

social value report

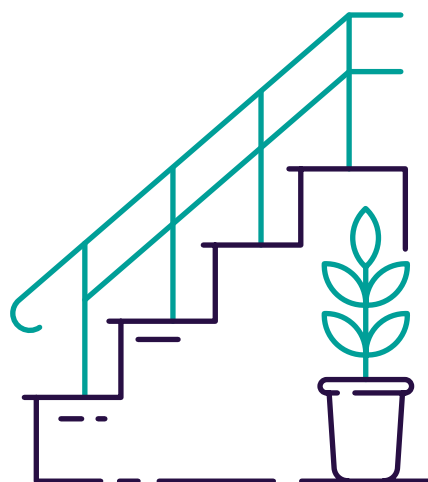
2022

2023

believe
housing

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Welcome to believe housing's second social value report.

As an organisation we believe in a life without barriers and know that our work in and with local communities has the potential to make a real change and a real difference.

Creating 'thriving, safe and sustainable places and homes that people want to live in' is one of our six strategic objectives set out in our 2022-25 Corporate Plan. We have a long-term commitment to investing in our communities and leveraging the investment we make as far as possible to maximise our impact.

We believe in the power of more and are proud that through our support, community organisations have been able to unlock over £200,000 of extra funding to provide innovative and much-needed activity within local communities.

Every year we see the benefit our support brings to the lives of people living in our communities and we know from first-hand experience that our funding really does make a difference while helping to improve people's lives.

We know that our customers and communities are experiencing several challenges, particularly around cost of living, rising energy prices and a decline in local voluntary and community sector provision. During difficult times it is important that communities are strong and resilient, which is why we are committed to identifying and supporting organisations to deliver essential and well-used activities within our local communities.

Through our Procurement Team, and our involvement with the County Durham Pound initiative, we have been able to ensure that our contractors commit to delivering social value as part of their contract, providing opportunities for local employment, maintenance support to local organisations and work in schools.

As part of our core purpose, we intend to build on our achievements this year including working across our business to capture further social value from teams and service areas not represented at present.

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 National TOMs (Themes, Outcomes and Measures) looks at social value 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.

During 2021/22, we became involved in the development of the County Durham Pound along with partners from across the county with the aim of increasing and improving social value secured through procurement. By joining together, we can work with local communities to provide the most effective level of investment and ensure that suppliers deliver activities that meet local need and provide real benefits to our communities.



our year in numbers

During 2022/23:



We created a combined total of
£5,010,417
in social value



Our HACT figure is
£3,293,730



Our TOMS figure is
£1,716,687



We invested over
£239,084
in communities through our community investment programme



Every £1 of community investment created
£13.77
of social value



Our community investment funding helped organisations to access
£203,768
of match funding



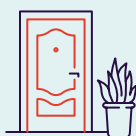
We've supported
183
people to access secure, sustained employment across north-east England



We've supported
123
people who are entering employment with support packages



Our suppliers have employed
58
local people



We have improved the energy efficiency ratings of
1,401
homes

community investment

Our community investment approach was developed to support our communities to thrive and support organisations with the funding needed to deliver projects that meet local needs.

We know that organisations and community groups sometimes need some financial support, which can make a significant difference to people.

We also know that our funding not only brings benefits to the wider community but also provides essential support and assistance to our customers. Our capital funding allows organisations to develop, improve and maintain vital community services and assets, providing centres and hubs that truly become part of the community and play a key role in equipping users with the skills and opportunities to become more resilient.

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 'a life without barriers'. We focus on supporting those groups and people who are best placed to deliver projects, as they understand their communities and their needs.

In 2022/23, we distributed funding through the following grant programmes:



A key aspect of our grant-making process is the development of our priorities using data and anecdotal information to ensure that we are able to provide the support that is needed at a local level.

During 2022/23, 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 employing people.
- A greener, fairer future: by reducing, reusing and recycling.
- Tackling inequalities as a result of the cost-of-living crisis including our 'keep warm, keep well' grant for community organisations providing 'warm hubs'.

In 2022/23, our community investment funding created an overall social value of £3,293,730.

Small grants:

In 2022/23:



We awarded 84

£500

grants to 81 organisations
or community groups



We awarded 18

£1,000

grants to 18 organisations
or community groups

Caff Gaff

We awarded £500 funding to Laurel Avenue Community Association to enable them to open the community centre for an additional two hours every Friday afternoon. The 'Caff Gaff' provided a 'warm hub' by offering free hot sandwiches, access to laptops and Wi-Fi, plus hot drinks and biscuits for all attendees. They also bought 15 fleece blankets, which were given to those families who were most in need due to the cost of living and energy crises. A community support worker coordinated the session and was on hand to support residents where needed, as well as signposting to other agencies and organisations for more specialised advice and information.

