



**Environmental,  
Social and Governance  
(ESG) Report  
2023/24**

# Welcome

## Why we're doing it

We're proud to present our third Environmental, Social and Governance report, highlighting our continued commitment to sustainability.

Alliance Homes exists to create great places to live that our customers are proud to call home. Investing in our communities, making our homes greener and ensuring our organisation is secure for the future are central to fulfilling that commitment.

In the context of rising energy costs, improving the energy efficiency of our housing stock is not just about future-proofing our homes. This investment is already benefiting our customers, and especially low-income households, by making their homes warmer, greener and more affordable to run. That's why we're investing more than ever in our existing homes and we're on course for all our properties to reach EPC Band C or above by 2030.

In our communities, we're improving our green spaces, transforming them into inviting areas where our customers want to meet up and enjoy the benefits of being closer to nature. We're also supporting more customers through our Home Energy Advice service, helping them manage and lower their utility bills.

Our commitment to our colleagues goes beyond being a Real Living Wage employer, we're officially recognised as a Great Place to Work. That's thanks to continued investment in our colleagues and the initiatives we have in place to provide a safe, fulfilling and inclusive workplace.

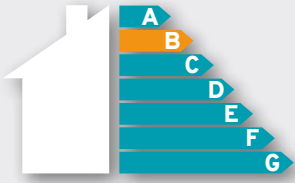
ESG is not just about a set of static targets, it's about creating a shift in approach, a desire to continually improve. That's why we've invested in creating a dedicated Sustainability Manager role, to develop and embed our sustainability approach in everything we do. They'll work with individual teams to create plans, monitor data and ensure we're ready for the future.

***Front cover: Leila-Mae enjoying a Nature Tots gardening session at our Coleridge Road Community Garden***



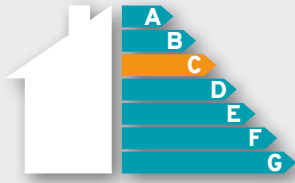
# Our key ESG achievements in 2023/24

95%



of all our new properties are EPC B and above

85%



of all homes are above EPC C

94



homes have received retrofit improvements

£31,953



of social value from supply chain

99.5%



of our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard

700kg



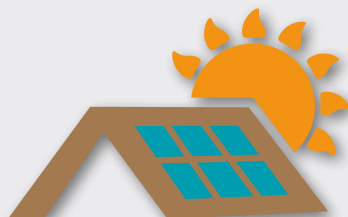
of fruit and veg grown and shared by the community

£100,000



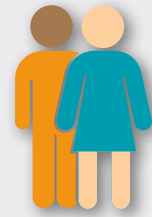
saved for customers by Home Energy advisors

4,453MWh



of electricity generated by the solar panels on our homes

50/50



Our board is 50% men and 50% women

**Environmental**

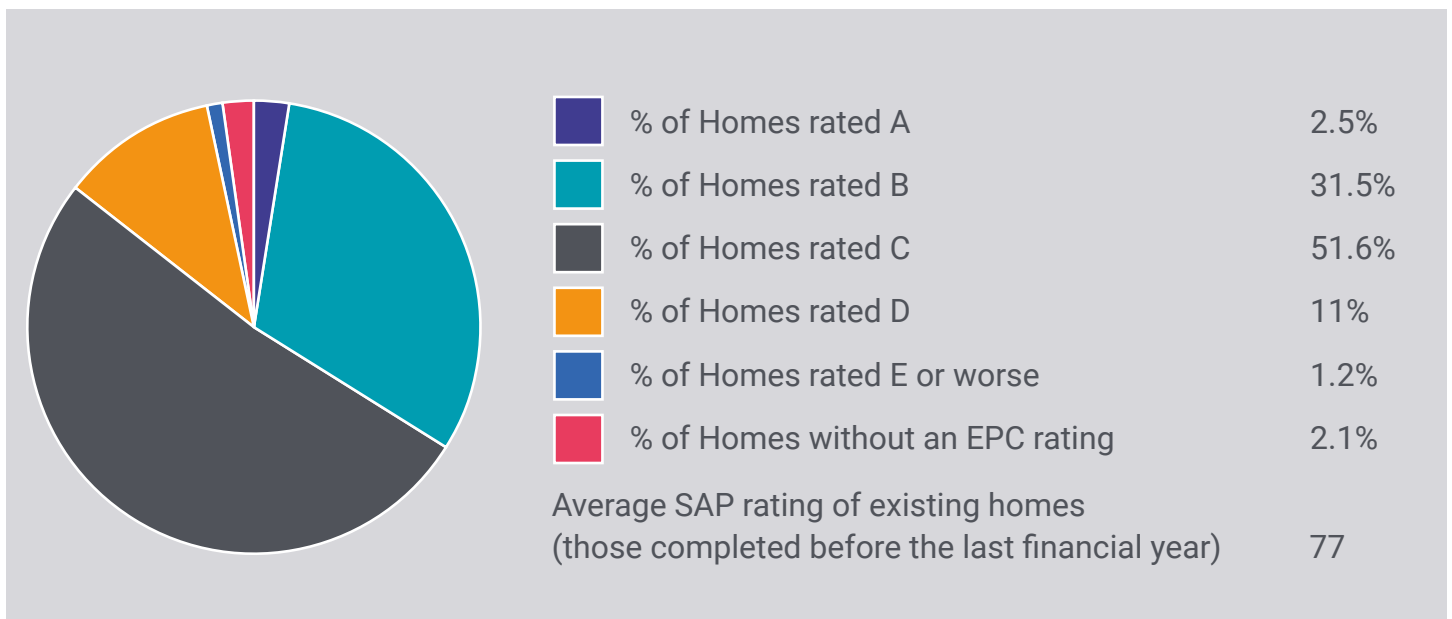
**Nature Tots at Coleridge Road Community Garden**



