



Better homes, better lives

# Annual Highlights 2015–2016

A year at Dunedin Canmore



# Message from Dunedin Canmore's Chair

Tom Mitchell looks back over  
the year's highlights.

The bottom half of the page is decorated with large, overlapping geometric shapes in shades of blue. A dark blue triangle points upwards from the bottom left corner, meeting a lighter blue triangle that points downwards from the top right corner. The two triangles meet at a central point, creating a white diamond-shaped negative space.



**Tom Mitchell**  
Chair of Dunedin Canmore

The year 2015-16 will be remembered as one of the most significant chapters in Dunedin Canmore's history.

We officially joined Wheatley Group after consultation with our customers, and a ballot in which 84.3% of tenants who voted supported plans for the partnership.

We celebrated our 40th anniversary and, most importantly, began a new stage of our journey to improve our services and move closer to our customers.

We also worked with our sister organisations in Wheatley to develop a five-year Group strategy - Investing in Our Futures.

Investing in Our Futures spells out Wheatley Group's vision and aims up to 2020. For Dunedin Canmore, it means we have aligned our strategy with our Group partners and now have clear and ambitious plans for the future.

We are also one of six Registered Social Landlords who have pledged to match the City of Edinburgh Council's plan to build 8,000 homes, which will bring an incredible 16,000 to the Capital over the next decade. Being part of Wheatley gives our resources a vital boost and will enable us to deliver on our promise to build these much needed affordable homes.

We introduced a new way of working, putting more housing officers in our local communities, and developed new and improved services for customers.

And we did all of that while continuing to build new, affordable homes and upgrade existing homes with improvements such as new bathrooms and kitchens.

The staff and Board at Dunedin Canmore have embraced our partnership with Wheatley Group and worked incredibly hard to deliver excellent services to customers and I would like to thank them for their continued commitment. We have built a solid platform for Dunedin Canmore to move forward and take advantage of the clear opportunities open to us.

Here are some of our highlights for 2015-16.



We invested £7.1million  
in improving our homes.



### **New affordable homes**

Over the year we completed 80 new affordable homes across our communities. We also started work on a further 145 homes with 188 currently in development.

Dunedin Canmore tenants moved into:

- 8 homes for social rent at Powderhall Gait in Edinburgh's Broughton, and
- 60 homes for mid-market rent at our Westfield Development in Edinburgh.

### **Improving our homes**

We invested almost £7.1million in improving and servicing our homes. The work included new roofs, major tenement repairs, new heating and replacement kitchens and bathrooms.

Our customers are not only enjoying their modern and comfortable homes with new amenities, the energy-efficient features also mean cheaper fuel bills. That helps us tackle fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions.

This year we have completed:

- 304 new kitchens
- 22 bathrooms
- 111 shower upgrades
- 133 windows and doors
- 162 new boilers/gas central heating.

### **Upgrade for historic building**

Work began on 39-48 Earl Grey Street in Edinburgh City Centre, a pre-1919 building in need of critical repairs. Dunedin Canmore owns 24 homes in the building which is also made up of 10 privately owned flats and five shop units.

The project will see essential stonework repairs for the walls and roof refurbishment work in order to preserve the integrity of the building.

The Earl Grey Street works form one of our first major projects to be delivered under our pre-1919 Tenement Strategy. The Strategy aims to address particular challenges faced by Dunedin Canmore in managing nearly 1,000 pre-1919 tenement flats. The estimated capital investment programme of the project is in excess of £10million.

The strategy has been developed in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council and Dunedin Canmore's local tenants' forum who have all welcomed our commitment to preserve and enhance our tenement properties across the city.

The Scottish Government has invited Dunedin Canmore to participate in a national working group which is looking at the challenges presented by pre-1919 tenement homes across the country. Several projects, including Earl Grey Street, have been selected by the Government as case studies to further develop national policy.

### **‘EPIC’ Customer service boost**

We launched a transformation programme to take our customer services at Dunedin Canmore to the next level.

