

Delivering impact through ESG

Our environmental, social and governance year in review
2025/26



great
places
HOUSING GROUP

Introduction

Welcome to our 2025/26 ESG report.

Great Places continues to operate in a demanding and changing environment, shaped by economic uncertainty, regulatory change, climate risk and cost-of-living pressures affecting many of our customers. Against this backdrop, we have made strong progress over the past year by strengthening services, investing in our homes and keeping a clear focus on long-term resilience, trust and impact.

Environmental, social and governance considerations are central to how we work and how we create long-term value for customers, colleagues, communities, investors, partners and other stakeholders. This report sets out our progress against the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing and explains how ESG priorities are embedded in our strategy, decision-making, risk management and day-to-day operational delivery.

During 2025/26, our ESG activity focused on four strategic priorities: improving customer outcomes and trust, investing in safe and sustainable homes, strengthening communities and maintaining strong governance and financial resilience. These priorities align with our Corporate Plan, Sustainability Strategy and long-term ambitions.

Our approach is shaped by the issues that matter most to our stakeholders and where Great Places can have the greatest impact. Customer feedback, Tenant Satisfaction Measures, complaints insight, scrutiny activity, colleague engagement, regulatory expectations, investor requirements and Board oversight all help shape the priorities covered in this report.

We aim to report progress clearly and proportionately, using evidence-based claims and explaining where data, delivery or methodology is still developing. This helps maintain confidence in our ESG reporting and avoids overstatement as we continue to improve.

During the year, our Customer Committee discussed the strategy before the Board approved the new Sustainability Strategy for 2025–2030, providing a clear framework for reducing our environmental impact across homes, operations and communities. Our long-term commitments include achieving net-zero carbon, ensuring all homes reach a minimum EPC C by 2030, and embedding low-carbon technologies and operational efficiencies across the organisation.

We have continued to make tangible progress in improving the quality and performance of our homes. In 2025/26, 705 homes were upgraded to EPC Band C, improving both energy efficiency and affordability for customers. Alongside this, we secured £225 million in sustainability-linked funding, linking our environmental performance directly to our financial resilience.

These improvements support both customer outcomes and long-term organisational resilience, helping Great Places respond to future financial, environmental and regulatory challenges.

Customer experience has remained a central focus. A comprehensive complaints review has strengthened early resolution and contributed to a 26% reduction in complaints. We have also progressed a major review of our repairs and maintenance service. To ensure our customers were involved in the review we engaged over 500 customers exploring what was important to them about the repair service. This has resulted in service improvements linked directly to customers' feedback ensuring improvements are shaped by customer insight and tested through delivery.

Supporting our customers and communities continues to be a core priority. Through targeted support and partnership working, we have helped customers increase income, access essential services and sustain their tenancies. We have also continued to play a key role in programmes supporting people experiencing homelessness and those with complex needs.

Customer safety remains a top priority. We have maintained a strong focus on building safety, compliance and investment in existing homes, alongside improvements in data, oversight and preparation for emerging requirements such as Awaab's Law.

Strong governance underpins this work and helps turn commitments into delivery. During the year, we welcomed new Board members and introduced changes to strengthen oversight, particularly around growth and development. We also saw continued positive regulatory outcomes, including an improvement in our consumer standards rating, reflecting progress in service delivery and customer outcomes.

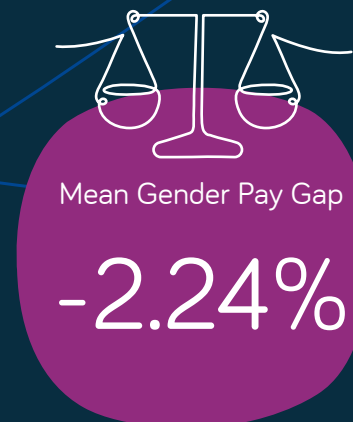
Alongside this, the Board has agreed a new set of long-term ambitions to guide Great Places over the next 10 years. These provide a clear framework for responding to sector challenges, prioritising investment and continuing to deliver for our customers and communities.

This report highlights our progress during 2025/26 and demonstrates our continued commitment to transparency, accountability and continuous improvement. I would like to thank Board members, colleagues, customers and partners for their contribution over the past year.

Mike Gerrard
Chief Financial Officer



ESG at Great Places: key headlines 2025/26



These results demonstrate progress in customer satisfaction, environmental performance, governance standards and community impact.

Our report structure

The Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing provides a consistent framework for reporting ESG performance across the sector. It also supports wider alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which call for action to end poverty, protect the planet and promote peace, prosperity and strong institutions.

This annual report is structured around three connected areas: social, environmental and governance. The sections should be read together: social outcomes are affected by the quality, affordability and sustainability of homes; environmental action must consider the impact on customers and communities; and governance provides the accountability, transparency and risk oversight needed to deliver our commitments.

Within each section, we explain the relevant theme, summarise progress during the reporting period, provide supporting evidence and identify areas for continued improvement. This approach is designed to make the report useful for a range of audiences, including customers, colleagues, investors, regulators, partners and community stakeholders.



ESG Area	Theme	Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goal	Page Reference
Social	Affordability and security	No poverty Reduced inequalities	6
	Building safety and quality	Sustainable cities and communities	7
	Customer voice	Sustainable cities and communities	9
	Customer Support	Sustainable cities and communities	14
	Placemaking	Sustainable cities and communities	22
Environmental	Climate change	Climate change	24
	Ecology	Life on land	28
	Resource management	Sustainable cities and communities	29
Governance	Structure and governance	Peace, justice and strong institutions	31
	Board and trustees	Peace, justice and strong institutions	33
	Colleague wellbeing	Decent work and economic growth	36
	Supply chain management	Responsible production and consumption	40



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 at 31 March 2026, Great Places owns and/or manages **28,313** properties, **87%** of which are social housing.

1280
Total homes
completed in
2025/26

New homes completed in 2025/26

318

Social rent

312

Affordable rent

471

LCHO
(low-cost home
ownership)

12

Supported
Housing

167

Rent to Buy

On average, our rents are set at **77%** of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and **58%** 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	2697	£122.48	£260.92	47%	£201.28	61%
Salford	2271	£127.08	£256.86	49%	£206.46	62%
Sheffield	2055	£114.71	£181.29	63%	£146.21	78%
Oldham	1317	£122.17	£229.41	53%	£147.23	83%
Blackpool	1189	£121.41	£156.07	78%	£121.40	100%
Total	9529	£121.57	£216.91	56%	£164.51	74%

How do we offer security of tenure for our customers?

We know a secure home makes a real difference. Great Places usually offers starter tenancies to new customers. Once that starter period has been completed successfully, customers move to an Assured Tenancy, which gives a high level of security. Customers who held a Secure or Assured Tenancy before April 2011 are also granted an Assured Tenancy. We use tailored agreements for supported and newly built homes where a different approach is needed.

Maintaining affordable rents remains central to our social purpose and helps reduce financial pressures on customers during continuing cost-of-living challenges.

Building safety and quality

This theme looks at how we meet our legal responsibilities to keep customers safe and make sure our homes and buildings are secure, well maintained and fit for the future.



Keeping customers safe remains one of our highest priorities. During 2025/26, we continued to invest in building and fire safety. We also strengthened how we manage risk and respond to changing requirements. This included preparing Building Safety Cases for our high-rise buildings, introducing a Mandatory Occurrence Reporting system under the Building Safety Act, and progressing our Building Safety Remediation Programme. We regularly review our approach to make sure it remains effective and meets current requirements, supported by strong working relationships with relevant Fire and Rescue Services.

Customer engagement and emergency planning

Customer engagement is central to our approach. Customers living in apartment buildings receive clear information about evacuation procedures and regular safety updates. We have also worked closely with customers in high-rise buildings over 18 metres to develop tailored Building Safety Engagement Plans. These plans help customers understand key safety information and give them opportunities to influence decisions about their homes. Customer input ensures the individual engagement strategies reflect the needs of customers living in the high-rise buildings.

We introduced Residential Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans for customers who may need extra support in an emergency. This helps us understand individual needs and put the right arrangements in place where needed.

These measures help reduce risk, improve compliance and provide greater confidence for customers living in affected buildings.

Building safety and remediation

A major focus has been our Building Safety Remediation Programme. This is a significant programme covering high and mid-rise buildings across our portfolio. During the year, we completed investigations across affected buildings and secured funding approval for every eligible building submitted through the Government's Cladding Safety Scheme.

We also made strong progress in preparing buildings for remedial work. This included technical investigations, design work, regulatory approvals and customer engagement. Several priority schemes are now in the final stages before construction starts, which is an important step in improving the safety and performance of these buildings.

We know this work may cause disruption for customers while it takes place. We will keep people updated, explain what is happening and provide support where needed. Over time, the programme will mean safer homes, better building performance and greater reassurance for customers.

Compliance and safety checks

Alongside remediation work, we continue to carry out fire, gas, electrical, lift, asbestos and water safety checks. We have also focused on reducing outstanding fire safety actions identified through fire risk assessments. This helps reduce risk across our buildings and strengthens compliance.

Our approach is supported by long-term investment in our homes, funding from the Government's Cladding Safety Scheme and, where appropriate, contributions from developers. We continue to improve how we manage building safety information and monitor risks, so we can meet our responsibilities as requirements change.

Together, this work shows our commitment to keeping customers safe, managing risk responsibly and maintaining good-quality homes that are safe, secure and fit for the future.

Building safety at a glance

Our work on building safety is reflected in the following key headlines:

Customers living in buildings over 11 metres owned by Great Places	1,942 customers 1,329 homes 22 buildings
External wall surveys completed for buildings over 11 metres requiring assessment	94%
External wall systems examined	66
External wall systems requiring some remediation	17
Remediation funding secured through the Cladding Safety Scheme	£2.003m
Buildings over 11 metres with developer agreement to fully cover remediation costs under the Responsible Actors Scheme	2
Spend on remediation projects in 2025/26	£1.674m
Budget set aside to complete required building safety remediation within five years	£37.605m

Safety and quality performance

- **99.99%** of our homes have an up-to-date gas inspection and service certificate (2024/25: 99.98%)
- **100%** of required fire risk assessments were completed (2024/25: 100%)
- **99.95%** of our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard (2024/25: 99.93%)
- **99.88%** of electrical safety checks were completed in customers' homes (2024/25: 99.42%)
- **98.29%** of lift safety checks were completed (2024/25: 100%)
- **100%** of asbestos checks were completed (2024/25: 100%)
- **98.97%** of legionella checks were completed (2024/25: 100%)

Where performance was below 100%, we reviewed the reasons, prioritised any outstanding actions and strengthened monitoring to help reduce the risk of it happening again.

Damp, mould and living conditions

We have continued to improve the quality of our existing homes, with a strong focus on tackling damp, mould and condensation issues. Alongside inspections, repairs and practical advice for customers, we introduced new reporting and triage arrangements in October 2025 to deliver in line with Awaab's Law. This includes clear information on response times, updated Living Conditions guidance and support from trained colleagues in the Customer Hub, so risks are assessed consistently and cases are acted on quickly.

As well as prevention, we respond to individual cases with solutions based on each home. This includes improving ventilation, fixing leaks and improving insulation. During the year, we strengthened how we manage complex repairs by giving customer-facing teams more training, improving call handling and appointment processes, and helping repairs and assets teams to be more aligned.

As part of a wider restructure of Asset Management, we also increased specialist resources to support the management of complex repairs and damp and mould cases. This has strengthened support available to frontline repairs teams and helped ensure customers receive the right response as quickly as possible. Our decant arrangements have also been improved linked to feedback from the lived experience of our customers. We know how disruptive it can be for customers who must move out of their homes whilst we undertake significant repairs.

Listening to and then using our customers' feedback has ensured we are focused on communication, updates and planning work with our contractors to minimise disruption to the lives of the people living in our homes.

