

Delivering Impact Through ESG

Our Environmental, Social and Governance Year in Review

2024/25

great
places
HOUSING GROUP



Introduction

by Mike Gerrard - Chief Financial Officer



Welcome to our 2024/25 ESG Report.

Great Places continues to operate in a challenging environment, with economic and regulatory pressures affecting our sector, customers, contractors, suppliers and colleagues. Inflationary cost increases and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis have intensified demand across our services.

Despite these pressures, we remain resilient and committed to our mission of providing high-quality, affordable homes and supporting communities. This report outlines our progress against the Sustainability Reporting Standard (SRS) for Social Housing and reaffirms our commitment to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) responsibilities.

In the past year we've drafted a new Sustainability Strategy and action plan to reduce our environmental impact, targeting carbon neutrality by 2050 and EPC C or better for all of our homes by 2030. We've also improved energy efficiency and heat networks to help customers manage heating costs. Building safety remains a priority, with continued investment in safety measures and long-term remediation plans to meet new legislation and maintain strong customer engagement.

Customer experience has remained central to our work this year. Following our first inspection under the consumer regulation framework, we welcomed positive feedback from the regulator, particularly on customer voice, while our Customer Committee and Insight scrutiny panels have strengthened accountability and service improvement.

In July 2024 we launched our new Corporate Plan, called Here For Our Customers, and we're making great progress towards delivering on the ambitions within it. We've reviewed our repairs service to boost efficiency and customer satisfaction, with changes set for 2025/26. We have also introduced a new telephony platform and reviewed complaints handling to meet Housing Ombudsman standards.

Great Places remains committed to ensuring the health and wellbeing of our customers, securing £750,000 in external funding to support this last year. Referrals for our debt and welfare advice rose by 36%, with £308,000 secured for customers to positively impact their lives. We continue to support vulnerable people through commissioned and in-house services, including tenancy coaching, and remain a key partner in Greater Manchester Housing First and the regional rough sleepers' programme.

In 2024 we launched our new Inclusive Services Team to help us better understand our customers' individual needs, and identify opportunities to improve our services as a result.

This, alongside enhancements to our housing management system, is really improving our understanding of customer needs so we can tailor our services.

Two of our values are 'We are fair' and 'We care', and being an inclusive employer that prioritises the wellbeing of our people also continues to be a strategic priority. Throughout 2024/25 we continued to play leading roles in promoting home-grown talent through the 20% Movement and Greater Manchester Housing Providers' BOOST programme, as the case studies later in this report demonstrate.

We continue to work hard to tackle the housing crisis, and our development programme delivered 726 new affordable homes and 196 shared ownership sales during 2024/25. We began the new year with around 2,200 homes on site, progressing our commitments to Homes England.

We retain G1/V2 status from the Regulator of Social Housing. While the V2 rating reflects sector-wide risks, our G1 governance rating confirms strong financial and governance arrangements. We were also among the first organisations assessed under the new consumer standards, achieving a C2 grading. Our credit ratings with Moody's (A3) and Fitch (A+) were also reaffirmed this year, reflecting our strong balance sheet and solid operating performance, despite ongoing inflationary pressures.

In governance, newly-appointed board members settled in well during 2024/25. Grenville Page stood down as a board member and as the Audit and Assurance Committee Chair in September 2024, and was replaced by Keith Ward, one of our new Non-Executive Directors.

This year we also saw the appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer, Alison Dean, who was promoted from her role as Deputy CEO. Alison took up the role on 1 July 2024, joining Group Board and Cube Board at the same time.

There will be some additional changes to Board during the 2025/26 year, with our Chair, Mervyn Jones, standing down in September 2025 along with Christine Amyes (Deputy Chair) and Emma Mountford (Cube Chair). Cath Purdy has been appointed as our next Chair.

In March 2025, the Board also took the decision to make significant governance changes from September 2025. These include making the Cube Board coterminous with Group Board and introducing a new Growth Committee to oversee all development activity across the group, including affordable development, Terra Nova and Cube Homes. This Committee will comprise Group Board Members and independent committee members.

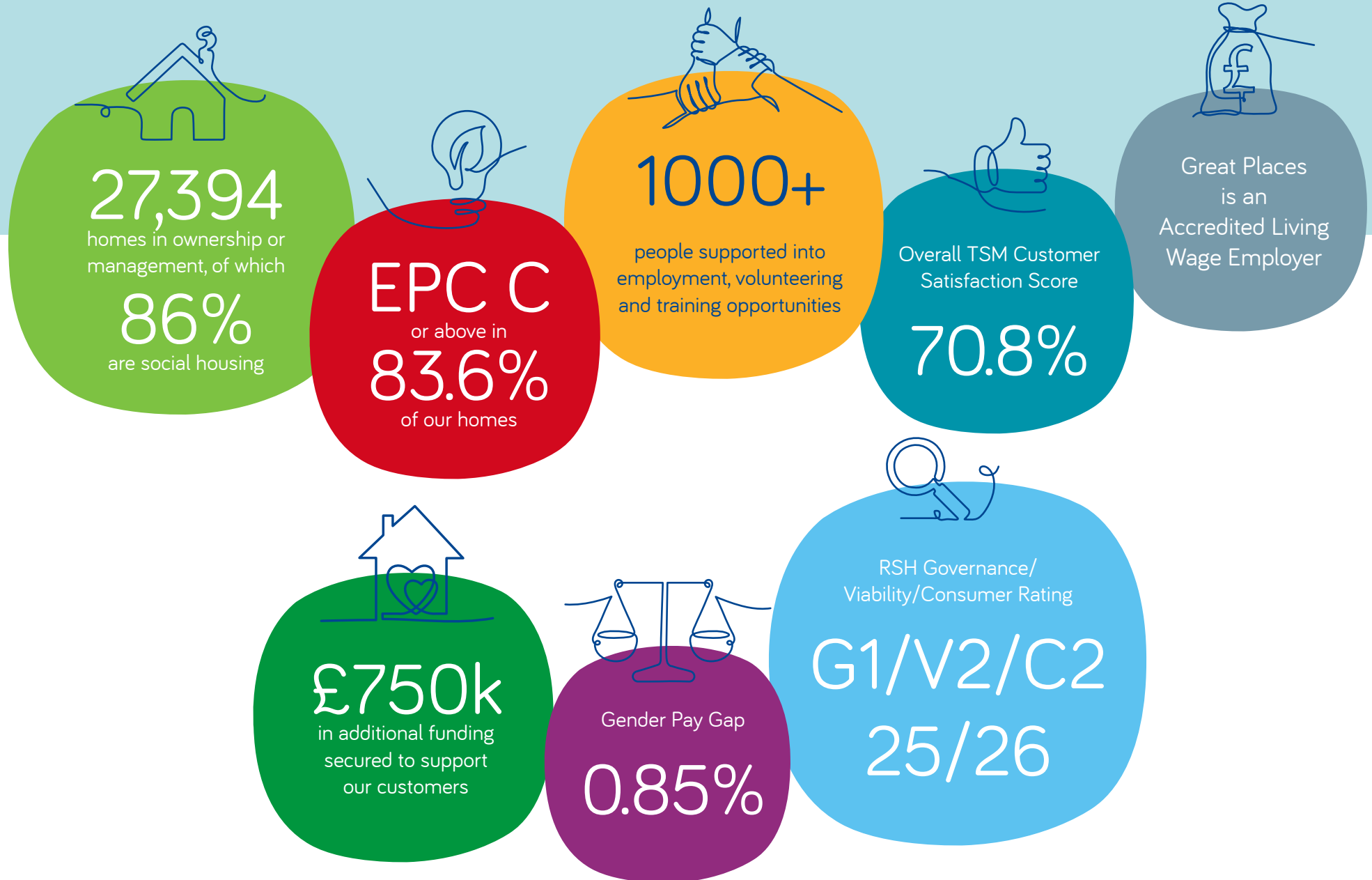
As we enter a new financial year, we look ahead with ambition. The Board has already begun shaping our next 10-year strategy to address sector challenges, invest in homes and communities, and enhance services for our customers.

I'm pleased to present this report, which reflects our achievements in 2024/25 and our continued commitment to tackling sector challenges through investment in our homes, communities and customer services.

Mike Gerrard



ESG at Great Places: Key Headlines 2024/25



Our Report Structure

'The UN Sustainability Reporting Standard is a set of common goals that demand investors, governments, businesses and society do more to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure people enjoy peace and prosperity.' (UN Transforming our world the 2030 agenda for sustainable development September 2013).

As part of our commitments under the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing providers must produce an annual update, to include the three high-level areas of this report, 'Environmental, Social and Governance.' Each include information taken from a set of themes aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



ESG Area	Theme	Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goal	Page Reference
Social	Affordability and security	No poverty Reduced inequalities	7
	Building safety and quality	Sustainable cities and communities	8
	Customer voice	Sustainable cities and communities	9
	Customer Support	Sustainable cities and communities	15
	Placemaking	Sustainable cities and communities	20
Environmental	Climate change	Climate action	22
	Ecology	Life on land	25
	Resource management	Sustainable cities and communities	26
Governance	Structure and governance	Peace, justice and strong institutions	28
	Board and trustees	Peace, justice and strong institutions	30
	Staff wellbeing	Decent work and economic growth	33
	Supply chain management	Responsible production and consumption	35



Social

Affordability and Security

This theme looks at the extent to which we provide long-term homes that are genuinely affordable for people on low incomes.

