

social value report

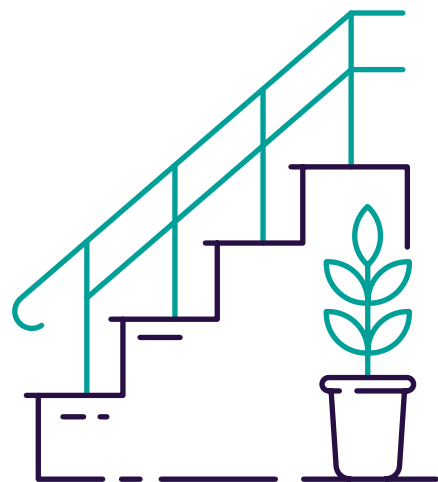
2023

2024

believe
housing

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foreword

I am proud to introduce our 2023/24 social value report, which highlights the valuable work that we do to support our local communities, residents and customers.

Our approach to social value ensures that we can create sustainable communities that give customers and residents the best possible opportunities for life without barriers.

Funding from believe housing gives these organisations – and, importantly, our communities – independent, meaningful support that meets the needs and aspirations of individuals, local groups and the wider voluntary sector.

Our report highlights the successes of our activities driving social value and the positive impacts it has in communities.

This is the first year where we can demonstrate the social value resulting from our tenancy sustainment activity and we have seen significant returns.

As part of our commitment to supporting customers to succeed we employed three individuals in 2023 through our New Start employment initiative, giving them the opportunity to gain valuable employment skills and access sustained well-paid employment.

I hope you find this insight into our business and the work that we do to support communities and individuals as inspiring and powerful as I do.

Alan Smith
Chief Executive



how do we calculate social value?

Here at believe housing we use two methods to calculate social value:

- HACT (Housing Associations' Charitable Trust) looks at social value in terms of community, individual development, family income, the local environment and wider environmental improvements. This methodology is used by social housing providers to demonstrate how direct investment into communities can support individuals and the wider community to thrive and achieve.
- The Social Value TOM (Themes, Outcomes, Measures) System measures in terms of the local economy, economic growth and employment as well as innovation and resilience. TOMs was developed as a response to the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013, which required organisations to demonstrate how their procurement activity has a wider benefit and impact on local communities, the economy and the environment.

We use the HACT framework when monitoring our community investment spend, in-house employability, environmental improvements and work to our properties.

We use TOMs when we procure services from third parties, as this method is designed to ensure we get the most value from our procurement exercises and our suppliers.



our year in numbers

During 2023/24:



We created a combined total of
£50,587,917
in social value



Our HACT figure is
£36,543,876



Our TOMS figure is
£14,044,041



We invested over
£268,397
in communities through our community investment programme



Our community investment programme created
£5,336,820
of social value



Every £1 of community investment created
£21.44
of social value



Our community investment funding helped organisations to access
£118,124
of match funding



We've supported
148
people to access secure, sustained employment across north-east England



We've supported
103
people who are entering employment with support packages



We have supported customers to claim
£1.6m
of additional benefits



We have improved the energy efficiency ratings of
2,612
homes

community investment

Since 2017, we have provided targeted grants to groups and organisations that support the development of our local voluntary and community sector.

This helps communities to tackle local issues, becoming more vibrant and resilient, and helps us to meet our vision of 'life without barriers'. We are proud to be able to support charities and organisations who work in partnership with local people to deliver this work.

In 2023/24 our funding benefitted 9,965 people within our local communities.

We distributed funding through the following grant programmes:

 <p>£500 small community grant, including our 'keep warm, keep well' grant programme.</p>	 <p>£1,000 small community grant.</p>	 <p>£10,000 large community grant (revenue).</p>	 <p>£20,000 large community grant (capital).</p>
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A key aspect of our grant-making process is the development of our priorities using data and local context and understanding to ensure that we can provide the support that is needed at a local level.

During 2023/24, we funded projects that met these priorities:

- Health and wellbeing – improving mental and physical health as well as building the confidence of individuals.
- Employability and training – including volunteering and other upskilling activities.
- Increasing household income – activities including debt and benefit advice, feeding families and helping people into employment.
- A greener, fairer future – by reducing, reusing and recycling.
- Tackling inequalities resulting from the cost-of-living crisis – including our 'keep warm, keep well' grant for community organisations providing 'warm hubs'.

