



**INQUILAB**

# Annual Review for Residents

2020-2021



Delivering reliable services  
that our diverse communities  
value and trust

[www.inquilabha.org](http://www.inquilabha.org)

# Foreword : 2020 - An Extraordinary Year by Inquilab Chair and Chief Executive

When looking back on the past year, Covid and the effects of the pandemic take centre stage in everyone's minds.

No one could have predicted how the world would be forced to change and how our everyday lives could alter so drastically.

The impact of the pandemic was, and remains, far reaching. Beyond the serious health issues brought about by the virus, the pandemic and lockdown saw higher incidences of domestic violence, hate crime, and anti-social behaviour. For many of our residents the impact of self-isolation, tragic losses, illness, and financial suffering saw an exponential increase in anxiety and poor mental health.

Throughout the pandemic we have been even more determined to support our communities and, in particular, our most vulnerable residents during these extraordinarily challenging times.

Taking the time to listen to and support our residents continues to be an integral part of our commitment to being a customer-focused organisation.

During the peak of the pandemic we undertook an outreach programme which ensured that we contacted, and remained in telephone contact with, our most vulnerable residents which included the elderly, those who live alone, and those with serious medical conditions.

Our programme included delivering groceries to those who had to self-isolate during lockdown, and helping residents to get online in this digital 'remote-working' world so that they could feel closer to family and friends, do on-line shopping and banking, and feel connected with the outside world.

Whilst doing this, we also maintained our services and continued to support our residents' requests for repairs within the guidelines of lockdown and Government imposed restrictions.

We are incredibly proud of our communities and the way in which our residents coped during the last year.





Our commitment to focusing on the needs of some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in local BME communities remains as strong today as when Inquilab was founded over 30 years ago.

We know that a home is so much more than bricks and mortar. Good quality housing is just part of the foundations needed to build and develop resilient, thriving communities. Supporting our residents in ways that improves their daily lives and opportunities for the future is equally important and, in 2020, we continued to provide wellbeing and financial advice, and ease unemployment by finding opportunities for upskilling and work.

This year has also seen good progress in terms of the way we engage with residents.

Our Residents Scrutiny Panel and Customer Committee both play incredibly important roles in holding us to account and scrutinising our performance. You can read more about these on pages 6 - 9. Thanks to the input of our members, we have made important strides forward in shaping our services to meet your needs.

2020 was undoubtedly a tough year with many challenges; but thanks to the commitment and resilience of our staff, residents, Board members and stakeholders we have emerged a stronger, even more customer-focussed organisation.

We know that the pandemic is not over; and the impacts will be felt for many years to come; but we are optimistic for the future which is encapsulated in our new three year Corporate Plan.

We remain committed to you, our residents, and to our communities. We thank you for your support to us.



**Pamela Leonce**  
Chair



**Gina Amoh**  
Chief Executive

# Highlights for 2020

2020 was a challenging year for everyone as the pandemic swept the world and brought about a new way of working.

However, thanks to our agility and investment in people, systems, and IT, we managed to maintain services throughout the pandemic, whilst focussing our attention on supporting our residents at a time when they needed us most.

Our staff quickly implemented home working so that we were able to continue to deliver services as seamlessly as possible for our customers.

We strive to be a top performing organisation which puts our residents first, and we are proud of the way our team managed during this difficult year.



## Highlights included:

- Delivering our Transformation Project which is already improving how we deliver our repairs service for our residents
- Organising and delivering our 'Reach Out' programme to support our most vulnerable residents during the pandemic
- Strengthening our team with new senior appointments in Governance, Customer Services and Communications
- Successfully resolving 100% of ASB cases (of cases now closed)
- Achieving the top G1 governance rating from our regulator and retaining the top V1 rating for financial viability
- Expanding the opportunities for our residents to get involved in decisions to improve our services through our Residents Scrutiny Panel and Customer Committee
- Implementing a new compliance system to ensure we meet all regulations and legal requirements
- Adding 21 new homes to our portfolio including acquiring 19 units from another housing association
- Ensuring our services were not disrupted during the pandemic and that we fully supported customers and staff
- Once again achieving the Diversity Champion mark in recognition of our open, inclusive, and transparent way of working which recognises and celebrates everyone's individuality regardless of background
- Publication of our three-year Corporate Strategy which sets out our key objectives, priorities, and plans for growth
- Ending the financial year in a healthy financial position, with reserve funds that will help in our plans to grow, invest in homes, and in the communities we serve.