As of 31 March 2025, Great Places owns and/or manages **27,394** properties, **86%** of which are social housing.

On average, our rents are set at **74%** of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and **65%** of typical private sector rents. The table below provides a breakdown for the five local authority areas where we have the largest number of homes.

Local Authority	No. of homes	Average current weekly rent	Average weekly market rent	Average of weekly market rent %	Average of LHA	Average of LHA %
Manchester	2,572	£116.96	£211.62	55%	£201.81	58%
Salford	2,348	£119.26	£211.03	57%	£206.28	58%
Sheffield	2,043	£110.50	£171.67	64%	£146.13	76%
Oldham	1,293	£117.47	£177.16	66%	£145.87	81%
Blackburn with Darwen	1,055	£114.84	£147.93	78%	£130.47	88%
Total	9311	£115.96	£189.99	61%	£174.69	66%

	New Homes completed in 2024/25
Social rent	171
Affordable rent	288
LCHO (low-cost home ownership)	206
Supported housing	61
Total	726



How do we offer security of tenure for our customers?

We believe a secure home is vital for both our customers and our business. After successfully completing a starter tenancy, customers automatically revert to an Assured Tenancy, which provides the highest security of tenure. Those who held a Secure or Assured Tenancy before April 2011 are granted an Assured Tenancy. We use tailored agreements for supported and newly built properties to meet their specific requirements.

Building Safety and Quality

This theme looks to assess how effective we are at meeting our legal responsibilities to protect customers and keep buildings safe.



Customer safety remains a key priority. Over the past year, we've invested £3.7 million in building and fire safety, ensuring compliance with evolving regulations. Key actions include submitting Building Safety Cases for high-rise buildings, implementing a Mandatory Occurrence Reporting system, and progressing remediation plans.

We've maintained strong customer engagement by clearly communicating evacuation procedures to apartment block residents and issuing regular safety updates. In collaboration with our Customer Involvement Team, we carried out a comprehensive consultation programme for residents in high-rise buildings over 18 metres, resulting in tailored Building Safety Engagement Plans.

Our remediation programme is underway, with works starting on our three highest priority buildings in early 2025, which are progressing well against the project plan. We've also enhanced fire detection and sprinkler systems in high-risk buildings and updated our risk management strategies.

The programme is backed by our 30-year Business Plan, with additional funding from the Government's Cladding Safety Scheme and, where applicable, the original developers. Ongoing compliance activities – such as fire risk assessments, gas and electrical safety checks, and water hygiene inspections – are led by our specialist internal teams, and supported by external consultants and contractors, including fire engineers and project managers. This investment reflects our continued commitment to maintaining high safety standards and effectively managing risk.

Key headlines:

- **99.98%** of our homes have an up-to-date gas inspection and service certificate (2023/24 – 99.99%)
- **100%** of compliant fire risk assessments completed (2023/24 100%)
- **99.93%** of our homes meet Decent Homes Standard (DHS) (2023/24 99.88%)
- **99.42%** of electrical safety checks completed in customers' homes (2023/24 97.35%)
- **100%** of lift safety checks completed (2023/24 92.72%)
- **100%** of asbestos and legionella checks completed (2023/24 100%)

To address issues with the quality of our existing homes, particularly around damp, mould, and condensation, we've implemented a comprehensive strategy over the past year, combining proactive inspections with responsive repairs.

We've strengthened our reporting systems to ensure prompt action and provided customers with guidance on preventing condensation and maintaining a healthy environment within their home. We've also invested in training for our maintenance teams to ensure they're equipped to manage these issues effectively.



In response to specific cases, we're tackling the 'root causes' by delivering tailored solutions — such as improving ventilation, fixing leaks and enhancing insulation. We also plan to introduce advanced diagnostic technology to assess problems accurately and guide effective remediation.

Our commitment to continuous improvement is reflected in regular reviews of our policies and procedures, incorporating best practice and customer feedback to ensure the highest standard of safety and quality in all of our homes.

How many cases of damp and mould have been reported that require action? In 2024/25 (period from April 2024 - March 2025), 2,321 cases were reported and had a damp and mould inspection.

What percentage of the housing providers portfolio does this account for? This equates to 12% of the homes where we have a full repairing responsibility.

Customer Voice

This theme assesses how effectively we listen to and empower our customers.



We recognise the value of customer voice and offer a range of involvement opportunities, from one-off feedback on local services to joining our Customer Committee alongside Board and Executive Directors. We tailor our consultation methods to suit different customer groups, using incentives and clear communication to show how feedback influences our services.

Over the past year, customer input has led to improvements in services such as ASB and repairs. Our repairs service is undergoing a major review focused on a right-first-time approach, shaped by customer feedback and due to roll out in 2025/26.

Established in February 2024, our Customer Committee – comprising seven customer members and two non-executive Board members – has played a vital role in embedding customer voice at Board level. The Committee reviews performance, requests deep dives into key areas such as repairs and complaints, and monitors progress through dedicated dashboards. Feedback from over 700 customers has informed these reviews.

In its first year, the Committee has:

- Influenced key strategies by providing suggestions around content prior to Board approval
- Reviewed the progress of the Inclusive Services Team in capturing customers' personal information data and the service improvements being made as a result
- Received information on Customer Voice activities to ensure feedback is listened to
- Received information on Community Investment activities, including how social value is promoted and how different funds are used in communities
- Participated in the recruitment of Non-Executive Directors and Executive Directors, reflecting the customer perspective throughout the process
- Reviewed performance data against targets and trends, challenging areas where service is not where it needs to be, and driven the development of a performance dashboard
- Reviewed in-depth information around the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), specifically around complaints and repairs in response to satisfaction levels
- Informed a revised approach to customer communications
- Supported the interview process for the appointment of our Chief Executive

Looking ahead to 2025/26, the Committee will:

- Continue to have oversight of key areas of policy and strategy, monitoring progress to ensure customers receive the best-possible service
- Oversee progress against Corporate Plan activities, including the Repairs and Complaints Reviews
- Work with our Customer Hub to understand the benefits that the new multi-channel communications platform will bring

Insight Customer Scrutiny Group

Customers also form our Insight Scrutiny Group, another key element of customer voice that has been in place for over a decade. Insight members undertake several scrutiny exercises each year, reporting back findings and recommendations to the Board and Customer Committee. These are focused on customers' experiences of services and highlight areas of improvement. They are then shared with customers via our website and customer magazines throughout the year. The Board and Customer Committee track the progress of recommendations made by Insight.

Previous Insight scrutiny reviews have looked at:

- How we triage anti-social behaviour cases when they are reported to us
- The service customers receive when moving into new homes
- Communications about damp and mould
- Support provided to assist with financial wellbeing and accessing employment and skills opportunities
- Management of communal spaces in neighbourhoods

Service areas Insight plan to scrutinise in the future include:

- Property investment work – replacement kitchens, bathrooms and windows
- Responsive repairs
- Grounds maintenance

Co-design and collaboration

Co-designing services with customers is at the heart of our model, and their feedback is used to develop and update policies and influence procedures.

Our Customer Experience and Customer Voice strategies have influenced a new Customer Experience Strategy for launch in summer 2025. We engage customers on a number of policies, including tenancy management, and we are involving customers in a range of tenancy matters, including pests, pets, permissions, CCTV and Ring doorbells.

We include updates to customers on the Our Voice digital engagement platform and via our website, enews and customer magazines, sharing messages around how their feedback is shaping and influencing services.

The complaint handling team has also improved customers' experiences by listening to their feedback and working with colleagues to resolve matters when things go wrong. We look at learning through case reviews, case studies and lifting up customer stories to teams, the Board and the Customer Committee. We then share these via our Annual Customer Complaint and Service Improvement reports.

Customer Engagement - April 2024 to March 2025:

- **18,521** emailers were sent to customers sharing opportunities to get involved
- **6,970** text messages were sent to customers sharing opportunities to get involved (where we don't hold an email address)
- **4,174** postal invitations were sent out to customers
- **120** face-to-face and telephone conversations were had
- **3,542** people visited our digital customer platform, Our Voice
- **2,633** customers completed surveys to give their feedback about our services

As part of our recent regulatory inspection, we received the following feedback:

'Great Places provides a wide range of opportunities for tenants to influence and scrutinise its strategies, policies and services. There are clear arrangements in place through which Great Places hears from tenants. There is also evidence that feedback from tenants has directly and positively impacted service delivery. Great Places has provided appropriate assurance that it makes effective use of its performance data to shape services and provides a range of information to tenants to support effective scrutiny.'



Quotes from members of the Customer Committee on their involvement

"I am most proud of being part of a Board/team/committee that is genuinely focussed on making real improvements for all its customers. My main priority is highlighting what truly matters to us customers and having a voice to represent how customers want time and money to be spent."

Sam Jones

"I am proud of the experience and knowledge I am gaining at Great Places because it has given me confidence that I can add value to the Customer Committee for the benefit of the customers. My priority is that all customers are in reach of all the support services offered by Great Places and communicated with in an honest, equal and inclusive way."