In 2023/24, our community investment funding:

- Created an overall social value of £5,336,820
- Supported 135 people to become regular volunteers
- Provided 67 people with training
- Helped 41 young people to feel more confident
- Supported 169 people to improve their diet
- Supported 30 people to feel a sense of belonging in their neighbourhood
- Empowered 139 people to take up regular exercise.

Small grants:

All our small grants are awarded directly by a panel of customers who come together on a monthly basis to read and discuss all applications. The panel then assess the grants from their own knowledge and experience of local communities as well as reviewing them against our funding criteria. All panel members have had comprehensive training and are provided with support from our Community Investment Team to undertake the role.

In 2023/24:



We awarded 84

£500

grants to 80 organisations
or community groups



We awarded 33

£1,000

grants to 33 organisations
or community groups

Takeaway Friday – Witton Gilbert CIC

The Takeaway Friday group applied for a £500 grant to run cookery sessions with 28 children and their families providing affordable, nutritious food that will be eaten in a communal setting with recipe cards given to all attendees following the session.

As well as learning new cookery skills, these sessions provide opportunities for language development, maths skills, and social development. The aim is to give attendees ideas of healthy choices they could cook at home. Involving children in cooking meals for themselves and their families helps to give them self confidence and provide opportunities to introduce foods that they might not normally eat.

The project also helped the parents or carers from making one main meal a week, helping in a small way towards feeding their children and saving a small amount of money towards other essentials.



Large community grants:

In 2023/24:



We awarded
£10,000
grants to 12 organisations
or community groups



We awarded
£20,000
grants to six organisations
or community groups

Active Advantage

The Active Advantage Social Prescribing and Volunteering Programme in East Durham is an initiative to improve the mental and physical wellbeing of individuals, enhance their employability prospects, and foster social inclusion within the community. Through a multifaceted approach encompassing health and wellbeing sessions, employability training, and volunteering opportunities, they aspire to empower participants to lead healthier, more fulfilling lives while contributing positively to their local communities.

From overcoming initial hesitations to actively participating in sessions, the journey of personal growth and empowerment for many of the participants is evident with many highlighting the transformative effect the programme has had on their lives.

J, a local participant said, "I've not really tried any exercise sessions before, but when I saw this one was running so close to my home, I decided to give it a try. I walk to class each week now and have seen a huge improvement in my energy levels and fitness since starting. I like that the sessions are relaxed and friendly so I can chat to other attendees, and I am considering taking part in the project training scheme to become a volunteer as I think it'll do me good and help me get out of the house more."





employability

Our Employability Team delivers person-centred tailored support, working with the customer to assess their needs and aspirations, while providing relevant referrals to other internal and external support services.

The team also offer support to customers looking to volunteer, seeking access to training or looking to set up their own business.

Our In-work Support Coordinator supports customers who are currently in, or have just left, a job to access sustained and well-paid employment.

As well as offering tailored support in terms of completing CVs, applying for roles, and support with interview skills, our team signpost individuals experiencing physical and mental health issues to several different support agencies.

In 2023/24, we:

- supported 148 people to access secure, sustained employment
- supported nine people to access volunteering opportunities
- supported six people through our health and wellbeing provision to access secure, sustained employment
- referred 129 people to other specialist support agencies, of which 22 were referred to external employability support
- supported three tenants to access employment through our New Start programme
- supported customers to repay £11,021 of rent arrears
- created a social value of £1,296,985.

Self-employment success

R and her partner were interested in becoming self-employed and were looking for support to help them achieve this. Working in partnership with the self-employment team at Durham Employability, we were able to support them to develop a comprehensive business plan, access independent financial advice, secure business advice and access support with regards to benefits implications. After securing permission to run a business from their home, we were able to support the business with a contribution towards start-up costs allowing R and her partner to launch their wax melts and party business. The business has now been trading successfully for several months using online sales, local craft fairs and word of mouth. The team continue to make contact, offering support and guidance where needed.

Employment success

As an HGV driver, J hoped that he was in a secure role and wouldn't need to look for another opportunity for an extended time. Unfortunately, this wasn't the case, and J found his shifts decreasing. As a young dad with a family, J needed to find a role that offered security and a steady, reliable income.