Bishop Auckland Baptist Church

The church supports the local community by holding a weekly drop-in for people on low incomes, providing low-cost food and activities using surplus food sourced through local fare share providers. A £500 grant has allowed them to buy a freezer to increase the range of food they can offer while allowing them to freeze any leftover meals that are then given to people accessing the service to take away and re-heat at home.



Large community grants:

In 2022/23:



We awarded seven

£10,000

grants to seven organisations or community groups totalling

£56,174



We awarded six

£20,000

grants to six organisations or community groups totalling

£117,851.84

Funtime Lunchtime

Easington Academy's project involved the installation of outdoor table tennis, and basketball hoops.

The aim of the project was to increase participation in extracurricular activities at social times, while also giving students the opportunity to improve their physical and mental health through activity.

Feedback from Easington Academy:

"By giving students the opportunity to engage in these activities during social time it has improved overall behaviour, attendance, and homework completion.

"The students were all extremely excited to put the equipment to use as soon as it arrived, and it's been great to see such engagement. The activities on offer have improved behaviour around the site as students are much more engaged and it has also meant that students have been going into lessons much more settled after dinner."

Feedback from one of the students:

"I felt conscious coming back to school. The table tennis table has helped me to make new friends through a common interest of playing table tennis. I look forward to break times now."

Eastlea Community Centre

The Eastlea Community Centre runs a warm space providing free warm food and companionship for local older people who are experiencing issues due to social isolation and the cost-of-living crisis.

Users reported that they had limited finances and were struggling to afford to heat their homes or eat, with some saying they were seriously limiting their food intake as well as any social activities to save money. We supported the community centre to expand their provision by running a weekly free community luncheon club providing support and friendship to local residents. Attendees can have a free two-course meal and then take part in several activities including curling, bingo and social time, as well as accessing other support provided by the centre. Sessions have also been run to help people learn how to make cheap, easy, nutritious food with attendees also being given free slow cookers and recipe books.

Users have said that the centre and the provision have made a real difference to their lives; providing many with a warm space and meal, and also an opportunity to meet other people, make friends and socialise in a safe environment.

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.

We work with individuals who are looking to access employment, self-employment, volunteering, training and more sustainable employment.

During 2021/22, in response to employment needs and issues associated with the pandemic, we increased the size of the team to include several employability coordinators to support our existing team.

We also added a specific health and wellbeing worker, with the aim of supporting those clients who are further away from the employment market and not in a position to currently access employment. They support customers in our communities, enabling and empowering them to reduce isolation, improve their health and wellbeing, and move forward to accessing our employability support.

Our in-work support coordinator has continued to support customers who are currently in work, or who have just left work, to access sustained and well-paid employment; as opposed to the short-term, poorly paid, low hours contracts that have recently become more prevalent.

The team has also worked with local schools and education providers to promote housing as a careers option, as well as supporting young people to negotiate the challenges of entering employment.

In 2022/23, we:

- supported 183 people to access secure, sustained employment
- supported six people to access volunteering opportunities
- supported four people through our health and wellbeing provision to access secure, sustained employment
- referred 149 people to other specialist support agencies, of which 38 were referred to external employability support.

Susan

After caring full-time for her two disabled children, Susan wanted to develop the confidence and skills to take up volunteering opportunities and prepare herself for employment. Working with one of our team, Susan was supported to access an IT training course to learn new skills and improve her self-confidence. Following her IT course, we were able to support her to become a regular volunteer at her local branch of 'That Bread and Butter Thing', where she packs food parcels and supports clients on a weekly basis.

Nathan

After working on a number of short-term factory contracts, Nathan approached the service looking to secure work as a joiner. Nathan already held a Level 2 joinery qualification and, through our partnership with Sendrig, was initially offered the opportunity to undertake some work experience. After submitting his CV, Nathan was offered the opportunity of paid employment with Sendrig, but needed a CSCS card and asbestos awareness qualification. After passing both qualifications Nathan is now working for Sendrig alongside a more experienced joiner who will support him with extensive on-the-job training, with the hope that he will be able to successfully complete a Level 3 joinery qualification in the future.