These changes have improved consistency of response and strengthened our readiness for new legislative requirements, including Awaab's Law.

We continue to review and improve our approach by updating policies, using customer feedback and adopting best practice. During 2025/26, we improved our systems, record keeping and job tracking. We also improved how we manage cases where we have not been able to access a home. This helps reduce missed appointments and means we can act quickly where needed.

These changes help us spot risks earlier, respond more consistently and give customers clearer information about what will happen and when. They also support our wider commitment to maintaining safe, good-quality homes while continuing to adapt to customers' needs and our legal responsibilities.

Damp, mould and condensation cases requiring action

In 2025/26, 2,342 cases of damp, mould and condensation required action ranging from preventative inspections and minor repairs to major remedial works. These cases related to 11.9% of the relevant portfolio of 19,679 homes.

Customer voice

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



We offer customers a wide range of ways to get involved, from shaping our Corporate Plan and influencing our new 10-Year Ambitions to suggesting improvements to our repairs offer, giving feedback on local services and joining our Customer Committee alongside Board and Executive Directors. We adapt how we engage to suit different customers, and we make sure people can see how their feedback is shaping decisions and improving services.

Customer insight continues to play a central role in influencing service design, business priorities and regulatory compliance.

Our latest Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) results for 2025/26 show that **78.4%** of customers are satisfied with the overall service provided by Great Places.

We have clear arrangements in place to ensure customers can hold us to account. Our Customer Committee, made up of seven customers and two Board members, oversees compliance with consumer regulation and the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

Over the past year, the Committee has monitored key improvement work, including complaints and repairs reviews, using a customer-focused performance dashboard to track progress. The Committee also reviews performance and customer feedback, including TSM results, and plays a key role in shaping and approving strategies.

Signals of Progress:

Overall customer satisfaction increased from 70.8% in 2024/25 to 78.4% in 2025/26, reinforcing the story of continuous improvement.

Our Insight customer scrutiny group provides additional challenge and assurance through carrying out in-depth reviews. It reports back to the Board, shares scrutiny information with the Customer Committee and works with colleagues to drive continuous improvement.

During 2025/26, our Insight scrutiny group reviewed what matters most to customers to help Great Places shape a new Code of Conduct. This work supports the Regulator of Social Housing's Competence and Conduct requirements. The outcomes were used to consult with a wider customer audience.

The group also reviewed customers' experience of reporting anti-social behaviour (ASB). They found improvements in processes and training and highlighted the need for clearer communication and expectations. Their recommendations focused on improving awareness, communication and ongoing updates for customers. This was linked to wider engagement activity with customers, which continues to support service improvements linked to policies and how Great Places manages ASB cases.

Insight also reviewed how communication impacts customers during planned improvement work. The group found a strong customer-first approach, and identified opportunities to improve consistency, feedback and data use.

Future reviews will focus on:

- Safeguarding
- Grounds Maintenance
- Customer Service Experience

We keep customers informed through our website, digital and printed publications and the Our Voice digital platform, showing how feedback is shaping services.

We also continue to improve our complaint handling by learning from feedback, case reviews and customer stories. This learning is shared across the organisation and published in our Annual Customer Complaint and Service Improvement reports.

Our Customer Experience Strategy has achieved its first-year outcomes. This has been reported to Customer Committee and Board, who continue to oversee our commitment to deliver on the actions in our Customer Voice and Customer Experience Strategies. We continue to provide a variety of opportunities to involve customers in shaping policies and services, with co-design at the heart of our approach. The Our Voice digital engagement platform is at the heart of this, however it is just one of many ways customers can share their views. We are flexible in our approach to ensure fair and accessible ways to be involved and co-design our services.

Quotes from members of the Customer Committee and Insight scrutiny group on their involvement

"The Customer Committee has become a stronger voice for customers in Great Places' decision-making. By reviewing performance, challenging where necessary and influencing future plans, we help make sure customer feedback leads to meaningful action."

Sheleigh - Customer Committee member

"I'm proud to be part of customer scrutiny, representing the views of a wider customer audience. By working closely with Great Places Housing, we help shape services so they better meet people's needs. Through detailed reviews, we identify what works well, where improvements are needed, and share our recommendations directly with the Board to highlight the real impact on customers' lives."

"What I value most about being part of the scrutiny group is presenting our findings directly to the Board; it shows clear accountability and underlines how important the customer voice is in helping to shape better services."

Sylvia - Insight scrutiny group member

"Our role is to make sure services are not only measured by performance figures, but by the experiences of the people who use them every day. By bringing the customer perspective into decision-making, we help ensure improvements are shaped by what matters most to customers."

Sam - Customer Committee member

"I feel extremely proud and privileged to be part of Great Places' Customer Scrutiny Group, where we take a close look at customer-facing services. We review performance data alongside customer feedback, and we're able to highlight what's working well and identify any gaps or barriers, putting forward practical recommendations for improvement."

"I believe our involvement helps shape services so they work more effectively for Great Places colleagues to deliver better outcomes for customers. It's particularly rewarding to see regular action plan updates from service teams, which clearly demonstrate the real impact and value of the scrutiny work we do."

Bev - Insight scrutiny group member



Measuring satisfaction

Customer satisfaction remains one of our most important performance measures and continues to be one of our key Signals for Success.

Our TSM results for 2025/26 showed that we achieved an overall customer satisfaction score of 78.4%.

The TSMs provide insight across key service areas, including repairs, safety, communication and neighbourhood management.

Satisfaction remains strong in areas such as the overall repairs service (**79%**), well-maintained homes (**80.8%**), and Building Safety (**86.6%**). Satisfaction with neighbourhood management and ASB handling is **72.1%**, while complaints handling remains an area of focus at **45.8%**.

The table below shows the TSM scores we collected, from our initial pilot.

Tenant Satisfaction Measure (Low Cost Rental Accommodation)	2022/23 Pilot	Year End 2023/24	Year End 2024/25	Year End 2025/26	Trend (YE 2024/25, YE 2025/26)	
Overall	69.0%	71.5%	70.8%	78.4%	7.6%	↑
Repairs service	71.2%	71.2%	73.8%	79.0%	5.2%	↑
Speed of repairs	71.8%	70.0%	71.1%	75.6%	4.5%	↑
Building maintenance	75.0%	75.1%	77.7%	80.8%	3.1%	↑
Safe home	82.6%	82.3%	81.6%	86.6%	5.0%	↑
Listens & acts	65.4%	64.5%	65.5%	73.8%	8.3%	↑
Kept informed	71.9%	74.3%	75.6%	81.0%	5.4%	↑
Fairness & respect	77.0%	78.5%	81.2%	85.0%	3.8%	↑
Complaints handling	32.3%	34.7%	42.4%	45.8%	3.4%	↑
Communal areas	66.5%	71.7%	72.8%	78.8%	6.0%	↑
Neighbourhood contribution	66.3%	66.4%	68.8%	75.4%	6.6%	↑
ASB handling	63.8%	61.5%	71.2%	72.1%	0.9%	↑

In 2025/26,
customer satisfaction
with new homes
(all affordable tenures)

93.1%



The strongest improvements were recorded in overall satisfaction, customer voice and communication measures, reflecting the organisation's focus on service improvement during the year.

We report all TSM results to our Board and Customer Committee, sharing them with leaders across the organisation and with customers and colleagues. To better understand what drives satisfaction, we analyse responses alongside complaints, repairs and customer demographics. This learning helps shape improvement priorities and track whether service changes are making a difference for customers.

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

Further detail on complaints performance and learning is set out in the Handling customer complaints section.

Handling customer complaints



Our Customer Feedback Team plays a key role in making sure complaints are handled well and that we learn from what customers tell us. During 2025/26, we completed a major review of our complaints service in response to rising demand and customer feedback. The focus was on understanding the main causes of complaints, simplifying the process and improving how we respond when things go wrong.

This review was not just about changing processes; it was about improving how we learn from feedback and work together to deliver a better customer experience. Improvements introduced during the year included stronger record keeping, a new central approach to logging elected member enquiries and a resolution tracker to ensure agreed actions are completed on time.

We also strengthened complaints handling by improving visibility and control over compensation payments, restricting access to confidential complaints so sensitive cases can be managed securely, and introducing clearer Stage Two guidance with mandatory check-ins and tighter timescales. Together, these changes have helped improve accountability, reduce repeat complaints, and support more consistent responses for customers. We have reduced complaints by 26%, but our stage 2 escalations remain high. We continue to work with customers and colleagues to understand the drivers for escalation.

In 2025/26, Great Places received 28 determinations from the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Across those determinations, the Ombudsman made **52** findings, of which **32** related to maladministration or service failure. We had **15** 'no maladministration' findings.

	Number of Housing Ombudsman Service referrals	% of total complaints	Service failures identified	Maladministration identified
2025/26	28	1.7%	17	15
2024/25	22	1.1%	11	16
2023/24	22	1.1%	14	22

We have used these determinations to drive further service improvement. This has included clearer communication with customers about home contents insurance and personal responsibility for belongings, which is now part of a new digital welcome pack and reinforced through regular campaigns.

We have also introduced a standard property inspection for repair or building-related Housing Ombudsman cases. This helps us confirm whether anything has been missed and resolve any outstanding concerns more quickly and effectively for the customer.

We will continue building on this work in 2026/27, including further enhancements to our complaints systems, dashboard reporting and Housing Ombudsman processes. We are also formalising how we learn from complaints through our Service Excellence Groups, helping us embed continuous improvement more consistently across the organisation.

Learning from complaints remains an important source of customer insight and continues to inform service redesign and continuous improvement activity.

The Top 3 areas we received complaints around from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 were:

Repairs

Customer Experience

Compliance

CASE STUDIES - SERVICES SHAPED BY CUSTOMERS

10-Year Ambitions

After consulting customers on our corporate priorities, the Great Places Board invited customers to help shape our 10-Year Ambitions. Customers reviewed a draft document prepared by the Board and shared whether the Ambitions felt right, whether they were bold enough and whether anything was missing. Customer Committee members also took part in the consultation, which helped inform the Ambitions signed off by the Board in December 2025.

Outcome: Board decision-making benefited from customer insight, helping shape the final 10-Year Ambitions, which will determine our direction of travel for the next decade.

Tenancy management

To inform our updated Tenancy Management Policy and changes to our tenancy agreements, customers were invited to comment on our approach to several tenancy-related issues. These included how we manage pest infestations, permissions for customer-installed CCTV and doorbell cameras, and the support customers need to exchange their homes. We invited all customers to get involved and sent individual invitations to customers with lived experience of running a business from home, having a pet, dealing with problems caused by a neighbour's pet, or making complaints about noise nuisance.

Outcome: Customer feedback informed final policy changes and helped ensure tenancy guidance reflected lived experience, making it relevant and meaningful.



Calls to customers with complaints with the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS)

As part of Great Places' complaints review, customers were encouraged to tell us about their experience of making a complaint to Great Places. Satisfaction scores had improved across all areas from previous surveys completed. However, if customers do not feel that they have received a fair and reasonable response to their complaint after escalating it to Great Places' stage two process, customers are advised how to escalate their complaint to the HOS.

We called a sample of customers who had escalated their complaints to HOS to understand the steps Great Places could have taken to reduce the need for customers to go beyond Great Places' own complaints process.

Great Places' complaints review resulted in updates to our Remedies and Resolutions Policy to ensure that customers are fairly compensated when issues have left them out of pocket or inconvenienced. This reflects the new HOS Compensation policy guidance supporting fair and transparent awards when we have got something wrong. It ensures that we have robust learning and service improvement from customer complaints and cases escalated to the HOS for their review.

Outcome: Customer feedback informed improvements to complaint logging, remedies and resolution processes. We've also seen a significant reduction in complaints, an improved Tenant Satisfaction Score in this area and quicker case resolution for customers.

