



# Environmental, Social and Governance report

2022- 2023

**The Wrekin**  
Housing Group

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## Executive summary

Welcome to our ESG Report which looks at our Environmental, Social and Governance highlights from the year.

In this year's report, we want to show you the positive impact we are having in our neighbourhoods and how we continue to make a difference to people's lives. This has all been achieved despite the financial challenges facing people across the country – and in this report we emphasise how we continue to support our customers who are being impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.

As an organisation, we are also not immune to rising costs and this has meant we have had to look at doing things in different ways to ensure we achieve our goals of achieving net-zero carbon by 2050.

This report also sheds light on the work we are doing to ensure Wrekin provides a supportive environment for both customers and colleagues – our Group is responsible for over 1,000 staff and 28,000 customers and it is imperative that we continue to listen to everyone to understand both their current and future needs better than any other.

The last twelve months has shown us that customer voice has never been more important – and we've made some key changes to our governance structure that means our tenants have a greater say at the highest levels of our organisation.

This report is part of our wider performance reporting, which includes our annual report and financial accounts, which help us demonstrate to customers, funders and stakeholders how we perform against key ESG criteria.

The reporting criteria covered here are diverse and cover complex challenges – whilst we might address some in the short-term, many will take years to address fully. One thing is certain, we are fully committed to addressing the Sustainability Reporting Standard (SRS) criteria and ensuring that we play our part.



Wayne Gethings  
**Group Chief Executive**

**£85.9m**

Invested into  
**new and existing  
homes**



**£56.7m**

Worth of  
**social value  
generated**



**G1/V2**

Awarded by the  
**regulator of  
social housing**





# Environmental sustainability

Working to reduce Wrekin's carbon footprint whilst ensuring our tenants can live in affordable, energy-efficient homes

During 2022/23

**£85.9m**

was invested into building new energy efficient homes and reducing the carbon footprint of existing homes



During 2022/23

**253 TONNES**

of waste was diverted from landfill by Wrekin Revive - our furniture reuse scheme



Since 2017

**CO<sub>2</sub>**

emissions from our head office in Telford have reduced by more than one hundred tonnes per year



We are fully committed to reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to net-zero by 2050 to meet the Government's target. We continue to develop high quality homes and upgrade the energy efficiency of our existing homes. During 2022/23, we invested £11.7m in our existing homes. A large part of this investment includes installing greener energy systems that are helping to reduce both our carbon footprint and energy costs for customers. We also invested £74.2m building new homes - ensuring they are designed to avoid the need for future energy efficiency retrofitting and are adaptable to climate change.

We are also playing our part by minimising the waste produced and carbon emitted by our offices and wider operations. During the last year our catering service reduced the use of single use plastic by 75%. We also stopped ordering fossil fuel vehicles for all company car leases and installed several electric vehicle charging points at our head office in Telford.



## Net-zero carbon

The starting point for Wrekin’s net-zero carbon strategy sets out the following three key aims:







- 1 **By 2025:** To have adopted an alternative non-fossil fuel heating source that will be used in all of our new homes.
- 2 **By 2025:** Although this date is under review due to rising inflationary and material costs, our aim is for all of our existing homes to have a Standard Assessment Procedure rating (SAP) of band C or better ahead of the UK Government’s target of 2030.
- 3 **By 2050:** All homes, as well as our wider business, will have net-zero carbon status.

The housing industry is currently experiencing a number of issues which mean achieving the aims laid out in our strategy will be challenging. As we strive towards these goals, inflation levels are very high and the cost of materials has also risen significantly.

Due to these pressures, we will continue to keep our short-term social and economic forecasts under constant review. We will also need to be open minded as to how our strategy might need to change to account for the current financial climate.

Despite these challenges, our long-term ambition will always be to make an effective contribution towards protecting the world we live in by reducing our carbon emissions.

Our priority is to ensure our homes are as sustainable and affordable as possible for our tenants and we have developed a series of commitments to keep this work on track as follows:

<p>All of our electricity supply contracts are <b>now</b> with suppliers that have 100 per cent green energy sources.</p> 	<p><b>By 2025</b></p> <p>All of the new homes we develop will have a heating source that is not reliant on gas or oil.</p> 	<p><b>By 2025</b></p> <p>All of our homes will have a SAP rating of band C or better, although this target date is currently under review due to the challenging financial climate.</p> 
<p><b>By 2026</b></p> <p>Our entire fleet will consist of electric and hybrid vehicles.</p> 	<p>Every single Wrekin employee and tenant will be invited to participate in a series of genuine conversations to influence the development of this strategy.</p> 	<p>Our leaders will look to work with partners as part of delivering the strategy.</p> 

## Net-zero carbon road map

Our strategy is a high-level one that sets out the road map for Wrekin on our journey towards being a net-zero carbon business by 2050.

### Key plans for 2023/24 against this road map are:

- Explore plans to work with our existing supply chain to bring our band D properties up to band C by 2025. Although this date is under review due to the challenging financial climate, we still intend to meet our commitment before the UK Government's 2030 target.
- Bring 55 of our worst-performing homes up to Band C or above using money allocated from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.
- Look at the feasibility of installing battery storage and other green technologies in our larger commercial premises
- Provide training to our staff to become MCS certified installers. MCS is an industry-led quality assurance scheme, which demonstrates the quality and reliability of installation companies. Being MCS certified demonstrates to our customers that Wrekin installs green technologies to the industry-expected level



2023

Procure a retrofit framework to enable energy improvement methods to be undertaken.

2023/2024

Recruit and train EPC assessors to survey our properties



2025

We are currently reviewing our target date to survey all 1600 SAP band D and lower homes and undertake retrofit work to achieve band C. Business and communal electricity to be purchased from zero carbon and all waste recycled. All new homes to be zero carbon ready and built off the gas grid.

2026

10% of commercial fleet to be electrically powered, with charging in key locations. All heating staff to have new heating technology training and be TRUSTMARK registered trades.



2028

Survey all 12,500 homes and complete a retrofit assessment (property plan).

2030

Undertake work to lift SAP 2012 C rated homes to band A or B targeting fuel poor first. Start installing solar PV where required and all new fleet electric from 2030.



2035

Start converting all heating systems including communal from mains gas to electric or hydrogen heating (whichever is preferred at the time).

2040

All new homes to be one hundred percent net-zero carbon and undertake work to lift SAP 2012 B rated homes to band A.



2050

All housing stock and offices to meet band A or B, electrically heated and carbon offsetting applied to achieve zero carbon status.



## Financial investment

Our current business plan includes an investment to improve the 1,600 homes which are currently performing at a SAP rating of band D or below.

Overall, positive progress has been made against the actions contained in the strategy. However, the costs of retrofitting stock to band C have increased considerably.

Registered social landlords (RSLs) carrying out schemes under the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund grant have overstretched the retrofit supply chain. This has resulted in a large number of RSLs trying to find contractors, materials and retrofit surveyors with the right skills at the same time.

Therefore, it is now estimated that the initial £1.4m cost to achieve band C has more than doubled to £4.3m over the last 12 months.

The figure is based on the costs being experienced by other RSLs, with nearly £3.5m of the additional costs relating to wall insulation.