Staff came up with a name for the programme based on the values that would drive their journey to excellence – excellence, pride, integrity and commitment – ‘EPIC’.

As part of the EPIC transformation, we introduced a new way of working with fewer layers of management. This is designed to speed up decision-making so that staff can deliver solutions for customers at the first point of contact.

We almost doubled our number of Housing Officers, increasing numbers from 14 to 24, and reducing the amount of homes they manage to 200 each.

New local teams made up of housing, repairs and environmental staff have also been formed so colleagues can work closely together.

Staff were involved in a series of engagement events with their ideas being turned into improvements for customers. These have included:

- shorter waiting times for callers to Dunedin Canmore’s customer service centre
- repairs being spotted earlier in customers’ homes as a result of increased visits
- specialist advice or care support put in place for elderly and vulnerable tenants.

### **Combating fuel poverty**

This year we began work on our ‘Energy 2020’ project which aims to fit 600 Dunedin Canmore homes with gas central heating over the next five years, saving tenants money on their energy bills.

The first stage of the project has seen 200 homes installed with cavity wall and loft insulation, helping make them warmer and more energy-efficient. 174 high-efficiency gas boilers and heating systems have also been installed under the initiative to date.

This first stage of the ‘Energy 2020’ project won a top energy-efficiency award – the Regional Small Scale Project of the Year Award 2016 – at the Annual Scottish Energy Efficiency Retrofit Awards.

Other works carried out to support the ‘Energy 2020’ project include full gas central heating, thermostatic showers, loft/cavity wall insulation and new windows and doors.



### Fuel advice slashes bills

Customers across our communities saved £153,987 in the past year thanks to our fuel advice service. A total of 878 tenants used the service in 2015-16 and saved on their bills.

Dunedin Canmore's energy advice team 'HEAT' gives customers free, expert advice on keeping their gas and electricity bills low.

They helped people:

- reduce payments
- get on a lower tariff
- apply for a Warm Homes Discount payment, and
- reduce debt.

Tenant Henry Dickson, 77, saved £250 just by doing an energy price comparison with help from HEAT advisor Nadia Winnick.

Henry said: "I like to keep my home cosy but I was worried about high fuel bills. I can't believe I was able to save so much just by changing my tariff. Nadia made it very easy to swap and I'm really pleased with the savings."

### Handyperson service a hit

Our Handyperson service is there to help tenants who are over 60 or disabled with small jobs around the home.

It proved a big hit this year with 131 jobs carried out. Jobs ranged from hanging curtains, putting up shelves and assembling flat-pack furniture.

Agnes Henry, 60, from Restalrig in Edinburgh had her new

bedroom furniture put together by handyperson George Neil. She said: "The Handyperson Service is a fantastic idea. It would have been impossible for me to build my bedroom furniture and it's great that tenants have access to this service."

"Not everyone has people to help with this kind of thing and it can be expensive to pay to get the job done."

### Excellent rating for hostel

Dunedin Harbour Hostel was awarded the highest grading of Excellent following an unannounced inspection by the Care Inspectorate in September 2015.

Inspectors said people at the hostel spoke highly of their key worker and other staff working in the service. And they found lots of evidence of the positive outcomes people were achieving, many of whom are dealing with very complex issues.

The past year has seen the hostel work with 105 service users. Outcomes include:

- 36 service users accessed education, training and employment
- 100% reported greater self-confidence
- 36 people reported reduced substance misuse, and
- 42 residents moved into settled accommodation.



# EXCELLENT

rating for Dunedin Harbour Hostel

# 72 People

helped into jobs by Dunedin Canmore and partners from our communities

## A route out of homelessness

Our initiative to help homeless people settle into a home of their own launched in 2015 and has enjoyed fantastic success.

We offer the option of a training flat to people in our homeless hostel who are looking to move into a long-term tenancy. The flats provide a caring and secure environment where they can learn how to maintain a tenancy and run a home. Once they feel confident branching out on their own we are able to resettle them into a new home in our communities.

Having direct access to housing within Dunedin Canmore is a great asset which allows us to create a continuous pathway from homeless accommodation to permanent homes.

