

# home energy improvements: the impacts



**the energy performance of  
3,000 believe housing homes  
has now been upgraded, with  
support from the Social Housing  
Decarbonisation Fund.**

**At this milestone, believe housing and delivery partner RE:GEN  
Group look at how this ongoing programme of works is:**

- Making homes warmer and healthier for residents and tackling fuel poverty.
- Boosting communities and supporting jobs, skills, and the growth of the green economy.
- Reducing carbon emissions from housing to help the UK meet our climate goals.

**upgrading the UK's homes is crucial, and at believe housing we know our home energy improvements are making a difference to people's lives, the economy and the environment.**



**As our lead contractor RE:GEN Group reaches the 3,000th home in our decarbonisation programme, supported by government funding, this report highlights the far-reaching positive impact of this work.**

Energy performance improvements are making our homes warmer and more comfortable, improving residents' health and wellbeing and reducing fuel poverty. I've been to customers' homes and heard firsthand how much better they feel and how much easier their homes are to keep warm, following works.

Economically, decarbonising our homes is driving growth in the north east of England, creating jobs, boosting the green economy and developing the skills needed for a sustainable future.

At believe housing, we care passionately about ensuring our investment in homes supports the communities we serve. So, working closely with local contractors and suppliers who share that ethos, we're also maximising social value to give our communities a much-needed boost.

Environmentally, decarbonising homes is key to helping the UK meet its net zero targets by 2050. believe housing is committed to protecting the planet, and improving the energy efficiency of our homes is just one way we're helping to reduce carbon emissions and minimise climate change.

I'm proud to introduce this report and show that by decarbonising our homes, we are helping to create a healthier, more sustainable and economically resilient future for everyone.

**John Marshall,**  
**Chair of believe housing**

# progressing towards net zero

As one of the largest housing associations in the north east of England, believe housing recognises the impact our homes and business activities can have on the environment.



We are committed to working with customers, colleagues and the supply chain to reduce our carbon footprint and ensure the green agenda is part of our 'business as usual'.

Since being established in 2019, we have invested £98.4m improving our homes, of which £13m went on home energy improvements.

We plan to continue that investment, spending around £210m in the next seven years, and have road mapped how to get all our remaining homes to EPC C or above by 2030.

By securing government funding we are achieving more than we could alone.

Through the SHDF programme we have taken a fabric first approach, which has allowed us to reach 3,000 customers in little over two years.

The cost-effective measures taken are not only reducing emissions to help the UK progress towards its target for net zero by 2050.

They are also making homes warmer, more comfortable and more affordable to run for our customers, many of whom are on low incomes.

**Ruth Dent,**  
Director of Assets and Compliance at believe housing



**3,000**  
homes had  
EPC upgrades

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**1,212**  
tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e  
saved a year

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which  
equates  
to



**263**  
cars off the  
road

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# health, wellbeing and outcomes

## The link between housing conditions and health outcomes is long established.

So when we make our homes warmer and more comfortable through decarbonisation works, we are giving customers the foundations for a better life.

We make it easier to manage problems like damp and mould and we can reduce the number of households in fuel poverty.

Warmer homes reduce respiratory diseases and mental health issues, saving the NHS money.

And when our customers are healthier and can access the range of support we offer, like financial and employability advice, they are more likely to remain socially and economically active.

By upgrading the EPC rating of **3,000 homes**, the improvement to residents' lives equates to **£2.5million** in social value.



**“At Healthy Homes Hub, we understand that improving housing conditions is vital for enhancing health and wellbeing. By making our homes warmer and more comfortable through decarbonisation, we lay the groundwork for healthier lives.**

“Warmer homes help combat issues like damp and mould, significantly reducing the risk of respiratory diseases and mental health challenges. This not only alleviates pressure on the NHS but also empowers our residents to lead more active and fulfilling lives.

“The social value generated from upgrading our homes is immense, translating into better health outcomes and increased economic participation.

“Our commitment to creating healthier living environments is essential for fostering resilient communities where everyone can thrive.”

**Jenny Danson, CEO of Healthy Homes Hub**





**John is in his 70s,  
with arthritis and  
diabetes.**

“Since the work was done in my house, which included cavity wall insulation, it feels a lot warmer even when it is cold outside.