Given the delay in planned budgets and their rephasing over a three-year period, we are currently reviewing our goal of upgrading all stock to band C by 2025. Although we still intend to meet our commitment before the UK Government's 2030 target.





# Social impact

Maximising the social value of our services for the benefit of our customers is a key priority for The Wrekin Housing Group

During 2022/23

£56.7m

worth of social value was generated, achieving 15,849 positive outcomes



During 2022/23

£4.4m

in additional income was achieved for our customers



During 2022/23

£54.5k

was awarded to groups and projects to help build community and individual resilience



For us, social value is about how we can make a real difference for our customers and communities. We focus our efforts on addressing some of the challenges our customers face such as financial, social and digital exclusion, unemployment, loneliness and health inequalities.

We work together with partners, customers and stakeholders to create opportunities for people to reach their full potential, building community and individual resilience. By listening to our customers we can help enable them to:

- Successfully maintain their tenancy
- Receive high-quality care and support
- Remain independent in their homes
- Contribute towards strong, vibrant, resilient communities.





In 2022/23 The Wrekin Housing Group delivered an estimated £56.7m of social impact and achieved 15,849 positive social value outcomes, calculated across our priority themes of employability, inclusion, wellbeing, resilience and environment.

Social impact is the effect of our activities on our communities and the wellbeing of people within them. These figures are based, in part, on calculations and formulas created by HACT (Housing Associations' Charitable Trust) and the National Housing Federation. A summary of this impact and its outcomes can be seen in the table below.

Employability	Social impact £	No. of outcomes
Creating employment opportunities	£425,000	39
Developing skills and building confidence	£3,300,000	1,823
Stimulating local economic growth	£250,000	71
Inclusion	Social impact £	No. of outcomes
Enabling people to connect and play active roles in society	£564,000	297
Enabling people to maximise income potential	£5,800,000	68
Securing, maintaining & sustaining homes	£4,800,000	1,383
Wellbeing	Social impact £	No. of outcomes
Helping people to live independently	£2,400,000	1,523
Improving physical and mental wellbeing	£2,300,000	475
Reducing social care needs and hospital attendance	£23,800,000	4,550
Resilience	Social impact £	No. of outcomes
Fostering a sense of community	£3,400,000	1,039
Providing a safe environment	£600,000	983
Treating people fairly and equally		1,654
Environmental Sustainability	Social impact £	No. of outcomes
Building and providing efficient homes	£9,000,000	1,944
Minimising impact on the environment	£24,000	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£56,663,000</b>	<b>15,849</b>



## Employability

Wrekin makes a difference to people's lives by creating job opportunities, promoting economic growth, and supporting people towards work and training.

We are a Cornerstone Employer, working with The Careers & Enterprise Company, The Marches Careers Hub and other local employers to support schools and colleges to prepare and inspire young people for the fast-changing world of work. Cornerstone promotes The Wrekin Housing Group as an employer of choice and raises awareness of our opportunities via:

- Work experience placements
- Careers events
- Industry placements
- Supported internships

During 2022/23 we offered 38 work experience placements across the business. We also provided 25 longer term industry placements and attended 26 school events.

More than 60 staff are signed up as School Ambassadors and volunteer their time to support school events and visits, reaching approximately 2,900 young people throughout the year.

Our Building Better Opportunities (BBO) programme came to an end in March 2023. This initiative was funded by the European Social Fund and National Lottery, enabling us to employ dedicated Employment Support officers, whose aim was to support those furthest away from potential employment. During the five-year programme, Wrekin supported over 300 people, with a significant number being successful in securing work or completing training.



## Inclusion

Wrekin works with our customers and employees to try to improve financial, social and digital inclusion. We offer access to support and advice to enable people to secure and sustain their tenancies, maximise their income potential, feel connected and play a more active role in society.

Our Money Matters team provides a holistic service of expert advice, supporting customers with multiple issues, including debt problems, energy advice, benefit advice, budgeting help, access to essential furniture, help to apply for grants and funding and support in a crisis through emergency food and gas/electric funds.

During 2022/23 the team successfully brought in more than £4.4m in additional income for our customers. They engaged with 1,488 households and received 2,315 referrals for support and advice.

In 2022/23 our Welfare Benefit Advisors and Tenancy Sustainment Officers carried out 788 income assessments, and a further 440 full affordability assessments.

Wrekin Debt Advice is a key service on offer to customers and provides regulated advice to tenants, supporting them to find tailored solutions to manage their finances. During 2022/23 the team received 258 referrals, achieving successful financial outcomes for customers of over £643k. This includes charitable grants, debt reduction and insolvency solutions.

2022/23 saw the launch of Wrekin Energy Advice, to support customers with the rising energy costs. Eight team members successfully qualified as Energy Advisors and we were awarded a two-year grant from the Cadent Foundation to fund a full-time Energy Advisor.

During 2022/23, Wrekin Energy Advice received 172 referrals, resulting in positive financial outcomes of over £43k. Customers are offered bespoke advice on how to reduce energy costs, supported to tackle energy debts, offered crisis help and provided with appropriate winter warm items, such as heated throws and slow cookers.

### Jane's story

A mum-of-two from Shrewsbury, reached out for help after she struggled to keep her head above water with debt.

She said: "I was having a tough time. I had built up debts and my monthly wages were being used to pay it off. It left me very little for food and other essentials. I had credit card, loan and overdraft debt."

"I work full-time, so my childcare costs are really expensive. I was having to pay for our weekly food shop on credit cards – so the debt began to creep up slowly."

"I had been stressing about my debt for at least two years before I plucked up the courage to get in touch. I felt sick and wasn't sleeping. I was ashamed and embarrassed, no-one around me knew the extent of my debt."

Jane reached out to the Money Matters Team and worked closely with one of our Debt Advisors. Working together, we were able to secure a Debt Relief Order (DRO) – which cleared all of Jane's remaining debt.

Jane added: "I cannot put into words the impact accessing this service has had on my mental health. It has made me realise that debt isn't anything to be ashamed of. I will never be able to thank the team enough."

### Digital inclusion

Wrekin has invested in a variety of digital inclusion initiatives in the past year. We have a number of devices, phones, tablets and laptops that we can lend out to customers who are working with us to improve their digital skills.

We also have tablets at each of our ShireLiving schemes to build digital confidence amongst our residents.

During 2022/23 we delivered Tea and Tech sessions for residents living in our Learning Disability homes.



### Wellbeing

Wrekin offers a wide range of activities and trips for our over-55s. These are very well attended but some of our residents can be anxious about getting involved on their own.

We want to make sure our trips are as inclusive as possible so that everyone feels welcome. To help with this we have established a friendly team of Trip Buddies, who are on hand ready to support anyone who would benefit from a bit of company.

Through these trips and activities people make long term friendships, reducing loneliness and isolation.

