

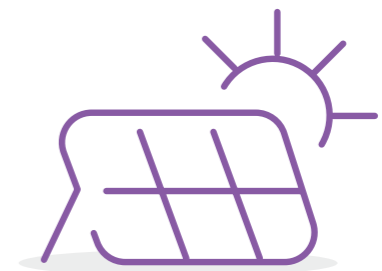






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# About us

Flagship Group is a housing association (HA) in the east of England, with over 33,000 homes, and our purpose is to provide homes and create sustainable communities. In addition to offering social and affordable housing, we construct new homes, reinvesting any profits back into the business, an approach we call 'profit for purpose.' We also manage our own in-house repairs and maintenance service, operate a successful heating and renewables company and oversee a homelessness charity.



# Flagship at a glance

2023 - 2024  
(year ending 31 March 2024)

**33,372**

Properties owned & managed

**86%**

Tenants with an assured tenancy

**63%**

Existing homes EPC C and above

**4782**

Switchee smart thermostats installed to date

**743**

New homes delivered

**90%**

New homes built to minimum SAP 81+

**1527**

Staff  
(10% part-time/90% full-time)

**104**

Apprentices supported towards achieving professional qualifications

**71.9%**

Rented Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

**58.2%**

Shared ownership Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

**97.62%**

Homes meet Decent Homes Standard





# Company strategy

At Flagship, our vision is to solve the housing crisis by empowering our people to innovate and take initiative in solving problems to best serve our tenants. We believe that great people doing great things is the key to delivering outstanding customer service and creating sustainable communities. However, we recognise that there is more we can do.

England is facing an acute housing crisis characterised by above average and inconsistent property prices, a shortage of homes to meet local needs, ageing housing stock, and an ageing population. These are demanding challenges. By spending money wisely, continually improving our service offering, and collaborating with our tenants, other businesses, HAs, and local authorities (LAs), we believe that we can fulfill our purpose and vision. We strive to make significant positive environmental and social impacts by working with the right partners and raising awareness among our internal and external stakeholders.



# Message from our Deputy Chief Executive



Helen Walsham  
Deputy Chief Executive Officer



As we conclude another year at Flagship Group, we are proud to present our Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) report for 2024. This report not only reflects our commitment to sustainable and responsible practices but also showcases the strides we are making to enhance the quality of life for our tenants and communities across the East of England.

At Flagship, our mission goes beyond providing housing; we aim to create resilient, sustainable communities where everyone can thrive. This year, we have focused on further integrating ESG principles into our operations, ensuring that our impact is positive and far-reaching.

The sector is faced with numerous challenges such as the turbulent economic and geopolitical landscape, a shortage of quality housing, increased development costs, labour and skills shortages, funding constraints, and ensuring our homes meet adequate quality and safety standards. HAs are increasingly tasked with addressing the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups, including older people, individuals with disabilities, and those experiencing mental health issues or domestic abuse. We are making progress with retrofitting our existing homes, taking a more holistic approach to ensure our tenants have a warm, energy-efficient, affordable-to-manage property. Throughout the year, we have strengthened our collaboration with tenants to address damp and mould issues, while also striving to cultivate safer communities and enhance our green spaces. These endeavors hold the potential to significantly improve the health and wellbeing of our tenants.

## Environmental stewardship

In response to the challenges posed by climate change, we are diligently working to reduce our carbon footprint and enhance our environmental sustainability. Our initiatives include drafting a climate change risk register and adaptation plan and retrofitting properties to achieve a minimum EPC rating of C by 2030 through upgrading insulation and installing low-carbon technologies. We are also improving the specifications of new developments by building homes to a minimum EPC rating of SAP B (SAP81+) and incorporating a minimum biodiversity net gain of 10% on our sites. We've expanded our arboriculture team to maintain and protect the significant number of trees under our care and are implementing a Biodiversity Plan that features rewilding projects and improved grounds maintenance. Additionally, we are promoting electric vehicle (EV) use among staff, aiming for all staff vehicles to be electric by 2027, and exploring opportunities to transition our maintenance fleet. We are committed to contributing to the global effort against climate change and are continually seeking innovative solutions for a greener future.

“ We are diligently working to reduce our carbon footprint

## Social responsibility

Social responsibility is at the core of our operations. This year, we have invested significantly in better data management and tenant support including improved complaint handling, community support projects, supporting initiatives that promote education, employment, and wellbeing. We work in partnership with local organisations to address the diverse needs of our tenants, ensuring that they have access to essential services. Our approach is rooted in inclusivity, aiming to uplift members of our local communities. Our charity, Hopstead, continues to make significant strides in collaboration with local charities and organisations to prevent and alleviate homelessness. Through these concerted efforts, we are dedicated to encouraging a more compassionate supportive environment for all members of our local communities.

## Governance leadership

Our regrade to G2 by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in July 2023, has been well publicised. G2 means that we continue to meet the Regulator's governance requirements but needed to improve some aspects of our governance arrangements to support continued compliance. Since the regrade, we have been working closely with the regulator and sector experts, digesting their constructive feedback, and implementing all improvement recommendations. We have welcomed this opportunity to reflect on existing governance arrangements and enhance our internal processes. This collaborative effort is all about building an even stronger future for Flagship, one where we can continue to improve the service we deliver to our tenants, and I am confident we will return to G1 in the near future. Our Board of Directors and Senior Leadership Team are dedicated to upholding the highest standards of governance, and driving strategic decisions that both align with our ESG goals and foster long-term sustainability.

## Looking ahead

As we look to the future, we remain steadfast in our commitment to ESG principles. Boards must navigate these challenges, ensuring strategic direction despite financial constraints. Mitigation plans are crucial, requiring stress testing and robust strategies. Attention to stock decency, tenant safety, and service delivery is paramount, with the need for accurate data and compliance with regulatory standards. We will adapt to evolving regulations and manage risks to maintain service delivery. Flagship Group recognises the challenges ahead but are confident that with the continued support of our stakeholders, we can overcome them and achieve our vision of creating sustainable communities. Our ongoing journey is filled with determination as we further embed ESG into our operations, creating a thriving workplace and delivering lasting value for our tenants and the wider communities we serve.





# Structure of the Report

This report has been prepared according to the specific themes outlined in the latest version (v2.0 published in Autumn of 2023) of the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing by Sustainability for Housing (SfH). The standard comprises 46 criteria across 12 themes distributed among the sustainability pillars E, S, and G. Enhanced Reporting Options are available for select criteria, and in such instances, we also diligently endeavor to address them where pertinent to the company. An index of criteria reported under each theme is provided at the end of this document, along with corresponding United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



## Environmental

## Social

## Governance

Theme 1	Theme 4	Theme 9
<b>Climate Change</b> Prevents and mitigates the risk of climate change 	<b>Affordability and Security</b> Provides affordable and secure housing 	<b>Structure and Governance</b> Legal structure of the organisation and its approach to Governance 
Theme 2	Theme 5	Theme 10
<b>Ecology</b> Promotes ecological sustainability 	<b>Building Safety and Quality</b> Tenant safety and building quality are well managed 	<b>Board and Trustees</b> High quality board of trustees 
Theme 3	Theme 6	Theme 11
<b>Resource Management</b> Sustainable management of natural resources 	<b>Tenant Voice</b> Listens to tenants' voice 	<b>Staff Wellbeing</b> Supports employees 
	Theme 7	Theme 12
	<b>Tenant Support</b> Supports tenants, and the local community 	<b>Supply Chain Management</b> Procures responsibly 
	Theme 8	
	<b>Placemaking</b> Supports tenants and the wider local community through placemaking 	



# Environmental

This year, we have firmly committed to enhancing our environmental stewardship by launching our first group Environmental Policy. This policy is now integrated into our Health & Safety Policy, forming our comprehensive Safety, Health & Environment (SHE) Policy. Environmental and sustainability matters are now incorporated into the extended remit of our Health & Safety Committee, forming the SHE Committee. This integration signifies our dedication to embedding environmental considerations into all aspects of our operations.

We are on a journey to improve our systems and data, enabling us to measure and continuously improve our environmental performance. By setting up a robust Environmental Management System (EMS), we aim to be in a better position to not only manage our compliance and risks but also identify opportunities and set measurable targets.

Our homes represent the largest area of carbon emissions for us to address, with over 33,000 properties across the east of England. To reduce our carbon footprint and enhance energy efficiency, we have been actively securing funding and progressing with our retrofit program. This initiative aims to ensure our homes become more energy-efficient and less carbon-intensive.

Our first ambitious milestone is to ensure all our homes achieve a minimum Energy Performance Certification (EPC) rating of C or above by 2030. This target aligns with our broader goal of reaching Net Zero emissions by 2050 at the latest, with a view to accelerating this if the opportunity arises. Achieving these objectives presents a significant financial challenge and is heavily reliant on a robust supply chain and skilled technicians to perform the necessary upgrades over the coming years.

In addition to our retrofit program, we are exploring innovative technologies and sustainable practices to reduce our environmental impact. This includes increasing and enhancing biodiversity, placemaking, improving waste management practices, and working with our supply chain to understand and improve on the environmental impact of the goods and services we procure. By adopting these measures, we aim to become a more sustainable housing association that contributes positively to the environment and the communities we serve.



As we continue working towards achieving this, we recognise the importance of collaboration with our stakeholders, including tenants, partners, suppliers, and regulatory bodies. Their support and engagement are crucial in achieving our environmental goals. Together, we are committed to building a greener, more sustainable future for all.

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



“ We have firmly committed to enhancing our environmental stewardship





# Theme 1 Climate Change



## C1. Distribution of EPC ratings of existing homes (those completed before the last financial year)

To provide insight into the overall energy efficiency of our current stock, we are disclosing the distribution of our Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating across our existing portfolio.

This year, we heavily invested in gathering more data, and new assets and retrofit software to improve our data integrity, providing us with a more comprehensive stock analysis. This investment enables us to strategically plan necessary stock improvements, thereby enhancing our ability to better forecast the carbon reduction measures needed and potential outcomes to further improve the energy efficiency of our homes.

As a result of better data management and increased stock surveys this year, we have observed fluctuations in previously reported numbers, leading to a material negative change in our carbon footprint (see section C6). However, we are pleased to report that we now have a more complete data set: 63% of our homes are rated EPC C or above, compared to 59% last year (see Figure 1). Compared to 2024, we estimate that we have 12% more properties at EPC C, with fewer assumed to be at EPC B and EPC D (see Figure 2 for a detailed breakdown). This figure will improve as we continue with our efforts to improve data quality and complete energy efficiency works to our homes.





Existing Home EPC Rating – FY 2024

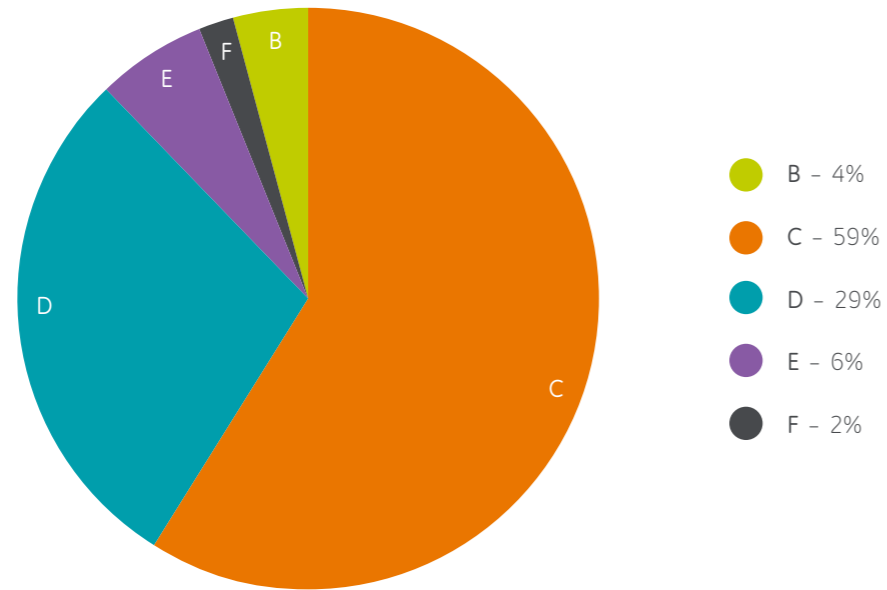
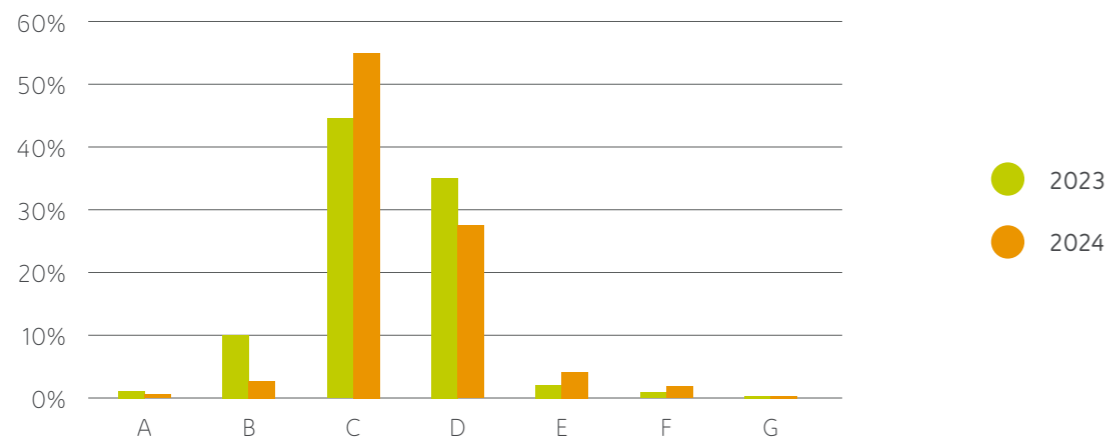


Figure 1: FLAGSHIP Existing Homes – EPC Rating 2024

<sup>1</sup> Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) rate the energy efficiency of a building, from A (very efficient) to G (inefficient). They tell you how costly it will be to heat and light your property, and what its carbon dioxide emissions are likely to be (Energy Savings Trust). Guidance on how a home's energy performance is calculated using the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) methodology, which underpins the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) (www.gov.uk).

