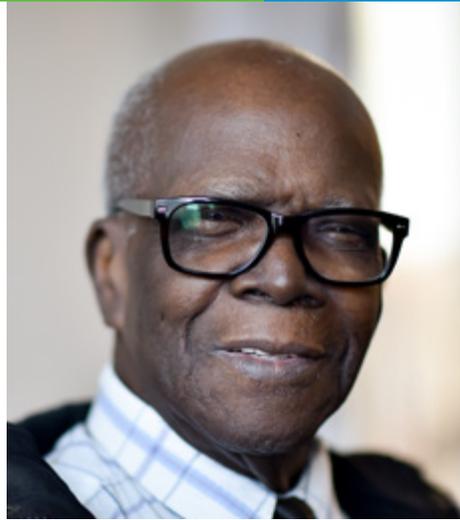


Housing 21

Doing The Right Thing

Social and environmental accounts



2020/21

Housing 21 at a glance

Housing 21 is a leading, not-for-profit provider of Retirement Living and Extra Care for older people of modest means

Our ambition here at Housing 21 is to be 'better than good' and this is driven by our three guiding principles:

21 – committed to providing a modern and forward thinking 21st century service

Better – striving for continuous improvement and innovation

Experience – providing a good service and great customer experience



Housing 21 at a glance (cont.)



Over **38,000 hrs**

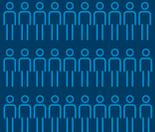
of care delivered to **over 5,000 service users** each week in Extra Care



143 Extra Care schemes – **over 6,700 Extra Care properties**



395 Retirement Living schemes – over 14,000 properties



2,293 (FTE) staff

employed in **Extra Care, Retirement Living**, and our corporate business streams



Working with **over 240** local authorities nationwide

Charitable **not for profit**



organisation



A leading **dementia-friendly** organisation



We are **Experts** in the provision of **housing for older people**



Over **90%** of care services rated **'Good'** by CQC with six services rated **'Outstanding'**

*as of 31 March 2020

A leading provider



of **Extra Care** and **Retirement Living** for older people of **modest means**



Over **55 years'**

experience



Stephen Hughes,
Chairman



Bruce Moore,
Chief Executive

Chair and CE Introduction

‘Doing the Right Thing’ is a principle that drives the decisions and actions of Housing 21. It emphasises the importance of:

- being true to our purpose of providing more and better Retirement Living and Extra Care for older people of modest means;
- the value of maintaining a strong and inclusive culture.

The philosophy of ‘Doing the Right Thing’ has been emphasised in our employee and resident events and conferences since 2019 and underpins our devolved operating model.

Our ‘Doing the Right Thing’ approach proved invaluable during the past year as we navigated our way through the Covid-19 pandemic. During these challenging times, we successfully:

- kept our residents safe with 99% expressing confidence that all actions were taken to maintain safety measures
- maintained all service provision
- provided employees with job security

We are especially indebted to our resident-facing employees (Care Workers, Scheme Managers, Cleaners and others) who went above and beyond the call of duty and often made personal sacrifices to help others and keep them safe. Some employees even stayed in our schemes for periods of up to 14 days to decrease the risk of transmission of the virus and keep the distance between their families and our residents. In response, we supported our people by applying Occupational Sick Pay rather than to Statutory Sick Pay for all and providing care employees with meals during shifts.

The corporate teams also responded positively to the demands of home working and we ensured that they had the equipment they needed to do so effectively. We didn't furlough any employees; instead everyone adapted and worked flexibly to provide help where it was needed most. This included supporting the incredible efforts to procure and distribute sufficient PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), ensuring that nobody went unprotected.

As we move forward and our focus shifts to things beyond Covid-19, we will continue to work for the good of our residents and employees and provide that much needed accommodation and support for older people of modest means.

This report highlights how we seek to do the right thing for our residents, employees, communities and the environment:



For residents

We operate across England, in over 500 locations, providing over 20,000 homes that enable older people to live well and access the support or care they require without sacrificing their independence.



For communities

In collaboration with our residents and employees, we seek to make a positive contribution to local communities and good causes. We are committed to investing in new developments and improving existing services, working in partnership with local authorities and using local and regional contractors whenever we can.



For employees

We employ over 3,500 people and strive to be a good and fair employer that invests in our people, supports their development, champions employee wellbeing and seeks to make work better for everyone.



For the environment

We are conscious of our impact on the environment and have therefore set ourselves challenging targets to be more sustainable in our use of energy, the carbon impact of our buildings and ways of working, as well as ensuring that our services are more climate resilient.

This report seeks to demonstrate Housing 21's continued commitment to doing the right thing and making a positive impact, whilst also showing we are willing to be scrutinised, questioned and held to account for our policies, practices and performance across these four aspects of our work. It is our second year of producing this report and in addition to these four aspects of performance, we are now including a report on our compliance with and performance against the criteria of the Environmental, Social and Governance framework which has recently been developed by and for social housing providers.

We intend to continue to build on the strong foundations we have established, to strive to improve and to continue to promote and develop our commitment to 'Doing the Right Thing'.

Bruce Moore Chief Executive

Stephen Hughes Chairman

Doing the right thing

This is our second Doing The Right Thing report. It is one of many publications by Housing 21, available on our website www.housing21.org.uk which showcases our varied work across the breadth of England.

This report is presented in four sections. Each of these, alongside a brief introduction, is contained in the table below.



Supporting our residents to live well and independently

07–27

We operate across England, in over 500 locations, providing over 20,000 homes that enable older people to live well.

We want to share and celebrate our successes in achieving that.

We are working towards achieving 95% resident satisfaction, currently 91% in Retirement Living and 90% in Extra Care.



Investing in our employees and being an employer of choice

28–35

We employ over 3,500 people (3,200 FTE) and strive to be a good and fair employer. We want to share how we invest in our people and support their development as well as their wellbeing.

We empower our people and are open to flexible working. We invest in employee development and celebrate diversity.

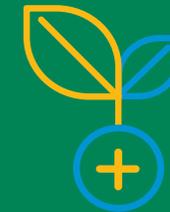


Investing in communities and the economy

36–45

We make decisions which positively contribute to local communities and good causes.

We encourage intergenerational activities. We collaborate with other charities and not for profit organisations. We are proud to be developing our cohousing schemes.



Making positive choices for the environment

46–49

We are conscious of the impact we have on the environment. We set ourselves challenging targets across our services to be more sustainable. We strive to go above and beyond legal requirements and Government targets.



Supporting our residents to live well and independently

Our residents are the focus of all our activities.

We enable residents to live their life as independently as they want to and empower them with the choice and control to do that.

We are committed to giving residents the power to determine how they want their Retirement Living or Extra Care scheme to be run. To do this, we introduced a process of local choice and consensus. Our resident-facing employees are trained on running inclusive and welcoming events to allow residents to genuinely influence life at their scheme, by voicing their opinions and ideas. We actively engage, involve and support residents in all aspects of our service, respond to their feedback and consider how our services need to adapt and develop to meet their changing needs and expectations.

We will now showcase how we do this in the following areas:

- Engaging with our residents, to give them an active voice.
- Listening to compliments and complaints, and learning about how we can deliver better services more consistently across the organisation.
- Being dementia-friendly.
- Providing support for residents to maintain their tenancies.
- Enabling our residents to be digitally included.

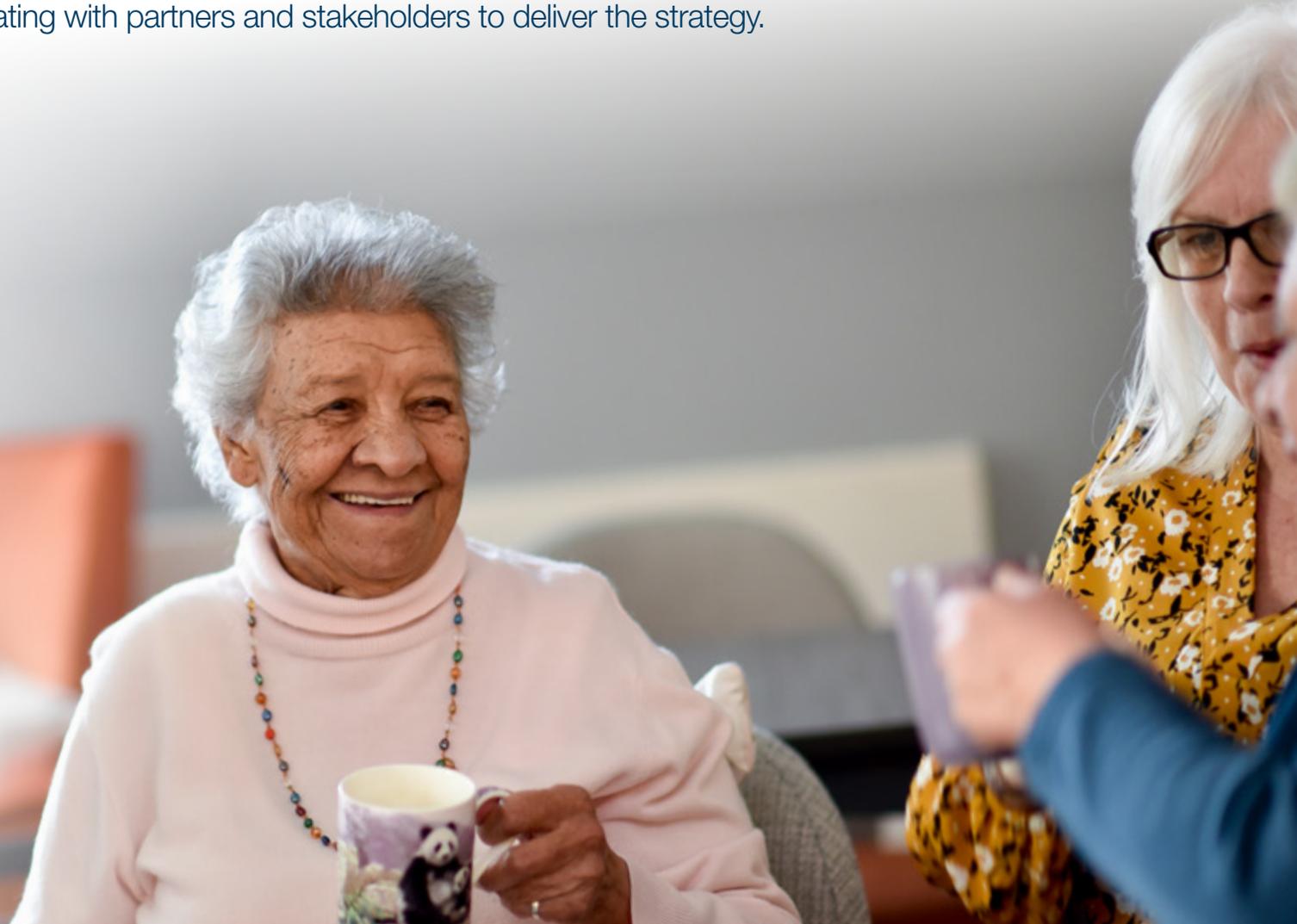
Our residents have an active voice

As a resident-focused organisation, Housing 21 is fully committed to meeting the needs and aspirations of residents. We know resident involvement makes us more successful, responsive and helps us to understand the challenges our residents face. The opinions of our residents are essential to future-proofing our service provision, predicting future trends and planning for change. Our Resident Involvement, Engagement and Insight Strategy will enable and support Housing 21 to be a force for good in the communities in which we work, collaborating with partners and stakeholders to deliver the strategy.

This strategy addresses our compliance, enhanced customer involvement and insight standards, as well as considering how the committees and Board can be assured of this.

Consultation with residents is crucial to ensure that we continue to provide high quality services informed by our residents. Consultation and communication are regular and ongoing. One of the main ways our residents can be heard and have genuine influence is through their Court Service Agreement which is a live document, reviewed with the residents at quarterly engagement meetings.

This Court Service Agreement is decided by using choice and consensus to determine and agree how residents want their scheme to be run. This can include agreement on car parking, pets and use of communal lounges and gardens. It also includes the use of local contractors and the types of social inclusion activities that happen at their services.



Consultations also take place by corporate teams to explain any changes for residents such as rent or service charges. Communications also extend to information displayed in schemes and a bespoke scheme newsletter containing both local and organisation-wide news.

Where residents want to meet more formally, we will assist them with the setting up of their own resident groups.

The Extra Care resident groups are panels made up of residents from around the country living in one of our properties. The aim of the groups is to give residents the chance to voice their opinions on our strategy, innovative ideas and give positive or constructive feedback about the services they currently receive and what they would like to see moving forwards.

In Retirement Living there are four reference groups focusing on different aspects. Anyone from across the organisation can approach the group for comments. Each group is chaired by a resident.

The vast majority of our schemes have a dedicated Scheme Manager providing day to day support for residents. They organise everything from signing up new residents and providing information about their accommodation, to arranging repairs and liaising with contractors. Engaging with our residents is part of everyone's role at Housing 21 and our locally based employees also arrange regular activities which are not just socially enjoyable, but also provide and gather views on issues such as direct debits, welfare benefits, healthy eating, keeping fit and learning new skills such as art and table tennis. Our residents really value our Scheme Managers and we are committed to providing that service.

