

# Group statement on Environmental, Social and Governance 2023/24

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# About Wheatley



# About Wheatley Housing Group

Wheatley Housing Group ('Wheatley' or 'the Group') is Scotland's leading housing, care and property management group and is committed to providing tailored services to support its customers.

Recent financial pressures caused by high inflation and increasing costs present increasing challenges to people in our communities. We remain committed to supporting those most affected through our customer-focused operating model, our high-quality homes and our financial strength. We have maintained a high level of tenant satisfaction across our subsidiaries, with overall satisfaction at 89%. Our most recent tenant satisfaction survey revealed 92% of respondents agreed their rent represents good value for money, especially important against the backdrop of a challenging operating and economic environment.

The Scottish Government declared a national housing emergency in May 2024, recognising the significance of the challenges created by pressure on homelessness services and high levels of temporary accommodation. The need for a partnership approach has never been more important and our strategic five-year commitment to provide 10,000 homes to tackle homelessness has seen us provide a total of 7068 tenancies since 2021 to people experiencing homelessness, well above our annual target of 2000 homes. In 2023/24, 59% of our lets were made to homeless households.



# About Wheatley Housing Group

The quality and energy efficiency of our existing homes remains as important as ever as our customers navigate the financial pressures of the cost-of-living crisis and rising fuel bills. Our programmes for fabric improvements, heating system upgrades and deep retrofit investment have resulted in over 91% of our homes achieving an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C rating or above. This investment in our homes resulted in reduced carbon emissions and cheaper heating costs for our customers.

Our new-build homes meet a minimum of EPC Band B rating, and the introduction of the New Build Heat Standard has prohibited the use of direct emissions heating systems in new buildings applying for building warrants since 1 April 2024 as Scotland continues to transition to net zero.

Wheatley's social impact is most keenly felt via our continued commitment to affordable rents. The private rental sector (PRS) in Edinburgh and Glasgow has seen the highest increases in rental costs for the whole of the UK<sup>1</sup>, and demand for our properties remains high. With our social rents at 34% of the comparable PRS levels in the main urban centres in Scotland, it is crucial we maintain a strong pipeline of new-build homes to go some way towards meeting this demand.

Ensuring our customers are at the heart of our decision-making and investment priorities via our Stronger Voices channels ensures a deeper understanding of their lived experience and delivers outcomes aligned with their needs. This extends through our governance structure with tenant members representing the view of our customers on our subsidiary and Group Boards

The Group is subject to multi-regulatory oversight from the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), and the Care Inspectorate.

Further information can be provided to existing and prospective investors via our Investor Relations team<sup>2</sup>.

1. [Zoopla UK rental market report Dec23](#)

2. [Wheatley Group Investor Relations](#)





# Environmental



# Environmental

The Group’s sustainability framework has four overarching outcomes which help us in the delivery of our sustainability ambition and align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals<sup>3</sup> of No Poverty (1), Good Health and Well-being (3), Affordable and Clean Energy (7), Decent Work and Economic Growth (8) and Sustainable Cities and Communities (11).

**Our four outcomes are:**

**Existing homes**

- Reduce carbon emissions from existing homes by 20,000 tonnes by 2026
- Net-zero emissions from all properties where technically feasible by end of 2043

**New homes**

- All properties at minimum of EPC B and with net-zero heating systems in line with planning timescales (no new-build approvals with fossil fuel after 2024)

**Business operations**

- Carbon neutral by end of 2026, including a decarbonised fleet, where feasible, and use of green electricity

**Supporting contributors**

- Build understanding and support action including among staff and communities to address climate emergency

# Environmental

Progress is reported each year to Wheatley Board and reviewed in advance by our expert Pathway to Net Zero Advisory Group. Highlights from this year include continuing our approach to reducing emissions from our homes through deep retrofit projects and on-going property lifecycle improvements, reducing emissions from existing heating systems and switching to 'green' electricity.

The challenge in improving the energy efficiency of our homes and transitioning to net zero remains significant given the age distribution of our homes and the availability of appropriate solutions. Nevertheless, we are in a good position with over 91% of housing assets at EPC Band C or better.

## Existing homes

The homes we own are the biggest source of emissions we can impact through investment in building fabric improvements and by improving heating systems. These investments benefit our customers directly by reducing the cost of heating their homes.

We have recently integrated the impact of our investment in reducing emissions from our existing homes into our asset management system.

We reduced emissions from our existing homes by over 5100 tn CO2 this year, meaning we have reduced emissions from our homes by an estimated 12,400 tn since 2021 when we made our commitment to reduce emissions from our existing homes by 20,000 tn by 2026.



# Environmental

## Carbon emissions in our corporate environment

We continue to monitor carbon emissions and measure our targets for reductions across our corporate activities in partnership with Planet Mark. We aspire to be carbon neutral across our corporate estate by 2026, while meeting service requirements and maintaining high tenant satisfaction levels. We continue to make progress against these aims.

The figures, validated by Planet Mark, are set out below.

| Corporate activities only | 2021/22 (tnCO2 ) | 2022/23 (tnCO2 ) | 2023/24 (tnCO2 ) |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Scope 1                   | 1623.6           | 1847             | 1859.5           |
| Scope 2                   | 307.7            | 320.2            | 0                |
| Scope 3                   | 260.0            | 435.9            | 398.1            |

Our Scope 1 emissions remained broadly flat year-on-year as we approach the transition to an Electric Vehicle (EV) fleet in a measured way via a programme of trials and pilots. We aim to

expand our EV fleet once suitable vehicles are available and we are confident of the advantages they will bring for our business operations in the future. The drop in Scope 2 emissions resulted from our first full year of renewable electricity for our corporate sites.

All our new homes approved over the last year achieved minimum energy performance ratings of B, and zero emissions heating systems are now the required source of heating for all future new-build projects.

This year we worked with Planet Mark to quantify the positive environmental impact of various Wheatley initiatives including the role out of EV chargers in our communities, furniture recycling and support for car sharing schemes.

We also undertook sustainability-focused customer engagement events across our subsidiaries, including the ‘Second-hand September’ campaign which increased awareness of our furniture recycling service, and promoted active travel to coincide with the installation of bike sheds in some of our communities.



# Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) overview

The current standard, Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing 2 (EESSH2), is set out below:

*The EESSH2 2032 milestone requires that all social housing meets, or can be treated as meeting, EPC Band B, or is as energy efficient as practically possible, by the end of December 2032 and within the limits of cost, technology, and necessary consent.*

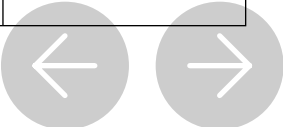
The Scottish Government ran a consultation between November 2023 and March 2024 on a replacement measure with the aim of setting targets which would better capture carbon emission reductions, rather than a measure solely focused on energy efficiency.

This was set out in the new Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS). Independent analysis of feedback provided is currently underway and, following a final response from Scottish Government, the Scottish Housing Regulator will engage with social landlords on the data needed for reporting on the target.

The Scottish Government will also publish guidance for landlords on compliance with the new SHNZS. The new standard is expected to be introduced no earlier than April 2025.

While reporting metrics may change under SHNZS, we are continuing to record data on the energy performance of our homes using EPCs. A total of 91.8% of Wheatley Group’s homes are rated at EPC C or above.

| EPC ratings | No. of homes 2022/23 | %     | No. of homes 2022/24 | %     | Variance |
|-------------|----------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|----------|
| A           | 60                   | 0.1%  | 60                   | 0.1%  | 0 –      |
| B           | 12,227               | 19.1% | 12,785               | 19.9% | 558 ▲    |
| C           | 46,587               | 72.7% | 46,280               | 71.9% | 307 ▼    |
| D           | 4,496                | 7%    | 4,473                | 7%    | - 23 ▼   |
| E           | 740                  | 1.2%  | 740                  | 0%    | 0 –      |



## Case study: Retrofit project in Dumfries

*We completed a large-scale retrofit project on homes in predominately rural areas in Dumfries and Galloway during the year. These older homes had poor levels of energy efficiency resulting in high fuel bills for customers.*

With the support of a £7.3 million grant from the Scottish Government's Net Zero Heat Fund, we delivered deep retrofit works including the installation of external wall insulation, solar PV, air source heat pumps and battery storage technology for 187 properties, with another 63 homes receiving one of these measures to further improve their efficiency. **All homes improved their energy performance from EPC Band 'D' to Band 'B'.**

BEFORE

AFTER



# Ecology

# Ecology

Our Neighbourhood Environmental Teams ('NETs') are a familiar sight across Wheatley communities, keeping back courts, open spaces, stairwells and communal areas in great condition and helping many customers with ad-hoc services. They are a highly visible part of our frontline services and make a significant contribution to our recent positive tenant satisfaction levels.

The NETs ran four 'weeks of action' during 2023/24, focusing on sustainability and community themes, working with partners, local schools, customers and others on projects including tree planting, installing a sensory garden, creating new seating areas, litter-picking and wild-flower planting.

Our partnership with Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) sees the environmental charity assess the service delivered by our environmental teams, with the vast majority of our neighbourhoods achieving five-star rating, the highest possible grade.

We have also recruited around 50 customers across our communities to become KSB assessors, taking part in estate walkabouts to provide feedback for project ideas and improvements, firmly placing the customer at the heart of local investment decisions.



# Ecology

Wheatley's Livingwell service helps our older tenants live independently in their own homes for as long as they can. Our Livingwell advisors work in small local teams as part of wider area hubs and provide a wide range of leisure and social activities for tenants, including opportunities to take part in volunteering projects.

The NETs 'weeks of action' are particularly welcomed by our Livingwell customers, many of whom take great pride in their local environments. The NETs in Anniesland in Glasgow worked with our residents this year to convert an area of lawn into a small putting green for customers to enjoy.

Our team in Almondvale, West Lothian, built a bench and planted flowers with the help of a 77-year-old customer, Henry. He said:

“*They cut the grass, straighten out all the edges and keep the area clean and tidy. The bench they've built will be great in nicer weather. It's nice to have somewhere to sit and chat with others.*”



# Resource management

City Building (Glasgow), jointly owned by Wheatley Group and Glasgow City Council, carries out repairs and maintenance for Wheatley subsidiaries in the west of Scotland. It has BSI ISO 14001:2015 accreditation, the world's most recognised environmental management system.

Its approach to waste and water management, as well as its operating practices, policies, and staff are externally validated each year by the British Standards Institute (BSI) with certification retained for 2023/24. City Building (Glasgow) publishes its statement of carbon emissions every year in compliance with Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting.

City Building (Glasgow) completed a full-year audit of its overall waste performance for 2023/24 which came to 5,047.79 tonnes. This includes weights from site skips and all waste through their Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) accredited Waste Transfer Station. Its recycling rate increased from 71% to 92% over the year. This increase is attributed to less waste going to landfill and either being recycled or converted to energy from waste. Their Waste Carrier Licence granted by SEPA remains valid until 4 April 2026.

A total of 18% of electrical operatives at City Building have completed training on installation, inspection, servicing, and maintenance of air source heat pumps, ground source heat pumps and photovoltaics, which includes design, installation, testing of domestic PV systems; electrical vehicle charging, including installation, testing and commissioning of domestic electric vehicle charging points, readying the staff to deliver the transition to low carbon heating.

# Resource management

## Wheatley's new-build framework includes increased sustainability requirements for contractors.

These include:

- participation in the Considerate Constructors scheme;
- producing a statement which outlines how they will achieve the Scottish Building Standards' Gold Standard or equivalent;
- a site waste management plan which complies with the current regulations in line with good practice published by charity, WRAP;
- ensuring project design achieves Building Standards Section 7 Sustainability, Silver Standard Aspect 1 to 8, unless confirmed otherwise;
- providing Energy Performance Certificates undertaken by an approved accreditation scheme in electronic form to the Group; and
- protecting all trees, hedges, shrubs and grassed areas and/or replacing them if uprooted or destroyed during the course of the construction project.

In addition, under the terms of our new-build framework agreements, Wheatley is entitled to audit any records, agreements or processes the relevant contractor has in place for environmental procedures which are required to be certified to BS EN ISO 14000, BS EN ISO 14001 or equivalent standard at any time during the life of the contract.