# Our governance is your assurance

Like all Housing Associations, Inquilab is led and controlled by a Board of Directors. The Board sets out our strategic direction, ensures we are working to uphold our values, that we are compliant with legislation, and that we are a well-run organisation that listens to, and meets, the needs of our residents.

Inquilab residents can join the Board to work alongside independent professional people from a range of careers and backgrounds. Together, our Board brings a wealth of different skills and experiences that our organisation benefits from, including strategy, people, finance, and housing management.

We are proud to have a Board of Directors who are truly committed to making a difference to the lives of our residents and who ensure we strive for constant improvement so that we remain a focussed, sustainable, and legally compliant, business.

**Thanks to this commitment and to the excellent work of our employees and everyone who works with us, we received a G1 rating for governance and V1 for financial viability in 2020. These are the highest possible ratings awarded by the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH).**

Our governance and the practices which we adopt, were also recently highlighted following an independent review conducted by The Governance Forum which identified our excellence in leadership and strategy.

We hope that this gives you, our valued residents, assurance that your home, safety, and the support you can expect from your housing provider, is in good hands.

## OUR BOARD

**Pamela Leonce**  
(Chair)

**Gina Amoh**  
(Chief Executive)

**Katie Wilmot**  
(Inquilab Resident)

**Puneet Rajput**

**John Barr**

**Peta Caine**

**Vivien Knibbs**

**Gordon Mattocks**

**Nisha Makwana**

# Our residents help us to help you

Residents have always been, and will always remain, at the heart of our organisation. We know that by involving our residents in decisions that affect your homes and neighbourhoods we can ensure we are delivering services that meet your needs.

We offer a range of opportunities for residents to provide feedback, scrutinise our performance, challenge our decisions, and share ideas to help influence and improve services for everyone.

## Residents Scrutiny Panel (RSP)

Through our RSP we give our residents the opportunity to scrutinise our work, give us feedback and ideas which we then capture as a set of actions for our organisation. Our RSP is made up of Inquilab residents who play a key role in helping us to build on the things that we do well, and develop the areas where we can do better. The RSP reports directly to our Executive Management Team and thanks to their recommendations and proposals we continue to improve our services.



**In 2020-21 this included:**

**How we communicate with our residents**

- We have redesigned and redeveloped our website so that it is more user-friendly and easier for you to find the information you need
- Launched our monthly e-newsletter to keep you up-to-date with important news and events
- A commitment and investment in developing a new Residents Portal to enable our residents to manage their tenancy in a way that works for them

**Improved our Repairs and Maintenance Service**

- Better response times to your enquiries and requests
- A real-time text service to let you know when your operative or engineer is due
- A feedback text alert to let us know if you are happy with your repair

**Focus on creating safer communities**

- Further investment in our approach to dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour which in 2020 secured 100% success rate on all (now closed) cases



**OUR RESIDENTS SCRUTINY PANEL:**

- Adnan Butt (Chair)
- Priscilla Ankras
- Tamzin Davidson
- Anthony Hylton
- Josephine Okello
- Abhishek Pandit
- Jason Sylvester
- Diane Wilson

## Customer Committee

Our Customer Committee was launched in September 2019 to oversee and respond to the services we provide for you, and to monitor resident engagement activities.

Despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, during its first full year in 2020 the Committee members – which includes Non-Executive Directors and Residents – continued to meet online and even recruited new members during lockdown. The committee had a productive year including:

- Overseeing the refresh of the Residents Scrutiny Panel and recruiting new members during lockdown
- Looking at the way we handle complaints so that we make feedback easier to give with improved response times
- Reviewing our repairs and allocations policies
- Checking we are compliant with the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards
- Examining research about our households and customers to help advise on how we can improve our services to meet individual needs.