Resident engagement has always been at the forefront of our minds when working closely in residents' homes and communal areas. The pandemic has impacted how we deliver our consultations but in many ways, for the better. For example, the interior design and surveying team have produced new ways to engage with residents and gain their support for choice, by producing individual information packs. For the makeovers of communal areas, we have given residents the chance to select the design they like best. Previously the consultations were held in person with a vote to choose which design most people liked for communal areas. This often meant those residents not in attendance didn't get to help select the colour

scheme. Now we leave large copies of the designs for residents to view, along with their own pack of information and a preference slip, so all residents can have a say in what they want at their court, to ensure we are providing what residents want.

- We remain committed to holding meetings to discuss
- Service Charge budgets, but during the pandemic we had
- to find another way so we reviewed the literature, compiled
- easy to understand budgets with full explanations and then
- offered video or telephone meetings.

We will also be holding some exhibition events later in the year to showcase our furniture, kitchens ranges, bathrooms and technology. This will ensure residents can try out items due for installation, give feedback and really influence the choices made for the homes they live in.

We undertake a resident survey on an annual basis, however, due to Covid-19 this has been delayed so the 2019 satisfaction figures are the latest which are available. 91% of Retirement Living residents and 88% of Extra Care residents were satisfied with the overall service provided by their Scheme Manager.



Organised resident events

Residents have the chance to meet with their Housing Managers at least once every eight weeks to enable them to raise issues at a local level. This results in most concerns being addressed quickly and efficiently.

The annual resident events unfortunately could not take place this year due to Covid-19, but ordinarily these are open to all residents. It is a great platform for all residents to ask questions and voice concerns to the Executive Team and Board Members and hear about the latest news and developments in Housing 21; no question is off limits! These events also give residents the chance to tell us what additional services they would like to see, and where we should concentrate in the future. All issues raised are addressed at a local level.

Being unable to hold these conferences, Retirement Living held seven virtual resident conferences using Microsoft Teams which were attended by 122 residents. The event was an hour long with the overall aim of updating residents on the work and future direction of Housing 21.

“ Our sincere thanks to you and everyone at Housing 21 who helped organise the Virtual Residents’ Event. It was exciting to receive our bags of treats before the event. Then later in the afternoon, listen to the informative speeches and close with some relaxing exercises! ”

“ I would like to say how much I enjoyed the Virtual Residents’ Event yesterday ”



Surveys

Another way we listen is through regularly surveying our residents. We have a target for 95% of all of our residents to be satisfied with the service which we provide.

We undertake an annual residents' survey which was due to take place during the first lockdown in 2020, so it was sensible to delay it. Therefore, the data shown here is for 2019/20. During that year, the satisfaction rate in Extra Care was 92%, and in Retirement Living it was 94%. The table below shows the positive movement in satisfaction levels across different service offers and tenures since 2016.

As we value our residents' feedback highly, for the first time in 2021, we are carrying out a census survey allowing everyone the opportunity to offer feedback. This is in response to a large number of residents telling us that they wanted to take part in the survey which they don't always get the opportunity to do when we use a sampling approach.



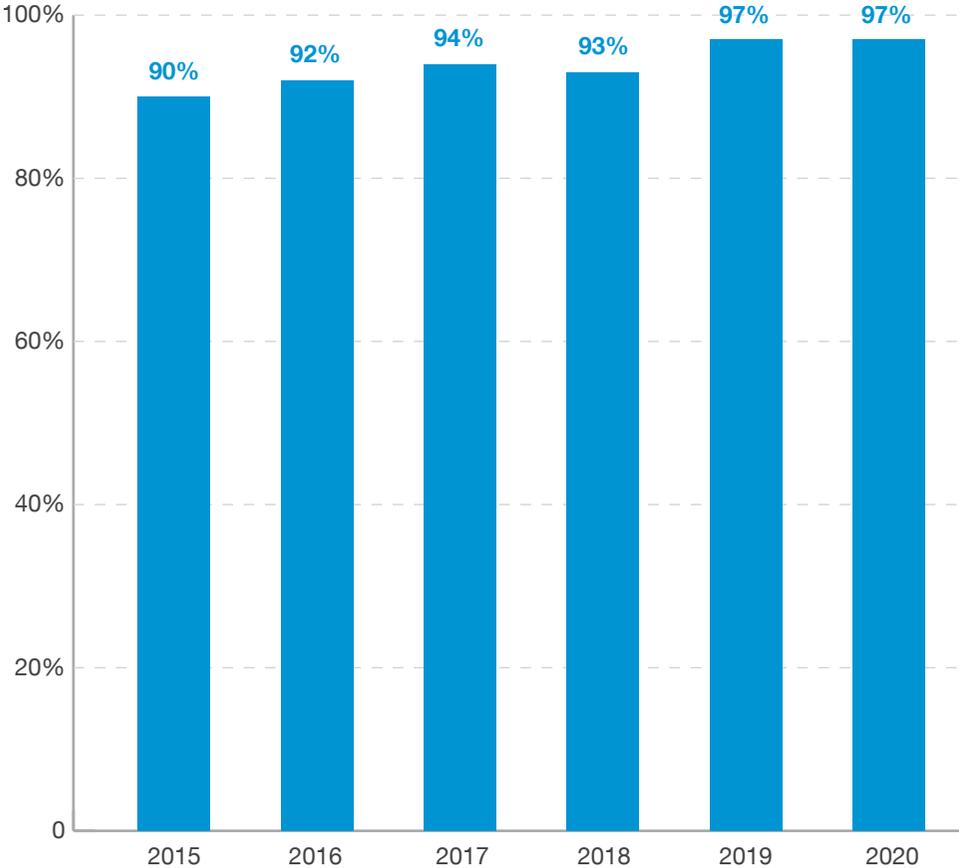
In 2019/20 within Extra Care the satisfaction rate was 92%, and in Retirement Living it was 94%

	Retirement Living			Extra Care				
	Retirement Rented National	Leasehold	Oldham PFI	Walsall PPP	Kent PFI	Shared Ownership National	Extra Care Rented National	Sandwell
2021	91% (6,457)	82% (545)	95% (789)	95% (203)	91% (131)	82% (510)	90% (2,435)	95% (165)
2019	94%	89%	90%	91%	95%	87%	92%	91%
2018	90%	-	-	93%	94%	73%	85%	93%
2017	-	83%	-	-	92%	-	-	-
2016	87%	-	90%	88%	93%	70%	86%	88%
2015	-	78%	-	-	96%	-	-	-

We are proud of the quality of our care

We also want, and need, to listen to our residents who receive care from us to ensure that our service to them is the best that it can be. We ask about the quality of our care and what is important to them. We are really proud that as of November 2020 (the latest survey) 97% of our residents who receive care remained as satisfied as they were in 2019, despite the challenges of the pandemic.

Figure 1: Care customers' overall satisfaction, 2015 – 2020



Our excellent Care Workers are also doing well in providing those elements of the care packages which our residents value.

97% of residents agree that Care Workers treat them with dignity, respect and listen to what they say

97% of residents say Care Workers help them with things they want them to

97% of residents say Care Workers support their independence

In November 2020 we also asked our residents their views on how we responded to the challenges of Covid-19; 99% of residents said the Care Workers have taken the necessary steps to keep them safe during the Covid-19 pandemic.

However high our resident satisfaction is, we will never become complacent and we are open to gaining honest feedback.



99% of residents said the care workers have taken the necessary steps to keep them safe during the Covid-19 pandemic



what our residents say about us

“ Their willingness to do what is asked / required; they always ask if anything else is required, safe, warm, comfortable. ”

“ Most carers treat us like family; I feel so safe. ”

“ The care we are given, problems we can talk about, safeness from carers. Happy with all of the care service. ”

“ We are very fortunate with the level of care service normally, but with the current Covid-19 situation my family member has received over and above care throughout these times. ”



We like to provide the best care at end of life

Early in 2020 we began to pilot the Gold Standards Framework (GSF) in 10 of our Extra Care schemes with a view to rolling it out to all schemes. The GSF is a framework used by many GP practices, hospitals, and social care settings to enable earlier recognition of patients with life-limiting conditions, helping them to plan to live as well as possible in their last years of life.

The aims of GSF are to improve:

- The quality of care for all people nearing the end of life, in line with their preferences;
- The coordination and collaboration of teams supporting them;
- Outcomes for people, enabling more to live and die where they choose, reduced hospitalisation and improved cost effectiveness.

The GSF is recognised by the Care Quality Commission due to the focus on enhanced training for Care Workers in supporting people in their end of life.



We like hearing compliments and learning through complaints

We are a responsive organisation and actively encourage feedback from residents.

During the year 2020/ 2021, we received over 950 compliments and 104 complaints across all business streams. Of these 43 were not upheld, 39 partially upheld and 22 upheld. The main areas of complaint related to housing services, repairs and maintenance and our employees.

When things do not go as well as they should, we see complaints as a way to learn and to do better. We try to resolve issues at our schemes locally, but that is not always possible. We had a one-stage formal complaints process with an option for a Director's Review. The Director's Review was introduced following feedback received from the Housing Ombudsman about having more than one stage and therefore more opportunity to resolve any issues.

A further review of the complaints procedure was undertaken which included the completion of a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) Complaint Handling Code. At this time, we consulted with our Residents' Complaints Panel as part of this review to ensure the residents' voice was part of this.

The outcome was for the Director's Review to become a formal stage two of a new two-stage procedure, along with the introduction of an informal complaint. The aim of the new procedure being to strengthen our local approach to dealing with complaints and make it easier and clearer for complainants.

All our formal responses confirm the stage of the complaint, what the next options are, and whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. We will say what we have learned and will do as a result of the complaint.

Once the formal procedure is complete and if a complainant is still unhappy, they can then make a complaint to the relevant Ombudsman. Currently in the case of the Housing Ombudsman there is still an eight-week cooling-off period before they will investigate. For housing related issues a complainant can also ask for their complaint to be reviewed by a designated person (MP, Councillor or our Residents' Complaints Panel). A designated person will review the complaint and can make any recommendations to us which they feel may help or resolve an issue. Alternatively, they may refer a complaint to the Housing Ombudsman before the eight-week cooling-off period.

Over the past year we received six case investigations back which have provided 13 determinations overall. Of these, four determinations were 'at fault' (rather than upheld).

Any complaints are carefully monitored so we learn from them and develop good practices for the future. Some changes we have made as a result of complaints include:

- Plans to introduce a formal process for lessons learned.
- The consultation process for the implementation of heating systems will be reviewed, in particular, how all residents are kept informed.
- There will be a review on how our people effectively communicate and keep records around on-going repairs issues.
- Review of Antisocial Behaviour and Nuisance Policy.

We are also resolving complaints in a timely manner.

Under the previous complaints process (April to December 2020), we acknowledged complaints within an average of 1.41 working days and 9.9 working days, to respond against targets of 2 and 15 workings days respectively.

Under the new policy from January 2021, we have a target to acknowledge formal complaints within five working days and we achieved this 100% of the time. We also aim to respond to the first stage of the complaint within 10 working days and the second stage within 20 working days. We achieved this in 94% and 100% of cases respectively.



We aim to:

Acknowledge formal complaints within **5 working days**

Respond to the first stage within **10 working days**

Respond to the second stage within **20 working days**



We like to have fun!

During 2020 we held our Summer Festival where our employees got to show off their #BestFood, #BestPet and #BestArt. We saw piano performances, songs and lots of dancing, not to mention the delicious foods and array of pets including horses and tortoises.



In October 2020 we launched our Winter Festival with our fabulous Spooktober competition where our people and residents showed of their spooky decorations, foods and singing. In November our employees and residents celebrated the Festival of Light with their beautiful decorations and December was our Winter Wonderland where we saw our people and residents working together to bring the theme to life on our schemes.



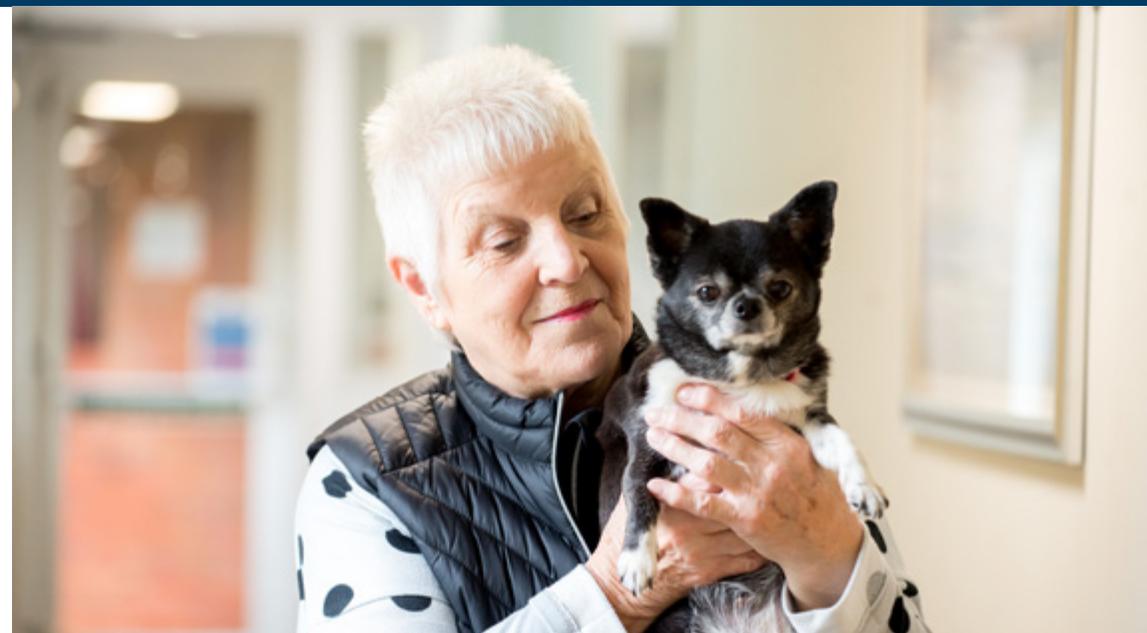


“ I feel safe and secure. I was able to bring my dog. Company if I want it. ”

We are pet-friendly

Housing 21 is a pet-friendly organisation; we believe that keeping a pet can positively promote the wellbeing of our residents.