# Social



# Affordability

In line with our legal obligations under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Wheatley always consults with tenants on rent increases and considers their feedback before making a final decision on rent-setting. Balancing rent affordability with the inflationary pressures across our business is of critical importance to ensure our financial stability.

We undertake affordability analysis across our communities and by house type with reference to sector average rents via the Scottish Housing Regulator's published data. We also take account of rents as a percentage of household income using the Scottish Government's benchmark of affordable rent (where housing costs do not consume more than 30-40% of household income)<sup>4</sup>.

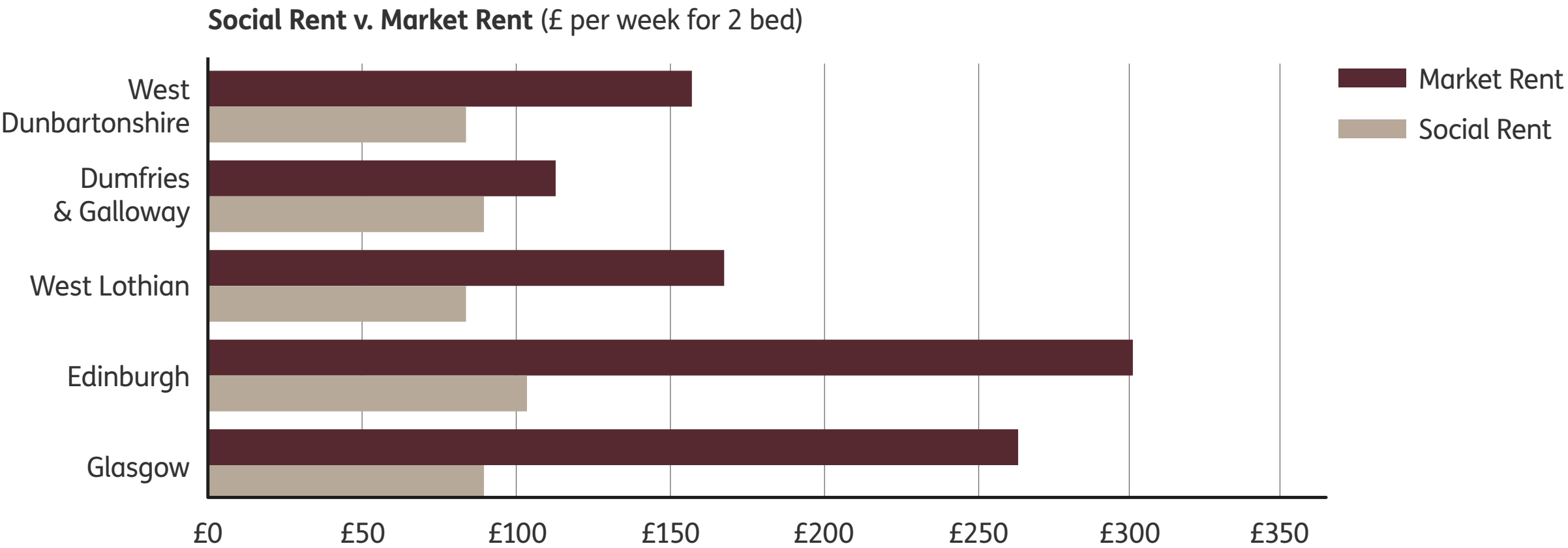
Our formal rent consultation in January 2024 was independently managed by Civica. We received more than 7,500 responses from customers which supported our proposed rent increase at 7.5% for 2024/25 for our social rent properties.



# Affordability

In the wider market, a comparison between social rents<sup>5</sup> and market rents<sup>6</sup> for the same property type clearly demonstrates the affordability of social rent tenures. The year-on-year rent increases in the private rental sector in our major cities and commuter areas has continued to be significant, with Scottish Government introducing rent control measures in the private rent sector via the Cost of Living (Tenant Protections) Act 2022. This legislation did not apply to social housing rents.

The relative affordability of social rent in Wheatley properties has improved in Glasgow and Edinburgh in 2023/24, with the average social rent for two-bed homes being 34% of the prevailing market rent for both cities. In 2022/23, a two-bed home in Edinburgh for social rent was 42% of the equivalent in the private rental sector, while Glasgow was around 38% of the market rent level.



5. [SHR average social rents FY23](#)  
6. [Citylets 1Q23 PRS data](#) and [SG PRS data 2010-22](#)



## Building safety

We work in partnership with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and ensure legal compliance with fire safety legislation and best practice guidance via adherence with our Fire Prevention and Mitigation Framework (FPMF).

The FPMF sets out our approach to proactively reducing the risk of accidental dwelling fires via a programme of person-centred risk assessments where housing officers have identified a degree of vulnerability in a customer. The safety visits and assessments are undertaken by our in-house fire safety team using the industry standard PAS 79-2:2020 methodology.

Following the 614 person-centred risk assessments delivered this year, the fire safety team arranged for enhanced detection in 130 homes and sent fire safety products, including air fryers and guidance on safe cooking practices, to 400 customers.

Higher-risk buildings, such as high-rise and sheltered/supported living accommodation, are also subject to fire risk assessments and require specific protocols.



**Stay Safe at home**

we're working with **SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**  
Working together for a safer Scotland

**Book a FREE home fire safety visit today**

**Text FIRE to 80800**

# Building safety

Our proactive, targeted approach to risk assessment continues to deliver reductions in accidental dwelling fires across our 65,000 homes with a 18% fall year-on-year. The actions of our fire safety teams have undoubtedly contributed to saving customers’ lives.

|                                 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Fire risk assessments           | 193     | 137     | 113     |
| Person centred risk assessments | 547     | 600     | 614     |
| Accidental dwelling fires       | 151     | 147     | 121     |
| Reduction from previous year    | 30%     | 2.5%    | 17.7%   |

**Smoke and heat detection**

Our homes have been fitted with ceiling-mounted interlinked smoke and heat detectors in compliance with regulations which have applied to all Scottish homes since February 2022. As property owners, Wheatley is responsible for meeting this standard. The alarms comply with BS EN14604:2005 for smoke alarms and BS 5446-2:2003 for heat alarms with carbon monoxide alarms holding a British Kitemark (EN 50291-1), and are fitted in living rooms, hallway/landing, and kitchens of all our homes.