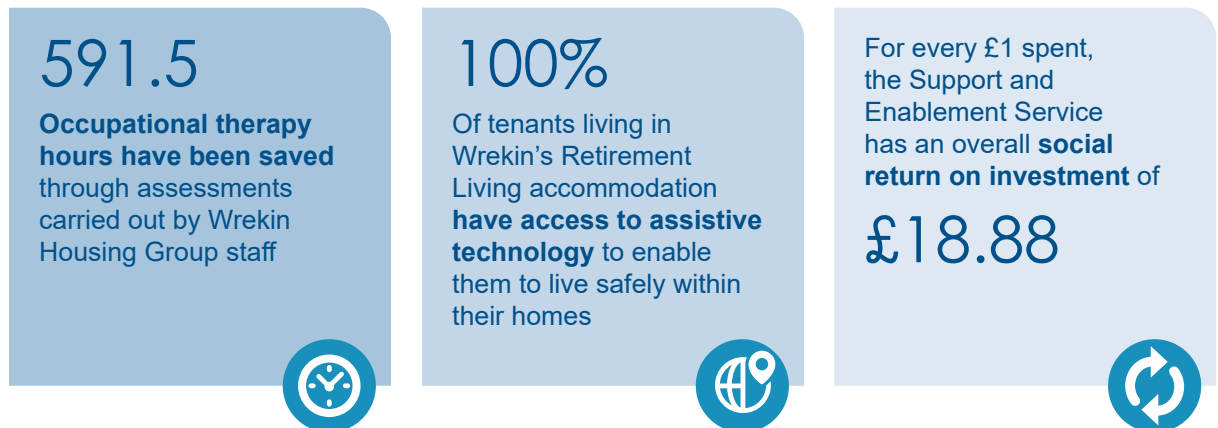
This year, the cost of living crisis has continued to have a huge impact on many of our tenants. This has resulted in an increase in referrals through our Support & Enablement team for energy and benefits advice as well as people looking to access energy vouchers and food banks.

During the winter months of 2022/23, we held weekly lunch clubs at most schemes and encouraged tenants to use their communal rooms as warm spaces. We have seen an increase in residents using these spaces, whilst waiting for



washing, watching TV or having a warm drink.

Accessing healthcare has become more problematic for our residents this year, so support has been focused on assisting our tenants to access medical appointments by arranging transport to ensure these appointments aren't missed. We have built up good relationships with GP surgeries, district nurses and rapid response teams to help reduce more costly hospital stays.



Following the Covid-19 pandemic, social activities and events have started to be re-introduced within our schemes. We have done this by working with outside organisations like Age UK, Alzheimer's Society, Fit4All Groups. Events to mark occasions such as the Queen's Jubilee and The King's coronation were very well attended.

Haybridge Hall, a retirement living scheme in Hadley, has been recognised for strengthening community ties and embracing diversity, equality and inclusion. Telford and Wrekin's Mayor, Raj Mehta, presented the Building Bridges plaque to the team of staff and residents for going above and beyond by organising events that include everyone living there, such as fetes, festive events, weekly fish and chip dinners, bingo and dancing.

## Volunteering

Wrekin encourages staff to volunteer and every employee is entitled to 16 hours a year volunteer time. This has been used for a wide variety of positive activities including volunteering in schools, Parent Teacher Associations, Governing Bodies, Board membership of local charities, wildlife and conservation projects, Scouts, Beavers, Brownies and Guides and numerous sports clubs.

In addition, staff have volunteered beyond their day jobs for the benefit of Wrekin customers with litter picks, school events, digital inclusion and communal garden tidies.

### Laura's volunteering

Laura Benting is part of Wrekin's Development team. Away from work, Laura volunteers her time to as a reading helper at her son's school. Each week she gives her time to listen and support pupils with their reading.

Laura said: "I'm really grateful to Wrekin for supporting me to do this. They allow me to use my volunteer hours to give me time to help children with their reading."

"I support pupils on a one-to-one basis. It's hugely rewarding, especially when you're reading with a child for several weeks and you see them developing and gaining in confidence. I've even started getting high fives at the end of sessions!"

## Staff fundraising

Wrekin staff continued to show their generosity through a wide range of fundraising challenges and opportunities across the year.

We have a permanent donation point at Old Park and staff regularly donate food items for local Food Banks. Through our presence at Shrewsbury Flower Show we collected a considerable sum to purchase essential food items for Telford Crisis Support.

Individual staff and staff teams have taken on a variety of challenges, raising much needed funds for local and national causes. Wrekin is able to match fund the amount raised, making a real difference to people's lives.



## Resilience

Wrekin awarded more than 40 grants to the value of £54,547 through our Partnerships and Community Fund to help build community and individual resilience.

Groups that were supported include Homestart Telford & Wrekin, Bikes4Kids, Leegomery Nature Trail, Wellington Orbit, The Anstice, Arleston Community Centre, Forum 50+, Shropshire Youth Association, Jayne Sargent Foundation, Ketley Coffee Club, Hadley & Leegomery Friendship Group, Challenging Perceptions, Cruse Bereavement Support, the Sea Change Trust, Donnington Partnership, St Georges Partnership and the Severn Valley Countryside Trust.

Working in partnership with Telford Crisis Support we granted funds towards new cots and children's beds for the Baby Bank and helped establish a Toiletry Bank for those most in need.

This year we also continued to invest in new local defibrillators across our communities, bringing the total Wrekin support to 64.

The lifesaving equipment has been installed outside our key buildings after Wrekin teamed up with the cardiac charity SADS UK to purchase the defibrillators.

Staff and residents are being trained and there is a nominated person at each site to maintain them.

David Lewis, Customer Engagement & Feedback Manager at The Wrekin Housing Group said:

"Having a defibrillator available in an emergency can be life-saving, especially in more rural areas where it may take emergency services longer to arrive. We do all we can to support our tenants, as well as the communities we operate.

"In a medical emergency, time is absolutely of the essence. By installing these defibrillator units, we are increasing the chances of survival of anybody who suffers a sudden cardiac arrest."

## Preventing Homelessness

Wrekin's dedicated team of specialist advisors provide one to one assistance with a wide range of clients across Shropshire with the aim of avoiding preventable homelessness.

Every person or family supported can result in a huge saving to the public purse, reduce the time and resources needed to place a family in temporary accommodation and minimise the trauma to those impacted of not knowing where their next night's sleep will be.



## David's story

David was facing the real prospect of losing his home due to spiralling rent arrears.

The team spent time with David and learned that he suffered with PTSD and complex mental health issues.

Working with Shropshire Council and liaising with his landlord, we secured around £3,000 to clear his arrears and secure his tenancy for the next six months. He is now able to concentrate on his mental health and is looking to secure alternative accommodation in the social sector.

## Warm packs

The Wrekin Housing Group has a long-standing preferred supplier arrangement with IDEAL boilers. For each boiler fitted in a Wrekin property we receive three x social value credits, this converts to £15 for social value activity.

Through this partnership, Wrekin is able to access these social value credits and make proposals to IDEAL for how we would like to utilise them for the benefit of our customers and communities in line with our Social Value Strategy.

With the fuel poverty and cost of living crisis, Wrekin requested that the credits earned in 2021/22 and 2022/23 be utilised by our Money Matters and Debt & Energy Advice teams to support our most vulnerable tenants facing financial hardship.