It is an individual resident's choice to own a pet and Housing 21 will give permission, within guidelines. Where this affects communal areas, this is aligned to our 'Choice and Consensus Policy' where a local agreement will be made. This local agreement will be documented with the Court Service Agreement.

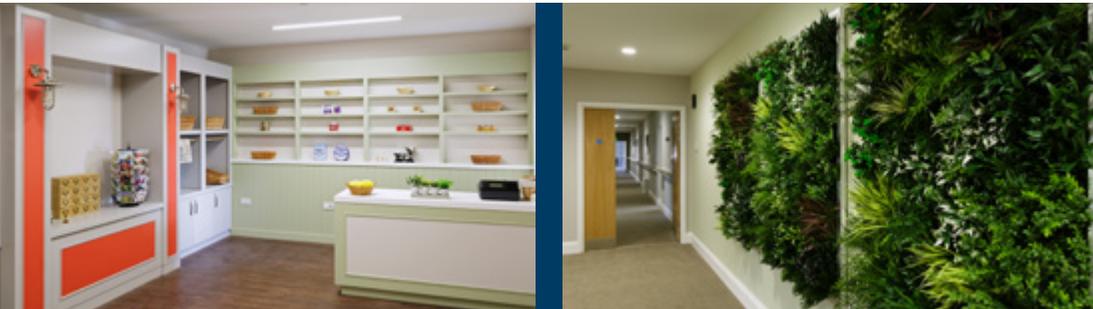


We are dementia-friendly

We are committed to supporting our residents who are either living with, or are affected by, dementia.

There are approximately 24% of residents in Extra Care and 11% in Retirement Living with either a diagnosis or suspected dementia.

Good quality, appropriate housing can help people live as well as they can with dementia and so consideration of this and other conditions is embedded throughout our housing and care services.



Case study of dementia design

One of Housing 21's latest extra care schemes, Meadow Walk in Fakenham, has been designed very much with dementia in mind. The court has many 'dementia-friendly features' including a village store and post office, potting shed, old curiosity shop, large garden themed internal areas to sit and enjoy the splendid view of the countryside alongside a fantastic, landscaped garden. Each wing of the building has its own identity with street signs influenced from the local town area and artwork to match. The new operational team has also decided that the reminiscence village store will operate as a small convenience store for the residents, and they plan to stock some non-perishable goods for sale.



Design of properties

All of our new buildings incorporate dementia-friendly design and our retrofits and refurbishments contain as many dementia-friendly design elements as they can.



Biophylic design

A relatively new concept, but one that embraces nature, plants and environmentally friendly products such as driftwood, bamboo, ferns and plants that stimulate all senses. The wellbeing benefits of biophylic design add to the overall appeal of the idea with the sense that we are 'bringing the outdoors in', perfect for residents that maybe can't get outside but want to enjoy a nice relaxing space at their scheme.



Services and employee training

We provide a dementia specialist in each of our Extra Care schemes where we provide the care. Advanced training for Dementia Advocates to support other employees.



Commitment to dementia related initiatives

All our people are Dementia Friends. Contractors are required to undertake a Dementia Friends session before working on our properties. Potential and current suppliers are required to sign up to the Dementia Friends initiative.

- We are really pleased that we have recruited a
- resident who is living with dementia to the Board, this
- will ensure that consideration of dementia remains
- at the forefront of our minds and in the strategic
- decisions which we make.

We were proud to both sit on the panel and give evidence to the APPG inquiry into the role of housing for people living with dementia. We have been instrumental in taking positive action to ensure that the recommendations of that report are embedded within the work of the housing sector.

To influence the wider housing sector, we chair the national Housing and Dementia Working Group. This group have identified a number of priorities from the APPG recommendations and will develop a work programme to ensure that these are actioned. We are also core members of the Housing and Dementia Research Consortium hosted by the University of Worcester.

To build on the Dementia-friendly Housing Guide, last year we developed a series of factsheets on dementia and specific aspects of it such as 'walking with purpose' and sundowning. These are for residents, families, employees and professionals to increase awareness of dementia. They also signpost to relevant resource and give practical advice.

The Alzheimer's Society Dementia Friends initiative is a great way to provide a basic understanding of dementia and how it affects people and we remain committed to all our people becoming Dementia Friends. We also strongly encourage residents to take part in a session too.

Dementia design has also been utilised in unexpected ways during the pandemic. Dovecote Meadow in Sunderland has a nostalgia shop and during the first lockdown they stocked it with essential supplies to support residents who may have run short of food or were unable to get to a shop.



Approximately **24%** of residents in Extra Care and **11%** in Retirement Living with either a diagnosis or suspected dementia

How we are supporting residents to maintain their tenancies

With our purpose being to provide housing, care and support for older people of modest means, we estimate about 75% of our residents claim welfare benefits. We do not ask for a deposit, but usually residents are able to pay us a month's rent in advance. If they are unable to provide this, we ask for one week in advance and agree a payment plan with them. We never refuse a tenancy if a resident is not in a position to pay a week in advance.

Our Tenancy Gurus were established last year to promote and support our tenancy sustainment agenda which we call "Helping hands". We recruited 50 gurus from across the organisation who received enhanced training on a range of topics such as benefits awareness and talking about money in a positive way. The gurus are now working with their colleagues to promote tenancy sustainment. We are now recruiting additional Gurus who will have a focus on Antisocial Behaviour and will be instrumental in the upcoming review of the Antisocial Behaviour policy, procedure and training.

Case study

One of the residents moved into a scheme in December 2020. Before this, employees believe he was living in a flat with other individuals who may have taken advantage of him financially.

He had lived a chaotic lifestyle, had debts through not paying bills and not taking responsibility for himself. He could not access his bathroom, so his personal care and health were being compromised and he did not eat very well.

The move for this resident was not an easy one as he was not used to following rules and living in a communal environment. The team at the scheme have done lots over the past few months to help him. This resident is now fully supported by all at Trinity House and is starting to get his life back in order.

One of the ways we are doing this is our "Making a Difference" days. These are days where the whole organisation is encouraged to do something that will make a difference to our residents. The first day focussed on access to benefits although we also saw our employees making calls to focus on wellbeing and even delivering flowers to all residents. Some examples of the difference made are:

- The Scheme Manager supported one resident to apply for backdated Housing Benefit, chatted about her income and prioritising her bills. The lady's rent account is now up to date as she has received an £800 back payment from Housing Benefit.
- A resident didn't understand his rent statements and how much he was required to pay. The Scheme Manager sat with the gentleman and explained his account in a different way, worked out with him his monthly payment and his account is now up to date.
- A Tenancy Guru had a benefits conversation with a resident and noticed she had not accessed all she was entitled to; the applications have now been made and this lady has told us she is no longer worrying about money.

Ultimately, our Scheme Managers are dedicated to their schemes and have the most regular contact with residents, and our new housing system, PEBBLES, allows them to put in place the best support for individuals.

“ The power of kindness and community has become increasingly important during this difficult time. These qualities are demonstrated across our organisation and we have taken the opportunity to showcase them during our Make A Difference Days. These days are a chance to share and celebrate all of the brilliant things our teams do to make a difference to our residents and the communities we work in. This has included helping with benefits, arranging activities, planting vegetable gardens, donating to local charities and an abundance of kind words and positive messages. The feedback has been amazing and we look forward to this initiative continuing to grow. ”

Pam Mastrantonio,
Executive Director of Retirement Living



Our safeguarding focuses on prevention

We know how much our residents value the safety and security of our services. Our emphasis is on Making Safeguarding Personal, taking a ‘nothing about me, without me’ approach. A person-centred and empowering framework is adopted where we document the resident’s views, wishes and outcome in relation to any concerns. More person-centred conversations are taking place across Extra Care and Retirement Living than ever before.

We have provided clear information for residents and updated training for employees. We are delivering the tools and knowledge to our people to further build their confidence to manage safeguarding concerns whilst empowering residents. Leaflets are available clearly explaining our approach to safeguarding and providing signposting information.

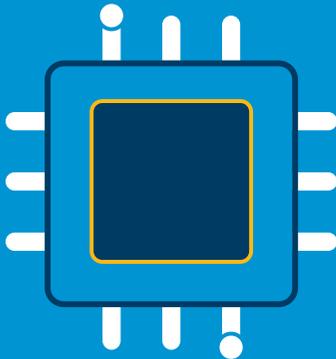
Covid-19 had a direct impact on safeguarding in March, April and May 2020 with the lowest numbers of safeguarding concerns being reported, which subsequently resulted in a spike in June and July 2020. Challenges were posed by the first lockdown in 2020 when there were a limited number of our people on the schemes.

The recording and referral of incidents within the 24-hour time frame is now evident in the majority of services across the organisation.

Becoming digitally included

We are at the forefront of the housing sector in the work we are doing to fully embrace the digital agenda. Across the organisation, we have worked hard over the last few years in partnership with Appello, our digital calls system partner, to bring the benefits of digital connectivity to our residents and employees. We have invested heavily in time and resource so that we can get employees and residents digitally connected and engaged.

During the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, the importance of this technology to stay in touch and to support residents has been evident. Our PEBBLES system has allowed Scheme Managers to maintain services and contact with residents whilst working safely from home, and the digital call systems have given residents additional assurance and the means to stay in contact with the Scheme Manager and their neighbours via video calling.



221 of our schemes (44.5%)
now have the
Digital Appello service.

We are spending approx.
£2.1 million
in capital costs for the **New Ways
of Working (NWOW) project.**

**We provide Wi-Fi
for residents and
visitors in 150
of our schemes.**
This is mainly within the
communal areas and
in Extra Care.

We are continuing to develop the functionality and digital connections for our residents:

1. 44 of our schemes have Wi-Fi and Bluetooth Living Hub in each flat as a Wi-Fi router; this will be rolled out across the organisation. All new installations will have Wi-Fi capacity.
2. The Appello app, which mirrors the Living Hub, is available to download for iOS and Android.

This allows a mobile tablet to be linked to a Living Hub giving Scheme Managers the ability to audio call every resident in their flat from the Scheme Manager's home, even if the resident does not have a telephone.

We are currently testing a video call version of this.

3. To help our residents access the benefits of the internet, we are installing smart TVs across our schemes and putting support in place so that as many residents as possible use them.

Alongside this, we are piloting 'SPARKO' which is an innovative new way for older people to connect with family, community and local services via their TV. SPARKO is a tool that enables local community engagement and promotes wellbeing, mental health and social prescription.

“ For me, it's really helpful when doing my regular calls with residents as I can see them over the video system and can tell if they are looking unwell, or pick up other signs about their wellbeing. ”

Scheme Manager



Raising the standard in our schemes

In 2020 we introduced our own Housing Quality Standards (HQS), which replicate the Care Quality Commission (CQC) ratings for care standards, across to housing services. We want the schemes that show good or outstanding qualities to be held up as fantastic examples for other schemes to follow suit.

- These ratings allow us to demonstrate and celebrate our
- “outstanding” housing services and recognise where we can
- improve. The HQS looks at five key areas: communication,
- compliance, community spirit, leadership and quality.

For the first time we have given Scheme Managers a comprehensive toolkit comprising a detailed breakdown of all the key areas of service, plus an audit template for self-assessment and to record how good our housing services are. This way we can officially recognise the quality of our schemes, where we perhaps need to provide support, celebrate our brilliant Scheme Managers and shout about the good stuff.

This year we are going to introduce the Quest for Outstanding for Retirement Living for Scheme Managers. This interactive skills builder tool is based on the Housing Quality Standards, meaning all Scheme Managers will have a dedicated learning plan so they can be confident in all aspects of the GQS assessment before we review them again next year.

Investing in our stock

We want to provide accommodation which our residents are pleased to call their home and which has kerb appeal in the local community.

Since 2015 we have invested significantly in our stock to meet our enhanced property standards, ensuring we maintain our properties in an excellent condition which residents value, while meeting all regulatory and legal building safety requirements.

We have developed comprehensive Court Business Plans to assist in the development of individual scheme strategies which will determine their longer-term investment requirement.

Our property standards mean that:

- Kitchens and bathrooms are no more than 20 years old;
- Every scheme has a design-led makeover.