Over the last year we worked with 18 people using our supported flats with:

- 8 people accessing education, training and employment
- 14 residents achieving greater independence
- 100% of people maximising their income
- 100% of people reporting greater self-confidence.

All 18 residents have moved into settled accommodation.

## Jobs and training

Employability schemes funded by Dunedin Canmore and partners helped 72 people from our communities into jobs and 426 people into training and further education over the year.

As part of our drive to provide customers with more opportunities to lead better lives and move on into jobs we helped people into community learning, further education, volunteering and employment through:

- youth projects including Environmental Volunteering and Outdoor Learning 'EVOLS'
- sport initiative 'Football works' which teaches employability and personal development through football, and
- community-based computer learning which provides access and support for digital training and includes access to accredited certification in Microsoft Office packages.

## Opportunities for customers

Joining the Group has meant our customers can now benefit from the Wheatley Pledge scheme, which incentivises contractors and suppliers to do more for our communities.

Alfie McIntosh, 33, a Dunedin Canmore mid-market tenant, landed a full time job with Dunpark letting agency in Edinburgh through the Wheatley Pledge.

He said: "Getting this job is a real boost for my family. It's fantastic my landlord can offer this kind of support."

Customers can now benefit from the Wheatley Modern Apprenticeships and our first Modern Apprentice was accepted in May 2016.

Sophie Hopkinson-Klein, 23, has been appointed Property Operations Modern Apprentice. She was previously a resident at our homeless hostel Dunedin Harbour and had been working in our Business Support team for a year.





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### Digital inclusion

We continued to increase the number of digital skills centres in our communities with 17 now open to the public and plans to open more over the next year.

Our Digital Skills for All project provides free computer facilities and support classes in some of Edinburgh's poorest communities. Expert advice is on hand to help people log-on to job sites, create a CV, get online shopping discounts, pay their rent and access online benefit forms and accounts.

1,079 participants from our communities have used our Digital Skills for All classes with 95 undertaking training, learning and employment activities. 30 of those people have gained employment.

The centres are a partnership between Cre8te Opportunities Ltd, Port of Leith Housing Association and Hillcrest Housing Association.

### Welfare services

We have increased the range of wraparound services designed to support people affected by welfare reform - from money advice, welfare rights, energy advice and support with income maximisation and financial literacy.

We also offer a range of other activities such as healthy eating advice, cooking lessons, health and safety awareness, tackling fuel poverty and employability.

In the past year a total of 1,600 customers have used the services.

### Improving performance

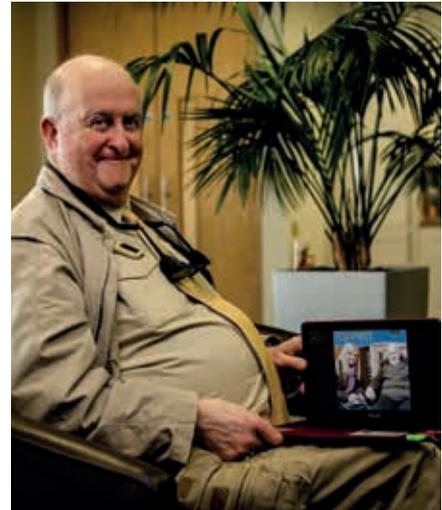
We continued to make significant strides in improving our business performance on many of the key indicators which we report to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Some of the key performance results for 2015-16 at Dunedin Canmore include:

- ▶ the percentage of customers who sustained their tenancies for more than a year rose from 91% to 92.6%
- ▶ customers' satisfaction at being kept informed about services and decisions remained high at 92%
- ▶ average length of time taken to re-let properties fell by 3 days from 29.42 days to 26.42 days, and
- ▶ rent arrears were reduced from 6.07% to 4.81%.

We will work hard to improve customer engagement satisfaction levels over the next year.

A significant amount of work was done to ensure our performance reporting was consistent with the rest of the Group. This will help business leads to drive improvements across all our services over the coming year.







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