With the money available we purchased heated blankets, slow cookers, draught excluders, hot water bottles, flasks, thermal socks, winter essential packs and fleece blankets to make up bespoke Winter Warm Packs tailored to each individual need.

We also utilised some of our IDEAL credits to set up an E-voucher scheme enabling us to issue gas and electric vouchers to those most in need. It seems particularly fitting that we have been able to initiate schemes that are supporting those most impacted by fuel poverty, spiralling energy costs and the cost of living generally with social value money generated from fitting new more efficient heating systems in our homes.

## Help for Alice

Alice has a medical condition which means she is affected by the cold. As part of our Winter Warm pack initiative, Alice was gifted a slow cooker, flask and blanket.

The slow cooker has meant she can reduce her gas consumption and the flask has been useful as she doesn't need to boil the kettle so much, further reducing her energy usage. She also said she was extremely grateful for the blanket and felt that the Winter Warm pack has made a big difference to her life and condition.

## Partnership working

Wrekin works closely with our development partners to ensure we maximise social value through our investment in new homes. During 2022/23 our work supported:

- 90 apprentices
- 585 work experience weeks
- 30.82% average local spend on subcontractors and suppliers

In addition, our contractors and sub-contractors get involved in a wide range of community initiatives,

including donating items to local community groups and supporting community-based projects.

In 2022/23 our developer partner Seddon, building homes at Hawksmoor Road, Stafford, made links with local Construction and Built Environment BTEC students from Stoke College to offer first hand, onsite experiences.

Seddon supported both the college and the students to ensure that the onsite knowledge and experience they gained complemented their studies, adding value to their learning back in the classroom.

This initiative has built a great relationship between Wrekin and Stoke College which will hopefully bring further opportunities to more students in the future.

Lucy Shore from Stoke College said, "The experience of working with Wrekin has been immensely beneficial both for students and staff members at the college."

"The students have been able to see a construction project in real time from start to finish. They have experienced first-hand what is required and what issues can arise from a project as well as meeting a lot of the different construction professionals along the way. This could not have been simulated the same within a classroom environment. It has taken the theory they learn within the classroom sessions and brought it to life. It has been a huge success."





# Governance

Listening to the voice of our customers plays a significant part of our governance

During 2022/23

## G1/V2

status was awarded to us by the regulator of social housing



During 2022/23

## A STABLE

was the credit rating reaffirmed for us by S&P Global



During 2022/23

We appointed a tenant as a Board member and Chair of the newly formed Customer Committee



Striving for good governance is at the root of everything Wrekin does. We have high standards which run right through our corporate values; inspiring positive change and making a difference to people's lives. This means that our approach to governance is also about delivering sustainable services for our customers and colleagues.

The group's governance arrangements continued to perform well during 2022/23 and there were some notable achievements. During this period, we were recognised as a G1/V2 housing association - achieving the highest of four possible grades for governance and a compliant grade for financial viability. This was reaffirmed by the Regulator for Social Housing following an in-depth assessment in April 2021, whilst our 'A stable' credit rating from S&P was reaffirmed in August 2023 after receiving praise for our strong and stable financial position. We have also adopted the National Housing Federation's (NHF) 2020 Code of Governance which we are fully compliant with in March 2023.





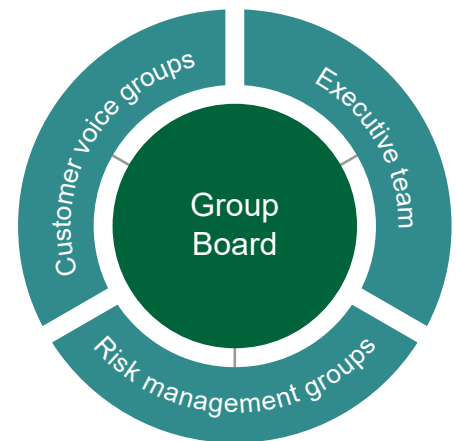


## Group Board

Wrekin's corporate governance structure and risk management activities are led by the Group Board which sets out the strategic direction. It monitors performance against our 2025 Strategic Plan, with the main aim of making a difference to people's lives. This plan balances the needs and interests of a wide range of stakeholders and seeks to deliver growth and high-quality services, whilst also balancing the need for investment with that of financial sustainability.

Our Group Board has a diverse membership with varied experiences and backgrounds. The mixture of skills they have is suited to the activities we conduct and the risks that we face. The Chief Executive and Chair of the Board are separate roles, ensuring the segregation of duties and independence of the Board. During 2022/23 four members came to the end of their tenure and four new members have been appointed with a wide skill set, including EDI, people and financial planning. One of the non-executive director appointments is a tenant and is the Chair of the Group's newly formed Customer Committee. The Committee was formed as part of the Group's revised Tenant Engagement Framework to strengthen the range of ways customers could get involved and decisions could be overseen and scrutinised. The Committee also has a direct reporting route into the Group's Board. We also appointed a further five independent members each taking up different positions on our Audit and Assurance Committee and Finance and Investment Committee and three of which joined the Customer Committee along with two of our existing independent members, meaning all members on this Committee have direct experience of what it is like to be a Wrekin tenant.

The Group Board is supported by separate Boards for the subsidiary group members (Choices Housing Association Limited, Old Park Services Limited and Strata Housing Services Limited). We have four committees which have delegated authority to review specific aspects of service and risk management (Audit and Assurance Committee, Finance and Investment Committee, People and Nomination Committee (formally known as Remuneration and Nominations Committee) and Customer Service Committee (which replaces the Service Quality Committee).



## Risk management

Risk management is at the centre of our internal control framework. The Group Board has responsibility for setting the tone and culture of risk management within Wrekin, with detailed input into how this is achieved from the Audit and Assurance Committee. Our assessment of risk is designed to ensure that emerging issues are identified early. We adopt a three-stage approach to eliminate or mitigate and control risks to reduce the likelihood of them occurring or lessen their impact if they do. Risk appetite – the level of risk that the organisation is prepared to accept in pursuit of its strategic objectives – is set by the Board and reviewed annually.

Our approach is continually improved and is reported quarterly to the Audit and Assurance Committee and Group Board. On an annual basis the Strategic Risk Register is compared with the regulator's Sector Risk Profile to ensure that we are addressing the risks facing the Group in an effective and proportionate way. We have strengthened our approach by creating operational risk registers across the whole organisation, engaging with teams in a programme of operational risk workshops to do this. This is enhancing the assurance mapping that has been adopted by the Group.



## Customer voice

Listening to the voice of our customers plays a significant part of our governance arrangements to ensure we continue to meet the needs of our most important stakeholders. We are bringing in new ways for customers to get involved to expand the diverse range of customer voices shaping our services. We are committed to listening to our customers to understand and deliver against their current and future needs, and this is being achieved by:

- Increasing the number of ways for customers to get involved, including channels by which customers can hold the Board to account;
- The appointment of a tenant non-executive director and the formation of the Customer Committee; and
- Creating ways for customers to lead on deciding where further scrutiny/review would support improvement and taking part in those working groups to understand topics, suggesting ways to improve.