Existing Homes EPC Rating Comparison, 2023-2024



C2. Distribution of EPC rating of new homes (those completed in the last financial year)

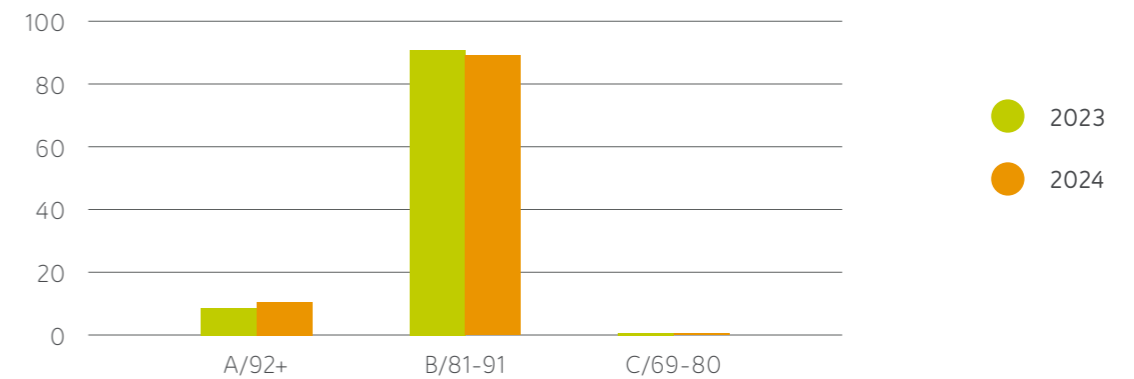
To ensure that our future stock of housing is more energy efficient than our older units, we are disclosing the distribution of our EPC rating for newly constructed homes in our portfolio.

During this period, we delivered a total of 743 homes, with 90% achieving an EPC rating of B. Our design specifications mandate that all homes we build must achieve a minimum EPC rating of B or an SAP score of 81. This year, we acquired 38 new homes through S106 acquisitions, utilising modern methods of construction (MMC) on two projects that employed timber frame techniques.

Next year, we plan to develop/acquire 585 new homes, and 116 of these across four projects will use MMC. We will develop three of these projects ourselves, comprising 112 new homes using i-house (a proprietary MMC product by Roofspace Solutions and H+H), Structural Insulated Panel (SIPs), and timber frame construction methods. Most of these homes will feature low-carbon technology, with air source heat pumps (ASHPs) as their main heating source as well as solar photovoltaic (PV) panels. The remaining four homes will be sourced through a S106 acquisition and will use timber frame construction. We anticipate year-on-year improvements in overall EPC/SAP scores moving forward.



Flagship New Homes Delivered – FY 2024 – EPC/SAP Rating





## C3. Does the housing provider have a Net Zero target and strategy?

Flagship is committed to achieving Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050, aligning with the UK government's targets. These targets include reducing emissions by 68% by 2030 and 78% by 2035, compared to 1990 levels. Our goal supports global efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C, as outlined in the Paris Agreement.

HAs play a crucial role in this transition. To achieve Net Zero, HAs must eliminate their share of carbon emissions by reducing the use of fossil fuels for operations and the heating of tenants' homes. This goal assumes that essential sectors, like the national grid, will also achieve Net Zero emissions.

### Focus on energy efficiency

Our largest source of emissions is Scope 3<sup>2</sup> from existing homes. We are focused on improving the energy efficiency of all our homes by upgrading thermal efficiency and installing cleaner heating technologies. Our first milestone is to reach a minimum of EPC C by 2030.

### Decarbonising Our fleet

We plan to decarbonise our staff fleet of vehicles by 2027, and are currently assessing options to decarbonise our maintenance fleet.

### Improving workplace energy efficiency

In 2025, we will produce our workplace strategy to improve the energy efficiency of our offices.

### Accelerating progress

We will take any opportunities to accelerate our progress, potentially contributing to a carbon-negative future by generating surplus renewable energy. Through these efforts, Flagship aims to lead in creating a sustainable, Net Zero future.

<sup>2</sup> According to the National Grid, "Scope 3 encompasses emissions that are not produced by the company itself and are not the result of activities from assets owned or controlled by them, but by those that it's indirectly responsible for up and down its value chain." See section C<sup>9</sup> for a more detailed breakdown.

### Innovation Projects

In 2023, Flagship embarked on a pilot project to test the Mixergy smart hot water cylinder in five properties, aiming to provide an energy-efficient alternative to conventional hot water tanks. Mixergy tanks, which heat water from the top down and feature advanced sensors for precise temperature and usage monitoring, were installed with direct electric systems. This initiative supports Flagship's goals of reducing carbon emissions and alleviating fuel poverty. Initial results indicate potential energy and cost savings, and the prospect of improving EPC/SAP scores. While some installation challenges and tenant feedback highlighted areas for improvement, the overall response has been encouraging, showcasing the potential benefits of Mixergy technology for enhancing energy efficiency and tenant satisfaction.

We also initiated the 'Sunamp - Heat Batteries for Hot Water' pilot project, installing six Sunamp units in student accommodation and four additional units in social housing properties to enhance energy efficiency and boost tenant satisfaction. These compact, low-maintenance units integrate seamlessly with renewable energy sources like solar PV panels and remove the need for legionella checks. Feedback has been very positive, and plans are underway to expand the pilot, using lessons learned to address spatial constraints and water pressure issues.

Finally, in 2023, we initiated a pilot project to test Nexgen infrared heating technology in one of our properties. This project aims to improve energy efficiency and reduce costs while providing comfortable heating. The consistent heat delivery, low energy consumption, and compatibility with solar PV panels helped to reduce the carbon footprint. Initial results are promising, indicating potential to scale this project up and install it in other properties, to further enhance energy efficiency and increase tenant satisfaction.

All of these projects, as well as other proptech pilots we have undertaken, will be analysed and tested for scalability across our portfolio with a view to implementing them into our standard specifications wherever possible.

#### Mixergy Tank & Sunamp Heat Battery Installations



## C4. What retrofit activities has the housing provider undertaken in the last 12 months in relation to its housing stock?

Over the past year, we advanced our retrofit programme after securing an additional grant from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) to enhance the energy performance of selected properties. We invested approximately £50 million in upgrading and maintaining our homes during this period.

Key installation measures included ASHPs and solar PV panels, which reduce energy procurement from the grid and lower tenants' bills. Improvements to insulation and ventilation were also made to enhance thermal efficiency and address damp and mould issues.

### Improvements to our housing stock to improve energy efficiency included:

Retrofit Measures	Wave 1	Wave 2	FG Funded	TOTAL
External Wall Insulation (EWI)	11	33	0	44
Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP)	37	68	114	219
Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Panels	35	130	7	172
Electric Storage Heaters	0	0	76	76
<b>Total Measures installed</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>577</b>

### Funding received

SHDF Wave 1

£1.5m

SHDF Wave 2

£4.4m





### Retrofit strategy

Flagship's 'Warm Homes Programme' (FWHP) aims to achieve EPC C ratings by 2030 and Net Zero emissions by 2050, focusing on energy performance, carbon reductions, and tenant wellbeing. Our strategy leverages advanced data management and alternative funding models to optimise investments and improve living conditions.

### Software implementation

In 2023, we deployed the DREam energy efficiency software to model retrofit options and outcomes, supporting our EPC C and Net Zero goals. Integration with Asprey Asset Management will also enhance data accuracy and streamline retrofit efforts.

### Roadmap to EPC C

Using the DREam software we are currently developing a detailed roadmap to achieve EPC C by 2030, prioritising measures such as insulation, windows, doors, heating systems, ASHPs, and solar PV panels.

### Retrofit process optimisation

We are implementing MicrosoftPower App to centralise project information, automate tasks, and improve data management, aiming for completion by early 2025.

### Retrofit communication plan

Our communication plan ensures clear engagement with stakeholders, particularly tenants, using various tools. By recruiting tenant champions we aim to ensure participation and minimise disruptions.




### Feasibility study to retrofit the Abbey Estate using private funding with Sero Ltd.

A central concern of Flagship's retrofit efforts remains how we will finance the works. To address this, Flagship is partnering with Sero Life Ltd. to undertake a feasibility study funded by the Community Energy Fund (CEF). The aim is to explore the potential of providing lower-cost renewable energy to tenants of the Abbey Estate in Thetford, Norfolk. The project involves installing PV systems and home energy storage batteries in as many as 669 homes. By utilising Sero's Energy Services model, tenants can purchase energy from project-owned PV systems at cheaper rates than grid prices, promoting energy cost savings and decarbonisation. By recovering some of the costs, however, this initiative may provide a financially sustainable way of paying for retrofits. The project aligns with Flagship's goals of reducing carbon emissions and enhancing energy efficiency, while also ensuring financial viability and scalability. Should the feasibility study prove successful, it would demonstrate strong community support and significant environmental and financial benefits, paving the way for further development and implementation.



### Tenant case study

One of our tenants was selected to receive an upgrade to his electric storage heaters at his property which is a semi-detached bungalow. His home was rated as EPC D with poor energy efficiency, and it was costly to heat. By using the SHDF funding, we were able to improve the energy efficiency of his property by upgrading his insulation. We adopted the 'fabric first' method, installing cavity wall insulation and 270mm of loft insulation. We then installed an ASHP and solar PV panels. These retrofit works meant that the energy performance of the property was improved to an EPC B. The tenant was pleased the installation process went smoothly and gave us some great positive feedback, saying we "... were the best team." He also commented that he was well-informed on how to use his new heating system and confirmed that his property is now adequately heated and rated his overall experience with this process as 5-star. The works were carried out by Gasway, who are our installation engineers for ASHP and PV.



### Gasway renewable technology team

This year, Gasway launched a new renewable technology team, marking a significant step forward in our commitment to sustainable energy solutions. Our growing in-house expertise in renewable technology is rapidly expanding, empowering us to broaden our capabilities and take on more low-carbon heating projects. Gasway now offers expert installation services for ASHPs, solar PV systems, and EV charging points, providing our clients and customers with cutting-edge, environmentally friendly solutions. This offers more opportunities for our customers to actively contribute to a greener future.

## “ FWHP aims to achieve EPC C ratings by 2030



## C5. GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions

This year Flagship saw a material increase in carbon emissions with total emissions rising from 81,105 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) reported in 2023, to 100,371 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. As referred to in section C3 this increase is due to improving our Scope 3 assets data and the 2023 DEFRA Conversion<sup>[1]</sup> factor resulting in a 7% increase this year for electricity. Although this appears to be a negative reflection of our progress, we are assured that our data is improving, allowing us to report more accurately and comprehensively in future, develop a targeted programme carbon reductions, and set more informed and measurable targets.

Streamlined Energy & Carbon Report (SECR) replaced the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Energy Efficiency Scheme, which closed in 2019, and sets out requirements for disclosing greenhouse gas emissions. This report presents a full third party verified SECR statement. All emissions throughout this report are displayed in tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

Our emissions reporting follows the GHG Protocol and UK Government guidelines, which categorise emissions into three scopes, as set out below.



We are pleased to announce we have achieved the SHIFT silver environmental standard



**Flagship Group (exc, Gasway intensity metric 189.53 kgs CO<sub>2</sub>e per home managed)**  
(exc. office emissions)

**Office intensity**  
20.92 kgs CO<sub>2</sub>e per m<sup>2</sup>  
(Excluding T&D losses)



### Scope 1: Direct emissions

These are emissions from sources that we own or control.

**For a housing association, this includes:**

- Emissions from gas used in offices and communal areas.
- Emissions from fuel used in company vehicles and maintenance fleets.
- Emissions from fuels bought for construction sites.

<sup>1</sup> The UK Government 2023 Conversion Factors for greenhouse gas (GHG) reporting have been applied for this round of SECR reporting in calculating our emissions. These factors are suitable for use by UK-based organisations of all sizes and international organisations reporting on UK operations. Most factors in the 2023 GHG Conversion Factors for Company Reporting have been aligned to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report (AR<sup>5</sup>).

### Scope 2: Indirect energy emissions

These emissions come from the production of electricity, heat, steam, and cooling that we purchase.

**For a housing association, this includes:**

- Electricity used in offices, community hubs, depots, and communal areas.

### Scope 3: Other indirect emissions<sup>2</sup>

These are emissions from activities that are not directly controlled by us but are linked to our operations.