green and sustainable homes

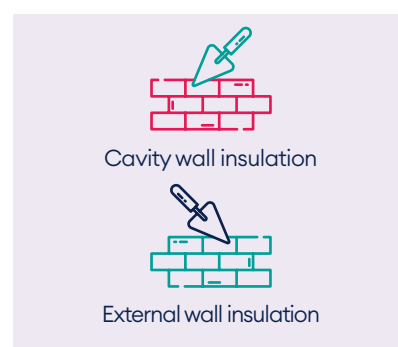
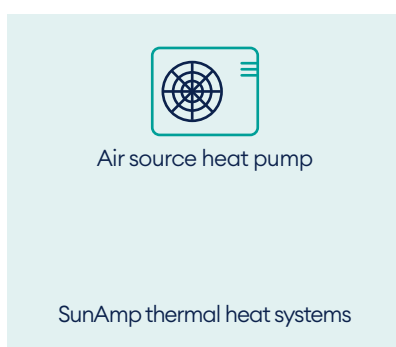
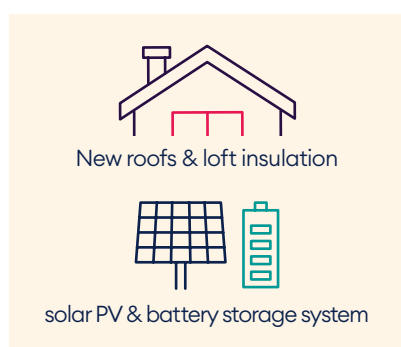
Our business strives to provide safe, well-maintained and secure homes in communities where people want to live, ensuring the needs and aspirations of our customers are met.

We know that the combination of increased cost-of-living, increased energy prices and inflation are having an adverse effect on our communities. We are working to ensure that our homes are as energy efficient and economical as possible.

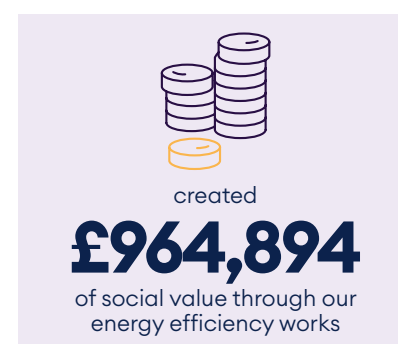
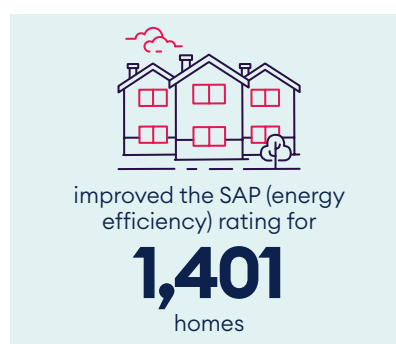
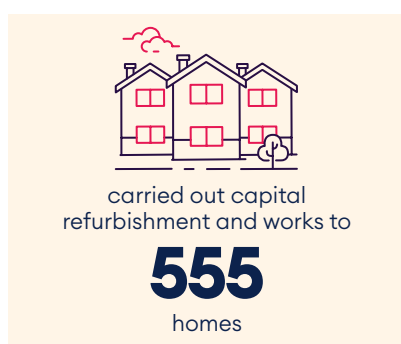
Our capital works programme ensures that we meet the Decent Homes Standard and are also able to carry out work to our homes that makes them more energy efficient and, as a result, more environmentally friendly.

We carried out home energy improvements to 1,401 homes, ensuring that customers can live in environmentally sustainable homes with improved energy efficiency.

Work undertaken has included:



In 2022/23, we:



well maintained homes for all

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

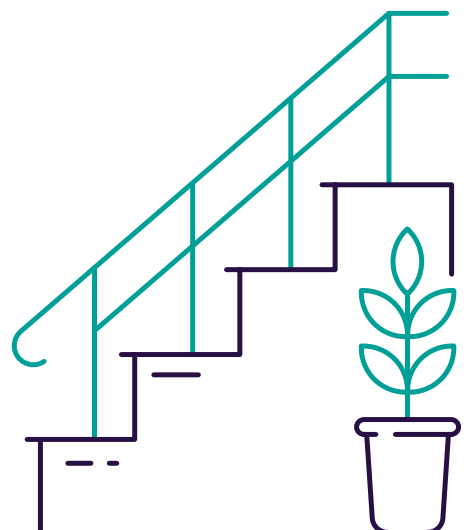
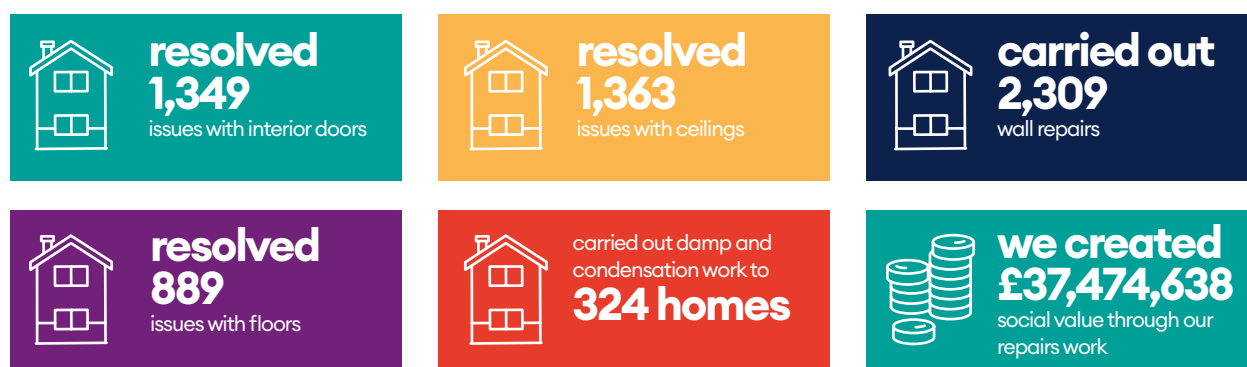
During 2022/23 we carried out 76,324 repairs ranging from restoring heat and hot water to mending internal doors, responding to damage and fixing broken taps.