### OUR CUSTOMER COMMITTEE:

**Katie Wilmot**

(Chair – Board member and resident)

**John Barr**

(Board member)

**Katy Crothall**

(Independent committee member)

**Zakia Raja**

(Independent committee member and resident)







*"I feel it is crucial for residents to have the opportunity to influence the service we receive from Inquilab. After all, who knows the service better than us, the customers? The Customer Committee plays a critical role in providing a voice for residents. It allows us to raise issues of concern and monitor the progress of improvements to the service we receive from Inquilab. We liaise directly with the Board, which ensures that our comments and recommendations go directly to the top of the organisation."*

**Katie Wilmot,**

Chair of Customer Committee

If you would like to get involved with Inquilab or have an issue to raise with one of our resident groups, please get in touch with us via our Residents Portal or Website at [www.inquilabha.org](http://www.inquilabha.org)



# Supporting you in lockdown

The last few years have been like no other in living memory as the pandemic forced us all to change the way we go about our daily lives.

Lockdown was tough for many people and we know that lots of our residents suffered as a result of feelings of isolation and concerns around health, money and work.

However, as a housing provider with a social conscience, we've tried to offer as much support to our residents as possible during these challenging times. We remain committed to delivering an unwavering level of service to all our residents, and our staff worked exceptionally hard to ensure services continued even throughout lockdown.

We organised and delivered our 'Reach Out' programme in which our staff regularly checked in on those residents we know are particularly vulnerable, such as the frail and elderly, people who live alone, those struggling with mental health issues, or residents who are classed as high risk of contracting Covid.



We kept in regular contact with these residents and also with everyone who had to self-isolate or quarantine to reassure them that help and support was always available if and when needed. And if we couldn't directly help, we were always able to signpost or refer to a specialist agency who could.

**As well as providing a friendly voice on the phone for isolated and vulnerable residents, we also reached out to those who were suffering financially by offering financial planning and budgeting advice to help people on furlough, and ensured fair rent payment plans were put in place for residents who had fallen into rent arrears.**

**During 2020, and following Government guidelines during the pandemic, we were able to ensure all our residents kept their home\*.**

We also made over 177 calls to vulnerable residents as part of our 'Reach Out' programme, and supported a number of residents experiencing financial difficulties with rent payment plans.

*\* Excludes cases of ASB or criminal offences*

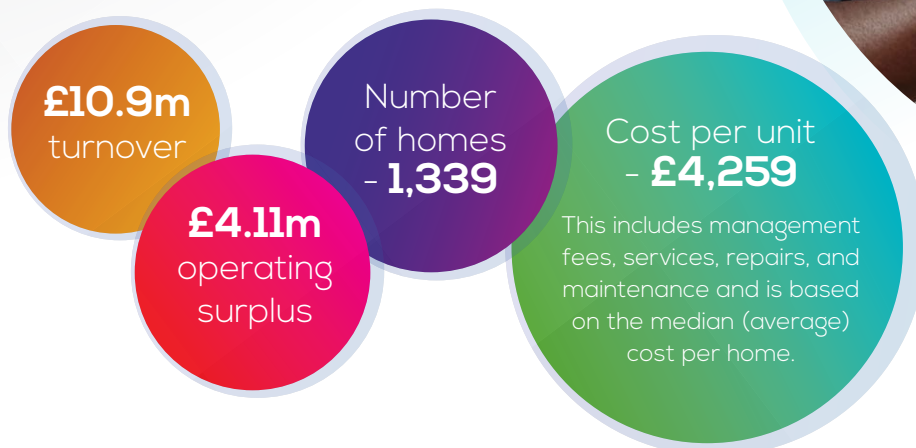


# How we spent your money

## Financial Highlights

In 2020 we were pleased to once again retain the top VI rating for financial viability. We remain a financially robust organisation with good cash reserves which enables us to continue to invest in quality homes and services, whilst providing funds for our future growth plans in supporting housing need within the communities we serve.

**During our Financial Year from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, we achieved:**



## Generating Value for Money

We know that every penny counts towards delivering real benefits for our residents. Any savings we make are invested back into funding improvements into services and initiatives that our residents tell us are important to them.

We are committed to delivering and demonstrating Value for Money (VfM) in everything we do for our customers and the communities we serve.

This commitment is led by our Board and shared across the whole organisation. It is fundamental to the way we operate, and it is embedded in our Corporate Strategy.