**This includes:**

- Emissions from homes when occupied by tenants, otherwise known as our downstream leased assets and employee commuting.
- Business mileage in employee-owned vehicles, public transport travel, and emissions from the maintenance fleet.

While reporting Scope 3 is not mandatory, it provides a fuller picture of our impact and helps identify risks and opportunities. We include voluntary emissions from housing stock because as a housing provider, this is key to our operations and measuring this is crucial to understanding our environmental impact.

#### Energy Performance

We are dedicated to achieving a minimum EPC rating of C or above for all homes by 2030, with Net Zero emissions as our ultimate goal by 2050. This commitment is part of our broader sustainability strategy to enhance the energy efficiency of our property portfolio.

#### Empowering Tenants

By enabling open communication and providing resources, we aim to educate and empower tenants about the benefits of energy efficiency, creating a collaborative environment for achieving our sustainability goals.

#### Continuous Improvement

We regularly assess our progress towards achieving these goals, adapting our strategies as needed to ensure that we remain on track to meet our targets. By staying at the forefront of technological advancements and sustainability practices, we are committed to continuously improving our approach to energy efficiency and carbon reduction.

#### Data Improvements

By 2025, we will upgrade and integrate our data collection and management systems to ensure more accurate, reliable, and timely information, enabling better informed and strategic decision-making and refining our approach to retrofitting.

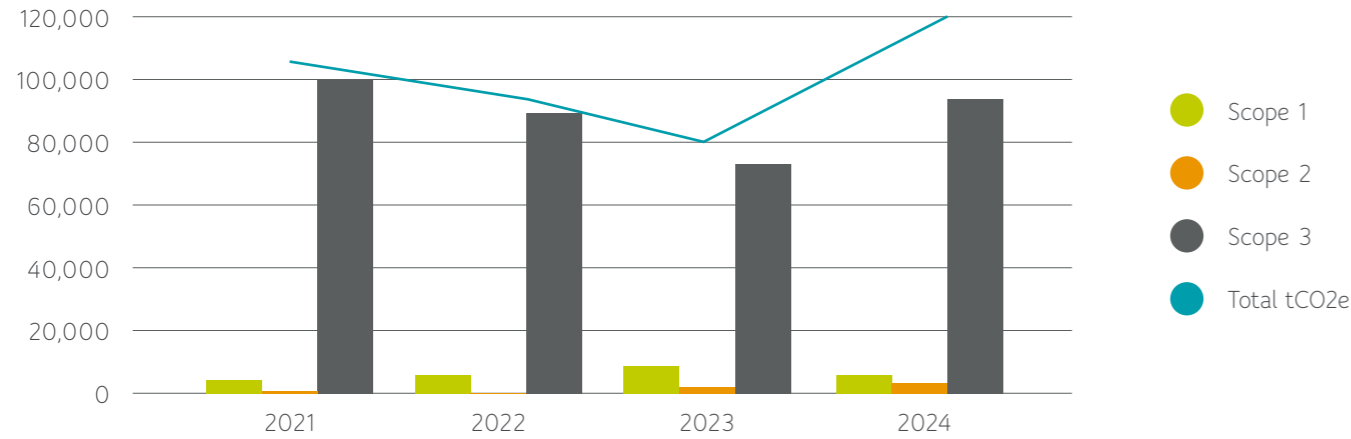
#### Interactive Tenant Portal

We are developing a user-friendly tenant portal to provide insights into energy consumption and efficiency measures. This portal will serve as a platform for tenant engagement and feedback, empowering tenants to participate in our sustainability journey.

<sup>2</sup> Scope 3 emissions - Scope 3 emissions from homes were calculated using SHIFT methodology. This is based on SAP data provided by Flagship from their 'Lifespan' asset data".



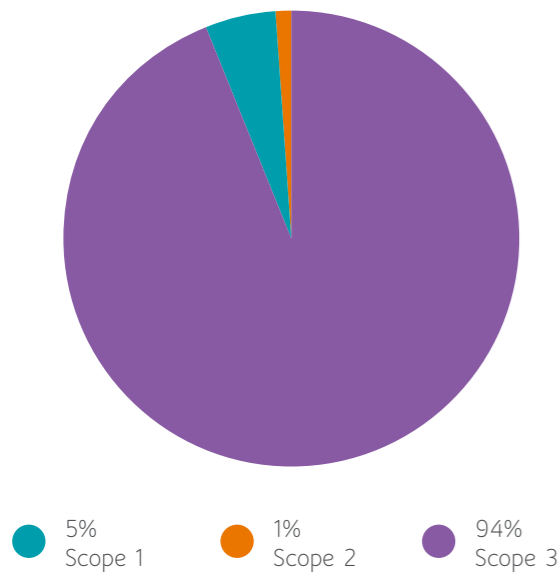
FG Carbon Footprint, 2021 - 2024, Tonnes of CO2e



Current Emissions and improvement initiatives

Approximately 94% of Flagship's carbon emissions are from our rental properties. We are actively addressing this through our retrofit programme, supported by both internal and external grant funding, to make our homes more energy efficient. As we upgrade our systems for better data collection and analysis, we will establish a realistic timeline for achieving a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of C or above for all our homes, with our ultimate goal being to reach Net Zero carbon emissions as soon as feasible.

2024 - Tonnes of CO2e - Scope Breakdown



Workplace energy efficiency

In 2025, we will introduce our Workplace Strategy, outlining specific targets and plans to enhance the energy efficiency of our office spaces.

Fleet and operational efficiency

We have implemented a policy mandating the transition to low-carbon vehicles, aiming for all company cars to be fully electric (EVs) by 2027. Currently, 96% of our staff are either driving an EV or a Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV), with some vehicles still on order. This initiative is part of our broader strategy to achieve a fully electric fleet by 2027.

To further enhance the energy performance of our extensive maintenance fleet, we are trialing Electric Vehicles (EVs) and exploring operational restructuring to transition to low-carbon transportation solutions.



C6. How has the housing provider mapped and assessed the climate risks to its homes and supply chain, such as increased flood, drought and overheating risks?

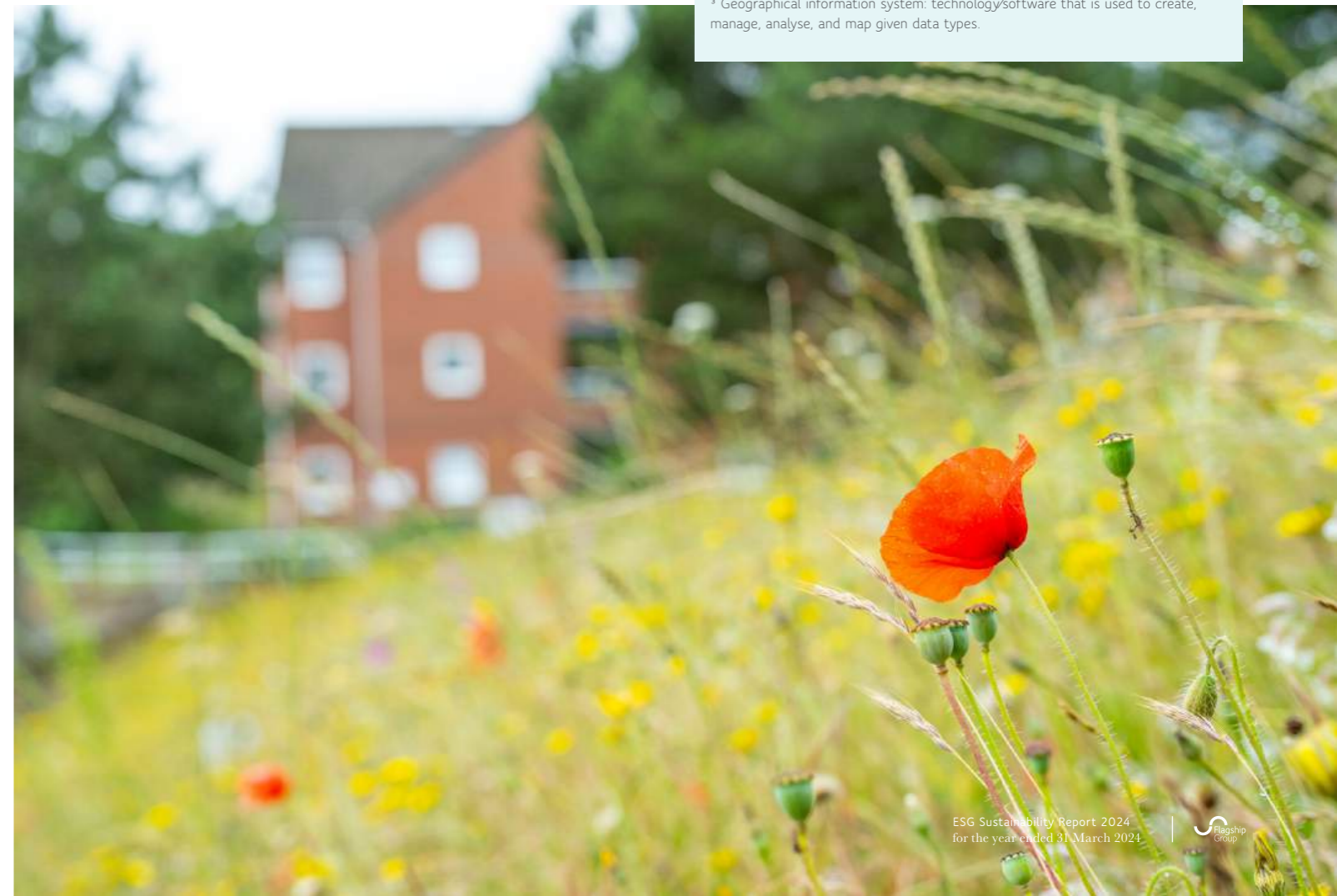
Flagship recently consulted with Zurich Climate Resilience Solutions to carry out a desktop study to analyse the current weather trends and predicted climate change scenarios that could impact our housing portfolio. Following this initial assessment, we established a climate change task force responsible for drafting a climate change risk register. We are also developing our in-house GIS<sup>3</sup> mapping to include identifying flood risks and incidents. Later this year, we aim to finalise our first climate change adaptation plan, ensuring continuous monitoring and review to effectively mitigate potential climate impacts.

By involving representatives from all relevant areas across the organisation, we will consolidate efforts, knowledge, and skills to ensure we are prepared and coordinated in addressing potential issues, including but not limited to increased flood risks, storms, and overheating.



Brainstorming at the Climate Change Risk Assessment Workshop

<sup>3</sup> Geographical information system: technology/software that is used to create, manage, analyse, and map given data types.







# Theme 2 Ecology



“ Access to nature significantly improves health and wellbeing

## C7. Does the housing provider have a strategy to enhance green spaces and promote biodiversity on or near homes?

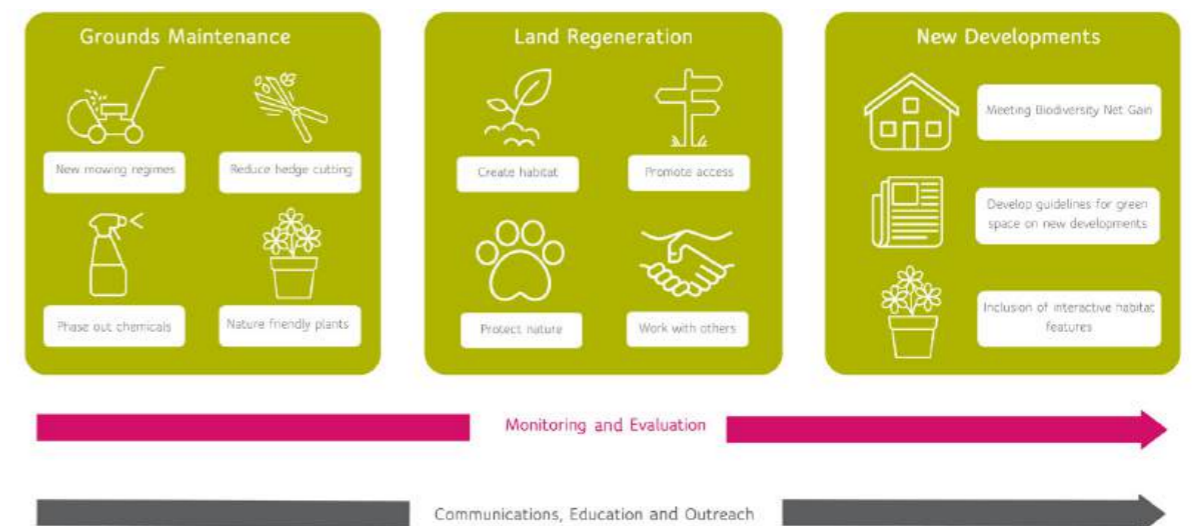
Last year, Flagship developed its Biodiversity Plan, outlining our ambition to increase and enhance biodiversity on the land we own. We aim to create green spaces that our tenants can enjoy, knowing that access to nature significantly improves health and wellbeing.

Our plan includes a headline target of managing 30% of our green spaces in a nature-friendly way. It details specific objectives across six key areas: grounds maintenance, land regeneration projects, new developments, monitoring and evaluation, communication, education and outreach.

By focusing on these areas, we aim to create a balance between our homes and the natural environment, ensuring that our communities benefit from healthier, greener surroundings.

