

Environmental, Social & Governance Statement





Introduction

This document was approved by the Board of West of Scotland Housing Association (WSHA) on 23rd June 2021 and sets out the environmental, social and governance commitments that the WSHA group makes to ensure that we deliver sustainable communities and offers necessary assurance for investors helping to deliver our objectives.

It aims to align with the Scottish Government's 'Housing to 2040' route map which describes their ambition for everyone to have access to a warm, safe, affordable and energy efficient home that meets their needs, in a community they feel part of and proud of.

Background

WHSA has a long history of delivering housing and community services across West and Central Scotland. We were established in 1965 with the aim of helping homeless people get quality housing and access to services they need. We became a landlord in 1966 and from then we grew rapidly building new homes and buying properties across Glasgow and further afield into Ayrshire and Lanarkshire. In 2002, we successfully completed a transfer of engagements of around 500 homes in Barrowfield, Glasgow and in 2015 a further transfer of 98 homes in Broomhouse also in Glasgow.

By March 2021, 55 years after first becoming a landlord, we own and rent around 3,600 homes, provide factoring and other services to approximately 500 owner occupiers and sharing owners as well as a number of commercial properties. Within our nine sheltered housing schemes we have community alarm systems and on-site staff support. Our leased accommodation provides a range of support services through our partners. Our accommodation (at 43 different locations) provides care at home and housing support services that are registered with the Care Inspectorate (homelessness, learning disability, older persons and other complex needs) as well as housing for asylum seekers. Our ongoing development programme has in recent years delivered 179 new units for social rent and by the end of 2025/2026 will deliver a further 689 new homes.

The information sets out our Environmental, Social and Governance approach and provides details of our outcomes and performance based on the critical themes recommended in the report: UK Social Housing: Building a Sector Standard Approach to ESG Reporting - published by The Good Economy 3.



Environmental

Climate Change

This theme seeks to assess how the activities of the housing provider are impacting on climate change, and how they are mitigating the physical risks of climate change.

This theme considers current practice, as well as the changes being made to improve performance in the future.

The theme is made up of six criteria, including the distribution of EPC ratings, emissions data, climate risk mitigation plan and environmental strategy.



Outline of Approach

In October 2020, we approved our first Green Strategy after a period of consultation with our staff and communities.

This commitment to playing our part in tackling climate change resulted from a Business Planning Review session with our Board & Leadership Team in September 2019.

This strategy strongly influences our Corporate Business Plan and our approach to service delivery, office and asset management and our overall sustainability objectives.

The strategy has five Strategic Objectives:

- Reduce waste, energy consumption and harmful emissions by improving the efficiency of service delivery and office management
- Improve/enhance the environment of our communities through investment in green infrastructure
- Reduce our carbon footprint and ensure that our properties are resilient to the potential impact of climate change, through our approach to new build construction and the improvement of existing homes
- Improve the health and wellbeing of our staff and communities by raising awareness and changing behaviours in respect of the climate emergency, and by offering opportunities to positively contribute to the environment
- Work with partners who are environmentally aligned with us and are committed to delivering 'green' benefits to our assets, customers and communities.

Going green is not always the cheapest option, however, in our procurement we must demonstrate that value for money for us and our customers will involve making procurement decisions that do not conflict with the aims of our Green Strategy.

Outcomes

There are two important documents that are also part of our Green Strategy:

1. an Action Plan that helps ensure that we meet the five strategic objectives within the Strategy
2. a range of baseline assessments across our business to measure the likely impact we are making in reducing our carbon footprint.

We are just at the start of our journey but noted below are some of the issues we have begun to address as part of our Green Strategy:

- One of the biggest impacts was completed out of necessity in response to Covid by all staff working from home. For any organisation, one of the most harmful impacts that they are responsible for is carbon emissions from commuting to work. We estimate that our staff transport emissions (business and commuting) are around 140 tonnes of CO₂ per year.
- We set up a Short Life Working Group (SLWG) to look at how we will work in a 'Post Covid World'. We are now piloting changes to the way we work to enable us to offer more flexible working to staff, reduce our carbon emissions through reduced commuting, whilst maintaining/improving services to customers.
- We have engaged consultants who have provided a report on how our pre 1919 tenemental stock can be brought up to EESSH 2 standards.
- We have replaced all our existing lighting in our office to low energy LED lighting
- We recycle furniture and whitegoods from our void properties and distribute free of charge to more vulnerable tenants to help maximise tenancy sustainment and minimise waste.
- We have signed up to a cycle to work scheme for staff and have plans in place to install secure and weatherproof cycling storage at our office.

- We have invested in electric pool cars for our staff and install necessary infrastructure at our office
- We have moved to an Energy supplier where 100% of the energy is from renewable sources
- We have set up a Green Strategy Project Team Working Group involving staff and tenants to monitor progress and consult on new green initiatives
- We have committed to green advice pages in every newsletter to raise awareness of climate change and advice on energy efficiency and waste
- Finally, we have two Passivhaus developments due to be completed by 2023.

Keep Scotland Beautiful, through their Chief Executive, agreed to contribute to the foreword to our Green Strategy, which is an endorsement of its content. KSB have delivered Carbon Literacy Training to our Leadership Team and our Green Strategy Project Team (which contains tenant representatives).

In 2021/22 we continue to prioritise our ambitions around our response to the climate emergency through a Key Business Objective of delivering the actions set out in our Green Strategy Action Plan.

In addition to these, we will also:

- Implement a plan for measuring our carbon footprint and setting KPI targets by October 2021 (including reporting on scope 1 and 2 emissions).
- Identify homes most at risk from flooding via SEPA website.