Our approach is delivered by our people through our culture of customer service and VfM, supported by strong leadership, training, individual objective setting, and rigorous financial management.

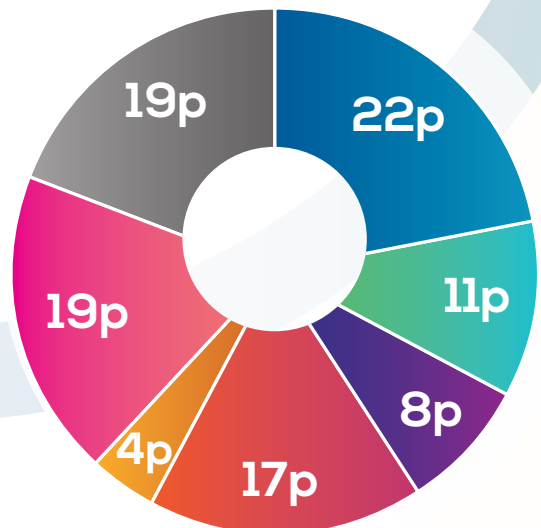


**We have a clear, comprehensive, and strategic approach to achieving VfM which includes:**

- Setting budgets which deliver the best balance of expenditure between investing in services, new and existing homes, and communities.
- Clearly highlighting activities in our Business Plan which will contribute to improving value for money.
- The measurement and regular reporting of performance against Key Performance Indicators which focus on the quality and efficiency of services provided.
- Rigorous appraisal of all significant projects, including the potential benefits in alternative delivery models.
- A robust assessment process for development and investment opportunities including alignment with our strategic objectives, likely returns on investment, demand for the products and external market conditions.
- An established Procurement Strategy.
- Focus and follow-up on planned savings by the Executive Management Team and the Board, including regular updates on the progress of forecast savings across relevant projects.
- Robust self-assessment of performance against the VfM standard to ensure compliance, including an assessment of performance which covers customer satisfaction, new homes built, employee engagement and operating margin.
- Benchmarking our performance against our peers and the sector as a whole.

**How We Spend Each £**

- Maintaining our properties
- Managing our properties
- Cost of Services e.g cleaning, ground maintenance
- Depreciation of our properties
- Other Charges paid relating to our properties
- Bank Interest paid on borrowing to buy housing
- Retained for future investment



# Dealing with anti social behaviour

Over the years, one area that continues to concern residents is increasing cases of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB).

In 2020 the impact of lockdown and self-isolation saw more people causing neighbourhood disturbance and nuisance and, in some cases, high levels of ASB.

We take ASB extremely seriously and we are committed to resolving incidences so that our residents feel protected and secure in their homes.

During 2020 we continued to work closely with our appointed specialist organisation, ASB Operations, to help develop our ASB service.

Listening to our residents, we have adopted an approach which resolves cases faster, and which better supports victims during, and after, investigations.

## In 2020:

**93** cases of ASB were investigated

**23** cases remain active (as of 31 March 2021)

of which 11 are in a monitoring status

**70** cases are now closed

of which 100% are successfully resolved (including in some cases, eviction)



### Percentage of ASB issues

- Threats / Intimidation and Harassment
- Noise
- Security and block issues
- Other
- Damage to Property
- Drug Related
- Violence / Assault
- Fly tipping
- Vehicle / Parking Related



Thanks to our approach with ASB Operations, more cases are being resolved more efficiently. This is through a mix of advice, mediation, and face-to-face meetings with the perpetrators to bring about a successful resolution.

Inquilab's success is based on collaboration and good working relationships with The Police, local councils, other housing associations, social services, and environmental health teams.

Inquilab's housing staff also receive specialist training to help them deal more effectively with ASB cases; and a Witness Support Network is now giving victims and witnesses a platform to share their voice and experiences of ASB.

*"Our approach is about mutually respectful and responsive relationships so that we can manage and, where necessary, bring perpetrators to justice,"* explains **Ben Hunt** of ASB Operations

*"It's equally about supporting the victims of ASB themselves and keeping Inquilab in close contact with the victims so that they are provided with regular updates on the progress of a case, and that they feel protected."*

# Zero Tolerance Case Study 1: Drugs and ASB

In 2020, despite the challenges of lockdown and pressure on the courts, Inquilab successfully brought a long-term ASB case to resolution when a drugs dealing tenant was evicted from their property.