### Biodiversity Plan

Enhancing biodiversity across our estate and increasing access to nature for staff & customers. How can we manage 30% of our land for nature by 2030.



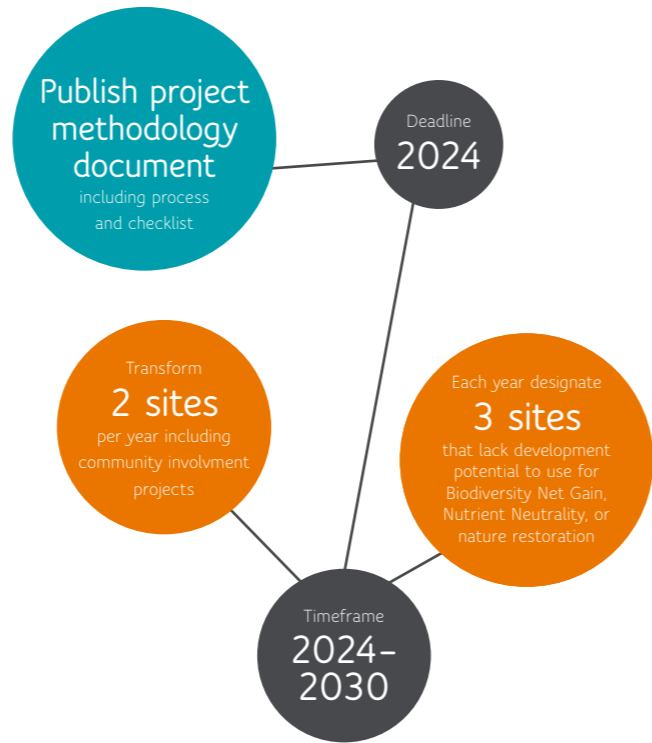


### Grounds maintenance (GM)

Last year, Flagship converted areas equivalent to three football pitches into meadow habitats across 34 of our sites by adapting our grounds maintenance practices. Building on this success, we plan to expand this initiative to an additional 160 sites this year, creating meadow areas equivalent to 14 football pitches. These areas are allowed to grow naturally during spring and summer, and in autumn are seeded with wildflower seeds to enhance biodiversity and provide natural habitats.

### Land regeneration projects

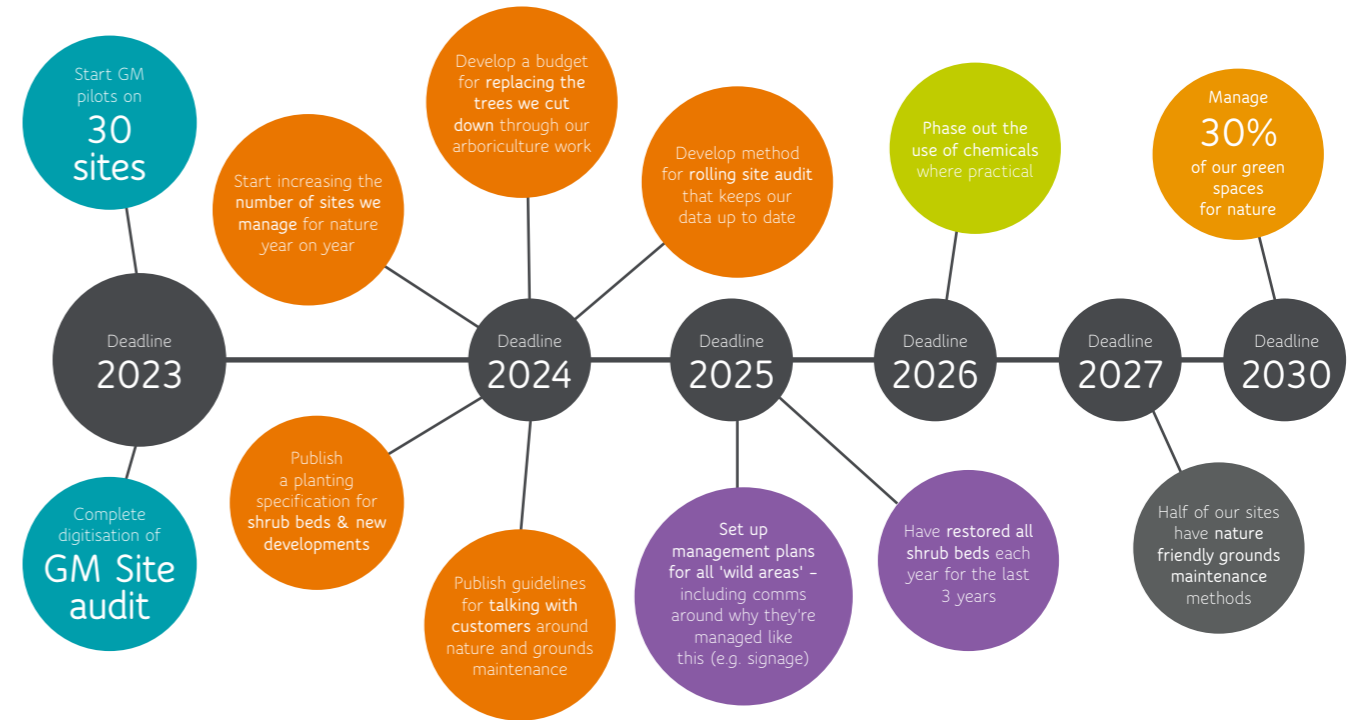
We have completed several projects aimed at enhancing biodiversity and increasing access to nature in local green spaces. These projects involve collaborative efforts with the community to co-create more sustainable solutions. Initiatives include the establishment of community gardens, tree planting, and the installation of benches to encourage outdoor enjoyment. Additionally, we are in the third year of our Urban Wilding Research Project, which investigates various management techniques and their effects on floral biodiversity and soil carbon levels.



Over the course of 6 months, Grounds Maintenance teams for Newtide, Victory, and Samphire Homes planted

**746** new shrubs

Implementing real change on grounds maintenance cycles will require a systematic shift, introduced gradually over a number of years. The actions below outline how we will make that shift:



These efforts underscore Flagship's commitment to creating thriving ecosystems within our communities while actively involving tenants in environmental stewardship and nature conservation initiatives.





### Arboriculture

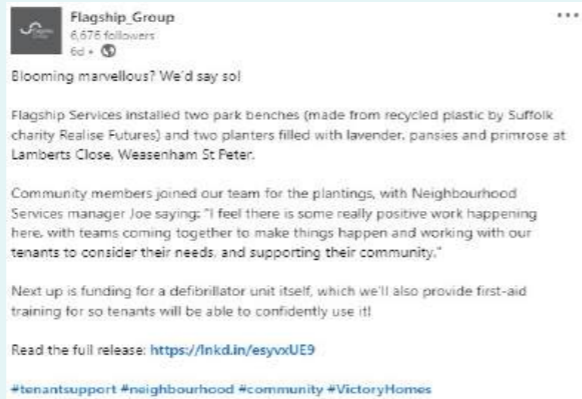
Preserving our trees is a significant priority for us at Flagship, and we are proud to have our own award-winning in-house Arboriculture Services team. During the FY 2024, we conducted a thorough analysis of how we manage our estimated 38,000 trees. The analysis indicates that, under the existing management model, the risk related to our trees is expected to increase over the coming years, exacerbated by the changing climate and associated extreme weather events.

While our team primarily focuses on operational aspects and risk reduction associated with our trees, with a passion for conservation they are now working more collaboratively with other teams across the business to increase and improve our urban forest. This collaborative approach ensures that we have the relevant expertise to develop a climate-resilient tree stock, which will further boost the environmental and social benefits for our tenants and communities.

Starting in April 2024, the Arboriculture Services team was divided into three teams, each dedicated to one of Flagship's housing brands: Newtide, Victory, and Sapphire Homes. This reorganisation aims to improve response times, increase efficiency, and reduce fuel costs, further lowering our carbon footprint. Flagship has made significant investments in this area, including upgraded plant machinery and equipment. These improvements not only make our teams safer but also reduce the time required to complete tasks, allowing us to accomplish more in less time.

Good data is vital for better management and driving continuous improvement, so we're investing in photogrammetry data from the National Tree Map, which will give us GIS mapping, size, risk and health data relating to all trees affecting any Flagship site. This same data can be used by other teams across the group, such as Development, Regeneration, and Sustainability & Environmental Management, to provide useful statistics on carbon storage, climate resilience and canopy cover. Furthermore, the same data can be used to inform decision making on our properties, insurance and health and wellbeing.

“ Preserving our trees is a significant priority ”



Flagship\_Group  
6,676 followers

Blooming marvellous? We'd say so!



Flagship Services installed two park benches (made from recycled plastic by Suffolk charity Realise Futures) and two planters filled with lavender, pansies and primrose at Lamberts Close, Wessingham St Peter.

Community members joined our team for the plantings, with Neighbourhood Services manager Joe saying: "I feel there is some really positive work happening here, with teams coming together to make things happen and working with our tenants to consider their needs, and supporting their community."

Next up is funding for a defibrillator unit itself, which we'll also provide first-aid training for so tenants will be able to confidently use it!

Read the full release: <https://lnkd.in/esyxUE9>

#tenantsupport #neighbourhood #community #VictoryHomes

Mapped Trees on the Abbey Estate, Norfolk (Source: BlueSky)

Moving a pot plant is easy enough, but what about shifting a small forest?

Well, that's what a team from Flagship Services set out to do when called upon to clear a site at Vinces Road in Diss, where 35 affordable homes are due to be built.


Wanting to find a way to save the trees growing there, Flagship's arboriculture services manager Dan Curtis led a pioneering project to transplant 39 English oaks, nine hawthorns and one field maple to another site 20 miles away.

Mr Curtis said: "At first it seemed like a bit of a mad idea. But the trees had to be removed from the site one way or another, so it made sense to have a go at it."

The operation took an entire week and saw the trees lifted out of the ground using a specialised 'tree spade' before they were loaded on to a lorry for the journey to Greens Wood, a woodland next to our Bury St Edmunds office Coppice House.

Dan said he had never heard of another project like this, but, if successful, it could become a model for future tree transfers. It's a project that will hugely benefit the biodiversity of the woodland, reinforces our commitment to sustainability and has saved trees that would otherwise have been lost.

Read more on our website! <https://lnkd.in/ekr7X2Vf>






## Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of new homes

### Case Study - Haughley

An application for 29 affordable homes was recently approved by Babergh Mid-Suffolk District Council. Our proposed landscape scheme will result in a 11.3% gain in habitat biodiversity and a 20.33% gain in hedgerow biodiversity.

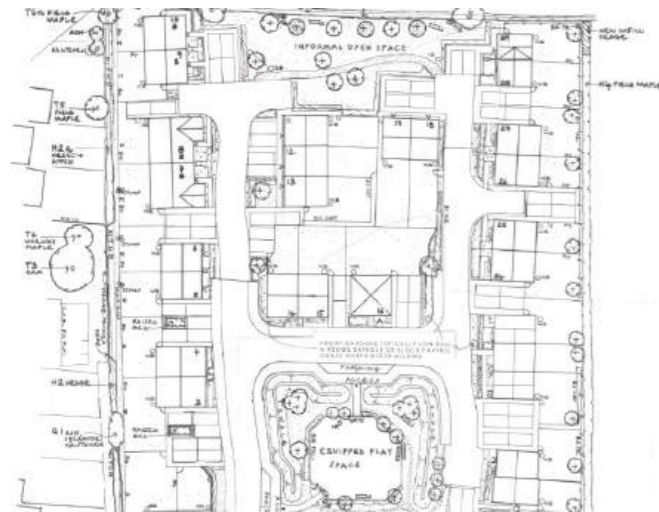
The scheme has been designed by our consultant Ecologist and Landscape Architect, in collaboration with our in-house Planner and Design Team.

**The scheme includes:**

- 70 new trees
- 2 hedgehog boxes
- 7 bat boxes
- 2 bumblebee boxes.
- 8 bird boxes

Additionally, two of the bungalows will have raised garden planters in the front gardens.

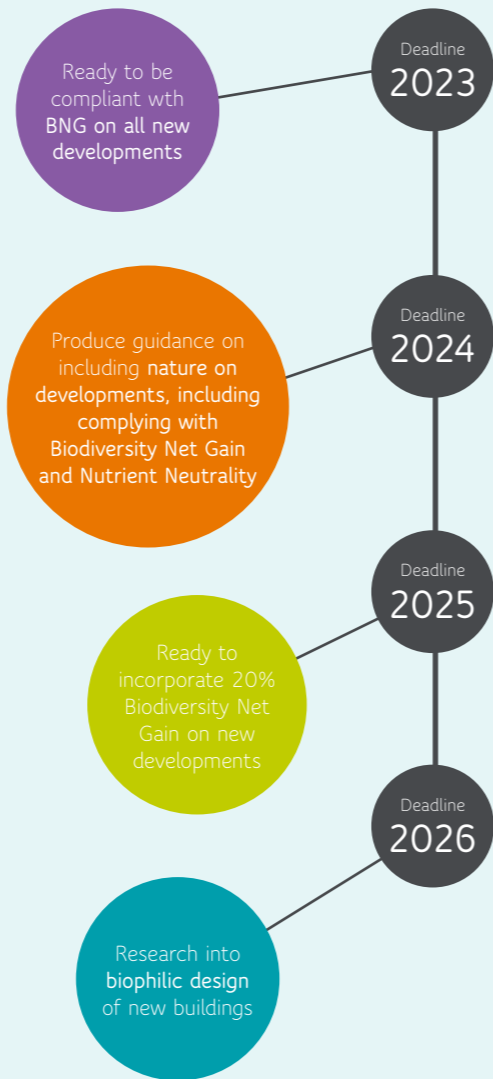
The new homes will also have access to a new play area, meadow areas with native grass and wildflower species, mown grass pathways, drainage swales (Sustainable Urban Draining / SUDs) (planted and seeded swales with shrubs) and attenuation basin (the banks of which will be seeded with a meadow mix), hedges (new hedgerows with native species) and trees.