“The house feels better for it and, in fact, so do I. I don’t feel like I’m getting as much severe pain and I’m not as worried about the cold going into the winter now.”



**Ralph and Sharron say  
their family’s quality of  
life has improved since  
the work in their home,  
which included new  
loft insulation.**

Sharron says: “We couldn’t keep it warm, then the bills started coming in.

“We had no insulation in the loft, but within two weeks everything got done and we’ve seen a big difference!

“It’s lovely and warm and cosy - we’ve never had the heating on, and our bills have already come down.

“I’m definitely happy with the work that has been done.”





# jobs, skills and the green economy

**With an £80m turnover, more than 600 employees and an extensive supply chain; believe housing plays a substantial role in the regional economy.**

We are upskilling our own workforce to drive forward this agenda.

And the significant investment in home energy performance upgrades, including programmes supported by the SHDF, is giving contractors the security and confidence they need to grow, to invest in jobs and skills, and to innovate.

Leading these works for believe housing is delivery partner RE:GEN Group, which is increasing its own capacity, investing heavily in the skills pipeline and has established a new renewables business in response to the housing sector's decarbonisation agenda.

## RE:GEN Group

**RE:GEN Group is a purpose-driven organisation, and a trusted partner for housing associations like believe housing.**

Our approach combines a deep understanding of the needs of housing providers and communities with the delivery of high-quality, sustainable housing solutions.

We have aligned our business to meet the sector's decarbonisation targets, enhancing both the energy efficiency and quality of people's homes and lives. We collaborate closely with our clients, partners and supply chain to drive change, ensuring that we're at the forefront



of building a more efficient, sustainable and smarter future for the housing sector.

The demand for these services has been extraordinary, and we've responded with a proactive and impactful approach. Throughout SHDF Wave 1 and 2, RE:GEN was responsible for delivering more than one third of retrofit measures nationally.

## Unlocking social value, contractors have given back to local communities by:

Donating **£10,000** and **214 hours** to transform a closure-threatened church into a community hub

Volunteering **56 hours** to remove old play equipment from a local school

Supported **two trainee** roles who were part of the SHDF delivery team

**“I’m doing my bit to contribute to lowering emissions from residential properties.”**



## upskilling at believe housing

**Colin is from a farming family and spent a decade working on a dairy farm before joining believe housing as an Energy and Retrofit Surveyor.**

believe housing retrained him and provided access to a qualification to become a Domestic Energy Assessor, to do EPCs in homes. He also completed a retrofit course, to survey homes below EPC C, helping to plan works that a home might be eligible for.

“I’m doing my bit to contribute to lowering emissions from residential properties.

“Using less fossil fuels and introducing renewable tech is a no-brainer for me.

“Trying to live as sustainably as possible is so important; to minimise climate change and protect biodiversity for future generations like my daughters. If we leave it to them, it’s too late.”

## business growth at



**CRAWFORD & CO**  
— SURVEYORS

**Through its involvement with believe housing’s SHDF scheme and other projects, Crawford & Co Surveyors has expanded its workforce from 45 to 81 nationwide.**

A new specialist team for SHDF works created 15 jobs, including project administration, senior project managers and retrofit coordinators.

Colleagues have completed more than 20 apprenticeship programmes from Level 3 surveying technician through to master’s degrees in building surveying.

To date, we have completed 30,000 retrofit assessments and 35,000 retrofit coordination, with believe housing providing 10% and RE:GEN providing 25%.

These figures demonstrate our trusted partnership, collective expertise and commitment to alleviating fuel poverty by improving energy efficiency improvements.

# a new business at RE:GEN Green

**One of the project's most notable success stories is the creation of renewable energy solutions company, RE:GEN Green.**

The business serves both commercial and domestic markets, managing every stage of the process from pre-commencement and design to compliance, installation, final delivery and aftercare.

RE:GEN Green started with two core work streams - PV and heat pump installations – and has expanded to offer a broader range of domestic services in electrical, plumbing and heating.

