

Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) Report

2023





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Foreword

Flagship Group (FG) is a housing association (HA) based in the East of England, managing approximately 32,000 social and affordable homes leased to people on low incomes. We also develop new homes for rental, shared ownership, and market sale. Our commitment to reinvesting all profits back into the business, Profit for Purpose, allows us to continue building more homes, maintaining our properties effectively, and providing essential support to our tenants when needed.

Our strategic vision is to “solve the housing crisis,” and our purpose is “providing homes and creating sustainable communities.”

Throughout the past financial year, the UK has confronted a myriad of challenges, including the post-pandemic COVID-19 recovery, the rising prices of goods and services, and climbing interest rates all impacting business profitability. Additionally, we have navigated labour and materials shortages, government rent caps, and the pressing cost-of-living crisis, which has sadly left many people faced with the difficult choice between heating and eating. Addressing damp

and mould issues has emerged as a top priority for housing associations, alongside continuous efforts to ensure homes are safety compliant, all while actively pursuing the decarbonisation of our housing stock.

Amidst growing global concerns about the environment and sustainability, the UK faces economic challenges to meet legislated environmental targets and transition to renewable energy sources. To contribute to these efforts, we have set a target for all our existing homes to achieve a minimum energy performance rating of EPC C/ SAP 69¹ by 2030 and have successfully secured an additional £5m in funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) to upgrade 400 more of our properties. Yet, we recognise the costly and logistical challenges ahead as we strive to improve the energy performance of our homes, reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions, and meet the government’s EPC C target and Net Zero by 2050. Our focus remains dedicated to environmental management, reducing pollution risks, and enhancing our systems and data to ensure sustainable business operations, both in the short and long term.

David Armstrong
Chief Operating Officer



Against this challenging backdrop, FG has continued its commitment to dedicating additional funding to support tenants, charities, and local partners through our charity, Hopestead, and our dedicated Affordable for All funding, helping those in need and individuals at risk of homelessness.

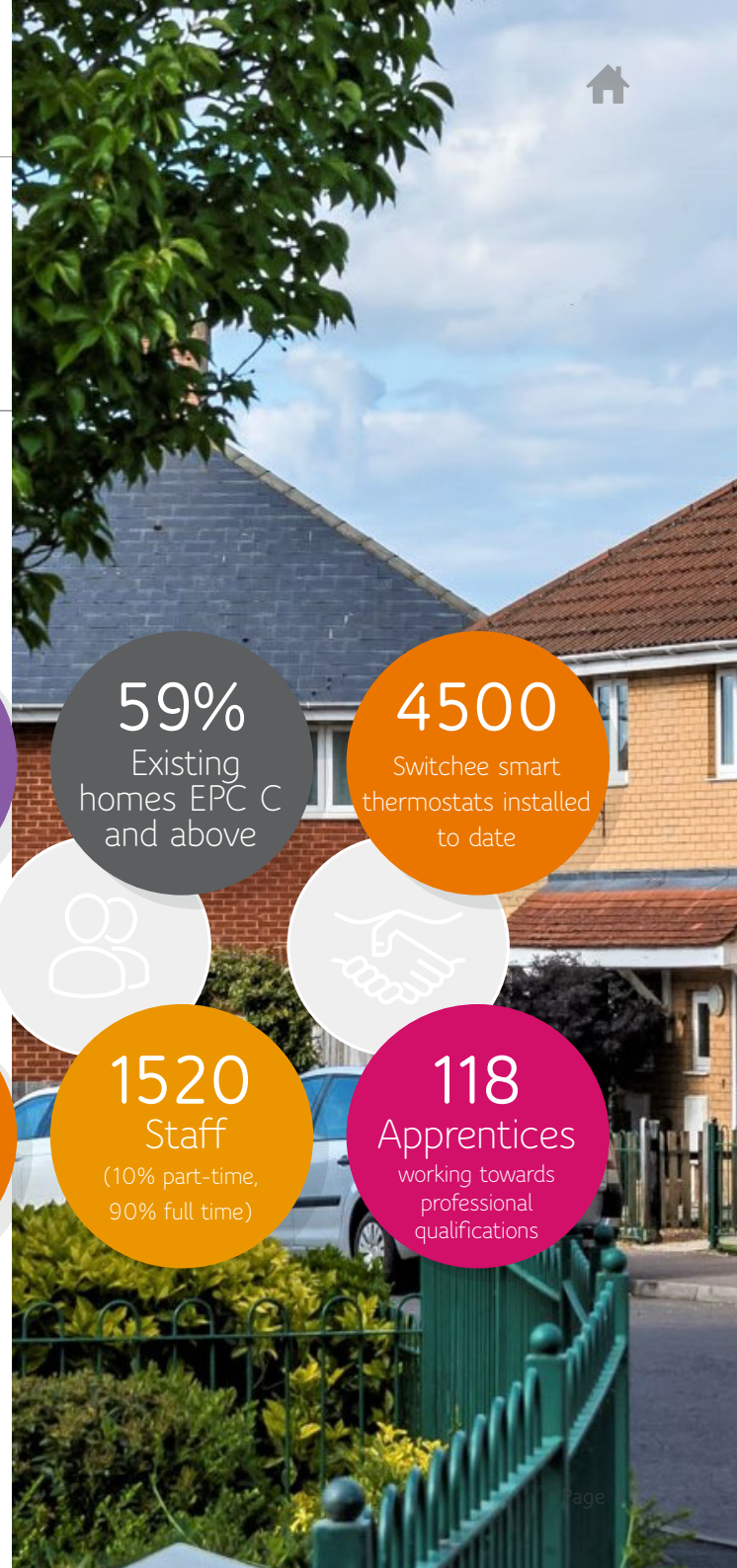
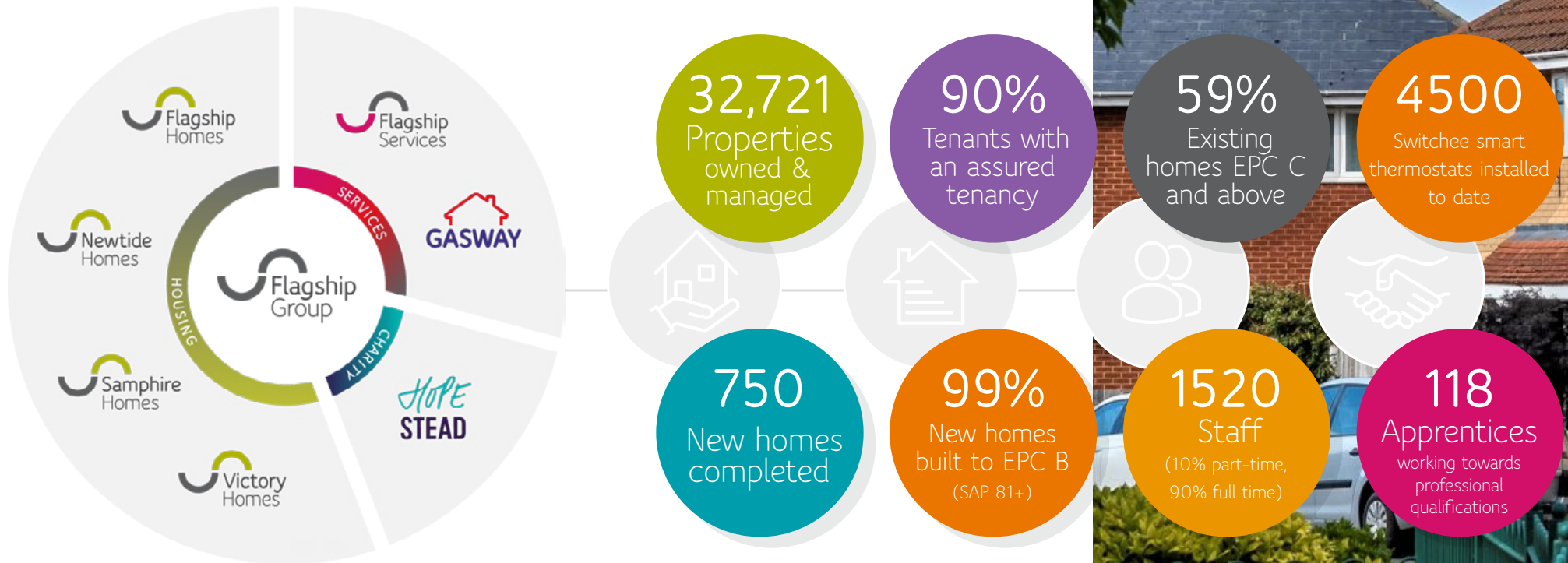
As an early adopter of the Sustainability Reporting Standard (SRS) for Social Housing, we remain committed to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Summary reporting. This marks our third ESG report, wherein we report against the same 48 criteria as last year.

We invite you to explore this report, which highlights our ongoing efforts, progress, and dedication to sustainability and social responsibility. Together, we strive to make a positive impact on our communities and the environment.

¹Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) tell you how energy efficient a building is and give it a rating from A (very efficient) to G (inefficient). They tell you how costly it will be to heat and light your property, and what its carbon dioxide emissions are likely to be (Energy Savings Trust).

Guidance on how a home’s energy performance is calculated using the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) methodology, which underpins the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) (www.gov.uk).

Flagship at a Glance



Report structure

This report is structured in line with the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing SRS Themes/Criteria and matched to the most relevant direct UN SDG.



Social

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Flagship Group impact

Hover over one of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals on the wheel to see how we are making an impact in this area*



*If you are unable to read Interactive PDFs, please refer to the appendix on page 47 [here](#)

Social

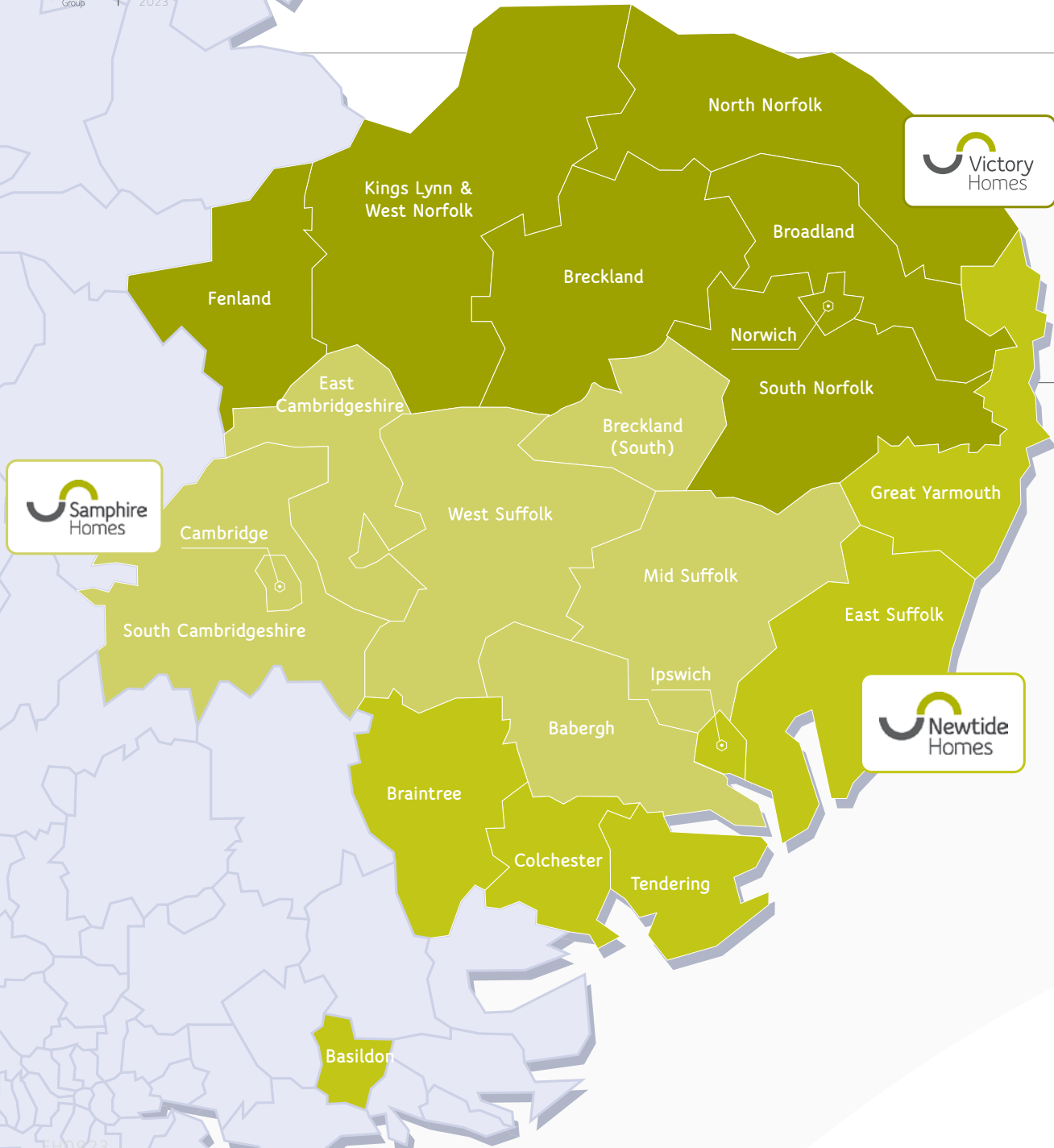
At Flagship, we understand that a home encompasses more than just its physical structure. Our core belief revolves around empowering our tenants to reside and truly flourish within their tenancies, fostering sustainable and thriving communities. Our utmost priority is to offer secure, well-managed, energy-efficient, and safe homes, complemented by easy access to amenities and enjoyable green spaces.