He attended a believe housing employment fair hoping that he'd be able to find help securing a new opportunity. At the fair he met a member of our Employability Team who was able to help him write a new CV, support him with cover letters, and assist him with searching for a new role. Within a couple of weeks J had applied and been successfully interviewed for a role at Durham County Council. This permanent, full-time role with agreed hours meant that J was able to spend time with his young family and have the security and sustained income he was looking for.

sustaining tenancies

Helping customers to sustain their tenancies

We are committed to supporting our customers to overcome any unexpected issues that they might encounter. Our Money Matters Team works with customers on a one-to-one, holistic manner to ensure that they can access the support needed to successfully manage and maintain their tenancy.

Working in partnership with teams across the business, support is provided to customers through:

- undertaking needs assessments and undertaking financial checks to provide support to sustain their tenancy, identifying any benefits entitlements or awards, and signposting to other services or organisations
- working with customers who experience an unexpected life event such as bereavement, separation or unemployment to provide financial advice and support but also help with accessing external services that can support them through this change.

During 2023/24, the Tenancy Sustainment Team:

- supported 3,119 customers
- secured over £1.6million of additional welfare benefits
- created £2,567,129 of social value.

A life-changing knock at the door

In October 2023 colleagues from across the business came together to hold a Talk Money door-knocking campaign in one of our communities. As part of this work, the team was able to:

- make contact with 42 customers
- issue 16 Heat and Eat Vouchers
- help 13 customers to reduce their rent arrears by more than £6,000
- give energy advice to 18 customers
- support customers to claim an extra £16,131 in financial support.

As part of this event the team met a customer who was in rent arrears. The team identified that the customer was employed on a low wage and receiving Universal Credit as well as repaying a Housing Benefit overpayment. This meant the customer was finding it difficult to manage financially and was working past the normal retirement age.

Following support from the team:

- the customer has now been able to access appropriate benefits and support so that they can retire from work
- the customer was able to reduce their rent arrears
- the customer contacted HMRC and has been able to reduce their Housing Benefit overpayment repayment to make it more manageable
- a Discretionary Housing Payment was awarded along with a backdated payment
- an affordable, sustainable plan was put in place to clear the remaining arrears
- a number of Heat and Eat Vouchers were issued to support the customer while the team worked to review their financial situation
- the customer has been able to claim a bus pass allowing them to access free transport options.

green and sustainable homes

Our business strives to provide safe, well-maintained and secure homes in communities where people want to live, ensuring the needs and aspirations of our customers are met.


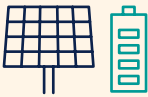








We know that the combination of increased cost-of-living, increased energy prices, and inflation continues to have a significant effect on our communities.

Through our Green Plan, we are committed to completing retrofit works to our homes, ensuring that customers can live in environmentally sustainable and cost-efficient homes.

Our capital works programme ensures our homes continue to meet the Decent Homes Standard, and that we can carry out work to our homes that makes them more energy efficient and, as a result, more environmentally friendly. Where possible we try to align the work we undertake to our properties, ensuring that our customers have the least amount of disruption and can benefit from a combined programme of works with a central point of contact.

We carried out home energy improvements to 2,612 homes, ensuring that customers can live in environmentally sustainable homes with improved energy efficiency.

Work undertaken has included:

 <p>New roofs and loft insulation</p>  <p>Solar (PV) and battery storage system</p>	 <p>Air source heat pump</p>  <p>SunAmp thermal heat systems</p>	 <p>Cavity wall insulation</p>  <p>External wall insulation</p>
 <p>New doors and windows</p>  <p>Ventilation system to prevent condensation damp and mould</p>	 <p>Rewire</p>  <p>Internal environmental monitoring to ensure the home is kept safe and healthy</p>	

In 2023/24, we:

- carried out capital refurbishment and works to 5,330 homes
- improved the SAP (energy efficiency) rating for 2,612 homes
- created £721,019 of social value through our energy efficiency works.