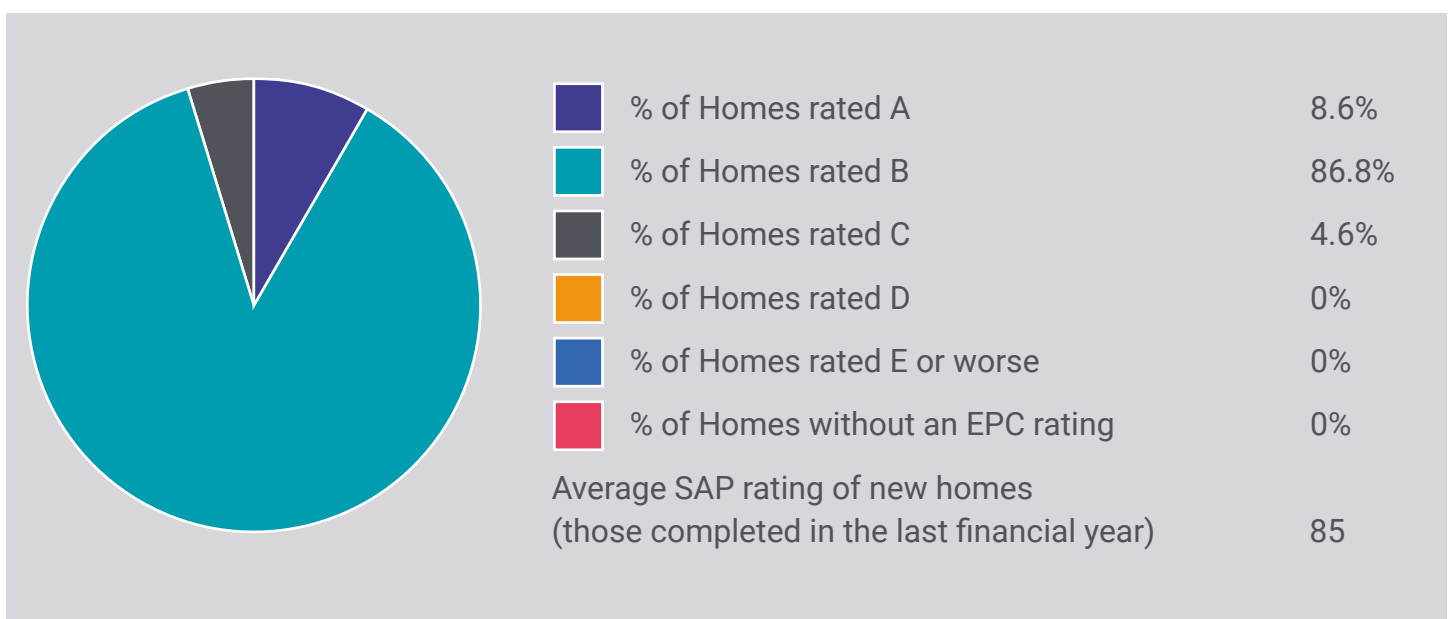
## Theme 1 – Climate change

This theme seeks to assess how the activities of Alliance Homes are impacting on climate change. This theme considers current practice, as well as the changes being made to improve performance in the future. The theme is made up of eight criteria, including the distribution of EPC ratings and heating sources, emissions data, capacity for renewable energy production, and environmental strategy.

### C1. Distribution of EPC ratings of existing homes (those completed before the last financial year).



### C2. Distribution of EPC ratings of new homes (those completed in the last financial year).



### **C3. Does the housing provider have a Net Zero target and strategy?**

#### **If so, what is it and when does the housing provider intend to be Net Zero by?**

Although we do not currently have a net zero target or strategy we are working towards one. Following the appointment of our Sustainability Manager and the formation of our internal sustainability group, we are now able to develop a comprehensive sustainability strategy. This strategy will outline our various sustainability goals and provide a roadmap to achieving net zero.

### **C4. What retrofit activities has the housing provider undertaken in the last 12 months in relation to its housing stock? How do these activities align with, and contribute towards, performance against the housing provider's Net Zero strategy and target?**

Throughout the last year, we made steady progress with our retrofit activities and improving the energy efficiency of our housing stock. 94 homes received a range of retrofit measures which included external wall insulation, internal wall insulation, cavity wall insulation and loft insulation. With the retrofit activities carried out and a review of our EPC data, we had 106 homes achieve EPC C, leaving us with approximately 800 homes below EPC C. Through the delivery of our Warmer, Greener Living project (funded by the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund), we will continue to deliver energy efficiency measures in our properties to support our objective of all homes at EPC C by 2030. The recruitment of our Retrofit Project Manager enables us to have a dedicated resource to support the delivery of our current SHDF project of improving the energy efficiency of 135 homes and future retrofit schemes.

### **C5. Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 Green House Gas emissions**

#### **Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 Green House Gas emissions per home**

#### **If unable to report emissions data, please state when the housing provider is expected to be able to do so.**

We are collaborating with relevant departments across the organisation to establish a robust process for data collection and monitoring, which will enable us to produce our emissions data. We aim to report on our Scope 1, Scope 2, and Scope 3 emissions in next year's ESG report.

This work is a crucial part of developing our sustainability strategy and will drive targeted and effective initiatives to support our carbon reduction efforts.

Our SHIFT assessment in 2022 provided valuable insights into our environmental impact. However, we acknowledge that gathering more accurate data will give a clearer picture of our current impact and help establish our baseline year for carbon emissions.

**C6. How has the housing provider mapped and assessed the climate risks to its homes and supply chain, such as increased flood, drought and overheating risks?**

**How is the housing provider mitigating these risks?**

For our existing homes, we have begun the process of mapping our assets on flood maps to identify potential risks. We are procuring a new GIS system, which will allow us to map all of our land and assets. This information will enable us to evaluate options to mitigate any potential risks to our homes and customers. As part of our plans to map out and assess climate risks, we will be looking into further detail at the risk of overheating and drought.

All potential new home schemes are assessed for different components of climate risk as part of the due diligence we undertake before embarking on a project or assessing a scheme. Where possible, mitigation is employed to reduce this impact. For example, where there is long-term flood risk, we ensure this informs design and attenuation requirements appropriately. To reduce risk of overheating, we consider thermal efficiency and installation of shading.