As a social housing provider, we are steadfastly committed to providing affordable and secure housing to individuals with low incomes facing socio-economic challenges. Unfortunately, years of soaring property prices, with houses costing approximately ten times the average salary and the 31% surge in private rental costs in the East of England, have rendered homeownership or private renting unattainable for many.

Amidst the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and various economic impacts, rising interest rates have resulted in increasing energy and food costs not experienced in years, leaving many of our tenants struggling to make ends meet during this financial year. In the face of such challenges, our work becomes even more crucial, given the high demand for social and affordable housing.

Our recent in-house survey, revealed that a significant number of our tenants have been left with less than £100 per month in discretionary income. This emphasises the urgent need for us to provide additional wrap-around support to help them maintain a stable roof over their heads. This undertaking has become even more critical now than in previous years.





Creating sustainable communities

Our housing stock is split across three housing associations:

- Victory Homes
- Samphire Homes
- Newtide Homes

By splitting our homes across three areas, we can provide a more localised service that will benefit our tenants' needs and enable us to tailor our support to our local communities.

T1: Affordability & Security

This theme seeks to demonstrate that we provide homes that are genuinely affordable to those on low incomes.



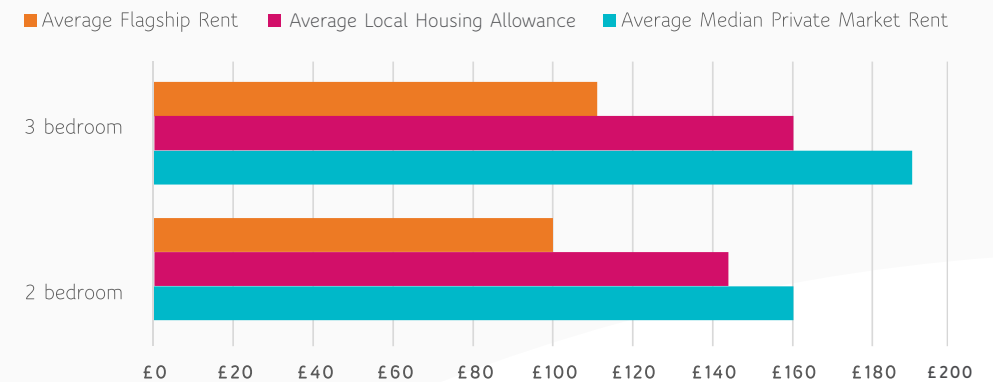
C1 - For properties that are subject to the rent regulation regime report against one or more affordability metric

As a housing association, we remain committed to our ESG principles by offering significantly lower rents compared to the private rental market. Our primary focus is on providing affordable housing solutions to those in need, potentially preventing homelessness within our communities.

The vast majority of our homes consist of two and three-bedroom properties, and on average, these rents are remarkably lower, ranging from 56% to 63% below the rates in the private market. Our rents are between 26% and 46% more affordable than the local housing allowance (LHA) rates.

This commitment to affordable housing showcases our strong sense of purpose and dedication to addressing the pressing social challenges of housing affordability and accessibility. By providing lower-cost housing options, we strive to make a positive impact on the lives of individuals and families facing financial hardships and housing instability. Our mission aligns with our ESG values, ensuring that social responsibility remains at the core of our operations and initiatives.

Comparison of the average weekly rental for Flagship, Private Market & Local Housing Allowance rates



C2 - Share and number of existing homes completed in the last financial year are allocated as follows:

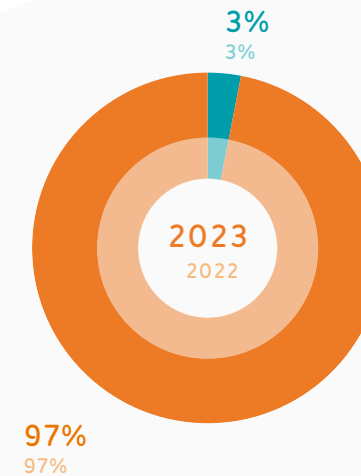
76% of our existing stock is made up of general needs housing that is charged at our lower social rents, and we have increased our general needs affordable stock by another 2% this year. This last financial year has also seen an increase in homes managed for others, up from 78 properties to 224.

Tenure Type	2020 -2021	% Share	2021 -2022	% Share	2022 -2023	% Share
General needs (social rent)	23,109	73	22,981	72	24,782	76
General needs (affordable rent)	2,209	7	2,607	8	3,064	9
Sheltered accommodation (social rent)	1,934	6	2,361	7	224	1
Low-cost home ownership (shared owner-)	1,634	5	1,690	5	1,863	6
Intermediate rent ⁴	1,132	3	1,168	4	1,180	4
Sheltered housing (social rent)	831	3	329	1	422	1
Sheltered (affordable rent - care homes)	0	0	30	0	22	0
Total Affordable	30,849	97	31,166	97	31,550	97
Market rented	346	1	348	1	347	1
Student accommodation	600	2	600	2	600	2
Accommodation managed for others	30	0	78	0	224	1
Total Non-Affordable	976	3	950	3	1,171	3

⁴ Intermediate rents are generally set at 80% of private market rents, but eligible service charges can be levied on top.

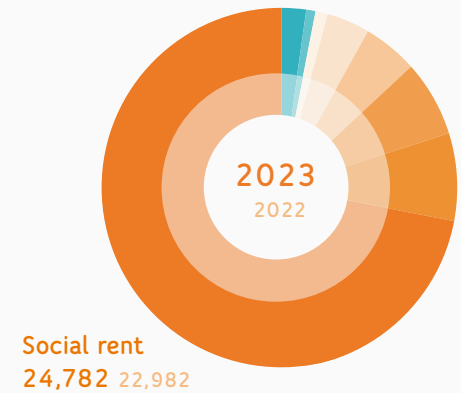
Share of homes

■ Affordable
 ■ Non-affordable



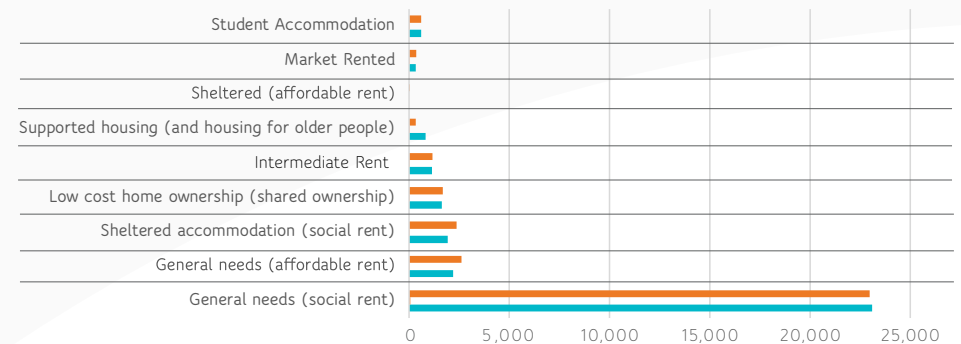
Share by tenure*

■ Affordable
 ■ Non-affordable



Number of homes by tenure type

■ 2021-2022
 ■ 2022-2023



C3 - The type and number of new homes completed in the last financial year

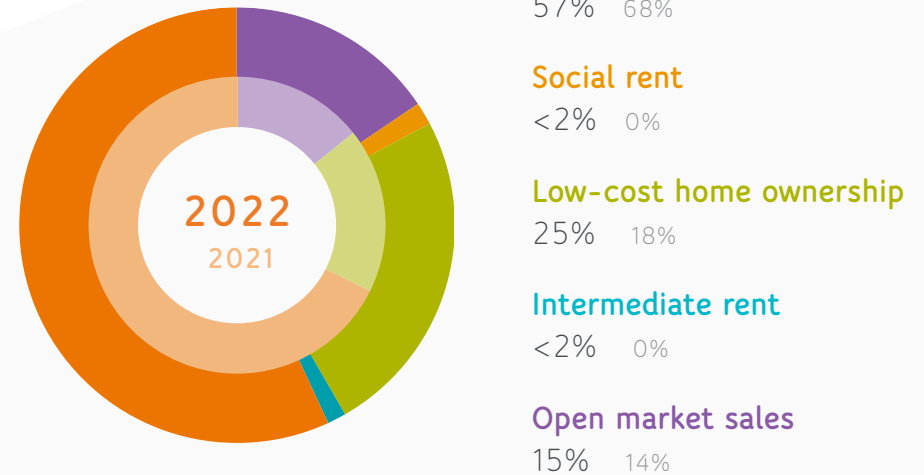
During this financial year, we are pleased to report that we have achieved significant progress in our housing construction efforts. A total of 751 new homes have been successfully constructed, marking a notable increase from last year's total of 655 homes.

Out of these newly built properties, 452 have been allocated as affordable homes for rental purposes. We are proud to contribute to addressing the ongoing housing affordability crisis by providing these affordable rental options to those in need within our communities.

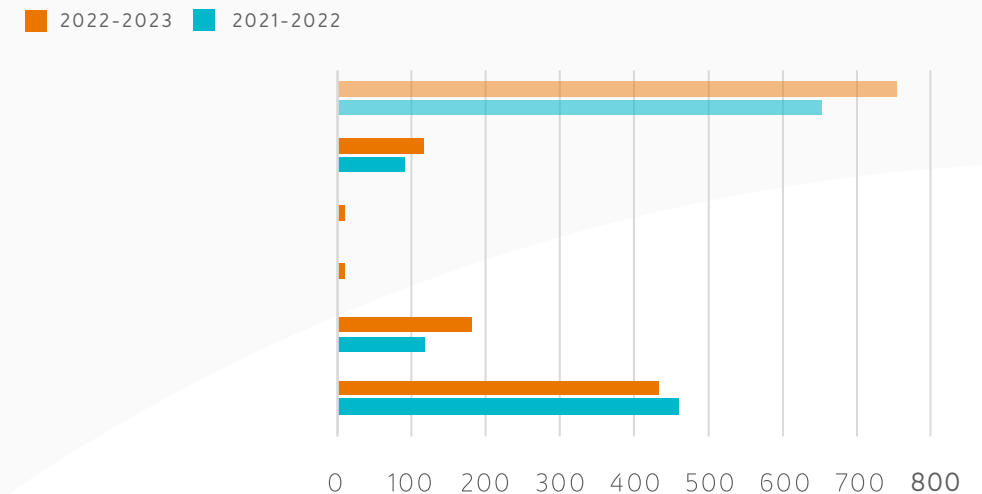
Furthermore, our commitment to social responsibility is evident, as 12 of these newly constructed homes have been specifically allocated for social rent.

New homes completed by tenure	2020-2021	% Share	2021-2022	% Share	2022-2023	% Share
Affordable rent	202	44	447	68	428	57
Social rent	0	0	0	0	12	<2
Low-cost home ownership (shared ownership and shared equity)	169	37	117	18	183	25
Intermediate rent product	89	19	0	0	12	<2
Open market sales	0	0	91	14	116	15
Total	460	97	655	97	751	100

Share of new homes by tenure



Number of new homes completed by tenure



C4- How is the housing provider trying to reduce the effect of fuel poverty on its tenants

Amidst the cost-of-living crisis and the surge in energy costs, our tenants have faced even greater hardships compared to previous years. To offer essential assistance, we increased our support through the 'Warmer Homes Fund,' launched in September 2022, as part of our Affordable for All initiative.

Here are some highlights of our support efforts:

- A total of 936 tenants received £93,488 in support from both the Warmer Homes Fund and the Discretionary Fund across the group.
- We assisted 519 families with their energy and heating bills, providing £42,492 in financial aid.

Throughout the winter months, our dedicated frontline staff worked tirelessly to address complex energy bill queries, handle prepayment meters, offer energy efficiency and budgeting advice, and refer tenants to organisations like the Citizens Advice for additional support. This commitment to assisting our tenants in need will continue for the foreseeable future.