Scrutiny

Our customer Insight group also undertook a scrutiny exercise linked specifically to our stage two complaint responses. They reviewed the process, communications and outcomes for customers. They made a number of recommendations, and an action plan has been agreed with Insight which will be delivered during 2026/27.

Outcome: Insight recommendations have been translated into an agreed action plan for delivery during 2026/27. The group receives regular progress updates from the accountable colleagues across the business.

Heat networks

We worked closely with the Energy and Heat Networks Team to support changes to systems and contractors for heat networks across several blocks. The project has helped save customers hundreds of pounds a year and gave us a better understanding of customer needs in those buildings. This involved meeting customers in their homes, making calls and providing regular communication. It also resulted in additional investment at one of our apartment sblocks, ensuring we are listening and acting upon our customers' feedback.

Outcome: Many customers have benefited from warmer homes and lower heating bills, as well as receiving more tailored communication and dedicated support.

Customer Engagement – April 2025 to March 2026

93,456	emails were sent to customers with opportunities to get involved	85	face-to-face and telephone conversations were held
4,603	text messages were sent to customers where we do not hold an email address	6,042	visits were made to the Our Voice engagement platform
3,387	postal invitations were sent	508	customers completed surveys to share their feedback

Repairs Review

Customer engagement highlighted what was important to people and enabled the review to focus on what customers wanted/ expected. This has influenced the new structure, new repair priority and new Repairs Policy. The next consultation is focused on customer responsibilities, and a new recharge policy, enabling customers to continue to shape policy and service improvements.

Outcome: We have drafted a new Repairs Policy for launch in Autumn 2026, which has been significantly influenced by customer voice and input.

Customer support

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

At Great Places, we know a good home is only one part of helping people feel settled, safe and able to move forward. That is why we invest in services that support customers through difficult times, help people build confidence and connect them with the right local support.

We work alongside partners to prevent homelessness through programmes such as Greater Manchester Housing First and the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme. Our Independence and Wellbeing teams provide commissioned support, and our Tenancy Coach Service works with customers who may be at risk of losing their home, offering practical help before issues become a crisis.

Our Community Investment Team helps customers take positive steps with their money, skills, wellbeing and future opportunities. By working with voluntary and community partners, we can reach more people, connect customers to trusted local services and create opportunities to volunteer, learn and take part through our community centres.

We are also investing in how colleagues support customers day to day. Working with our delivery partners SM&SH, we are running customer service workshops for all colleagues. These sessions are designed to strengthen our customer-centred culture by helping colleagues see the whole customer journey, understand the impact of every interaction and feel confident taking ownership.

As the rollout continues, we will track longer-term outcomes, but early feedback already suggests positive changes in behaviour including:

- More consistent and professional communication
- Increased individual accountability for customer outcomes
- Greater awareness of the end-to-end customer journey
- Proactive use of tools introduced in the sessions, including the Customer Experience funnel and Accountability Ladder

In 2025/26:

We invested over
£2m
into community
services

We secured over
£600k
in external funding
and social value
contributions



Supporting financial stability

Our Financial Resilience Team helps customers increase their income, manage debt and deal with rising living costs. This includes access to essential items through the House to Home project, and food and fuel vouchers through the Household Assistance project.

In the last year:

- We secured over **£214k** in additional income for customers
- **850** customers benefited from support funds worth **£150k**

Recognising challenging customer affordability, our new-build development programme now includes the provision of both carpets and blinds within rented apartments which eases moving costs for customers and enables them to settle into their new homes quicker.

Employment and skills

Our Employment and Skills Team provides one-to-one support for customers who want to find work, build skills, start training, volunteer or explore self-employment. The support is personal and practical, helping people take the next step at a pace that works for them.

In 2025/26:

- More than **1,000** people accessed the service
- Over **840** people moved into work, training or volunteering
- **12%** of the Great Places workforce are social housing customers, showing how our employment pathways also create opportunities within our own organisation

We are continuing to monitor longer-term outcomes and sustainability of these opportunities.

Communities and wellbeing

Our Place and Regeneration Team helps bring people, partners and opportunities together in local communities. The team connects customers to training, health and wellbeing support, working closely with partners and our community centres so support feels visible, local and easy to access.

During the year:

- We invested **£200k** in over **130** community projects
- We helped partners secure almost **£600k** in funding
- More than **1,000** people benefited

CASE STUDY - Transforming lives through personalised employability support

Adebola, a customer in Oldham, came to the Employability Service after facing repeated job rejections and feeling unsure about her next step.

Working with an Employability Coach, she received tailored support with job searching, interview preparation and confidence-building. The relationship gave her space to recognise her strengths, explore options and prepare for roles that matched her ambitions.

With this support, Adebola developed new skills, rebuilt her confidence and successfully secured a role as an Independence and Wellbeing Housing Assistant at Great Places.

Her story shows the value of relationship-led support that adapts to each person's circumstances, helping customers overcome barriers such as low confidence, career changes and limited access to opportunities.

Most importantly, it shows how the right encouragement and practical guidance can help people see their potential and take meaningful steps towards sustainable employment.



CASE STUDY - Supporting entrepreneurship and self-employment

Lara, a Great Places customer in Salford, had a passion for baking and an ambition to turn it into something more. While balancing part-time work and caring responsibilities, she first connected with our Employability Service through a digital skills course. From there, she joined a self-employment programme that gave her structured learning, practical tools and the confidence to start shaping her business idea.

One-to-one coaching gave Lara space to talk through her ideas, understand her options and plan her next steps. She was also linked to external mentoring and specialist workshops, helping her build knowledge and networks. The support stayed flexible around her circumstances, so she could pause when needed and re-engage when the time was right.

With additional funding for essential equipment and ingredients, Lara launched a small business producing traditional pastries and cakes inspired by her Portuguese heritage. The support has helped her create a sustainable income, grow her confidence and share something meaningful with her local community.



CASE STUDY - Discovery Day opens pathways into employment

During 2025/26, Great Places hosted a Discovery Day with Pure Innovations, giving participants the opportunity to learn about careers in housing and gain first-hand experience of the workplace.

The day included an introduction to Great Places and the housing sector, opportunities to meet colleagues from across the business, workplace activities, an office tour and mock interviews with personalised feedback.

The event helped participants build confidence, develop employability skills and gain a better understanding of different career pathways. It also gave colleagues the opportunity to support more inclusive routes into employment and share their experiences of working in housing.

CASE STUDY - Removing barriers to employment through practical support



Finding work can be harder when practical barriers get in the way. In Blackburn, our Working Wardrobe initiative helps customers feel prepared for interviews by offering free access to suitable clothing, alongside CV guidance and interview preparation.

The cost of interview clothing can be a real barrier, especially for customers already managing tight budgets. By removing that obstacle, the initiative helps people focus on presenting their skills and experience with confidence. The service is flexible too, with virtual consultations and home delivery available for customers who may face mobility or travel challenges.

The individuals who have gained employment after accessing the Working Wardrobe all agree that it is a simple, practical example of how the right support at the right time can make a meaningful difference. The experience made them feel better prepared going into interviews, and played a key role in helping them move into employment and financial independence.

CASE STUDY - Growing Greatness, Apprentice and Graduate Programme

We continue to prioritise social housing customers and other disadvantaged groups through our apprentice and graduate schemes. Our current cohort of 30 graduates and apprentices are thriving at Great Places, building their professional reputations and developing careers in housing.

In the last three years, 27 Growing Greatness colleagues have moved into permanent roles across Development, Neighbourhoods, Tech Services, Repairs, Independence and Wellbeing, and People and Transformation. Two of these moves took place in 2026.



CASE STUDY - Tracy's story*

After losing her mum, Tracy found everyday life increasingly difficult. Her mental health declined, and over time her home became heavily cluttered, creating concerns around fire safety, mobility and her overall wellbeing.

Tracy knew things needed to change but did not feel able to do it on her own. Working with her Tenancy Coach, she received personalised support at a pace that felt right for her. Together, they agreed a plan to make her home safer and help her regain confidence.

Support included fire safety checks, referrals to specialist services and a gradual decluttering plan. One of Tracy's main goals was to use her kitchen again. With regular encouragement, she cleared the space herself and was able to start cooking at home once more.

As trust grew, Tracy engaged with bereavement support and wider services. She also accessed Great Places' furniture recycling scheme, redecorated her home and had her carpets cleaned, helping transform her house into a home she could feel proud of.

Today, Tracy is living independently and feels much more positive about the future.

Tracy's story shows how personalised support, understanding and the right interventions can help customers overcome challenges, improve their wellbeing and feel safe and confident in their home.

**Customer's name has been changed to protect their privacy*



Tenancy sustainment

The cost of living continues to put pressure on customers, so early support is key.

Our Tenancy Coach Service works with customers who are struggling to manage their tenancy. It takes a flexible, person-centred approach, supporting areas such as finances, health, housing and social connection. The focus is on early intervention to prevent homelessness and help customers build long-term stability.

Tenancy Coaches work closely with Neighbourhood Services Managers and local partners to provide tailored support based on individual needs.

In 2025/26

1,049 customers were referred

97% sustained their tenancy at both six and 12 months

£59.8k was secured by Tenancy Coaches for customers

10 evictions at court stage were prevented

The most common support needs were financial support, resettlement, complex needs and mental health.

Where customers need specialist financial help, our Financial Resilience Team works alongside Tenancy Coaches to provide joined-up support.

By focusing on practical help and early intervention, we continue to support customers through financial challenges and help them stay in safe, stable homes.

CASE STUDY - Supporting resettlement and independent living

Great Places supported Michael, a customer moving from temporary accommodation into his first independent tenancy, demonstrating the importance of tailored tenancy coaching in enabling successful resettlement. Having previously lived in supported accommodation, he faced multiple challenges including limited English, ongoing physical and mental health needs, and a lack of local support networks. These factors increased his risk of isolation and financial difficulty when moving into an unfurnished property.

A Tenancy Coach provided intensive one-to-one support, including arranging an interpreter so Michael could fully engage in discussions and decision-making. Together they completed a full needs assessment and developed a personalised plan to support his transition. Practical help included securing essential household items through grant funding, setting up utilities and ensuring access to healthcare by registering with a local GP. Financial guidance was also provided, including budgeting support and help to maximise income through benefit applications.

Ongoing weekly visits helped build Michael's confidence and independence. Over time, he became more able to manage his tenancy, maintain his home and engage with his local community. This intervention shows how coordinated, person-centred tenancy support can reduce vulnerability, prevent tenancy failure and enable customers to live independently with confidence.

CASE STUDY - Preventing tenancy breakdown through early intervention

Great Places supports customers at risk of tenancy breakdown through early intervention and holistic tenancy coaching, helping them address challenges before they escalate.

Customers experiencing financial pressures, social isolation or difficulties managing their home are offered tailored support plans that focus on both practical and personal needs. This includes budgeting advice, referrals to specialist services, and support to access community networks.

Tenancy Coaches work alongside neighbourhood teams and external partners to provide coordinated support, ensuring customers receive the right interventions at the right time. Regular check-ins and flexible engagement help build trust and encourage sustained progress.

This proactive approach helps customers maintain their tenancies, improve their wellbeing and reduce the risk of eviction or crisis intervention.

By addressing issues early and providing consistent, person-centred support, Great Places is helping to create more stable households and resilient communities.



Homelessness prevention and support - 'playing our part'

Great Places is proud to play a lead role in the regional and national ambition to end homelessness and rough sleeping by making these experiences rare, brief and non-recurring. As an organisation that has been at the forefront of tackling homelessness for many years, we have seen first-hand the difference that safe, secure housing and tailored support can make to people's lives.

Our profile as a key provider in tackling homelessness has been catalysed by our role as the accountable body of the Greater Manchester Housing First and Rough Sleepers Accommodation programme. Over the last 8 years we have successfully led a cross sectoral partnership of 11 different organisations working together to deliver Housing First across the Greater Manchester region.