Kimberley Borsay

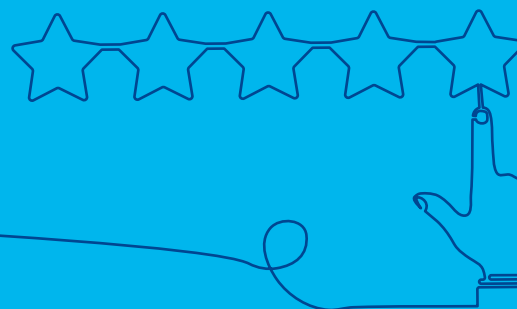
"I'm proud to work alongside a team at Great Places as a Customer Committee member, committed to listening and improving services with customers at the heart of it all. My priority is ensuring inclusivity, making sure everyone, regardless of background or circumstances, feels their voice matters and is reflected in the decisions that are made at Great Places."

Ali Mirzee

"I'm most proud of how our feedback and suggestions have been incorporated into the work that Great Places does. It really feels like we are all making a difference. My priorities are ensuring that agreed plans are implemented and followed up on and making sure that many types of customers are considered as part of senior decision making, especially vulnerable customers."

Naomi Davey

Measuring Satisfaction



Our TSM results for 2024/25 showed that we achieved an overall customer satisfaction score of 70.8%

The table below shows the scores for the TSMs that we have collected, from our initial pilot onwards.

Low cost rental accommodation	2022/23 Pilot	Year End 2023-24	Year End 2024-25	Trend Pilot 2022/23 Year End 24-25	HouseMark Median 2024/25
Overall	69.0%	71.5%	70.8%	1.8%	72.5%
Repairs overall	71.2%	71.2%	73.9%	2.7%	73.9%
Speed of repairs	71.8%	70.0%	71.3%	-0.5%	69.9%
Well maintained home	75.0%	75.1%	77.5%	2.5%	72.8%
Safe home	82.6%	82.3%	81.7%	-0.9%	79.1%
Communal areas well maintained	66.5%	71.7%	73.3%	6.8%	67.3%
Listens & acts	65.4%	64.5%	65.5%	0.1%	62.0%
Keeps you informed	71.9%	74.3%	75.4%	3.5%	73.1%
Fairness & respect	77.0%	78.5%	81.0%	4.0%	78.1%
Complaints handling	32.3%	34.7%	42.1%	9.8%	35.3%
Contribution to neighbourhood	66.3%	66.4%	69.0%	2.7%	66.3%

We report all TSM results to our Board and Customer Committee, sharing them with leaders across the organisation and with customers. To better understand what drives customer satisfaction, we've carried out deep dives into TSM responses – particularly around complaints and repairs – analysing related data such as complaint records, repair jobs, and customer demographics (e.g. property type, household make-up, ethnicity). Customer comments are also reviewed to identify trends and areas for improvement. These insights will continue to inform the Customer Committee's agenda, helping track the impact of service changes on satisfaction.

As a learning organisation, we use continuous improvement tools – such as Service Excellence Groups and targeted projects – to enhance the customer experience based on feedback. We also publish our Annual Complaint and Service Improvement Performance Report, which is made available on our [website](#) and via customer publications.

Recent service improvements include:

- Complaints handling training delivered to 750 colleagues, embedding good practice and a customer-focused culture
- Revised ASB policy and procedures, improving triage and case management for better first-time resolution
- An updated Adaptations Policy, shaped by customer feedback and aligned with regulatory guidance, to provide clearer information for both customers and colleagues

We've also updated several policies in response to complaints and customer input, including:

- Customer Feedback and Remedies & Resolution Policies, aligned with the Housing Ombudsman's Code
- Service With Respect Policy and Vulnerabilities Policy, supporting a more inclusive and responsive service approach

Handling Customer Complaints



Our Customer Feedback Team ensures robust complaints handling, focusing on learning from both complaints and compliments to share best practice across our services.

We are committed to transparency and accountability, regularly publishing complaints data through our magazines, digital bulletins and website. In 2024/25, like so many others in our sector, we saw a continued rise in complaints, reflecting ongoing pressures – particularly on our repairs service. Despite these challenges, we remain focused on resolving issues and delivering excellent service.

Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, we handled 2,161 complaints – up from 1,852 the previous year. Of these, 283 (13.23%) progressed to Stage 2, including 48 cases carried over from 2023/24. The majority (87%) were resolved at the first stage.

Great Places received 22 determinations from the Housing Ombudsman service in 2024/2025. Each determination can have a number of findings and outcomes which include maladministration. The HOS identified 52 findings from the cases they managed; of these, 16 related to maladministration and 11 to service failure.

	Number of Housing Ombudsman Service referrals	% of total complaints	Service failures identified	Maladministration identified
2024/25	22	1.01%	11	16
2023/24	22	1.18%	14	22

These findings are used by the HOS to calculate our overall maladministration rate, which for this period was 60%. This is lower than last year when we reported a rate of 76%.

A review of our complaints service was one of our five first-year Corporate Plan priorities, along with our repairs service. This has been influenced by customer complaints themes and trends, as well as customer feedback through our engagement and involvement projects. Our new Continuous Improvement Forum is now responsible for using learning from complaints and customer feedback to improve services. They will continue to work with customers to co-design any improvements around service delivery, customer communication, changes to policies, procedures and contract management. Improvements will be monitored by our Customer Committee through their TSM and bespoke performance dashboard.

Some examples of what we have done this year include improvements in our communication with customers around repair appointments, and we are continuing to focus on this in our repairs service review. We have also updated a number of policies and procedures based on our customers' feedback. This has included our Tenancy Management Policy, which covers a number of matters relating to customers' tenancies.

Customer feedback has also influenced the procurement of contracts in our Asset teams. Customer cases studies are used at the tender and evaluation stages. Customer feedback is used to measure and monitor successful contractors' performance.

The Top 3 areas we received complaints around from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 were:

Repairs

Customer Experience

Compliance/
Gas related

CASE STUDIES - CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT TEAM

Our co-design engagement model is doing best what matters most. In 2024/25 our Customer Involvement Team has worked with colleagues and customers to provide opportunities for customers to be involved in designing and influencing our offer. **This work has included:**

Building and fire safety resident engagement strategies

In response to The Building Safety Act 2022 we have produced individual resident engagement strategies tailored to each of our eight higher-risk buildings (those 18m or more in height, or seven or more storeys). Customer feedback was crucial in producing the final plans. This involved contacting customers and sending over 1000 contacts via email, text, postal surveys, posters and support from local teams and community partnership colleagues. We also held a programme of engagement activities at the buildings to launch the strategies with customers and answer related questions about the strategies, their homes and communal spaces.

Repairs

Customer engagement has been a crucial part of a comprehensive end-to-end repairs review, which is a key priority for the business in the first year of our new Corporate Plan. The first stage of customer consultation was completed in early January and February 2025. This saw 524 customers respond, telling us what is important to them about our repairs service. This feedback has been crucial to ensure we are focused on improving the areas identified by customers. We will be carrying out further consultations during 2025 and 2026 and involving customers in the co-design of the service and improvements.

Home user guides

In response to customer feedback on information provided when moving into their homes, we invited over 1,500 customers to share their views on our existing Home User Guide. Customers' responses resulted in the creation of a revised Home User Guide and changes to the onboarding process to improve customers' experience of moving into their new home.



ASB

We started our customer consultation on how we handle reports of anti-social behaviour in 2022. In 2024 we asked customers how they feel about the service following a number of improvements, including how reports of ASB are triaged and advice given at the first point of reporting. Customer feedback was positive and is reflected in the customer satisfaction scores for the Tenant Satisfaction Measure relating to our handling of anti-social behaviour (TSM TP12), which has risen from 61.5% last year to 70.8%. We will continue to engage and listen to customers' feedback as part of our ongoing commitment to service improvement.



CASE STUDY - Working in partnership on Russell Road LGBTQ+ Extra Care Scheme

In the past twelve months, Great Places made substantial progress on the UK's first majority LGBTQ+ Extra Care housing scheme, located on Russell Road in Whalley Range, Manchester.

Developed in partnership with Manchester City Council and LGBT Foundation, the scheme has been co-produced with partners and members of the LGBTQ+ community to provide inclusive, purpose-built housing for people aged 55 and over, with a focus on LGBTQ+ residents.

The project was designed through a co-production approach with Triangle Architects, our contractor Rowlinson Construction, Commissioners and a dedicated Community Steering Group (CSG), comprising older LGBTQ+ people and local residents.

Following a successful public consultation in spring 2024 a planning application was submitted and Manchester City Council granted planning permission in September 2024.

The £37 million development will deliver 80 one- and two-bedroom apartments for social rent, alongside communal facilities such as lounges, treatment rooms and landscaped gardens.

The scheme is being built on the site of the former Spire Hospital, a long-vacant brownfield plot, and will also include a neighbouring shared ownership block of 40 apartments to support first-time buyers and address local home ownership affordability challenges.