**Attenuation pond at our 100% affordable housing development in Cheddar, Steart Farm**

## Theme 2 – Ecology

This theme seeks to assess how Alliance Homes is protecting the local environment and ecology. The theme considers both policies and performance results in this area. The theme is made up of criteria that review different elements that impact the local ecology: sourcing materials, waste management, managing pollutants, water management and biodiversity.

### **C7. Does the housing provider have a strategy to enhance green space and promote biodiversity on or near homes?**

**If yes, please describe with reference to targets in this area.**

**If no, are you planning on producing one in the next 12 months?**

Currently, we do not have a strategy specifically focused on enhancing our green spaces and promoting biodiversity. However, to build on the work that we do in our community gardens and ensure we are promoting biodiversity on or near our homes, biodiversity and green space will be a key theme within our sustainability strategy. This will include clear objectives and metrics of success to ensure customers have access to local green spaces and defined approach as to how we maintain our land that supports biodiversity.

Providing access to green space to our customers is an important part of our Growing Together Programme. The programme exists to promote access to green spaces for Alliance Homes customers and others within the immediate locality.

The Growing Together programme operates primarily from Coleridge Road Community Gardens, Alliance Homes' flagship outdoor community hub, situated within the Bournville community in Weston-super-Mare.

We offer a variety of opportunities for our communities to get involved including seed swaps, parties and open days. We want as many customers as possible to be able to spend time outdoors and enjoy the benefits this brings including health, well-being, and strengthened community connections. We share the food we produce amongst our volunteers and any surplus is shared freely at the nearby Healthy Living Centre.

- 1,500 visits to the community garden
- Over 2,000 hours of volunteering
- 700kg of fruit & veg grown and shared by the community
- Coleridge Road Community Garden events are fully booked every week

There are many more green spaces across land owned by Alliance Homes. In the coming months we will map out all these green spaces, and this improved understanding will enable us to better consider how we use our green spaces and our grounds maintenance projects to encourage more biodiversity on or near our homes.



## Discovering the outdoors with Nature Tots

Each Friday, we welcome children, together with their parents and carers at Coleridge Road Community Garden for our Nature Tots sessions. This is a great opportunity for children and their families to spend time outdoors while socialising and joining in with fun activities in the garden. Activities range from planting and growing fruit and vegetables to making potions and pottering in the greenhouses. They can also get involved in outdoor cooking, from making jam to toasting marshmallows over a campfire.

Kelly Greatorex loves bringing four-year-old George and three-year-old Henry to the Friday sessions. *"My boys really enjoy it, when they come here they play differently, and they get to interact with other kids. They love being outside, it's a comfort to them. Being outdoors is important for our family. I feel that being outside lifts up your spirits."*

A teacher herself, Kelly appreciates the effort George puts into the sessions. She says:

*"The session leader, George, always has amazing ideas and can create something out of nothing, which is an incredible skill, and it's always things that keep the kids entertained."*

Nature Tots is run by George Heathcote. She believes the sessions are an important way to address the 'nature deficit' that many children experience:

*"It's really important for children to get out in nature and feel at home there. Nature Tots provides them with a safe space to do this."*



Community Gardener George with two of our Nature Tots

It's just as important making sure that the parents feel happy and confident about their children being outdoors and having the freedom to take risks, as it is for the children who experience it. Having young children can be lonely, so this space is really valuable for parents and carers. Just being outside helps with mental health.

Community Gardener, George Heathcote

**C8. Does the housing provider have a strategy to identify, manage and reduce pollutants that could cause material harm?**

**If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?**

No but plans to develop a strategy.

We do not currently have a strategy to manage and reduce pollutants and no plans to develop one in 2024/25. However, through the development and delivery of our sustainability strategy over the next few months, we will deliver initiatives that support the reduction of pollutants and build on existing standards such as our Asbestos Policy.



## Theme 3 – Resource management

This theme looks at how Alliance Homes seeks to reduce waste generation and adopt sustainable practices.

### **C9. Does the housing provider have a strategy to use or increase the use of responsibly sourced materials for all building and repairs works?**

#### **If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?**

No, but planning to develop a strategy.

We currently do not have a strategy regarding the use of responsibly sourced materials for building and repairs works. However, we do recognise the impact that procuring responsibly sourced materials can have on our environmental impact and the wider community. For instance, we already source FSC timber and, where possible, we aim to move to more sustainably sourced materials across our product ranges. Reviewing our materials supply chain will be an integral part of our sustainability strategy as we aim to reduce our environmental impact and work with suppliers that support our ambitions.

We are currently reviewing our materials supply chain. As part of this review, we aim to produce a fixed product catalogue where we'll be reviewing the price, quality and sourcing of all products to be able to make better informed decisions when selecting materials.

### **C10. Does the housing provider have a strategy for waste management incorporating building materials?**

#### **If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?**

No, but planning to develop a strategy.

Currently, we do not have a strategy for waste management but as part of our sustainability strategy we aim to develop a plan that drives improved data, encourages actions to increase diversion rates and support customers to improve recycling at home and reduce fly tipping. We are working towards this and a new waste management contract which will incorporate all Alliance Homes' business. We aim to launch this tender at the end of 2024. A new contract is an opportunity to collect better data on various waste sources across various departments and then begin monitoring our progress towards increasing the rate that waste is diverted from landfill.

## **C11. Does the housing provider have a strategy for water management?**

### **If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?**

No water management strategy but plans to develop.

We do not currently have a strategy for water management. As we develop our sustainability strategy, we aim to engage with customers about ways they can reduce their environmental impact, which could include tips to reduce water usage at home.

In our offices, we are continually seeking opportunities to reduce our water usage and our rainwater harvesting system at our head office in Portishead has been helpful in reducing our water demand. As part of our sustainability strategy, we will consider water reduction targets within our offices.



**Social**



**Our customer, Rob Bayes, who moved into one of our new-build homes at Mendip View after six months of homelessness.**

## Theme 4 – Affordability and Security

This theme seeks to assess the effectiveness of the initiatives that Alliance Homes runs to support individual residents. The theme is made up of two criteria that cover: What support is provided? And how successful is it?