The tenant had been running a wide-spread drug operation from their property, causing anxiety, noise, and intimidating behaviour to other residents.

Working with the police, Inquilab obtained a Closure Order which 'closed down' the property, meaning the perpetrating tenants were banned from entering the property.

Explains Ben: **"We then applied for Injunction Orders to further prevent the tenants from returning to the property while we waited for the Courts to reopen after lockdown upon which the Court approved permanent eviction and repossession of the property."**





# Zero Tolerance Case Study 2: Hate Crime and ASB

Angela has been an Inquilab resident since 1999 and feels very much part of her community.

However, in 2005 her family became subjected to racial abuse which included hate mail, noise, bricks thrown through her windows and car, faeces put through the letterbox, and fireworks set off in her garden.


This was more than ASB; it was a hate crime that was endured for 15 years. Attempts to involve the local police proved unsuccessful due to lack of evidence.

**"I was so scared all the time," explains Angela. "The behaviour and abuse just kept going. We tried moving but there were no available homes and we couldn't afford to buy our own house. Our daughter had to move out, we had to park our car out of sight; it was a nightmare."**

Angela also suffered anxiety and depression as a result of the abuse and harassment.

In 2019 Angela turned to Inquilab as a last resort. Desperate to find a solution, in 2020 ASB and Inquilab helped to install CCTV outside Angela's home so that evidence could finally be captured and presented to the Police.

But the evidence never came; because the perpetrators never came back. This not only resulted in a positive outcome for Angela and her family, but also for the neighbourhood as crime and victimisation in the immediate area reduced significantly.



*"I am in no doubt that it was installing visible cameras outside my house that stopped this crime. The camera has made me, and my neighbourhood safer. I am grateful to Inquilab for listening to me and giving me the support I needed when I really didn't have anywhere else to turn."*

# Welcoming our new residents

In 2020, we welcomed new Inquilab residents following our acquisition of properties at Abbey Lodge in Ealing and Priory Avenue in Chiswick.

This latest acquisition, which was completed in March 2021, saw an addition 19 properties added to our portfolio, enabling more people within our communities to enjoy their home and have access to our community support such as helping to find work, employability training, getting online, and managing finances.

Linda is one such resident who is delighted with her new home. She says: **"Inquilab's friendly staff were there to greet us on the day of the transfer which made us feel really welcome and supported. Inquilab has maintained an excellent level of service since day one and the block is well looked after. The regular cleaner, gardener and window cleaner all do a really good job and they've even helped to take away the garden refuse from the communal garden which now looks its best for us all to enjoy."**



# A top-to-toe service

We know that repairs is one of the most important services for our residents so it's crucial we get it right.

In recent years we have transformed the way we're organised, improved our systems, and invested in new technology to make things easier for our customers and staff.

In 2020 we worked closely with our contractors to ensure more day-to-day repairs are carried out right first time in order to improve our residents' repairs experience.

And we also embarked on an ambitious top-to-toe project which aimed to transform our housing blocks by making them look, feel, and operate better.

Focusing on blocks which were experiencing more repair needs or antisocial behaviour issues, we sent out surveys to residents requesting feedback. The aim was to carry out repairs and security improvements suggested by residents in each block, in order to reduce calls about repairs and antisocial behaviour, whilst enhancing community pride in local neighbourhoods.

To date, **eight blocks** have already benefitted from the project and we have plans to progress onto a **further 12 blocks** by mid-2022

Reports of antisocial behaviour have reduced as a result of our Top-to-Toe project too!

## Works suggested by residents that have been completed include:

- Installing safe bike storage to prevent bicycles being left in communal areas eliminating issues around theft, fire and safety
- Installing new security doors with key fob access to prevent unauthorised visitors entering and therefore making our residents feel more secure
- Increasing security around bin stores by installing key fob access to prevent antisocial behaviour in these areas.

# When things go wrong

Although we strive to always deliver the very best service possible we appreciate that sometimes you may feel the need to make a complaint. That's why we have a complaints process in place so you can tell us if there is something you are unhappy with and we can put it right.