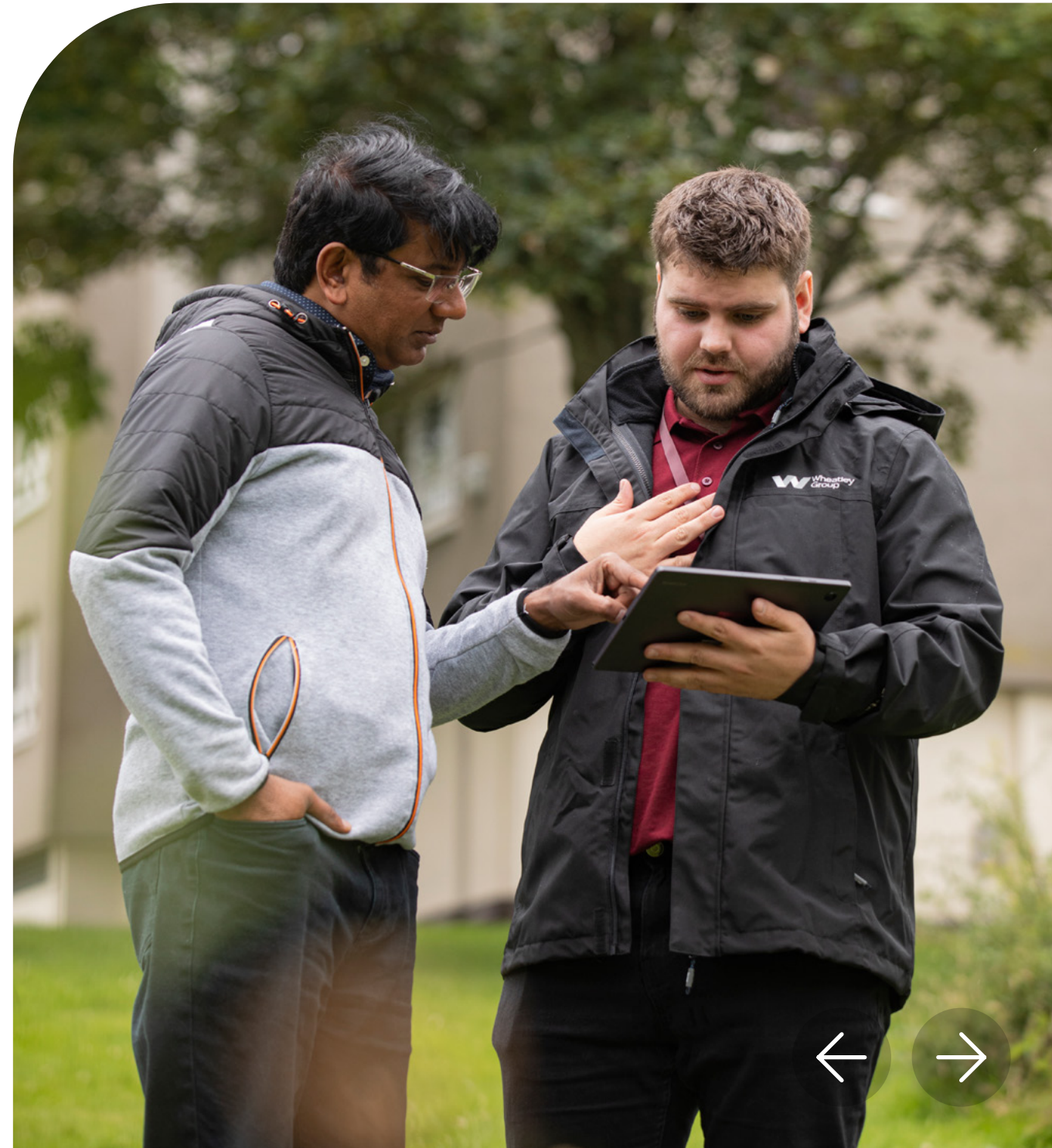
# Resident voice

Wheatley's 2021-26 strategy, "Your Home, Your Future, Your Community", emphasises co-creation with our customers, giving them the power to be in control and self-direct their services.

Our engagement framework, "Stronger Voices, Stronger Communities", sets out our vision for supporting our customers to become more involved in the Group's decision-making, giving customers the power to make their own choices about the services they want. This approach was informed by feedback from customers and by the research project 'Democracy Starts at Home', carried out for us by The Democratic Society.

Our approach encourages accessibility – anyone can volunteer for an activity without further commitment – and flexibility, allowing customers to express views at a time and in a way that suits: online, 24/7, from home, or in-person.

Our Stronger Voices framework consists of four pillars and is supported by various digital tools to help with engagement.



# Resident voice

| Pillars                                                                                                                              | Customer outcome                                                                                                                                  | Digital Channels                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— <b>We</b> listen</li><li>— <b>You</b> are heard</li></ul>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— You tell us if we are doing well or if we are getting it wrong</li></ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— My Voice feedback surveys</li><li>— Book it, Track it, Rate it</li><li>— Social media</li><li>— Web self-service</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— <b>We</b> consult and co-create</li><li>— <b>You</b> influence and design with us</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— You help us improve services</li></ul>                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Digital customer voice panels and focus groups via Zoom or Teams</li></ul>                                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— <b>We</b> give power to</li><li>— <b>You</b> decide</li></ul>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— You direct spending and resources</li><li>— You work with us to design new services or products</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Digital feedback tools including Menti</li></ul>                                                                           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— <b>We</b> support</li><li>— <b>Your</b> voice is stronger and people listen to you</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— You help us improve services</li><li>— You work with us to design new services or products</li></ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— MyAcademy online training for Customer Voices</li></ul>                                                                    |

*Embedding a strong customer voice in Group decision-making helps us achieve our aims and objectives and improves service delivery for customers and communities.*

*We have over 2,000 customers signed-up to participate in our Stronger Voices initiatives. They have taken part in surveys, panel events and in-person and online focus groups. Their knowledge, skills and lived experience has helped shape our decisions on local service delivery, policy-making and strategic projects.*

# Case study: Stronger Voices consultation on the Group Sustainability Framework

*We ran a series of online focus groups with customers to discuss our plans on net zero and 'greener community' initiatives to ensure the customer voice was embedded into our strategic decision-making.*



Discussions on priorities around retrofitting, biodiversity, fuel poverty and funding for improvements led to valuable input from customers. This included:

- The importance of a 'just transition' to ensure new heating technologies do not result in higher energy costs.
- The merits of electric vehicles in some rural communities given the shortage of electric charging infrastructure.
- The requirement for new-build energy-efficiency standards not to be made at the expense of retrofitting existing properties, given the higher costs in heating older homes.
- Potential costs and the risk of reducing other services due to funding pressures.