We spent £242,000 to achieve these in the last financial year. The lower spend was due to decreased access to properties due to the pandemic. Next year will see this spend increase again.

In the last financial year, we spent:



According to our move-in survey, this investment has resulted in residents being very satisfied with their property upon arrival. As can be seen below, this satisfaction is fairly even across all areas of the organisation.



We are also placing greater attention on some of the external elements of our schemes. These include:

- [External landscaping \(hard and soft\).](#)
- [Accessibility.](#)
- [Car parking provision.](#)
- [Pathways and fencing.](#)

This provides attractive kerb appeal, particularly for prospective new residents. Attractive, usable areas offer opportunities for residents to enjoy the outdoors as well as engage in gardening activities, both of which can be very beneficial to wellbeing.

We are piloting some garden makeovers as we have recognised that outdoor spaces have been invaluable for wellbeing and socialising during the difficult times everyone experienced due to the pandemic. The latest asset management strategy has highlighted the need to improve some of the outdoor spaces for residents to maximise their access to somewhere to sit, reflect, socialise and get the health benefits of being outdoors in the fresh air. We will be looking to ensure the garden makeovers offer seating, lighting, pathways, sensory planting and covered areas to sit and enjoy the view or participate in a hobby.

- [When designing outside space they will be inclusive and suitable for residents with mobility problems, dementia or visual impairments.](#)

All work on our schemes is driven by consultation with our residents to enable them to influence how their scheme looks.



Our response to the pandemic

The pandemic has highlighted the dedication and commitment of our employees, from resident-facing employees to corporate teams rolling out the IT equipment needed for people working from home. We chose not to furlough anyone but redeployed people from teams whose work was temporarily halted to teams where extra help was needed, such as the Procurement Team in procuring PPE at that difficult time.

Our resident-facing employees put the safety of the residents at the heart of their work and went above and beyond to protect our residents from the pandemic and the associated issues such as food shortages.

One of our Housing Managers worked with a local charity to deliver essential food, cleaning products and a few treats to lift spirits and see smiles! They were distributed to our vulnerable people, people self-isolating and those who had no one to help them shop. The Housing Manager said *"I cannot thank Veterans in Sefton enough for their help with this! Without them I wouldn't have been able to deliver this little (big) surprise to many people at James Horrigan Court when they really did need it!"*

One of our Scheme Managers throughout the first lockdown supported his residents tremendously all seven days of the week. He started a Baked Spuds' Day each week and during lockdown he delivered them to each resident (Covid-19 secure) to their doorstep. The money raised was used to buy a pool table for the communal lounge. He has also formed a Men's Discussion group to aid male mental health.

We also made sure that no one was at risk of financial hardship if they could not work due to illness. Full sick pay was given to those colleagues who needed to self-isolate. Housing 21 also directly paid the full salary of any colleague shielding, choosing not to access the furlough scheme but ensuring the same level of benefit.

We are so very proud of our employees and the way everyone has risen to the extraordinarily challenge of Covid-19.



“ It’s important that in such difficult times, colleagues are fully supported to deliver the best possible care to the most vulnerable. It’s also vital they are recognised for their hard work and dedication with the best support and fairest conditions possible. ”

Kris Peach, Executive Director of Extra Care



Investing in our people and being an employer of choice

We are committed to listening to our employees and value their feedback.

The year 2020 was the year that our people shone, from our corporate teams maintaining business as usual whilst working from home and juggling competing demands, to our resident-facing colleagues keeping our residents safe, connected, and happy during a national pandemic. We really could not be prouder of our people; our people matter, our people drive performance, and our people are at the heart of Housing 21.

Over the last year we have had the opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to Doing the Right Thing time and time again; the adaptability, resilience and sheer dedication of our people across the organisation have enabled us to maintain a stellar service delivery during the most challenging operational year to date. This year

we were particularly delighted that 92% of respondents are satisfied working for Housing 21, up from 90% last year.

In July 2021 we achieved the Platinum Investors in People Accreditation. Only around 1.6% of the companies assessed by Investors in People have achieved Platinum.

It was recognised that at Housing 21 we strive for continuous improvement and innovation, to never become complacent and constantly challenge ourselves to be better, whilst achieving greater value for money. All of which contributes to a consistently excellent service and a great experience for all.

We empower our people

94% of employees say that they are encouraged to use their initiative in their role. We place our people at the heart of the decision-making process, including them through employee representative groups, surveys and local forums. It is important to us that our people can see how they can contribute to, and shape, our organisation.

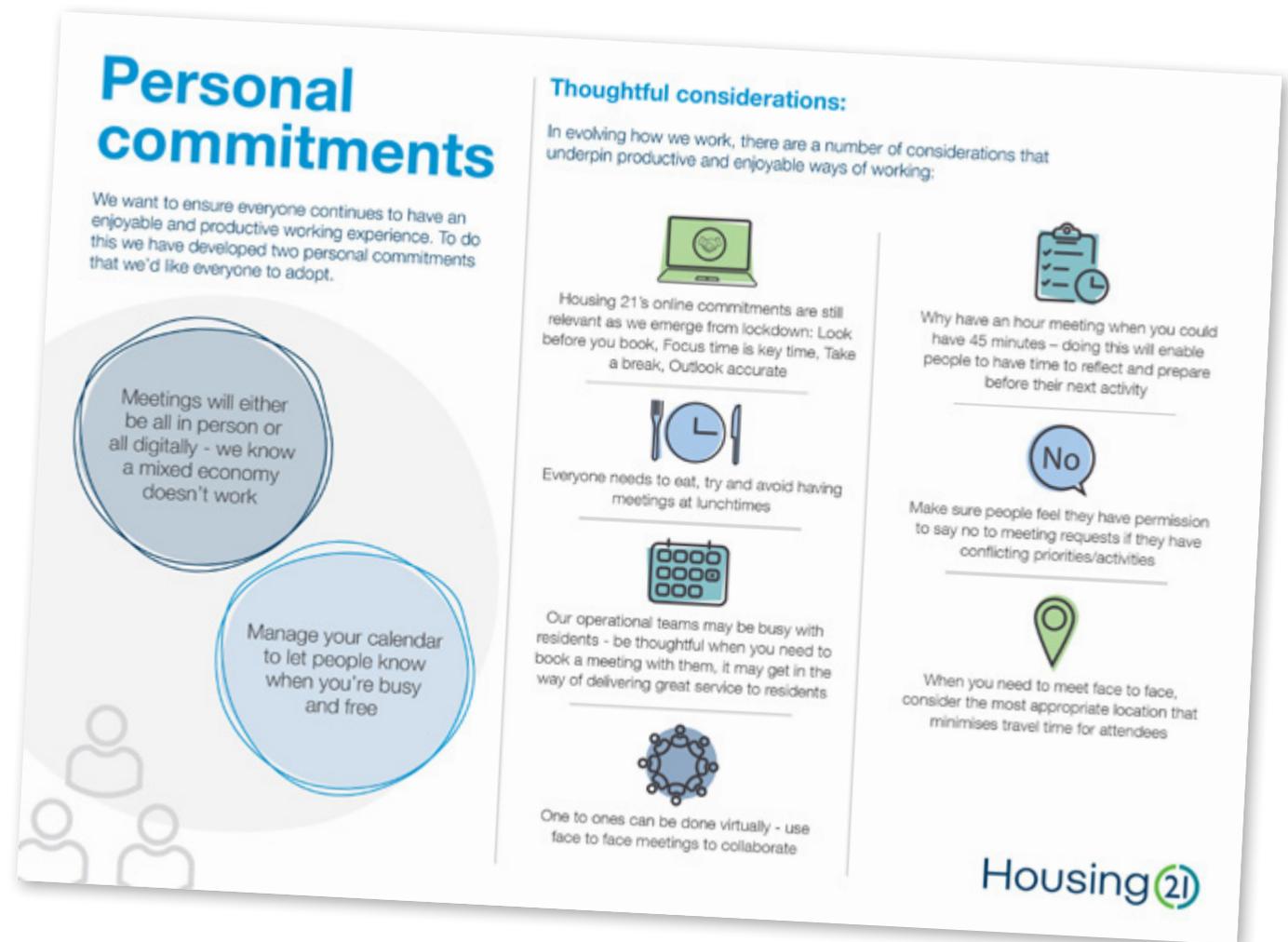
At Housing 21 we believe that ‘everyone is a leader’ and we actively encourage our people to use their initiative and let us know how we can be better than good.

Flexible working is our default position

The pandemic meant a fundamental shift in the way a lot of our people work. There was a swift change to home working for the majority of our people who are not in resident-facing roles.

We have had to evaluate the ways that we work and consult with our head office employees about their long-term working preferences. Most of our corporate employees are now fully kitted out to work successfully from home.

“ Having the ability to work around homeschooling my children was a life saver, it was a busy, busy time but I was grateful that I was able to work when it suited me and when I knew I could be most effective during this time. ”



Together with the positive aspects this new way of working brings, it has also introduced new challenges as we connected remotely and spent more time facing our screens. Working across the organisation we introduced our personal commitments to enable this new way of working to flourish and support the wellbeing of our people.

We are committed to investing in developing our people

Not only do we strive to create a great place for our people to work, we also make sure that they have the opportunity to develop their skills and career with dedicated role-specific learning pathways, a Leadership Development Pathway and Apprenticeship opportunities. Working for Housing 21 helps individuals realise their career ambitions. We have a dedicated learning design and delivery team who work closely with experts from the organisation to align development with our strategic goals and operational demands whilst providing a chance for people to develop their interests beyond their area of responsibility if they wish.

- 88% of employees say that they feel supported in their personal development; the proportion of employees stating this has increased by 9% in the last two years.

Our Learning Management System, FRED, enables our people to take control of their development; learning is available when needed via eLearning packages. We are currently developing a suite of 'Knowledge Nuggets' which will contain key business insights and guidance available for our people to access when it is convenient for them and which enables them to improve their knowledge and understanding on a range of topical subjects.

We work hard to ensure all of our development opportunities are current and up to date and our key products are endorsed by Skills for Care, the Chartered Institute for Housing and the Institute of Leadership and Management.

“ This course was very enjoyable and very valuable for my development as a manager. I recommend it to anyone. ”

[Leading to Excellence delegate](#)



We want our people to access learning opportunities

We see beyond CVs and value potential. At Housing 21 we emphasise the importance of having the right values — skills can be learned, but sharing our values and being committed to our purpose is the most important thing.

“ If you had told me 10 years ago that I would have a career I would have laughed at you, as I had been a stay-at-home parent for 13 years. I am so proud of everything I have achieved. ”

Julie Izzard, Scheme Manager

(Joined Housing 21 in 2012 as a Cleaner).

We value individual opinions and ideas

We truly value the opinions of our people; they are the key to helping us move forward and fulfil our purpose. We listen to our people and use their feedback to inform our plans for the future and we also recognise the great things that they do.

We have put in place a wide range of ‘employee voice’ mechanisms to capture feedback from our people and encourage participation such as our internal conferences, Workplace by Facebook, our Intranet, employee surveys, team meetings and representative groups.

Last year, we bought our representative groups under the umbrella group ‘Make Work Better’. This group is made up of the leads of all employee forums in the organisation to ensure that there is one group which has an overview of all of the issues being discussed in the various groups. It also ensures that any idea or initiative takes into consideration the views of the various respect and inclusion groups, and employee groups.

The Care Workers’ forum is one of our employee representative groups. They have been great at influencing our work and improving our offer to them. At the start of 2021 a quarterly newsletter was launched aimed at resident-facing employees, many of who do not have access to the Intranet. The content of this newsletter is generated by resident-facing employees and supported by the communications team.



Learning opportunities

22,793 e-learning sessions were accessed last year

45 employees have undertaken our **Leading to Excellence** training programme

19 have completed our **Inspiring Excellence programme** which is Leadership and Management level 5 accredited (both of which are endorsed by the Institute of Leadership and Management)

246 employees are working toward an **Apprenticeship from Level 2 to an MBA**

We have delivered **3,865** training sessions in the last 12 months

28 employees have been trained through the Chartered Institute of Housing in the **Certificate in Housing Practice** at either Level 2, 3 or 4

We encourage our people to be the best they can be

At Housing 21 we love to celebrate the great things our people do and hold annual events that enable our regional teams to get together, network and have fun.

As the pandemic meant we could not hold our annual engagement events in 2020 and we didn't get the chance to demonstrate our appreciation to the everyday heroes in our organisation, we developed 'Housing 21 Heroes' in October 2020. This is a monthly award and recognition event that is hosted by our Chief Executive. Nominations come from across the business and each winner receives a 'shout out' at Bruce's keeping in touch session and a letter of thanks.



To date, we have recognised **293** Housing 21 heroes

We believe that the performance of our employees is key to providing good customer service and enabling our success, and our recognition schemes allow managers the freedom to recognise individuals and teams for doing a great job all year round. Last year we spent just over £50,000 on rewarding our people.

We recognise that our leaders are the key to enabling our people to be the best they can be. That's why we offer a wide choice of ways to develop leadership skills including working with Henley Partnership, our in house designed and delivered Leading to Excellence and Inspiring Excellence programmes, and Diplomas in Leadership and Management. Housing 21 has also identified the behaviours they want in their leadership team and our 'Leadership Principles' are available to everyone to assess themselves against.