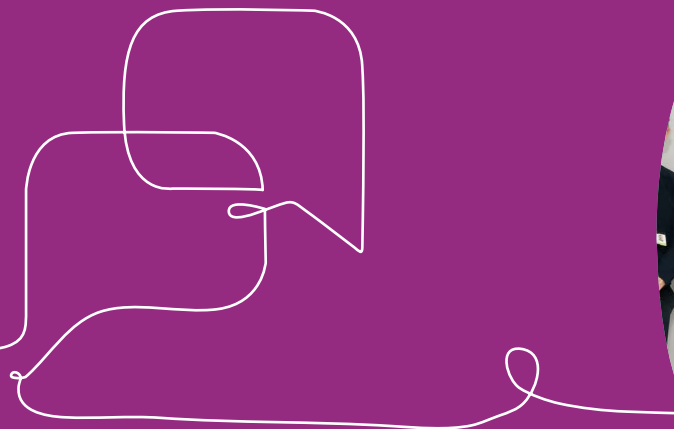
Throughout the year, the CSG played a central role in shaping the scheme, offering input on interior design, cultural programming and the overall vision. The development is intended to be more than just housing—it will serve as a Centre of Excellence, promoting social connection, reducing isolation and improving health and wellbeing for older LGBTQ+ people across Manchester and beyond.

Construction began in early 2025, with completion expected in 2027. The scheme is funded by Great Places, with support from Homes England, Manchester City Council, and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's Brownfield Housing Fund.



Customer Support

This theme seeks to assess the effectiveness of the initiatives that we run to support individual customers.



At Great Places, we do more than provide affordable homes – we invest in our communities through our profit-for-purpose model, helping customers live well and independently.

We continue to work with partners to tackle homelessness through initiatives such as Greater Manchester Housing First and the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP), alongside delivering commissioned support via our Independence & Wellbeing teams. Our Tenancy Coach service also supports customers struggling to sustain their tenancies.

Our Community Investment Team offers a wide range of support focused on economic inclusion and personal development. Working with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) partners, we deliver services that promote financial resilience and reach thousands of residents across our neighbourhoods. We also connect customers to statutory services and offer volunteering opportunities through our seven community centres.

In 2024/25, our Funding Partnerships service secured over £760,000 in external funding to strengthen community partners. Our Greater Together Foundation contributed a further £250,000 – funded by Great Places and our supply chain – to support community groups and provide direct financial relief to customers. Our in-house employability team supported over 1,000 customers into work, training, and volunteering, with around 30 people starting their self-employment journey through our Boss-It programme.



From 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025:

We supported over
1,000
people into
employment, training
and volunteering

30
customers were
supported through
our Boss-It Self-
employment
programme

£760k
was secured in external
funding to support
customers

Supporting our customers through difficult times

The rising cost of living continues to affect our customers, and we remain committed to providing meaningful support.

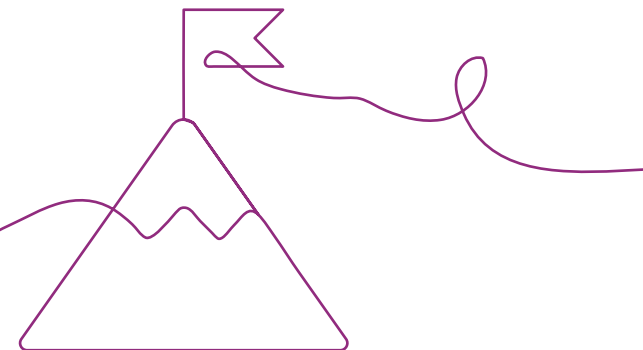
Our Tenancy Coach Support Service helps customers sustain their tenancies, avoid homelessness, and build resilience and independence. The service supports those with complex needs, including mental and physical health conditions, substance misuse and financial hardship, while also signposting to specialist local partners.

In 2024/25, our Tenancy Coaching Service:

- Received 849 referrals
- Achieved a 96% tenancy sustainment rate at six months and 95% at 12 months post-exit
- Secured over £34,000 in financial returns for customers
- Generated more than £1.27 million in social value
- Supported 218 customers with complex needs

Alongside this, our Financial Resilience Services Team, regulated by the FCA, supports around 500 customers annually with complex debt and advocacy. We also help customers improve energy affordability, increase income, reduce costs and manage finances more effectively. Last year, we secured over £308,000 in additional support for customers.

By offering tailored advice and practical support, we continue to empower customers to navigate financial challenges and maintain stable, healthy homes.



CASE STUDY - Charles' Story

After experiencing homelessness, Charles began his new tenancy with Great Places in an empty flat and uncertainty about the future. With support from Great Places' Tenancy Coaching Service and the local council, he received essential furnishings, financial guidance, and help navigating benefits and utility bills. Thanks to this wraparound support, Charles has not only settled into his home but is now giving back—using his gardening skills to improve the communal spaces at Canal Mews. His story is a powerful example of resilience, community, and the impact of social value in action.

Scan the QR Code to watch Charles' story, or [click here](#)



CASE STUDY - Mike's Story

Mike, a customer in our in our South Region, faced significant financial challenges after experiencing three strokes. His wife and grown-up children had left him, and he was living alone in a four-bedroom house. Without Housing Benefit due to his previous employment, Mike was struggling to survive on £194.26 from his state pension and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and was referred to our Money Matters Team.

An initial consultation with Mike highlighted that despite being eligible for additional support, he had no Housing Benefit in place and insufficient income to cover daily expenses and bills including council tax and utility bills. Following the meeting, the team supported Mike in helping him apply for support including a single person discount on council tax, resulting in a £453.32 award, council tax support amounting to £1,087.95 and Housing Benefit of £143.74 per week. The team also contacted Manchester Council and arranged a transfer credit from the joint council tax account to Mike's account, as he had evidence of payments. In addition, the team supported Mike in applying for pension credit of £213.94 per week and a reduction in his water bill.

The financial advice and support provided to Mike by the team significantly improved his financial situation. With the new benefits and discounts, he was able to manage his living expenses more effectively, reducing the stress and uncertainty he faced daily. The collaboration with various partner agencies ensured that all aspects of his financial needs were addressed, providing him with a stable and manageable financial foundation.

Mike's story highlights the importance of tailored financial advice and support in improving the quality of life for customers facing challenging circumstances. Through proactive measures and dedicated assistance, the Money Matters Team was able to make a real difference.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT CASE STUDIES

Working Wardrobe – Blackburn

Great Places has launched Blackburn's first Working Wardrobe, a new initiative providing free interview clothing to help people prepare for job opportunities.

The Community Investment Team transformed an unused room at our Bowland House scheme at Primrose Bank, into a dedicated space offering interview outfits. The service is open to all Great Places customers in Lancashire and to non-tenants referred by the Job Centre. In addition to clothing, colleagues offer CV support and interview coaching.

For those unable to visit in person, a virtual service is available, allowing customers to select clothes via video call, with delivery arranged to their home.

The initiative was launched at an event with partners to explain how the scheme works.

Commenting on the launch of the service, our Employability Coach Stacey Fletcher said:

"We're delighted to launch the Working Wardrobe at Bowland House. Interview clothes can be expensive, and by removing this barrier, we're helping more people feel confident and ready to succeed."



Wybourn Works – Supporting customers into employment

Louise Haigh MP and Clive Betts MP visited Wybourn Works, a Great Places-led employability initiative based at the Pat Midgley Community Hub in Sheffield. Launched in July 2024, the programme is one of ten national pilots funded by the Department for Work and Pensions and the Learning and Work Institute.

The initiative aims to raise aspirations and support residents into work, training, or volunteering. It offers structured training in areas such as childcare, hospitality and customer service, alongside personal development and wellbeing sessions.

In its first year, Wybourn Works supported 70 residents, with 15 securing full-time employment and others progressing into training or volunteering.

During their visit, the MPs met with participants who shared their experiences. Louise Haigh MP commented:

"It's fantastic to see the impact Wybourn Works is having. This community has so much potential, and it's vital we remove the barriers that prevent people from achieving it."

You can hear more by scanning the QR Code or [clicking here](#) to watch the video about Wybourn Works.



Partnership with St. Vincent's Furniture Project

Great Places' Community Investment Team works closely with local organisations to support customers, including a long-standing partnership with St. Vincent's Furniture Project in Sheffield.

Part of the national St. Vincent de Paul charity, the project has provided quality second-hand furniture to those in need since 1987. With support from Sheffield City Council, donated items are stored, sorted and delivered by volunteers to referred individuals.

Our partnership began in 2019, with St. Vincent's collecting furniture from our void properties. In return, Great Places customers – many of whom are first-time tenants, refugees, or have experienced homelessness – are referred to receive essential household items.

We now contribute £3,500 annually from our Neighbourhood Initiatives Budget, supporting faster collections and deliveries. In the first three quarters of 2024/25, 93 items worth £4,378 (if bought new) were delivered to customers, helping them turn houses into homes while also reducing landfill waste.

A new Service Level Agreement has been confirmed to continue the partnership into 2025/26.



Placemaking

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



Placemaking remains central to our mission, particularly across our four anchor neighbourhoods and seven community centres. Our approach is one of true partnership with local communities, for example at the Pat Midgeley Community HUB in Wybourn where we have set up a charity of residents and community stakeholders to govern and direct the work of the centre.

We're developing long-term neighbourhood plans focused on high-density housing areas, creating a clear roadmap for delivering measurable outcomes for customers and communities. Our updated Anchor Neighbourhood Plans – shaped by customer and stakeholder input – set out our commitments across community investment, development, asset management and housing services.

In addition, our Community Investment Team's Place and Regeneration Team connects customers to local opportunities and works closely with the VCSE sector. In 2024/25, this work secured £600,000 in funding for support services.