We remain focused on our retrofit program, prioritising a 'fabric first' approach. Our goal is to enhance the thermal efficiency of our homes, ensuring they all achieve an EPC C/SAP 69+ rating

or higher by no later than 2030. We are particularly focused on addressing the thermal improvements of our homes with the lowest EPC ratings. Our retrofit projects adhere to PAS:2035 standards and regularly assess and model expected energy savings, mitigating the impact of rising energy costs.

We have software to model expected energy savings, mitigating the impact of rising energy costs.

For our off-gas homes, we prioritise the installation of air source heat pumps (ASHPs), especially in cases with inefficient and costly electric heating, such as old storage heaters. This year we fitted 360 air source heat pumps.

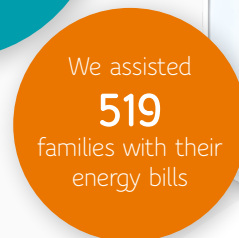
Embracing smart technologies, we have deployed approximately 4000 Switchee smart thermostats in our homes over the last few years, for which we

have received positive feedback for helping tenants manage their homes more efficiently.

Furthermore, we are actively testing various innovative technologies, ensuring that their running costs remain a top priority. We remain committed to exploring and implementing measures that empower our tenants with energy-efficient, sustainable, and cost-effective solutions.

C5- What % of rental homes have at least a three year tenancy agreement

90% of FG's tenants are in a secure tenancy bringing them peace of mind that they have a roof over their heads for as long as needed, bringing them long-term stability and security.



Supporting tenants during the Cost of Living Crisis

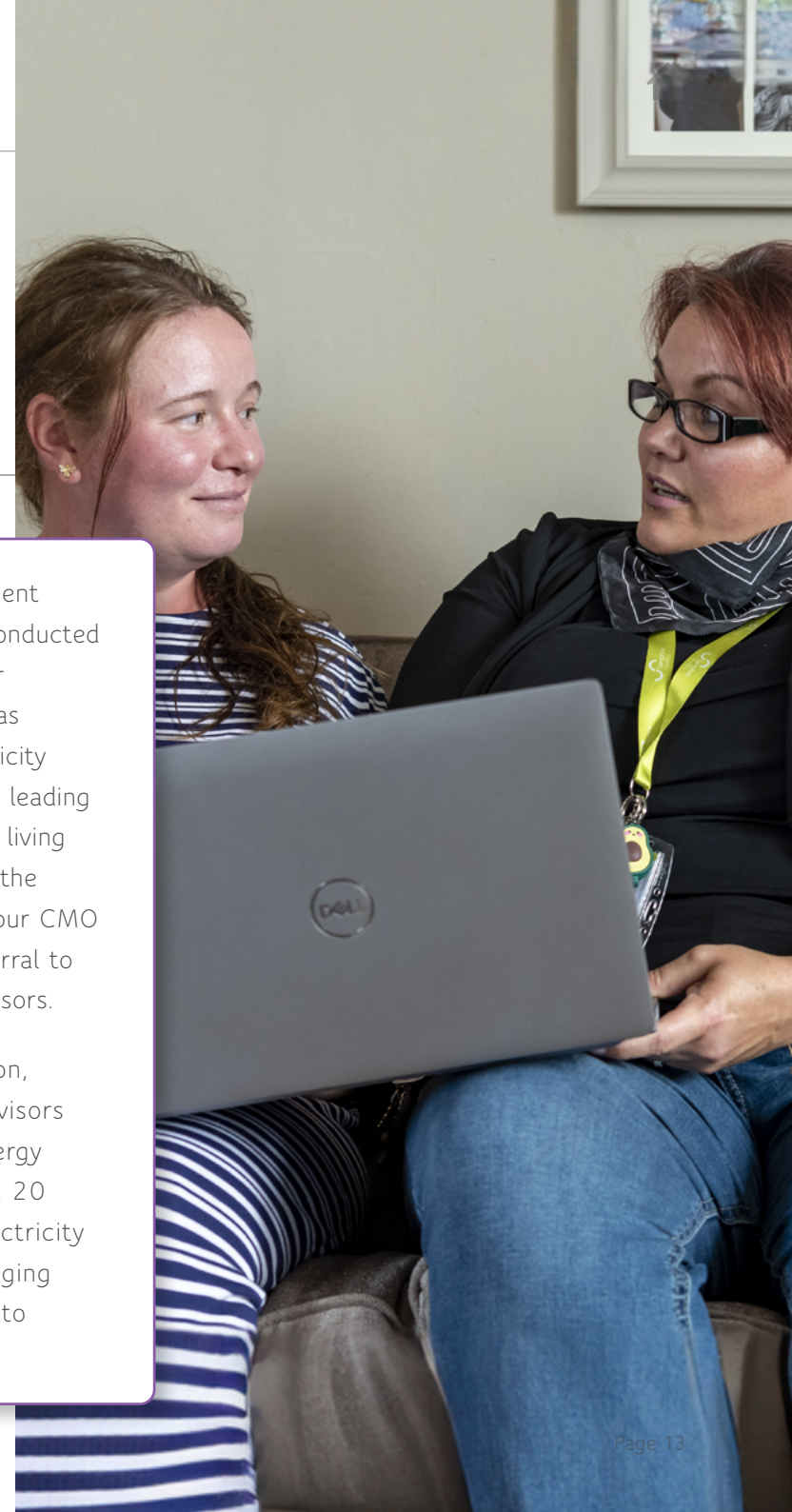
Flagship Services recently responded to a tenant's property to address damp and mould issues, only to discover that the tenant had endured a winter without heating. Upon immediate notification, our Affordable for All advisor was involved, revealing that the tenant had refrained from heating their home for several years due to financial constraints and personal difficulties. These challenges included financial struggles, the loss of a child, health problems, and ongoing cancer treatment.

To address the situation, the tenant had opened an account with an oil supplier and was making monthly payments with the intention of heating their home next winter. Thankfully, through our Warmer Homes fund, we were able to secure a donation, enabling us to support the tenant and their family by contributing towards the purchase of 500 litres of heating oil.

During a welfare visit conducted by our Tenancy Support Team, it came to light that the family was also burdened with the cost of renting a cooker, which was becoming increasingly unaffordable. In response, our Neighbourhoods Team stepped in to provide further assistance by sourcing a second-hand cooker, allowing them to return the rental and save some much-needed money.

Our Community Management Officer (CMO) recently conducted a home visit to one of our vulnerable tenants who was struggling to afford electricity during the winter months, leading to a cold, damp, and dark living environment. Recognising the urgency of the situation, our CMO promptly submitted a referral to our Affordable for All advisors.

Thanks to this swift action, the Affordable for All advisors immediately provided energy vouchers, and within just 20 minutes, the tenant's electricity supply was restored, bringing warmth and light back into their home.





T2: Building, safety & quality

This theme assesses how effective we are as a housing provider at meeting our legal responsibilities to protect our tenants and ensure our homes are safe.

SDG
Directly
Impacted



Safety remains a top priority for the housing sector. FG has been employing people with the necessary skillsets required to manage all areas of compliance. FGs commitment to investing further in staff has seen more compliance streams handled in-house leading to less reliance on external providers.

The Fire Safety Act, 2021 and Building Safety Act, 2022 have helped shape the new team that delivers fire safety. This is an area of compliance that is evolving quickly, and we have a fully resourced team to meet the challenges of embedding the legislation and best practice guidance.

61 properties were marked as overdue for gas services at the end of March 2023, all of these are process compliant and with the legal team.

This year we commissioned Savills to carry out an additional 6,000 stock condition surveys on our properties as the basis for our decent homes analysis. This was a representative sample of the stock based on archetype and location and as such provides high statistical accuracy and was used as a baseline for the DHS position across our entire stock. Any homes that were identified as not meeting the DHS will be prioritised for works to bring them up to standard during the new financial year.

C6 - What % of homes with a gas appliance have an in-date, accredited gas safety check? **99.7%**

C7 - What % of buildings have an in-date and compliant Fire Risk Assessment? **98.7%**

C8 - What % of homes meet the Decent Homes Standard (DHS)? **97.6%**



T3: Tenants' voice

This theme seeks to assess how effective we as the housing provider are at listening to and empowering our tenants.

SDG
Directly
Impacted

C9 - What arrangements are in place to enable the tenants to hold management to account for the provision of services?

We know that involved tenants should be a key part of our governance and scrutiny arrangements. We have been developing our new Tenant Voice Framework to be inclusive and tailored to the needs of our tenants, which will encourage and support greater involvement.

Our personal and local offerings are well established with clear and actionable data informing service improvement and local engagement to bring tenants together over common issues such as anti-social behaviour or improvements to communal areas.

This year we have been focusing on enhancing and developing new mechanisms and channels for tenants to influence decision-making at a Group level.

We currently have a total of nine tenants on our three local housing boards and this year to strengthen our involved tenant offer, we launched our 'Group Influencer Network', to provide more opportunities for tenants to influence strategic decision-making.

The framework focuses on three key areas:

Group
Gaining tenants' views on our direction, allowing a stronger, more impactful voice in decisions.

Personal
Driving insights from feedback, complaints and service requests

Local
Getting tenants involved in their communities on what matters to them



Tenant INfluencer Network

In February we announced a suite of new Group engagement options via a newly branded “Influencer Network” offer that is inclusive, wide-ranging and has a variety of channels and topics open to all.

The Influencer Network enables involved tenants to review, scrutinise and discuss a variety of topics, policies, strategic priorities and/or issues identified through our customer insight data or proposed via our tenants themselves. We hold four in-person ‘Group Influencer’ events per year for our Influencers to scrutinise a different key service area each quarter. Service area managers are present as well as team members to discuss the service, answer questions and receive tenant views, opinions and feedback directly.

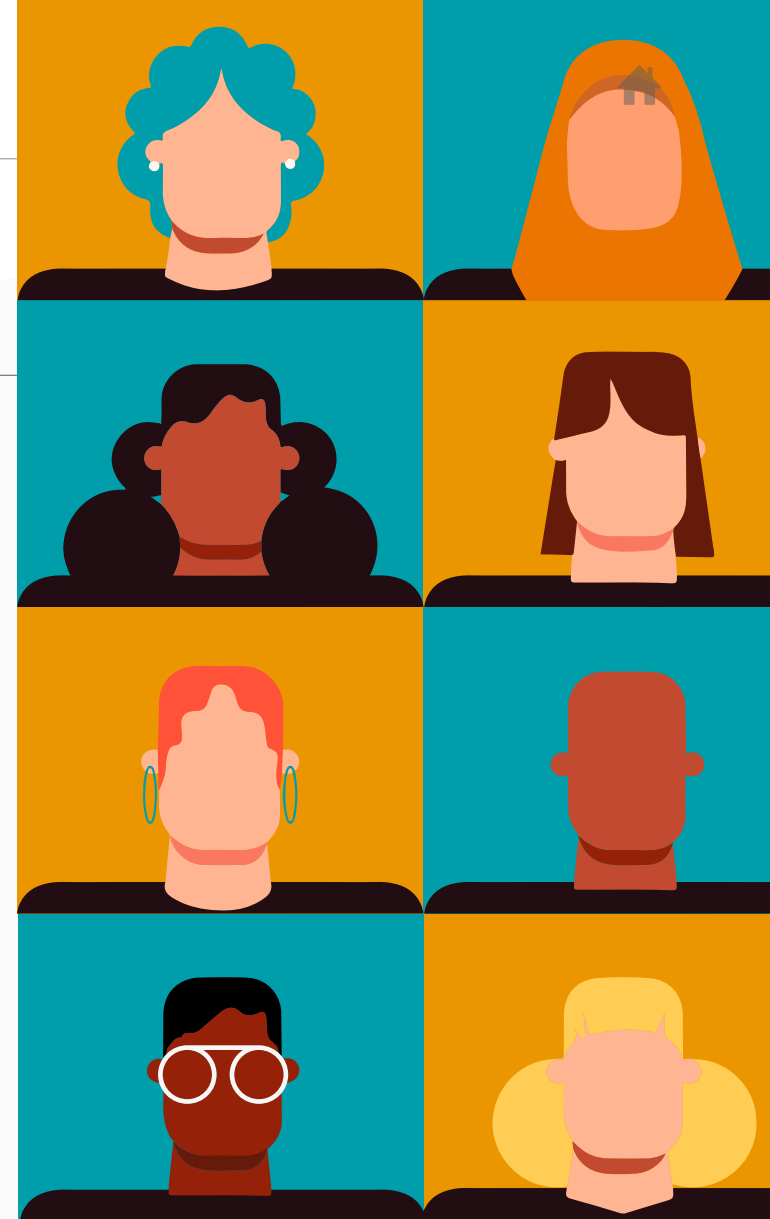
Our tenant influencers are invited to join us at co-creation and collaboration sessions on a regular basis. We recently worked together to review a new repairs policy and invited feedback on our damp and mould correspondence, providing a valuable contribution for further shaping our internal procedures and services provided.