Landscape Architect Design for Haughley Development

### New housing developments

Developers are now mandated to deliver a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)<sup>4</sup> on all new developments. We want to ensure that our new developments provide plenty of communal green space for communities to interact with nature.



<sup>4</sup> Gov.uk - Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is a way of creating and improving natural habitats. BNG makes sure development has a measurably positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development.

## C8. Does the housing provider have a strategy to identify, manage and reduce pollutants that could cause material harm?

While we currently do not have a formal strategy to track, manage, and reduce pollutants, we recognise the importance of such a strategy in ensuring our commitment to minimising the impact of our activities on the planet. However, we do have a system for reporting pollution incidents, and our operational staff are trained on managing spills and how to handle hazardous waste. This system will be formalised through the establishment of a robust Environmental Management System (EMS) aligned with ISO 14001, which is currently underway.

To oversee this initiative, we have now formed an Environmental & Sustainability Operational Group. This group is responsible for identifying and mitigating potential issues and setting measurable targets and driving continuous improvement.







# Theme 3 Resource Management



“ Over 90% of our waste is diverted from landfill

C9. Does the housing provider have a strategy to use or increase the use of responsibly sourced materials for all building and repairs works?

At present, we do not have a formal strategy in place for using responsibly sourced materials for all building and repair works.

However, we are actively engaging with our supply chain to raise awareness and explore more environmentally friendly solutions available. Our ongoing discussions aim to inform future decisions and incorporate more sustainable practices into our operations.





## C10. Does the housing provider have a strategy for waste management incorporating building materials?

Flagship has been assessing its current waste practices. Waste broker reporting ensures that over 90% of our waste is diverted from landfill, but we aim to set more measurable targets and improve our practices. A thorough waste analysis project will commence in late 2024, allowing us to strategise for better waste management. Awareness campaigns have been rolled out to staff to encourage more thoughtful waste handling and disposal, but there is still much more we can do. We are committed to finding innovative solutions to enhance our waste management efforts.

### Utilisation of wood chip

Flagship is committed to sustainable waste management practices, exemplified by our innovative recycling of green waste. By repurposing tree branches and other organic materials, we support our grounds maintenance efforts and contribute to environmental conservation. Our green waste, primarily composed of tree branches and trimmings, are processed into wood chip. These wood chips are utilised in various ways to enhance our landscape maintenance and environmental sustainability efforts.

We are exploring opportunities to turn this process into a revenue stream, which could help offset our operational costs. With current production at approximately 195 tonnes per year, disposing of this amount would currently cost around £17k +VAT per annum using traditional green waste disposal, making this a much more cost-effective and environmentally friendly solution.

Flagship's green waste recycling program not only supports our grounds maintenance activities but also aligns with our commitment to sustainability. By increasing the use of recycled materials and exploring new revenue opportunities, we aim to enhance our environmental impact and operational efficiency in the future.

### Mulching Flagship trees (10%)

**Application:** Approximately 10% of the recycled wood chip is used as mulch for Flagship trees

**Benefits:** This practice improves the growing conditions for our tree stock by retaining soil moisture, regulating temperature, and providing essential nutrients

**Future Goals:** We aim to increase the percentage of wood chip used for mulching Flagship trees in the coming years to further enhance their health and growth



### Shrub bed enrichment (15%)

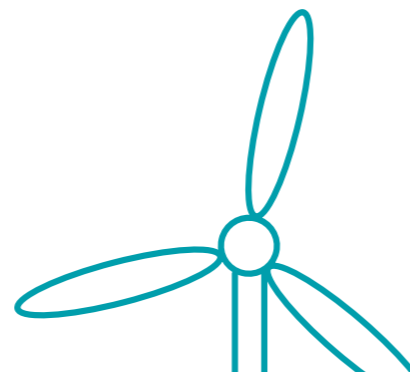
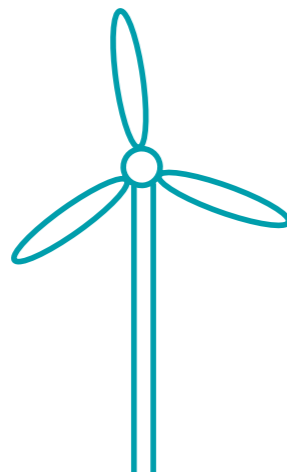
**Application:** Around 15% of the recycled wood chip is applied to shrub beds by our Grounds Maintenance teams

**Benefits:** The chips enrich the soil, suppress weed growth, and enhance the aesthetic appeal of our green spaces

### Renewable energy and composting (75%)

**Application:** The remaining 75% of the wood chips are sent to Suffolk Woodchips for renewable energy production and composting

**Benefits:** This initiative supports renewable energy efforts and creates high-quality compost, contributing to a circular economy



## C11. Does the housing provider have a strategy for water management?

Flagship does not yet have an official water management strategy, but we are actively working to develop one to enhance our approach to sustainable water use. Here are some key initiatives we are currently exploring and implementing:

### Water conservation in existing homes

- Ensure effective water conservation efforts in our existing housing stock to reduce consumption to 110-130lpd<sup>5</sup>
- Assess and implement water-saving technologies and practices in our properties

### Efficiency in new developments

- Ensure our new homes have all necessary water efficiency measures such as low flow taps, low volume flush WCs, and low flow showers
- Incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in all new developments to manage stormwater sustainably and reduce flood risk
- Explore rainwater harvesting on new developments for watering

### Innovative solutions for operations - Rainwater harvesting

- Utilise rainwater for irrigation and other non-potable uses including run-off from office roofs
- Implement systems for rainwater harvesting, including abstraction from SUDS ponds and basins
- Water new trees, reduce flooding, and manage surface water runoff effectively

<sup>5</sup> Environment Agency research suggests that UK domestic water efficiency should be 130 litres per person per day (lpd) by 2030 to adapt to forthcoming climate change. However new national strategies are emerging which may mean this target is reduced to 110 lpd<sup>1</sup>.

### Soil improvement

- Improve soil quality around trees and shrubs to enhance water retention and reduce runoff
- Amend soils with organic matter and other soil conditioners

### Information and awareness campaigns

- Educate staff and tenants on the importance of water conservation
- Roll out comprehensive information and awareness campaigns
- Promote sustainable living and responsible water use practices

We are developing a mitigation solution for nutrient neutrality that will facilitate the construction of new homes in Norfolk while incorporating water-saving features.

By focusing on conservation, efficiency, and innovative solutions, we aim to create a positive impact on our communities and the environment.



Coppice House Office - Rainwater tank system for watering



## Social

In 2024, Flagship remains committed to its mission of providing homes and creating sustainable communities, something deeply rooted in our core values and purpose. As a dedicated social housing provider with over 33,000 properties, we offer secure, affordable housing.

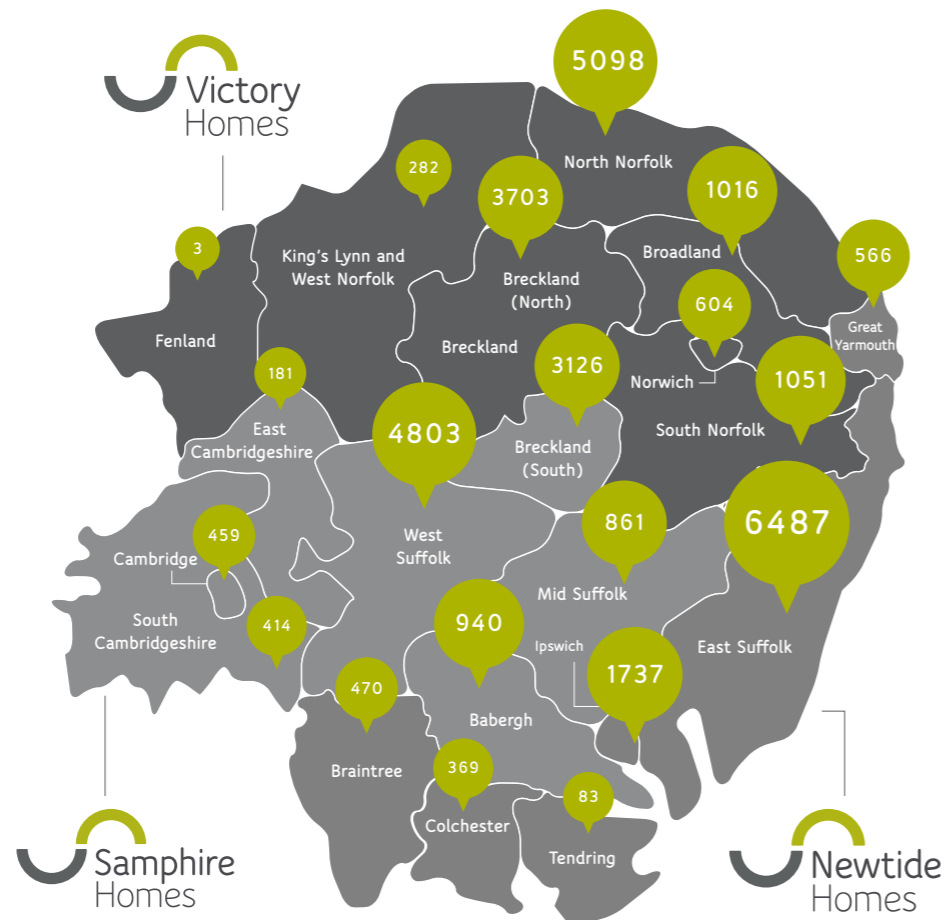
Across the UK, the demand for accessible housing continues to grow, exacerbated by a lack of homes being built, soaring private rental costs, and considerable barriers to homeownership in the east of England, where many find these options financially out of reach.

In the landscape of ESG considerations for 2024, the social dimension has gained prominence. Persistent housing shortages, coupled with affordability crises and widening socioeconomic disparities, highlight the critical need for inclusive and equitable housing solutions. As we navigate these challenges, Flagship remains committed to pioneering initiatives that not only address housing needs but also positively impact the lives of our tenants and the social wellbeing in the communities we serve.

Housing associations like Flagship play a crucial role in addressing the housing crisis by providing affordable housing solutions to individuals and families. Beyond increasing the availability of accessible homes, we offer vital support services to our tenants. Our support programmes include financial counselling, employment assistance, and community engagement initiatives designed to help tenants maintain stable and secure housing. This comprehensive approach addresses the immediate need for more housing while fostering long-term stability and wellbeing for our tenants.

By continuing to invest in and develop these initiatives, we aim to create sustainable, inclusive communities where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

The Flagship housing stock is split across the three housing brands: Newtide (NH), Victory (VH), and Samphire Homes (SH).



# Theme 4 Affordability & Security





## C12. For properties that are subject to the rent regulation regime, report against one or more Affordability Metric: Rent compared to median private rental sector (PRS) rent across the relevant Local Authority & rent compared to the relevant Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

The majority of our housing stock consists of two and three-bedroom homes. In addition to our traditional social housing, we provide:

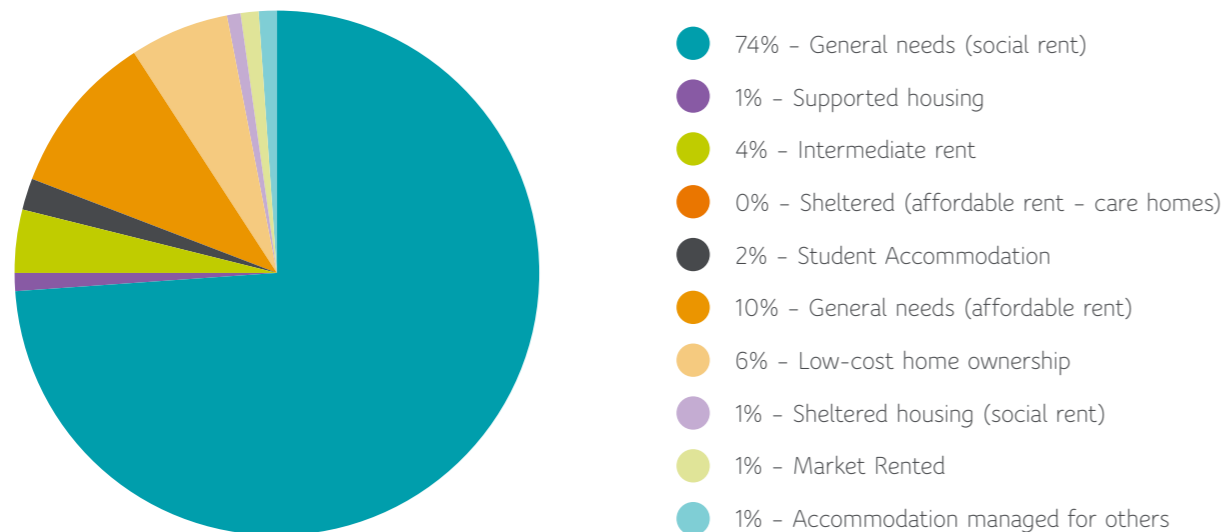
- Sheltered housing accommodation
- Shared ownership homes
- A small number of market-rented homes
- Student accommodation

Our commitment to affordability is evident in our affordable and social rental pricing:

- **Two-Bedroom Properties:** Our social housing rents are typically 38% lower than the median weekly private market rents.
- **Three-Bedroom Properties:** Our social housing rents are typically 39% lower than the median weekly private market rents.
- **Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Rates:** Our rents range between 19% and 40% lower than the median LHA rates, depending on property size and location. LHA rates are used to calculate housing benefit payments for tenants renting from private landlords within the local authority area where our properties are located.