CASE STUDIES

Great Places and ALL FM: empowering communities through radio

Great Places is committed to fostering community resilience and empowering our residents. Our recent collaboration with ALL FM with customers at our Docherty Project (supported accommodation for people who are experiencing homelessness and alcohol dependency) exemplifies this commitment, providing valuable skills to our residents while boosting their confidence and mental wellbeing.

Funded with £5,000 from the 2023/24 Community Resilience Fund, the programme targeted Great Places customers in Levenshulme, Longsight and Gorton. Five residents from the Docherty Project took part, with two going on to present their own show.

Training began at Docherty House and later moved to the ALL FM studio, giving participants hands-on experience in a professional setting. The project culminated in a live broadcast of Manc Bees on 2 December 2024, where participants shared personal stories and advice on homelessness support in Manchester.

The project boosted participants' confidence and skills, with two expressing interest in continuing their radio journey – highlighting the lasting impact of this creative, community-led initiative.

Funding community growth

Great Places is committed to enhancing community wellbeing and has provided £7,500 through our Financial Resilience Fund to an arts and social justice project in Accrington, Blackburn, and Nelson to support a new programme of activities for women to explore health through relationships with plants and each other. The Physic Garden was purchased by the community through crowdfunding. The garden features over 130 medicinal plants used globally to support health. Great Places' funding has enabled the Physic Garden to run monthly workshops introducing medicinal plants and exploring issues such as health, stress, food, recovery, belongings and happiness, fostering a supportive community environment.

Putting down strong roots

Great Places teams and customers came together to create a 'Celestial Garden' in Blackburn, which transformed a former fly-tipping wasteland into a thriving green community space.

[Watch the video](#) to find out more.





Environmental

Climate Change

This theme seeks to assess how our activities are impacting on climate change and how we are mitigating the risks of climate change.



Great Places works hard to reduce the impact of its communities and day-to-day operations on the environment. Our cross-organisational Sustainability Working Group is responsible for implementing our new Sustainability Strategy and delivery of the underpinning Action Plan. Our aim is to reduce our environmental impact across all aspects of our business and focus on the areas where our emissions are the greatest. This will enable us to realise our corporate commitment to become a carbon-neutral business by 2050.

Retrofit Programme

Our retrofit programme remains an important part of our work to meet the environmental commitments outlined in our Corporate Plan. Great Places is committed to getting all of our homes to a minimum standard of EPC level C by 2030. Over the past 12 months this has seen us make substantial progress to reduce the number of homes with a rating below EPC C to 2,541 (14%). Future plans which support the Government's Warm Homes Social Housing Fund include improving 450 homes over the next three years in South Yorkshire and a further 700 homes in the Greater Manchester area.

EPC ratings for our existing homes (As at March 2025):

A - 106
B - 6059
C - 9607
D - 2294
E - 228
F - 19

Homes without an EPC - 156

85% of all homes built in 2024/25
achieved a minimum of EPC B.



Great Places is prioritising the upgrade of its Heat Networks. In January 2025, we completed our largest heat network upgrade at Richmond Park in Sheffield, with 50% of the costs covered by government funding. In partnership with Fairheat, improvements were made to nine plant rooms, 299 homes and a community centre. Benefits include improved energy efficiency and customers having greater control over their heating and hot water costs. We are undertaking two optimisation studies at Docherty House, Manchester and John Atkinson Court, Salford and we are now developing funding applications to deliver the required interventions.

We have secured funding for improvements at Hutton Lodge, Manchester, and we are reviewing all of our Heat Networks to ensure that we are able to meet future regulatory requirements.

You can hear more about our energy efficiency projects at Great Places by scanning the QR code to watch a video on some of our work, or [click here](#).



Scope 1, 2 and 3 Greenhouse Gas emissions

Great Places uses the Carbon Workbook calculator and methodology developed by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to establish its carbon footprint. The method of accounting has changed to include the emissions figures for homes served by third-party district heating within the Scope 3 Existing Stock category. In addition, there has been an increase in the number of homes built and the number of colleagues which, together with more accurate energy billing, has resulted in an increase in this year's emissions.

Great Places Housing Group Carbon Emissions 2024/25		
Scope	Source	Carbon Emissions (CO2e)
Scope 1	Great Places directly used gas consumption, fleet consumption, fugitive emissions	3,144
Scope 2	Electricity consumption	6
Scope 3	Existing stock energy consumption, new build, grey fleet, electricity transmission and distribution	90,963
	Total emissions	94,112

Mitigating climate risks

Mitigating the risks of overheating and flooding is a key part of Great Places' Sustainability Strategy. We're committed to addressing these challenges through thoughtful design and practical solutions across our homes and neighbourhoods.

Flood risk and overheating are central considerations in all new developments. Homes are built in flood zone 1 – the lowest risk category and any risks mitigated by, for example, raising floor levels. Surface water is discharged via approved routes and rates, with attenuation measures such as oversized pipes, swales and balancing ponds used where necessary.

To reduce surface water run-off, we use permeable paving and are exploring green roofs to naturally manage rainwater, reduce overheating and support biodiversity.

New homes are designed to prevent excessive indoor temperatures through orientation-specific design, glazing choices and ventilation strategies that maintain safety and wellbeing. Where passive measures aren't sufficient, mechanical cooling is used, in line with Building Regulations Approved Document Part O (2021).

Our design standards require dynamic modelling using Integrated Environmental Solutions IES software to assess overheating risks accurately for each home and site, ensuring tailored and effective mitigation.

Engaging customers on ventilation, heating and recycling

At Great Places, we recognise the vital role our customers play in helping us become a more environmentally sustainable organisation.

Our customer-facing teams and website offer practical advice on energy efficiency, including guides on using heating systems and new technologies. A dedicated damp, mould and condensation page also provides tips on reducing moisture in their home. Customers can request printed user guides if needed.

When moving into a new-build home, customers receive a comprehensive Home User Guide (HUG) which is available in print and digital formats. This includes instructions on operating heating, ventilation and waste systems. A home demonstration is also provided, followed by a check-in two weeks later to offer further support.

Additional guides cover boiler care, repairs, lawn maintenance and drainage – encouraging responsible water use.



CASE STUDY - Mulino Walk – sustainable homes in New Islington

Mulino Walk is one of Great Places' latest developments, delivered in partnership with Manchester City Council as part of the ongoing regeneration of New Islington and Ancoats.

The £7 million scheme, part-funded by Homes England, has delivered 23 high-quality shared ownership homes – three two-bedroom and 20 three-bedroom properties – helping make city-centre home ownership more accessible. A neighbouring site will add 52 social rent apartments by winter 2025, contributing to a wider plan to deliver over 400 new homes in the area.

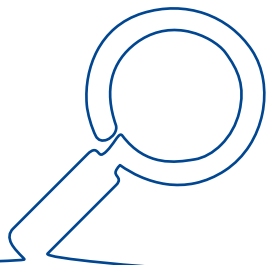
Mulino Walk is a flagship low-carbon development supporting Manchester's climate goals. Sustainability features include:

- » Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs)
- » Enhanced insulation and triple glazing
- » Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR)
- » EV charging points and cycle stores
- » Permeable paving

The homes are carbon-neutral ready and powered by 100% renewable electricity. The scheme also includes biodiversity enhancements – such as planting, bird and bat boxes – and a sustainable drainage system to protect the nearby canal.

Waste management was a key focus during the build, with 99% of construction waste diverted from landfill.

Mulino Walk not only delivers affordable, sustainable housing but also sets a benchmark for future developments, exceeding current environmental standards and contributing positively to the local community.



Ecology

This theme seeks to assess how we are protecting the local environment and ecology.



Great Places strives to go beyond minimum Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements where feasible as set out in our design guidance.

We follow a clear biodiversity hierarchy:

1. Avoid biodiversity loss
2. Minimise impact
3. Restore habitats on-site
4. Enhance biodiversity in the local community
5. Offset through BNG banks or off-site contributions (as a last resort)

Each site undergoes a preliminary ecological appraisal and BNG assessment to evaluate biodiversity impact, including checks for invasive species and protected wildlife. Planting strategies favour native, low-maintenance species over traditional lawns, with landscaping designed in collaboration with our Grounds Maintenance Team.

Where appropriate, developments include features such as bee and swift bricks, hedgehog runs, bat boxes, SuDS habitats and clover or moss lawns to support biodiversity and reduce environmental impact.