To date the partnership has supported over **465 people who had experienced long-term homelessness** and faced multiple exclusion into homes of their own, giving them the stability and support needed to rebuild their lives making it the largest programme of Housing First delivery in this country.

During 2025/26 we:

Made homelessness brief

Ensured people experiencing homelessness had access to safe, decent and secure homes with **536 of our 1,836** completed lets **made to households** assessed by a Local Authority as homeless. This represents **29.2%** of all lets made across our general and supported housing stock during the year.

We made sure people had access to support quickly via our Achieve service by facilitating **257 housing advice** outreach sessions across Salford, Bolton, Trafford and Bury.

Made homelessness rare through prevention

Using our profit for purpose approach, we internally fund a Tenancy Coach service that works with customers living in our general needs properties who may be at risk of losing their home, offering practical help before issues become a crisis. You can read more about our Tenancy Coaches and the impact that they had in 2025/26 in the Tenancy Sustainment section on page 18.

Housing First is based in the ethos that housing is a human right and provides a stable home in the first instance coupled with intensive tailored support enabling people that have experienced long-term housing instability to address wider challenges they are facing enabling recovery.

Supporting people that have experienced entrenched homelessness into homes of their own not only has a huge cost saving to wider public services it has a real human impact helping people to rebuild their lives and reconnect with family, with one Housing First customer stating:

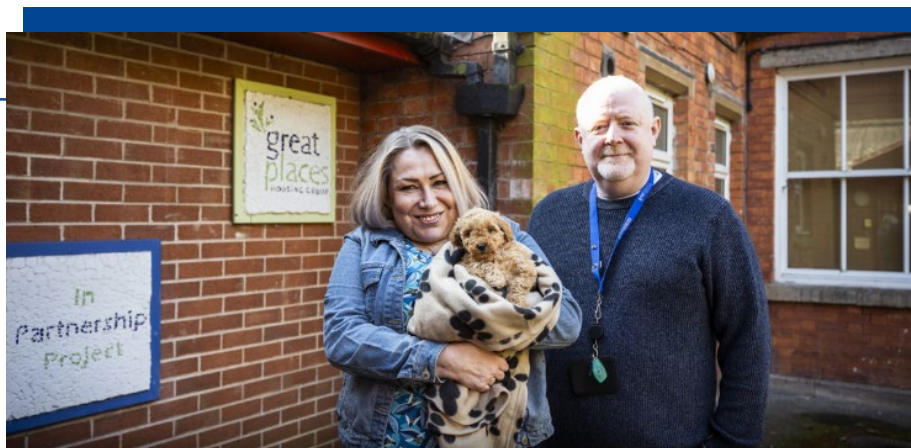
"What they do is incredible. These are the people you want in your corner. They don't shout their name enough. They are very good at giving your life back."

Organisationally our impact on homelessness is broad and demonstrates our ongoing commitment to playing our part in preventing and resolving homelessness in our communities.

Our Financial Resilience Team helps customers increase their income, manage debt and deal with rising living costs. This includes access to essential items through the House to Home project, and food and fuel vouchers through the Household Assistance project. In the last year:

- **We secured over £214k in additional income for customers**
- **850 customers benefited from support funds worth £150k**

By focusing on practical help and early intervention, we continue to prevent homelessness by supporting customers through financial challenges helping them to stay in safe, stable homes.



During 2025/26 we:

Ensured homelessness is non-recurring

No one should have to experience homelessness more than once in their life and our organisational approach to providing tailored support to our customers supports this ambition.

In our Independence and Wellbeing department the teams provide commissioned support aligned to our framework that was co-produced with people who have lived experienced of homelessness. Our person-centred approach recognises the trauma that people in our services have experienced and provides bespoke support based on individual need. Our approach strives to ensure that people never leave our services and return to rough sleeping. Over the last year we have:

- **Provided 22 accommodation projects for temporary supported housing comprising of 326 homes**
- **Provided a service to 479 customers with 161 customers positively moving on**

Housing First provides long-term support to people who have experienced multiple and complex issues and for who no other intervention has been able to resolve their long-term homelessness recognising that recovery for people who have faced complex trauma takes time. Currently on the programme **133 people have successfully maintained their homes for over 3 years**, which is significant considering **80% of people** being supported by the programme have **co-occurring conditions** experiencing both mental health and substance misuse issues.

Lobbied for wider impact

Along with direct delivery Great Places has a wider impact on striving to support the end of homelessness via influencing and lobbying regional and national strategies.

Greater Manchester's Housing First city region mission positioned by then Mayor Andy Burnham is based on learning from the successful delivery of the GM Housing First programme led by Great Places and now as Prime Minister his commitment to a Housing First ethos at a national level continues.

Housing First is also viewed as a key example of the regional 'Enhanced Live Well Offer' being developed under this agenda in Greater Manchester with learning from the programme feeding directly into the development of the wider offer.

Earlier this year, when he was Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy visited The Docherty Project in Rusholme, our award-winning supported accommodation service for people experiencing homelessness and alcohol dependency. The visit highlighted something we've long understood: **when safe housing, specialist support and strong partnerships come together, people can achieve remarkable things.**



Placemaking

This theme highlights the wider work we do to create well-designed homes and neighbourhoods that meet local needs and provide great places for people to live and enjoy.

Placemaking is about more than buildings and public spaces. It is about helping neighbourhoods feel safe, welcoming and connected, so people can put down roots and take pride in where they live. During the reporting period, we continued to focus this work through our anchor neighbourhoods, where long-term neighbourhood plans are shaped by local evidence, customer priorities and partner insight. These plans bring together community investment, neighbourhood services, development, customer voice and asset management, helping activity on the ground feel more joined up and responsive to local need.

Anchor neighbourhoods help Great Places target resources where long-term investment can deliver the greatest social impact.

Our Anchor Neighbourhood Plans start with listening. In Wybourn, Sheffield, customers and local stakeholders have helped shape priorities around environmental improvements, skills and employment support and future housing growth. Their feedback has informed a draft masterplan, a social value plan and proposals for new affordable homes on Manor Oaks Road. In Longridge and Shaw Heath, engagement has shaped priorities around better connections, community facilities and opportunities for children and young people, alongside work to secure affordable housing, walking and cycling improvements and wider investment through local planning proposals.

Our Place and Regeneration Team helps connect this work across services and partners, including securing more than £600k of funding for community partners each year. In Northmoor, this has meant bringing together customer insight, retrofit planning, neighbourhood management and local partnerships to improve homes, communal spaces and the wider environment. Across our anchor neighbourhoods, this approach is helping teams work more closely together, build stronger local partnerships and create the conditions for long-term benefits that customers and communities can see and feel.



CASE STUDY - Youth hub brings new life to Northmoor Anchor Neighbourhood and supports young people

In our Northmoor Anchor Neighbourhood, Great Places worked with Youth Elements to bring vacant retail units on Northmoor Road back into use as a youth hub. The space has created new opportunities for young people and brought renewed energy to the area. Since moving in, Youth Elements has delivered informal education, life skills and creative activities, including youth clubs, leadership programmes, wellbeing sessions and community initiatives that help young people build confidence and feel connected to where they live.

The hub provides a safe and inclusive place for young people to learn, access support and take part in positive activities. Accredited leadership training, community clean-up projects and creative arts programmes have helped build a sense of ownership and pride in the neighbourhood. The project has also supported wider placemaking outcomes, including local job creation and improvements to the physical environment through community planting and public art celebrating local culture.

CASE STUDY - Wybourn festival brings residents together in Anchor Neighbourhood celebration

In our Wybourn Anchor Neighbourhood, Great Places supported a community festival that brought customers, partners and programme participants together to celebrate the success of the DWP-funded Wybourn Works programme. Held at Wybourn Primary School, the event showcased the achievements of local people who had taken part in employability, training and wellbeing activities. Certificates were awarded to participants and volunteers, recognising their progress and contribution to the community.

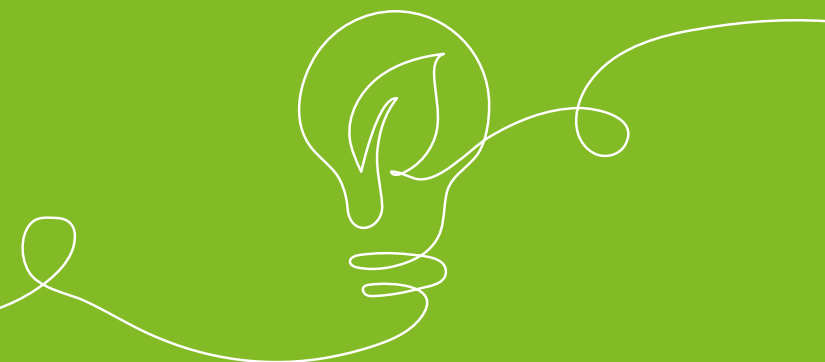
Hundreds of residents and partners attended, creating a day of activity, connection and celebration. The festival also helped raise awareness of local support and encouraged more people to get involved. Wybourn Works has supported residents to access training, volunteering and employment, helping people build confidence and develop new skills. The event reflected the positive impact of this work, sharing success stories and strengthening relationships across the community.



Environmental

Climate change

This theme assesses how our activities affect climate change and how we are reducing the physical risks linked to climate change.



Our Sustainability Strategy 2025/26–2030/31 sets out the long-term steps we will take to reduce carbon emissions across our homes, operations and neighbourhoods. It builds on our earlier carbon reduction work and gives us a clearer route towards net zero over time. The strategy focuses first on improving the performance of existing homes, supported by a delivery plan, cross-organisational oversight and close links to our Asset Management and Development strategies.

Improving the performance of existing homes remains a key priority. Our strategy aims for all homes, where viable, to achieve a minimum EPC C rating by 2030. This will help customers reduce energy use and manage household costs.

Of all homes built in 2025/26, 88% achieved a minimum of EPC B and 21% of new homes built in 2025/26 achieved EPC A.

Over the year, our Sustainability Team improved 705 homes from EPC band D to EPC band C. These homes are now more energy efficient, easier to keep warm and cheaper for customers to run. This work included delivery through schemes such as Warm Homes, alongside self-funded insulation and solar installations. Together with our planned investment programme and external funding, including the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund, this is helping us continue to improve the energy performance of our homes across the life of the strategy.

These improvements help customers reduce energy use, improve comfort and manage household bills more effectively.

EPC Band	SAVA Calculated figures RdSAP10
A	46
B	5200
C	10149
D	2699
E	138
F	13
No EPC	70
Total Reportable EPCs	18315
Below EPC C	2850

During the reporting period, changes to the standard assessment model impacted existing EPC scores resulting in a shift to our baseline position for the number of properties that are EPC D-G. However, during the reporting period the 705 properties treated in order to move them to EPC C, exceeded our target of 637.

Great Places continues to optimise heat networks to improve efficiency, reduce emissions and lower costs for customers.

This year, optimisation works were completed at Hutton Lodge (Manchester) and at Elk View and Tulloch Court in Blackpool. These upgrades delivered around a 40% reduction in heat losses, meaning warmer homes for customers and lower communal energy costs. Customers at these schemes now benefit from fairer, usage-based billing, improving transparency and control over energy costs.

The programme has been supported by the Heat Network Efficiency Scheme (HNES), which provided up to 50% match funding. A fully funded optimisation study was also completed at Windmill House, with a further study under way at Fernbank House.

Working with FairHeat, Great Places is continuing to expand its pipeline of improvement projects, with additional funding applications submitted for both optimisation studies and capital works. This ongoing programme strengthens performance across the portfolio and ensures readiness for upcoming heat network regulation.

Alongside this, the strategy includes action to improve data, develop a decarbonisation retrofit plan for every home, assess carbon emissions across our operations and build the skills, governance and partnerships needed to deliver long-term change.

Building colleague capability for climate action

Delivering our Sustainability Strategy relies on colleagues across the organisation understanding the role they can play in reducing carbon emissions and supporting climate resilience.

