



Annual Report to Tenants

24/25

**Tenant Management is what makes
BITMO different. It is our superpower.
It is what leads to better services and
higher levels of satisfaction.**

Welcome to the 2024/25 Annual Report



This report sets out how we’ve performed over the last financial year and includes some key figures and facts we hope you’ll find interesting.

In this last year we have really focused on improving information to tenants, putting tenants at the heart of decision making, and really tried to spread the word about the benefits of tenant control. In 2024 we secured another 5 years of tenant management through the ballot of tenants and used the opportunity to rethink our mission and objectives. We felt it was time to be more ambitious and expect more from ourselves and deliver more for the people who live in Belle Isle, and I think we’ve done that!

BITMO’s work is delivering housing services and community development. Belle Isle volunteers are fundamental to this. They are the bedrock of our community. Tenant control is about tenants having a clear and strong voice about what is important to them and making sure they get the service they want. Throughout this report we show you how we are doing this.

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Welcome

A note from our Chairman, Harry Austen

This is my second year as Chairman of BITMO and I'm proud of the work being done to build a safer stronger greener Belle Isle where people want to live. BITMO is an ambitious organisation and we want to provide the best services possible to you. In this report we share examples of the changes we have made to invest in people homes, support people to live well and build tenant control. There are lots of examples of how tenants in Belle Isle shape the service we provide and improve the area for the benefit of everyone who lives here. In the next few pages, we share information on how we are performing in different areas.

This year we have seen continued high demand for homes in Belle Isle and the services we provide. People in our community are facing significant financial pressures, and our priority is to support people to live well whilst targeting homes most in need of investment and continuing to make improvements to services.

Our performance data shows a strong organisation but we know that there is more work to be done to make sure you fully feel the benefits of tenant control and spread the word.

– Harry Austin,
BITMO Chairman



FREE HOT DRINKS & WI-FI IN
OUR FRIENDLY WARM SPACE



**Our Mission is to build a
safer stronger greener
belle isle where people
want to live and we will
do that by:**

**01.
Supporting
people to live
well**



**02.
Investing
in people's
homes**



**03.
Building
tenant control**



Tenant control delivers better services

BITMO tenants report higher levels of satisfaction with the services they receive and the area they live in.

Overall satisfaction, at 75% is **9% higher** among BITMO managed tenancies than those managed by LCC. Satisfaction with repairs at 82% is **12% higher**. Satisfaction that we listen and act upon the things tenants say at 65% is **11% higher**. Satisfaction that tenants are kept informed is 78% which is **12% higher** than satisfaction among LCC managed tenancies.

Our local presence, and office that is open five days a week with staff working on site 3-4 days a week is what makes a difference. We are highly visible on the estate, working with tenants on issues that are important to them.



75%
Overall
satisfaction

82%
Satisfaction with
repairs

65%
Satisfaction that
we listen and act

78%
Satisfaction that
tenants are kept
informed



BITMO tenants report higher levels of satisfaction in relation to communal areas (7% higher than LCC), the appearance of the estate (6% higher than LCC) and the contribution we make to the neighbourhood (20% higher than LCC).

77%
Satisfaction that
BITMO are easy
to deal with

The first two of these we attribute this to the fact that we have a dedicated caretaker team. Satisfaction with the contribution we make to the neighbourhood, we attribute to the number of community-based projects such as our community orchard, community garden, and the improvements we have made to Belle Isle Circus. In addition, we feel we add a lot of value through our children's holiday activities, and theatre and music events that attract a lot of participation. We actively partner with Red Ladder Theatre and Opera North to bring entertainment to Belle Isle, free of charge throughout the year. These events are always well attended.



We think the combination of our accessibility, visibility, and tenant engagement underpin our reputation for being friendly and approachable (65% satisfaction), and easy to do business with (77% satisfaction).

The area where there is a much narrower margin between BITMO and LCC is in relation to satisfaction with our approach to ASB. BITMO tenants are less satisfied than LCC tenants in this area. This is an area that we are working hard to improve.