In 2022/23 a task and finish group of Board members, staff and involved customers re-designed our Customer Engagement Framework, working with TPAS as an expert advisory organisation. This led to the creation of the Customer Committee and broadening the ways for our customers to get involved.

### **Our plans for 2023/24 can be summarised as follows:**

- Continuing to roll out a range of ways for customers to get involved;
- Targeting improvement work based on customer feedback and Customer Committee direction; and
- Creating more ways to connect our customer voice with our social value work, such as our partnerships to create resilience within communities.

## Stonewall

In February 2023 Wrekin achieved the Stonewall Bronze Award for LGBTQ+ support. The award recognises exceptional employers who are committed to supporting their LGBTQ+ staff and customers.

This was the first time we had put in a submission to Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index - the definitive benchmarking tool for employers to measure their progress on lesbian, gay, bi and trans inclusion in the workplace.

Over the past year, Wrekin has undertaken significant strides towards creating an inclusive working environment through the introduction of a number of key LGBTQ+ policies, including Transitioning at Work, Sexual Orientation and Gender identity in the Workplace and a new Equal Opportunities Policy.



# SRS criteria 2022/23

The Sustainability Reporting Standard (SRS) is divided into twelve ESG themes which have been aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Cells marked in grey denote core criteria

Cells marked in green denote enhanced criteria

## Affordability and security

Criteria	Measurement Unit	Response		
For properties that are subject to the <b>rent regulation regime</b> , report against one or more affordability metric:	Rent compared to median private rental sector (PRS) rent across the Local Authority <b>% of PRS rent</b>	64.8%		
	Rent compared to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) <b>% of LHA rent</b>	75.1%		
Share, and number, of existing homes (owned and managed) completed before the last financial year, allocated to:	Number of general needs units	7922	61.6%	
	Number of intermediate rent units	788	6.1%	
	Number of affordable rent units	1492	11.6%	
	Number of supported housing units	768	6.0%	
	Number of housing for older people units	1307	10.2%	
	Number of low-cost home ownership units	315	2.4%	
	Number of care home units	66	0.5%	
	Number of Private Rented Sector units	132	1.0%	
Share, and number, of new homes (owned and managed) that were completed in the last financial year, allocated to:	Number of other units	73	0.6%	
	Number of general needs units	73	15.2%	
	Number of intermediate rent units	102	21.2%	
	Number of affordable rent units	226	47.0%	
	Number of supported housing units	70	14.6%	
	Number of housing for older people units	0	0.0%	
	Number of low-cost home ownership units	8	1.7%	
	Number of care home units	0	0.0%	
How is the housing provider trying to reduce the effect of fuel poverty on its residents?	Number of private rented sector units	0	0.0%	
	Number of other units	2	0.4%	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During 22/23 we invested in support from our local partners Marches Energy Agency to assist customers hit by the rising costs of energy bills, they have supported 51 tenants.</li> <li>We have been successful in securing funding for a dedicated Energy Advisor post, thanks to The Cadent Foundation.</li> <li>Wrekin Energy Advice has supported 172 customers – this support ranges from; Behavioural advice, accessing grants, installing low cost measures, bill reading, raising complaints and supporting those in crisis situations – this has supported customers with positive financial outcomes of over £48,000.</li> <li>Our in-house Energy Advisor compliments our ongoing offer from our trained Welfare Benefits Advisors, Tenancy Sustainment Officers and Debt Advisors.</li> <li>8 staff from Money Matters have achieved the Energy Awareness Level 3, industry recognised Energy Advice qualification.</li> </ul>			
	What % of rental homes have at least a 3 year fixed tenancy agreement?	% of homes	91.4%	

## Building safety and quality

Criteria	Measurement Unit	Response
What % of homes with a gas appliance have an in-date, accredited gas safety check?	% of homes	100.0%
What % of buildings have an in-date and compliant fire risk assessment?	% of buildings	99.7%
What % of homes meet the national housing quality standard?	% of homes	100.0%

## Resident voice

Criteria	Response
What arrangements are in place to enable the residents to hold management to account for provision of services?	<p>The Group has a long history of listening to its customers since our original stock transfer in 1999. This has developed over time to ensure The Group has customers at the heart of everything we do, with our Customer Strategic Pillar at the centre of this – ‘Through listening to our customers we will understand their current and future needs better than any other’.</p> <p>Throughout 2022 The Group has worked with TPAS (the experts in tenant engagement) and our involved customers to review all our methods of engagement. Post-Covid, and with new regulatory requirements on the horizon, we knew that we needed to hear broader voices and increase customer representation, as well as simplifying our engagement structure, enabling more meaningful outcomes and impact. We also wanted to enable more tenant scrutiny to really get to the bottom of issues. With the ultimate challenge of actually proving everything.</p> <p>A new framework was approved and is now in place, this is led by the Customer Committee. This committee has replaced both the Customer Voice Panel and Service Quality Committee. It has a tenant majority, including a Tenant Chair who will also be a full Board member. This group of tenants will also be paid. The Vice Chair is also a Board member and another Board member will sit on the group (which has eight members, of which six are customers). The Committee will include a stronger approach to customer scrutiny with a sharper focus on how wider customer voices will be used to inform decision making at Wrekin – reporting direct to The Group Board.</p> <p>Under the guidance of the Customer Committee and facilitated by the Customer Voice team, we now have a much more flexible and inclusive approach to engagement, based on three tiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead or involvement in Governance – Tenant Board member and Customer Committee</li> <li>• Work in partnership with customers – Scrutiny and focus groups, as well as other regular meetings such as our ShireLiving Panel</li> <li>• One off or less formal options – Surveys, events, walkabouts and occasional community meetings</li> </ul> <p>The Customer Committee has an agenda framework, which drives the engagement activities throughout the year, ensuring services are scrutinised and held to account.</p> <p>The above are the formal methods of involvement but our involved tenants can also request to speak to any Senior Manager/Exec or Board member by appointment.</p>
How does the housing provider measure resident satisfaction and how has resident satisfaction changed over the last three years?	<p>The Group collects tenant satisfaction both at a perception level, through the former STAR survey and in 2022/23 moving to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (October 2022) and through a series of surveys throughout the year, such as on repairs, lettings and Money Matters. As well as survey information we also have a tenant engagement framework to bring customers' views into shaping our services along with using complaints insight to learn and enhance our services from.</p> <p>In December 2021 we changed from an internal telephone survey to collect our perception surveys to a digital only method through the CX feedback system, using emails and SMS. Like other landlords and sectors we have seen a reduction in some levels of satisfaction. Some of these relate to COVID related service restrictions, the change in methodology and also where service improvements have taken some time to show an impact in customer satisfaction. Equally during 2023/24 we will be embarking on an Inspiring Positive Change Programme of service reviews with the aim of securing improved customer satisfaction.</p>

Resident voice continues overleaf

## Resident voice (continued)

In the last 12 months, how many complaints have been upheld by the Ombudsman.	Number of complaints upheld	0
How have these complaints (or others) resulted in change of practice within the housing provider?	<p>In the last 12 months the complaints system has been audited by KRM Risk Assurance Services and found no risks. The self-assessment is now mandatory and is completed yearly with the sign-off from the Customer Committee and Board.</p> <p>A key part of the Ombudsman complaint handling code is to learn from the complaints received and publish any changes to services made, or where a policy/procedure has changed. The website page is under review and will hold more customer voice information.</p> <p>This year the policy and procedure are due for a review and a new customer complaints focus group are assisting with this.</p>	