Performance Data

99%
of our homes
meet EESSH

2.9%
of Existing Homes
Rated A
compliant with
EESSH 2 standard

22%
of Existing Homes
Rated B

74%
of Existing Homes
Rated C

100%
of New Homes
(completed in last year)
compliant with
EESSH 2 standard

40%
of new homes
planned to be built
to Passivhaus

100%
of new build programme
will meet
EESSH2 standard

33%
of staff who live within
6 miles of our office
planning to cycle to work

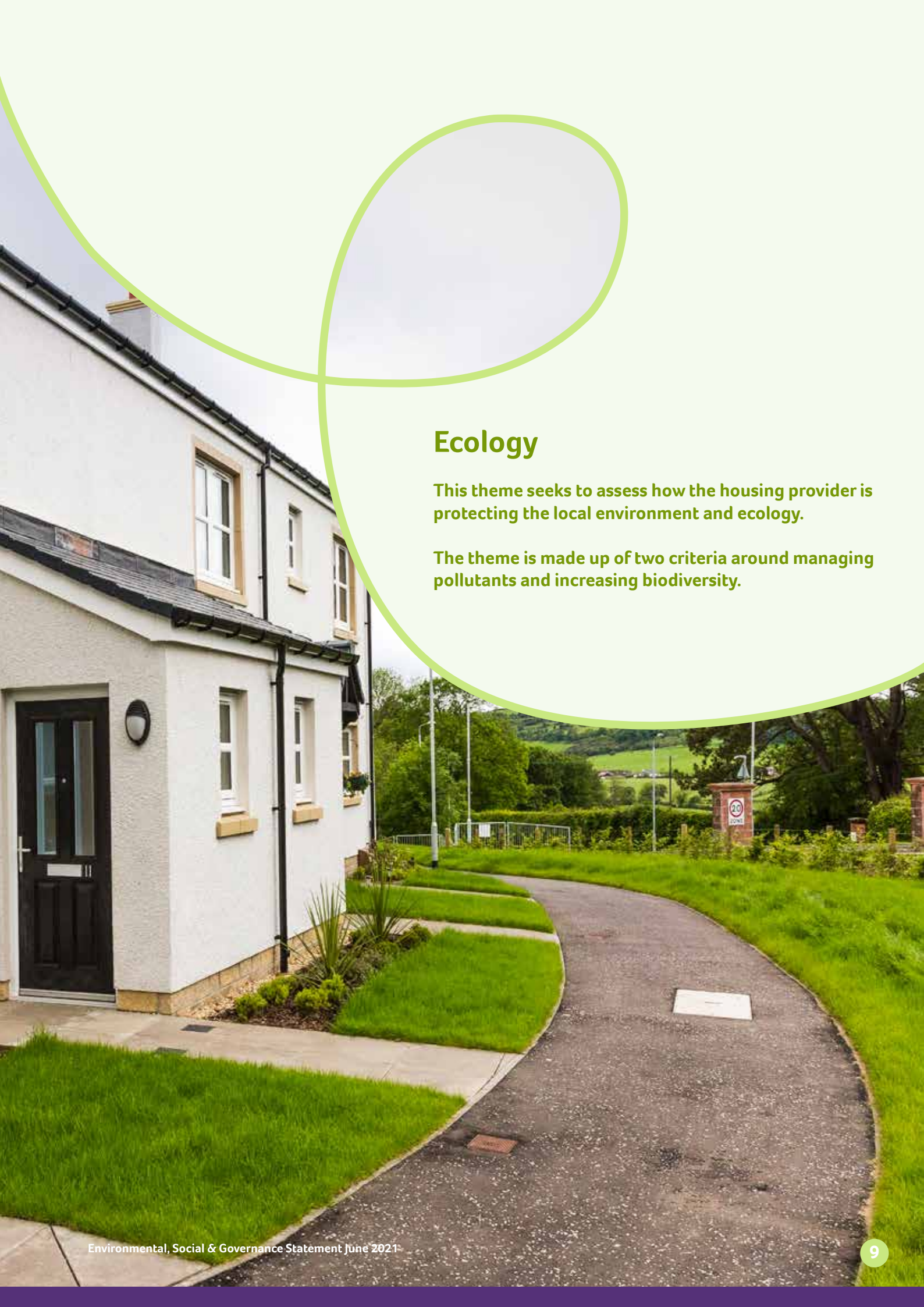
100%
of office energy from
renewable source

100%
of WSHA Leadership Team
with Carbon Literacy
Certification

Performance Data

New KPIs targets to be measured in 2021/22





Ecology

This theme seeks to assess how the housing provider is protecting the local environment and ecology.

The theme is made up of two criteria around managing pollutants and increasing biodiversity.

Outline of Approach

Our Green Strategy has a strategic objective to:

Improve/enhance the environment of our communities through investment in green infrastructure.

Outcomes

We are identifying derelict sites used for fly tipping and working with the community to bring back to sustainable use.

We are in the process of reclaiming an area of land in Camlachie, Glasgow from a fly-tipping eyesore to a community greenspace for play and growing space. *(see images below)*



We have built in to our new Grounds Maintenance contract the facility to leave some open space uncut for parts of the year to encourage bio diversity. We have piloted 6 areas of wild planting and will consult further with communities on extending this.

Performance Data

We will set a target in 2021 for the percentage of our open space allowed to grow wild and encourage biodiversity.



Resource Management

This theme seeks to identify the extent to which the housing provider has a sustainable approach to materials in both the construction and management of properties.

The theme is made up of three themes that cover sourcing materials, water management and waste management.