1. Supporting people to Live well in Belle Isle

Belle Isle is a very popular estate and demand for the properties that become available far outweighs supply.
In 2024/25 we managed:

£408,000
Spent on void repairs

£3,675
Average cost to ready property for new tenant

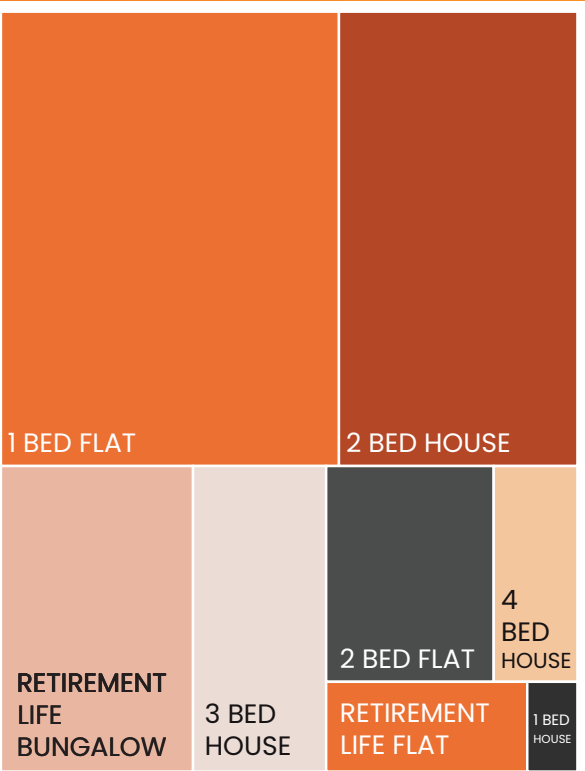
97
New tenancies

35
Average days to let homes from key-to-key



The properties we let:

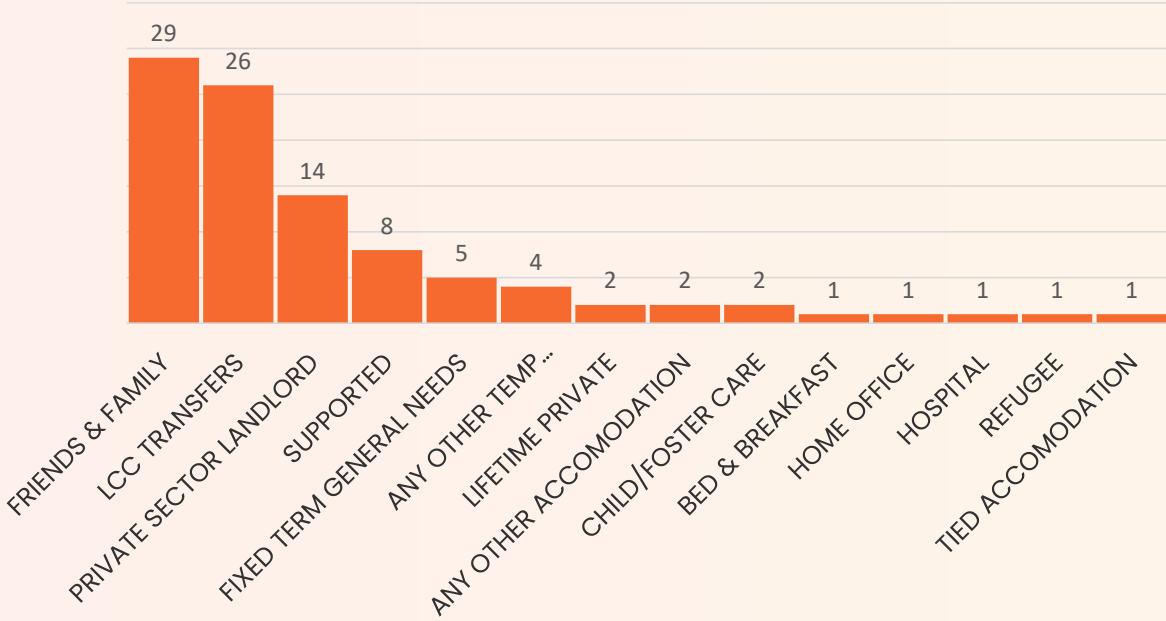
Property Type	No. in Stock	No. Let
5 Bed House	0	0
4 Bed House	133	4
3 Bed House	404	9
3 Bed Flat	2	0
2 Bed House	624	24
1 Bed House	11	1
2 Bed Flat	122	8
1 Bed Flat	473	34
Retirement Life Bungalow	64	13
Retirement Life Flat	52	4
Grand Total	1,833	100%