## Resident support

Criteria	Response
What support services does the housing provider offer to its residents. How successful are these services in improving outcomes?	<p>Our Money Matters Team provides expert benefit advice, to ensure that customers of the Group are receiving the income they are entitled to, along with supporting them to manage their expenditure, all focused on sustaining tenancies. The team provide an holistic service, supporting customers with multiple issues, including debt problems, energy advice, benefit advice, budgeting help, access to essential furniture, help to apply for grants and funding and support in a crisis through emergency food and gas/electric funds.</p> <p>During 2022/23 the team successfully brought in more than £4.4m in additional benefits, income, discretionary/charitable support for our customers, engaging with 1,488 households and dealing with 2,315 referrals for support and advice.</p> <p>Ensuring our prospective customers can afford and manage a tenancy is an important part of our work, along with identifying extra support they may need. In 2022/23 our Welfare Benefit Advisors and Tenancy Sustainment Officers carried out 788 income assessments, and a further 440 full affordability assessments.</p> <p>Wrekin Debt Advice is a key service on offer to customers, and provides regulated advice to tenants, supporting them to find tailored solutions to manage their finances. During 22/23 the team received 258 referrals for debt advice, achieving successful financial outcomes for customers of over £643k. This includes charitable grants, debt reduction and insolvency solutions.</p> <p>2022/23 saw the launch of Wrekin Energy Advice, to support customers with the rising costs of gas and electric. Eight team members successfully qualified as Energy Advisors and we awarded a two year grant from the Cadent Foundation to fund a FT Energy Advisor post. During 22/23, Wrekin Energy Advice received 172 referrals for energy advice, resulting in positive financial outcomes of over £43k. Customers are offered bespoke advice on how to reduce energy costs, supported to tackle energy debts, offered crisis help and provided with appropriate winter warm items, such as heated throws and slow cookers.</p>

## Placemaking

Criteria	Response
Provide examples or case studies of where the housing provider has been engaged in placemaking or placeshaping activities.	<p>We are leading a regeneration project in Wellington, Telford that will see 130 existing flats suffering from defects relating to their age and building type, with circa 70 new houses. The area in question also suffers from high ASB levels, much relating to the design and lay-out of the existing blocks. Working in partnership with the Local Authority and the LEP, we will combine this project with the re-development of a former college site owned by the LA to deliver much needed new accommodation for older people. The LA will also deliver a number of homes for private rent on the project through it's own development company. The project will also involve the delivery of a brand new community facility. By working closely in partnership with the LA we will deliver a true regeneration scheme that helps to change the face of the area.</p>

## Climate change

Criteria	Measurement Unit	Response
Distribution of EPC ratings of existing homes (those completed before the last financial year).	% of homes rated A	0.1%
	% of homes rated B	28.4%
	% of homes rated C	51.9%
	% of homes rated D	18.9%
	% of homes rated E or worse	0.5%
	% of homes without EPC rating (unknown)	0.2%
Distribution of EPC ratings of new homes (those completed in the last financial year).	% of homes rated A	1.2%
	% of homes rated B	96.7%
	% of homes rated C	2.1%
	% of homes rated D	0.0%
	% of homes rated E or worse	0.0%
	% of homes without EPC rating (unknown)	0.0%
What energy efficiency actions has the housing provider undertaken in the last 12 months?	<p>80% of the Group's overall carbon footprint is derived from our existing homes. During the previous and current financial years, we included 55 of our properties in the Wave 1 SHDF-Retrofit Programme. The goal was to use grant cash to address some of our worst-performing stock while also learning about the PAS retrofit standard. This process has provided us with great knowledge, but it has also taught us that grant funding schemes are extremely difficult to deliver due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bureaucratic processes adding in additional costs of around £1,000 per property</li> <li>• Retrofit Assessment £200 av</li> <li>• Retrofit Plan £300 av</li> <li>• Co-ordination and sign off of works £500 av</li> <li>• A scarcity of qualified retrofit surveyors and contractors in the market</li> <li>• Inflated delivery costs (to the point that grants provide almost little value)</li> <li>• Meeting the PAS Standard which is required for funding (without doing any work) costs an £1,000 per house. This is more than the group's current budget to meet our SAP C 2025 aspiration.</li> </ul> <p>As a result, adhering to this PAS criterion is only appropriate for properties that require considerable retrofit work in a high-value package for which one of the many grant funding incentives are available. The alternative is to train our own employees to the appropriate standards, but to complete the work alongside the existing planned renovations at a lesser cost (saving us approximately £800 per property in additional expenses). These additional costs add weight to the need to grow our own skills over the next two years, and utilise the Groups existing contractors to undertake work alongside other planned improvement works.</p> <p>As a result of the above, the Group, together with several other social landlords, are now looking into ways to supply incremental retrofit while integrating with our other property repair programmes and at a cheaper cost.</p> <p>Whilst this may take longer to deliver the band C target, it could reduce the delivery costs and make retrofit more affordable. Further work will be undertaken this year to understand the financial costs of delivering the work in this way. Therefore, a consultant is being procured to work alongside us the undertake a sample retrofit assessment, co-ordination and design evaluation of stock based on archetype, so we can better understand the best delivery model.</p> <p>10% of the Group's business carbon is derived from heating and powering our communal/commercial buildings, the remainder from other activities such as fleet and purchasing goods and services.</p> <p>Due to the above, the Group's reduction in business carbon is focused mostly on the fuel used to heat and power common buildings and offices, as well as the van fleet needed to repair tenants' homes. Several projects have progressed in this area:</p>	

Climate change continues overleaf

## Climate change (continued)

Completion of energy upgrades to the Old Park Office including:

- LED Lighting
- New more efficient air handling plant
- Voltage optimisation
- New lift control gear
- Installation of solar PV
- Heating system upgrade
- EV charging points

At our Old Park office, the amount of carbon emitted, has reduced from 511 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year in 2017, to 400 tonnes in 2021/22. A new energy rating calculation is due this year, which again should hopefully show an additional reduction. Other projects include:

- Office rationalisation including Reviive and local area offices.
- Installation of telematics onto the van fleet to enable evaluation of mileage, and the possible route to electrification of the van fleet in the future.
- Work is now underway by ICT to link the telematics to our scheduling software so that at the point of ordering work the closest engineer with the correct skills can be selected with a greater degree of certainty than is achieved currently as staff appointing work have no visibility.
- The Group are currently investigating technology that will reduce visits to tenants' homes by creating a video link with the tenant at the point of call. This technology could significantly assist all customer facing teams in quicker, more efficient diagnosis of problems without the need to travel.
- Trialling the connection of a communal building heating and ventilation control system to central software, before doing the same with other buildings, to enable better monitoring. Currently undertaking some software data security checks before moving forward in the Q2/Q4 this year.
- Carbon awareness training and other associated work such as:
  - » Audit of recycling from offices
  - » Audit of recycling from learning disability schemes
  - » Audit of catering operations
  - » Starting an Audit on business mileage
  - » Social Value work e.g., litter picking, community projects

All the above have actions plans under development. In addition, work has been undertaken to review the options for creating a web of EV charging points to support the transition of the Group's van fleet to electric, this combined with the vehicle mileage audit will help to give a clearer picture on how the Group may start transitioning to EV vehicles and the costs of doing so. This work is expected to be complete in the next 12/18 months, in time for the 2025/26 budget setting process.