### C12 For properties that are subject to the rent regulation regime, report against rent compared to the relevant Local Housing Allowance (LHA)?

#### Measure

Measure	Q4 2023/24
1 Bed	93.65%
2 Bed	93.98%
3 Bed	90.50%
4 Bed	84.75%
5 Bed	79.99%
Overall	91.96%

### C13 Share, and number, of existing homes (owned and/or managed) completed before the last financial year allocated to:

Measure	2023/24 Existing (Built pre April 2023)
Share, and number, of homes allocated to:	
General Needs	5,877 (85.7%)
Intermediate Rent	31 (0.5%)
Affordable Rent	662 (9.7%)
Supported Housing	46 (0.7%)
Shared Ownership	238 (3.5%)

### C14 Share, and number, of new homes (owned and/or managed) that were completed in the last financial year, allocated to:

Measure	2023/24 Existing (Built pre April 2024)
Share, and number, of homes allocated to:	
General Needs	74 (42.5%)
Affordable Rent	62 (35.6%)
Shared Ownership	38 (21.9%)

## **C15 How is the housing provider trying to reduce the effect of high energy costs on its residents?**

We know that the cost-of-living crisis disproportionately affects social housing customers so we're providing several ways to help our customers.

### **Home Energy Advice Team**

It's been a year since we launched our Home Energy Service, supported by the Centre of Sustainable Energy. In that time we've been able to help over 400 customers, saving them more than £100,000 in total.

### **Improving existing homes**

We recognise the difference in energy efficiency between our older housing stock and newer properties. To mitigate this, we are identifying the most affected homes and installing energy efficiency and renewable energy measures. These measures include external and internal wall insulation, air source heat pumps and solar panels. Last year we carried out enough retrofit improvements to increase the number of homes with an EPC rating of C or higher from 83% to 85%. We also launched our Warmer, Greener Living project.

### **Building for the future**

To better prepare our customers for higher energy costs in the future, we are incorporating sustainable technologies into more of our new homes. These features include high-quality triple glazing, additional insulation, heat pumps and electric car charging stations. We are committed to ensuring all homes built on our land-led schemes achieve an EPC rating of A.

### **Case Study**

Mr O'Shea is the full-time carer for his wife who has dementia and other health issues. After switching energy providers, they ended up with a large debt and an unaffordable payment plan.

Over three months our Home Energy Advisors were able to renegotiate the payment plan. They also completed a benefit check that found the couple weren't claiming all the benefits they were entitled to. The team were also able to advise the customers on how best to use their home energy technology more efficiently.

The service I've received has been prompt, professional, and thorough. You've calculated my bills and helped us set up a new payment plan. The support I've received is a great help especially as we head into winter.

Mr O'Shea

## Community Living Rooms at our hubs

To help those who could not afford to keep their home warm, our community hubs adapted some of their sessions to become 'Community Living Rooms', offering comfortable, safe and warm spaces to socialise and enjoy a cup of tea together. These become increasingly important for those most in need. Here's what some of them had to say:

Having a warm place to go to during the winter months has been a blessing. The support I've received from the hub's community has helped me get on my feet.

Carol

Christmas dinner at the hub was the best time ever. Great food, great company and lots of giggles. It beats spending Christmas on my own.

Josie

### C16 How does the housing provider provide security of tenure for residents?

Security of tenure is a fundamental aspect of our housing offer. We know that the security people get from a long-term tenancy makes a huge difference to their feeling of stability and gives them the opportunity to build local support networks.

Most new Alliance customers are given Starter Tenancies. After six months, provided tenancy conditions are met, our tenants can then move to an Assured Tenancy, which lasts for as long as they want it to.

In some circumstances we offer Fixed Term Tenancies for five years. This form of tenancy is linked to homes that are particularly scarce, such as properties with four bedrooms or which have significant disabled adaptations. Fixed Term Tenancies are for a minimum of 5 years. Towards the end of the tenancy we assess the household need, if they still have the need they can stay in the property, if they no longer have the need then we will work with them to find appropriate accommodation. By limiting the length of the tenancy we can ensure these forms of home are available for future customers who have that need.



## Theme 5 – Building safety and quality

This theme seeks to assess how effective Alliance Homes is at meeting its legal responsibilities to protect residents and keep buildings safe. The theme is made up of two criteria, disclosing gas safety checks and fire risk assessments.

**C17 Describe the condition of the housing provider's portfolio, with reference to:**

**% of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out.**

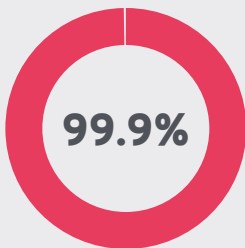
**% of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out.**

**% of homes for which all required electrical safety checks have been carried out.**

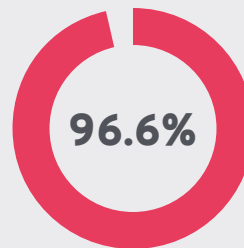
**% of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out.**

**% of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out.**

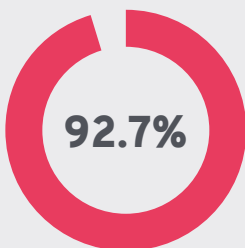
**% of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out.**



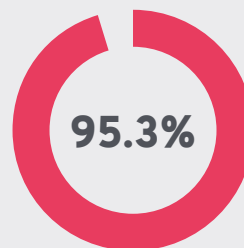
of our homes have up to date gas safety checks



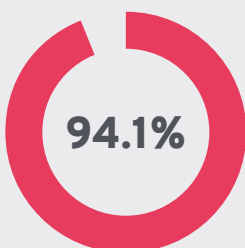
of our homes have up to date fire risk assessments



of our homes have up to date electrical safety checks



of our homes have up to date asbestos checks



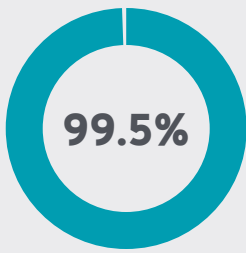
of our homes have up to date legionella checks



of our homes have up to date communal lift safety checks

## C18 What % of homes meet the national housing quality standard?

Of those which fail, what is the housing provider doing to address these failings?