During the last year we've had to contend with competing pressures, including: rising cost of materials; an increased number of repairs requests; issues resulting from natural weather events; our increased focus on damp and mould repairs work.

As part of our commitment to delivering a proactive repairs service, we continue to work with our customers to understand issues faced by those experiencing mould and damp, as well as prioritising works depending on need and vulnerabilities. We know that to develop a truly proactive response, we must understand our customers and understand the data that we hold. As part of this, we have begun to review our customer relationship management systems with the view to developing intuitive systems that provide effective and correct information.

Using the HACT methodology, we can demonstrate a social value for a small number of repairs activities. In particular, those activities that help a person to feel comfortable and secure in their home. In 2022/23 we carried out 6,234 of these types of repairs.

During 2022/23, 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.

We ask all suppliers to demonstrate how they will provide a benefit and tangible impact in our communities. As part of national procurement rules, we require all organisations to supply evidence of how they will provide social value alongside their contracted activity. Using the TOMs framework, companies commit to a number of activities that are considered at the shortlisting and awarding stage, and then regularly monitored throughout the life of the contract.

During 2022/23:

- We awarded contracts to 31 suppliers, of which 20 were based in north-east England.
- Our contractors employed 58 local people.
- 19 of our awarded contracts contained provision for TOMs-defined social value activity.
- Total value of social value delivered as per the TOMs framework = £1,716,687.

Foundry Fields Allotments Association:

We worked with the Foundry Fields Allotment Association to secure the support of one of our contracted suppliers. As part of this work, BCE Northern Limited provided 84 hours of staff time free of charge to the allotments association. BCE also supplied and installed the materials needed to create a fully accessible community garden, with the aim of increasing inter-generational links between older people and local youth organisations and schools.



moving forward and our future plans

Creating communities that thrive and achieve is important to us, not only because of the positive benefits it has for our customers but also the positive benefits it has for every member of that community.

We know that our customers and our communities are facing ever-increasing pressures in terms of cost-of-living, risk of unemployment, financial uncertainty, energy prices and transport costs. We want to ensure that we are able to support community organisations to tackle these issues at a grass roots level, as well as delivering effective and tangible support to individuals. During the next 12 months we are keen to progress and develop the work that we've undertaken, as well ensuring that we enhance and improve our approach to supporting communities. Our next steps are outlined in the table below:

Action	Success Criteria	Metrics	Completion date
Business-led social value generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of social value collection within the organisation Understanding of importance of social value Services collecting social value as standard Engagement with internally-promoted volunteering opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of internal HACT social value created Amount of internal TOMs social value created Combined amount of social value created Number of people taking part in volunteering activity 	March 2024
Community funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed patch-mapping exercise Commissioning of activity that meets identified local needs Annual funding review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social value created through community funding Social value created through commissioned activity 	March 2024
New Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment and successful employment of New Start participants within the pilot scheme Recruitment and successful employment of New Start roles within the wider business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Start individuals employed within the business NVQ qualifications achieved New Start individuals achieving employment following the six-month programme 	March 2024
Energy efficient homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Round 2 Improving the energy efficiency of assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Value created through energy efficiency works Number of properties receiving SAP works 	March 2024
Providing well-maintained homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed damp and mould gap analysis Review of repairs function Adoption of damp and mould Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social value created through repair work Number of repairs completed 	March 2024
Social value from procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective monitoring of social value commitments Links successfully made between contractors and community organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of social value created through procurement Number of community projects supported by contractors 	March 2024



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