Outline of Approach

Our Asset Management Strategy dovetails with our Procurement Strategy where our approach is to support a circular economy. We will use the waste hierarchy in sustainable procurement for both our new-build development projects, our planned major repairs and our responsive repairs contracts. The waste hierarchy is used in zero waste objectives with the principles as follows:



Our procurement seeks to score more highly those contractors who are able to evidence that they care about the sustainable sourcing of materials and their activities as much as we do. **Our main contractors have ISO 14001 accreditation.** This demonstrates that these contractors seek to manage their environmental responsibilities in a systematic manner that contributes to the environmental pillar of sustainability.

Outcomes

Sourcing Materials

Our suppliers are now much more aligned to our own approach in taking responsible decisions to minimise the impact our activities have on the environment. Our procurement favours those that can demonstrate their commitment to this approach.

We minimise transportation of materials by sourcing locally available materials, where possible.

We view the whole life-cycle costs in our investment in existing and new-build stock. We regularly review our Design Guide to specify more sustainable and durable material that provide us with better VFM for our investment. This helps keep our rents as low as possible.

Off-site manufacturing has been utilised on a number of sites. This helps reduce site wastage, lead-in and construction times meaning we are able to provide much needed homes sooner than we would through using traditional construction methods.

Resource Management

Our Stock Consolidation Strategy provides a framework for disposal of stock that includes property that is remote from existing stock and therefore less efficient to manage.

We use the latest technology to help us deliver services in a more efficient way and can provide this whilst mobile working. This includes our technical team being able to inspect repair jobs and raise a works order directly to the contractor whilst still at the property.

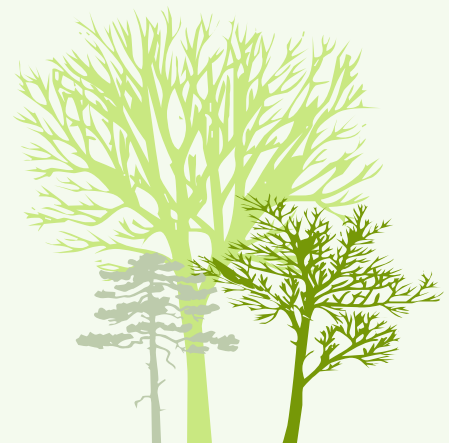
Water Management

Reduce water demand within our properties.

Effective Surface water systems are installed to minimise volume into the network and encourages biodiversity.

Resource Management Commitments

- The majority of our larger contracting suppliers have ISO 14001 accreditation.
- Low maintenance and long-lasting durable materials secured.
- Increased use of naturally sourced materials that can be reused or recycled at the end of its life.
- Promote the use of our local supply chain as part of our community benefits commitment.
- Regular reporting on waste management from contractors with targets of 90% to recycle materials from our new-build sites.
- Our responsive and void contractor has a 95% recycling target on materials used in these works.
- Install A rating appliances within all our properties.
- Install low flush cisterns.
- Install water efficient showers.
- Rainwater gardens or open swales form part of the design of the development.





Social

Affordability & Security

This theme seeks to assess the extent to which the housing providers provides long-term homes that are genuinely affordable to those on low incomes.

The theme is made up of five criteria including the tenure mix of new and existing properties, the security of tenure and fuel poverty.



Outline of Approach

Affordability

Our tenants told us that our previous Rent Policy lacked clarity and was not transparent. As a result, an exercise was carried out during 2020-21 to review the policy and clarify the way rents are set. The review included consultation with all tenants, our tenants advisory group (TAG), staff and Board members. A new policy was created and approved by the Board in October 2020.

Our newly revised Rent Policy recognises that there are three considerations that we require to take into account when setting the rents we charge:

- Viability - The need to collect enough income to ensure our financial viability
- Affordability - The need to provide homes that are affordable for our customers.
- Comparability - The aim to have rents set at levels that are comparable with other social landlords who provide similar properties in similar areas.

This new Rent Policy offers a more robust approach to assessing the affordability of our rents. The policy notes that to determine rent affordability we will:

- Make use of the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations Affordability Tool when we are reviewing rent levels
- Seek tenant views in our customer satisfaction survey and annual rent increase
- Consultation
- Benchmark our rents against other social landlords

We have a comprehensive Tenancy Management Policy and monitor tenancy sustainment on an annual basis.

Outcomes

Affordability

The SFHA Affordability Tool was launched in 2017 to support landlords to assess the affordability of proposed rent levels. The tool allows landlords to input different household characteristics and compositions, and to vary income levels, and finally to provide breakdowns by Local Authority areas. We have undertaken an assessment of our rents using the tool and the results were presented to our Board in October 2020. There are five criteria in the Affordability Tool by which rent affordability can be assessed.

The key criteria that we are looking at when using the tool is and what percentage of a tenant's income the proposed rental charge represents. The SFHA guidance indicates that tenants should not be spending more than 30% of their income on a proposed rent.

Comparability

Our new Rent Policy gives a commitment that we will compare our rent levels with other landlords who operate in the same geographical areas that we do, to ensure our rents are broadly comparable.

Viability

Our Rents are set at a level that ensures that we remain financially viable and are also linked to the priorities in our Corporate Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy.

Fuel Poverty

We employ an Energy Advisor who supports tenants with accessing affordable energy. This service has delivered over 2,000 energy advice interventions with an average saving per tenant of £233.68.