Support when it is needed

Once people move in a lot of our work is about **supporting people when they are struggling**. Our tenancy support team worked intensively with 42 households in the year. The support we provide is around helping people who are struggling to sustain their tenancies. It may be because they don't have the skills to run a home and need help organising bill payments and furniture, or they suffer from hoarding disorder, or have complex mental health needs. They may neglect their self-care, or be victims of domestic violence. They may have complex family circumstances, complex mental health problems or drug and alcohol problems. Whatever the issue that is preventing someone from living well in their BITMO tenancy we will support them or help them to access a specialist service help them to get back on track. The work is challenging but so rewarding when you can make a difference.

Who we house:



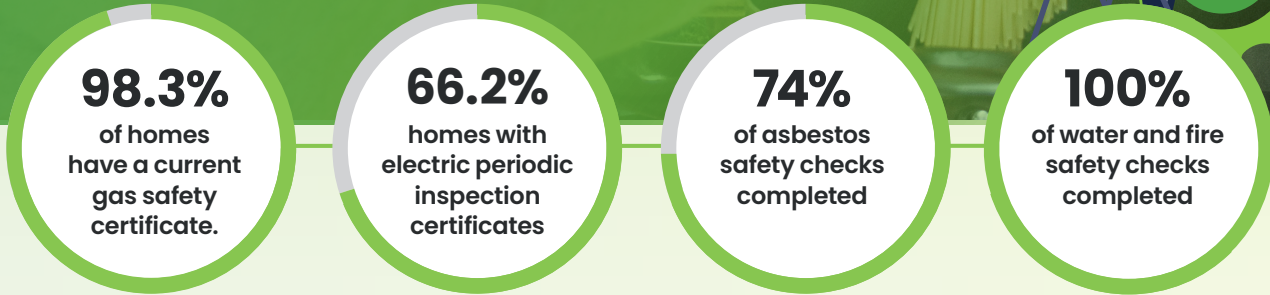
2024/25 by Numbers

2. Investing in people's homes

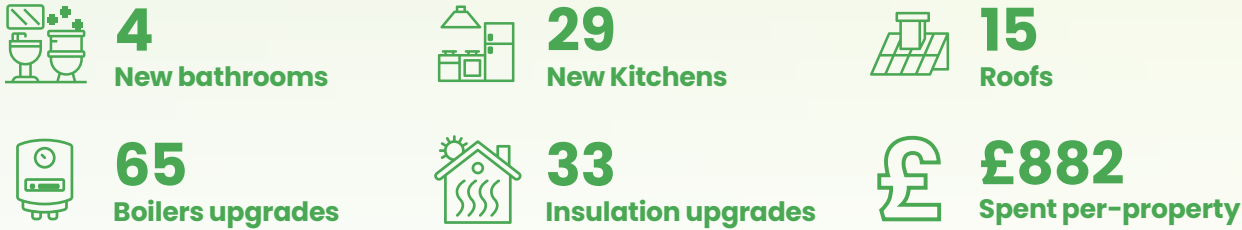
£1.2m
Invested

82%
Satisfaction

Satisfaction with our repairs service has increased significantly in the last year going up from 76% to 82%, which is 12% higher than the Leeds average. People are also much happier the how quickly repairs get done – 82% compared to 68% for Leeds. 73% of people are happy that their home is well maintained. 94 % of repairs were completed within target timeframes.



In 2024/25 we invested £1.2m and achieved 100% satisfaction with the investment programme. This included:



Overall, **we spent £882 per property**. We want to spend more than that in future years and we are working up a plan to do just that. Part of that plan will involve spending less on avoidable damage and charging tenants when they are responsible for the work that is needed.

Tenant control means fewer complaints and better resolution. We get a low level of complaints, but when we do get them, we work hard to get to the root of the problem so it doesn't happen again. We are always learning and improving what we do. Our Board member Trevor keeps a close eye on complaints making sure that the solutions we offer are the right ones.