To build this capability, Carbon Literacy training forms part of Great Places' corporate induction programme and is available to colleagues across the business. The training increases awareness of climate change, its relevance to social housing and the opportunities for action within individual roles and teams.

Through a mixture of practical learning, discussion and action planning, colleagues develop a better understanding of how their day-to-day decisions can contribute to Great Places' sustainability objectives. As part of the training, participants commit to both an individual and a team-based low-carbon action, helping to embed sustainability into everyday practice and supporting delivery of our wider environmental goals.

Scope 1, 2 and 3 Greenhouse Gas emissions

Great Places measures its carbon footprint using the Carbon Workbook calculator and methodology developed by housing providers working with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

The methodology has been refined to include emissions from all homes served by third-party district heating within the Scope 3 existing stock category. This improves consistency and helps avoid double counting. While heat network optimisation has reduced gas consumption in some schemes, overall emissions have also been affected by growth in the number of homes built and managed during the year.

Scope 3 emissions make up the largest part of our footprint, reflecting the impact of existing homes, new development and wider value-chain activity. Our Sustainability Strategy therefore prioritises improving the energy performance of existing homes, strengthening data quality, developing retrofit plans and working with partners and suppliers to reduce emissions over time.

We recognise that carbon reporting will continue to evolve as data quality, methodology and sector practice improve. Future reporting will aim to show clearer year-on-year trends, explain the drivers of change and demonstrate how investment decisions are contributing to emissions reduction.

Great Places Housing Group carbon emissions 2025/26		
Scope	Source	Carbon emissions (CO2e)
Scope 1	Great Places directly used gas consumption, fleet consumption, fugitive emissions	2,782.10
Scope 2	Electricity consumption	8.03
Scope 3	Existing stock energy consumption, new build, grey fleet, electricity transmission and distribution	93,250.04
	Total emissions	96,040.17

Mitigating climate risks

Our development approach is aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and our wider Sustainability Strategy. This helps ensure that new homes and places deliver social value, health and wellbeing benefits, climate resilience and environmental sustainability, while using consistent language and measures across our work.

We know development is not just about building homes. It is about creating communities that are resilient to future climate impacts and affordable to live in over the long term, allowing:

- Lower energy bills for customers
- Reduced risk of fuel poverty
- Healthier, more comfortable living environments

Our approach to sustainability aligns directly with our social housing purpose by supporting long-term affordability, improving quality of life and reducing the need for more disruptive retrofit work in the future.

We prioritise low-carbon technologies such as air source heat pumps and solar panels, alongside efficient lighting, ventilation systems and design choices that support lower energy use.

Engaging customers on ventilation, heating and recycling

We take a design-first approach, using practical measures to reduce risk across our developments. New homes are designed to be located in the lowest flood risk category wherever possible. Where sites include higher-risk areas, we reduce exposure through layout changes, ground-level design or by using these areas as public open space.

Garden drainage for each plot is assessed based on geological information and visual inspections during construction, helping reduce the risk of standing water and supporting long-term property performance.

We manage surface water carefully using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), including:

- Oversized pipes, swales and balancing ponds
- Permeable paving to reduce run-off
- Landscape design that responds to increased rainfall

These measures are supported by our wider design standards, which require developments to consider flood resilience, surface water management and long-term climate impacts from the outset.

To reduce overheating, we focus on the performance of the building fabric and passive design. This includes:

- High levels of insulation and airtightness to limit heat gain and loss
- Designing homes around orientation and window placement
- Ventilation systems such as mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR)
- Shading and glazing choices that balance daylight with thermal comfort

We assess overheating risk using dynamic modelling to make sure each home performs as intended. Mechanical cooling is only used where these measures are not enough.

We continue to improve our designs through feedback from customers, colleagues and partners. This helps ensure our homes are comfortable, resilient and ready for future climate conditions, while supporting healthier living environments, financial resilience and reduced future retrofit requirements.

Priorities for 2026/27

- » Continue EPC C programme
- » Develop whole-stock retrofit plans
- » Improve emissions reporting
- » Expand heat network optimisation

Supporting customers to manage their homes

We know customers play an important role in how homes perform day to day, so we focus on making things easy to understand and manage.

We provide clear, practical information to help customers use their homes efficiently. This includes advice on heating, ventilation, recycling and reducing moisture to prevent damp and mould.

Customers can access support through:

- Straightforward written and video guidance on our website
- Printed information where needed
- Advice from our customer-facing teams

When customers move into a new home, we provide a Home User Guide in digital (written and video) and printed formats; digital written guides can be easily translated into many different languages to support equality, diversity and inclusion. The guide explains how to use core systems, including heating, ventilation and other electrical installations. We also offer a home demonstration and follow-up support to make sure customers feel confident managing their home.

Our homes are designed to support this, too. We use simple, reliable systems and aim to avoid unnecessary complexity, so homes are easier to run and maintain.

We also include features that help customers manage their homes more effectively, such as:

- Smart meters and in-home energy displays to track energy use
- Efficient fixtures and fittings to reduce water use
- Clear storage and recycling arrangements to support day-to-day living

Alongside this, we provide practical guidance on:

- Using heating systems efficiently
- Managing ventilation and airflow
- Maintaining boilers, drainage and outdoor spaces

By keeping our approach simple and consistent, we help customers feel confident managing their homes while supporting our wider sustainability goals.

CASE STUDY - Warm Homes programme improves energy efficiency in Wybourn Anchor Neighbourhood

In our Wybourn Anchor Neighbourhood, Great Places launched a Warm Homes programme to improve the energy efficiency of homes and support customers through rising energy costs.

The programme will upgrade more than 300 properties over a three-year period, delivering a range of improvements including insulation, ventilation and low-carbon technologies to enhance energy performance and comfort.

These measures will help customers live in warmer homes while reducing energy consumption and household bills. The programme also contributes to Great Places' wider commitment to achieving EPC C across all homes and supporting the transition to net zero.

Customer engagement has been central to the approach, with events providing opportunities for customers to learn about the improvements, ask questions and feel confident about the changes to their homes.

This initiative demonstrates how targeted retrofit investment within our Anchor Neighbourhoods can deliver environmental and social benefits, improving quality of life while reducing carbon emissions.



CASE STUDY - Climate Minister visit showcases sustainable homes and retrofit innovation

Great Places played a key role in hosting a visit from the Climate Minister to showcase new and retrofitted eco homes across South Yorkshire, highlighting how housing providers are contributing to the transition to a low-carbon future.

The visit included examples of both new-build and retrofit homes, demonstrating how a combination of technologies such as air source heat pumps, solar panels and electric vehicle charging can reduce carbon emissions and energy costs.

Alongside this, retrofit work within existing neighbourhoods showed how large-scale improvements to heating systems and energy performance can make homes warmer, more efficient and more affordable to run.



CASE STUDY - Winter support helps customers stay warm and reduce energy costs in Richmond Park

In Richmond Park, Sheffield, Great Places brought together Community Investment and Financial Resilience teams to support customers in staying warm and managing energy costs during the winter months.

Through a series of community drop-in sessions, customers received practical support including winter warm packs, access to hot meals and tailored advice on reducing energy use and improving household finances.

Specialist guidance covered topics such as switching energy tariffs, accessing grants, managing fuel debt and improving energy efficiency in the home. Customers were also connected to partner organisations providing additional home visits and longer-term support.

The initiative helped to build awareness of available services while encouraging residents to take practical steps to stay warm and reduce costs. It also strengthened links between customers and support networks within the community.

This work demonstrates how combining environmental initiatives with financial and wellbeing support can help tackle fuel poverty, ensuring customers benefit from warmer homes while using energy more efficiently.



Ecology

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



Great Places is committed to creating developments that support biodiversity, strengthen green infrastructure and improve long-term environmental resilience. Our Design Quality Guide makes this clear by setting an ambition to promote ecology and biodiversity while consciously limiting environmental impact across all schemes.

We prioritise green spaces and biodiversity across our developments, going beyond minimum Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements through our design guidance and Employer's Requirements. This is embedded in a clear biodiversity hierarchy:

- Avoid biodiversity loss
- Minimise impacts
- Restore habitats on-site
- Enhance biodiversity within the local community
- Offset via BNG banks or off-site contributions as a last resort

Each site is subject to a preliminary ecological appraisal and BNG assessment to understand baseline conditions, identify protected species, and assess ecological value. This ensures that biodiversity considerations are embedded from the earliest design stages.

Our landscaping approach reflects the principles set out in our Design Quality Guide, which promotes accessible, well-designed green spaces that enhance health, wellbeing and biodiversity. Planting strategies prioritise native, climate-resilient and low-maintenance species, with a move away from traditional lawns towards wildflower, clover or moss alternatives to increase biodiversity and reduce maintenance demand.

Across developments we integrate, where suitable, a range of ecological enhancements, including:

- Bee bricks, swift bricks, and bat boxes
- Hedgehog highways and wildlife corridors
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) designed as biodiversity features
- Native planting and habitat creation within public and private spaces

In line with our wider sustainability approach, we also consider SuDS integration and flood-resilient landscape design to respond to climate change and support ecological networks.



Reducing pollutants

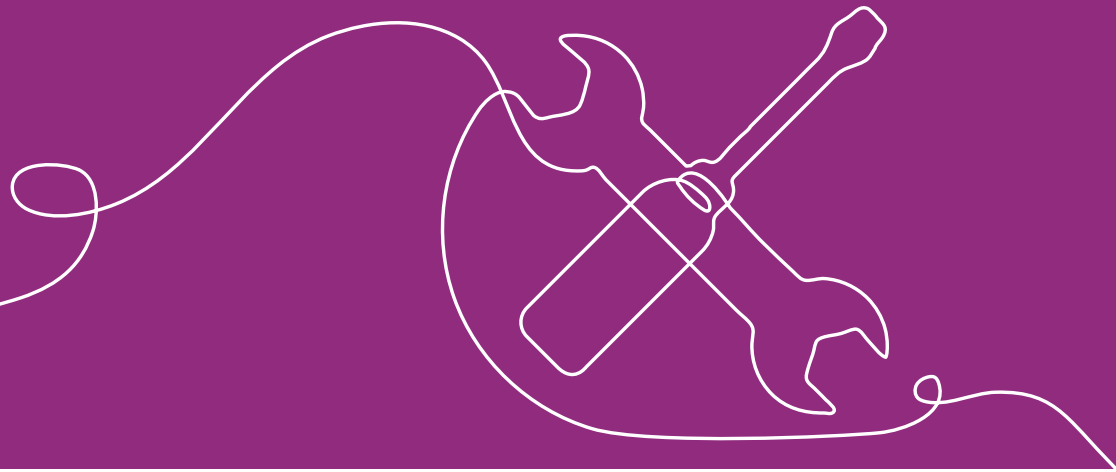
We take a proactive approach to protecting environmental quality and reducing pollution risks:

- All developments comply with relevant environmental and pollution legislation, with no reportable pollution incidents recorded during 2025/26
- SuDS-linked parking areas incorporate fuel and oil interceptors to protect watercourses
- Robust site investigations are undertaken in line with Employer's Requirements to identify and remediate contamination risks prior to development
- Deleterious materials are excluded from specifications
- Building systems are maintained in line with manufacturer standards to ensure efficient performance
- Extensive condition surveys are carried out to manage indoor environmental quality and minimise risks such as damp and mould

This integrated approach ensures our developments not only enhance biodiversity but also protect ecosystems and environmental quality over the long term.

Resource management

This theme looks to establish the extent to which the housing provider has a sustainable approach to materials in the construction of new homes.



Sustainability in the supply chain

Great Places takes a whole-life approach to materials, making sure sustainability, durability and efficiency are considered throughout design, procurement and construction.

Our Design Quality Guide emphasises the importance of durable, robust materials that minimise maintenance and replacement over time, supporting long-term sustainability and value.