In 12 months it has grown to a team of more than 20 specialists, including electrical and mechanical supervisors, design and compliance experts, and four electrical apprentices. Three of its apprentices came through RE:GEN Academy and senior team members have advanced through additional qualifications and promotions as the workload has increased.

Between the team's first job in January 2024 and October 2024 it completed 1,000 home upgrades.

And RE:GEN Green is on track to reach a turnover of £4.2m by the end of 2024-25, and is poised for even greater growth in the future.

This growth is not only helping believe housing and RE:GEN Group deliver sustainable solutions to the housing sector, but also creating significant employment opportunities within the green sector.



## Developing the skills pipeline at RE:GEN Academy

**The shortage of skilled workers continues to impact the sector's ability to meet demand as the need for green building projects increases.**

It's estimated that 1,500 new skilled workers are needed annually to sustain development projects. This doesn't just affect RE:GEN Group, but the wider supply chain, which relies heavily on SMEs to deliver projects on the ground.

To tackle this RE:GEN has invested heavily in its non-profit RE:GEN Academy, which offers training and employment opportunities for those looking to enter the sector. The

Academy is helping to bridge the gap between the current skills shortage and the future workforce needed to meet the region's decarbonisation goals.

Across 2023/24, the Academy supported 121 learners through its Skills Bootcamps, of which 15 were residents of social housing, and 15 gained employment by RE:GEN Group.





**“Hearing the vision for RE:GEN Green, and the future of the sector, makes this is an exciting opportunity.”**

## creating new opportunities

**Tommy left a career in special educational needs to retrain at the RE:GEN Academy in Sunderland.**

He completed one of its Skills Bootcamps – a blend of classroom-based learning, practical sessions and real-life work experience – and is now an apprentice electrician with RE:GEN Green.

In the first phase of his new career, he has been working on SHDF-backed investment in social housing, which has included installing solar PV on believe housing homes.

“I loved my old job, but it was challenging emotionally and draining. I was thinking of a change when I saw the

opportunity to do a skills bootcamp. It was a brilliant introduction to the construction sector and green jobs, and I got a Level 3 Retrofit qualification and my CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) card so I can work on sites.

“I’m really into hiking and I care about what we do to the environment, so I love working outside and being part of something green. I took a wage cut to come here but hearing the vision for RE:GEN Green and the future of the sector makes this is an exciting opportunity.”


# the work so far in numbers:

Working with partners, believe housing secured £10.26m from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund towards £18.8m of home energy efficiency upgrades.


By working closely with our delivery partner RE:GEN Group we're exceeding our targets.

SHDF Wave	Awarded	Homes in bid	Homes delivered
1	£3.4m	908	1,187
2.1	£6.85m	2,022	On track for 2,203


Work has now been completed on 3,000 believe housing homes, with 10,183 individual measures installed including:




Loft insulation:  
**2,795**




Cavity wall insulation:  
**810**



PIV ventilation:  
**1,555**



Solar panels:  
**276**



Air source heat pumps:  
**4**





# customer feedback:

98% of customers said they were satisfied or very satisfied.



**“Over the moon with everything.”**



**“I used a whole roll of paper towel wiping the condensation from my windows most mornings. Once the works were completed, the very next morning the condensation was gone.”**



**“Everyone was helpful and very nice. Happy with all the work carried out.”**



**“All work carried out was positively done by all trades, clean up was done after operations and workers left me confident with all my questions answered.”**



**“I’m still apprehensive for the efficiency of this new heat pump, however we all need to move forward for a greener future, thank you.”**



**“It’s made a hell of a difference, why wouldn’t you get it done?”**

## strong partnerships are paramount to success

The impact reflected in this report would not have been possible without the hard work of many partners.

This includes a variety of contractors and suppliers in the north east of England, which we hope will continue to play a role in providing healthy homes for residents and growing the UK's green economy.

Airlock	Fortify Solutions	Oak Electrotechnical
BCS Render Systems	Gas Checks NE	Odin
Clear Climate	JMAC	Phaze Scaffolding
Crawfords	JTL	RE:GEN Green
Derwent View Scaffolding	Julian Holmes	RE:GEN Solutions
Fortify Electrical	Keystone	Rothwell Plumbing
	MRM Solutions	Springs Roofing

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