH provides rented housing through its 3 key products:

Great Tenants

By working with private landlords, GLH finds and secures houses, flats or any other type of property that suits an individual's needs. Acting as a bridge between the private rented sector and people with a learning disability, GLH ensures people have high quality housing and the peace of mind of knowing GLH is their landlord.

Our House

Many parents or families want to leave their family home or purchase a property for their loved ones as a way of planning for the future and ensuring long term housing security. But often people need someone to manage and maintain a property. Through a discretionary trust, GLH can work to make this a reality and ensure there is a rental income that pays for the necessary costs.

Ordinary Houses

Where it is not possible to find housing through the private rented sector, GLH purchases specific houses and can make the necessary adaptations. This route is particularly suited to people with higher needs or where individuals, families or organisations are interested in putting their own money towards the purchase of a home with GLH.

New developments and voids 2010-2011

New developments

New schemes developed	44
People housed in new schemes	88

Voids

People housed in existing properties	102
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Developing new approaches in a changing environment



To respond to the changing environment, GLH has continued to innovate. 2010–2011 saw GLH conclude its 2 year London Homefinders Project. Funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government, this project created a route for people with a learning disability to access good quality housing in the private rented sector that GLH leased and managed.

Taking around 200 referrals the project not only directly housed 24 people with a learning disability but also indirectly led to many more finding housing either directly in the private rented sector or through assistance GLH gave to help people access services already available through the 8 partner local authorities.

The future

The London Homefinder Project is the forerunner of a new national approach to housing, GLH have called this Great Tenants. The Great Tenants approach allows GLH to provide more houses for people despite shrinking capital funding that would otherwise restrict our ability to develop properties through our traditional purchase approach.

By developing new approaches to securing housing, GLH can ensure that people with a learning disability continue to get the opportunity to live in good quality homes that meet their individual needs in areas of their choice.

Southwest London
homefinder



 **Communities**
and Local Government

Improving quality

The quality of someone's home can have an enormous impact on the quality of their life.

Renovation programme

Having undertaken a detailed stock condition survey of each one of the nearly 400 properties GLH owns, GLH has reasserted its commitment to not just maintaining but raising standards through the implementation of a 2 year £2million renovation programme across its property portfolio.

"This improvement programme will make a meaningful difference to the lives of all our tenants and will help ensure the future long term sustainability of our services," says Customer and Property Services Manager Melissa O'Donnell.

Maintenance standards

Alongside this work GLH has undertaken a major activity to ensure our properties continue to meet and exceed requirements in a tightening legislative background.

Planned works properties in Somerset and Shropshire.



Before works



After works



Maintenance work 2010-2011

Day-to-day repairs and emergencies	3916 jobs
Planned works	1377 jobs

Total spend 2010-2011

Day-to-day repairs and emergencies	£618,330.77
Planned works	£938,085.80

Tenant involvement



Involving individuals is an integral part of GLH; from the outset individuals are involved in the process of finding the right home, as a landlord GLH offers a variety of opportunities.

Tenant satisfaction survey

This year GLH has sent out its first tenant satisfaction survey enabling tenants and their support networks to give feedback on services provided. The responses will support GLH with service delivery and target areas of improvement.

Tenancy Health Check (THC)

GLH has developed a comprehensive quality framework based on an individual throughout their tenancy and the property in which they live. The THC is carried out annually and on an on-going basis.

Campaigning

Up and down the country tenants supported GLH and Mencap's campaign against Housing Benefit changes - giving personal accounts of their housing and how changes could affect them.

Tenant forums

GLH's tenant forums are a platform to support tenants wellbeing and improve GLH's services. Chaired by tenants, 5 forums are held across the country twice a year. In 2010-11 tenants received specialist advice on fire safety, improved easy read information and got involved in GLH's services.

Interview panel

Tenants form part of GLH's interview panel to support with appointing new members of staff.

Contractor training

GLH's primary contractor, Seddons Property Services Ltd provided training to tenants to learn painting and decorating skills.

Contractor tender process

With the help of tenants GLH is finding new contractors to deliver its maintenance service. Through tenant involvement GLH has included their aspirations and expectations of a contractor and maintenance service in the tender documents issued.

Partnership working

GLH recognises the strength and impact of working in partnership.

Mencap

Established by Mencap, GLH has always retained a very close working relationship with Mencap.

Working together Mencap and GLH can offer joined up services that include housing alongside; Advocacy, Personal support, help finding work, leisure opportunities and learning opportunities through one of the three specialist Mencap colleges.

Local Authorities

By working with councils GLH can ensure that housing can be provided in ways that suit the local environment and meets predetermined needs.

Whether as part of a county wide reprovision or de-registration programme, through providing clusters of housing to reduce support funding or through the provision of housing for specific individuals, GLH can provide tailored housing solutions that give individuals long term affordable housing.



Support providers

GLH recognises the importance of an individual having choice about who supports them. Nationally, GLH works with over 50 different support providers as well as a number of people who receive individual budgets. We also accept referrals from providers looking for housing for people they currently support.

Housing associations

GLH also works with a number of housing associations and other mainstream housing providers to ensure that people with a learning disability are getting the specialist support and landlord services they need. Whether GLH works on a consultancy basis or takes a lease on specific properties we ensure that all our tenants get the same high level of service.