Reducing pollutants

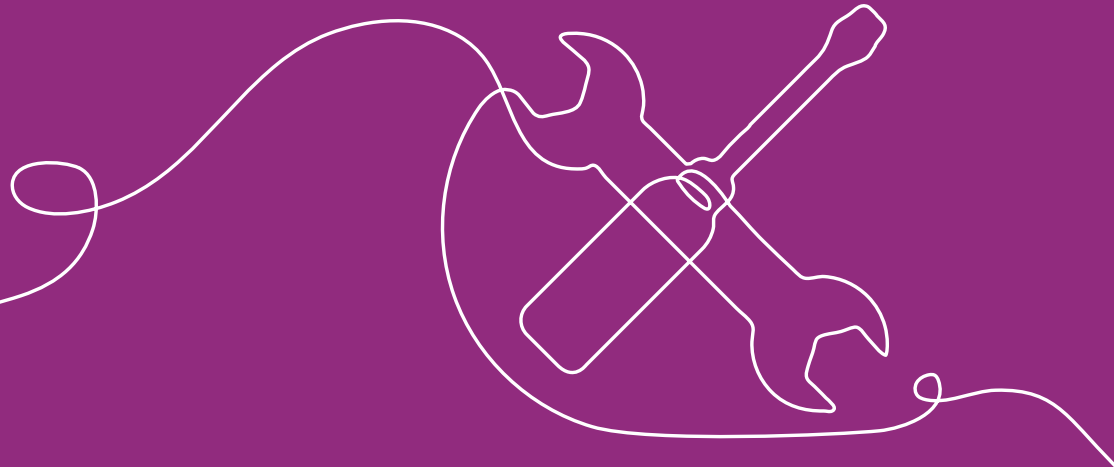
We are committed to minimising pollution across our developments through the following key measures:

- Great Places' new developments comply with pollution legislation and no reportable pollution incidents have occurred at any of our developments in the last year
- All parking areas linked to SUDs are designed with fuel and oil separators to prevent contamination of watercourses
- Our building services systems are serviced and maintained in accordance with manufacturer recommendations to ensure they are performing effectively and efficiently
- We have carried out extensive conditions surveys over the last year to ensure internal environment conditions within our customers' homes are effectively managed to limit the likelihood of damp and mould formation
- Deleterious materials are excluded within our Employers Requirements
- Site investigations are robustly defined within our Employers Requirements to ensure any site contamination is known prior to construction works commencing and suitable remediation strategies are in place to limit the potential for material harm occurring from disturbance or displacement.



Resource Management

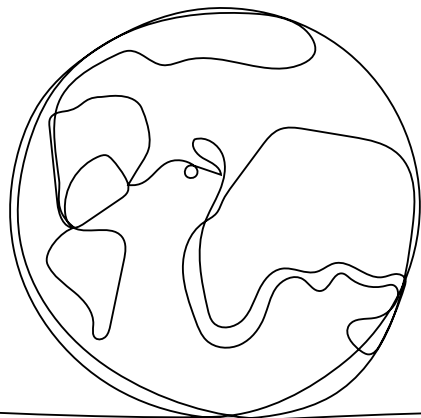
This theme looks to establish the extent to which we have a sustainable approach to materials in both the construction and management of properties.



Sustainability in the supply chain

We work closely with consultants and contractors to ensure our specifications align with sustainable materials standards, previously outlined in the Code for Sustainable Homes. All timber used in our developments is legally sourced and certified by FSC or PEFC.

Our specifications and procurement strategies prioritise responsibly sourced materials for development, refurbishment and asset replacement. Materials are selected for durability and longevity to withstand weather and wear, helping to reduce waste and the need for frequent replacement.



Waste management

From project inception, our Design Team identifies potential sources of construction waste to ensure compliance with the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) hierarchy.

Contractors implement and manage waste through a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP), which is regularly monitored to maximise reuse, repurposing and recycling – keeping landfill waste below 5%.

Our Development Managers work closely with consultants and contractors to track and report waste data, aiming for zero waste to landfill across all sites.

Water management

Great Places is developing a strategy to reduce domestic water use across both new and existing homes.

We've trialled leak detection sensors with automatic shut-off valves to limit damage from major leaks, with plans to roll this out in new homes over the coming year and extend it to existing properties.

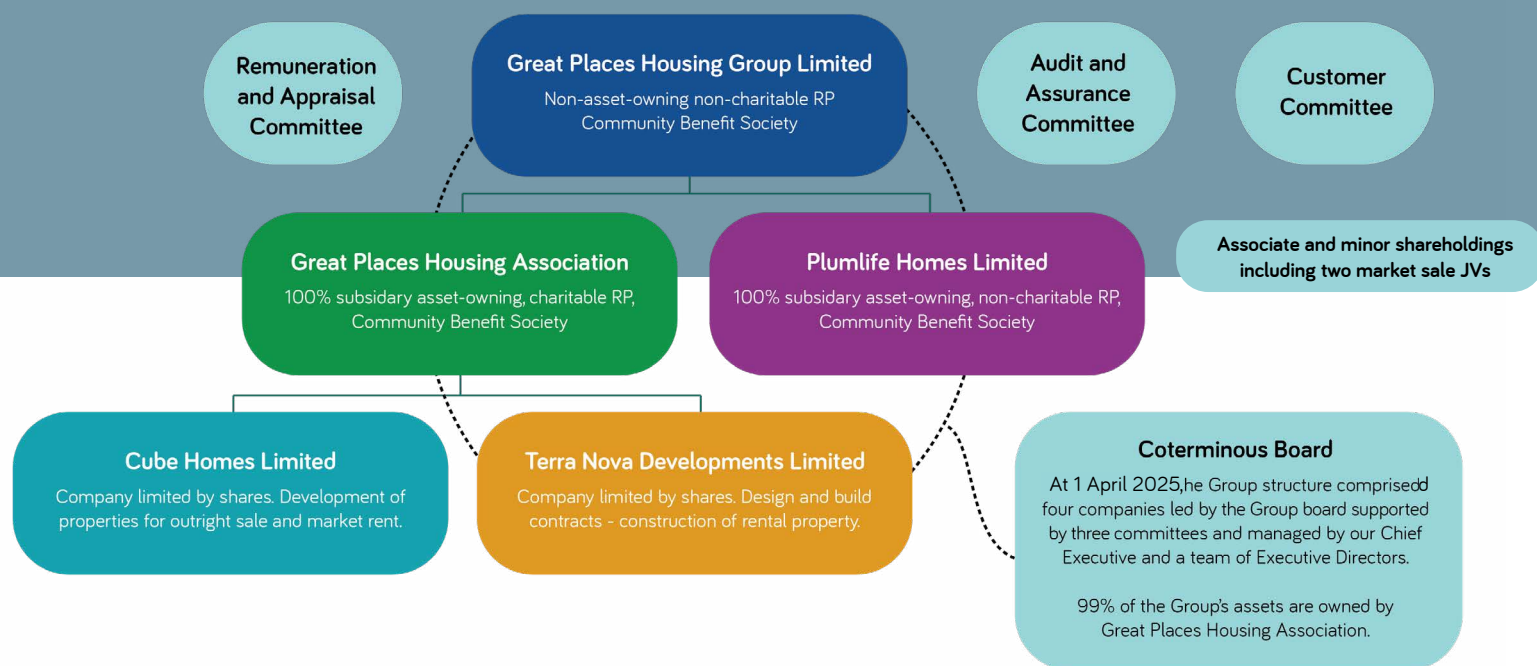
To reduce water demand in new homes, we specify:

- Water-efficient showers – saving over a third of water and energy
- Dual-flush toilets – with a maximum flush of six litres
- Efficient appliances – including low-consumption washing machines and dishwashers
- Aerated taps – reducing water use by up to 30%
- Drought-resistant planting – promoted in our Employers Requirements
- We aim for water use of 100 litres per person per day, with a maximum of 110 litres. Consultant teams carry out water usage calculations for each scheme to ensure compliance with this target.



Governance

Structure and Governance



This theme seeks to assess our overall structure and approach to governance.

Great Places Housing Group Limited is a registered housing provider and parent company to Great Places Housing Association (a not-for-profit with charitable status) and Plumlife Homes Limited. Both Great Places Housing Group and the Housing Association operate on a profit-for-purpose basis, reinvesting surpluses into new homes and community development.

As a Registered Provider, we are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing and currently hold a G1 governance rating and a V2 financial viability rating, confirmed in our latest inspection in September 2024. We also received a C2 grade under the new Consumer Standards, reflecting both strengths and areas for improvement in service delivery. This feedback has helped shape our three-year corporate plan, Here for Our Customers, which was shared with the Regulator during the inspection.

Despite sector challenges – including inflation, rising interest rates and the cost-of-living crisis – the Regulator has confirmed our financial resilience and ability to manage risks, including those linked to development and sales.

We follow the National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020 and have had no adverse regulatory findings in the past year, including in areas such as data protection.

Customer feedback is gathered through our independent Customer Scrutiny Group (Insight), which conducts reviews and reports findings to the Board and Customer Committee. These are considered alongside Tenant Satisfaction Measures, complaints data and wider customer feedback.

Risk Management



Great Places acknowledges that risk management – whether concerning positive risks (opportunities) or negative risks (threats) – is not only a regulatory obligation, but also a fundamental aspect of day-to-day operations.

Our Code of Governance assigns the Board ultimate responsibility for establishing, overseeing and reviewing internal control systems, as well as for setting and maintaining a risk management framework. This includes approving our Risk and Assurance Strategy, agreeing the Risk Appetite Statement and ensuring that all decisions align with this statement. The Audit and Assurance Committee is tasked with detailed scrutiny and evaluation of the risk management and internal control framework. Its terms of reference reflect this responsibility and are closely linked to both internal and external audit functions, as well as to assurance provided by relevant internal and external experts.

Risk management and assurance are interrelated processes that underpin effective governance. Risk management offers the Board assurance that all significant threats to the organisation have been identified, assessed and addressed. Mitigation strategies may include reducing the likelihood or impact of a risk, accepting it as unavoidable, transferring it to a third-party expert or ceasing the activity that gives rise to the risk. Assurance mechanisms provide confidence that controls are robust and effective, and that mitigation plans are proportionate and represent good value for money.