86% of employees state that **their manager motivates them to achieve their best**

Leadership Principles

- **Do the right thing**
Set an example and ensure your values underpin your actions.
- **Show how people contribute**
Share the vision and inspire your team to succeed.
- **Act as a champion for change**
Look for innovation and challenge your team to continually improve.
- **Trust your team**
Grow their independence and let them take actions with confidence.
- **Give time to your team**
Get to know your team and celebrate their achievements.

Housing 21 is committed to investing and building on the capabilities of our leaders through the exciting offer of a Level 5 University Certificate of Professional Development in Management and a Level 7 Certificate of Professional Development in Leadership, in partnership with De Montfort University. Both the Level 5 and Level 7 development programmes have been designed in conjunction with Housing 21 to inspire its leaders to embark on a journey of personal educational development with access to leading-edge academic and practitioner thinking, alongside an opportunity to reflect constructively upon current working practices and concepts. Delegates will be encouraged to actively translate their learning into organisational action through 'reflective practice' and a business improvement project.

We have a devolved working model and this means that we need great leaders to ensure that everyone throughout the organisation is empowered to be the best they can be.

“ It's as if all our managers have been on a course or given an injection to be approachable, caring and supportive! ”

We are inclusive and celebrate diversity

Housing 21 has increased its focus and work around respect and inclusion. We have a dedicated Respect and Inclusion Lead to work across the whole organisation. We are ensuring that the respect and inclusion agenda is embedded in all that we do from policies through to providing care and support.



96% of employees say that **diversity is welcomed** at Housing 21

95% of employees think that **diversity and inclusion is important** to us as an organisation



We champion employee wellbeing and work / life balance

We want our people to feel valued and happy working for us and to provide them with opportunities to contribute meaningfully in all aspects of their life, in their family, community and personally.

Time away from work is important for wellbeing and to maintain a good work / life balance and so in addition to their contractual annual leave allowance, employees are able to purchase up to 10 extra days of holiday each year through a salary sacrifice arrangement.

Wellbeing is about so much more than time off, and our Employee Wellbeing group, part of the Make Work Better group, focuses on what we can do to support our people to look after their wellbeing. Their Wellbeing Strategy has subgroups to support the work of four key strands:

- Mental health
- Physical health
- The menopause
- Financial wellbeing

We have 30 Mental Health First Aiders across the organisation who advocate our belief that ‘it’s okay to not be okay’ and provide first line advice and guidance.

During the past year, many of our employees have been affected by death and bereavement as a result of Covid-19. In recognising the impact of this, we have thought about how best to support people during this difficult time, so we have put in place:

- Revamped policies which recognise the impact of death, bereavement and terminal illness;
- A promise to pay the Death in Service benefit to the employees nominated beneficiary within two weeks of their death where practicable;
- Work with Cruse to make employees aware of the support they offer as well as providing training on bereavement for managers;
- Guidance for employees when a colleague or resident dies;
- A leaflet which signposts employees to relevant support and resources.

During Dying Matters week in May, we held our first death café to start to develop an internal culture where all our people and residents can speak openly about death and bereavement.

“ Great initiative to acknowledge Dying Matters across the organisation ”

30
Mental Health
First Aiders

We promote a
**Cycle to
Work** scheme

£164,500
was spent on life
assurance

£8,900
was spent on
medical insurance

£6,900
was spent on
employee wellbeing
initiatives

We are a charitable and not-for-profit organisation

Our employees really value working for an organisation which is led by a Board who want to 'do the right thing', rather than shareholders. They like the fact that all surplus monies are reinvested into existing or new stock to continue to provide much needed accommodation for older people of modest means.

We are able to add value to local communities not only financially, as detailed earlier, but also through being members of various boards and committees to share the knowledge and expertise of our people. We also engage with charities and schools and offer the support which a larger organisation can give to them.

Giving back to local communities is important to us and that is why we also offer a volunteer leave initiative, enabling our employees to take up to two days paid leave a year to help out a cause that they feel passionately about. Lots of our corporate teams like to support our own services, with tasks like gardening and repairing fencing.



31 volunteer leave days were taken last year.

This activity has been significantly affected by Covid-19 and we will have a renewed focus on this as soon as it is safe to do so.

We care

Housing 21 recognises that our people are not just our employees; they are parents, partners, brothers, sisters and we want them to be able to enjoy every aspect of their life. We provide a comprehensive benefits package that includes access to Cash Health Plans and an Employee Assistance Programme all of which can be extended to include family members.

We are passionate about people and continually strive to make work better.





Investing in communities and the local economy

Housing 21's schemes are in a wide range of different settings and locations and we want them to be integrated into their local community. We house people who have connections with the local community and this is a condition of the nomination agreement with the relevant local authority for Extra Care housing.

Recommendations from our current residents to potential residents are a real compliment to our organisation and last year 41% of our new residents found out about us in this way which is an increase on previous years. In addition, 11% were recommended by an employee of Housing 21.

By housing local people, our residents have existing connections with the community which they can strengthen by:

- Bringing the community into our schemes
- Working with charities

As an organisation we also:

- Promote volunteering
- Provide housing which is appropriate for different communities

Bringing the community into the scheme

In normal times (outside a global pandemic), the communal spaces in our schemes can be used by the local community, giving residents the opportunity to discuss local issues and influence local action.

Charities using our facilities have included, amongst others, Age UK, dementia-related groups, the Women’s Institute, the Cinnamon Trust, Macular Society, RSPCA, stroke support groups and the police and fire services. Some of these groups provide funds to the residents for activities.

We support charities

Fundraising is a passion of our residents and employees. As an organisation, we do not support just one charity. Each scheme chooses which charities, local or national, they would like to support and the way in which they would like to do this.

The last year has been difficult for so many. Charities have stepped up and provided much needed services and provisions for those adversely affected by the pandemic. Yet, charities themselves have been affected by a fall in donations and an inability to fundraise.

Our employees and residents are passionate about helping local communities and raising funds and donations for charity. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, our employees and residents have kept giving:

Easter 2021 saw our people and residents collect over 3,000 Easter eggs to be donated to various charities, foodbanks and schools.

- One of our schemes supported a local charity to support victims of domestic abuse by donating food and toys.
- A charity who supports veterans in crisis received donations of sweets and toys from one of our courts.
- Our people got running to support a charity who provide emotional and psychological support to people diagnosed with cancer and completed a 50-mile charity run.

Our reverse advent calendar appeal has been an initiative at Housing 21 for the past three years. This is where each Christmas our employees and residents donate something for local food banks and animal shelters. Year on year the donations have been increasing. This year our residents and our people, once again, did us proud and we collected:



We gave all of this to local foodbanks, hostels, the Salvation Army and local charities such as Little Sprouts and The Moses Project.

Corporately we promoted a ‘pay it forward’ initiative which asked people to donate what they would be spending on a lunch (if they had been in the office) to local charities in Walsall. We raised £550.



Pearce Smith Court in Lymington took part in the Easter egg appeal. The Scheme Manager displayed posters, and also delivered a letter to all residents, to make sure everybody was aware. As soon as the residents knew of the appeal, the response was fabulous as they gave so generously. In total Pearce Smith Court donated 32 eggs, four chocolate bunnies, and three packets of Mini Eggs. All the eggs went to the local food bank, Basics Food Bank, in Lymington. The eggs were greatly received, and went to families with children who suffered hardship or who have been affected financially by the pandemic. It was fantastic to be able to give something back to the local community, especially after the tough year we've all been through and let them know there are people who care.

Orchard Court residents were also involved. One of the residents kindly put forward their local charity, Connect Reading. It was a great way to give some support to our local Reading children who attend the support group for parents with children with additional needs. It is called Fifi's Vision.

The group meets every Thursday morning and provides a great support network and a chance to meet other parents in similar circumstances.

Not all of the residents at Orchard Court had known about Fifi's Vision until the Scheme Manager explained about the organisation and what could be done to support them. The residents were grateful to learn about such a worthwhile charity and were more than happy to donate to the Easter egg appeal. They were especially delighted to receive photos of the children enjoying their chocolate eggs.



The pandemic has seen an increase in domestic abuse and residents of Burchell wanted to support a local charity which has a number of safe houses for women and children fleeing domestic violence. Having spoken to their community fundraiser, they were overwhelmed at how many women during the pandemic had literally just taken their children and left without any belongings for fear of losing their lives. The Scheme Manager is so proud of how the scheme rallied around and provided these women and children with some gifts that will at least let them know someone is thinking of them.

We are passionate about providing appropriate housing for communities

Housing 21 has ambitious development plans and aspirations. We will continue to provide high quality Extra Care and Retirement Living schemes but believe cohousing provides an additional option for older people of modest means.

Cohousing provides the opportunity for potential residents to join a project group at the outset so they have a critical role in the design of the properties and communal spaces and, just as importantly, are able to shape the ethos and values of the community aspects of cohousing.

By working together as a project group from the very early stages it means, when the residents eventually move in, there should be a sense of ownership, belonging and community. The focus will be on the “mutually supportive” nature of cohousing; the benefits of having good neighbours and living in a community setting whilst recognising that residents may come from diverse backgrounds and have a range of views rather than being “like minded”. The key will be a commitment to living in a community and a culture of respect.

Working in partnership with Birmingham City Council we have now identified five sites in the city where we plan to develop cohousing projects for older people. All are located in areas of significant deprivation and four are in areas with very diverse ethnic communities. In addition to working with the city council, we recognise the expertise and knowledge that local organisations can bring to the projects and have engaged Legacy WM to support us with our community consultation events over the next 12 months.

- We hope to have the first two projects ready for people
- to move into during 2023.

Alongside this work we have established a ‘focus group’ which is made up of members of the community, networks interested in cohousing and academics. The main aim of this group is to capture the journey and the lessons learnt in order to share them with the wider sector.



Economic impact — supporting the local and national economy

Housing 21 invests a considerable amount of money in its employees and in maintaining properties, money which is spent in both the local and national economy.

We do this by:



Employing workers throughout England



Investing in our properties



Employing local contractors to undertake repairs



Building new schemes

Providing employment

We provide local employment opportunities through our existing and new schemes and employ over 3,500 employees across England.

Our spend on employees last year totalled £74,461,000.

Our Care Workers do a vital job, something which has been considerably highlighted during the pandemic. They make a huge difference to the lives of our residents, so in 2018 we started to pay our Care Workers 10% more than the National Living Wage. We also offered guaranteed hours to provide more stability and fairness. During the pandemic we decided to offer our Care Workers Occupational Sick Pay as opposed to Statutory Sick Pay to reflect the pressure they have been under. There is a sound business case in investing more in our Care Workers; we are doing this to ensure that we consistently provide high quality care for our residents and ensure that employee turnover is lower. This has resulted in continuity of care for residents as well as decreased costs relating to employee turnover.

Our Care Worker turnover of 16.2% is significantly less than the adult social care average of 30.4%.



Over **3,500** employees across England

Our spend on employees last year totalled

£74,461,000

Investing in our properties

We have been investing £27 million a year in our properties since 2015 to improve kerb appeal and other design aspects. These pictures show how Campbell Court was transformed by developing a new main entrance, external landscaping, a remodelling of the flats and design-led communal redecorations.

- Last year we spent £18,614,000 on our stock investment programme.
- Again, the lower spend reflects the restrictions placed on us during lockdowns (this was £31,200,000 last year).

Asset management like to improve communal spaces for residents to maximise their opportunity to socialise with their neighbours. Occasionally we have found that on an older scheme, the design of the communal areas is no longer practical for residents or to support social events. One such court in York had additional investment funds made available to improve the communal areas.

Campbell Court had a very small communal space that didn't offer a very welcoming entrance and didn't have the private court manager office space or lounge facility large enough to host resident events. With some clever re-organisation of the space and a small extension, the scheme has been transformed.

We have also worked closely with residents every step of the way and sought their advice with finishing touches. We have some keen gardeners on the court so we provided some indoor plants that they will maintain, and we also asked for their help choosing artwork. We have selected local artwork of the Shambles in York including images through the ages dating back to the 1800s. We have also sourced a gallery of artwork created by local artists to support small businesses during these tough COVID-hit times and generate a talking point at the scheme. The residents are thrilled with the new lounge and communal spaces.

From this...



To this...



“ It feels much more homely ”

“ I am proud to say that I live here now ”

“ It’s amazing ”

“ I can’t wait to show my daughter,
she will want to move in ”

“ It no longer looks like
an old people’s home ”

“ It’s unbelievable,
thank you so much ”

“ It makes me so emotional,
I’m nearly in tears, I love it ”



Using local contractors

Any repairs which are needed in our properties are arranged locally, so this means that our spend of £11,341,000 went to local companies, helping local employment opportunities.

So, how happy are our residents with the repairs?