A rolling programme of topics and initiatives for tenants to influence our direction and hold us to account

Re-occurring involvement panels such as our complaints panel and digital experience reviews.

A new digital platform to enable our involved tenant community to interact and collaborate with us and each other is being procured. This will give us the ability to survey, gather feedback, segment, host forums/quick polls, add stories and newsfeeds, creating an online platform that achieves our aspirations.

An internal menu of engagement, encouraging our teams to think “tenant voice” when changing or improving a process, when setting a strategy or simply consulting on an idea or innovation.



IN TENANT
INFLUENCER
NETWORK



C10 – How does the Housing Provider measure Resident Satisfaction and how has Resident Satisfaction changed over the last three years?

We have an extensive and well-refined feedback mechanism in place to measure customer satisfaction over a range of services from when a tenant moves into their home, has a repair carried out and contact through to moving out.

The overall FG customer satisfaction score for the year was 82.5% (up 0.3% from 2021-22).

First-time resolution and the attitudes and behaviours of our staff continue to be key drivers of positive scores and customer satisfaction (CSAT). CSAT informed us that we still need to improve our

Flagship Group's overall customer satisfaction score was

82.5%

During 2022-23, the Housing Ombudsman has delivered

10

determinations

waiting times for repairs which we are addressing with the implementation of a new service delivery system in this upcoming financial year.

Throughout December 2022/January 2023, we conducted a pilot of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's) to ensure readiness for the launch of the TSMs in April 2023, which we will be reporting on from 2024. returning to 'normal' we remain focused on increasing satisfaction with the services we provide.

We also invite tenants to participate in our annual Net Promoter Score (NPS) survey. NPS is a metric that helps us understand the strength of our relationship with our tenants. This annual temperature test brings together our tenant insight into a wealth of actionable insights by asking just one question: "How likely would you be to recommend us and why?" which informs service improvement and helps us focus our efforts on the things that matter most.

C11 - In the last 12 months, how many complaints have been upheld by the Ombudsman?

During 2022-23, the Ombudsman delivered 10 determinations and four of those were upheld. No year-on-year systemic issues have been identified.

T4: Tenant support

This theme seeks to assess the initiatives that we as the housing provider run to support individual residents

C12 - What support services does the housing provider offer to its tenants. How successful are these services in improving outcomes?

At the heart of our business lies the commitment to provide tenants with affordable homes and the essential support to uphold their tenancy, promoting the growth of sustainable communities.

Our tenant's benefit from a wide variety of support services, each tailored to cater to their individual and unique needs. This support can encompass a range of services, which may include but are not limited to:

Income maximisation: Helping tenants with their benefits' applications such as Universal Credit, Housing Benefit, Personal Independence Payments, and Discretionary Housing Payments.

Budgeting: We support tenants to make affordable repayment agreements when a rent debt arises, to ensure the repayments are sustainable and prevent enforcement action where we can.

Safeguarding: Signposting tenants to support services, completing referrals to mental health agencies and referrals to Childrens Services.

Grant applications such as referrals to the Norfolk Assistance Scheme and Benjamin Foundation.

Supporting tenants moving into their new homes, including making referrals for white goods, carpets and furnishings, if needed.

Setting up home: Visiting new tenants to assist with registration for council tax, gas, electricity, water and other utilities.

Starter tenancy reviews carried out at 12 months to ensure early intervention when needed.

Moving home: Assisting with joining the housing register and mutual exchanges.

Dedicated affordability advisors in each of the three housing areas to provide financial assistance with energy bills, supermarket vouchers and white goods etc.

Multi-partnership working: It is crucial, and we regularly liaise with other agencies such as: Citizens Advice, Reach, Social Services, local authorities, police and healthcare bodies.

Aids and adaptations for people with disabilities.

Our neighbourhood team is on hand to provide tenants with support who need help with gardens and cleaning up the local green spaces.

Case studies: the work we do really matters

After a period of non-engagement, we pursued an eviction warrant on a tenant due to significant rent debt owed, totalling nearly £5500. Our dedicated Rent Officer made extensive efforts to establish communication with the tenant and successfully collaborated with the local authority and benefits team. As a result, a payment of £3,632 was secured and credited to the tenant's account. This substantial payment substantially reduced the debt to a much more manageable level, crucially preventing eviction for our tenant.

“The tenant promised to stay in touch with me and stated that I had been a star. Moments like this make the job so worthwhile.”

We became aware of a distressing situation where one of our tenants was sacrificing her own meals to ensure her children had enough to eat. In response, we stepped in to provide essential support to her and her family by offering grocery vouchers. With these vouchers, she could fill her cupboards and freezer, granting her and her children access to a variety of healthy meal options

c.£12k
donated via the Kindness Fund and
£35k
from our Affordable for All fund

we handed over
2505
sets of keys to new tenants in 22/23

417
families were supported with essentials, such as food and furniture, to the value of
£51k

we provided support for
847
of Samphire Homes raised safeguarding concerns

After tenants raised an issue about the lack of parking and churned up grass due to cars, our Neighbourhood Team arranged for the area to be tarmacked to offer additional parking.



After

Before



Our Capital Services Manager Steven led a group of volunteers to don a high-vis vest and get to work on litter picking in a nearby river in one of our communities. Building and maintaining local communities is an integral part of what we do.



Thinking about our tenants' needs is a priority and is an integral part of Flagship's culture. Our Newtide Neighbourhood Team tidied up this communal area to give space for tenants to hang their laundry and relax.

Before



After

Happy to Chat Benches - £10k

As part of our community outreach efforts, we contributed 10 benches to local neighborhoods, creating inviting spots for people to take a break during errands and fostering interactions among neighbours. These benches serve as a welcoming place for individuals to pause, chat, and combat feelings of loneliness and isolation. The warm reception from local communities has been truly heartwarming.



THIS (The Horticulture Industry Scheme)

We donated a second-hand truck to THIS (The Horticultural Improvement Scheme). THIS engages in social gardening projects, providing flexible employment contracts and in-work training in horticulture and landscaping. Additionally, they offer community-based support, aiding prison leavers, returning citizens, and individuals with experience of homelessness in their journey towards independent living.



Funding

Thin Ice, Lowestoft - 2.5k

We donated £2.5k to the charity Thin Ice who distribute meals to those in need over the winter months.

Combat to Coffee - Ipswich £2.5k

We made a generous donation of £2.5k to Combat to Coffee, a charitable organisation that offers outreach services for veterans. The funds were allocated to support their Coffee Cell, a place where veterans can gather, access training opportunities, and socialise. The money contributed towards providing refreshments, cakes, and Christmas dinners, ensuring that those in need received essential support and care.

The Wymondham Shed - £1.5k

With our donation, The Wymondham Shed were able to acquire materials for concrete paving with enhanced accessibility features to accommodate individuals with disabilities attending their workshops.



Leiston Community Land Trust

We teamed up with one of our construction partners, Lovell Homes, to donate a bench to the Church Square regeneration project being carried out by Leiston Community Land Trust.



Community Skills

We have recently expanded our community skills offering, and our dedicated Community Skills Team is available to support tenants to increase opportunities to develop skills and find employment opportunities.

Increasing access to skills development can support tenants with:-

- Greater financial independence
- Increased stability and security to support tenancy sustainment
- Greater employment opportunities leading to an enhanced quality of life
- Increased confidence
- Increasing contribution to the local economy.

Community Skills Team 2022-23 stats:

141

referrals received to Community Skills across Victory Homes, Newtide Homes and Samphire Homes.

18

tenants supported into employment - 16 into new employment and 2 into self-employment

17

tenants supported with access to training courses

13

tenants funded to access digital services

28

tenants provided with digital skills training

101

sessions of career guidance support delivered



Our charity

Everyone deserves a place to call home in a sustainable, connected community. Our charity Hopestead operates with three main objectives:-

PREVENT & RESOLVE HOMELESSNESS

BUILD EMPOWERING PARTNERSHIPS

CREATE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

We have the ambition to do so much more in 2023/24, and have invested funding to deliver the following projects:

BUILDING HOPE

£200k contribution to ending and prevention of homelessness by providing homes/bed spaces for those experiencing homelessness or are at risk of it.

HOPE AT HOME

£700k to continue providing essential furniture, white goods, and flooring packages so that those moving into a home from a route of homelessness have access to the household items required.

HOPE FUNDS

£200k of funding will be provided to likeminded local charities, organisations, and community groups to support additional beneficiaries through their work.

EH0923

Our Hope at Christmas campaign raised nearly £2000 in 2022



HOPE STEAD

EVERYONE DESERVES A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Donated 18k to 4 domestic abuse charities across East Anglia to support those experiencing homelessness

Awarded £177k to 19 charity partners to support and increase their impact to 10,970 beneficiaries

Signposted 59 individuals and families to additional support

Gifted 124 appliances to 81 households through our Hope Essentials white goods scheme

Developed partnerships with 40 likeminded charities, organisations and community groups

Supported 219 households moving into their first tenancy following homelessness with furniture, white goods and flooring

Funded the support of 152 beneficiaries, provided 46 beds and 38 rooms for those experiencing homelessness

Held 8 cash donation events on the streets of East Anglia, and at our community champion partners Morrison's, with 23 volunteers across Flagship Group

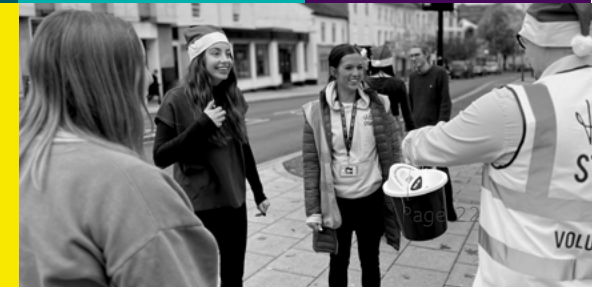
Carried out 5 interviews with Hope at Home service users to better understand their experience of homelessness

Provided 74 households moving in from a position of homelessness with additional essential items for their home

Raised £1,951.70 through our Hope at Christmas 2022 campaign, providing 50 parcels with emergency essential items



**WATCH THE
VIDEO**



T5: Placemaking

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

C13 - Provide examples or case studies of where the housing provider has been engaged in placemaking or place-shaping activities

The Abbey, Thetford

Building on the foundation of a successful three-year engagement and consultation campaign (over 20,000 pieces of feedback), this year, we shared the “Design for the Abbey” through a public exhibition, offering residents and the local community 12 opportunities to understand the design and its potential impact. A true landscape-lead placemaking project - the design aims to overcome the constraints of the 1970’s layout, creating positive change, including a new active neighbourhood heart, safer more connected streets, improved green spaces, and sustainable transportation options, and is now working towards a planning application later this year.

Barnham Cross, Thetford

We worked with the Barnham Cross community to create a vision for the future of the estate, incorporating their hopes and aspirations to overcome the place-based symptoms of a Radburn layout. This vision includes safer routes, enhanced amenity spaces, and improvements to garage sites. Through face-to-face workshops, we are building the details of this vision to turn it into reality. Ensuring tenants, local community champions and key stakeholders have ample opportunity to get involved is vital to help shape the future, that’s why all our engagement is undertaken via a multitude of accessible mediums.