Security of Tenure & Tenancy Sustainment

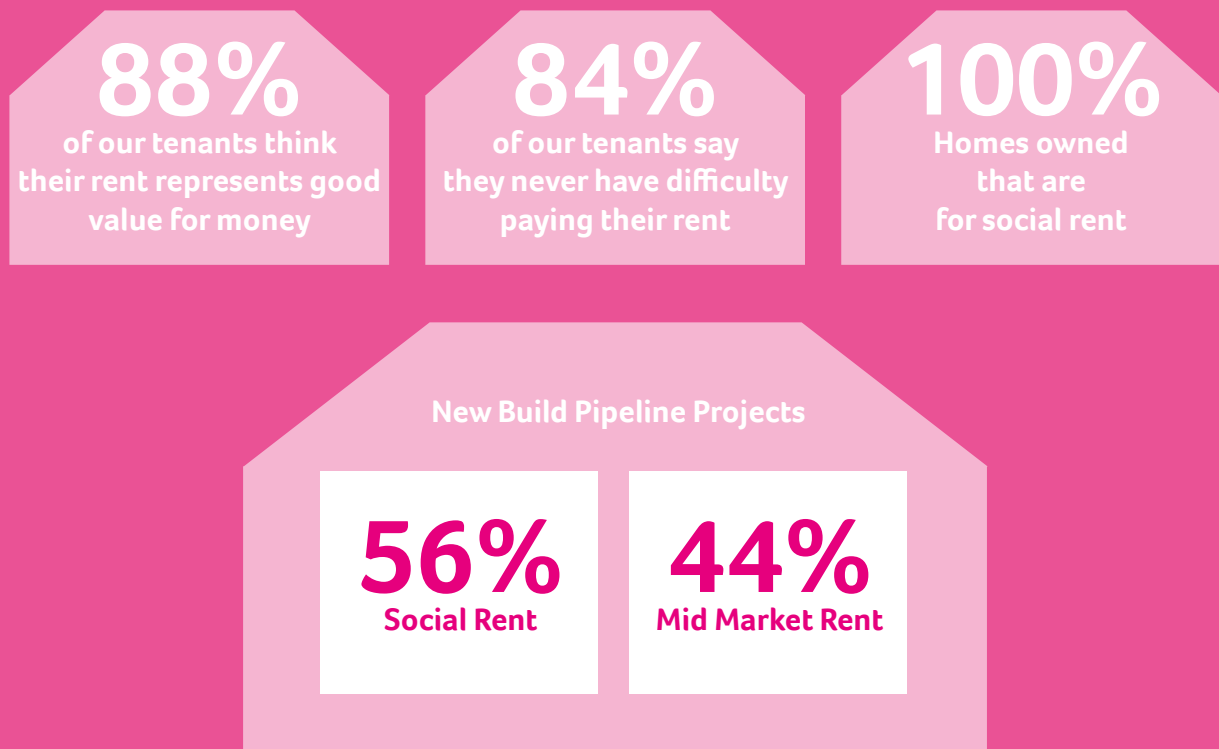
We have teams dedicated to supporting our tenants with Housing Officers available to assist tenants with tenancy issues, an Income Maximisation team available to support those with rent issues and our Community & Support Services team available to help tenants with money, debt and fuel poverty issues, and who are focused on tenancy sustainment.

Performance Data

After undertaking the SFHA Affordability assessment, it was noted that for the vast bulk of our homes in each Local Authority Area our rental incomes are significantly below the target of 30%.

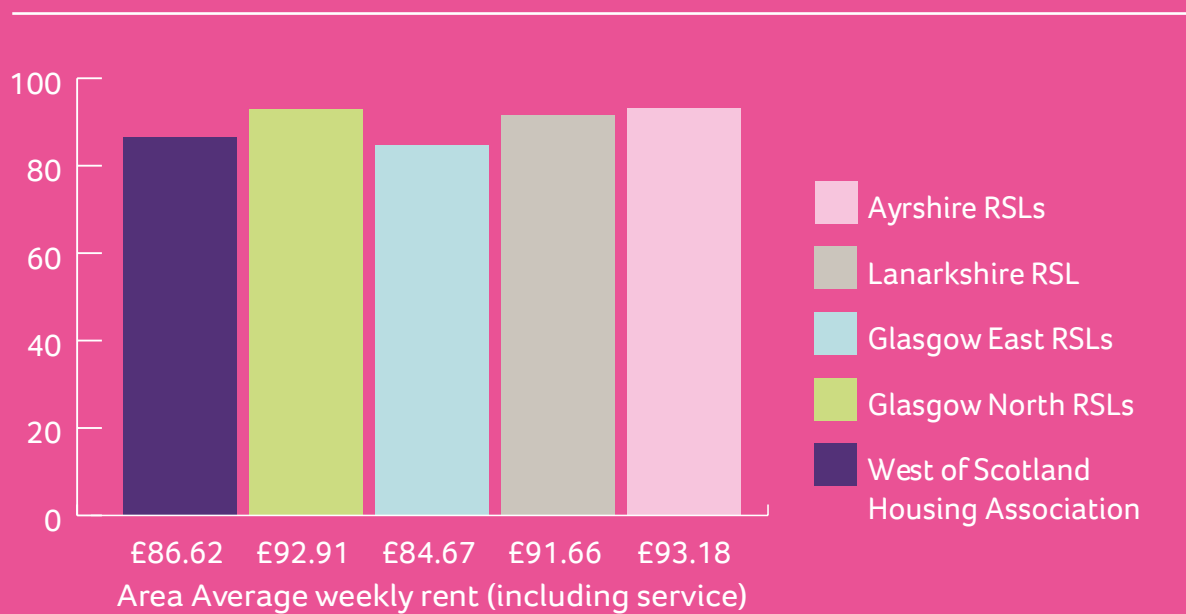
None of our rents are considered unaffordable using this tool when the service charge is discounted.

The affordability of our rents will be evaluated at each annual rent review to ensure the continuing affordability of our rents.



Performance Data

The Table below shows how our rents compare with Housing Associations operating in Glasgow North, Glasgow East, Lanarkshire, and Ayrshire.