95% of our residents are happy with the **overall quality of the repair**

89% are happy with the repair being **done right the first time**

“ The work was done with perfect satisfaction, so pleased to be here ”

Extra Care

“ Our new manager had the repairs done without delay. Well done. ”

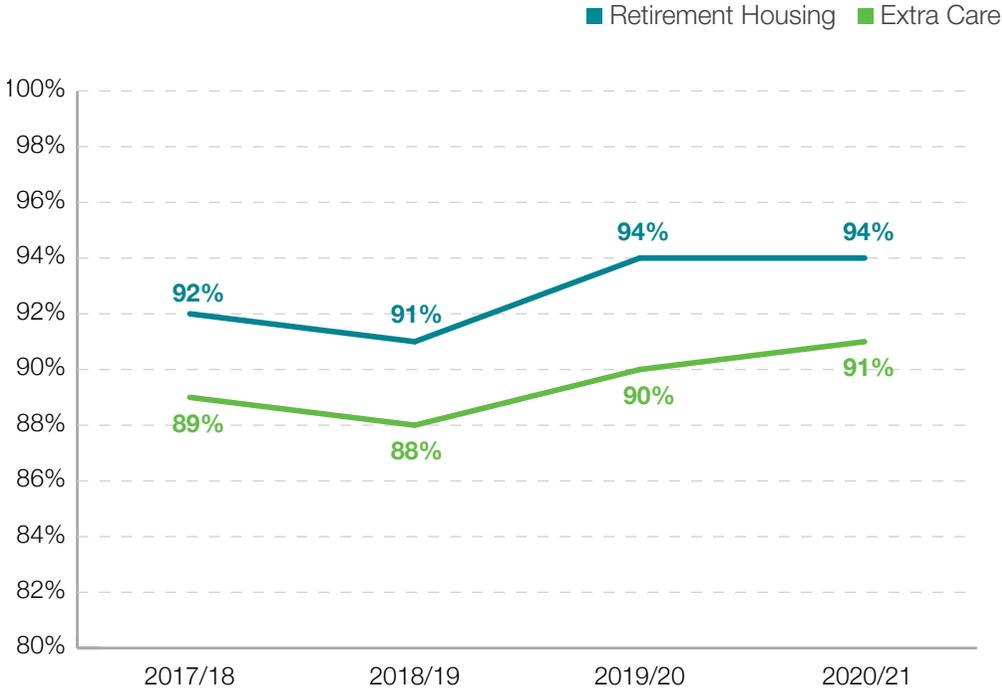
Retirement Living

“ Work completed to high standard. ”

Extra Care

Figure 2 shows that there is a gradual increase in the level of satisfaction with repairs.

Figure 2: Resident satisfaction with the repairs service, 2017-2021



“ The repair to the water coming in down a pipe into my cupboard has now been fixed. I am very pleased with the work, and the man was very good, cleaned up after his work, very pleasant. Thank you. The leak in my bathroom has been fixed to a very good standard and very clean. Thank you. (name) has done a good job. ”

Retirement Living



By working closely with our main contractors and sub-contractors, we have encouraged the development of apprenticeship opportunities in a wide range of occupations, as shown below.

- 10 Electrical apprentices
- 8 Bricklaying apprentices
- 6 Plastering apprentices
- 6 Plumbing apprentices
- 6 Carpentry apprentices
- 5 Trainee manager apprentices
- 4 Trainee site manager apprentices
- 4 Trainee quantity surveyor apprentices
- 3 Groundwork apprentices
- 2 Decorating apprentices
- 1 Roofing apprentice
- 1 Steel frame apprentice
- 1 Labouring apprentice

We are continuing to provide much needed housing...

We spent £83.39 million on building new schemes last year.

- To staff these new schemes, our costs
- increased by £377,154.

We know that more quality, contemporary accommodation and support for older people is needed and we are committed to playing our part. Housing 21 is committed to building 800 per year after 2021.

We've also made a commitment to build in those areas with the greatest need, such as those with high levels of deprivation or with a high BAME population.





Environmental Impact — taking care of the environment

Housing, or the residential sector, is responsible for about one-fifth of UK carbon emissions; if construction is included it is significantly higher. The Board, which is acting as a champion of the environmental agenda, has agreed that we should be ambitious in our commitment to sustainability. We should seek to go beyond the legal requirements, exceed those minimum standards and strive to achieve a position of 'doing no harm'. Our initial focus and emphasis are on the areas and issues where we might be able to have the biggest impact and where we are able to make a difference.

It is clear that environmental challenges are going to play a greater role in future strategic thinking and prioritisation for Housing 21 and we are truly committed to making positive changes for the environment. We believe that a targeted approach will make a greater impact than a little work on lots of areas.

Environmental impacts and issues will not be addressed if they are simply seen as an 'add on' or 'after thought'.

We are serious about addressing this agenda and will challenge our starting assumptions and approach. Progressive environmental standards will be set for all new developments.

We are focusing our efforts in those areas that will make the most difference, so the emphasis will be on the three key areas of:



We will also develop metrics to report on each of the above areas to assess the positive impact which we are making. We have also worked with other housing associations to sense check what we are doing as well as finding out about their pilot projects and whether they would be transferable to Housing 21.

An environmental steering group is in place with representation from across the organisation. The group is working towards embedding and aligning Housing 21’s sustainability objectives within the core organisation objectives. The group also leads the development of sustainable targets, tracks and challenges the progress being made against each of these and facilitates transparent reporting.

Carbon impact / energy consumption

We are currently at the forefront of the housing sector in terms of energy consumption with 92% of our properties already being EPC C or above. This will be achieved across all properties no later than April 2022. This objective has already increased EPC scores by 10 EPC points for 3,770 properties that were below level C. This translates into an estimated 25% saving on energy costs (circa. £140 per property and a total annual benefit to residents of over £525K per annum).

We will maintain that level without recourse to fossil fuels. We will seek to not install any new fossil fuel heating systems in new developments after 31 December 2022. This is a number of years ahead of the commitments of other providers to not install fossil fuel systems after 2025. We will measure the average carbon use for each scheme and track improvements to our overall carbon footprint.

We have started to calculate the carbon tonnage which the organisation produces, using the EPCs from our schemes. The dataset excludes electric heating from both communal areas and resident flats. This produces a total of 30,814 carbon tonnage per annum.

Carbon footprint: 30,814 tonnes

Housing 21 Annual CO₂ Figure — April 2020

We are planning to offset these emissions and over the next year will be evaluating suitable projects to support this as well as engaging with our employees and residents as to what these projects should be.

Moving forwards, we will continue to track any changes to the carbon footprint of our portfolio by modelling through the EPC Streamline software available to us. The benefits of this are that as the generation of electricity throughout the UK becomes greener, we will be able to demonstrate that our carbon footprint is reducing and therefore reduce the amount of offsetting required to achieve a carbon neutral status.

All electricity is only sourced from renewable sources.

We are committed to report on our carbon tonnage annually in our ESG reporting. We fully expect average energy use per property to fall as further improvements are made to current stock and new developments achieve higher energy rating levels.

Climate change resilience

Every single one of our schemes have been surveyed for climate change resilience and we have analysed the results.

We are addressing short-term resilience issues and producing action plans for each court during 2021 to plan longer-term environmental sustainability. Once results have been assessed then action plans and remediation strategies will be confirmed.

Last year, for the first time, we created Court Sustainability Strategies for each scheme. It is a thorough exercise where each Surveyor follows a template assessing a series of tasks and modelling exercises to demonstrate what impact each different heating system might have if it were to be installed on site. There are also other sections: flood risk, travel, transport, waste and water.

The idea behind this document is to evaluate the current position of a scheme giving us some basis to inform future decisions around investment, resident engagement and education on sustainability etc. The plans are individually signed off for each scheme. Residents are actively engaged in the development of Court Sustainability Strategies and each scheme will have a completed strategy by April 2022.

All of our new developments are going to be subject to a climate risk assessment and there will be an evaluation of options as well as alternative solutions to reduce carbon impact, water usage and waste.

Climate change is causing it to get much wetter in the winter with 2013/14 and 2015/16 being the wettest winters on record. This results in a significant strain on the sewerage system. There is also concern about the amount of housing which has been built on flood plains in recent years.

Overwhelmed sewage systems and a lack of natural drainage could contribute to flooding of our schemes. To assess the extent of this, we undertook some research and found:

- 61 schemes are at high risk of surface water or flash flooding.
- 59 schemes said they frequently suffer from storm damage.
- 13 schemes felt at future risk of coastal erosion.
- 17 Extra Care schemes suffered from overheating in winter and 82 courted stated they suffered from overheating in summer only.



Transport

The rapid change in the way of working during the pandemic has given us some positives. In 2017/18, pre Covid-19, Housing 21 recompensed approximately 1.8 million miles worth of journeys. The average car in 2015 emitted 153g CO₂ per kilometre. That means that if all of our cars conform to this average, then each year the company contributes approximately 440 metric tons of CO₂ to the atmosphere.

To do our bit for the environment, targets have been set to reduce travel costs in the 2020/21 budgets by at least 25% and reduce car travel by 25%, but these need to be linked to a review of car and travel policies and the organisation's new ways of working.

The impact of Covid-19 and the need to work from home demonstrated the potential for better use of video conferencing and less travel. We are in the process of reviewing office versus home-based working to minimise non-essential travel. We are determined to hold onto the positive changes.

We will also review our car and travel policies to ensure they are in line with our environmental stance.

We have a dedicated steering group to monitor and drive progress towards our environmental objectives and to challenge peers in their areas of responsibility. The steering group is sponsored by the Chief Executive and backed by the Board.

In addition to this work, we have:

- Installed a new electric thermal store heating system at a site in Hull which is the first of its kind for us;
- Started a Ground Source Heating Project at a scheme in Norwich.
- Liaised with numerous external businesses regarding accessing funding for future projects and these discussions are ongoing;
- Electric charging points?

We are determined to do the right thing by the environment and will strive to implement as many environmentally-friendly initiatives as we are able to.





Our services

We have two distinct service offers:

Retirement Living



Extra Care Living



Retirement Living

Retirement Living offers older people the opportunity to remain independent in their own home but in a community setting, with the added benefit of support from a dedicated Scheme Manager and a 24-hour emergency alarm system.

Scheme Managers are a vital component of our offer and are highly valued by our residents. They provide advice and arrange help if required whilst also managing the building and associated services.

“ Scheme Manager is there when I need them, but I still feel independent ”

“ I receive the right level of support and live in a beautiful home — I am so much happier here ”

We manage over 14,000 Retirement Living properties which are mainly rented in more than 350 locations across England. They vary in size and facilities, but many have a communal lounge, gardens and a guest room for visitors.

Leasehold properties

We have over 1,000 leasehold properties where we provide a management service.

Leasehold is the most popular tenure to facilitate home ownership within buildings with multiple households. Housing 21 uses leasehold to offer affordable home ownership and is committed to this tenure being fair and transparent with no hidden charges or penalties whilst providing value for money for its leaseholders.

“ Comfortable independent living with reasonable costs ”



“ The standard of my property is excellent and the support I receive from Housing 21 is the cherry on the cake ”

“ I wanted to stay independent while also feeling safe and supported and moving to this Housing 21 property has meant I can do that ”

Extra Care Living

Extra Care Living provides care for older people in a housing setting, enabling them to maintain their independence with the reassurance of having Care Workers on-site 24/7. Extra Care is also a positive alternative to residential care, allowing couples to stay together when their care needs vary. All of our properties are pet-friendly and we encourage pet ownership for the positive difference it can make to the lives of our residents.

“ I am very comfortable in my flat, carers on duty 24/7 which gives my family and me peace of mind ”

“ Being safe and happy. It makes a big difference, thank you ”

“ The service that is provided is excellent. All Housing 21 employees from the Cleaner upwards do a first-class job ”

Our preference is to integrate the management of housing and care, providing care with our own Care Workers. Although we do not provide the care to all of our Extra Care residents, we do deliver over 42,000 hours of care a week and are proud of our commitment to providing the highest quality care services. As a leading organisation in the sector with over 90% of our Extra Care schemes rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission. We are leading the sector with six 'Outstanding' services as rated by CQC.*

*as of 31 March 2020



Extra Care schemes tend to be larger than Retirement Living schemes and typically have between 60 to 80 properties per site as well as more extensive communal facilities including hair salons and on-site restaurants providing freshly cooked meals. We develop Extra Care schemes in partnership with local authorities as Extra Care often offers a cost-effective way to provide for care needs. Properties are available to rent but also to purchase on a shared ownership basis for older people who have some housing equity.

Housing 21 is the largest provider of Extra Care in England with over 6,000 properties, around 10% of Extra Care provision and is set to retain this position as a major developer of Extra Care.

“ People received exceptional, person-centred care from the onset. Their wishes were understood and close relationships between people, employees and families had developed. Family members told us the care their relatives received was exceptional and had far exceeded their expectations ”

[CQC report for Cambrian Green Court](#)



Within our Extra Care housing we have a number of properties which are managed in a different way or offer an alternative to renting.

Shared ownership

We have 989 shared ownership tenancies (5% of all tenancies) where residents buy the lease for a property at a percentage of the full market rent. This has previously been from 25% to 75%, however the new model of shared ownership, reduces the initial purchase percentage to 10%. A monthly rent is payable on the share that is not owned.

Housing 21 offers a shared ownership option alongside the rental option to enable people to retain their current status of homeowner if they wish to whilst being able to access the additional care and support offered by us.



Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

Housing 21 has two PFI contracts, both for a period of 30 years. They are located in Oldham and Kent.