We work closely with consultants and contractors to align our specifications with recognised sustainable materials standards. Key commitments include:

- All timber is legally sourced and FSC or PEFC certified
- Materials are selected for durability, longevity and low lifecycle impact
- Preference is given to responsibly sourced and, where possible, locally sourced materials
- Use of a reduced palette of high-quality materials to minimise waste and improve long-term performance

We also actively support Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), with over 60% of recent schemes utilising MMC approaches to improve resource efficiency, reduce waste and lower embodied carbon.

To further support circular construction, our development processes require a minimum of 10% recycled or reused materials across schemes, monitored and recorded throughout delivery.

Waste management

Waste reduction is embedded from the earliest project stages and aligned with our ambition to achieve zero waste to landfill across developments.

- Design teams identify potential waste streams early, following the WRAP waste hierarchy
- Contractors implement Site Waste Management Plans (SWMPs) to control and reduce waste
- Waste performance is actively monitored to maximise reuse, repurposing and recycling
- Landfill waste is kept below 5%, with a long-term target of zero landfill

In addition, innovation during construction – such as moisture testing and improved build sequencing – helps reduce defects, prevent material waste and improve build quality.

Glossary

BNG: Biodiversity Net Gain, an approach to leaving habitats in a measurably better condition.

MMC: Modern Methods of Construction, including off-site and more efficient building techniques.

SuDS: Sustainable Drainage Systems, which manage surface water and reduce flood risk.

IoT: Internet of Things, where connected devices collect and share data to support monitoring and control.

Water management

Water efficiency is a core component of our sustainability strategy, supported by both design standards and emerging technologies.

Our Design Quality Guide and live schemes set a target of 105 litres per person per day, with a maximum threshold of 110 litres, supported by water efficiency measures in all new homes.

We specify:

- Water-efficient showers (saving over one-third of water and energy)
- Dual-flush toilets (maximum six litres per flush)
- Aerated taps (reducing water use by up to 30%)
- Efficient appliances where provided
- Drought-resistant planting and landscaping

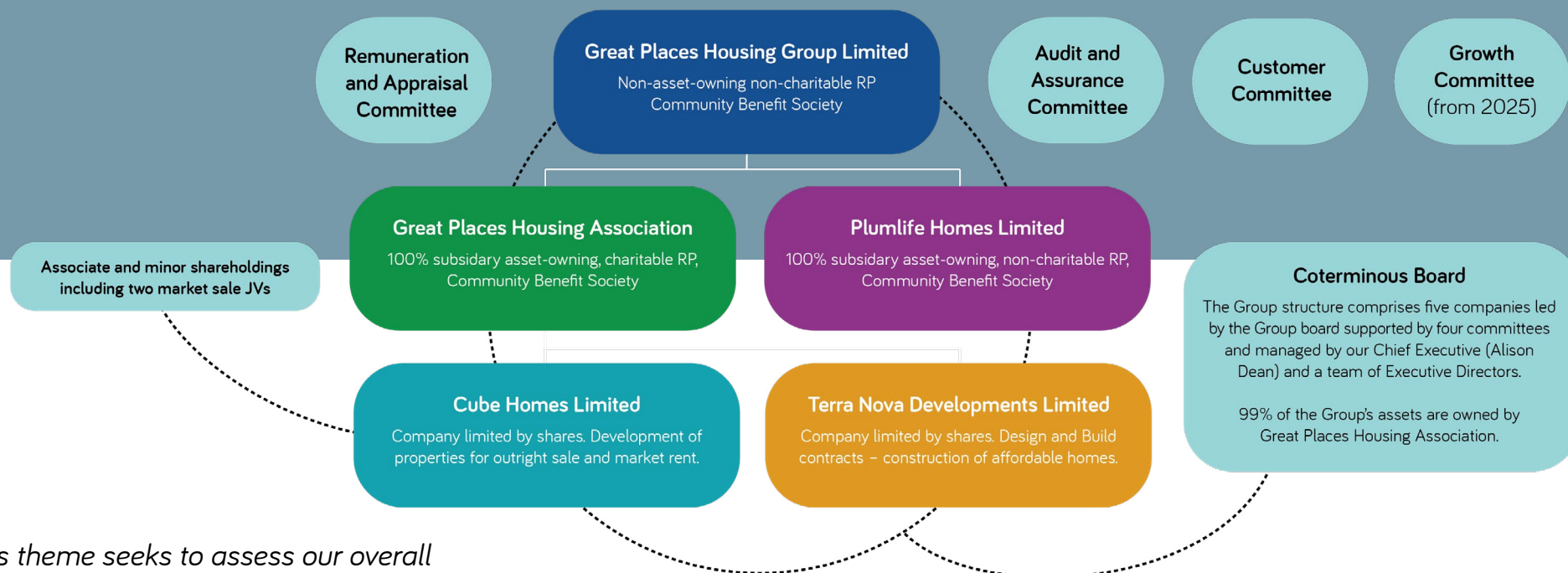
Our latest Employer's Requirements support the use of smart leak detection systems with automatic shut-off valves. These help prevent water damage, reduce waste and improve resilience through Internet of Things-enabled monitoring. They also support flow control of incoming mains pressure, helping heating and hot water systems operate efficiently and reducing excessive water and energy use.

These measures are complemented by wider design principles, including SuDS integration and climate-responsive landscaping, ensuring a holistic approach to water management across our developments.



Governance

Structure and governance



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

Strong governance helps Great Places maintain service standards, manage risk and improve outcomes for customers.

Great Places Housing Group Limited is a registered housing provider and the parent company of Great Places Housing Association, a not-for-profit organisation with charitable status, and Plumlife Homes Limited. Both Great Places Housing Group and the Housing Association operate on a profit-for-purpose basis, with surpluses reinvested in new homes, services and communities.

Signals of Progress:

Consumer Standards rating improved from C2 to C1 in December '25, reflecting progress in customer experience, service delivery and compliance.

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 most recent inspection in September 2024. We also received a regrade to C1 this year under the new Consumer Standards, up from C2 the previous year, reflecting our commitment to improving customer experience and compliance.

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

Effective risk management supports good decisions and strong day-to-day management. It helps us understand the opportunities we want to take and the risks we need to control.

Board oversight

The Board has ultimate responsibility for the organisation's internal controls and risk management framework. This includes approving the Risk and Assurance Strategy, setting the Risk Appetite Statement and ensuring strategic and operational decisions remain within agreed tolerances.

Committee assurance

The Audit and Assurance Committee provides detailed oversight of the Group's risk management framework and system of internal control. It reviews the effectiveness of risk processes and independent assurance activities, working with internal audit, external audit and subject matter experts to ensure that principal risks are identified, evaluated and managed appropriately.

Supporting this framework, the Growth Committee provides oversight and assurance in relation to development, regeneration and growth activity, including the management of associated strategic and operational risks. The Customer Committee scrutinises customer outcomes, service performance and regulatory compliance, providing assurance on matters affecting customers and communities. The Remuneration and Appraisal Committee oversees risks relating to colleagues, leadership, organisational culture and reward arrangements.

Through their respective areas of responsibility, these committees provide assurance to the Board and contribute to the overall assessment of risk and control. The Audit and Assurance Committee retains responsibility for coordinating assurance across the Group and advising the Board on the overall effectiveness of the risk management and internal control framework.

How the framework works

Risk management and assurance work together. The framework identifies, assesses and mitigates significant risks, while independent checks confirm that controls are effective, proportionate and provide value for money.

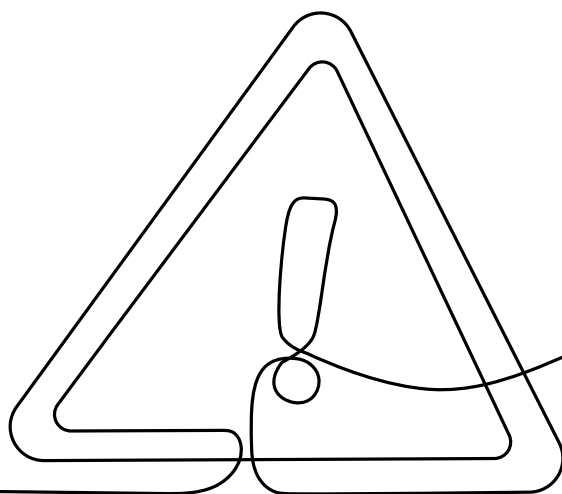
Our approach continues to mature through Board and Audit and Assurance Committee oversight. It is structured around the recognised "three lines of defence" model and supported by an Assurance Map that links key risks to controls and assurance activity across the organisation.

Core stages

The risk management process is built around three core stages:

- Risk identification – recognising existing and emerging risks across strategic, operational, financial, and compliance areas
- Risk assessment – evaluating risks based on likelihood, impact, and alignment with risk appetite
- Risk mitigation and monitoring – implementing and tracking controls and mitigation actions

We maintain a forward-looking approach in response to financial pressure and wider economic and political uncertainty. Regular sensitivity and stress testing considers multi-variable scenarios, potential breaches of financial "golden rules" and agreed tolerance thresholds. Mitigation plans are reviewed and challenged by the Board to support resilience and informed decision-making.



Board and trustees

This theme assesses the quality, suitability and performance of the Board and trustees.

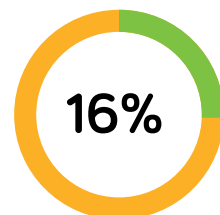
The Boardroom



6/12 Great Places Housing Group Board members are female



3/6 Executive Team members are female



16% of Great Places' Board members identify as having a disability



56 is the average age of Great Places Housing Group Board



51 is the average age of the Executive Team



3/12 of the Great Places' Board members are from ethnically diverse backgrounds



Two years is the average Non-Executive Director tenure (as at 31 March 2026)

As at 1 April 2026, the Group Board comprised 12 members, of whom 11 are Non-executive Directors (92%) 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 an extension up to a total of nine years.

Over the past two years, four Non-Executive Directors have stepped down from the Board, representing a turnover rate of 33%. Additionally, two Executive Directors from the Senior Management Team have left the organisation during the same period, also equating to a turnover rate of 33%.

Declarations of interest are a standing item at the start of every Board and committee meeting, and 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.

Four committees report directly to the Board: the Audit and Assurance Committee, the Customer Committee, the Growth Committee and the Remuneration and Appraisal Committee. The Audit and Assurance Committee includes individuals with significant senior-level housing sector experience and two members with recent and relevant financial expertise, whose recent roles have been Finance Director and Audit Partner respectively. The Customer and Growth Committees include members of Group Board as well as Independent Committee Members.

Our external auditors, Menzies (previously known as 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 has a wide range of responsibilities, including Board succession. A succession plan is provided annually to both the Board and the Committee.

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 Growth Committee provides oversight and assurance on the delivery of Great Places' growth, development and construction strategies, including performance across subsidiaries, joint ventures and grant-funded programmes. It approves development schemes, monitors delivery against agreed targets and ensures that the risks associated with growth activity are effectively understood and managed including health and safety and customer satisfaction.

Overall, our aim is to ensure that we are compliant with our Code of Governance, while maintaining the strongest Board possible to support effective governance. Our triennial governance reviews, internal audits on governance, and regulatory inspection results have been positive and confirm that our governance arrangements are strong and supported by positive assurance findings. Our next triennial governance review is due in late 2026.

Equality, diversity and inclusion of Board members and senior management

We know diverse and inclusive leadership leads to stronger performance, better decision-making and a better understanding of the people and communities we serve.

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, as well as diversity of thought and lived experience.

Our Recruitment and Selection Policy has been developed through learning from BOOST, the Greater Manchester Housing Providers initiative aimed at changing the culture of housing providers so that ethnically diverse talent can emerge and thrive. In this regard, we are committed to more than just ensuring our recruitment practices are inclusive; we actively create the environment where potential new recruits can feel comfortable to showcase how their knowledge, skills, experience and passion can add value to our business. We proactively support The 20% Movement, working hard to support those with lived experience of social housing into our business, and we operate Guaranteed Interview Schemes in certain areas of the business to promote inclusion.