As can be seen from the comparisons above, our rents compare favourably. The majority of areas where we have housing our rents are broadly comparable with landlords operating in those areas across all sizes of property with the exception of some small landlords.

Our main tenure types are Scottish Secure and Short Scottish Secure Tenancies (SST/SSST respectively) with a small number falling within the Fair Rent regime. Of those 2.84% are Fair Rents, 0.05% are SSST and 97.1% are SST.

In the last two years our tenancy sustainment rates have exceeded 90% with the rate at 91.3% for 2020/21.

Building Safety & Quality

This theme seeks to assess how effective the housing provider is at meeting its legal responsibilities to protect residents and keep buildings safe.

The theme is made up of three criteria, disclosing gas safety checks, fire risk assessments and meeting Housing Quality Standards.



Outline of Approach

Our Asset Management Strategy outlines our proactive approach to tenants' safety to ensure that all of our properties meet legal and regulatory requirements.

Our Fire Risk Assessments are carried out regularly on our properties where this is required to comply with the two main pieces of legislation applying to fire safety in Scotland Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, Sections 53 and 54, and Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006

The recommendations from the FRAs are monitored by our Health and Safety Working Group who ensure that all actions are carried out. Progress of actions against the recommendations are reported to our Health and Safety Committee who provide assurance to Board that these obligations on fire safety are being discharged.

Meeting Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS)

The Scottish Housing Regulator collects this data from all RSLs. All social housing should be SHQS compliant from 2015 subject to exemptions. Recent changes have seen EESSH data now included as part of SHQS.



Outcomes

Gas Safety Checks

This is reported to Board as part of the annual self-certification for the ARC return. It is monitored quarterly by the Health and Safety Committee who provide assurance to Board that this duty is being discharged.

Operationally we have added assurance from a separate contractor who undertakes a 10% sample of the gas safety checks completed by our main service provider. This layer of assurance provides a second check that the gas safety inspections are being carried out timeously and that any follow up recommendations are being actioned.

Fire Risk Assessments

We have regular assessments that capture the frequent changes around fire safety. These FRAs are shared with our partners who provide support or operate our sheltered housing complexes, supported living properties and Housing of Multiple Occupation (HMOs),

We want to ensure Fire Safety remains a core consideration in developing our new build flatted properties. Where required, we have employed the role of a Fire Strategist to ensure that this is addressed throughout the build from design, to layout to materials used.

Meeting SHQS

Our stock is compliant with SHQS. We still see this as a minimum standard and whilst it is more difficult to improve existing stock in certain elements, we exceed these standards in our new developments.

Where we have abeyances from the standard (tenant may not want the work carried out) we regularly contact tenants to see if their position has changed and we are able to undertake any required works.

However, due to almost 19% of our current stock being Pre 1919 stock, we have a number of exemptions, which is primarily down to galley kitchens in some of this stock that restricts our ability to meet the minimum standards.

Performance Data

We have held 100% record of gas safety checks. During lockdown we had 1 fail due to a customer shielding which is significantly better than our peers.

All recommendations that originate from our FRAs are implemented and any alternatives have the approval of our FRA and partners.

96% of our stock meets SHQS although we have 136 exemptions and 15 abeyances within this calculation. We had 1 fail where we have now completed the work required but were unable to do so at the end of the ARC reporting year due to Covid restrictions.

SHQS held in abeyance has dropped from 47 to 15 over the previous 12 months.

Resident Voice

This theme seeks to assess how effective the housing provider is at listening to and empowering residents.

The theme is made up of three themes that cover board scrutiny, complaint handling and resident satisfaction.



Outline of Approach

The Scottish Housing Regulator collects data every year from RSLs to see how they have performed against the outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. This is done through the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC). Our last ARC was submitted for the period April 2019 to March 2020.

The Scottish Housing Regulator measures the following key indicators of customer satisfaction. The table here shows that we compare very favourably to the Scottish Average for 2020/21 with performance for each indicator above average.

In 2021/22 we have a Key Business Objective to Review and develop our customer care and engagement approach.

We have adopted the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Complaints Procedure.

Outcomes

In the last year our Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) have reviewed the following:

- Tenant Engagement Strategy.
- Tenant Scrutiny.
- Complaints Policy.
- Various Policy Reviews.
- The way we are regulated has changed and TAG received regular updates about the progress in developing the 'Assurance Statement' that is signed off by the Board.
- Rent consultation.

In 2020, TAG worked with us to improve how we consulted with tenants about their proposed rent increase. On a quarterly basis TAG receives an update on how well we have performed against agreed key performance indicators and are able to challenge performance where targets are missed.

We also have a Tenant Scrutiny Panel who decide which aspects of our services they wish to review and report their findings to our Board.

In 2021 we will review our Customer Engagement Strategy to and push ourselves at being more innovative and creative in relation to how we involve how our tenants.

We undertake regular customer satisfaction surveys which are carried by Research Resource, this allows us to identify any issues in order to seek resolutions but also supports our contract management process where we have outsourced service delivery.

Performance Data

91%

of our tenants
satisfied with our
overall service

94%

of our tenants
were satisfied with our
repairs service

99%

of tenants feel that we are
good at keeping them
informed about our
services and decisions

100%

of tenants happy with the
opportunities to
participate in our decision
making processes

In 2020/21 we received 205 complaints.

We have had no complaints upheld by the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman in the last 4 Years.





Resident Support

This theme seeks to assess the effectiveness of the initiatives that the housing provider runs to support individual residents.

The theme is made up of two criteria that cover: What support is provided? and How successful is it?