Our approach to risk management has evolved considerably in recent years, with the Board and the Audit and Assurance Committee playing a central role in its advancement. This approach is structured around the three lines of assurance model and consolidated through our Assurance Map. The risk management process itself is built around three core stages: risk identification, risk assessment and risk mitigation.

Given the financial challenges posed by the current operating and political climate, a robust and strategic approach to risk management is essential. We continue to employ sensitivity and stress testing, including multi-variable scenarios, to explore situations that may exceed our tolerance thresholds or challenge our financial “golden rules.” These are supported by control measures and mitigation activities. The Board plays a key role in these discussions and in shaping the financial mitigation strategies adopted.

ESG Risk management

In relation to ESG-related risk management, any risks falling under the ESG umbrella are included in our corporate risk register and are monitored monthly by the leadership team. These risks are assigned to Directors, and the Board is kept informed at every meeting regarding the control framework and any planned mitigation measures. Where appropriate, ESG risks are also addressed through our “three lines of defence” assurance model and may be incorporated into the internal audit programme.

ESG risks are embedded within the risk register, which is reviewed by the Board at each meeting. The register outlines the control measures currently in place to manage these risks, along with any additional actions planned to reduce either the likelihood of the risk materialising or the potential impact on the organisation should it occur.

Board and Trustees

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

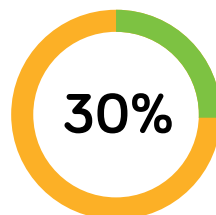
The Boardroom



5/10 Great Places Housing Group Board members are female



2/5 Executive Team members are female



30% of Great Places' Board members have a disability



56 is the average age of Great Places Housing Group Board



53 is the average age of the Executive Team



2/10 of the Great Places' Board members are from ethnically diverse backgrounds

As of 1 April 2025, the Group Board comprised 10 members, of whom nine are Non-Executive Directors (90%) and one is an Executive Director (the Chief Executive). The roles of Chair of the Board and Chief Executive are held by separate individuals.

In line with best practice and following the adoption of the NHF 2020 Code of Conduct, all new Non-Executive Directors are appointed for a maximum of two three-year terms, with the possibility of extension up to a total of nine years. Our Remuneration and Appraisal Committee actively monitors the succession plan to ensure that recruitment is well-planned in advance and reflects the skills required on the Board and Committees at any time.

Over the past two years, four Non-Executive Directors have stepped down from the Board, representing a turnover rate of 42%. Additionally, three Executive Directors from the Senior Management Team have left the organisation during the same period, equating to a turnover rate of 55%. Declarations of interest are a standing item at the start of every Board and committee meeting. A register of interests is maintained and published on our website in accordance with the Code of

Governance. Where a conflict is declared, the relevant Board member may be asked to abstain from voting or participating in discussions on the matter concerned.

Three committees report directly to the Board: the Audit and Assurance Committee, the Customer Committee, and the Remuneration and Appraisal Committee. There is also a subsidiary Board for Cube Homes Limited. Each committee and the subsidiary Board includes members of the Group Board.

Overall, our aim is to ensure that we are compliant with our Code of Governance, but also to have the strongest Board possible to support effective governance. Our Triennial Governance Reviews, Internal Audits on governance and Regulatory Inspection results have been extremely positive and confirm that our governance arrangements are excellent.

Our external auditors, Beever and Struthers, have served since November 2021, with Sue Hutchinson acting as Lead Audit Partner. A policy governing the independence of external auditors is reviewed annually.

The Remuneration and Appraisal Committee holds a broad remit, including responsibility for Board succession planning. A succession plan is presented annually to both the Board and the Committee. The Audit and Assurance Committee includes two members with recent and relevant financial expertise, having previously held roles as Finance Director and Audit Partner, respectively.

The Customer Committee is responsible for a wide range of matters relating to customer-facing services, policies and strategies, ensuring that the customer voice is embedded in their development and design. The effectiveness of the Board is independently reviewed every three years. The most recent triennial review, conducted by Altair between December 2023 and February 2024, assessed both Board effectiveness and remuneration. The review concluded that the organisation has strong governance arrangements in place.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) of board members and senior management

We know that having a diverse and inclusive Board and leadership team will ultimately lead to stronger performance, and it is important to us that our Board and senior leaders are reflective of our stakeholders.

At Board level, we have a Recruitment, Succession and Development Policy in place which explicitly references our commitment to EDI. In addition to ensuring non-discrimination, this policy – alongside our Statement of Preferred Board Composition – aims to create a Board that reflects our customer base and the communities we serve. It actively promotes diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity and disability (surface diversity), as well as diversity of thought and lived experience (deep diversity).

Our Recruitment and Selection Policy for colleague appointments includes a dedicated section on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), ensuring that no individual is discriminated against on the basis of protected or broader characteristics. Great Places regularly monitors equal opportunities data relating to applications and appointments. Where analysis highlights areas for improvement, we are committed to taking appropriate action. This may include, but is not limited to, additional training, policy or process changes, or positive action initiatives.

Over the past year, we have introduced a new recruitment platform and implemented anonymous recruitment at the initial stage to help eliminate unconscious bias during shortlisting. We now explicitly encourage applications from diverse candidates in all job adverts and provide interview questions in advance to support neurodiverse applicants. Interviews also include mandatory questions on equality, diversity and inclusion, exploring what these values mean to each candidate.

Our recruitment partners for Board roles are required to source as diverse a candidate pool as possible and to provide EDI monitoring reports throughout the recruitment process, enabling us to track progress at each stage. As of 31 March 2025, 50% of the Board are women, 20% are from ethnically diverse backgrounds, and 30% identify as having a disability. While none of the current Board members are Great Places customers, we do have seven customers serving on the standing Customer Committee.

Among the ten Board members, three identify as Christian, five as having no religion, one as Buddhist, and one as 'other.' The average tenure of the Non-Executive Directors is 3.5 years, reflecting the recent appointment of four new members.





CASE STUDY - SHe Programme

Last year we launched the SHe (Sharon Hayes Empowerment) Programme, in memory of our former Director of Tech Services, who sadly passed away in 2022 following illness.

Sharon not only created a sector-leading service offer, but as a female in a traditionally male-dominated world, was a role model within the sector and was passionate about nurturing female talent.

The SHe programme was a six-month development programme designed to empower female colleagues working in more male-dominated teams to develop their skills to progress in the future. It was a deep dive into the key leadership and team management skills as well as addressing some of the issues and barriers that women specifically face when navigating progression at work, such as imposter syndrome and menopause. Crucially it also provided an opportunity to participants to attain an ILM Level 2 Award in Leadership and Team Skills.

The first cohort of 12 colleagues also received mentoring from existing Great Places female Directors and Heads of Service. The programme was nominated as part of the CIH Women in Housing Awards and Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter.



CASE STUDY - BOOST Programme

Addressing issues of equality and diversity across our business and particularly in leadership roles is really important to us, and that's why we're proud to be a part of BOOST.

Led by Southway Housing Trust on behalf of Greater Manchester Housing Providers, this programme currently has 19 GMHP member organisations. Addressing issues of representation of colleagues in ethnically diverse backgrounds in the leadership space, it looks to find ways to break down barriers to recruitment and progression, and all members sign up to a BOOST Commitment to develop action plans to facilitate real change.

An important aspect of this is mentoring; with mentees being teamed with a mentor from a different housing association as well as a designated Change Champion from their own, whose strategies are informed by their shared learning and experience.

The focus last year was around recruitment practices. One thing we put in place was updating the wording of our job advertisements to encourage more applicants from social housing backgrounds, a group which is disproportionately represented by black and ethnically diverse communities. Our HR Team has confirmed that this has resulted in more applications, but also more from those of diverse backgrounds. We look forward to continuing to grow with BOOST.

Colleague Wellbeing

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

At Great Places, colleague wellbeing is a core priority and central to our “Great People” vision. We are committed to supporting the health, wellbeing and engagement of our workforce through our people strategy and a range of targeted initiatives.

To promote a positive working environment, we have set clear objectives to improve colleague wellbeing, particularly in the face of ongoing challenges. Our comprehensive health and wellbeing programme is designed to empower and educate colleagues, helping to make Great Places a healthier and more supportive workplace.

Over the past year, we have continued to enhance our wellbeing offer, which currently includes:

Marketplace and Wellbeing Hub: An internal platform offering access to a wide range of benefits and discounts from hundreds of retailers. It also features a wellbeing centre that provides educational resources, support and tools to help colleagues lead healthier, happier lives. The platform is structured around four key themes: Move, Munch, Money and Mind. For our Repairs Operatives we have provided van-based wellbeing kits, which include signposting numbers to support services.

WPA Healthcare Cash Plan: This plan covers dental, optical and therapeutic treatments, with options to include family members. It also provides 24/7 access to counselling and GP services.

Mental Health support: Last year we trained 51 Mental Health First Aiders across the business. We also introduced peer-to-peer trauma support. This was initially introduced into our Independence and Wellbeing services, with 41 colleagues and 11 managers trained as practitioners. We also have access to a dedicated CDT psychologist/counsellor for colleagues experiencing mental health challenges due to personal or work-based situation.

Onsite physiotherapy appointments: Weekly onsite physiotherapy sessions have been introduced this year, and are consistently fully booked, offering colleagues convenient access to support for musculoskeletal issues. Colleagues using the service have noted significant improvements in their physical health and mobility.