Our housing in Oldham

In Oldham we manage over 1,400 properties on behalf of Oldham Council. The project covered the initial refurbishment of the council's sheltered housing stock and some new builds, resulting in 820 bungalows and 613 flats, split across six Extra Care and 13 Retirement Living schemes. The service contract runs until 2036, until which time we provide full housing management, repairs, maintenance and support services for residents. Now in the 15th year of the project, we are also delivering additional improvements to properties in partnership with the council, to ensure they continue to meet the changing needs of residents.

Our housing in Kent

Better Homes Active is the PFI in Kent, through Kent Community Partnership to Kent County Council, in partnership with 10 district and borough councils. We manage 16 schemes providing 275 units of Extra Care housing, 58 supported apartments for adults with learning disabilities and seven supported living apartments for people with mental health conditions.

Sandwell and Walsall Public Private Partnership (PPP)

This 30-year contract between Housing 21 and Walsall Borough Council consists of five Extra Care sites and a specialist dementia residential care home. We also manage three Extra Care sites in Sandwell.

The Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing

The Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing was launched on 10 November 2020 by the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) working group. The ESG reporting framework has been developed to establish a transparent, consistent and comparable set of ESG criteria across the housing sector.

The standard is a voluntary reporting framework which is based around 12 core themes, shown below, under which there are 48 criteria.

ESG Area	Theme #	Theme Name
Social	T1	Affordability and Security
	T2	Building Safety and Quality
	T3	Resident Voice
	T4	Resident Support
	T5	Placemaking
Environment	T6	Climate Change
	T7	Ecology
	T8	Resource Management
Governance	T9	Structure and Governance
	T10	Board and Trustees
	T11	Employee Wellbeing
	T12	Supply Chain Management

This report follows the structure of the ESG framework and reports on all criteria, core and enhanced. Where specific data is unknown, the context around the criteria is offered.



Social

T1 – Affordability and security

This theme seeks to assess the extent to which housing providers provide affordable homes. There are five criteria including affordability, the tenure mix of new and existing properties and the security of tenure.

Housing 21 as a not-for-profit social housing provider has the core purpose to provide housing and care for older people of modest means. Approximately 75% of our residents are in receipt of benefits and cannot afford to buy in the open market. We provide security of tenures for our residents which are not time limited.



Our average rent is 87.2% of the median private rental sector.

Our average rent is 83.4% of the Local Housing Allowance.

22.4% of our properties are above the average private rent and 77.6% are below (3,913 properties).

31.2% of our properties are above the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) level and 68.8% are below (5,442 properties).

This position reflects the last financial year. However, we made a decision at the start of this financial year that we will move away from Affordable Rent and all tenancies will be on a Social Rent formula as from 1 April 2021. This allows us to apply a flexible rather than fixed service charge which we believe offers better value for money.

The following table shows the number and proportion of existing homes allocated to the different rent and tenures. We operate in approximately 200 local authority areas throughout England.

Existing stock

	Number	% of total
General needs	62	0.3%
Affordable rent	3,436	15.9%
Housing for older people	15,098	70.1%
Low cost home ownership	1,155	5.4%
Care home	40	0.2%
Market rent	211	1.0%
Scheme Manager	85	0.4%
Social leasehold	882	4.1%
Non-social leasehold	578	2.7%
	21,547	100%

The following table shows the number and proportion of new homes completed in the last financial year allocated to the different rent and tenures. We have a target to build 800 properties each year; 80% of these will be Extra Care and 20% Retirement Living.

Properties completed in the financial year 2020/21

	Number	% of total
Affordable rent	80	20%
Housing for older people	128	32%
Low cost home ownership	192	48%
	400	100%

Helping residents with fuel poverty

We strongly believe that all our flats should be affordable to heat, protecting our residents from fuel poverty.

Since 2015 we have invested significantly in our stock to meet our enhanced property standards, ensuring we maintain our properties in an excellent condition which residents value, while meeting all regulatory and legal building safety requirements.

Our property standards mean that:

- Kitchens and bathrooms are no more than 20 years old
- Every scheme has a design-led makeover

T2 – Building safety

This theme assesses how effective the housing provider is at meeting the legal responsibilities to keep buildings safe, protect residents and ensure that their voice is heard.

Every resident has the right to feel safe and secure in their home and we ensure that we invest the necessary time and resource into ensuring that this is the case.



- 100% of our homes with a gas appliance have an in-date, accredited gas safety check.
- 100% of our buildings have an in-date and compliant Fire Risk Assessment.
- 100% of our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard.

T3 – Resident voice

This theme looks at how effective the housing provider is at listening to and empowering its residents. There are three criteria covering resident satisfaction, complaint handling and board scrutiny.

Residents are at the focus of our services and we want to empower them to tell us what we should be doing more of and what we should be doing less of.

The arrangements which are in place to enable the residents to hold management to account for provision of services are as follows:

We have an Extra Care Strategy and a Retirement Living Strategy in development, both of these have a heavy focus on involving and empowering residents and communities.

There are also recently re-energised Extra Care and Retirement Living resident groups which are panels made up of residents from around the country living in one of our properties. The aim of the groups is to give residents the chance to voice their opinions on our strategy, innovative ideas and give positive or constructive feedback about the services they currently receive and what they would like to see moving forwards.

In response to the White Paper, an Extra Care Residents group has been established who have met to discuss topics important to them, and will be meeting with the Extra Care committee.

Four reference groups have been set up within Retirement Living; each group will be chaired by a resident and will concentrate on: strategy, support, services and systems.

Residents are also involved in the recruitment of managers for each scheme.

We actively engage, involve and support residents in all aspects of our service, respond to their feedback and consider how our services need to adapt and develop to meet their changing needs and expectations.

All schemes are visited by a Housing Manager at least every eight weeks. Residents are informed of when this will be. This is the residents’ opportunity to air any issues, concerns or ideas which will then be dealt with at the local level. Obviously this has not been happening consistently during the past year due to Government restrictions during Covid-19.

T4 – Resident Support

This theme looks at how effective the housing provider is at listening to, and empowering, its residents. There are three criteria that cover Board scrutiny, complaint handling and resident satisfaction.

With our purpose being to provide housing, care and support for older people of modest means, we estimate around 75% of our residents claim welfare benefits. In order to support residents and help them to maintain their tenancies, we have a number of initiatives, such as the following:

Our Tenancy Gurus were established to promote and support our tenancy sustainment agenda which we call 'Helping Hands'. We recruited 50 gurus from across the organisation who received enhanced training on a range of topics such as benefits awareness and talking about money in a positive way. The gurus are now working with their colleagues to promote tenancy sustainment.

One of the ways we are doing this is our "Making a Difference" days. These are days where the whole organisation is encouraged to do something that will make a difference to our residents. The first day focussed on access to benefits although we also saw our staff making calls to focus on wellbeing and even delivering flowers to all residents.

Some examples of the differences made are:

- A Scheme Manager supported one resident to apply for backdated housing benefit, chatted about her income and prioritising her bills. The lady's rent account is now up to date as she has received an £800 back payment from Housing Benefit.
- A resident didn't understand his rent statements and how much he was required to pay. The Scheme Manager sat with the gentleman and explained his account in a different way, worked out with him his monthly payment and his account is now up to date.
- A Tenancy Guru had a benefits conversation with a resident and noticed she had not accessed all she was entitled to, the applications have been made and this lady has told us she is no longer worrying about money.

In addition to this, we have

- Daily wellbeing checks for residents by Scheme Managers.
- Appello warden call system including out of hour emergency call service.
- Activity co-ordinators and communal activities to tackle isolation, loneliness, wellbeing, mental and physical health.
- Handy person service.
- Some schemes have shops for basic goods including some pop up shops during the pandemic.
- A range of links with community groups who provide exercise classes and other activities including digital inclusion and IT skills.
- We have worked with foodbank and benefit advice services.

Complaint handling

With reference to the Ombudsman, in the last 12 months, we have received six case investigations back which have provided 13 determinations overall. Of these, four determinations were 'at fault' (rather than upheld).

As a result of these, the following actions have been taken:

- We have introduced an informal complaints process to strengthen the complaints procedure and make it easier and clearer for complainants.
- The consultation process for the implementation of heating systems will be reviewed in particular into how all residents are kept informed.
- There will be a review on how employees effectively communicate and keep records around on-going repair issues.
- The complaints training will be undertaken for employees and it has been updated to reflect the better use of redress when resolving complaints.
- A review of antisocial behaviour and Nuisance Policy.
- A review of Pets Policy.

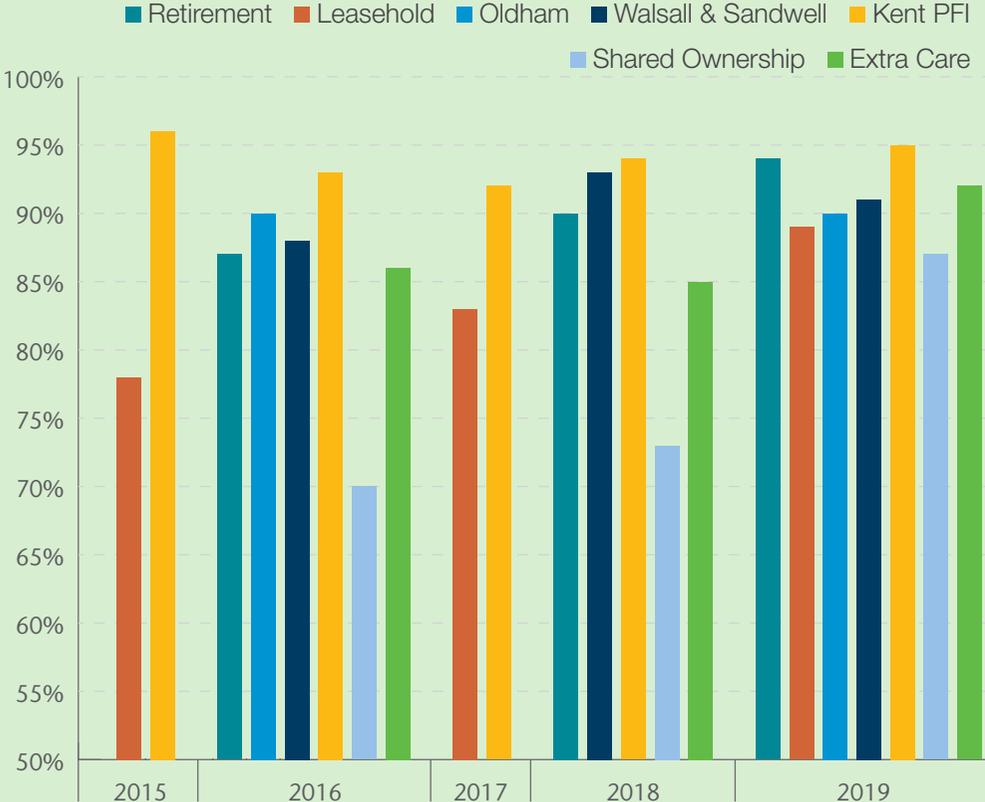
We also plan to introduce a formal process for lessons learned.

Resident Satisfaction

Housing 21 has a resident satisfaction target of 95%. Traditionally the resident satisfaction surveys have been bi-annually but this has now changed to being annual. The survey is outsourced to an independent research company. To date we have surveyed residents using a representative sample of residents to provide statistically robust data. In 2021, we are undertaking a census for the first time. This is in response to resident feedback that they would like to opportunity to complete this and offer their opinions.

The following chart shows resident satisfaction between 2015 – 2019.

Resident satisfaction by business stream



T5 – Placemaking

This theme highlights the wider set of activities that housing providers undertake to create well-designed homes and places.

We are committed to giving residents the power to determine how they want their Retirement Living or Extra Care scheme to be run and to do that we introduced a process of local choice and consensus.

A Court Service Agreement is decided upon by using choice and consensus to determine and agree how residents want their scheme to be run. This can include agreement on car parking, pets and use of communal lounges and gardens. It also includes the use of local contractors and the types of social inclusion activities that happen at their services.

In addition, consultations take place by corporate teams to explain any changes for residents such as rent or service charges. Communications also extend to information displayed in schemes and a bespoke schemes newsletter containing both local and organisation wide news.

Where residents want to meet more formally we will assist them with setting up their own residents groups.



Environmental

Climate Change

This theme seeks to assess how the activities of the housing provider are impacting on climate change. It considers current practice and future changes to improve performance. There are five criteria: including the distribution of EPC ratings, emissions data, climate change impact risk and resident information provision.

T6 – Distribution of EPC ratings of existing homes

Housing 21 is committed to sustainability and the Board has agreed that we should be ambitious, going beyond the legal requirements, exceed those minimum standards and strive to achieve a position of ‘doing no harm’. Our initial focus and emphasis is on the areas and issues where we might be able to have the biggest impacts and where we are able to make a difference.

EPC profile of our existing properties



B	24.71%	E	1.12%
C	67.20%	F	0.07%
D	5.22%	TBC	1.68%
			100.00%

*figures exclude leasehold, shared ownership properties, Kent PFI and Oldham PFI

On new developments, Housing 21 is committed to being sustainable. In part this relates to the type of construction and finding ways to reduce both embodied and operating carbon through careful design, innovative non fossil fuel heating and choice of materials. We are requiring higher levels of fabric improvement to our new developments with air tightness significantly better than Building Regulations. This is in addition to highly efficient MVHR systems to reduce the energy requirements for heating properties.