99.5% of our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard

Next year we will be increasing our major works budget from £9.5m to £12m to bring even more of our homes up to the Decent Homes Standard. We are also proactively managing any Decent Homes Standard failures that are caused by Category 1 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).



Alexandra House, Weston-super-Mare

## **C19 How do you manage and mitigate the risk of damp and mould for your residents?**

**Responses to also include a description of resident engagement and communication around damp and mould, the reporting processes, and the provision of advice around home ventilation.**

**Include reference to both Category 1 and Category 2 Hazards as defined by the Housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS).**

In 2023/24 we have been building on and enhancing our approach to addressing damp and mould, which we developed last year with our Damp and Mould Commitments to Customers. These commitments ensure we focus on resolving issues quickly and proactively addressing reports of damp and mould in our homes.

We take a "building first" approach, conducting a full inspection of customers' homes to ensure there are no structural issues before offering advice on managing damp and mould.

This year we are further enhancing our in-house skills and responsiveness by creating a new Complex Works Team dedicated to investigating homes with reports of damp and mould. This team is led by our Complex Work Manager and supported by a Surveying Project Manager, both of whom are qualified by the Property Care Association specifically for dampness in buildings.

Since joining, the new team has streamlined the reporting process with Alliance's Contact Team (ACT) to make reporting more efficient. They have also provided damp and mould training to ACT, leading to several improvements. First, the contact team can now ask customers more in-depth questions about their damp and mould issues, improving the quality of data provided to the Complex Works Team and allowing for quicker diagnosis. Second, this training helps identify high-risk customers who may need extra attention or a faster response.

The Complex Works Team has also begun implementing practices guided by Awaab's Law. Although not yet legally required, we consider it best practice and use it to identify areas for further improvement.

We continue to provide customers with literature developed with the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) on managing damp, mould and home ventilation. This information is available on our website, promoted through our social media, and provided in printed copies to our customers.

## Theme 6 – Resident voice

This theme seeks to assess how effective Alliance Homes is at listening to and empowering residents. The theme is made up of three themes that cover board scrutiny, complaint handling and resident satisfaction.

### **C20 What are the results of the housing provider's most recent tenant satisfaction survey?**

#### **How has the housing provider acted on these results?**

In our most recent tenant satisfaction survey results we received a score of 67.8%.

The data used to generate the tenant perception measures was collected over two fieldwork waves, one in July 2023 and a second in January 2024. The total number of Low Cost Rented Accommodation (LCRA) households that were sampled is 1,420 or 20%. The sample method was a census approach.

#### **Acting upon our satisfaction results**

Delivering a great customer experience is one of our ongoing corporate priorities. Much of what we do as an organisation is based around this aim. We analyse the results of not only our headline satisfaction figure, but also those of provided by a variety of other surveys that provide more detail into how customers feel about our service. We use this data to identify specific action plans that will lead to service improvements. Following our analysis of the latest customer satisfaction data we will:

- Implement a process that will resolve our backlog of repairs and lead to repairs being completed more quickly for customers.
- Improve communication with customers regarding their repairs.
- Strengthen our customer contact centre and feedback function to ensure that we answer customers quickly and deal with complaints in a timely fashion, in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Code for Complaints Handling.
- Re-focus our tenancy services team to ensure we are letting homes more quickly and managing customer queries more effectively.
- Review and amend the way we managed complaints of anti-social behaviour.



## **C21 What arrangements are in place to enable residents to hold management to account for the provision of services?**

Customers can share their views on our services through various methods:

- **HIVE:** Our online engagement platform allows customers to provide anonymous feedback at their convenience. Through surveys and discussion forums, customers can voice their opinions, helping us make decisions, shape our services and drive improvements.
- **Customer Feedback Panel:** This group of tenants meets regularly in person to scrutinise specific elements of our service. By providing detailed feedback at quarterly board meetings, they ensure that customer perspectives are valued and central to our operations.
- **Transactional surveys:** After key interactions, we send customers short surveys to gather insights and improve our services. These surveys follow events such as home repairs or major works, moving into a new home, closing a complaint or anti-social behaviour (ASB) case and interactions with our support services.

## **C22 In the last 12 months, in how many complaints has the national Ombudsman determined that maladministration took place?**

### **How have these complaints (or others) resulted in change of practice within the housing provider?**

Between April 2023 and March 2024 two of the four complaints that were escalated to the Housing Ombudsman had a result that maladministration had taken place.

All complaints are an opportunity to learn how to improve our services. The following are learnings from complaints in 2023/24.

- Following complaints regarding roofing contractors, we have recruited an additional roofer so that we can manage the work ourselves and provide a better service.
- To provide customers with better clarity when they book repairs verbally, a confirmation email is also provided.
- We have changed the way we send text messages to customers regarding repairs appointments. We now include the trade of the required repair to avoid any confusion if the customer has multiple repairs booked.
- When contractors are clearing gardens, a new process has been implemented to ensure they know which are communal gardens and which are not.

## Theme 7 – Resident support

This theme seeks to assess the effectiveness of the initiatives that Alliance Homes runs to support individual residents. The theme is made up of two criteria that cover: What support is provided and how successful is it?

### **C23 What are the key support services that the housing provider offers to its residents?**

The following are details of the ways we support customers. We don't have specific performance indicators for these services.

#### **Community Support Service**

In partnership with North Somerset Council we offer a wide range of high-quality support services to people living in North Somerset. We deliver our services working alongside other local, regional and national support organisations.

Our aim is to help tenants achieve control, freedom and choice over their lives, supporting them to live safely and independently at home. Our assistance includes support around the following:

- Identifying housing options
- Settling successfully into a new home - for example arranging removals, finding furniture and essential household items and setting up utility accounts
- Maximising income by claiming the welfare benefits they're entitled to.
- Accessing health and social services, and other specialist agencies
- Addressing financial problems such as rent arrears or other debts
- Sourcing aids and adaptations for their home
- Accessing education, training, volunteering and employment opportunities

**No. of people supported in 2023/24 - 2,173**

#### **Home from Hospital**

The Home from Hospital team works closely with local hospitals to help people who are in hospital to return home safely and even reduce admission time.