Colleague wellbeing and engagement events: The 2024/25 programme has included:

- Time to Talk Days introduced into teams to promote conversations about wellbeing and mental health
- Wellbeing Action Plans embedded into one-to-one conversations between managers and their team members
- Regional Recognition Days to celebrate colleague achievements
- Yoga sessions and a Cycle to Work Day, complete with breakfast and bike checks
- Workshops focused on mental health and self-care
- Rockfit fitness classes, Wellbeing Walks and Wellbeing Toolbox Talks
- A continued fundraising partnership with Mind, aiming to raise £30,000 over two years. In the first year, we raised £14,577 through team activities such as the Manchester 10K, Tough Mudder, raffles and quiz nights
- Activities aligned with national and international awareness days
- Increased awareness of health screening through podcasts featuring guest speakers with lived experience of breast, cervical, bowel and prostate cancer.

Great Places' approach to pay



Great Places is an accredited Living Wage Employer. In 2024/25 we paid the Real Living Wage to all our colleagues, and paid our Apprentices above the National Minimum Apprentice rates.

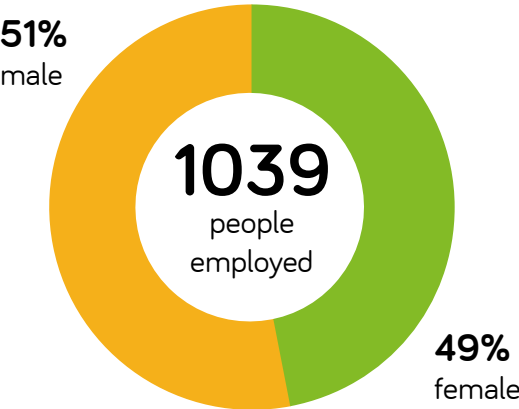
We're accredited with the following:



Gender pay gap

The latest figures reported to government at the time of publishing this ESG report are:
UK gender pay gap (ONS 2024): **10%**
Great Places Housing Group's gender pay gap (mean is) **-0.85%** (2023/24 - 2.6%)

We employ 1039 people, 49% are female and 51% are male.



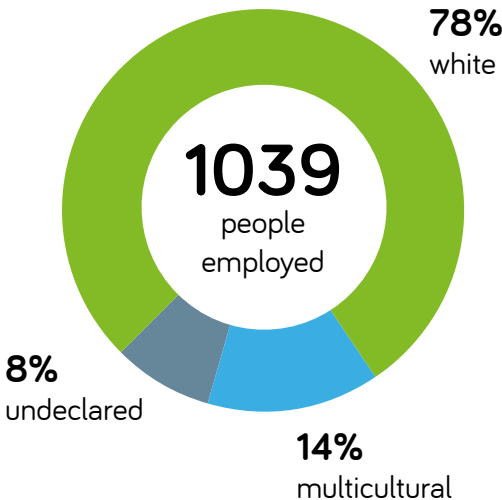
CEO worker pay ratio

CEO: median average pay ratio – 6.28:1 (2023/24 6.3:1)
This means that the CEO earns 6.28 times the median salary in the business.

Ethnicity pay gap

Median: 17% (2022/23 18.7%)
Mean: 17.05% (2023/24 18.3%)

We employ 1039 people, 78% identify as white, 14% as multicultural and 8% did not declare their ethnicity.



Supply Chain Management

This theme seeks to assess if we procure responsibly.

At Great Places, generating social value through our supply chain management remains a key priority.

Our Procurement Strategy includes a dedicated objective focused on building a sustainable supply chain that delivers positive economic, social, ethical and environmental outcomes aligned with our organisational ambitions. As part of this commitment, we prioritise the development of local supply chains and work to reduce barriers that may disadvantage Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs). We also embed social value into our procurement processes by applying specific weightings for social value within our evaluation criteria.

We assess social impact by inviting suppliers to make pledges to deliver social value and by evaluating the positive contributions businesses make through a process we refer to as responsible business evaluation. This approach provides a holistic assessment of a supplier's social impact, including areas such as carbon reduction, compliance with the Living Wage, EDI, and local employment.

Great Places is actively embracing the flexibilities introduced by the Procurement Act 2023 to remove barriers to participation and to prioritise local suppliers. Over the past 12 months, suppliers contracted to deliver services to our customers have committed to £2.3 million in social value pledges. Oversight and scrutiny of these commitments – and the realisation of supply chain benefits – are provided by our Great Value group.

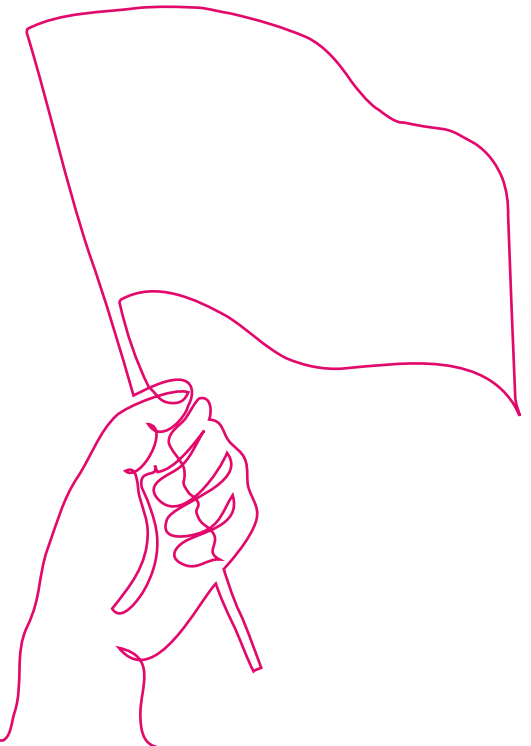
Our Community Investment Team leads the delivery of social value, working in partnership with suppliers to achieve outcomes that reflect local needs. Over the past year, our social value achievements have included:

- Over £200,000 in donations to community partners
- 631 weeks of work experience and apprenticeship placements
- 423 hours of volunteered support, including attendance at careers fairs and the renovation of community centres.

Throughout the financial year, our supply chain has continued to provide extensive support to our customers and communities – not only through financial contributions, but also by offering time, expertise and resources.

In addition, our suppliers have continued to support our Annual Resilience Fund, which is designed to help build healthy communities. Distributed on a commissioning basis to organisations across our regions, this year's fund has focused on health and wellbeing, with an emphasis on early intervention, preventative services and community cohesion projects. Thanks to the continued support of our partners, we have been able to assist 20 organisations in delivering services to our customers, including Blackburn CVS, MadLab, Mancunian Way, and Revive Church.

Find out more about the organisations we supported through our fund [here](#), or by scanning the QR code.





CASE STUDY - Social Value in Action at Manor Park Primary School

A notable example of our social value activity is the ongoing support for our partnership with Manor Park Primary School, located in our Longridge Shaw Heath Anchor Neighbourhood. This collaboration provides pupils with valuable insights into the wide range of careers available within the housing sector.

In January, approximately 30 Year 5 pupils from Manor Park Primary visited Great Places Housing Group's head office as part of our Inspiring Futures project. This initiative aims to strengthen the financial resilience of the community and raise the aspirations of its young people. During the visit, pupils took part in a variety of activities designed to introduce them to careers in housing. They also met several of our suppliers – including Emmanuel Whittaker, VPS and Simon Fenton Partnership – who shared insights into roles in property management, quantity surveying, construction and regeneration.

Read more about this [here](#), or by scanning the QR code.



Socially responsible resourcing

At Great Places, environmental sustainability is embedded within our procurement processes, with one of our four social value objectives being to “Reduce Supply Chain Carbon Footprint.” While our approach to social sustainability is ambitious and largely effective, we recognise that further progress is needed in addressing environmental considerations. Our cross-organisational Sustainability Working Group is currently reviewing our Sustainability Strategy to strengthen these areas.

We routinely assess suppliers on their carbon management plans and their willingness to develop such plans during the contract term. This assessment forms part of our responsible business evaluations, except where it may present a barrier for SME bidders. We also evaluate suppliers based on the proportion of their vehicle fleet that is electric or hybrid.

In addition, we encourage suppliers to commit to carbon literacy training for their employees. This training can reduce individual carbon footprints by approximately 10% and supports more environmentally conscious decision-making.

As part of our ongoing Sustainability Strategy review, we are exploring ways to embed environmental sustainability more systematically into our procurement practices.

While we continue to face many challenges, we remain committed to delivering for our customers and our communities and to deliver on our customer commitments every day.

We hope you found our report interesting and that it demonstrates our commitment to improving our ESG performance and reporting on this transparently.

If you are an investor and have any questions or feedback, please get in touch with treasury@greatplaces.org.uk. If you are a customer, please contact communications@greatplaces.org.uk

Please don't print this document unless you need to!

Great Places Housing Group includes three registered Housing providers:

Great Places Housing Group:
Co-operative and Community Benefit Society
(FCA) No 30045R
Regulator of Social Housing No L4465

Great Places Housing Association:
Co-operative and Community Benefit Society
(FCA) No 19564R
Regulator of Social Housing No L1230

Plumlife Homes Limited:
Co-operative and Community Benefit Society
(FCA) No 23202R
Regulator of Social Housing No SL3224

Registered Address for the Group:
Great Places Housing Group
2a Derwent Avenue
Manchester
M21 7QP

great
places
HOUSING GROUP