Abbey Estate ‘Neighbourhood Heart’ concept

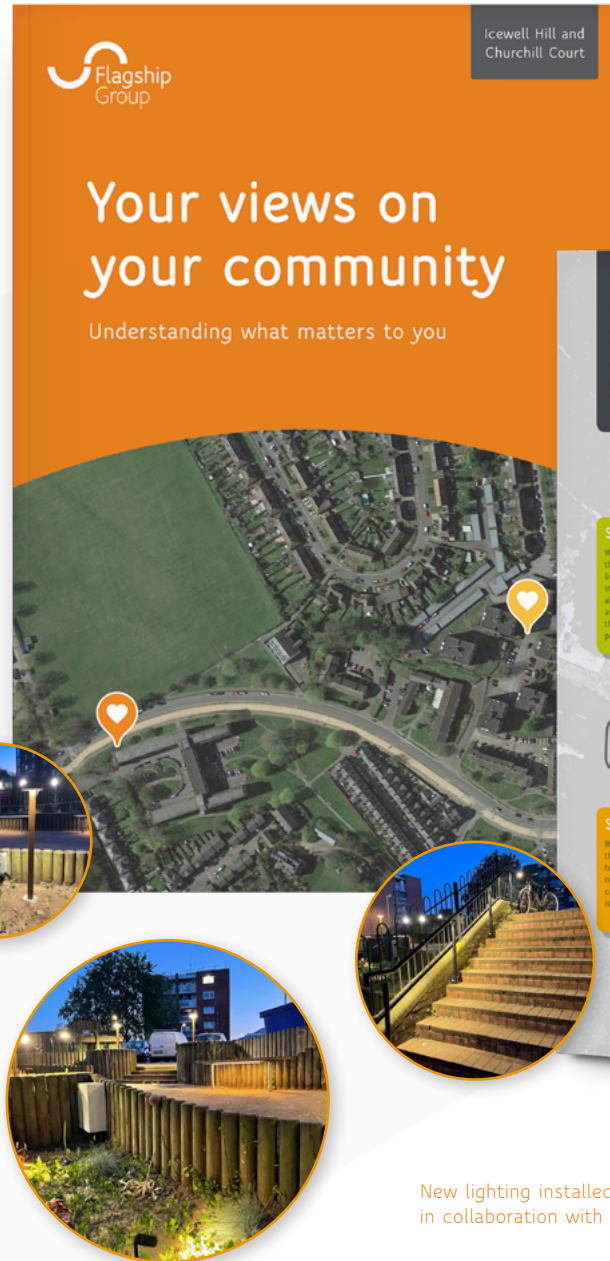


A resident workshop at Barnham Cross

Icewell Hill, Newmarket

Our engagement with Icewell Hill residents has provided valuable insights into the challenges they face daily. So far, we have gathered almost 600 individual pieces of feedback, highlighting issues such as anti-social behaviour, parking difficulties, and inadequate lighting. We've gathered feedback from the community via several different routes, including an online platform 'Give My View' (which targets relevant people via social media to undertake an online survey), written surveys, and face-to-face workshops.

Long term meaningful change at placemaking on this scale takes time to develop, and even longer to implement, and so in the meanwhile - responding directly to residents' feedback priorities - we've removed some redundant garages to create much needed parking, and initiated a lighting pilot in collaboration with lighting designers Light Follows Behaviour. We believe warm, and welcoming lighting shouldn't be a privilege - the pilot aims to resolve lighting consistency in area, changing how residents feel.



Icewell Hill and Churchill Court community engagement brochure



New lighting installed at Icewell Hill in collaboration with Light Follows Behaviour

Environmental

Our Net Zero Strategy is centred around a primary objective: upgrading our homes to achieve a minimum EPC C/SAP 69 rating by 2030. Currently, 91% of our greenhouse gas emissions originate from indirect Scope 3 emissions, stemming from tenants' energy consumption. To effectively address this challenge, we have adopted a fabric-first approach, focusing on enhancing energy efficiency in our lowest-performing homes. This approach involves insulation upgrades, window and door replacements, and the integration of renewable technologies such as ASHPs and solar photovoltaic panels (PVs).

Our commitment to sustainability extends beyond homes to encompass new construction projects and the creation of accessible, high-quality green spaces. In addition to these initiatives, we are taking proactive steps to decarbonise our operations. This includes optimising energy efficiency in our offices, reducing waste sent to landfills, transitioning our staff vehicles and fleet to electric vehicles (EVs), and promoting sustainable practices across our supply chain.

Adopting a risk-based approach, we place significant emphasis on regulatory compliance, mitigating potential pollution risks, and diligently working to achieve government targets. By doing so, we demonstrate our unwavering dedication to addressing the climate change emergency and safeguarding the environment for generations to come.

Right: Solar Panels in Market Lane, Wells



T6: Climate change

This theme seeks to assess how our activities as the housing provider are impacting climate change



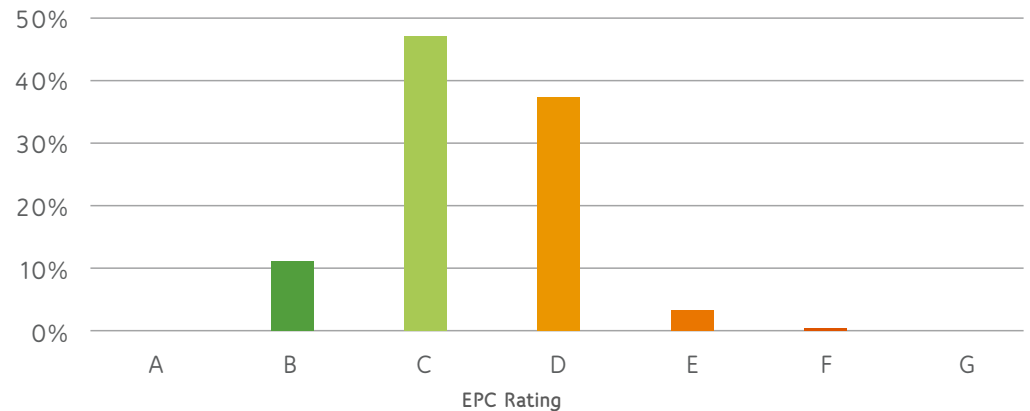
C14: Distribution of EPC ratings of Existing Homes

Our unwavering commitment to enhancing the energy performance of our properties continues year after year. In the past year alone, we have invested approximately £48k to improve our existing homes, leading to a significant portion of our housing stock achieving EPC C & D ratings. While our efforts have yielded positive results, we remain actively engaged in securing additional funding to accelerate this progress even further. It's important to note that the pace of improvement is influenced by factors such as material availability and the availability of skilled tradespeople for necessary work.

Recently, we have successfully completed a new stock condition survey, encompassing a stratified sample of 20% of our homes. This strategic approach empowers us to make informed investment decisions, focusing on effective and efficient improvements. We are eager for the implementation of new asset management and retrofit software in the upcoming financial year. This technological advancement will provide us with more precise data, facilitating comprehensive stock analysis. This, in turn, will aid us in effectively programming works and forecasting carbon reduction outcomes.

Drawing from our current data, which includes some modelled insights, we have identified that approximately 40% of our homes still require measures to attain an EPC C rating or higher. Our dedication to achieving these targets remains steadfast, as we continue to work toward a more sustainable and energy-efficient housing portfolio.

Share of Flagship stock by EPC (as of 31 March 2023)



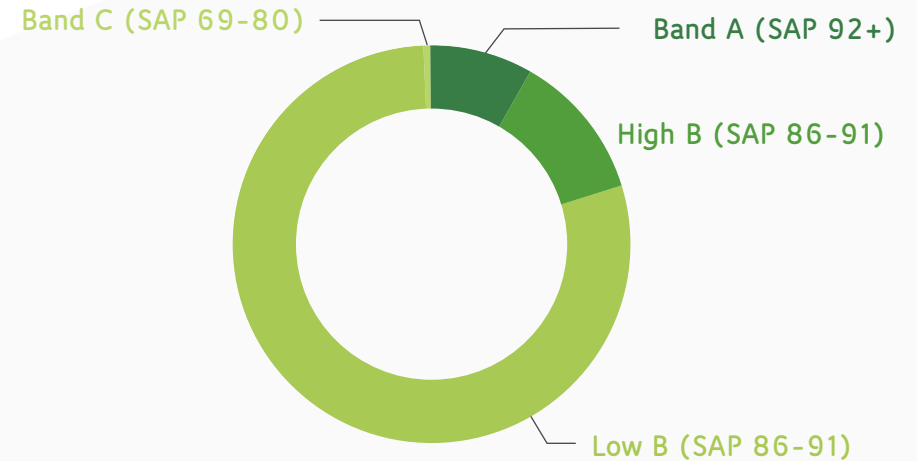
C15 - Distribution of EPC ratings of new homes

Flagship Homes, our development arm’s commitment lies in embracing a fabric-first approach for every new build home we create. This approach involves the meticulous selection of materials on all of our sites to ensure the construction of homes that are highly efficient. In pursuit of our target EPC B/SAP 81+ rating, we have seamlessly integrated ASHPs solar PV panels into our home designs.

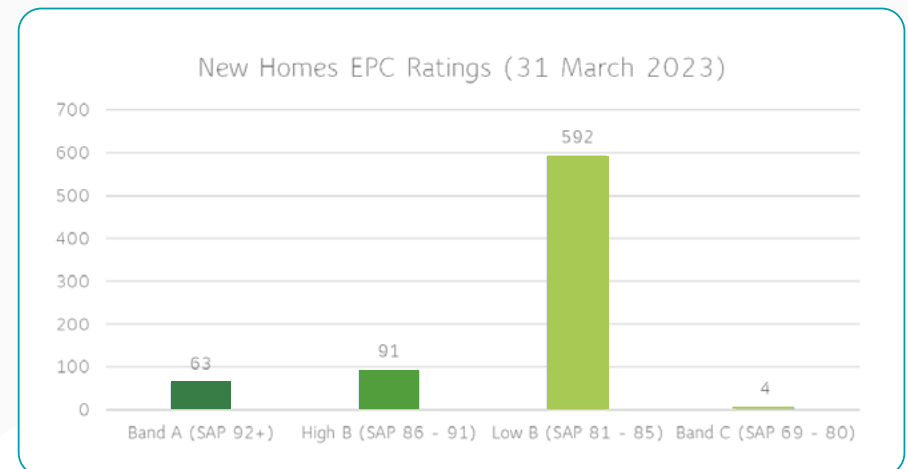
Notably, a commendable percentage of our homes have achieved an outstanding EPC A/SAP 92+ rating, achieved by the strategic addition of supplementary PV panels on rooftops. In the past financial year, our accomplishments include the completion of 751 homes, with 592 of them attaining the EPC B/SAP 81+ rating.

As we progress, our aim remains steadfast—to uphold a minimum of EPC B/SAP 81+ for all our new homes, consistently striving to elevate energy efficiency standards. We are committed to augmenting the percentage of homes reaching the coveted EPC A rating, especially on our land-led sites. In this context, we are pleased to highlight that 63 of our homes have successfully achieved this high-energy performance standard. These achievements underscore our enduring dedication to sustainable practices and environmental stewardship.

Share of new homes by EPC, for the period ending 31 March 2023



Number of newly built homes by EPC, for the period ending 31 March 2023



Great Yarmouth

Flagship Homes and Wellington Construction Ltd have embarked on a collaborative venture for a new development in Great Yarmouth. With the support of £1.6 million in funding from Homes England, this initiative through our housing brand - Newtide Homes - will yield 30 new affordable homes. This project directly addresses the pressing need for increased affordable housing in the area.



The Cricketers, Swardeston

3 new homes were built at The Cricketers in Swardeston. Bennett Homes once again delivered some high-quality affordable homes that we can provide to local families. The site offers a variety of high-quality, energy-efficient homes, including one-bedroom apartments, two-bedroom bungalows, and two and three-bedroom houses. This diverse selection caters to a wide range of customers. The management of the new homes at The Cricketers will be handled by Victory Homes, who warmly welcomed their new tenants on the day of the launch.

Chalk Lane, Narborough

Chalk Lane Development in Narborough Norfolk Burmor Construction is building 40 new properties on behalf of Flagship Homes, a mix of Affordable Rent and Shared Ownership properties. The development, will utilise Modern Methods of Construction (MMC). LoCaL Homes is looking forward to manufacturing and delivering the Eco-100 timber frame system as part of this development affordable housing in the area.



C16 - Scope 1, Scope 2, and Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions

Our dedication to environmental transparency and accountability is reflected in the successful completion of our annual Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR) for the period spanning from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. We have thoughtfully aligned this reporting timeframe with our financial year, simplifying reporting procedures for the future. It brings us immense pleasure to share that the Group's carbon emissions have exhibited noteworthy reductions over the past three years, attributed largely to the commendable improvements in the energy performance of our existing homes.

The total greenhouse gas emissions reported for this year amount to 81,105 tonnes of CO₂e⁴, as indicated in the table below:

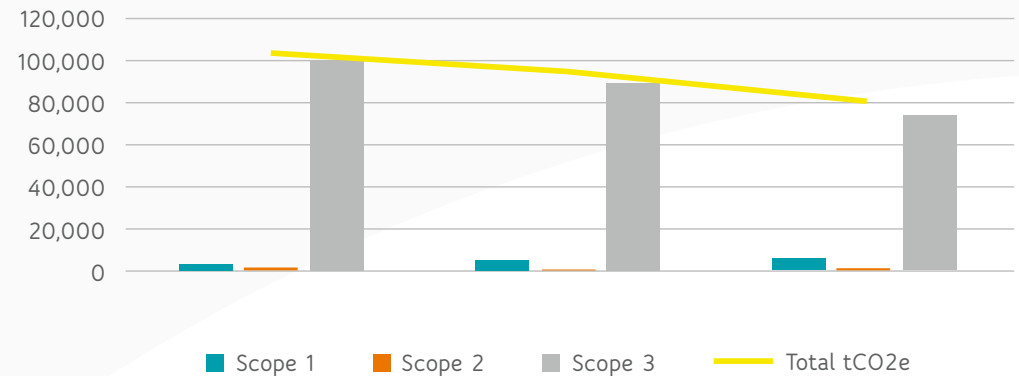
Acknowledging the pivotal role that effective systems play in accurate data collection, we are currently engaged in implementing new software and enhancing our internal data collection processes. These enhancements are pivotal in ensuring a higher degree of precision in measuring our carbon footprint. Furthermore, we are working in close collaboration with our energy broker, taking steps to refine and enhance the accuracy of our reporting procedures for comprehensive analytical insights.