Campaigning on housing issues

With widespread changes to funding for housing, housing related benefits and substantial changes to the wider benefit regime including for personal support, GLH has strengthened its working partnership with Mencap.

Our aim has been to use the housing expertise of GLH alongside the profile, connections and clout of Mencap to create a voice on housing issues for people with a learning disability.

2010-2011

During the past year GLH and Mencap have been campaigning and lobbying on the current housing allocation system, housing benefit changes (particularly for those in supported housing) and on income support mortgage cuts affecting people in shared ownership homes they have bought.

Supporting tenants

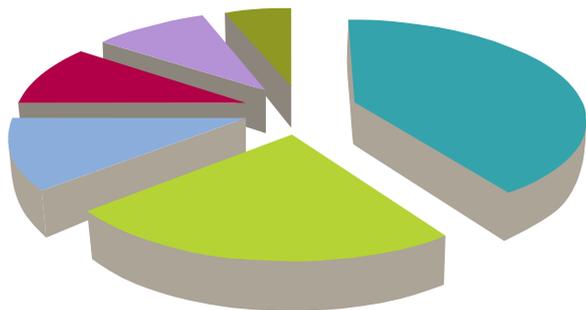
GLH also plays a very active local role supporting individuals and families facing Housing Benefit rent restrictions or challenges from their local authority. GLH's robust challenges have ensured that people get their full entitlement and the housing they need and deserve.



Finance 2010-2011

GLH owns 380 houses, flats or bungalows and leases 102 others.

Value of GLH properties



GLH owned properties financed by:

	Shared investment	£ 3,829,519
	Outstanding loans	£37,653,482
	Repayable grants	£17,456,840
	Non repayable grants	£ 4,479,673
	Bonds	£ 1,800,000
	Equity	£ 4,729,899

Total value of GLH properties **£69,949,413**

Income and expenditure

Income

Rental income	£ 8,084,586
Donations	£ 38,949
Investment income	£ 13,074
Other income	£ 34,575

Total income **£8,171,184**

Expenditure

Services, repairs and staffing	£ 7,109,756
Governance	£ 39,085
Other costs	£ 61,816

Total expenditure **£7,210,657**

Surplus used for financing the capital repayment element of GLH loans £ 960,527

Get involved

The combination of austerity measures and the high cost of housing means more and more people with a learning disability need the help of GLH. We know that GLH alone can not fully meet the need, so we are looking for people who share our vision that people with a learning disability should have equality of opportunity to live in a home they can build their lives around.

Campaigning and housing champions

GLH can't provide housing for everyone, so alongside the housing we provide, we work to ensure that the housing system works better for people with a learning disability. Whether campaigning on cuts to benefits or highlighting the plight of individuals, GLH is trying to create a community of like minded individuals who can add to our voice.

The GLH adaptation fund

Often it is not the bricks and mortar which is the biggest challenge for GLH to find, instead it is the cost of specialist adaptations – each individual is different and we need to respond in very short timescales. The GLH adaptation fund allows us to ensure that when there is no alternative funding available, people can still live independently – this might be anything from a ramp to a wet room, hand rails to environmental heating. A donation as small as £50 could make the difference to someone.

Creating a lasting housing legacy

Many individuals and families recognise that when they are no longer about they can make a difference by leaving money or property to GLH to help us continue to house more and more people with a learning disability.

Donating to support our work

It is only thanks to donations from the public that we can continue our housing surgeries and provide specialist housing for some people with the highest need. As a registered charity Golden Lane housing does not receive grant funding that Housing Associations do, so support in the form of donations ensures we can continue to work with individuals whatever and wherever their needs might be.

Landlords and developers

We are looking to work with enlightened landlords and property developers across the country. We know people with a learning disability can make great tenants. By working with GLH we can ensure landlords get market rates and people with a learning disability get the housing they need and deserve.

To find out more about any of the ways you can help:

0845 604 0046

email: enquiries@glh.org.uk

or visit our website: www.glh.org.uk

Looking ahead

Our vision is a world where everyone with a learning disability has access to a full range of housing options to meet their individual needs.

To deliver our vision, GLH is continuing to provide more housing based around what specific individuals want and need, to enable them to live full independent lives.

By building on our work with private sector through our Great Tenants service, by working with families to help them plan for their future through shared ownership or housing management services and through working closely with local authorities and support providers to address strategic commissioning plans, GLH can ensure that each year more people can live independently in a home around which they can build their lives.

As a specialist landlord that understands the needs, desires and aspirations of people with a learning disability, GLH not only ensures people get a home they can call their own, but that they are properly

supported to maintain their tenancy. Over the coming year GLH is committed to:

- Developing new ways of working and providing more people with housing.
- Improving the quality of our housing and housing related services.
- Campaigning to ensure that the rights and needs of people with a learning disability are properly recognised.

We are always keen to hear from people who share our vision and aspirations, whether that is an individual looking for housing, a local authority keen to provide more options for people or people who recognise the importance of high quality housing and want to join our campaigning.

Please get in touch with GLH, share your experiences, and see if there is more that we can do in your local area.



Alastair Graham
Director, Golden Lane Housing



Contact us

For more advice and information about
Golden Lane Housing's services:

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West Point
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Email: enquiries@glh.org.uk
or visit our website: www.glh.org.uk

Images are courtesy of GLH tenants and Mencap.