Work has also been undertaken to review the options for heating upgrades at several of the Group's large communal heating schemes, which are due an upgrade in the next three years. This has identified the transition to hybrid gas/electric heating systems as the most viable option currently. More detailed specifications will be produced for delivery of the works at a later date.

As stated in the Net-Zero Carbon Strategy, as of September 2022, the Group changed its approach towards company car leasing, moving away from fossil fuel vehicles and now only offering hybrid or EV vehicles for all new orders. This change in approach has been accompanied by the installation of new EV new charging points at the Old Park office. As part of this change, the Group has taken action to review the current offering for company car leasing to see how this can be improved given the emphasis on becoming 'greener'. To better enhance the benefits for staff, the Group has taken steps to consider the salary sacrifice scheme as aiming to replace the existing leasing scheme over time. As both models of car leasing need to be procured, a working group is currently scoping how this will be procured and what benefits it could create for employees.

This year the Group's electricity supply is due for tender/review, therefore the Group will be looking for a zero-carbon supplier either – wind, solar, hydro, nuclear, or a mix of all four.

Work is due to start over the next 12 months mapping of scope 3 emissions through our main supply chain i.e., Travis Perkins and Planned Programme Suppliers QA e.g QA Kitchens, Ideal Boilers.

Climate change continues overleaf

## Climate change (continued)

How is the housing provider mitigating the following climate risks:

- Increased flood risk
- Increased risk of homes overheating

The Group are looking to undertake a flood risk assessment exercise in 2023/24, and this will identify where the Group requires enhanced flood risk mitigations.

For overheating we are working to get all of the Group's Building Management systems linked centrally to be able to monitor the heating and cooling of the extra care housing stock, which house some of our more vulnerable customers.

## Ecology

Criteria	Response
How is the housing provider increasing green space and promoting biodiversity on or near homes?	<p>We recognise and embrace the importance of green space and biodiversity, both to the health and wellbeing of our customers and the sustainability of local environments. For developments of new homes, biodiversity net gain is addressed through the planning system, however, all our new developments feature bespoke landscape plans that are carefully designed by qualified experts. We always seek to preserve existing trees and flora as far as we possibly can, and we design developments around key natural features where practical. We also seek to plant new trees and hedgerows and install sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) wherever they are viable. This adds to the attractiveness of new developments, and it also promotes natural habitats for wildlife and reduces flood risks. We now have over 4,000 trees across our property portfolio. We also have extensive gardens across our retirement living portfolio and we encourage residents to play an active role in maintaining these is a way which is sensitive to the local environment and wildlife. This includes planting and nurturing additional plants and flowers to those which are maintained by our contractors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The measures we take on our new housing developments include the following:</li> <li>• Installing hedgehog highways to enable them to move safely around a development</li> <li>• Providing bat boxes and designing bat friendly lighting</li> <li>• Installation of building and tree mounted bird boxes</li> <li>• The use of sustainable drainage systems</li> <li>• Introduce more soft landscaping</li> <li>• Retain, reinstate or establish hedgerows, instead of using fencing where possible</li> <li>• Sympathetic tree planting to enhance existing ecologies</li> </ul> <p>In addition, we are incorporating community facilities such as play parks, open green spaces, linear parks and areas of rewilding across new housing developments.</p>



## Resource management

Criteria	Response
Does the housing provider have a strategy to use or increase the use of responsibly sourced materials for all building works?  If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?	Yes  We target all directly appointed contractors with an aim to have at least 30% of the project supply chain from the LA postcode area, thus encouraging inward investment, and reducing required travel distances for materials and labour. This is reported via the monthly site progress meetings in the Contractors Report. Work is due to start over the next 12 months mapping of scope 3 emissions throughout the main supply chain i.e., Travis Perkins and Planned Programme Suppliers QA e.g QA Kitchens, Ideal Boilers.
Does the housing provider have a strategy for good water management?  If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?	Yes  We see responsible waste management as an integral part of our business and we operate a proactive system which ensures compliance with statutory requirements.  We are committed to reducing our water usage, with many areas of the country under high levels of water stress due to high demand. We have set a minimum standard for each home to achieve a water efficiency value of 110 litres per person per day, which is the target usage as recommended by Severn Trent Water. To facilitate this aim we specify low water use fixtures and fittings in our new homes.  From a compliance perspective we have a water management strategy and policy in place to control Legionella and general water hygiene. Monitoring and ensuring compliance with safety standards through a live compliance dashboard integrated into the asset/housing management system, as well as performance reporting to the Group's Executive Management (EMG), Audit and Assurance Committee and Group Board.  A comprehensive Health and Safety Report is delivered to the Group Board twice a year. Having information on water management, Legionella control, and compliance areas available to the Group Board allows for greater oversight, informed decision-making, accountability, risk mitigation, and continuous improvement to the highest level of responsibility for the organisation. This knowledge enables the Board to take proactive measures to protect occupants health and safety.

## Structure and governance

Criteria	Response
Is the housing provider registered with the national regulator of social housing?	Yes
What is the most recent regulatory grading/status?	G1/V2
Which Code of Governance does the housing provider follow, if any?	National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020
Is the housing provider Not-For-Profit?	Yes
If not, who is the largest shareholder, what is their % of economic ownership and what % of voting rights do they control?	
Explain how the housing provider's Board manages organisational risks.	<p>The Board of The Wrekin Housing Group reviewed and approved the Group's Risk Management Framework in September 2022. The Framework sets out our risk management approach. It details the roles of Board, Audit and Assurance Committee and the leadership team in terms of how we manage, monitor and report on our risk management activities. The methods of gaining and reporting on risk assurance are also covered. The Framework sets out the Group's strategy for dealing with risk appetite. The Board's Statement of Risk Appetite was reviewed in March 2023. As at May 2023, there were two strategic risks outside of the Board's risk appetite: counterparty risk and the care service risk. Top strategic risks, presenting the greatest threats to the Group, are reported at every Group Board meeting and Audit &amp; Assurance Committee.</p> <p>Appropriate focus is given to the identification of emerging risks. The Group Head of Risk &amp; Policy completes a fortnightly report to the Executive Management Group that identifies sector intelligence and emerging risks. A synopsis is included in the strategic risk update for Audit &amp; Assurance Committee and Group Board. Notable issues that present future potential risks to the business include: the cost-of-living crisis, the macroeconomic outlook, access to labour and skills: decarbonisation of the housing stock, enhanced consumer regulation/customer expectations as set out in the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill, national reputational issues resulting from poor quality social housing (damp and mould, for example) and the enhanced health and safety requirements following the Grenfell fire contained in the Fire Safety Act and the Building Safety Act.</p>
Has the housing provider been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last 12 months (data protection breaches, bribery, money laundering, HSE breaches etc) - that resulted in enforcement or other equivalent action?	No