⁴ Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) is a unit used to express the global warming potential of greenhouse gases in terms of the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) that would produce the same level of warming. It is a standard measure to compare the impact of various greenhouse gases based on their global warming potential over a specific time frame.

Flagship's Carbon Footprint 2021-2023 Tonnes of CO₂e

Emissions Breakdown	2021	2022	2023
Scope 1	3,399	5,160	5,668
Scope 2	1,038	477	1,339
Scope 3	99,856	1,339	74,039
Total tCO₂e	104,293	95,247	81,105

Flagship's Carbon Footprint 2021-2023 Tonnes of CO₂e



C17 - What energy efficiency actions has the housing provider undertaken in the last 12 months?

During the financial year 2022-23, we solidified our commitment to sustainability and social impact through a comprehensive £49 million asset investment program. This initiative was meticulously designed to upgrade our properties and align with our ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) objectives. Within this context, we placed significant emphasis on advancing energy efficiency and embracing low-carbon technological solutions whenever feasible.

Energy efficiency measures

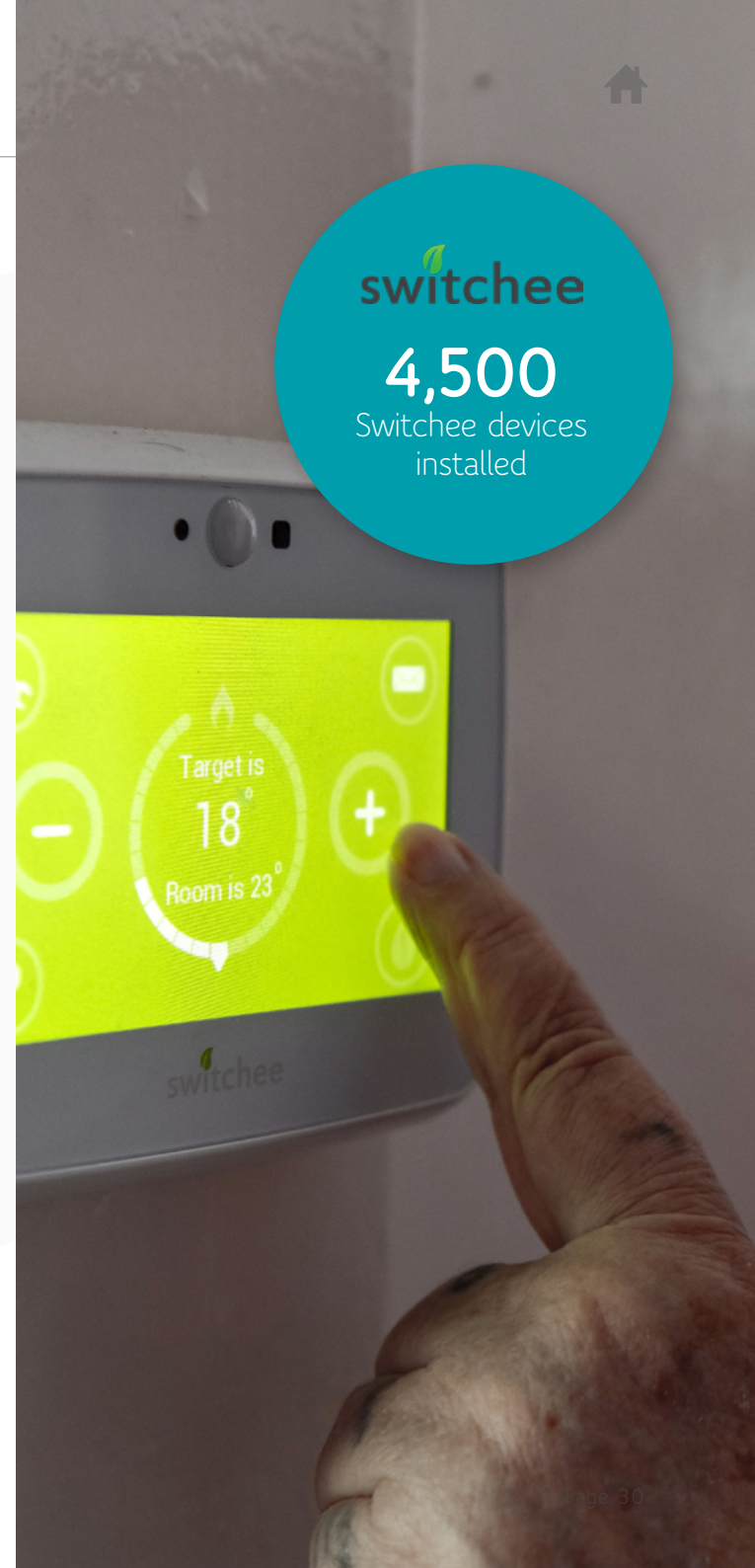
Throughout the year, our dedicated efforts translated into the successful implementation of 5,115 energy efficiency measures. These encompassed a diverse range of upgrades including new doors, windows, external wall insulation, loft insulation, and cavity wall improvements. Beyond reducing energy consumption, these measures effectively contribute to lowering carbon emissions, closely aligning with our commitment to combat climate change.

Low-carbon technology solutions

Our commitment to environmental stewardship was evident through the priority we placed on integrating sustainable technology solutions. We strategically installed 20 ground source heat pumps (GSHPs), 360 ASHPs, 63 Solar PV systems, and 67 high retention storage heaters (HHRSH), a total of 510 low-carbon solutions. These conscientious choices significantly curtail the carbon footprint of our properties while championing the utilisation of renewable energy sources.

Smart technology for tenant comfort

Ensuring tenant wellbeing and providing them control over their living spaces guided our introduction of Switchchee smart thermostats, bringing the total amount of devices to 4,500. Empowering tenants to regulate home temperatures and facilitating remote monitoring of living conditions, these devices also enable us to identify properties susceptible to damp and mould. This proactive approach ensures that our tenants enjoy comfortable and healthy living environments.





Energy efficiency measures

2,837 Insulation installations/
improvements with 1st Choice

74 Insulation installations/
improvements with Cornerstone

757 New windows

1,447 New doors



Low-carbon technologies

20 Ground Source
Heat Pumps

360 Air Source Heat
Pumps

63 Solar PVs

67 High retention
storage heaters

Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Award

We proudly share our successful bid for Wave 2 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) issued by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. This achievement resulted in the allocation of £4.8m in funding. Demonstrating our unwavering commitment, we pledged to match this funding, resulting in a substantial total investment of £9.6m. This financial boost is dedicated to upgrading and decarbonising an additional 408 properties, raising them from EPC F/SAP 21+ ratings.

Community impact

Our ESG endeavours extend beyond the environmental realm, encompassing the creation of positive social impact. By elevating property quality and introducing energy-saving measures, our objective is to uplift living standards for tenants, fostering resilient and sustainable communities.

Left: Accepting our award for 'Housing Association/Landlord of the Year' at the East of England Energy Efficiency Awards 2023

New Cheveley Road

In collaboration with the Local Authority Delivery scheme and West Suffolk District Council, FG identified 20 homes on New Cheveley Road that qualified for energy efficiency improvements. We initiated a comprehensive project, installing external wall insulation and enhanced ventilation in each home, while also upgrading windows and doors for increased efficiency where necessary.

These measures have significantly enhanced the living conditions for our tenants, providing them with warmer, drier, and more comfortable homes. The positive impact of these insulation measures was evident when one tenant shared their experience, stating, “I have only just put the heating on. Before I would have put the heating on much earlier in the year.” This feedback highlights the noticeable improvement in thermal comfort resulting from our efforts.

These upgrades have resulted in a substantial boost in energy performance. The average Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) grade of the homes has notably increased from a D rating to a C rating. This accomplishment brings us closer to our ambitious target of achieving an EPC C rating across our properties by 2030.

Through this successful collaboration and project implementation, we continue to demonstrate our commitment to sustainable practices and providing our tenants with the best possible living conditions. As we move forward, we remain dedicated to further enhancing energy efficiency and creating more environmentally conscious communities.

“I have only just put the heating on. Before I would have put the heating on much earlier in the year.”



Electric Vehicles

We have successfully transitioned 85% of our staff driving company vehicles to electric and hybrid vehicles (EVs & PHEVs) (including ones on order). Our aim is to have all employees driving EVs by 2027. We've installed EV charging points at our offices to support this transition.

Although transitioning our substantial maintenance fleet to EVs poses challenges like fleet size, costs, range, and charging infrastructure, we are proactively addressing these obstacles. Trials with select EVs are underway, assessing their performance. Our Neighbourhoods Team's adoption of EV vans reflects our commitment to sustainable transportation.

These EV transitions align with our ESG objectives, underlining our dedication to a greener future and eco-conscious communities. Our intention to fully embrace EVs by 2035 mirrors our devotion to environmental responsibility and meets stakeholder expectations. By advocating sustainable transportation, we contribute positively to the environment and enhance employee well-being, thus making a meaningful societal impact.

Sustainability & social impact

The sustainability and social impact initiatives undertaken in the financial year 2022-23 are a testament to our unwavering commitment to responsible business practices. Through strategic investments in energy efficiency and low-carbon technologies, we are making significant strides toward fulfilling our ESG objectives. As we persist on this journey, we remain steadfast in our pursuit of constructing a greener, more sustainable future for all our stakeholders.



85%
staff company
vehicles are electric
or hybrid



C18 - How is the housing provider mitigating the following climate risks for Increased flood risk & Increased risk of homes overheating

Flood Risk

In our continuous pursuit of proactive risk management, FG has collaborated with Ambiental (Royal Haskoning DHV), drawing on their expertise to access high-quality flood data. This data encompasses the spectrum of existing risks posed by river floods, flash floods, surface water, and storm surges. Our collaboration further extends to insights into projected risks for 2030, 2050, and 2080, coupled with risk profiles spanning 30 years, 100 years, and 500 years.

The integration of this flood data is pivotal for FG, offering a panoramic understanding of both current and anticipated risks to our housing stock from flooding. Armed with this understanding, we can effectively allocate resources and funds to tackle vulnerable areas. This data-driven approach bolsters our decision-making framework, enabling us to proactively factor potential future risks that could impact both our organisation and our valued tenants.

Further fortifying our flood risk management strategies is the valuable data obtained from

reporting minor and near-miss flooding incidents in real-time. This information augments our knowledge base, complementing the comprehensive mapping data provided by Ambiental. The synthesis of these insights empowers us to develop robust and resilient flood risk mitigation measures.

Overheating

We acknowledge that overheating is a growing concern, particularly in light of the increasing occurrences of extreme hot temperatures. As part of our commitment to sustainability and tenant wellbeing, FG will conduct a comprehensive risk analysis. This analysis will delve deeper into understanding the potential impacts of overheating on our housing stock in the coming years. By proactively addressing this issue, we can look at implementing effective measures to ensure the comfort and safety of our tenants and mitigate any adverse effects arising from overheating.

C19 - Does the housing provider give tenants information about correct ventilation, heating, recycling, etc.? Please describe how this is done

We take a proactive approach with regard to tenant communication and education on energy efficiency and ventilation. Through a diverse range of communication channels, such as websites, printed materials, and face-to-face interactions, FG ensures that tenants receive valuable information on optimising energy usage and enhancing ventilation in their homes.

Given the recent emphasis on damp and mould (D&M) issues in the sector, we recognise the critical importance of ensuring that our tenants fully understand the significance of energy efficiency and ventilation. and we carried out a D&M campaign via social media, our websites and direct mail to address this. We want to actively collaborate with our tenants, working together to promptly address any concerns related to these matters.

Our goal is to foster open and transparent communication, empowering our tenants to actively contribute to creating

energy-efficient homes and maintaining a healthy living environment. This collaborative approach reflects our commitment to promoting sustainable practices and prioritising the wellbeing of our tenants. However, we acknowledge that there is still more work to be done in terms of education and raising awareness about sustainable living practices.



T7: Ecology

This theme seeks to assess how we as the housing provider are protecting the local environment and ecology

SDG
Directly
Impacted



C20 - How is the housing provider increasing Green Space and promoting Biodiversity?

At Flagship, we recognise that, as a landowner, we have an important role in tackling the biodiversity crisis and contributing to the restoration of nature in the East of England.