During 2020 the Housing Ombudsman (an independent public body that looks at complaints within the social housing sector) introduced a new Complaint Handling Code to ensure all complaints are handled fairly and effectively. This is to ensure tenants and leaseholders receive the best possible service if things do go wrong.

In response, we carried out a self-assessment of our complaints service to see where we comply with the code and where we need to make improvements.

The result is that we've made some important changes to help us deal with issues effectively and ensure we learn important lessons from complaints so that mistakes are not repeated.

Some of the changes we've introduced to make the service more accessible is to ensure that our new website prominently features how you can give us feedback and make a complaint; and we are investing in the development of a new Resident's portal which we will be launching in 2022.

**You can view our action plan and more information on our website.**



## What is stage two?

If a resident is not satisfied with the outcome of the initial (stage one) investigation, the complainant can make a request for their complaint to be escalated to a review panel. This must be requested in writing within ten working days of receiving our response to the complaint. If we don't escalate the complaint to a review, we'll explain the reasons why within ten working days.

### Top three complaint themes:

- 1 Raising and reporting a repair
- 2 Communication
- 3 Repairs follow-up

*"As part of Inquilab's commitment to drive service improvements, our Resident Scrutiny Panel has been working closely with the team to scrutinise how it deals with complaints and resident communications, and that it puts the strength of its residents voice at the heart of its Governance. We are pleased that Inquilab's complaints service is resolving issues at Stage One and that the organisation continues to learn from valued resident feedback."*

#### **Adnan Butt**

Chair, Residents Scrutiny  
Panel



# Looking forward

## Our Three Year Strategy

We have achieved a lot this year and, despite the challenges of Covid-19, we are proud of the way we have continued to support our communities whilst maintaining a high quality service.

However, we know there is always more we can do, and we are committed to ongoing improvement by building on the things we do well, and developing the areas which our residents tell us they want and need.

We have exciting plans to develop and grow so that we can help meet urgent housing need, and to achieve our vision. Our new corporate strategy which sets out our ambitions and key objectives for the next three years.

**MISSION**

**To meet housing need and support sustainable communities**

**VISION**

**Delivering reliable services that our diverse communities value and trust**

## OUR 'STARS' VALUES

**SERVICE**

*Deliver cost-effective and valued community services*

**TRUST**

*Being open, honest, and embedding integrity in all activities*

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

*Taking ownership and responsibility for homes and services*

**RESPECT**

*Treating everyone with dignity and respect while valuing diversity*

**STRENGTH**

*Building on the strength of people, legacy, and resources*

**As we look forward,  
we have prioritised four key areas:**

- 1** To deliver quality homes and services – by putting customers at the heart of our work and ensuring our homes are safe and well maintained
- 2** To grow the business – and provide a range of affordable homes
- 3** To be a high performing business – so that we are financially strong and our staff are well trained and highly motivated
- 4** To empower our communities – by working and investing in the communities we serve.



### Quality Homes and Services

We want our homes to be safer and greener and for our residents to be more satisfied with the quality of their home and the service we deliver. By providing decent homes in thriving communities we aim to ensure that all our residents enjoy a sense of pride in their home and their neighbourhood whilst being part of the Inquilab family.

### High Performing Business

We want to expand our success, strong performance and financial position so that we remain a sustainable business that is fit for the future and delivers value for money.

You can

find out more about our **Corporate Strategy** and action plans for the next three years here, via the Resources section of our website, or by requesting a copy of our Corporate Plan Brochure by writing to us at Inquilab Housing Association Unit 3, 8 Kew Bridge Road, Brentford, TW8 0FJ.

### Empowering Our Communities

As a community organisation, we do more than provide homes. We want to make a real difference to people's lives and that involves supporting our residents in many different ways. We want to empower our communities, for example by helping individuals to get out of debt, find work or retrain and achieve their full potential.

### Sustainable Growth

We plan to grow the business by acquiring and building more affordable homes for the diverse communities we serve. These plans build on our previous accomplishments as we have successfully increased the number of units year on year to ensure more people benefit from our quality service.



# INQUILAB

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In some instances, names of residents may  
have been changed to protect identity

[www.inquilabha.org](http://www.inquilabha.org)