Our pricing structure highlights our purpose to provide affordable housing for those on low incomes. By offering rents significantly lower than the private rental market, we help individuals and families who might otherwise face homelessness due to the difficulty of accessing private rental properties.

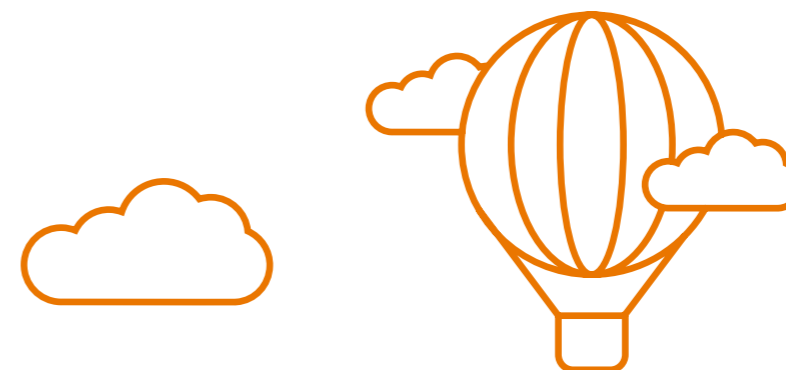
Flagship Group Existing Homes by Tenure - FY 2024



## C13. Share, and number, of existing homes (owned and/or managed) completed before the last financial year allocated to:

As of March 31, 2024, Flagship owns and manages 33,372 properties, 96% of which are social and affordable rentals.

Tenure Type	FY 2023	% Share	FY 2024	% Share
General needs (social rent)	24,782	76	24,708	74
General needs (affordable rent)	3,064	9	3,406	10
Supported housing (housing for older people) (social rent)	244	1	243	1
Low-cost home ownership (shared ownership)	1,836	6	2,042	6
Intermediate rent	1,180	4	1,223	4
Sheltered housing (social rent)	422	1	423	1
Sheltered (affordable rent - care homes)	22	0	0	0
Market rented	347	1	344	1
Student accommodation	600	2	600	2
Accommodation managed for others	224	1	383	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,721</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>33,372</b>	<b>100</b>



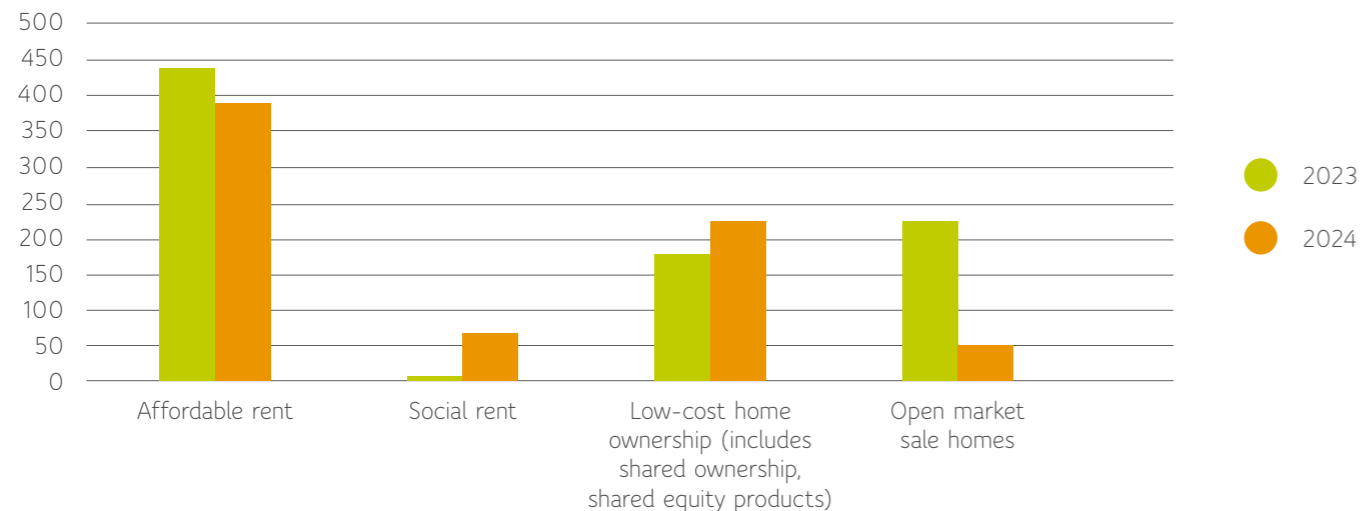


## C14. Share, and number, of new homes (owned and/or managed) that were completed in the last financial year, allocated to:

Flagship delivered 743 homes this year, and we are pleased to report a notable increase in the number of social homes and low-cost home ownership properties.



FG New Homes Delivered, 2023-2024



## C15. How is the housing provider trying to reduce the effect of high energy costs on its tenants?

Flagship is dedicated to mitigating the impact of rising energy costs through its comprehensive approach:

- **Immediate support:** The Affordable for All Team provides energy vouchers and one-off payments for utilities, offering relief to tenants facing energy cost challenges.
- **Enhanced retrofit coordination:** The Dwelling Improvement Plan targets energy cost reductions through strategic upgrades aimed at decreasing heating and power requirements.
- **PAS 2035 Framework:** Implements whole-house assessments, strategic improvement plans, quality assurance checks, and a dedicated Retrofit Coordinator role to ensure effective energy savings.
- **Retrofit assessment:** Flagship completed c.800 assessments in FY 2024, conducting energy audits, tenant consultations, system upgrades, and evaluating renewable energy options.
- **Tenant engagement:** Tenant Engagement Officers provide personalised energy advice and promote energy-saving practices, for better understanding and management of energy bills. They are also ready to offer support and act as a point of contact before and during retrofit projects.
- **Smart technology:** Flagship has been rolling out smart thermostat technology and has installed 4,828 Switchee devices as of July 2024, enabling us and our tenants to monitor fuel usage in homes. These devices also allow us to identify those at risk of fuel poverty and provide the necessary support.
- **Website resources:** Our HA websites are regularly updated with useful information on energy-saving tips for tenants.

This integrated approach ensures that Flagship effectively supports its tenants in managing energy costs while promoting sustainable living practices.

## C16. How does the housing provider provide security of tenure for tenants?

We have discontinued issuing fixed-term tenancies. Now, all new Flagship tenants receive an assured tenancy with a 12-month starter period. Currently, approximately 86% of our tenants have peace of mind, knowing their rental agreement offers secure tenure.







# Theme 5 Building Safety & Quality



“ **Tenant safety will always be a core area of focus** ”

## C17. Describe the condition of the housing provider's portfolio, with reference to:

	% of Homes
Percentage of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out	98.79%
Percentage of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out	98.89%
Percentage of homes for which all required electrical safety have been carried out	98.48%

We are actively addressing access issues related to gas and electrical safety by collaborating with our housing and legal teams to ensure compliance with relevant processes. Our Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) are conducted in accordance with our internal policy on a risk-based cycle, with all properties having valid FRAs. This year, we are reprofiling assessments to distribute them more evenly throughout the year.

Tenant safety will always be a core area of focus, and a full suite of policies, management plans and operational guidance notes help a competent assets compliance team keep our tenants safe in their homes.

Investment in this internal team has seen more and more specialist work come back in-house, including electrical testing and high-risk Fire Risk Assessments.

Legislation and best practice evolve quickly, and the assets compliance team keep up to date with these changes while also scanning the horizon for what might be coming next.

The Fire Risk Assessment programme has been improved throughout the year to make the inspection process more sustainable in terms of workloads and miles travelled.

Our vulnerability checks ensure that no tenant is left without heating. While the introduction of a new process has temporarily affected compliance levels, these will improve as IT systems streamline the process by reducing manual tasks. In cases where safety concerns arise, we may cap the gas rather than leave an appliance unchecked, but we always conduct additional checks first to ensure vulnerable tenants are not left without heating and hot water.



## C18. What % of homes meet the national housing quality standard?

The Decent Homes Standard (DHS) is a government-agreed technical definition on the statutory minimum requirement for a home to be classed as 'decent'. This is a standard national criterion that provides insight into the condition of a housing provider's stock.

**97.62%**  
of homes meet the national housing quality standard

### Of those which fail, what is the housing provider doing to address these failings?

All actual failures identified will be added to capital works programmes for component replacements or repairs raised as appropriate. Failures based on extrapolated data will be resolved by tracking qualifying works for properties that meet the criteria for failure when work is carried out throughout the year.

Progress against the above is tracked and reported monthly in our Performance Dashboard, which is published to the Flagship Group Board. We will also work to reduce the number of potential failures by using dynamic works programmes that can be supplemented or changed through the year as any further failures are identified during the year.

## C19. How do you manage and mitigate the risk of damp and mould for your tenants?

At Flagship, we take the health and comfort of our tenants seriously by addressing damp and mould proactively. The eradication of damp and mould is a strategic focus and board priority for Flagship.

- **Comprehensive reporting and treatment:** Tenants are encouraged to report issues via our Damp and Mould Referral Form, accessed through the relevant HA website, initiating thorough house surveys and targeted treatments by our teams so prompt action can be taken.
- **Improving ventilation:** During home upgrades, we prioritise proper ventilation to maintain fresh air and reduce dampness.
- **Heating upgrades:** We are replacing old heaters with low-carbon heating such as ASHPs, improving warmth and dryness in homes.
- **Insulation checks:** We are ensuring homes have adequate insulation during upgrades to ensure our homes are thermally efficient, preventing a damp environment.
- **External wall insulation:** Where needed, we add additional insulation to outer walls, effectively combatting damp and mould.
- **Priority response:** Properties with damp and mould issues receive priority in our improvement programmes.
- **Standards and compliance:** We adhere to BSI standards alongside PAS 2035 and PAS 2030 to eliminate condensation, damp, and mould.

Through these measures, Flagship ensures that our homes are healthier and more comfortable environments for all tenants, aligning with our commitment to quality housing and tenant wellbeing.



### Case study

Flagship hosted a session focused on gaining a comprehensive understanding of the risks associated with damp and mould, and the proactive steps we can take to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our tenants.

Nadhia Khan, Executive Director of Customer and Care at Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, attended as a guest speaker and gave an enlightening and impactful presentation. With the devastating incident last year where two-year-old Awaab Ishak tragically lost his life due to damp and mould complications at a Rochdale property, the session served as a call to action and a stark reminder of the collective responsibility we have towards our tenants and our communities.



### Objective

#### Damp and Mould

*"The eradication of damp and mould We want all of our homes to be safe and healthy places to live for our tenants. We will work relentlessly to sustainably manage and resolve damp and mould issues into the future."*

#### What next for 2025?

Damp and mould continue to be a key strategic focus for Flagship but has been renamed for FY25, 'Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 including - Awaab's Law', acknowledging the wider reaching scope expected from Awaab's Law later in FY25.

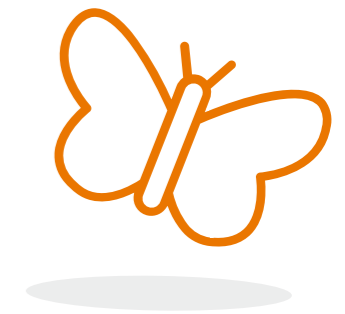
### What we have achieved

- 4,770 damp and mould repair jobs raised through tenant contact, property surveys, visiting officer visits or repairs operatives recording follow-up work jobs after attending a property.
- We have promoted awareness with our tenants through updated resident guides and postcards and with our teams through enhanced eLearning for customer-facing staff.
- Our surveyors receive additional training and carry appropriate diagnostic equipment to undertake a comprehensive 12-stage diagnostic survey approach.
- We have a specialist team of trained operatives for mould washes and utilise external specialists to undertake more complex intrusive remedial works where required.
- We have installed 4,782 smart thermostats to date in our homes allowing us to monitor temperature, humidity, air pressure and using this data we can target properties where the risk of damp and mould is greatest.
- We want to identify all instances of damp and mould in our homes, even the smallest spots, so we can stop it becoming a larger issue.





# Theme 6 Tenant Voice



## C20. What are the results of the housing provider's most recent tenant satisfaction survey?

We monitor customer satisfaction throughout the customer journey. This is over a range of services from when a tenant moves into their home, to when they have a repair carried out, and contact through to moving out. The overall Flagship customer satisfaction score for the year was 80.9%. Throughout the year we received many positive comments from tenants who were very happy with the excellent service staff provided; staff conduct & empathy has been a key driver of positive scores and customer satisfaction (CSAT). CSAT scores informed us that we need to improve our waiting times for repairs and work on making sure customer callbacks are completed to avoid unnecessary frustration.