well maintained homes for all

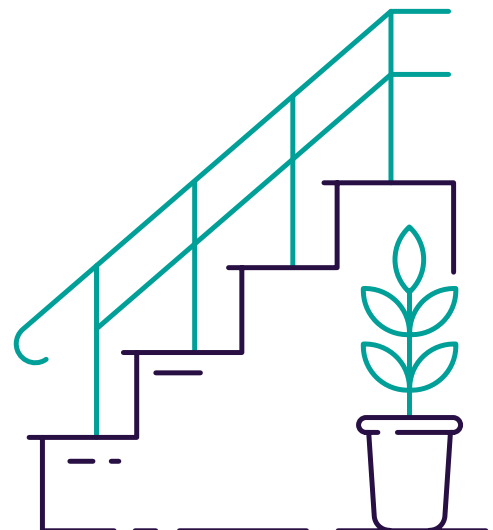
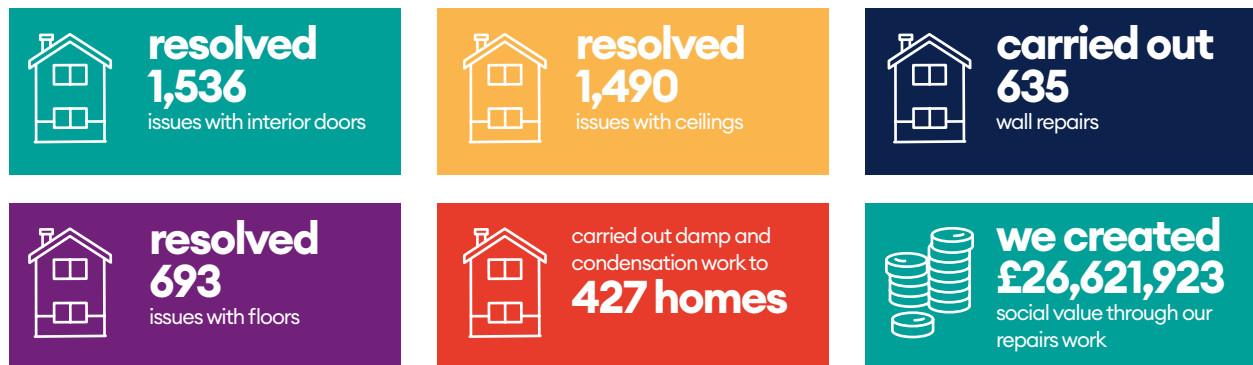
Every day we inspect, repair and resolve issues in our customers' homes.

During 2023/24 we carried out 74,567 repairs ranging from restoring heat and hot water to mending internal doors, responding to damage and fixing broken taps.

During the last year we've dealt with competing pressures, including: rising cost of materials; an increased number and complexity of repairs requests; and an increased focus on damp and mould repairs work.

We are committed to providing the best possible repairs service that recognises the needs of our customers. We have reviewed our processes and procedures as part of our Simple Done Right transformation project. As a result, we have made changes to improve the speed and efficiency with which customers can contact us about a repair and how we communicate with them during the repairs process. We are now in the process of implementing our new repairs management system that will continue to improve our efficiency and our customers' experience.

Using the HACT methodology, we can demonstrate a social value for some of our repairs activities; in particular, those activities that help a person to feel comfortable and secure in their home. During 2023/24, we have:



working with our suppliers

As a business, we can't do everything on our own.

We use our procurement policies to purchase goods, services and activities from external suppliers, ranging from payroll services for our people to scaffolding and major capital works.

We are proud to be a key partner in the County Durham Pound initiative, ensuring that all public sector procurement in the county maximises investment while supporting the delivery of tangible social value and activities in our communities and neighbourhoods.

A key aspect of the Social Value Act is that we require our suppliers to demonstrate how they will provide social value alongside their contracted activity. This can range from running careers events within schools to employing local people. Our Procurement Team monitor these commitments as part of the usual procurement processes and require evidence of outcomes as well as activity.

As a business, we also use the TOMs framework to monitor our own business-wide activity. This allows us to demonstrate how our activities have a positive impact on local communities, but also highlights the importance we place on social value to our suppliers.

During 2023/24:



Jewsons Partnership Solutions

Following the opening of their new managed stores provision in Seaham, alongside their existing provision in Croxdale, Jewsons has engaged with believe housing to ensure their social value commitment benefits local communities.

Colleagues from Jewsons joined members of our repairs and procurement teams to support the Seascapes Initiative with a beach clean at Noses Point, Seaham. This joint volunteering removed more than 20 bags of rubbish and plastic pollutants from the beach.

As part of their social value commitment, Jewsons created eight full-time equivalent posts across their two stores in Seaham and Croxdale and ensured that these were used to employ local people living in communities across County Durham.

Hartside Primary School, Crook

Following the award of an environmental improvements contract, BCE Northern worked in partnership with believe housing to help support the development of a much-needed early years garden and outdoor learning facility within the grounds of the school.