This customer feedback had a direct bearing on our sustainability strategy, confirming our commitment to delivering a just transition as well as our assessment of the financial implications of replacing heating systems to ensure they don't increase costs for customers.

# Case study: Stronger Voices consultation on the Group Sustainability Framework

We have amended our timescales for full transition to an EV fleet to ensure we maintain service levels in rural communities and match the speed of charging infrastructure improvements and vehicle availability. We continue to engage with customers on this and have met 70 customer voice participants since the strategy was finalised.

Our focus on customer engagement was recognised by the Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland (CIH) in 2023, with the 'Excellence in Customer Service' and 'Excellence in Housing Innovation' awards for our new 'Book it, Track it, Rate it' app which updates customers when a repair is booked and the tradesperson is on their way and allows them to rate the service, all of which helps us continue to improve the repairs service.

## Tenant satisfaction surveys

Delivering excellent customer services is a key objective for the Group, and we set an ambitious target to achieve tenant satisfaction scores of 90%+ within the term of our 2021-26 strategy. We conducted our first large scale, independent tenant satisfaction surveys since the pandemic between May and November 2023. Two of our RSLs, Wheatley Homes East and Loretto have already achieved the 90%+ overall satisfaction, while Wheatley Homes Glasgow and Wheatley Homes South are at 87% and 88% respectively at this stage.

Key performance measures from our tenant satisfaction surveys and those reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator for the 2023/24 Annual Return on Charter are set out in the table below. Sector average figures for 2023/24 are not yet available, so we have included figures for 2022/23.

# Tenant satisfaction surveys

| Scottish Housing Regulator: Annual Return on Charter                  |                        |                 |                     |                      |                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
|                                                                       | Wheatley Homes Glasgow | Loretto Housing | Wheatley Homes East | Wheatley Homes South | Sector Average (2022/23) |
| Overall service provided by landlord                                  | 87%                    | 93%             | 96%                 | 88%                  | 87%                      |
| Kept informed about services and decisions                            | 94%                    | 98%             | 98%                 | 96%                  | 90%                      |
| Opportunities for participation in decision making                    | 98%                    | 98%             | 99%                 | 97%                  | 86%                      |
| Satisfaction with repairs service provided                            | 82%                    | 84%             | 93%                 | 86%                  | 88%                      |
| Satisfaction with the quality of your home                            | 86%                    | 94%             | 95%                 | 89%                  | 84%                      |
| Satisfaction with Wheatley’s contribution to neighbourhood management | 91%                    | 95%             | 93%                 | 95%                  | 84%                      |
| Whether rent represents good value for money                          | 89%                    | 93%             | 96%                 | 95%                  | 82%                      |

# Tenant satisfaction surveys

The results from our Customer Service Excellence (CSE) assessment, which took place in October 2023, further demonstrate the effectiveness of our customer-centred approach. CSE is the national standard for excellence in customer service in public sector organisations overseen by the UK Government's Cabinet Office<sup>7</sup>, and covers every aspect of customer service, including customer journey mapping, complaints, first contact resolution, data protection, engaging communities, and innovation.

The assessment resulted in a successful reaccreditation with 22 elements of the assessment rated as 'Compliance Plus', the highest possible rating.

The CSE assessor stated:

“ (Wheatley's) 'Think Yes Together' culture means staff listen to customers and respond to find a positive solution, well exemplified in the annual tenant visits. The customer-focused culture is strongly embedded at all levels of the organisation. Staff continue to be passionate in their commitment to customers, displaying enthusiasm and desire to go the extra mile.”

# Resident support

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Thriving neighbourhoods are critical in supporting high levels of tenant satisfaction. Our small patch sizes of 250 homes ensure we are closer to customers and able to support them to live in warm, safe, and peaceful homes.

Our Protecting People and Communities Group brings together our Community Improvement Partnership (CIP) and Group Protection teams to help achieve our aim of customers feeling safe and secure in thriving neighbourhoods.

The CIP is a partnership of Wheatley Homes Glasgow, Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue to improve the way we approach anti-social behaviour and tenant vulnerabilities. Our aim is to support frontline housing staff to help make tenants' lives and communities safe.

By using additional information reported to partner agencies, this initiative addresses information gaps arising from the lack of reporting to the police from people affected by anti-social behaviour, allowing us to identify, validate and prioritise issues adversely affecting the community.

Our Group Protection team provides training on safeguarding customers and communities enabling housing and care staff to act quickly and effectively to reduce the risk of harm or abuse to vulnerable customers. This includes spotting signs of domestic abuse and the process for reporting this, signs of adults or children at risk of harm and for suicide prevention. The team also supports staff in dealing with customers who are managed under Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements.