Outline of Approach

As a social landlord we understand the importance of providing our tenants and communities with access to support which assists them sustain their tenancy and improve their wellbeing. For five decades we have worked in partnership with our charitable subsidiary Willowacre Trust to deliver tenancy sustainment services and provided enhanced opportunities to our tenants.

Willowacre Trust is a fundamental part of our history and the Trust acts as a conduit to deliver specialist support and wider community services. These services include Sheltered Housing Support, Older People's Services, Handy Person Services, Tenancy Sustainment Services and the Barrowfield Community Hub.

We are aware that our most vulnerable tenants and communities are often those with the least capacity to engage and the reverse is true in that communities with capacity are those which are confident, organised, cohesive and influential, where people are likely to enjoy a better quality of life.

It is important that WSHA and Willowacre Trust engages with and listens to the communities which we operate in. We currently work with and support tenant advisory groups, tenant members on our Board, use tenant surveys, community groups, community councils and individual feedback from tenants to inform our services.

Supporting our tenants and communities is important to our ongoing success. We understand and support the social principles of community development including human rights, social inclusion, equality, respect for diversity and increasing capacity.

Willowacre Trust also supports the delivery of our community development activities which align with the Community Empowerment Act (2015). We support local communities to inform locality planning processes and work to empower, enable and support our tenants to become active citizens.



Outcomes

Our community and support services delivered include, but are not limited to:

- Starter Packs Service
- Digital Participation Support
- Provisions of Furniture
- Food Parcels
- Fuel Poverty Initiatives
- Energy and Money Advice
- Christmas Programmes
- Holiday Programmes
- Community Consultations
- Thriving Places Initiative
- Youth Diversionary Services

The impact of Covid has brought into sharp focus the support our tenants need including services not previously delivered such as wellbeing support.

As a result of these challenges we have experienced an unprecedented period of change which has increased the demands on services particularly for tenants with complex support needs. This has led us to explore new ways of delivering services to assist in addressing high levels of health and social inequalities within our communities. In recognition of the increasing role the Community & Support Services team have had to play during the Coronavirus pandemic, a new Key Business Objective has been incorporated into our Corporate Business Plan to review the services provided by the team to ensure that we remain best placed to support our communities.

Our aim is to ensure full participation and engagement from our communities when implementing any services or projects resulting from our 2019 'Supporting Communities Strategy'. This strategy will also be reviewed during 2021.

We will continue to explore the opportunities that are available to such communities to tackle the blight caused by derelict buildings and land through making use of the provisions within Community Right to Buy Legislation. Our Community Support Manager will work with our Development Manager to identify a list of neglected land or assets within our existing communities to begin a process of engagement with local communities on the potential development for sustainable community use.

We currently provide a budget commitment of around £297,000 to Willowacre Trust to deliver tenancy sustainment services on our behalf. Both WSHA and Willowacre Trust will continue to maximise external grant funding to support delivery of additional services for our tenants and communities.

Performance Data

In terms of areas of multiple deprivation, 55% of WSHA communities are represented in the bottom 15% most deprived areas within the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Key milestones for Willowacre Trust in recent years include:

- Generated £1.6 million for support services; £1.2 investment in community assets; £800,000 investment in community activities; £900,000 income for our community hub; £234,000 in older people's services.
- Delivered 2,000 energy advice interventions with an average saving per tenant of £233.68
- Delivered 1,200 debt advice interventions with an average saving per tenant of £701.00
- Completed 1,500 Handy Person jobs, including over 550 rooms decorated
- Delivered an average of 1,500 interventions, 600 activities and a further 200 engagements per year
- Delivered 2,900 books to children from the Imagination Library
- Supported 18 CJS placements, 4 Foundation Apprenticeships, 3 Graduate Trainees, 1 Internship and 10 Apprenticeships
- Delivered 330 Starter Packs
- Upcycled 120 furniture items
- Delivered 300 food parcels; 3,000 Christmas gifts; 200 Christmas food hampers; 1,000 vouchers to families; Christmas pantos and events to over 2,500 tenants
- Delivered 120 community events from our community hub.

We have a target to achieve a minimum of 67% of the funding of Community Support services to come from external grants, service charges or generated income by 2022 (current percentage is 62%). A Funding Officer post has been created to help with grant applications and assist with delivering on that target.



Placemaking

This theme seeks to highlight the wider set of activities that housing providers undertake to create well-designed homes and places that meet local needs and provide great places for people to live and enjoy.

The theme is made up of one criterion, a space for the housing provider to give examples of their placemaking or place shaping work.



Outline of Approach

We have 64 separate locations where we have homes. This can make community engagement more challenging, however we are proud of our commitment to customer and community engagement and our success in this area is reflected in the satisfaction results noted above.

Our Design Guide (Version 5) aims to direct designers on what we expect to be incorporated into our new developments both inside and out. It also reflects the lessons learned from previous projects and feedback from new tenant's surveys to ensure that we continue to improve the homes we build.

The key attributes to creating a sense of community and an attractive place to live are:

- Attractive built form
- Integration and tenure blind
- Useable high quality external private & common open spaces
- Functional & flexible living spaces
- Affordable living costs
- Discreet common bin and cycle areas

One of our main objectives is to achieve high quality standards in both the use of durable materials and workmanship to reduce maintenance and life cycle costs for WSHA, and to keep running costs low for tenants by providing high energy efficiency standards.

Outcomes

We are not complacent and recognise that we need to continue to have strong connections with our customers and our communities. We will continue to do this by:

- Using our Place Standard tool to identify how we can work with partners to meet the needs of our communities.
- Ensure that we engage with all members of the community by recognising that residents have a range of preferences for how they want to receive information or participate in our decision making.

As an example, in 2020 we consulted with our tenants in Cowlairs (Springburn) using the Place Standard tool which provides a simple framework to structure conversations about place and our community.