Throughout the year we conducted our Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). Overall satisfaction for low-cost rental agreement homes was 71.9% and for shared ownership homes overall satisfaction was 58.2%.

We achieved more than our required survey sample size for both tenure types, which has been validated in an internal review that validated our methodology to ensure compliance with the regulatory standards. Representation of stock type, HA, gender, and age were measured throughout to make sure the results are a fair representation of our tenant base. Tenants' safety in their home is the highest-scoring TSM for both tenure types, closely followed by people feeling they are treated with fairness and respect. This aligns with the commentary praising the service received from Flagship staff. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) and complaint handling were the lowest performing measures, which is something being seen across the sector. Repair wait time is also a lower-scoring area and is consistent with trends in complaints and feedback - it remains a key priority. The results of our TSMs were submitted to the regulator by the end of June 2024.

Using tenant feedback, we remain focused on increasing satisfaction with the services we provide. The implementation of Total Mobile has improved repairs appointment communications with customers, we send an appointment confirmation, and a reminder that we are on route.

A new repairs policy has been implemented to ensure clarity around timescales and to manage tenant expectations. A focused '95% repairs in 28 days' plan is now in place to tackle the current work in progress, which aims to get to repairs within target timescales. Our Microsoft Dynamics CRM build continues and will provide a single source of truth for tenant transactions and contact. It is set to improve the tenant journey, providing automated and consolidated communication functions. Our Microsoft Dynamics CRM build continues and will provide a single source of truth for tenant transactions and contact. It is set to improve the tenant journey, providing automated and consolidated communication functions. Our phased implementation approach started with tenancy management modules, such as complaints which was the first to launch May 24 and ASB which launches September 24. Tenancy management modules will be followed by groupwide contact and case management.

[View our full TSM Report here.](#)





## C21. What arrangements are in place to enable tenants to hold management to account for the provision of services?

This year we have continued to develop our Tenant Voice Framework, 'The INfluencer Network', with a focus on offering meaningful and accessible opportunities for tenants to engage and influence. We have a total of nine tenants on our three local housing boards<sup>6</sup> and 56 involved tenants who are referred to as our 'Group Influencers'.

Tenants who sign up to be a Group INfluencer are invited to review, scrutinise, and discuss a variety of topics, policies, strategic priorities and/or issues, which are identified through our customer insight data or proposed by our tenants themselves. Our INfluencers are encouraged to hold us to account on key services; this year they were invited to in-person scrutiny events which held a spotlight on Safe Communities & Neighbourhoods, the Contact Centre, and Social Housing stigma. At each event we provided a 'you said, we did' update from the previous spotlight session, as we understand it is important our participants feel confident their feedback is being listened to and is helping to drive positive change. Throughout the year we held three Complaint Scrutiny Groups to drive improvements in complaint handling, the group review complaint data, and real complaint case studies. INfluencers also joined us to help shape our new service standards, and they reviewed our voids standard to make sure we understand what is important for tenants when they move in. Our Digital Engagement Group has continued to meet regularly with a focus on helping us design our new customer portal. They have also supported user testing for WhatsApp as a new communication method with tenants. Since its launch in February, we have dealt with 227 tenant requests through WhatsApp.

“ The INfluencer Hub has attracted 308 tenant members

In Sept 23 we launched EngagementHQ, our interactive online engagement space enabling tenants to make a difference from the comfort of their own home. In March 2024 we ran a prize draw to incentivise tenants to join the INfluencer Hub, and plan to run regularly incentivisation offers to keep growing this online community. Since its launch, the INfluencer Hub has attracted 308 tenant members, and we have published 66 project pages with the opportunity to participate in surveys, polls, and forums. We use the INfluencer Hub to publicise Group INfluencer events, with each event summarised in a project page providing an overview of the event, as well as the 'you said, we did' follow-up to make sure our commitment to listening and using tenant feedback to drive positive change is heard.



## C22. In the last 12 months, in how many complaints has the national Ombudsman determined that maladministration took place?

During 2023/24, the Ombudsman delivered 12 determinations with a total of 39 findings. Of those, 24 resulted in either maladministration or service failure with 15 findings of no maladministration. No year-on-year systemic issues have been identified. Complaints serve as valuable intelligence to identify issues and drive positive changes in service delivery and this year we have put in place a new solution that enables us to record learning from complaints and monitor and measure the impact of improvements.

Learning and improvement opportunities, driven by determination outcomes, have delivered positive change; for example, the introduction of a new vulnerability question on our damp and mould reporting form which will enable the team to consider any such concerns at the property and prioritise the job accordingly. We are also in the process of making improvements to our system which will ensure we have a mechanism in place to capture data on tenant disability and long-term illness consistently.

In direct response to complaints about poor communication we have brought together two of our contact centers to avoid handoffs and increase the resolution of enquiries at point of contact. On the advice of our complaint's scrutiny panel, ensured our complaint handling teams instigated communications plans to keep tenants updated on the progress of their complaint and we have created new service standards that clearly set out what tenants can expect and the related timescales for responding to service requests.

During 2023 we received our Ombudsman landlord complaint report for the previous year. This report gave a 23% maladministration rate and Flagship Group were said to have performed "very well when compared to similar landlords by size and type". We have shared this report with our staff, Boards and tenants and ensure that we continue to focus on learnings from determinations, and in helping us understand any systemic causes of failure.

Flagship recently launched a group-wide campaign to emphasise the importance of good customer service, which is always at the heart of what we do, highlighting our commitment to "Customer First." Using the acronym STANDOUT, staff are reminded to:

- Smile, say hello and introduce yourself
  - Tell our customers what to expect
  - Act with kindness and respect
  - Nurture relationships, be polite and helpful
  - Do the right thing – go above and beyond if possible
  - Own it, deliver and keep your promises
  - Understand and listen
  - Talk about what happens next
- This campaign reinforces our dedication to providing exceptional customer service through positive, proactive, and respectful interactions.



<sup>6</sup> In March 2024, we disbanded our Local Housing Boards and are introducing a new customer committee. Focusing on co-creation, the new committee will support the Flagship Group Board ensuring the voice of the tenant is heard on matters that impact them and offer a wide range of meaningful opportunities for tenants to influence our services.





# Theme 7 Tenant Support



## C23. What are the key support services that the housing provider offers to its tenants?

At Flagship, our commitment to social housing extends beyond providing safe and affordable homes. We want to ensure our tenants live in secure and supportive communities, understanding that some tenants may need additional assistance to thrive in their tenancies. Our compassionate and comprehensive support efforts are designed to ensure that we continuously evolve our services to ensure that our tenants feel secure, valued, and empowered.

### Holistic support services

Flagship's holistic support services are extensive and tailored to meet the diverse needs of our tenants. Our approach is comprehensive, recognising that stability in housing is often intertwined with financial, social, and personal wellbeing. Here are some key areas of the support we offer:

- **Money management:** We understand that managing finances can be challenging, particularly in today's economic climate. Our dedicated teams provide one-on-one support to help tenants create and maintain realistic budgets, ensuring they can meet their rent and other essential expenses.
- **Income maximisation:** Many of our tenants are unaware of the full range of benefits and financial support available to them. Our income maximisation support involves assessing each tenant's situation and guiding them through the process of applying for and receiving benefits, grants, and other financial aids.
- **Health and wellbeing support:** Recognising the importance of mental and physical health, we collaborate with local health services and charities to provide access to healthcare, counselling, and support groups. Our aim is to ensure that our tenants have the necessary resources to maintain their wellbeing.
- **Crisis intervention:** In times of crisis, quick and effective support is crucial. Our housing support teams are trained to assist tenants facing emergencies, whether due to financial difficulties, safeguarding, health issues, or other urgent situations such as antisocial behaviour and domestic abuse. We provide immediate support and connect them with appropriate long-term resources.
- **Aids & adaptations:** Flagship has dedicated resources to help tenants who may need extra care at home due to old age or health impairments. We can make adjustments to the property, including installing handrails, ramps, stairlifts, and other modifications to make tenants' lives easier and ensure our homes are accessible and comfortable for all tenants.
- **Multi-partnership working & signposting:** Our dedicated teams work in conjunction with other partners, but we recognise that we may not always have the resources or expertise to address every issue. In such cases, we are committed to directing our tenants to the right places for help, including but not limited to specialised services, local charities, or government agencies. This ensures we can guide our tenants towards the support they need.





### Tenant Feedback and Continuous Improvement

We believe in listening to our tenants, using regular feedback surveys, tenant forums, and advisory panels to ensure that we continually refine our services to better meet their needs. This ongoing dialogue helps us adapt to changing circumstances and improve the overall tenant experience as referred to in section C20.

Our housing teams have made a significant impact this year, dedicating themselves to supporting our tenants through various challenges and life changes. Below are just a few examples of the many ways we've provided crucial support:

- **Empowering Moves:** We facilitated 13 strategic relocations within the Samphire area, helping tenants downsize, upsize, and address affordability concerns, antisocial behavior, and medical needs.
- **Essential Aid:** Newtide extended critical assistance to 144 households, providing food vouchers, white goods, bedding, flooring, and other necessities, ensuring that families have the essentials to thrive.
- **Combating Homelessness:** Samphire proudly provided 305 tenants with keys to their new homes, offering a fresh start for those transitioning from homelessness.
- **Kindness Fund Impact:** With £16,000 invested, Samphire supported 62 tenants through our 'Kindness Fund', covering travel expenses and providing items like mobile phones and white goods, adding comfort and stability to their lives.
- **Fuel Support:** The Newtide team issued 76 fuel vouchers, helping households manage their energy costs during challenging times.
- **Supportive Moves:** 41 Victory tenants were supported with managed moves to address crucial needs, including downsizing, upsizing, medical requirements, property disrepair, and escaping domestic abuse.

These efforts represent just a portion of our ongoing commitment to improving the lives of our tenants, as we continuously seek new ways to provide meaningful support.



### Domestic Abuse support

- **790 cases in total**
  - 446 active cases
  - 344 DA support cases where advice and/or information was given
- Post relationship was the highest amount of referral type, where a tenant or an agency has got in contact for support following a relationship ending.

#### Tenant case study

A tenant fleeing domestic abuse was referred to Kay our Domestic Abuse Officer. The tenant was anxious about her new property's security due to an integral cat flap and a communal pathway backing onto the garden. Her anxiety was heightened by impaired vision, with only 5% sight in one eye due to an attack by her perpetrator.

Kay worked closely with housing and the tenant, providing ongoing support, home visits, and security assessments. She arranged for 6-foot fencing around the garden, window alarms, and a front door camera to enhance safety. Additionally, a new door was installed to eliminate the cat flap concern.

Feedback from the tenant: "Kay has helped build a safe sanctuary for me to live in, and I am very grateful".

# Affordable for All Fund



Our Affordable for All Fund has made a profound difference across our housing brands, receiving 829 referrals this year. With a total group-wide investment of £157,484, we provided vital support to tenants facing financial challenges.

This fund enabled access to essential items such as food, energy, flooring, white goods, and other necessities that would have otherwise been out of reach due to affordability constraints.

Through our Travis Perkins CSR fund this year we supported the following projects:



**West Suffolk College**  
PPE & Materials for Apprentices £5.5k



**Beavans Court Great Yarmouth**  
Upgraded a play area £5k



# The work we do truly matters...



Our dedicated teams handle a variety of cases daily, resolving issues that deliver positive social impacts, improve people's lives, and uplift the communities we serve. Here are just some of the day-to-day issues we provide tailored support for:

## Working in partnership

We supported a young mum and her son who moved into their flat under challenging conditions. The LA alerted us to their situation: they were living with just a mattress on the floor and a fridge freezer. In collaboration with the LA, which provided white goods, our charity Hopestead stepped in to provide new flooring and essential furniture. Additionally, we offered a toy voucher from the Affordable for All fund, allowing the mum to buy toys for her son. The tenant later expressed her gratitude, sharing that our support had made a significant positive impact on their living conditions.



## Housing benefit oversight

A tenant, who had been incorrectly paying a housing benefit shortfall for an extended period, was diagnosed with terminal cancer and received full disability benefits. Our rent officer identified the error and contacted the LA to challenge the oversight. As a result, we secured £2,343 in backdated payments, which was returned to the tenant, providing much-needed financial relief.

## Supporting a new start

Our tenant fled domestic abuse from another part of the country and was placed in a refuge. When she was nominated for a Samphire home, it was evident she needed significant support. Regular contact was maintained with her and her support workers to ensure a smooth transition. On move-in day, she arrived with only clothes in dustbin liners, an air bed, and a kettle.

Our Lettings Officer contacted Hopestead to provide essential items, including a bed, bedding, white goods, kitchen utensils, furniture, and carpets for each room. She was also guided to local support services to help develop skills, build confidence, and improve well-being.

Starting her tenancy in March 2023 with Universal Credit as her main income, she found a full-time job by September 2023, settled well in her new home, and is thriving.