Our biodiversity strategy sets out how we will increase biodiversity on our land and improve access to nature for our tenants and wider communities. Our goal is to be managing 30% of our land in a more nature-friendly way by 2030.

This year we're piloting a grounds maintenance service that is kinder on nature by managing grassy areas less intensively and allowing some spaces to grow into meadow areas. While currently piloting this initiative at 30 sites, we plan to expand its implementation more widely in the future.

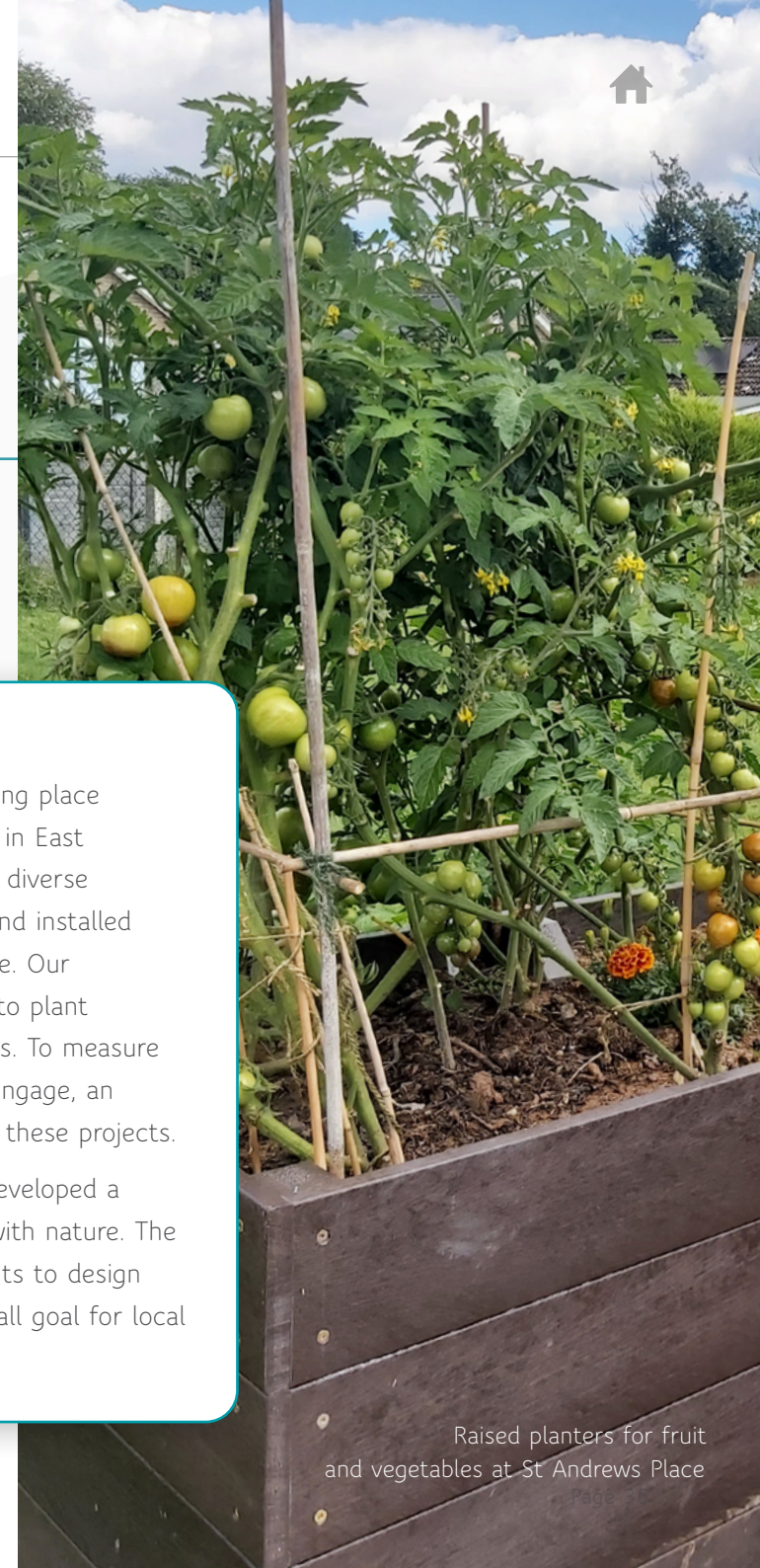
We've embarked on various land regeneration projects, transforming unused green spaces into

thriving wildlife habitats and accessible nature areas for the local community.

St Andrews Place, Melton

One such initiative, the urban wilding research, is taking place at St Andrews Place in Melton, Suffolk, and The Park in East Harling, Norfolk. In these locations, we've established diverse habitats, including wildflower meadows and shrubs, and installed recycled plastic benches from a local social enterprise. Our dedicated Regeneration Team volunteered their time to plant bulbs, complementing the vibrant wildflower meadows. To measure the impact on biodiversity, we've partnered with Greengage, an ecological consultancy, in conducting assessments of these projects.

In collaboration with the local community, we have developed a community garden, fostering a sense of connection with nature. The Neighbourhood Team worked together with the tenants to design and install various amenities, such as a shed, a football goal for local youth, and wheelchair-friendly raised planters.



Raised planters for fruit and vegetables at St Andrews Place

Measuring our progress

To ensure the success of our Biodiversity Strategy, we focus on tracking and measuring our progress. This monitoring ensures that we remain invested in achieving our set targets. Our biodiversity goals include developing best practice guidance across different departments, creating informative communications material, and transforming a minimum of two green spaces each year into nature-friendly havens for both wildlife and people.

Research and continuous improvement

We will conduct research to identify additional metrics for assessing and improving biodiversity across our properties. Through these dedicated efforts, we aim to create a more nature-friendly and biodiverse environment, positively impacting the world around us.

C21 - Does the housing provider have a strategy to actively manage and reduce all pollutants?

As part of our ESG initiatives, we are actively implementing an Environmental Management System (EMS) that adheres to the ISO 14001 standard. This robust EMS enables us to efficiently identify and prioritise pollution risks, facilitating effective mitigation and prevention measures wherever feasible. Additionally, it ensures the establishment of emergency response plans to address any potential issues promptly and proactively. By adhering to this systematic approach, we strengthen our commitment to environmental sustainability and responsible business practices, safeguarding the wellbeing of our communities and the planet.



T8: Resource management

This theme seeks to assess how the housing provider is managing resource use.

SDG
Directly
Impacted

C22 - Does the housing provider have a strategy to use or increase the use of responsibly sourced materials for all building works?

Our commitment to sustainability has prompted us to embark on proactive discussions with our key suppliers, initiating a comprehensive assessment of their environmental impact. These dialogues extend to investigations into the embodied carbon of materials procured in significant quantities. By delving into the environmental footprint associated with our material acquisitions, we underline our unwavering dedication to reducing our ecological impact. This proactive stance not only demonstrates our commitment but also serves as an avenue for advocating and endorsing sustainable practices across our supply chain.

C23 - Does the housing provider have a strategy for waste management incorporating building materials?

Within the framework of our Environmental Management System (EMS), we are actively

evaluating our waste management practices. Our focus is on continuously improving our recycling rates and finding innovative ways to further reduce waste to landfill. This proactive approach reflects our commitment to environmental stewardship and our dedication to improving waste management in alignment with our ESG goals.

C24 - Does the housing provider have a strategy for good water management?

Conserving water holds paramount importance in our water-scarce region. To drive positive change, we are committed to gaining a deeper understanding of our water consumption in the upcoming year and onwards. This will enable us to identify areas for improvement and implement effective strategies to optimise water usage, ensuring sustainable practices for the benefit of our community and the environment.



Governance

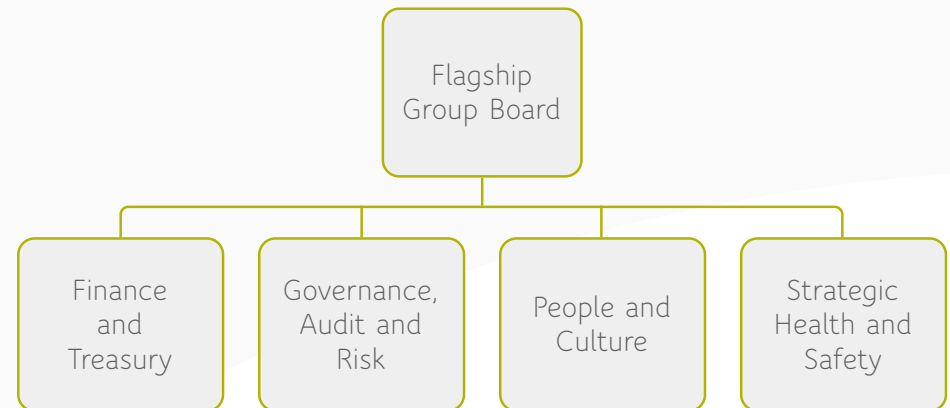
Flagship Group is made up as follows: -



Our Flagship Group Board comprises Non-Executive Directors, along with our Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, and Chief Operating Officer. This diverse leadership team plays a pivotal role in shaping our strategic priorities, monitoring performance, and ensuring their successful implementation.

The Board's oversight extends to governance matters, including fulfilling the Group's financial, legal, and statutory responsibilities. Equally significant is the Board's responsibility in driving our social purpose, vision, and values, reflecting our unwavering commitment to making a positive social and environmental impact.

Our FG Board is supported by the following committees



T9: Structure and governance

This theme seeks to assess the quality, suitability, and performance of the corporate and governance structure.



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

Flagship Group is registered as a social housing provider with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) (registration number 4651).

C26 - What is the most recent regulatory grading/status??

We were awarded G1/V2 for this financial year.²

C27 - Which Code of Governance does the housing provider follow if any?

The The National Housing Federation (NHF) Code of Governance 2020 (adopted from April 2021. Prior to that: 2015 version).

C28 - Is the housing provider Not-For-Profit?

We are a Not-For-Profit organisation registered with the Financial Conduct Authority as a Cooperative & Community Benefit Society - registration number 31211R.

C29 - Explain how the housing provider's board manages organisational risks.

Flagship has a Risk Management Framework which is reviewed annually by the FG Board and by the Governance, Audit and Risk Committee (GARC) (reports directly to the FG Board).

PKF Littlejohn was appointed as our external auditor and KPMG as our internal auditor.

Our internal audit plans are agreed by GARC, which also monitors delivery against the plan, approves the final reports and provides oversight of recommendations to ensure actions are completed.

FG's Risk Appetite Statement, Strategic Risk Map and TOCS (a horizon scanning tool and analysis akin to a SWOT analysis showing external Threats, Opportunities and internal Challenges and Strengths) are reviewed and approved by the FG Board as a standing agenda item at each of their scheduled meetings.

The Assurance Map (which provides assurance through the three lines of defence for all risks listed

on the strategic risk map) is reviewed and approved by GARC as a standing agenda item at each of their scheduled meetings.

Each Directorate has an Operational Risk Map that lists key risks to operations and control measures. These link to the Strategic Risk Map where appropriate. The Operational Risk Maps are made available to GARC ahead of each of their meetings.

An Internal Controls Assurance exercise is undertaken annually covering regulatory and legal compliance and self-assurance statements. A statement of compliance for inclusion in financial statements is approved by the FG Board.

C30 - Has the housing provider been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last 12 months?

Flagship has not been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last 12 months that resulted in the enforcement or other equivalent action.

T10: Board and trustees

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



C31 - What are the demographics of the board? And how does this compare to the demographics of the housing providers' tenants?

The FG Board has overall responsibility for setting the Group's strategic goals and monitoring performance against them.

The demographics of our board compared to the area we operate in are as follows:

- 18% female – 53% of Flagship's residents are women and 61% of our lead tenants are women. 50% of the working-age population in the East of England are women.
- The average age of our board members is currently 63 years old. The average age for all Flagship residents is 37 years and 53 years for lead tenants. The median age of the East of England population is 42 years.
- 9% of our board is from 'any other mixed background' 2.8*% of East of England population

is from a mixed background (*data from 2021 census). No comparative FG data is available.

- Our current board members haven't declared any disabilities. 16.64% of the East of England population is disabled under the Equality Act, 2010 (census data). No directly comparable FG data is available but 43% of FG residents reported a member of their household as having a physical or mental health condition/illness lasting or expecting to last for 12 months or more.

The average tenure for current FG Non-Executive Directors is eight years.

C32 - What % of the board and management team have turned over in the last two years?

One Non-Executive Director (16%) retired on 30 July 2021, from the FG Board that at the time comprised 13 member and they were not replaced. An Executive Director (25%) retired from the board on 31 May 2022 and was not replaced, reducing the size of the board to the current size of 11 members. The turnover

figure has been calculated as a percentage of the average board size over the past two years.