## Board and trustees

Criteria	Measurement Unit	Response
What are the demographics of the Board? And how does this compare to the demographics of the housing provider's residents?  Add commentary if useful.	% of Board that are women	36.36%
	% of Board that are BAME	9.09%
	% of Board that have a disability	9.09%
	% of Board that are LGBTQ+	0.00%
	Average age of Board members (years)	58 years
	Average Board tenure (years)	3 years
What % of the Board AND management team have turned over in the last two years?	% of Board	45.0%
	% of management team	0.0%
	With the adoption of the new NHF Code of Governance there has been a change to maximum tenure being normally six years, but where a member has served six years and the Board agrees that it is in the organisation's best interests, their tenure may be extended up to a maximum of nine years. This has resulted in higher turnover of Board members than prior years. Wrekin has adopted a hybrid approach with members who have served over six years stepping down at years six, seven and eight to ensure skills are retained and succession planning is smoother.	
Is there a maximum tenure for a Board member? If so, what is it?	Yes	
		With the adoption of the new NHF Code of Governance there has been a change to maximum tenure being normally six years, but where a member has served six years and the Board agrees that it is in the organisation's best interests, their tenure may be extended up to a maximum of nine years.
What % of the Board are non-executive directors?	100%	
Number of Board members on the Audit Committee with recent and relevant financial experience.	Four	
		Three Non-Executive Directors and one independent member of the Committee were specifically recruited for their financial experience and had experience in organisations of a similar size and complexity.
Are there any current executives on the Remuneration Committee?	No	
Has a succession plan been provided to the Board in the last 12 months?	Yes	
For how many years has the housing provider's current external audit partner been responsible for auditing the accounts?	Two years	
When was the last independently-run, Board-effectiveness review?	February 2023	
Are the roles of the chair of the Board and CEO held by two different people?	Yes	
How does the housing provider handle conflicts of interest at the Board?	There is a specific policy in place for Board Member Declarations of Interest, which specifies what constitutes a conflict / potential conflict and how this will be managed by the Board. This will range from redacting Board papers through to the resignation / removal of a Board member where a conflict is unmanageable.	

## Staff wellbeing

Criteria	Response
Does the housing provider pay the Real Living Wage?	No
What is the median gender pay gap?	18.7%
What is the CEO : median-worker pay ratio?	Total annual CEO remuneration divided by annual median working remuneration 7.8 : 1
How does the housing provider support the physical and mental health of their staff?	<p>We have a number of support interventions in place to support employees. We have recently reviewed our sickness absence policy and made this a more manager led, supportive process. The policy and procedure is now called Managing Attendance. We delivered a training session for all of our managers to ensure they were aware of how they needed to support their employees' wellbeing, whether that be physically, mentally or financially. We have created toolkits and welfare action plans for managers to use when supporting employees. We have set up a Wellbeing work group which consists of employees from all parts of the business who volunteered to be part of the group. We have introduced a Wellbeing Policy and procedures and are currently in the process of writing an employee strategy to embed within the culture of our organisation. We have Menopause and Andropause Champions to support employees – who are either suffering with their health or who are supporting partners who are suffering.</p> <p>We have tendered for a new Occupational Health Provider whose focus is more on support and welfare with a team of specialists for MSK, Mental Health, Finance etc rather than traditional nurse approach. We have been promoting the benefits of using our EAP scheme to encourage employees and their families to use it for support which extends counselling and specialist advice for family also. We have a Wellbeing Lead working in conjunction with our Employee Forum and the Employee Wellbeing Group on how we can enhance support for employees. We have recently delivered a presentation to all Managers and Executives on our approach to wellbeing, their role and responsibility in supporting the business and employees on making positive changes. Our Executive Director of Business Solutions is our Executive Sponsor for Wellbeing in the Workplace to support the business and Wellbeing Groups.</p>
What is the average number of sick days (both long and short term) taken per employee?	6.2 days

## Supply chain

Criteria	Response
How is social value creation considered when procuring goods and services?	<p>The Wrekin Housing Group consider social value as a key element to any and all procurement activity and this is reflected within the tendering process for goods and services. Regardless of the chosen route to market, a consideration for social value is achieved to contribute towards an ethical procurement process and align the results of the tender with the overall objectives of the business.</p> <p>Every procurement exercise is different in many ways, particularly in the services, contract value, location etc. Despite these variations, a constant throughout the Group's procurement approach is social value and how it can be used when scoring and evaluating bidders for goods and services. When procuring these services, the Group encompasses social value within the quality aspect of the tender. To emphasise the importance of the bidder's responses towards social value, procurement exercises are typically weighted more in favour of the quality responses rather than the cost submissions. Furthermore, all Group procurement must now include at least 10% of the total score associated to social value initiatives.</p> <p>To ensure consistency, the Group's approach to procurement includes a social value strand that focusses on Local Sustainability. Guided by this, all tenders evaluate bidders across various measurable outcomes that focus on community benefits or employment and skills. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing local employment opportunities</li> <li>• Provision of work placements/ apprenticeships</li> <li>• Provision of benefits to Wrekin residents (e.g. tenant discount cards)</li> <li>• Use of local sub-contractors and suppliers</li> <li>• Provision of a social value fund.</li> </ul> <p>The attention to a wide range of social value outcomes provides the flexibility across each procurement exercise to identify measures that are achievable and applicable, without resulting in unachievable submissions. Once a tender has concluded, Wrekin support the relevant contract managers in collaborating with the supply chain to guarantee that the outcomes promised within tenders are delivered and recorded.</p>
How is environmental impact considered when procuring goods and services?	<p>The Wrekin Housing Group (the Group) works with a wide external supply chain for goods and services which is achieved through procurement. With an ever-growing supply chain, the Group is conscious that measures need to be in place to manage and monitor the environmental impact that comes from manufacturing, delivering and providing services or solutions from the supply chain. As the Group's supply chain has such a large involvement in the lives of the tenants and the local communities, it is within Wrekin's responsibilities to test the market on environmental initiatives and impacts when procuring.</p> <p>Wrekin's strategy to becoming net-zero carbon has a large bearing on how current and future procurement activity considers environmental impacts when scoring and evaluating bidders. To achieve the business objectives around this topic, the procurement strategy incorporates particular Environmental Sustainability strands to ensure that each tender considers this when testing the market. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of environmental prosecutions</li> <li>• Use of environmentally sustainable products</li> <li>• Carbon reduction methods/ operating a carbon neutral business.</li> </ul> <p>Through this, Wrekin has the ability to score each bidder on relevant environmental issues and capture high performing partners within the supply chain. Having the option to focus on different elements within the supply chain's environmental impact, the Group can become flexible when procuring and ensure that relevant and appropriate measures are being requested and evaluated.</p> <p>The way in which procurement is carried out by Wrekin also contributes towards considering these impacts into every tender. For instance, moving to full eProcurement solutions rather than a physical tender removes a need for paper and drastically decreases the associated impacts that come from transportation.</p>