**No. of people supported in 2023/24 – 1,306**

#### **Home Energy Advice Team**

The Home Energy Service helps customers save money on their home energy bills. Our advisors have been trained by the Centre for Sustainable Energy on all matters relating to energy use, billing and dealing with energy companies. They're also trained on a range of other matters that can help, including maximising incomes and connecting customers to community services that support health and wellbeing.

**No. of people supported in 2023/24 - 401**

## **Tamar Dementia Day Centre**

The Dementia Day Centre provides care and engaging activities for those living with dementia in North Somerset. The Day Centre will be closing from 1 July 2024.

**No. of people supported in 2023/24 - 50**

## **Adult Carers Service**

We offer a range of support and advice to adult carers to maintain their own wellbeing. We help them identify the impact of their caring responsibilities on their life and help find potential solutions, as well as signposting them to support they're entitled to. This can include referrals for a comprehensive carers assessment with North Somerset Council or a care assessment for the person they care for.

**No. of people supported in 2023/24 – 415**

## **Young Carers Service**

We help young people who have a caring responsibility at home. This can be relieving some of the stresses associated with their caring role and helping them to meet other young carers and get involved in activities that are just for them. This includes social meet ups, holiday workshops, day trips, residential weekends and one-to-one support.

**No. of people supported in 2023/24 – 617**

## **Social Prescribing**

Alliance provides social prescribing services in partnership with Citizens Advice North Somerset. We employ Link Workers who work in conjunction with local organisations to provide assistance to people living in Weston-super-Mare.

Link Workers spend time with each patient, getting to know their life and understand the range of social, economic and environmental factors that are affecting them. The Link Worker then works with the patient to develop a personalised plan and will work through that plan with the patient to help rectify the issues.

**No. of people supported in 2023/24 – 375**

## **Money Advice Team**

Money Advice Team work with customers on a one-to-one basis to identify the specific assistance they need. This can include help managing money, income maximisation or money saving tips.

During 2023/24 our Money Advisors have opened over 400 new cases and unlocked over £2.4 million in income maximisation, which includes benefit applications and appeals as well as handling debt advice.

**No. of people supported in 2023/24 – 746**

## Theme 8 – Placemaking

This theme seeks to highlight the wider set of activities that Alliance Homes undertakes to create great places for people to live and enjoy.

**C24 Describe the housing provider's community investment activities, and how the housing provider is contributing to positive neighbourhood outcomes for the communities in which its homes are located.**

**Provide examples or case studies of where the housing provider has been engaged in placemaking or placeshaping activities.**

### Our Neighbourhood Network

The Our Neighbourhood Network (ONN) initiative was set up with funding from the National Lottery Community Fund. The programme aims to strengthen community resilience in three of our neighbourhoods in Oldmixon, Coronation and South Ward.

One of the main achievements of ONN has been to establish community hubs in each neighbourhood. Our hubs are places where customers can meet and engage in activities. ONN has hosted lots of events and activities, with more than 30 local groups using the hubs and a total attendance of more 12,000 community members.

**The hub has brought the community together - it's a great resource.**

**Sue Kelly  
Connecting Lives**





## Communities Together Grants

We want our customers to help us decide how best to support their communities. In January 2024, we awarded a total of £27,500 to ten local projects and organisations through our Communities Together Grant (CTG). The successful awards were chosen by our new Communities Together Feedback panel, with the larger awards being voted on by our online community, HIVE. The applications that were successful ranged from an adult literacy project in Weston to supporting refugee engagement in schools.

### Tackling loneliness through art, with the help of an Alliance Homes grant

The Serendipity Art and Craft Group was set up by a group of customers in Weston-super-Mare. They wanted to share their artistic skills with each other, so they put in an application to the Alliance Homes Communities Together grant programme and were successful.



As a group we decided we wanted to meet regularly and try out different art and craft techniques. Many of us are on low incomes and would struggle to contribute much money, so our successful grant application to the Alliance Homes Communities Together fund has been a tremendous help.

The greatest benefit of the group has been the strong friendships we've formed. Some of us live with physical and mental illnesses which can be isolating. Through the group we've created a support network that's helped reduce those feelings of loneliness. I'm now much more confident and happier. It's got me out of the house - even if I'm in pain or feeling like rubbish, I want to come!

Victoria Richards, Serendipity group member

## Delivering festive cheer

Alliance Homes and the For All Healthy Living Centre in Bournville joined forces to bring festive cheer to people across North Somerset last December.

Colleagues surprised more than 400 households with a special delivery of festive hampers, aiming to share the spirit of Christmas with those they believed would benefit from a little extra seasonal joy.

Each hamper included a selection of chocolates, a £25 supermarket gift voucher and a Christmas card inviting people to local community groups and activities in their local neighbourhood.



Colleagues with some of the festive goodies we distributed

The hamper project was coordinated by Helen Wheelock, our Community Growth Manager.

We found the recipients of the hampers by asking our Support Team, Tenancy Team and community partners to nominate people they thought might benefit from a visit and a little extra Christmas cheer.

This year we've delivered more hampers than ever before and that's thanks to all the local businesses and organisations who answered our call and made this possible.

**Governance**



## Theme 9 – Structure and Governance

This theme assesses how Alliance Homes develops effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

**C25. Is the housing provider registered with the national regulator of social housing?**

Yes

**C26. What is the housing provider's most recent regulatory grading/status?**

G1/V1

**C27. Which Code of Governance does the housing provider follow, if any?**

The National Housing Federation's Code of Governance 2020

**C28. Is the housing provider a Not-For-Profit?**

**If not, who is the largest shareholder, what is their % of economic ownership and what % of voting rights do they control?**

Yes



Alliance leadership meeting

**C29. Explain how the housing provider's board manages ESG risks.**

**Are ESG risks incorporated into the housing provider's risk register?**

**We are committed to effective risk management and ensure that we monitor our operating environment so that risks and their drivers are continuously assessed and that we respond accordingly.**

"Being a green and ethical business" is a strategic objective within the corporate plan (Plan A 2.0). Risks that may prevent us achieving our objectives are considered and reviewed quarterly by the Strategic Leadership Team, the Audit and Risk Committee and the board.