# Wheatley Foundation



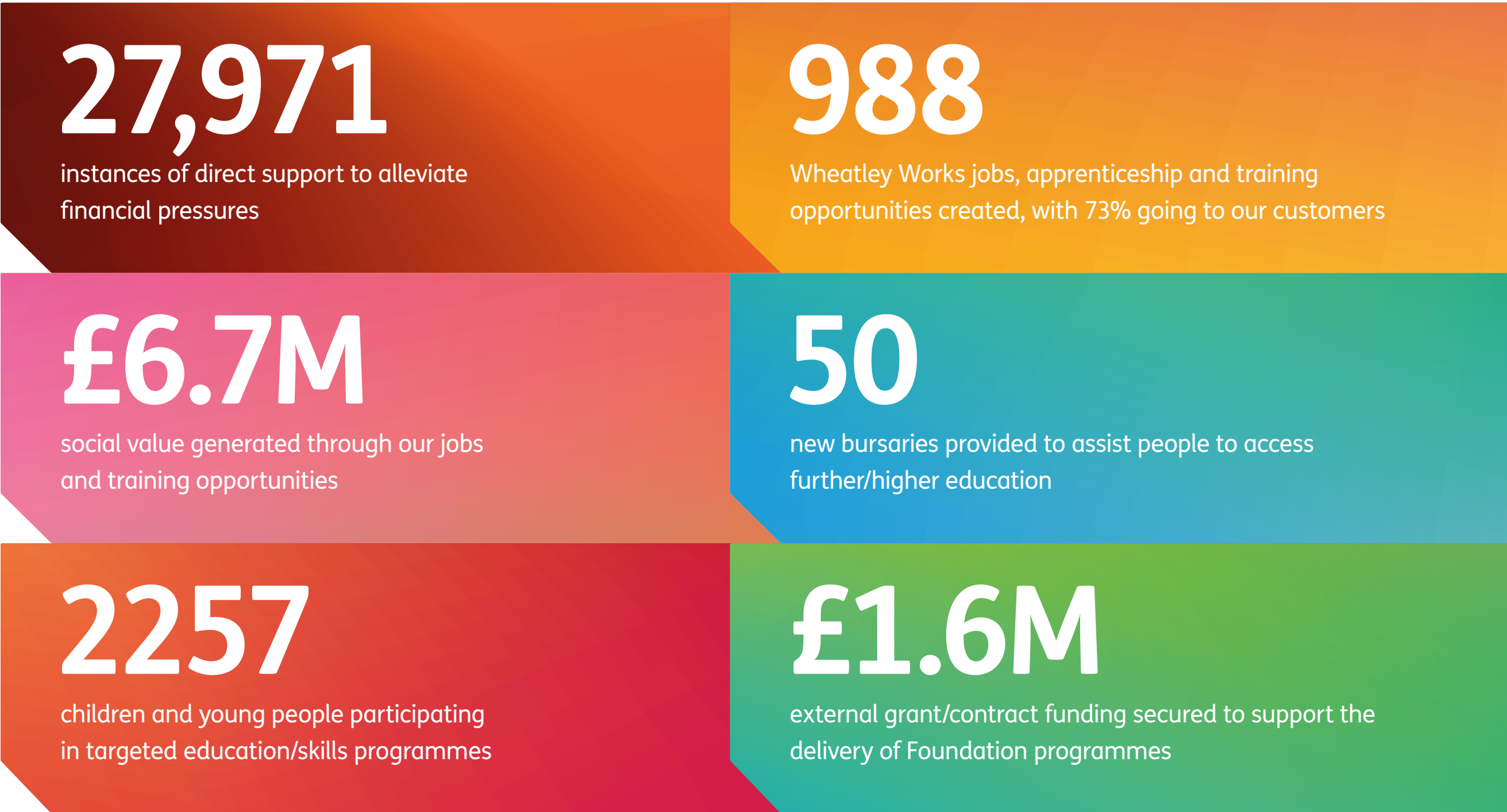
# Overview

The Wheatley Foundation was created in 2016 to support our commitment to “Make Homes and Lives Better” for customers and communities. During 2023/24, the Foundation has provided vital support to thousands of households, delivering an extensive planned programme of activity and initiatives for our customers and those living in our communities focusing primarily on:

- **Supporting customers by tackling social exclusion and alleviating the impacts of poverty; and**
- **Maximising access to employment, training and learning opportunities for customers of all ages.**



In the year, we invested £9.2m, supporting over 17,000 people across our programmes, achieving all annual targets including:



# Wheatley Foundation

Our **Home Comforts** programme delivered **4,123** free recycled furniture and white goods items to **1,210** tenants, supporting customers to create a home and sustain their tenancy.

Our **Starter Packs** provide customers who are moving into a new home with a helpful pack including kettle, toaster, cutlery, crockery, pots and pans, bedding, towels, and cleaning materials. **957** households benefited from this intervention.

The development of local Pantries and Larders has helped customers in our communities to access affordable food as well as the opportunity to link in with local support services. Our two most recently opened larders, delivered in partnership with Good Food Scotland, at Sandyhills and Kennishead, now have almost 800 members. As well as food provision, Sandyhills larder has hosted community activities during 2023/24 including sewing classes, digital classes, and a Food Waste reduction event.

During 2023/24, the Foundation began using the HACT Social Value tool which employs a long-standing wellbeing valuation approach, calculated using UK Treasury Green Book compliant methods. The HACT social value tool is used to calculate the impact of project outcomes on the wellbeing (life satisfaction) of individuals. This



is converted into the amount of money required to produce the equivalent impact on wellbeing.

The social value generated from jobs and training opportunities this year for Wheatley customers is £6.7m – demonstrating the significant impact of training and employment on customers' wellbeing.

The **John Wheatley Learning Network** provided free drop-in digital support and internet access to 2,554 people in 34 local Learning Centres across Wheatley communities. There were 1,125 enrolments to certificated Wider Access courses including Community Achievement awards and SQA qualifications on word processing and excel.

# Wheatley Foundation

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library provides free books to children under five in our homes. A total of 817 children are currently registered to receive a free monthly book, and 5500 books were delivered in 2023/24.



Streetywzye is a 12-week education programme for young people in the East End of Glasgow who are at risk of being involved in gang culture, knife crime and anti-social behaviour. During the year, 319 young people aged 14–18 have participated in these education workshops and diversionary activities.

Our Welfare Benefits Advisory team secured over £13.7m in otherwise unclaimed support for our customers – over 30% of which is directly contributing to the prevention of rent arrears. Our Fuel Advice service has provided help to over 3,300 households this year. Assistance from Fuel Advisors has mainly focused on supporting customers to understand how to heat their homes as efficiently as possible, support with meter and tariff issues and accessing available grants/funds.

My Great Start, delivered in partnership with three voluntary sector partners, has provided 921 new tenants with help to get off to a positive start in their tenancy. This personalised one-to-one support provides expert financial capability advice including debt management, saving/budgeting habits, benefits advice and energy advice. Support is also provided to help the tenant make links with local services such as community support groups, food networks and health resources. The service has secured new tenant financial gains of over £670k.