As part of the work, colleagues from BCE Northern:

- installed new fencing
- carried out landscaping and planting
- refreshed the existing sandpit area
- installed a new mud kitchen and other outdoor learning facilities.

The garden area is now well used. The school has been able to support extracurricular learning, track improvements in behaviour, and support pupils to learn about how they interact with the natural world.



who we supported during 2023/24

41st St Helens Auckland Brownies	1338 (Seaham) Squadron	Aclet Close Nursery School	Age UK County Durham	
Bearpark Community FC	Bowburn Local History Society	Bowburn Youth Project	Brandon Community Association	Brandon Primary School PTA
Browney Residents Association	Building Bearpark Community Partnership	Coalfields Regeneration Trust	Community Hub @ Bishop Auckland Baptist Church	
Copeland Road Primary School	County Durham Community Clothing Bank/Food Pantry	Coxhoe Local History Group	Coxhoe United FC	Creative Youth Opportunities
Croxdale Go-Sew	Cultivate 4 Life	Daisy Arts	Deaf Hill Miners Banner Group	
Dene Academy	DERIC Youth and Community Project	Durham and Chester-le-Street School Sport Partnership	Durham Academy (Advance Learning Partnership)	Durham Area Youth
Durham Christian Partnership	Durham County Council Fostering Service	Durham County Federation of Women's Institutes	Easington Social Welfare Centre	
East Durham Communities Cancer Support Group	East Durham Pulse Netball Club	East Durham Veterans Trust	Eastlea Community Centre	Eden Learning Trust
Escomb Youth FC	Framwellgate Moor Youth and Community Association	Free the Way	Friends of Addison Park	
Friends of Frosterley School/Frosterley School	Friends of St Helens School	Frosterley Primary School	Frosterley Village Hall and Institute	Groundwork North East and Cumbria
Hartside Primary Academy	Hawthorn Community Centre	Hazelwell Centre, Haswell Community Centre	HDFT NHS	
Heart on the Terrace	Hidden Stories CIC	Horden Centennial Centre	Horden Community Welfare Football Club	Horden Youth and Community Centre
Ileostomy, Urostomy, Colostomy Patient Support (OOOPS)	Inside Out North East CIC	KJI Walking Netball	Little Chefs Big Chefs CIC	
Little Treasures	Ludworth Community Association	LVAC Community Interest Company	MK Youth Sports CIC	NE Youth
North East Speak Their Name Suicide Memorial Quilt	Nuvo Wellbeing CIC	Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School	Parkhill Residents Association	
Parkside Allotment Association	Pet Angels Wearside	Peterlee Amateur Swimming Club	Peterlee Azuls FC	Peterlee Community Garden Group
Peterlee Town Council	Peterlee Town FC	Prince Bishop Community Broadcasting Ltd	RAF Association Crook Branch 475	
Rose Cottage Community Hub CIC	Ryhope Allstars Marching Jazz Band	Seaham Coast FC Under-12s	Seaham Coast Girls	Seaham Eastlea and District Community Association
Seaham Park CC	Seaham Repair Cafe	Seaham Youth and Community Centre	Shadforth Community Association	
Shadforth Parish Council	Shotton Colts Juniors FC	Silver Tree Primary School	South Hetton and District CA	Spare 10 for Ben
St Helen Auckland Parochial Church Council	St Helen Auckland Primary School	St John's Church, Neville's Cross	St John's Hall, Meadowfield	
St Margaret's Centre	St Thomas Church Hall	St Anne's C of E Primary School	Stanhope Silver Band	STARS Community Learning CIC
The Browney	The Just Love Project	The Oaks Special School	The Phoenix Junior Badminton Club	
The Well	The Wider World Project	Thornley Village Centre/Parish Council	Trimdon Community College Association	Wellbeing Group
Trimdon Grange Community Centre Association	Trimdon Village Hall	Waddington Street Centre	Wear Valley Community Action Group	
Weardale Community Choir	Weardale Flower and Garden Club	West Auckland Memorial Community Association	West Auckland Town Youth FC	West Auckland Vineyard Church
West Rainton FC Youth U10	Wheatley Hill Community Association	Wheels2Work County Durham	Willington Open Door Church	
Willington Youth Football Club	Wingate and Station Town Family Centre	Wingate Primary School	Witton Gilbert Nursery CIC	Wolsingham Angling Club

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