Complaints

In terms of complaints handling, satisfaction is low at 41%, but this is 15% higher than Leeds and 10% higher than the LCC Housemark Peer Group. We have worked hard to improve how we handle complaints and approach each one as a problem-solving opportunity; trying to ensure that the customer receives a solution. The types of complaints are:

Category	Number	Upheld	Not Upheld
Repairs	10	6	4
Customer Service	19	7	12
Property Condition	7	4	3

Case study 1 – Damp and mould Upheld at stage 1

Our tenant got in touch to report that their home suffered from damp and mould. An inspection was carried out, and black mould spores were found. The tenant was advised that the house was cold because of its construction type and that the solution was to increase the heating and ventilation in the property. The complaint centred around the feeling the tenant had that the Surveyor had not sought to directly address the root cause of cold. The complaint was upheld. The investigating manager concluded that the Surveyor should have taken more account of the fact that the property is cold and considered insulation issues, and offered support through our Winter Warmth offer and made a referral for gas energy vouchers. £50 compensation was offered, and the property has been included in the thermal efficiency workstream of the planned works programme this year. The complaint led to a review of the management of damp and mould which found considerable weaknesses. The policy and procedure have been re-written and staff training has been provided.

Case study 2 – Customer Service Not upheld at stage 1

During the application of our Messy Gardens procedure, we received a complaint about a member of staff attending a garden inspection after the tenant said they could not make the appointed time. The staff member responded to the tenant that they did not need to be present as he was able to inspect the garden regardless. He confirmed the date and time of the visit. When he attended, he knocked on the door as a matter of courtesy and the tenant was in. The tenant's complaint was in two parts 1] that the visit should not have gone ahead, and 2] they did not want the staff member concerned to continue to be involved in their case. The complaint was not upheld because 1] it was reasonable to carry out the inspection without the tenant being present and 2] Cases are allocated on the basis of job role and skill set, and the allocation was appropriate.

Case Study 3 – Customer Service Upheld at Stage 2

The tenant was in significant current and former tenancy rent arrears. A back payment of a direct deduction from benefits was received from UC which would clear the current rent arrears and leave a credit of £40 on the account. The residual amount was credited to the former tenancy debt account. The tenant complained that this should not have happened, and they wanted to be credited directly with the £40. At stage 1 the investigating officer concluded that the complaint should not be upheld as it was reasonable to transfer the money to the former tenancy debt. At stage 2 it was considered that the sum should not have been transferred to the former tenant debt as there is no policy in place to support this. In addition, it is not possible to request a direct deduction in respect of a former tenancy debt, so it is not reasonable to use a deduction to contribute to the relief of that debt.

Improving the Estate

Belle Isle Makeovers



In the year we consulted on the following projects:

Belle Isle Parade Tree Nursery

Belle Isle Circus use, safety & access

We have listened to you and as a result we have made the following improvements to our service delivery.

- Invested in Belle Isle circus making it a place people can relax, play and meet.
- Produced customer information to help tenants to know what service standard can be expected and hold us to account for it.
- Put £450k into the pockets of people through grants, our community fund and our financial inclusion service
- Helped 29 tenants through our Winter warmth programme
- Entertained hundreds of children through EVERY school holiday putting on events for them from a petting farm, to bouncy castles,
- Clarified the arrangements for payment of compensation i.e. it is not to be credited to a rent account
- Clarified that credits on accounts cannot be transferred to former tenancy debts without agreement from the tenant
- Improved the management of requests for service around damp and mould and improved the quality of communication with people who make these requests. We have updated the policy and procedure to include the timescales associated with Awaab's Law

BITMO staff have also been consulting tenants and making a number of improvements to Windmill Close:

- A caretaker clean up
- Repair of metal railings to close a cut through
- Putting bird mouth fencing in
- Planting a mini orchard and standard trees
- Two A-frame barriers installed on the ginnel to Belle Isle Road
- Closure of a garden fence to prevent another cut through.
- Provision of a litter bin.



We really want to work with tenants who want to improve the estate.

If there is an area of the estate that you want us to improve, we will work with you to clean it up, provide seating, improve the planting and provide play facilities.