Our recruitment platform uses anonymous recruitment at the initial stage to help reduce unconscious bias during shortlisting. We have rolled out Inclusive Recruitment Training for managers, which includes the Implicit Association Test developed by Harvard University. Linked to this training, we have introduced a 'Licence to Hire' for recruiting managers. We 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 to explore 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.

Diverse leadership helps ensure decision-making reflects the needs of customers, colleagues and communities.

As at 31 March 2026, 50% of the Board are women, 25% are from ethnically diverse backgrounds, and 17% identify as having a disability. While none of the current Board members are Great Places customers, we have seven customers serving on the standing Customer Committee.

Among the 12 Board members, four identify as Christian, six as having no religion, one as Buddhist, and one as 'other'. The average tenure of the Non-Executive Directors as at 31 March 2026 is 2 years, reflecting the recent appointment of five new members and the end of tenure of three long-standing members.



CASE STUDY - Colleague recruitment

We have worked in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions and our Community Investment Team to recruit six Trainee Grounds Maintenance Operatives on six-month fixed-term contracts during the growing season across Blackpool, Sheffield and Manchester. These roles were targeted at social housing customers and people looking to return to work. Two women were appointed, which is particularly positive given that grounds maintenance has historically been a male-dominated area and a challenging workforce to attract women into.

We attended local job centres to promote the opportunities directly within our communities, and the campaign generated 50 applications. Candidates were invited to interview, where we trialled a different approach through 'walking interviews'. These involved informal, site-based conversations and a guided tour of the working environment. As many applicants had been out of work for some time, this approach helped reduce pressure, build confidence and enabled candidates to better demonstrate their skills and potential. Feedback from candidates was very positive, particularly around the supportive and accessible nature of the process.

This approach has helped us move away from relying on agency cover during the growing season. It has reduced agency spend and dependency while creating meaningful pathways into employment and development for local people.

At the end of the traineeship, one of these Candidates was appointed to a permanent role in Sheffield. We hope that many more of the trainees will be successful in securing longer-term employment with Great Places.



Colleague wellbeing

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



At Great Places, we recognise that colleague wellbeing is fundamental to engagement, performance and creating a culture where people can thrive. Our wellbeing strategy takes a holistic approach, supporting mental, physical, social and financial wellbeing through a range of accessible initiatives designed to meet the diverse needs of our workforce.

We continue to invest in a positive working environment where colleagues feel supported, valued and able to do their best work. Our health and wellbeing programme provides practical tools, guidance and support across physical, mental, financial and lifestyle wellbeing, and has been recognised through shortlisting for both the Northern Housing Awards and the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter Awards.

Supporting mental wellbeing

Creating a culture where colleagues feel comfortable talking about mental health remains a key priority. We continue to invest in initiatives that reduce stigma, encourage open conversations and provide practical support. We have trained 74 Mental Health First Aiders across the business, with 24 colleagues also trained in Suicide First Aid. Peer-to-peer trauma support continues to be rolled out, with 41 colleagues and 11 managers trained as practitioners, alongside access to a dedicated psychologist and counsellor for colleagues experiencing personal or work-related mental health challenges.

In partnership with Andy's Man Club, we delivered a targeted men's mental health campaign, including a cold-water dip challenge, and facilitated mental health discussions. To ensure

support was accessible to all colleagues, particularly frontline Repairs teams with limited access to digital communications, we distributed wellbeing resource packs and delivered Toolbox Talks focused on mental health awareness and support.

Throughout the year, colleagues have been able to access wellbeing workshops covering topics such as mental health, resilience, financial wellbeing and healthy lifestyles. During Stress Awareness Month, colleagues took part in activities including chair massages, sound baths, Tai Chi sessions, a Couch to 5K programme and a reflective stress-reduction challenge. Our annual Wellbeing Week further supported positive mental wellbeing through activities such as Reiki meditation, yoga, capoeira and mindful parenting workshops, encouraging colleagues to prioritise self-care and wellbeing.

Supporting physical wellbeing

Supporting colleagues' physical health is essential to maintaining a healthy and productive workforce. Our focus is on prevention, early intervention and providing easy access to professional support. One of our most popular initiatives is our weekly onsite physiotherapy service, introduced to help colleagues manage musculoskeletal conditions and workplace-related physical health concerns. The clinics remain consistently fully booked, with colleagues reporting improvements in mobility, pain management and overall wellbeing.

We also actively promote preventative healthcare. A series of volunteer-led wellbeing podcasts featured personal stories from individuals affected by breast, cervical, bowel and

prostate cancer. These conversations increased awareness of health screening programmes and encouraged colleagues to seek medical advice, resulting in several colleagues receiving diagnoses and treatment following the campaign. To support cardiovascular health, we marked Heart Month with health screening events across our regional offices, complemented by a mobile Health Kiosk to improve accessibility for remote and field-based colleagues. As a direct result of the heart screening, four colleagues went to their GP and received important adjustments to their medication.

Our WPA Healthcare Cash Plan also supports colleagues' everyday health needs, covering dental, optical and therapeutic treatments, with options to include family members. It provides 24/7 access to counselling and GP services. During the year, colleagues accessed 766 dental treatments, 615 prescriptions, 440 optician appointments, 152 sight tests, 155 contact lens appointments, 291 physiotherapy sessions, 158 chiropractic treatments, 70 osteopath appointments, 56 acupuncture sessions and 19 chiropody treatments.

- Our Marketplace and Wellbeing Hub gives colleagues access to a wide range of benefits and discounts from hundreds of retailers, alongside wellbeing resources structured around Move, Munch, Money and Mind
- Van-based wellbeing kits have been provided for Repairs Operatives, including signposting to support services
- Year-round workshops continue to support physical, mental and lifestyle wellbeing

Supporting social wellbeing and community connection

We recognise that strong relationships, a sense of belonging and connection to a shared purpose are important contributors to colleague wellbeing. Our charity fundraising activities bring colleagues together while supporting causes that matter to them. Over the last two years, colleagues raised more than £30,000 for Mind through challenges, awareness campaigns and fundraising events, including the Manchester 10K, Tough Mudder, Dragon Boat Racing, static bike challenges and quiz nights. Following the successful completion of our partnership with Mind, colleagues are now supporting our new Charity of Choice, the British Heart Foundation.

We have also introduced Time Out in the Community (TOinC) Days, providing colleagues with dedicated volunteering opportunities to support local communities. These days allow colleagues to step away from their usual roles, connect with colleagues in a different setting and make a meaningful difference within the communities we serve. As well as supporting local causes, TOinC Days help build social connections, foster a sense of purpose and contribute positively to overall colleague wellbeing.

Recognition and engagement

Recognition plays a vital role in colleague wellbeing and engagement, helping to create a culture where people feel valued, connected and motivated. Our recognition programme combines everyday appreciation with formal recognition opportunities. Through our peer-to-peer recognition platform, colleagues can celebrate and thank one another in real time, while managers can issue YouCount rewards to acknowledge exceptional contributions, achievements and behaviours that reflect our values.

Recognition is also championed by senior leaders through regular leadership communication, where members of our Executive Team recognise colleagues nominated by Heads of Service for making an outstanding difference to customers, communities or their teams. Our annual Local Legends Awards celebrate the often-unsung heroes of Great Places – the dependable colleagues who consistently go above and beyond, quietly supporting others and embodying our values every day.

Our latest staff survey showed colleague engagement at 95.3%, with 89.4% of colleagues saying they are satisfied with Great Places as an employer. By embedding recognition throughout the colleague experience, we ensure colleagues feel seen, appreciated and connected, supporting both engagement and overall wellbeing.

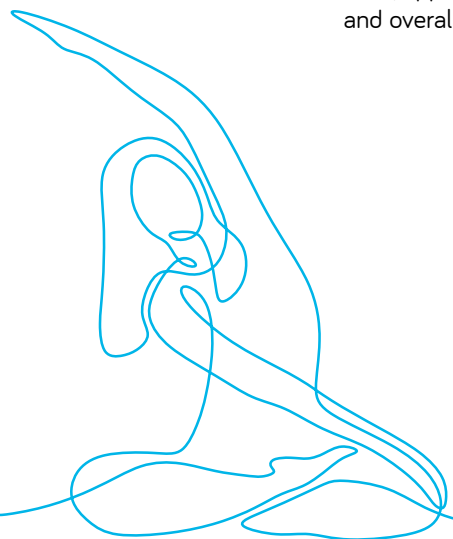
Supporting financial wellbeing

Financial wellbeing is a key component of overall colleague wellbeing. We recognise that financial pressures can have a significant impact on mental health, stress levels and overall quality of life. Through a combination of financial education, colleague benefits and practical support, we help colleagues maximise their income, manage everyday costs and plan ahead.

Our financial wellbeing support has delivered meaningful impact, helping colleagues navigate cost-of-living pressures and driving strong engagement with savings tools and everyday cost support. In the last year, total spending through discount platforms reached £368,000, generating £19,400 in savings. Engagement remains high, with 83% of colleagues actively using the offer, and 32% of total spend on groceries, highlighting the importance of support with everyday essentials.

We also introduced Stream, which gives colleagues access to salary payments early and helps reduce reliance on payday lenders. Since launch, 130 colleagues have used the service, with £37,000 advanced monthly. Stream also enables saving, with 288 colleagues opening savings accounts and collectively depositing an average of £18,000 per month.

Our approach is centred on making financial wellbeing accessible to all colleagues, regardless of their circumstances, ensuring everyone has access to the support they need to improve their financial health and security. By promoting financial resilience and reducing financial stress, we enable colleagues to focus on their wellbeing, perform at their best and feel supported both inside and outside of work.



Developing our people and strengthening inclusion

Developing our people remains key to being a high-performing organisation. Our comprehensive learning and development offer combines formal and informal opportunities, from qualifications and structured in-house programmes to mentoring, on-the-job learning and digital content via The Study. Through our training request process, 37 colleagues completed qualifications during the year, while 14 completed the GAP Mentor Programme and five completed the HDN Mentor Programme.

Our apprenticeship and graduate programme, Growing Greatness, continues to provide valuable talent routes into and through Great Places. In total, 94 colleagues are working towards apprenticeship qualifications across areas including housing, HR, leadership and management, and trades-related roles, with 18 achievers during the year. We also welcomed 13 new trainees in September 2025 across Assets, Repairs, Tech Services, Development, Neighbourhoods, Customer Experience, and Independence and Wellbeing, with 10 trainees securing permanent roles. We are excited to offer 26 graduate and apprenticeship opportunities for our next Growing Greatness cohort starting in September 2026. This is our largest annual intake to date and shows the value and impact Growing Greatness has had on our people and the organisation.

Our ambitions to be an excellent workplace of growth and talent development are supported by our commitment to deliver a large corporate programme called 'Building Professional Excellence'. The Building Professional Excellence Programme will maintain a strong, future-focused professional function that helps colleagues, managers and leaders do their best work, meet our regulatory responsibilities and deliver the best customer experience. We have also taken steps to strengthen inclusion. As part of our leading role in BOOST, we were the first Greater Manchester Housing Providers organisation to roll out 'Having Positive Conversations about Race' training to managers to improve their cultural awareness, confidence and practical skills to support colleagues and handle sensitive situations respectfully. We have refreshed our Colleague Network Groups so each has a Chair, a senior sponsor and a clear plan linked to our Inclusion and Belonging commitments.

Following the success of the Sharon Hayes Empowers (SHe) Programme, we have evolved the legacy of our late Director of Tech Services into the Sharon Hayes Development Academy. Fourteen aspirational ethnically diverse colleagues are working through a programme with the Total Excellence Centre and will graduate in October 2026 with an ILM Level 3 qualification. Each participant has a mentor and attends a series of leadership workshops.