# Wheatley Foundation

## Case study: Educational bursaries

Wheatley has provided educational bursaries to customers to support them pursue higher or further educational qualifications. Since we launched the scheme in 2016 more than 400 people have benefited from this financial help. The Foundation is committed to providing a minimum of 50 bursaries per year, helping tackle the many barriers people face growing up in poverty.



*“I’m really keen on a career in the television industry. It’s a fantastic course and I’ve learned so many different skills, including lighting, sound, editing and camera work. My goal is to get a job in editing.”*

*The course is based in Ayr, so the bursary has been a god send. Without it I would have struggled to afford the cost of travel to Ayr for my classes. Having the bursary removed any worries about money and has been a massive help.”*

Michael McMillan, a Wheatley Homes Glasgow tenant, received a bursary to study for a degree in TV Production and Script Writing.



# Homelessness

Wheatley has a sector-leading commitment to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping. We set a target of providing 10,000 new lets to people experiencing homelessness over our five-year strategy term, which represents over 50% of all new lets every year. In 2023/24, 58.64% of all lets were to people experiencing homelessness. Our progress to achieving this target is set out below:

Data released by the National Statistics Publication for Scotland in August 2023 showed homelessness in Scotland was higher than pre-pandemic levels. The report revealed a 10% rise in the number of households assessed as homeless to 32,242, up from 29,339 in 2021/22, and a record number of households in temporary accommodation.

|                           | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Lets to homeless          | 2475    | 2207    | 2406    | —       | —       |
| Cumulative total / target | 2475    | 4682    | 7088    | —       | 10,000  |
| Against target            | 124%    | 117%    | 118%    | —       | —       |

# Homelessness

Robert, 20, from Glasgow, became homeless after a family breakdown. After spending several years in the care system and then sofa surfing for 18 months, he was offered a secure tenancy by Wheatley Homes Glasgow. He said:

*“I’m so grateful for the house I’ve been given. Having a roof over my head and space to call my own means a lot. I’m trying to get into work now to help me manage. That’s what is going to make the difference for me. I’m learning about money management and looking after the property. I’m getting support from Wheatley to do this when I need it.”*

It is vital for customers to be able to sustain their tenancy and we provide specialist support (My Great Start), benefits advice, financial inclusion services, tenant starter packs, fuel advice and food vouchers to help with this. The Foundation also provides free, upcycled furniture and white goods through Home Comforts.

Wheatley continues to be a partner in Housing First, a partnership set up to tackle rough sleeping across Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Dumfries, and has provided over 300 tenancies via this initiative. We have also worked with local authority partners to provide homes for more than 300 Afghan and Ukrainian refugees.

## Staff wellbeing

Wheatley has a comprehensive package of health and wellbeing assistance accessible to all staff. In addition to two wellbeing days per year, staff can apply for financial support for a range of health matters including dental care, optical fees, physiotherapy, health club memberships, alternative therapies, and menopause care. We also provide all staff with access to the WE Benefit discount site which provides daily discounts and deals on everyday purchases. Additional benefits include the cycle to work scheme, the opportunity for staff to buy annual leave and help with the cost of driving lessons.

Staff requiring support can access our Employee Assistance Programme, PAM Assist, which is available 24/7 for counselling and emotional help. Our counsellors can also offer support to colleagues and their immediate family to address family or couple concerns. Mindfulness practitioners run courses for staff to learn techniques and coping mechanisms to handle everyday anxieties. A range of specialist workshops including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and wellbeing coaching are also available.



# Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Wheatley's EDI Action Plan, supported by our EDI and human rights policy, helps ensure Wheatley is a more inclusive workplace for everyone, regardless of their age, race, sex, sexuality, and health status. We are a member of enei, the employer's network for equality and inclusion, which provides staff with access to resources including expert webinars and guidance of all aspects of diversity.

Wheatley is also a member of Business in the Community, a UK-based organisation working to deliver responsible business practice, including the development of inclusive workforces.

In response to annual EDI surveys, we also created networking groups to support staff on a range of issues, including carers; disabilities; LGBTQ+; neurodiversity and mental health; age; pregnancy and parenting; religion; race; and menopause and perimenopause

Our statement of commitment on EDI is set out below.

- **Equity:** Employees and customers are treated fairly and have access to equal opportunities to fulfil their potential.
- **Diversity:** Respecting and valuing individual differences and unique characteristics.
- **Inclusion:** Making sure our employees and customers feel comfortable being themselves and they feel valued, respected and heard.

# Living wage, gender pay gap and staff absenteeism

While Wheatley does not have accreditation with the Living Wage Foundation, we pay all staff the Real Living Wage and are committed to increasing pay in line with the Real Living Wage in future years. We require all building contractors on our framework to adhere to paying the Living Wage.

All organisations with more than 250 employees have been required to publish their gender pay gap figures since April 2017. This year, four of our subsidiaries – Wheatley Homes Glasgow, Wheatley Homes East, Wheatley Care and Wheatley Homes South – met the qualifying criteria.

The mean pay gap figure is calculated by adding total pay and dividing this by the number of staff and shows that women are, on average, paid more than men across these subsidiaries.

| Wheatley Group subsidiary | Mean gender pay gap |         |         |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------|---------|
|                           | 2021/22             | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| Wheatley Homes Glasgow    | -20.7%              | -21.6%  | -24.7%  |
| Wheatley Homes East       | Not in scope        | -1.3%   | -2.9%   |
| Wheatley Homes South      | -15.2%              | -13.2%  | -16.5%  |
| Wheatley Care             | -4.7%               | -7.4%   | -6.2%   |

More detailed information is included in the gender pay gap reports:

- > [WH Glasgow Gender Pay Gap](#)
- > [WH East Gender Pay Gap](#)
- > [WH South Gender Pay Gap](#)
- > [Wheatley Care Gender Pay Gap](#)



# Absence rates

Absence rates are reported in our Annual Return on Charter (ARC) to the Scottish Housing Regulator. As of 31 March 2024, absence rates measured by the percentage of working time lost for the Registered Social Landlord subsidiaries are set out in the table below:

|                           | Absence rate: % of working time lost |         |         |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Wheatley Group subsidiary | 2021/22                              | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| Wheatley Homes Glasgow    | 3.57%                                | 2.74%   | 2.39%   |
| Wheatley Homes East       | 4.72%                                | 5.65%   | 0.45%   |
| Wheatley Homes South      | 3.06%                                | 3.53%   | 3.50%   |
| Wheatley Care             | 1.63%                                | 2.19%   | 2.52%   |

# Strategic direction

The Wheatley Housing Group Board sets the overall strategic direction for the Group.