The community issues tenants felt should be addressed in the area were children and young people's programmes, dedicated community spaces, hubs or community gardens, supported to meet with other people within their community and employment programmes.

Following on from this exercise, an action plan has been established to address the issues raised by tenants. Among other things the action plan includes helping residents set up an action group, exploring the possibility of a community hub as part of our Cowlairs development and exploring wider Community Benefits around employment and young people.

Performance Data

93% of our tenants are satisfied with our contribution to the management of the neighbourhood they live in.

We have achieved strong overall customer satisfaction results from three of our recent developments at Earls Green, Symington and East Kilbride at 97%, 93% and 89% respectively.





Governance

Structure and Governance

This theme seeks to assess the housing provider's overall structure and approach to Governance.

The theme is made up of six criteria covering the regulator, code of governance, risk management and ownership.

Outline of Approach

We are a not for profit Registered Social Landlord regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR).

Code of Governance

We have a suite of governance policies and documents which are the basis of our governance. Where relevant these are based on the Scottish Federation of Housing Association's model policies and documents and are adapted to be bespoke to WSHA

Risk Management

As per our risk management process, operational risks are reviewed quarterly by the relevant risk owner and high operational risks and strategic risks are reported to the Audit Committee on a quarterly basis and to the Board on a six monthly basis. We have a robust risk management policy and approach which is scrutinised by our Audit Committee on a quarterly basis. The Board carry out an annual risk assessment of proposed key business objectives as part of our business planning process. We also carry out risk assessments for organisational projects as part of our project management framework.

Outcomes

Our current SHR Engagement Plan shows that we are Compliant with the Regulatory Framework.

In 2020, our internal auditors carried out an audit of our governance and the audit opinion was of substantial assurance. We take a continuous improvement approach to our governance and use the self-assessment process of compliance against the SHR Regulatory Requirements to identify areas of improvement and to form an annual action plan.

Going forward we will also include a risk update in our quarterly Corporate Business Plan Update Report to the Board to ensure continued linkage to the achievement of our business objectives.

Performance Data

Fully compliant SHR Engagement Plan 2021.

Substantial Assurance rating given by BDO for Internal Audit Report for Governance in 2020.

Board

This theme seeks to assess the quality, suitability and performance of the board and trustees.

The theme is made up of eleven criteria including demographics of the board and the experience and independence of the board.



Outline of Approach

Our Board has an ongoing process in place to self-assess compliance with the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Requirements including the Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management. This process includes Board annual reviews, training and development plan, review of Board meetings and linking Board papers to compliance with the standards. This self-assessment identifies any areas of improvement which forms the basis of our Governance Improvement Plan.

9 year rule...

As part of our individual Board annual review process, we assess the effectiveness of our Board members. At the point where a Board member has been on the Board for 9 years or more and is due for re-election, the Chair of the Board will report to the Board the annual review outcomes and this will allow the Board to assess the effectiveness of this Board before they are put forward for re-election. We currently have two Board members that have been on the Board for 9 years or more and they both continue to be effective.

The Scottish Housing Regulator sets out how they will engage with us in our Regulation/Engagement Plan.

SHR have also defined WSHA as Systemically Important given our size, turnover and level of debt. They refer to a small number of RSLs as systemically important because of their stock size, turnover or level of debt or because of their significance within their area of operation.

For these RSLs they need to maintain a comprehensive understanding of how their business models operate, and how they manage the risks they face and the impact these may have.

Outcomes

In 2020, we submitted our second Assurance Statement to the SHR based on this self-assessment process.

Our Board receive a quarterly subsidiary report, the first of which was presented to the Board in January 2021. They also highlighted through the self-assurance process, that they need to know more about key themes in terms of our complaints and how we take forward the learning. We have now incorporated this into our quarterly performance to the Board.

In 2020/21, we recruited new Board members and have put in place a robust induction programme. The Board continues to hold effective meetings online and training is now being delivered online and through e-learning.

Our new Chair was elected in September 2020 following the development of a succession plan and we have two Vice-Chairs in place as part this succession plan. We have reviewed membership of our Sub Committees to ensure that we have the rights skills and experience of each of our Sub Committees. In addition to this we will develop a new Board Training Programme based on the objectives of the Corporate Plan as well as the feedback from the Board Annual Review process.

Our review of our vision, culture and values will start with our Board as it is important that our Board members are role models in respect of our culture and values. We will also continue to develop a tenant first approach in respect of our governance approach to ensure that Board decisions are being made in the best interests and needs of our tenants.

In June 2020, Our Board approved a succession plan and Kelly Adams (an auditor and Partner with RSM) was appointed in September 2020 as our new Chairperson.

In 2021 we appointed a new external auditor (Chiene + Tait).

In 2020 the Kinharvie Institute undertook a successful review of how our Board works and held individual and team coaching sessions.

Every Board agenda has a standard agenda item where Board members are asked to declare any interest in any agenda items and if so they leave the meeting for that item.

Performance Data

50%

of the board
are women

17%

of the board
are BAME

8%

of the board
have disability

47

is the average age
of our
board members

30%

of the board members
have changed
in the last 2 years.
*All board are non executive
8 places are for tenant
members and 7 are for
general members
(with specialist skills)*

40%

of board members
on the audit sub committee
have recent/relevant
financial experience





Staff Wellbeing

This theme seeks to assess how staff are supported and how their wellbeing is considered.

The theme is made up of five criteria including salary information, additional support for staff and average sick days.