In particular, the Audit and Risk Committee plays a key role in risk management by monitoring and reviewing the Risk and Control framework, including the assessment and management of the risk system, ensuring there is a rigorous process for the identification and classification of risks. The Committee ensures detailed scrutiny and evaluation of risks on behalf of the board, assisting the board in the identification and regular review of the individual and combined material risks faced by the organisation and its plans and strategies to mitigate and manage them effectively.

All our risks are assessed in terms of their impact and probability, across their life cycle of inherent, current and target scoring. Amendments to risks, including the identification of new risks, are proposed as part of decision making, which are then approved by the board or Audit and Risk Committee. In addition, reports presented to our boards and Committees outline the risks involved in the matter under consideration.

An annual review of our management of risk is carried out by an Independent Advisor.

**C30. Has the housing provider been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last 12 months (data protection breaches, bribery, money laundering, HSE breaches etc.) - that resulted in enforcement or other equivalent action?**

No

## Theme 10 – Board and Trustees

This theme seeks to assess the quality, suitability and performance of the Board of Alliance Homes.

### **C31. How does the housing provider ensure it gets input from a diverse range of people, into the governance processes?**

**Does the housing provider consider resident voice at the board and senior management level?**

**Does the housing provider have policies that incorporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) into the recruitment and selection of board members and senior management?**

There are a variety of approaches deployed to ensure the customer voice is at the heart of the governance process and input is received from a diverse range of people.

- At each Board meeting the Board meets with a representative of the Customer Feedback Panel, which is a group of customers who voluntarily support the business by looking at specific issues and ways to make improvements. This is always the first item on the agenda to set the tone for the rest of the meeting.
- All decisions made by the Board and/or Strategic Leadership Team consider the impact on customers and consideration of relevant stakeholders consulted as a mandatory field on the reporting template.
- HIVE is an online community that is optional for all customers to join and share their views. This is used for surveys, opinion polls and consultation activity, including improvements to customer facing policies.
- As a community benefit society, Company Membership is open to all customers and local independent business or social representatives via our website.

We understand that diversity brings strength. Increased diversity will help us make the best decisions for our customers and colleagues, so our aim is to bring together a board team where all voices are heard at the table. This is supported by the Board Membership and Recruitment Policy.

Board Members are recruited based on skills and competencies. We are continually looking for ways to improve diversity, including participation in the Insight Programme that has been developed by GatenbySanderson to give prospective Non-Executive Directors from under-represented groups first-hand experience.

The Board currently has 50% women, 0% ethnic minority, 0% disability, 0% LGBTQ+.

The average age of the Board is 56 and the average tenure of current members is 4.2 years.

Please note, the above figures do not include one female member who has been co-opted to the Board for succession planning, nor the current participant shadowing the Board from the Insights Programme.

**C32. What % of the housing provider's Board have turned over in the last two years?**

**What % of the housing provider's Senior Management Team have turned over in the last two years?**

In the last two years (2022-23/2023-24) there has been a 25% turnover of the Board, and a 29% turnover of the Strategic Leadership Team.

**C33. Number of board members on the housing provider's Audit Committee with recent and relevant financial experience.**

1 - The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee is a Chartered Accountant.

In addition, there is a co-optee who is also a Chartered Accountant, recruited as succession for the current Audit Chair. They will be put forward for nomination to the Board at the next AGM when a full Board position will become available.

**C34. What % of the housing provider's board are non-executive directors?**

87.5%.

Except for the CEO, all Board members are non-executive directors.

**C35. Has a succession plan been provided to the housing provider's board in the last 12 months?**

Yes

**C36. For how many years has the housing provider's current external audit partner been responsible for auditing the accounts?**

2 years

**C37. When was the last independently-run, board-effectiveness review?**

07/2024

**C38. How does the housing provider handle conflicts of interest at the board?**

Declarations of interest are made on first appointment, annually thereafter and required following any material change of circumstance. In addition, Board members are asked to declare any actual or potential conflict or duality of interest at the start of each meeting and at any point during the meeting should the situation require it. Board members also have documented guidance on conflict of interest and duality of interest.

## Theme 11 – Staff and Wellbeing

This theme seeks to assess the extent to which Alliance Homes is a good employer to its internal staff.

### **C39. Does the housing provider pay the Real Living Wage?**

Yes, Alliance Homes is a Living Wage Employer.

### **C40. What is the housing provider's median gender pay gap?**

15.84% median gap.

### **C41. What is the housing provider's CEO: median worker pay ratio?**

The CEO: median worker pay ration is 5:1.

### **C42. How is the housing provider ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is promoted across its staff?**

At Alliance, we celebrate the diversity within our workforce and the communities we support. By valuing each person's unique characteristics, we can enhance our services for the communities we serve. We are committed to treating colleagues and customers fairly, ensuring that no individual, group, or community faces disadvantage or discrimination.

Our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) extends to our customers, colleagues, Board and volunteers. Our goal is to create an environment where everyone can access equitable services and live and work without fear of discrimination.

We have a team of Equalities Champions from across the organisation. They're dedicated to raising awareness about diversity and equality issues, fostering a respectful and inclusive environment, speaking out against discrimination, harassment, or inappropriate behaviour, and continually improving our diversity policies and procedures.

We strive to create a workplace that promotes dignity and respect, celebrates differences, and values the contributions of all colleagues. For example, we celebrate various cultural events throughout the year, including Pride and Black History Month.

We provide mandatory ED&I training to all colleagues every three years, along with ongoing training on various topics such as Being an Ally, Disability Etiquette and Hate and Mate Crime.

We regularly review our employment practices, policies and procedures to ensure they are fair and free from illegal discrimination. Our equality, diversity and inclusion policy is monitored and reviewed annually.