Over the past five years we have undertaken an energy assessment on the performance of all flats across our stock. The Decent Homes Standard requires us to assess and report on the insulation levels within our properties and all shortfalls have been rectified over previous years.

Housing 21 has an Energy Efficiency Property Standard that will ensure that each flat will have an energy efficiency rating of a minimum of a C by March 2022. Any schemes which have been identified as having old or inefficient heating systems have been incorporated into our major investment programme. This has delivered new efficient replacement heating systems and further improvements to insulation levels where required to ensure good levels of thermal comfort.

As expanded on below, we have undertaken reviews of our properties that do not meet EPC Band C and either completed energy saving measures or have a plan in place to complete before March 2022.

EPC rating of properties built during 2020/21

B	100%
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*figures exclude leasehold and shared ownership properties

We have started to calculate the carbon tonnage which the organisation produces, using the EPCs from our schemes. The dataset excludes electric heating from both communal areas and residents flats. This produces a total of 30,814 carbon tonnage.



We are planning to carbon off-set these emissions. Over the next year we will be evaluating suitable projects to support and will engage with our employees and residents as to what these projects should be.

Moving forwards we will continue to track any changes to the carbon footprint of our portfolio by modelling through the EPC Streamline software available to us. The benefits of this are that as the generation of electricity throughout the UK becomes greener, we will be able to demonstrate that our carbon footprint is reducing and therefore reduce the amount of offsetting required to achieve a carbon neutral status.

We are not currently measuring Scope 3 emissions but have a working group looking at the best way we can do this and what should be included.

We have undertaken a range of energy efficiency actions in the last 12 months.

We have undertaken reviews of our properties that do not meet EPC Band C and either completed energy saving measures or have a plan in place to complete before March 2022.

Examples of works include:

- New heating systems
- External wall insulation
- Loft insulation upgrades
- Window upgrades
- Energy saving lighting
- Controls to existing heating systems to improve efficiency
- Assessment of our existing communal heating systems and reduced consumption by better system set up (overheating sites)
- Renewable technology installation (Robert Smith Court GSHP in progress)

Climate risks – flood risk, overheating of schemes

Only one scheme has been identified at high risk of river and sea flooding.

Over recent years efforts have been made to address heating systems with a particular focus on overall control. Last year we carried out an assessment of overheating in our schemes. Specific data was captured relating to the type of heating systems and experiences from the resident and care team perspective were captured. The results showed 63% of schemes had no issues.

We have seen a good deal of improvement. Many of the sites have new controllers fitted which allow us to view and adjust the heating settings. A follow up call to schemes will be undertaken this summer to monitor the situation.

Short-term resilience issues are being addressed and we are committed to producing action plans for each scheme during 2021 to plan longer-term environmental sustainability.



Ecology

This theme assesses the work which the housing provider is undertaking to protect the environment and ecology. It looks specifically at biodiversity and managing pollutants.

T7 – How is the Housing Provider increasing Green Space and promoting Biodiversity on or near homes?

We have recognised that outdoor spaces have been invaluable for wellbeing and socialising during the difficult times everyone experienced due to the pandemic. The latest asset management strategy has highlighted the need to improve some of the outdoor spaces for residents to maximise their access to somewhere to sit, reflect, socialise and get the health benefits of being outdoors in the fresh air.

We will be looking to ensure the garden makeovers offer seating, lighting, pathways, sensory planting and covered areas to sit and enjoy the view or participate in a hobby. These areas offer opportunities for residents to enjoy the outdoors as well as engage in gardening activities, both of which can be very beneficial to wellbeing, particularly noted during recent lockdowns.

- On new developments, Housing 21 is committed to
- being sustainable. We are also committed to creating
- welcoming and accessible gardens that support well-
- being and are secure environments for our residents who
- may have dementia or physical frailty. Typically we also
- invest in biodiverse landscaping to include flower beds and
- allotments for residents to tend to.

A number of pilot external makeovers are planned for 2021 which will be designed in conjunction with residents and our operational staff to see how we are able to transform gardens and general external areas into more attractive and usable spaces.

Each scheme has a contract with local grounds maintenance contractors which is chosen by residents and they also define the specification of the contract. The condition of external spaces is also a criteria within our internal Housing Quality Standard.

Managing and reducing all pollutants

In planning and building new schemes we work very closely with contractors, all of which have environmental considerations contained in the specification. We seek assurance that they actively work to this and monitor the impact of their actions.

All our developments are design and build and therefore the contractors are responsible for both targeting the maximum efficiency for recycling and diverting from landfill for waste and also for sourcing materials.

T 8 – Resource Management

This theme examines how the housing provider is managing resource use. It considers policies and results around the three criteria of sourcing materials, waste and water management.

Responsibly sourced materials

We have an environmental strategy which states that challenging environmental standards will be set for all new developments. We review the position with contractors through the delivery of new projects and seek innovation from contractors to review and target lower embodied carbon.

Waste management

Housing 21 reviews the waste management position with contractors through the delivery of new projects and looks at alternative forms of construction which will have positive impacts on waste reduction.

We are not proposing to actively measure or monitor scheme waste management and recycling volumes, but will encourage participation and adoption of the relevant local authorities' recycling campaigns. In doing this, we will remind residents about the importance of recycling at their scheme.

Centrally procured contracts must include consideration and demonstration of active steps to reduce waste and dispose of unavoidable waste in a sustainable manner. We will look for increasingly efficient ways to promote waste and embodied carbon.

Good water management

We are not proposing to actively measure or monitor scheme water use, but will encourage sensible and sustainable water use measures including rain water recycling for garden use, use of A rated and low water use washing machines in scheme laundries and installation of disperser taps.

We fit showers as opposed to baths in our properties, the taps have reduced flow to sinks and basins and residents water usage will generally be lower due to the occupancy of our properties (older persons not general needs).



Governance

T9 – Structure and governance

This theme provides information on the corporate and governance structure, it contains six criteria including ownership, governance and risk approaches.

- Housing 21 is registered with the Regulator for Social Housing.
- The most recent rating is G2 V1.
- We have adopted the National Housing Federations Code of Governance.
- Housing 21 is a not-for-profit provider.

The management of risk is acknowledged as being fundamentally important to Housing 21.

Risk management processes are incorporated into the strategic risk framework supported by a range of routine governance activities which sit alongside the strategic and department risk process. Each committee of the Board reviews risks aligned to their areas of responsibility, assessing risk against the Board's risk appetite, reviewing actions to mitigate risk to an acceptable level. In addition each committee and the Board completes horizon scanning to ensure emerging risks are considered. The Audit and Assurance Committee and Board maintain oversight of strategic risks.

Housing 21's risk framework includes reviewing the controls and assurance mechanisms which manage risks, assessments of risk in terms of impact and probability, aligned to the Boards risk appetite, along with the recording and review of risk actions which mitigate risks to an acceptable level. In addition, related performance information and risk triggers are reviewed to assess whether further management action is needed.

Although the Board is ambitious in its outlook, particularly around growth, technology and sustainability, it maintains a wholly averse risk appetite in respect of non-compliance with Regulation and Law, including any failures of health and safety. The Board expects a measured approach to risk, there being no complacency in the assessment of risks along with a 'compliance first' approach to be taken and evidenced by the organisation.

Adverse regulatory findings

During the last 12 months there has been a downgrade of the Governance rating from G1 to G2 as a result of failures to govern rent setting and charging effectively which has led to overcharging rents to a number of residents. Housing 21 commissioned a review into root causes and is working through an improvement action plan whilst also working on rectification of prior overcharges.

T10 – The Board and Trustees



This theme seeks to assess the quality, suitability and performance of the Board of Trustees. The 11 criteria includes demographics of the board, ownership, experience and their independence.

There are a total of 11 Board Members. Five of which are women and six are men. Two are from a BAME background. One Board Member has a disability and their average age is 59 years old.



The average tenure of a Board Member is three years.



The maximum tenure for a Board Member according to our internal policy is six years.



Housing 21 operates across approximately 200 local authority areas, all with a different demographic profile so it is not easy to state that it is representative of an area. However, we aim to integrate diversity of representation and thought into the Board.



100% of the Board are Non-Executive Directors.

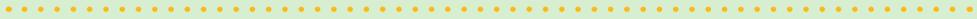


All Board Members on the Audit Committee have recent financial experience, one member was a Finance Director until 2016, one was a partner at KPMG until recently and one is a Director of various businesses.

Housing 21 does not have a separate remuneration committee, however this remit is included within the Governance and Transformation Committee.



A succession plan is in place and has been discussed with the Board in the last 12 months. It contains information and a clear plan detailing the date a Board Member may leave and what skills are needed to replace them.



Our external audit partners, BDO, have been responsible for auditing the accounts for 18 years.



The last independently run board-effectiveness review was undertaken in February to March 2021.



The roles of Chair of the Board and Chief Executive are held by two different people.



A register of interests is maintained by the Board. The rules set out how to treat potential conflicts and at each meeting the Board is asked to identify against each agenda item where a conflict could potentially arise.

T11 – Employee wellbeing

This theme assesses the extent to which the housing provider is a good employer. It is made up of five criteria: the CEO-worker pay ratio, a disclosure on being a Living Wage employer, gender pay gap, sick pay, sick days and support provided to employees.

Housing 21 gained accreditation for Investing in People Platinum in July 2021.

Housing 21 does not pay the Real Living Wage. We are committed to paying our Care Workers 10% above the National Living Wage and over 70% of our Care Workers are contracted and not on zero hour contracts.

It is important to note that gender pay gap is not the same as equal pay. Housing 21 pays all individuals equally regardless of gender or any other protected characteristic. We recently completed the second and final phase of our pay review project, ensuring that all roles in the organisation have been reviewed using an assured methodology.

- We are tackling low pay by investing in our Care Workers, who have earned at least 10% above the new National Living Wage rate from April 2018.
- Our gender pay gap is 36.7% mean and 30.6% median.

Our Gender Pay Gap is high and is driven by the structure of our workforce and the nature of the work we do. We employ a large number of women who work part time, carrying out occupations in cleaning, care and support that are not highly paid. 90% of our workforce are female, with men proportionally underrepresented in lower paid roles having a significant impact on our overall pay gap.

When broken into deciles we can see that a significant pay gap only occurs with our highest paid staff, in part due to greater differentials at this level. It is noted that 62% of roles in the highest decile are held by female employees. Since the time of reporting our Executive Team has undergone significant change, including increased representation of female employees.

We are continuing to invest in ensuring Housing 21 is an inclusive organisation, having recently appointed to a new role – Respect & Inclusion Lead. This role will help to shape our future strategy for inclusion not just in regards to the gender pay gap, but in all that we do.

The Chief Executives worker pay ratio is:

Year	25th Percentile Pay Ratio	Median Pay Ratio	75th Percentile Pay Ratio
2020/21	“15:1	“14:1	“12:1

The data snapshot used to generate this is the same dataset that feeds our gender pay gap reporting. Our pay policies ensure equal pay, and our CEO/employee salaries are applied consistently on this basis.

Housing 21 supports the physical and mental health needs of our employees in a number of ways. We have a Wellbeing Lead who oversees a number of sub-groups which include mental wellbeing, physical wellbeing and the menopause. We also have a number of respect and inclusion sub-groups which undertake initiatives which support the mental and physical wellbeing of staff including a transgender and sexuality group, a disability group and race and religion. All groups come together under an umbrella group – Make Work Better. All groups have an action plan and Terms of Reference.

We have developed in-house leadership training which is accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management. These training courses hold modules on employee wellbeing.

The average number of sick days taken by employees is 17.6 days.

T12 Supply Chain Management

The Procurement Policy includes a section on Ethical, Environmental and Social Responsibility.

- It is a fundamental policy that Housing 21 always behaves ethically and with integrity in all its activities. In turn it seeks to improve performance through effective supply management.
- Housing 21 will use its influence and buying power to encourage suppliers to carry out socially responsible practices and use energy and resources efficiently. An ongoing aim is to incrementally introduce sustainable procurement practices throughout procurement operations.

Housing 21 wishes to work with suppliers that share a commitment to preserving world natural resources. As far as is reasonably practicable, Housing 21's procurement choices will favour products showing clear environmental advantages and will seek to use suppliers having similar policies and practices. Procurement intends to integrate sustainable procurement criteria into its activities on an ongoing basis by including obligations on suppliers to demonstrate their approach in tender documents which will form part of the evaluation of bids.

We will avoid using companies that exploit child or sweated labour, that disregard basic health and safety provision, that 'pirate' the intellectual property of others, or that wilfully and avoidably damage the environment or otherwise act in contravention of applicable laws.

Suppliers shall demonstrate how every endeavour in this area is made, where economically possible, to utilise products/components manufactured from sustainable sources or from recycled materials where this does not have a negative impact on planet performance.

Our procurement activity will be conducted such that any supplier who has the necessary abilities to be of service to the company has a fair opportunity to secure Housing 21's business.

Housing 21 recognises that it has a responsibility to its suppliers. Wherever possible, when problems arise with a supplier's performance or behaviour, we will work with the company concerned to help them meet our requirements where this is deemed to be appropriate.



Housing

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