The Executive Management team welcomed one additional (interim) member in December 2022, following the retirement of one member in 2022.

C33 - Is there a maximum tenure for a board member? If so, what is it?

The average tenure for current FG Non-Executive Directors is eight years with the maximum being nine years.

C34 - What % of the board are non-executive directors?

73%

C35 - Number of board members on the Audit Committee with recent and relevant financial experience

Two members (67%) of GARC are Board members and have recent and/or relevant experience:

Member 1 and Chair – FG Board member – worked as a partner for Pricewaterhouse Coopers for 20 years and is a qualified public sector accountant with a detailed understanding of internal and external audit, risk management and financial management. Also sits on a number of other financial and audit-based committees.

Member 2 – FG Board member – qualified accountant and member of the Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group until June 22. Previous experience of having been a Chair of Audit Committees for North Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group. Director of a consultancy service providing strategy, finance, business planning and governance advice to businesses and charities. Business mentor for the Prince’s Trust. Has held a number of senior financial and audit management posts.

C36 - Are there any current executives on the Remuneration Committee?

No.

C37 - Has a succession plan been provided to the board in the last 12 months?

Our Remuneration Committee has an expanded remit to cover Culture, Employee Experience, Employee Relations, ED&I, HR and Learning and Development initiatives and is made up of Non-Executive Directors and a Board Advisor. A Union Representative and the People & Workplaces Director also attend the meetings. The committee was renamed the ‘People & Culture Committee’ to reflect its wider brief. Our succession planning work is ongoing by our People and Culture Committee and the Flagship Board to prepare for the forthcoming Non-Executive Director retirement.

C38 - For how many years has the housing provider’s current external audit partner been responsible for auditing the accounts?

PKF Littlejohn was appointed as our external auditor during 2022/2023.

C39 - When was the last independently run board-effectiveness review?

The 2020 review was conducted by Altair and concluded in November 2020.

Another independently run effectiveness review is due to be undertaken in the summer of 2023.

C40 - Are the roles of the chair of the board and CEO held by two different people?

Peter Hawes	Flagship Group Chair
David McQuade	Chief Executive Officer

C41 - How does the housing provider handle conflicts of interest at the board?

We have a process in place for dealing with any conflicts of interest and they are detailed in Flagship’s standing orders and include:

- Declarations of interests as a standing agenda item at each board meeting
- Formal minute-taking of declarations
- Withdrawal from any meetings by the relevant Board member should a declaration arise (withdrawal from the meeting lasts for the duration of the item debate/decision where the interest is clear and substantial)
- The board member offering to resign where a conflict is likely to recur on a frequent basis.

An annual disclosure of interest exercise is carried out for staff, Board, and committee members

T11: Staff Wellbeing

This theme seeks to assess that as Group we take our staff's wellbeing into consideration.



C42 - Does the housing provider pay the Real Living Wage?

Yes (except apprentices who receive the National Living Wage for their age bracket and their training costs).

C43 - What is the median gender pay gap?

We evaluate and track our Gender Pay Action Plan (GPAP) to measure impact. We are brave in reporting what didn't work and are relentless in our pursuit of reducing the gap. Our Gender pay gap actions are aligned to our E,D,&I Policy, so our culture of belonging is evident throughout the Group.

Flagship (inclusive of Flagship Services) has seen a decrease in the mean (average) and an increase in the median (middle) hourly pay gaps in 2022. The mean has decreased from 3.57% to 3.13% in 2022. This is a small percentage decrease down 0.44% from 2021. The median has increased from

-5.57% in 2021 down to -5.99% in 2022. Gasway has seen a small increase in its median hourly pay gap for 2022, increasing from 37.51% to 37.86%. The mean has also increased from 29.90% to 32.78%. Bonuses at Gasway have been awarded during this period to 6.12% of women and to 2.72% of men. We have seen a decrease in the mean bonus gap from 40.54% down to 36.59% and a reduction in its median bonus pay, from 10.18% in 2021 down to -60% in 2022.

C44- What is the CEO: median worker pay ratio?

10.66 :1



C45 - How does the housing provider support the physical and mental health of their staff?

We strive to create a great place to work for our people, ensuring we support positive physical and mental wellbeing. Happy staff creates a happy, vibrant workplace, enabling them to offer excellent customer service and ensure we have a thriving business.

We have numerous initiatives in place to ensure our staff feel supported and inspired throughout their employee journey with us, including:

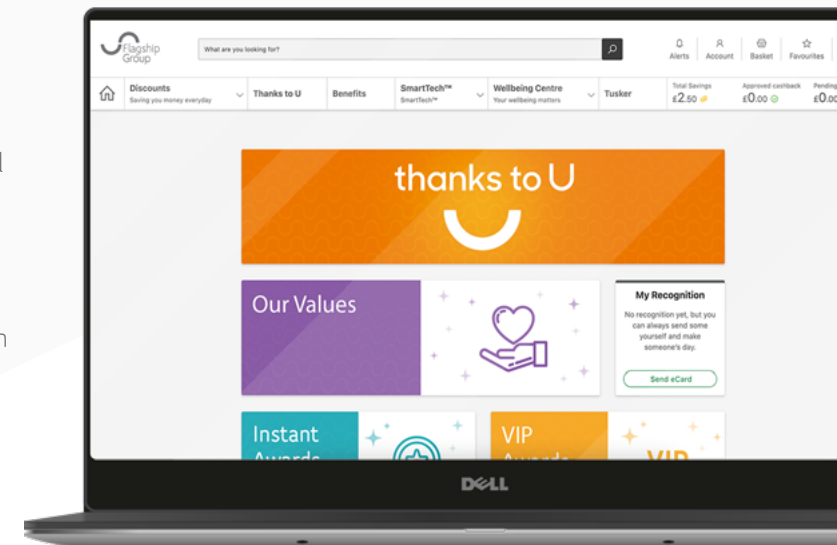
- 'Flagship Rewards' is a digital portal that hosts our wellbeing hub, employee assistance program, Thanks to U (reward and recognition portal), an employee benefits platform, and access to high-street & supermarket discounts
- Access to subsidised private healthcare and cash plan options that they can pay for via salary sacrifice.
- Free counselling via a local specialist provider
- An Employee Assistance Programme with 24/7 counselling and support for employees and their families
- Staff champions for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Menopause, and Safeguarding
- A dedicated full-time Workplace, Wellbeing & Sustainability Coordinator

- An outsourced Occupational Health Team
- Over 130 trained Mental Health First Aiders
- An embedded Talent management scheme that supports personal and professional development
- An applicant tracking system that enables anonymised applications to support inclusive, unbiased recruitment & selection
- A calendar of wellbeing activities across the year, including physical wellness challenges, positive mental health campaigns, and awareness & education events
- An extensive offering of enhanced family-friendly policies, including enhanced maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoptive leave and pay, and paid time off for IVF
- Agile working offered with six guiding principles for clarity, and the ability to buy or sell annual leave, to support work-life balance
- Death in Service of three times the employee's annual salary for all staff to provide peace of mind
- Yearly funded eye tests, discounts on boiler servicing, and the option to apply for additional support via our Warmer Homes Fund
- Options to apply for Cycle to Work Schemes, with the introduction of Smart Tech Schemes (apply for vouchers for tech to be paid back via salary sacrifice) or short-term staff loans introduced in April 2022

- A modern digital health and safety management system including risk assessment and incident investigation/reporting to minimise workplace injury or illness
- 28 trained first aiders.

C46 - What is the average number of sick days (both long and short term) taken per employee?

In the last financial year, the average sick leave per employee improved to six days, marking a decrease of two days compared to the previous year. This reflects a significant 27% reduction in days lost per employee over the course of the financial year, surpassing the Group's pre-pandemic levels.



Proactively attracting new talent

West Suffolk College

In the spirit of improving sustainability, recycling and reusing of materials, some of our apprentices had the great idea to share building materials.

The haul included (among other things) wall and floor tiles, adhesive, grout, plumbing fittings, paint, caulk, filler, copper pipe, sandpaper, duct tape, door fittings and locks, glue, overshoes and more.



Norfolk & Suffolk Careers Festival

3 new homes were built at The Cricketers. We joined more than 60 businesses and an estimated 7,500 students at the Norfolk Showground over the 8 and 9 March for the 2023 Norfolk & Suffolk Skills and Careers Festival.

Colleagues from our Assets' department, Flagship Homes, and our Apprenticeships programme were out to represent us, and we had a really fantastic response from everyone who came to have a chat.



Large Apprenticeships Employer of the Year

T12: Supply Chain

This theme seeks to assess the extent to which we as the housing provider use our supply chain to achieve positive outcomes.



C47 - How is Social Value creation considered when procuring goods and services?

We emphasise the integration of social value considerations right from the tender specification writing stage. At FG, we have developed a pool of award criteria and questions, carefully curated to assess the social value that will be generated from each contract. These assessment questions cover a diverse range of areas, including environment decarbonising, safeguarding, fostering a diverse supply chain, promoting skills and employment opportunities, prioritising inclusion, supporting staff mental health and wellbeing, and ensuring safe and secure supply chains. By incorporating these comprehensive criteria into our evaluation process, we remain committed to promoting social value and creating a positive impact within our operations and partnerships.

C48 - How is Environmental impact considered when procuring goods and services?

As part of our ESG initiatives, we want to prioritise environmental impact considerations when drafting tender specifications for procuring goods and services where possible. At FG, we maintain a pool of award criteria and questions specifically designed to assess the environmental impact of each proposed contract. From this pool, we select the most suitable and relevant criteria to be used as quality assessment questions.










Our assessment questions encompass various key areas, including carbon emission reduction, air pollution reduction, safeguarding of the natural environment, resource efficiency, and circular economy solutions. Additionally, we are starting to evaluate whether potential suppliers

hold relevant certifications such as ISO 14001, indicating their commitment to environmentally responsible practices.

By incorporating these robust criteria into our procurement processes, we can demonstrate our dedication to environmental sustainability and our efforts to partner with suppliers who



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UN SDG	Flagship Group Impact
	Creating Sustainable Communities is at the heart of Flagship Group's purpose. We want our tenants to live in safe, affordable housing. Placemaking is important to us as we reimagine and design our properties and communities with energy-efficient homes, better connectivity, and enjoyable green spaces in mind. We offer a range of support to our tenants to help them sustain their tenancies long-term, and we will provide education and awareness to help them live more sustainably over the coming years as we work towards reaching the UK's ambitious target of achieving Net Zero (NZ) by 2050. This
	We would like all of our homes to reach a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C/SAP 69+ by 2030. We'll improve our properties' thermal efficiency by installing various insulation measures and renewable technology. A significant retrofit programme is underway. We continue to bid for all available funding to help deliver this costly programme.
	We are a large, responsible employer with many staff benefits and pay the Real Living Wage ² . We also offer an extensive apprenticeship programme for various roles and trades. Wherever possible, we offer support to our tenants through our community skills team to help them access training and get back to work. Our development programme supports the economic growth of the areas in which we work through the provision of high-quality, affordable homes, meeting the needs of people on low incomes for whom market-rented housing is too expensive.
	We realise that many people in the UK are still trapped in poverty. Providing affordable homes is vital to tackling inequality. A place to call home has a significant impact on people's health and wellbeing, therefore improving a person's chances in life. We support our tenants to help them maximise their income and signpost them to other relevant support needed to get them back on their feet.
	We are working with our contract managers to ensure they think more responsibly when procuring goods and services. FG is communicating with key suppliers to better understand and improve on the embodied carbon in products and find ways to work in partnership to reduce our impact on the environment and deliver more social value.
	Understanding the risks of climate change is imperative to running a sustainable business, and working towards Net Zero remains one of our key priorities. Our NZ Strategy and internal Environmental Sustainability Steering Group set our intentions and action plan to reach the relevant government targets and make improvements as quickly as feasibly possible. We are focused on reducing our impact on
	We are taking urgent action to increase and enhance the biodiversity we are responsible for. Our biodiversity and land management plan sets out how we will improve our natural habitats and provide quality green spaces for our tenants and staff to enjoy.
	The FG Board is responsible for setting the Group's strategic goals and monitoring performance against them. We want to ensure that our workplaces, homes, and communities are peaceful and inclusive places. We can do this through multi-agency working to reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB) in our communities. Our Safe Communities, Domestic Abuse (DA) and Safeguarding Teams provide a variety of tailored support and awareness where needed. We are also training a group of in-house DA champions to offer further support, expertise and signposting.
	We need to work in partnership with various agencies and organisations to achieve our vision of solving the housing crisis in England. We cannot do this alone and seek like-minded partners and ethical investment.

²Real Living Wage (RLW) - companies voluntarily sign up to agree to pay a better rate over and above the government minimum wage which currently in the East of England is £9.90 p.h. for people over 18 years old.