### C43. How does the housing provider support the physical and mental health of its staff?

At Alliance, we appreciate that supporting our colleagues in terms of their physical and mental health is beneficial to them as individuals and us as a business. Helping colleagues establish and maintain healthy habits means they are more likely to be happy, engaged and productive team members who are willing to go the extra mile to support our customers.

Our wellbeing champions group is tasked with exploring ways to improve our offer to colleagues and ensure that our resources are directed in ways that make a difference.

We also support a wide range of EDI initiatives aiming to ensure that we create an inclusive culture that encourages colleagues to be themselves in our workplace.

Our continued offer of agile working also contributes to a healthier work life balance, as colleagues can choose where and when they work in conjunction with business needs.



We provide support to colleagues across a breadth of options, including;

### **Physical health**

- Mediacash is our health plan, which provides money back for everyday health expenses and treatments including dental, optical, therapies and consultations. Senior leaders have this benefit through Aviva.
- An occupational health service supports colleagues when their health is impacting their ability to work, helping us to understand their situation and recommending the way forward to help them get back to work, for example with reasonable adjustments in place.
- Our menopause online forum is a chat group about all things menopause that's open to all colleagues who can share information and experience.
- We run menopause awareness sessions to help colleagues understand the impact of menopause, how it can affect women at work and what we can offer in support.
- The Know Your Number Sessions are an MOT style health check appointment for colleagues to gain information about key health measures (BMI, blood pressure, etc.) and how to manage any concerns around them.
- We provide an online Wellbeing Centre through our Reward House saving and discounts portal providing education, support and tools for a healthier, happier life.
- The onsite Wellbeing Room is a quiet place for anyone in need of some time out to de-stress, or to access some of our online support information in privacy, while at work

### **Mental health support**

- Mental Health First Aiders are a group of colleagues trained to spot the signs and symptoms of mental ill health and are available for colleagues to approach for support.
- Our Employee Assistance Programme is a professional service that provides confidential advice, support and counselling around the clock over the telephone, as well as providing face-to-face counselling.
- Our Colleague Crisis Plan is a mechanism that can be used to agree with managers or HR how we would support a colleague who is facing acute mental health challenges.
- Workplace stress risk assessments are used to ensure we are working with colleagues to minimise work-related stress.
- Our eLearning system is a comprehensive suite of topics is available for managers and colleagues to develop better understanding of mental health issues.

## Financial health

- Reward House is our online portal which offers benefits, perks and discounts.
- We provide a cycle to work scheme offering savings for those wishing to adopt a healthier way to travel to work.
- We run pension awareness sessions for colleagues who want to know more about getting the most from our pension scheme.
- Our pre-retirement workshops help colleagues manage finances after work.

### **C44. How does the housing provider support the professional development of its staff?**

Professional development enables colleagues to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence and encourages them to keep up to date with the latest developments relevant to their profession and social housing in general. Since the publication of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, promoting professionalism has become a key focus for the sector.

To ensure we are ready for the requirements of the new standard that are due to come into effect in April 2025, we mapped the qualifications that we supported six colleagues to study for (CIH Level 4 and Level 5). We have also enrolled twelve colleagues from different teams on the Housing Professional Passport. This programme includes workshops and completion of a portfolio, leading to accreditation against the CIH professional standards.

We have a range of training opportunities for all colleagues. Our online learning management system (OLLI) provides a comprehensive range of learning and development options that are easily accessible. Topics on OLLI include business skills, wellbeing and health and safety. We run a programme of corporate learning and development, planned in consultation with managers, and each department has a budget for the development of individual colleagues, which can include undertaking professional qualifications. In addition, we fund membership of a relevant professional body for colleagues and give them access to development opportunities through our corporate membership of the National Housing Federation and the Housing Quality Network.

We have invested in apprenticeships for new and existing colleagues this year. In partnership with Weston College, we recruited two electrical apprentices and one gas apprentice. We also have colleagues undertaking professional development at degree and postgraduate degree level, funded through the apprenticeship levy, making further study much more accessible and affordable for them.

Our Leadership Academy offers a programme of development opportunities designed for managers to enhance their management skills and expertise. It features a blend of bite-sized learning modules, comprehensive resources and dedicated support, including e-learning resources.

We encourage all colleagues to undertake continuing professional development, tailored to their own needs and aspirations.

## Theme 12 – Supply Chain

This theme looks at how Alliance Homes promotes public procurement practices that are sustainable.

### **C45. How is social value creation considered when procuring goods and services?**

#### **What measures are in place to monitor the delivery of this Social Value?**

We have firmly embedded social value into our procurement policy and processes, with over 40 suppliers committed to supporting our communities.

Where appropriate, we include social value considerations in our procurement processes for goods, services and works. We provide a guidance document to help potential suppliers understand our approach to social value. Our procurement process evaluates not only the commitments suppliers are willing to make but also the methods and responsibilities for delivering those commitments. The importance of social value varies between procurements, depending on other factors.

We monitor all supplier commitments using a tracking system and regularly report outcomes, including statistical data and impact case studies.

In the 2023/24 period, our supply chain delivered £31,953 of social value. Examples of supplier commitments include apprenticeships, work placements, school visits, career advice, volunteering, pro bono work and cash donations. These contributions support Alliance Homes' community investment activities, helping to create vibrant, sustainable communities.

### **C46. How is sustainability considered when procuring goods and services?**

#### **What measures are in place to monitor the sustainability of your supply chain?**

Incorporating environmental considerations into our contractual specifications and tender processes is essential for achieving our broader sustainability goals. We're currently reviewing our procurement process to minimise the environmental impact of our supply chain. This review applies to contracts for goods, services and works.

As we develop our sustainability strategy, it will be crucial to engage with existing suppliers on sustainability and ensure our procurement process evaluates their sustainability efforts. This approach will help us reduce the carbon emissions associated with our supply chain.

So far, we have taken steps such as using FSC-certified timber products in our repair services and partnering with local contractors whenever possible to decrease carbon emissions from their vehicles.

As we work on establishing our carbon emissions baseline and gathering accurate data on our scope 3 emissions from suppliers, we will be better equipped identify opportunities to reduce our environmental impact by targeting specific suppliers and upcoming tenders.

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