Anti-social Behaviour

We dealt with **106 cases** of ASB in the year. We work closely with LASBT, the Leeds anti-social behaviour service who deal with the more serious types of cases involving criminal behaviour threats and harassment. **We passed 62 cases onto LASBT** in the year. Tenants tell us through the Tenant satisfaction survey that they are not satisfied with the ASB in the community. We are working hard to take a zero-tolerance approach to serious ASB, but we rely on you to tell us what is happening and to report things you see to the police. Without that support from the community our hands are tied. But we won't give up. We are doing what we can to make a difference.

Non-payment Evictions

Helping people to keep their tenancies is sometimes about making sure people pay their rent, and we put a lot of effort into helping people to make ends meet. Our financial inclusion service is putting money in the pockets of the people who need it. Sometimes despite our best efforts we have to go down the enforcement route and in this year, we served **108 Notices of Intention to seek Possession**, sometimes it's only when that happens that people decide to engage with us to sort the problems of non-payment out. We entered **13 cases into court** and **evicted four households** for non-payment of rent.



Belle Isle creativity

Belle Isle is such a creative community.

This year we even had an "Artist in Residence" who guided a group through creating the Belle Isle tapestry. We have art and craft projects running throughout the year, and this year the Belle Isle Tapestry was displayed in the Leeds City Museum. We bring live theatre and music to our community via Red Ladder Theatre and Opera North. This creativity brings people together to support each other, learn new skills and find talents they didn't know they had, with incredible results. And all Completely free of charge.



With thanks to:

RED LADDER
THEATRE COMPANY

opera north

 **Swarthmore Education Centre**

3. Building Tenant Control



We want our tenants to be actively involved in managing the estate. We want to hear their ideas for how we do things better. In the year 2024/25 we carried out tenant consultation in relation to the renewed vision and objectives for BITMO at a meeting of engaged tenants. This is being supplemented with a survey of all tenants who didn't vote in the last ballot to try to understand what the barriers to voting were and how we can overcome them in future ballots. We held a repairs workshop and an ASB workshop at which tenants came together to talk about their experience of the repairs service and steps we can take to improve it.

Measure	Leeds City Council	BITMO
Overall satisfaction	66%	75%
Repairs last 12 months	70%	82%
Time taken repairs	68%	82%
Well maintained home	67%	73%
Safe home	72%	79%
Listens and acts	54%	65%
Kept informed	66%	78%
Fairly and with respect	73%	79%
Complaints handling	26%	41%
Communal areas	62%	69%
Neighbourhood contribution	51%	71%
Approach to ASB	52%	51%
Neighbourhood appearance	51%	57%
Safety in neighbourhood	60%	64%
Easy to deal with	65%	77%
Advice and support	45%	62%
Friendly approachable staff	52%	65%
Rent vfm	54%	67%
Good reputation	36%	53%

The Regulator of Social Housing introduced **Tenant Satisfaction Measures** in April 2023 as a way of assessing how well social housing landlords in England and Wales are doing at providing quality homes and services. The Measures are aimed at helping improve standards. We compare BITMO's performance with Leeds Housing's Performance:

A message from our CEO Deborah Kelly



BITMO NEEDS YOU!

BITMO is a great organisation, and you could be part of it being even better!

2024/25 has been another positive year for everyone involved in supporting the Belle Isle Community. The work our teams do has a genuine positive impact on the lives of many despite some huge challenges. I'd like to say a very heartfelt and personal thank you to our colleagues, our board and our tenants who make it possible to look back on the last year with pride, and to look forward to another 12 months of working with our Board delivering for you. Over the next twelve months we will spend more on your homes, improve our ASB service, and make the estate look better than ever. We hope you'll notice the difference, and choose to take control and help us to do even better.

Future Plans

- Increasing investment in your homes.
- Improving our ASB service.
- Getting more tenants involved in controlling the decisions that affect them.



Thank You

We hope you've enjoyed reading this Annual Report to Tenants.



We are proud of the work we are able to do on your behalf, making a difference in the community. We can only do it because BITMO is tenant led, and we believe that makes all the difference. In the next year we will be recruiting additional tenants to get involved in mystery shopping, a new customer committee, and join our board.

We will continue to be led by you, the people who live in Belle Isle, adapting and evolving to meet your needs, enhancing our offering to better serve you. We hope you will consider becoming more involved and shaping the future of your community.

If you would like to find out more about how you can get involved in running the Belle Isle Estate please get in touch, we would love to hear from you.



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