## Board and trustees

The Wheatley Board currently comprises five non-executive directors, five subsidiary chair Board members and two co-opted members. The Board meets every two months, including an annual two-day strategy workshop.

Our subsidiary companies, the RSLs, Wheatley Care and Lowther, retain decision-making on key operational matters directly with their own Boards. This enables them to centre their customers and communities by listening and responding directly to local resident voices.

Board minutes and Group Standing Orders are publicly available on the Wheatley Group website.

The function of the Wheatley Group Board is to co-ordinate the component strands of the Group and to take a strategic overview of its activities. The Board ensures the Group uses its size and scale to achieve maximum value for money and efficiency for our customers and communities.

It is important our Group Board reflects and is representative of our customers. Our 12-person Board includes seven female members (58%), ethnic group<sup>8</sup> representation (8%), tenant membership (17%), and a disabled person (8%). The average age of Board members is 60.9 years.

Wheatley Group Board: Diversity representation



# Strategic direction

The Group Chief Executive attends Board meetings but is not a member and does not have voting rights. The Board is 100% non-executive. The Chair and CEO are separate roles.

The Group Chair, Jo Armstrong, was appointed in September 2021, following six years as a Board member and Chair of the Group Development Committee.

Our auditors, KPMG, were re-appointed in February 2023 for a five-year period, with two 12-month extensions. The most recent strategic governance review was completed in 2021/22 by Campbell Tickell.

Our non-executive directors are subject to an individual annual appraisal process to monitor their performance and identify any areas for continuous improvement. We support our non-executive directors with a continuous professional development programme which draws on a range of external experts, including the Institute of Directors, sector and industry experts and our external legal advisors. This allows our Board members to refresh and maintain the key skills and experience they require to discharge their duties.

## Systems and risk management

The Board of Wheatley Housing Group is responsible for ensuring effective systems of internal financial control are maintained within all members of the Group using the following framework:

- written policies and procedures including Standing Orders setting out delegated authorities across Group subsidiaries and organisational structure to support business processes and with clear lines of responsibility;
- employment of suitably qualified and experienced staff to take responsibility for key areas of the business. This is supported by a formal personal development programme;
- adoption of a risk-based approach to internal control and maintenance of risk registers which evaluate the likelihood and impact of identified corporate risks, designate responsibility for monitoring and reporting progress against the Group's key risks;
- financial plans and budgets supporting strategic and operational financial targets, monitoring, and forecasting performance against targets and key performance indicators, all of which are reviewed by the Board; and
- conflicts of interest are handled through a specific agenda item at the start of every meeting (with reference to the terms of Article 38 of our Articles of Association 'Interests').

# Strategic direction

The Group Board is supported in discharging its duties by three sub-committees.

| Committee name                                                 | Function                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Remuneration, Appointments, Appraisal and Governance Committee | Responsible for approving the process for recruitment, selection, succession planning and appraisal of Board members and for ensuring Board members within the Group have the necessary balance of skills and experience to fulfil their roles. The committee evaluates and reviews the Group’s governance framework on an ongoing basis.                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Group Audit Committee                                          | Responsible for oversight of the Group’s system of internal control, compliance assurance and risk management. It is responsible for approving the internal audit plan and ongoing monitoring of its implementation. It also oversees the external audit process, including agreeing the annual external audit plan and undertaking a detailed review of financial statements. The committee is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the overall risk strategy and reviews the strategic risk register. |
| Group Strategic Development Committee                          | Responsible for reviewing any new major strategic projects and initiatives on behalf of the Group Board, in particular fundraising and strategic partnerships.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |



# Strategic direction

Individual subsidiaries each have their own Board which is responsible for setting their strategy which aligns with the overall Group strategic direction and reflects their unique circumstances and customer priorities. Each subsidiary Board is composed of non-executive directors based on its own individual skills matrix and across the Group. In addition, 31% of our subsidiary RSL board members are tenants who live in our communities.

Our governing bodies review operational performance measures and key performance indicators (KPIs) each time they meet and their strategic aims and targets are set out in their respective five-year strategies. The subsidiary and Group Boards review and update their strategic priorities on an annual basis after consideration of existing and future changes in the operating environment, emerging risks, policy changes and legislative developments among other things. This assessment of risks and opportunities, and any resultant changes in focus or activities, is supported by the role of the Group Audit Committee, the work of our expert advisors on our Pathway to Net Zero Group, the Wheatley Solutions Board, our membership of sectoral networks such as the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and our participation in stakeholder groups such as the Scottish Government Housing Investment Taskforce. This year, the Group

Board undertook a strategic review of the emerging Scottish Government policy changes to the targets for energy efficiency in social housing set out in the proposed Social Housing Net Zero Standard and agreed to focus financial resources on investment in existing homes that provided the right balance between energy efficiency improvements and cost for social housing tenants.



# Supply chain

The Group's procurement and sustainability strategies ensure compliance with sections 24 and 25 of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 which sets out requirements that:

- public contracts over the value of £4 million will incorporate appropriate community benefit requirements and opportunities; and
- delivering community benefits is a core part of contract compliance.

We have embedded commitments to include social value into our procurement processes by way of our 'Community Benefits' approach, which requires our partners to deliver a minimum number of work placements, training opportunities, apprenticeships, new jobs, mentoring and a charitable contribution per property as an integral requirement of working with Wheatley Group.

Community Benefits are required for all goods and services procurements valued above £500k and for all new-build contracts greater than £2m. The commitments from our contracting partners increase steadily based on the value/banding of the contract. As an example, a Band 9 new-build contract for projects greater than £18m means our contractor would have to deliver a minimum of 19 work placements and training places, eight apprenticeships, 10 new jobs and £775 charitable contribution per new-build unit.

Wheatley Group creates successful and attractive places in partnership with the construction industry. Our development contracts set out clear principles which include requirements to embed sustainability into new-build projects. This includes energy efficiency, floor space, access to green spaces, and commitments on electric vehicle charging points.



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