Through this holistic approach, we continue to create a workplace where colleagues feel supported, valued and empowered to prioritise their wellbeing, enabling them to thrive both personally and professionally.



Great Places' approach to pay



Great Places is an accredited Living Wage Employer. In 2025/26, we paid the Real Living Wage to all colleagues, and paid our apprentices above the National Minimum Apprentice rate.

We're accredited with the following:



CEO worker pay ratio

CEO: median average pay ratio – 6.1:1 (2024/25: 6.28:1)
This means that the CEO earns 6.1 times the median salary in the business.

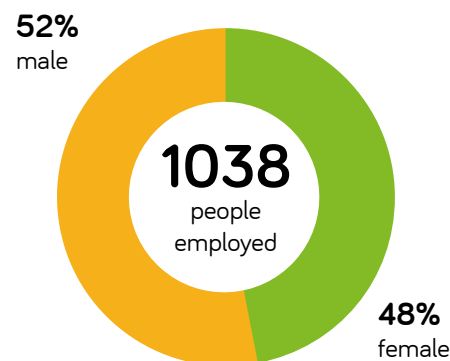
Gender pay gap

The latest figures reported to government at the time of publishing this ESG report are:

UK gender pay gap (ONS 2025): **6.9%**

Great Places Housing Group's gender pay gap (mean is) **-2.24%** (2024/25: 0.85%)

We employ 1,038 people, 48% are female and 52% are male.



Disability pay gap

Median: 1.32% (2024/25: 15%)

Mean: 7.48% (2024/25: 15.39%)

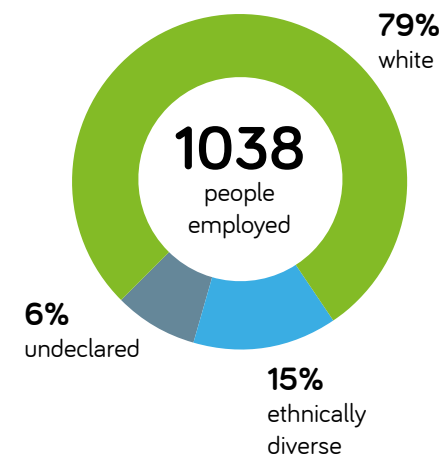
More information about our pay gap reporting is available on the Great Places website: Pay Gap Report 2025.

Ethnicity pay gap

Median: 15.26% (2024/25: 17%)

Mean: 15.35% (2024/25: 17.05%)

We employ 1,038 people. 79% identify as white, 15% as multicultural and 6% did not declare their ethnicity.



The Group continues to monitor pay equality and progression opportunities across all protected characteristics.

Supply chain management

This theme seeks to assess if we procure responsibly.

At Great Places, social value delivered through our supply chain remains an important part of how we support customers and communities. As well as development activity, suppliers working across our wider frameworks contribute funding, time and specialist expertise. These contributions are brought together through a central social value pot, overseen by our Community Partnership Managers so support can be targeted where it will have the greatest impact.

During 2025/26, the Assets Framework generated £202,243.32 in direct social value funding through its 2% levy. £100,000 of this was invested in House to Home, a flagship programme delivered with the Furniture Resource Centre that helps customers settle into a safe, stable home by providing essential furniture, white goods and household items. Over the year, 227 customers were supported, with an average support value of £441 per household, including people fleeing domestic abuse, those moving on from homelessness and households facing multiple vulnerabilities.

Smaller frameworks also continue to make a meaningful contribution. During the year, around £50,000 from specialist and lower-volume frameworks was reinvested into projects focused on early years development, employment, wellbeing and crisis support. This included support for Baby Boogies, an early years programme delivered by SPARK Oldham; a fully funded Door Supervisor and First Aid training programme in Oldham through SAFE and EDU Training Centre; emergency flooring support for a customer fleeing domestic abuse through Sustainable Flooring; and skills training funded by Ultra Cleaning Services to help unemployed customers build confidence and explore new income opportunities.

These examples show how supplier partnerships can go beyond contractual delivery to respond to crisis, create opportunity and strengthen communities. By combining financial contributions with practical support and local insight, our supply chain is helping us deliver social value that is not only measurable, but also felt by customers in meaningful and immediate ways.

These activities demonstrate how procurement supports wider organisational objectives beyond contract delivery.

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 from our Innovation Chain North framework have included:

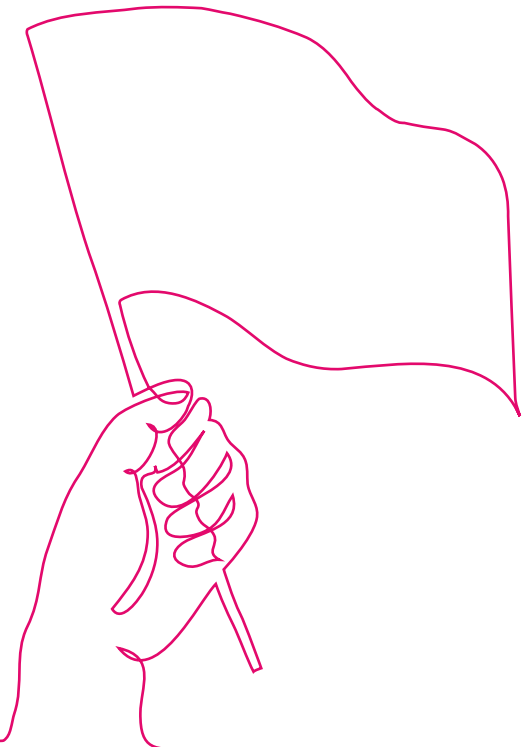
£50,000 in donations to community partners

40 hours of volunteered support, including attendance at careers fairs and the renovation of community centres

193.5 weeks of apprenticeship and work experience were delivered

117 hours of careers support were provided

Throughout the year, our supply chain has continued to support customers and communities through financial contributions, time, expertise and resources.



Recent stories on the Great Places website also show how supply chain partnerships and community investment are creating practical opportunities for customers and communities. In April 2026, Sophia's story highlighted the impact of Wybourn Works and its partnership with MPCT, a military training academy supporting young people aged 16 and over to develop fitness, vocational qualifications and employability skills. Sophia first came to Wybourn Works on her GCSE results day with an interest in the armed forces and mental health, but low confidence in her maths and English, fitness and people skills. Through holistic support from the Wybourn Works team, including help during a challenging period of homelessness and links into MPCT, she was supported to build confidence and take positive steps towards her future. Scan the QR code to read Sophia's full story and [watch the video](#).

In November 2025, Great Places shared progress from its Training and Skills Academy, which is helping customers gain accredited qualifications such as Level 2 Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools and Level 3 Education and Training. Delivered in-house, the programme gives customers practical skills, recognised qualifications and a clearer route into employment, demonstrating how social value can build long-term resilience as well as immediate opportunity.

More recently, in March 2026, Great Places and SAFE Group announced a £10,000 social value contribution to support House to Home and Household Assistance, helping new tenants access essential white goods and providing food and fuel vouchers for customers facing hardship. The partnership also includes volunteering support to improve community spaces, showing how supply chain relationships can combine funding, practical help and local engagement to deliver meaningful benefits beyond the core contract.



Sophia's Story

Socially responsible resourcing

At Great Places, procurement plays a central role in delivering our environmental, social and governance objectives. We recognise that the way we source goods, works and services directly influences not only value for money, but also the wider impact we have on customers, communities and the environment.

Our Procurement Strategy 2024–2027 sets out a clear commitment to developing a sustainable supply chain that delivers positive economic, social, ethical and environmental outcomes. This approach is embedded across our procurement lifecycle, from supplier selection through to contract management and performance monitoring.

We take a socially responsible approach to sourcing by:

- **Embedding social value into procurement decisions:** All significant procurements include a dedicated social value weighting, ensuring suppliers contribute to outcomes such as employment opportunities, skills development and community investment.
- **Supporting local economies and inclusive supply chains:** We prioritise the development of local supply chains and actively work to reduce barriers for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations. This helps ensure that our investment creates opportunities within the communities we serve.
- **Promoting fair and ethical employment practices:** We require suppliers to align with key ethical standards, including compliance with the Real Living Wage and measures to minimise the risk of modern slavery within the supply chain.
- **Managing supply chain risk and compliance:** Our procurement processes include a comprehensive suite of supplier obligations covering areas such as safeguarding, health and safety, data protection and professional standards. These are supported by ongoing monitoring through our contract management framework.

- **Driving supplier performance and accountability:** We are strengthening our contract management approach to provide greater visibility of supplier performance, including the development of consistent KPIs and centralised reporting. This enables us to hold suppliers to account and ensure delivery aligns with our organisational priorities.

Environmental sustainability is an increasingly important part of our sourcing approach. One of our core social value objectives is to reduce the environmental impact of our supply chain, including its carbon footprint. While we have made strong progress in embedding social value, we recognise that our approach to environmental sustainability in procurement is less mature.

To address this, we are:

- Reviewing how environmental criteria are embedded within procurement processes and specifications
- Strengthening engagement with our supply chain to improve environmental data and transparency
- Developing a more consistent and joined-up approach to sustainable sourcing across the organisation

This work is being taken forward through our Sustainability Strategy and internal governance arrangements, including our Sustainability Working Group.

Through this approach, we aim to use procurement as a strategic lever to deliver long-term social, economic and environmental value for our customers and communities.



CASE STUDY - Michael's Journey

When Michael joined Wilkinson Cowan Partnership as a Business Administration Apprentice, he was looking for an opportunity that would allow him to gain real-world experience while continuing to develop professionally in a supportive environment.

Michael's apprenticeship was procured through the ICN Framework, providing him with a structured route into the industry while allowing him to gain hands-on experience alongside recognised qualifications. The opportunity has helped him develop both professionally and personally, giving him direct exposure to a real working environment while building a strong foundation for his future career.

He was recruited via Great Places Housing Group, who advertised the position internally to residents. This gave Michael access to an opportunity within his own community that he may not otherwise have been aware of, making the route into the industry feel far more accessible and achievable.

Rather than taking the traditional university route, Michael was drawn to the practical nature of an apprenticeship and the chance to learn directly within a working business.

Since starting his apprenticeship, Michael has become involved in a wide range of day-to-day business operations. His role includes supporting office administration, organising documentation, handling correspondence and assisting with financial administration tasks such as invoice processing, expense tracking and cash flow support.

One of the projects Michael is most proud of so far has been compiling and developing a cost database for the Quantity Surveying team. Being trusted to manage a task that supports the wider business helped build his confidence and demonstrated the importance of accuracy, organisation and attention to detail within a consultancy environment.

Over the course of the apprenticeship, Michael has developed strong communication, organisational and time management skills, alongside growing in confidence professionally. One of the biggest milestones for him was independently attending the Master Your Networking Game 2.0 event in Liverpool. The experience pushed him outside of his comfort zone and helped him build confidence in professional networking, communication and relationship building.

Reflecting on his experience so far, Michael says the support from colleagues has played a huge role in his development. Learning from experienced team members, particularly those who have followed similar career paths themselves, has helped reassure him that growth takes time and that asking questions is an important part of learning.

Michael's journey so far highlights the positive impact apprenticeships can have when businesses, frameworks and housing organisations work together to create accessible career opportunities. Through the support of the ICN Framework, Great Places and Wilkinson Cowan Partnership, he has been able to gain practical experience, develop transferable skills and begin building a long-term career within the industry.



Case study courtesy of Wilkinson Cowan Partnership

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 this report gives a clear picture of the progress we have made and our continued commitment to improving our ESG performance and reporting openly on it.

During 2026/27 we will continue to strengthen customer outcomes, improve environmental performance and further develop how we measure and report ESG impact.

If you are an investor or customer and have any questions or feedback, 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

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great
places
HOUSING GROUP