Outline of Approach

We are committed to being a good employer and this is reflected in our approach to staff terms and conditions, support and engagement. We are members of Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH) which ensures that our staff salaries and terms and conditions benchmark well in the sector. We have a silver Investors in People accreditation and gold Healthy Working Lives accreditation. We encourage involvement and engagement with our staff and staff consultation is a key part of our decision making process. We have an Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy in place and staff health, wellbeing and safety is a key priority for us.

Outcomes

Over the past 18 months we have focused on improving our culture and staff engagement and consultation. In order to measure this we introduced a staff engagement survey in February 2020. Following this survey, we implemented an action plan to address the issues that arose from the survey and when carrying out the 2nd staff engagement survey in 2021, we saw significant improvement in staff engagement with our staff engagement score increasing from 72% to 84%.

In 2021/22 on our key business objectives is to review our vision, values and strategic aims and we will fully involve staff and tenants in this process. We will then use our new values as basis for the development of a new HR & Culture Strategy and ensure that our new values are embedded as the foundation of our HR processes.

Living Wage

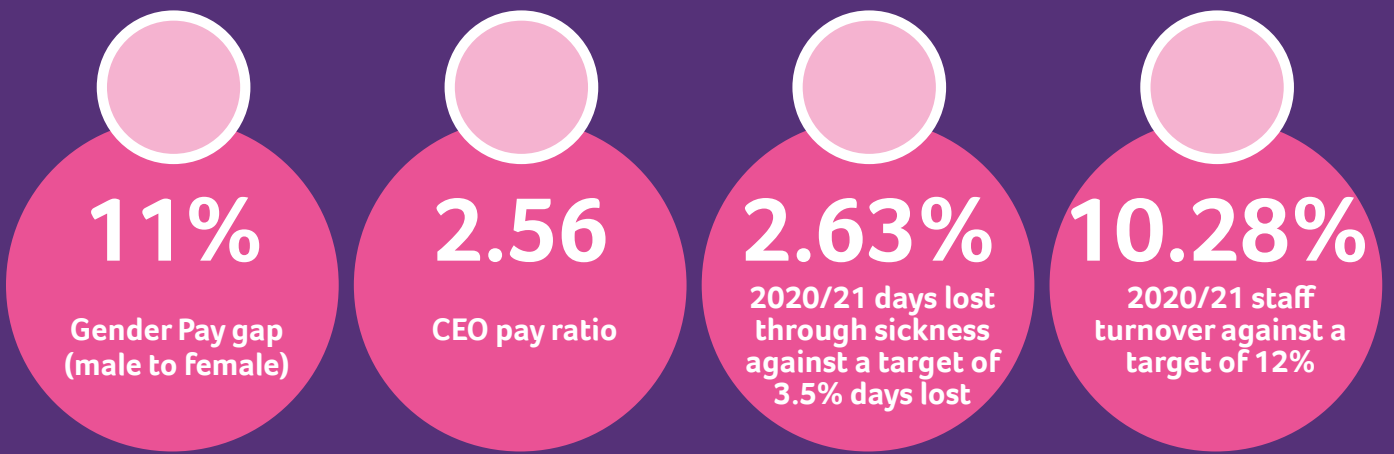
All employees including staff employed by our subsidiary Willowacre Trust earn the Real Scottish Living Wage as a minimum. We also encourage our supply chain to pay the living wage in terms of our procurement.

SUPPORT FOR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH OF STAFF

We have gold accreditation with Healthy Working Lives and we also have Investors in People Health and Wellbeing. Annually we produce a Staff Health & Wellbeing Action Plan which outlines the actions for the next year in terms of staff health & safety and wellbeing and mental health. For this year, activities include various workshops for staff on mental health, information campaigns to raise awareness of issues such as the menopause, bowel cancer, we will hold online mindfulness sessions and online fitness classes with a view to moving back to our yoga and circuit training. We offer all staff access to our Employee Assistance Programme which also includes a fitness and healthy eating app.

In respect of staff health & safety, we have a robust risk assessment process and use the EVH Model Health & Safety Control Manual in terms of policies and procedures. We have suite of H&S e-learning to support a comprehensive health & safety training plan.

Performance Data



Supply Chain Management

This theme seeks to assess if the housing provider procures responsibly.

The theme is made up of two criteria assessing how social value and environmental impact are considered.



Outline of Approach

Social Value

We have a Community Benefit Policy in place and as part of our Procurement Policy we seek to achieve community benefit where possible. Community Benefit opportunities can range from work placements, apprenticeships to community enhancements such as community gardens and improving our community hub facilities.

We have five-year procurement strategy and one of the key objectives is in relation to achieving community benefits through our procurement. We produce an annual report to the Board on progress against this objective.

We also have a Young People's Strategy and a key focus of this is working with our contractors and suppliers to create meaningful employment and training opportunities for younger people.

Supply Chain & Environmental Impact with the introduction of our Green Strategy, this is an area we are looking to focus on over the coming year. We have updated our Procurement Strategy to include an objective in relation to reducing the environmental impact and will look to include a quality assessment in relation to this as part of our procurement process. Going forward we will develop KPIs to measure the impact that this has on our supply chain's carbon footprint.

Our main responsive repair and development contractors are ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems compliant . This provides levels of reassurance to us that these contractors consider the impact of their actions, and their supply chain's, on the environment and take actions to mitigate or off-set this impact.

Outcomes

Through this approach to community benefits we have managed to obtain benefits for our communities and our tenants through procurement.

Going forward we would like to develop this further to assess the impact and social value of these benefits to our communities to ensure that they are of real benefit.

This is an area we have just started to work on but the desired outcomes of this work would be to work with our supply chain to reduce their carbon footprint in terms of both their deliver of our services but also how they operate overall. By developing KPIs and management information, it is anticipated that we will be able to measure this.



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large print, audio or any other language



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