Anna, our Lettings Officer, remarked, "I am so happy for this lady and very proud of her"







## Aids & Adaptations

In the UK, the ageing population and the significant number of tenants living with disabilities require us to ensure our homes remain accessible and suitable. To meet these evolving needs, we have increased our budget for aids and adaptations to approximately £400k per annum. Over the past year, we have used this budget to provide essential equipment and make home alterations for our tenants. For adaptations costing more than £1,000, we classify these as major adaptations and seek assessment and DFG funding from the LA.

### Minor adaptations

These are alternatives we can make without an assessment from a healthcare professional or Occupational Therapist (OT) and can be requested via our aids and Adaptations co-ordinator in Flagship Services.

#### Examples of minor adaptations:

- Grab rails
- Sliding doors
- Additional bannisters
- New or relocated plug sockets
- Keysafes
- Lever taps

#### Minor adaptations installed

Grab rails (inc drop down rails, galvanised handrails, toilet frames)	1795
Internal door alterations	101
External door alterations	42
Bannisters	279
New or relocated plug sockets	109
Keysafes	19
Lever taps	45
Half steps	75
Pathworks	47
Shower seats	132
Raised toilet seat	22



### Major adaptations

These are significant changes which are more expensive and often require a specialist contractor to do.

#### Examples of major adaptations:

- Altering steps, ramps, or doors to help you get in and out of your home.
- Over-bath or level access showers or specialist toilets to make your bathroom easier to use.
- Kitchen alterations to help you cook and prepare food.
- Dropped kerbs or new paths so you can explore your community and visit your neighbours.
- Hoists and stair lifts to help you move around your home.

#### Major adaptations (DFG Funding)

External access inc. steps, ramps or doors	123
Over bath showers	25
Lever access showers	263
Specialist toilets	39
Kitchen alterations	30
Path works	30
Stair lifts	62





# Hopestead



Addressing homelessness requires innovative approaches and collaboration and so in 2020, Flagship Group established a charity, Hopestead. Hopestead's strategy builds upon Flagship's vision to solve the housing crisis.

Hopestead believes that everyone deserves a place to call home—not just four walls, but spaces where individuals can thrive.

Their aim is to tackle the causes of homelessness and build long term, sustainable solutions. They work in partnership with other organisations to achieve their vision of ending homelessness together.

As a Group, we know we must focus not only on the supply of new homes but also ensuring that those moving into a house from a route of homelessness and those at risk of homelessness receive the support they need to break the cycle of homelessness, take control, and build a sustainable future. Their three main objectives are to:

Prevent & resolve homelessness | Build empowering partnerships | Create sustainable communities

## Key highlights 2023-24

<p>Signposted 59 individuals and families to additional support</p>		<p>Supported 219 households moving into their first tenancy following homelessness with furniture, white goods and flooring</p>	<p>Funded the support of 152 beneficiaries, provided 46 beds and 38 rooms for those experiencing homelessness</p>	<p>Held 8 cash donation events on the streets of East Anglia, and at our community champion partners Morrison's, with 23 volunteers across Flagship Group</p>
<p>Gifted 124 appliances to 81 households through our Hope Essentials white goods scheme</p>		<p>Carried out 5 interviews with Hope at Home service users to better understand their experience of homelessness</p>	<p>Provided 74 households moving in from a position of homelessness with additional essential items for their home</p>	<p>Raised £1,951.70 through our Hope at Christmas 2022 campaign, providing 50 parcels with emergency essential items</p>
<p>Awarded £177k to 19 charity partners to support and increase their impact to 10,970 beneficiaries</p>	<p>Developed partnerships with 40 likeminded charities, organisations and community groups</p>	<p>Donated 18k to 4 domestic abuse charities across East Anglia to support those experiencing homelessness</p>		

Statistics for 2022/23 FY

# Hope at Home

Hopestead ensures those moving into accommodation from a route of homelessness, have what they need to thrive in their home. This means providing them with furniture, carpets and essential household items.

### Impact of homelessness

- Tenants often arrive with few or no household items due to their previous living conditions, which may include temporary accommodation, shelters, or rough sleeping
- Lack of essential furniture can severely impact physical and mental health, as well as financial and social wellbeing

### Programme outputs

- In 2023-24, Hopestead supported 239 households with over £875,825 worth of items, assisting 418 people (264 adults and 154 children)
- 65% of the people supported were previously living in Local Authority temporary accommodation, while 13% were staying with family or friends
- 64% of the people they supported had either a mental health condition, physical health condition or disabilities. Within those 64%, mental health conditions were the most prevalent (85%)

### Feedback and outcomes

- 53% of the people they supported, said they would have gone without essential items without Hopestead's support
- 93% felt more positive and settled in their new homes
- 50% felt more capable of managing their finances and household

### Tenancy stability

- Of the 239 households supported, 233 remain in their homes
- Only one tenancy was abandoned, with four tenants passing away due to health complications, one moved due to safeguarding concerns, and two currently under tenancy notice

### Hope Funds

- Hopestead provides other charities, social enterprises and community groups, who are working to end homelessness, with the time, skills and money to amplify their activity and impact. During 2024, the second round of the Hope Funds projects were completed, which supported 19 organisations with £176,778 worth of funding, and reached 12,669 beneficiaries.

### Building Hope

- Hopestead works with charities and developers to find innovative ways of building and funding additional homelessness accommodation.
- Hopestead partnered with Emmaus Suffolk and New Meaning Foundation ('NMF') to deliver two modular homes to provide accommodation for individuals transitioning out of homelessness. The trainees at NMF built and installed the modular homes, each piece representing a step toward a brighter future for both the builders and the future tenants. Emmaus Suffolk named the new homes "Hopestead Place," symbolising hope and renewal and these were officially opened by Sir Terry Waite, celebrating the collaboration that brought these homes to life.
- Hopestead were delighted to be awarded the 'Best Use of Technology in Housebuilding' award at the Housing Digital Awards, in recognition of the use of emerging technology and the social impact of the project.







# Theme 8 Placemaking



## C24. Describe the housing provider's community investment activities, and how the housing provider is contributing to positive neighbourhood outcomes for the communities in which its homes are located.

Placemaking is essential because it impacts our local communities, individuals and broader society. It's about taking a holistic approach that transforms spaces into vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable places.

It addresses the physical, social, economic, and environmental needs of a community, leading to improved quality of life for its tenants.

 Community Building	 Economic Benefits	 Environmental Sustainability
 Health & Wellbeing	 Safety & Accessibility	 Empowerment & Participation
 Aesthetic & Cultural Value		



Our vision is to effect positive change through the built environment by addressing community-identified issues. Through a landscape-led masterplan, we aim to enhance green spaces, create safer and more connected streets, and establish vibrant neighbourhood centres. These are some of our ongoing projects:



### Saxon Road, Saxmundham

This year, we continued our engagement efforts following the approval of outline planning permission for a garage site in Saxmundham. In collaboration with Ebrik, we enhanced our 'See it First' app to improve the consultation process. This innovative tool allows tenants to explore proposed new homes in life-size scale, inside and out, at their convenience. We hosted a dedicated session for tenants less familiar with the app, providing an immersive experience of our future plans. Using the app as a focal point, we engaged in detailed discussions about the appearance of the proposed homes and the future of surrounding open spaces.



### Green Lane, Fakenham

After a fire at four of our properties in Pudding Norton, Fakenham, we re-evaluated the area's potential. Through face-to-face workshops and written surveys, tenants shared their thoughts on the future of the site. Collaborating with architects Ensemble, we designed a plan that not only replaces what was lost but also transforms under-utilised spaces in the Green Lane estate. This design incorporates affordable homes, a shared communal space, and addresses broader community concerns. Our engagement efforts culminated in a detailed design submission to the local planning authority, marking a significant step forward in shaping the community's future.



### Icwell Hill, Newmarket

This year, we built on our successful community engagement, deepening our understanding of their priorities. Through dedicated sessions with local tenants, we explored potential interventions for the area's future, gathering feedback on both short-term and long-term priorities for change.



### The Abbey, Thetford

Our ongoing engagement with the Abbey community, spanning four years, focuses on understanding and addressing their concerns. This year, we provided clarity on our illustrative masterplan, which responds directly to community feedback and the constraints of the original 1970s layout. Recognising the long-term nature of regeneration efforts, we prioritised transparency by regularly sharing information through FAQs, maintaining a consistent presence in the community, offering regeneration bus tours, participating in local MP meetings, and organising dedicated sessions on planning and our commitments to tenants. Our continued efforts have culminated in the preparation of an outline planning application, one which seeks to effect positive change through the built environment by addressing community-identified issues.



# Governance

We are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), which promotes a viable, efficient, and well-governed social housing sector. We maintain a transparent and cooperative dialogue with the RSH, engaging constructively on all issues affecting the Group and the sector.

In July 2023, the RSH rated Flagship G2, acknowledging our compliance with governance requirements while identifying areas for improvement. We continue to hold a V2 viability grading, indicating that although we meet the regulator's viability standards and can manage a reasonable range of adverse scenarios, there are material risks we need to address for continued compliance.

Throughout the year, we have worked closely with the regulator and sector experts, incorporating their feedback and implementing recommended improvements. Our ambition is to return to a G1 rating as soon as practicable, demonstrating that we have fully embedded all recommendations.

We're also proud to announce that Moody's updated our credit rating outlook from negative to A2 stable. This reflects our robust financial health and strong liquidity and balance sheet leverage metrics, which positions us strongly in, what continues to be, an uncertain operating environment.

Governance and regulation have always been central to our organisation, and this collaborative effort is focused on building a stronger future for Flagship, ensuring continued service improvements for our tenants.

## Strategic Board Priorities



Each year, we set key board priorities aligned with our values to drive targeted, impactful change within our organisation. This ensures holistic improvement across the Group. These are our strategic priorities for the upcoming year, for more details see our [Flagship Group Annual Financial Statement](#).

Consumer Regulations



Delivery of the Repairs Transformation Plan



Data - The effective collection, organisation, and utilisation of information



The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023

which incorporates Awaab's Law including damp and mould



# Theme 9 Structure & Governance





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

We are registered with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in England.

## C26. What is the housing provider's most recent regulatory grading/status?

Since July 2023, Flagship has been rated as a G2/V2 organisation.

## C27. Which Code of Governance does the housing provider follow, if any?

We have adopted a Code of Governance based on clear requirements and commitments which enable the board to demonstrate best-practice compliance as it applies to the housing sector.

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

## C28. Is the housing provider a Not-For-Profit?

Yes, Flagship is a registered Not-for-Profit organisation. As a not-for-profit, any surplus income is reinvested into where we need it most i.e. maintaining our homes and improving housing services, rather than being distributed as profit to shareholders

## C29. Explain how the housing provider's board manages ESG risks

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

Our external auditors are PKF Littlejohn, and internal auditors were KPMG (up to the end of financial year 2023/24) and RSM thereafter. Internal audit plans are agreed by GARC, which also monitors delivery against the plan, approves the final reports, and provides oversight of recommendations to ensure actions are completed.

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

The Assurance Map (which provides assurance through the three lines of defence for all risks listed on the strategic risk map) is reviewed and approved by GARC, as a standing agenda item at each of their scheduled meetings.

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

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

## C30. 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?

Flagship has not been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last 12 months (e.g. data protection breaches, bribery, money laundering, HSE breaches or notices) that resulted in enforcement or other equivalent action.

However, it has been served with an Enforcement Notice by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in relation to a tall building and the suitability of its external wall materials and the internal fire compartmentation. Flagship is cooperating with SFRS in relation to the scope of the works that are needed and is confident that the work will be completed before the expiry date of the notice.





Our ambition is to return to G1 status as soon as practicable. We are actively demonstrating that we have embedded all recommendations through the following key changes:

1. Simplifying corporate and governance structure: Improving the line of sight for the Board, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and reducing governance costs.
2. Introducing a Customer Committee: Strengthening the customer voice within a simplified structure, supported by a customer engagement framework.
3. Combining the Asset Management Committee and Flagship Services Board: Enhancing budgetary control, removing duplication, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and ensuring consistent challenge on the Repairs Transformation Plan.
4. Redirecting finance oversight to the Group Board: Enhancing Board oversight and engagement in strategic performance management.
5. Emphasising sustainability: Finding ways to integrate more sustainable practices into our operations and governance, reducing our environmental impact, and promoting responsible sourcing and energy efficiency in our housing projects.



**“ Our ambition is to return to G1 status as soon as practicable**



# Theme 10 Board and Trustees





### C31. How does the housing provider ensure it gets input from a diverse range of people, into the governance processes? Does the housing provider have policies that incorporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) into the recruitment and selection of board members and senior management?

As set out in our standing orders, the Flagship Board plays a key role in shaping our culture and ensuring that equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are at the core of everything we do. Our goal is to positively influence the services we provide to our tenants, customers, and other key stakeholders.

We have a single Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy that applies to all employees, tenants, and customers, promoting a culture where everyone is treated fairly, with dignity and respect.

Our boards and committees are composed of individuals with diverse skills, experiences, and perspectives, enabling us to address customer and business needs effectively. We ensure an open and transparent recruitment process for board and committee members, aiming to reflect the diversity of the communities we serve and uphold our EDI commitments.

Demographics of the Flagship Board	2023/24	2022/23	Increase/decrease from previous year
What % of the board are women?	25%	18%	>7%
What % of the board are of ethnic minority?	0%	9%	<9%
What % of the board have a disability?	0%	0%	No change
Average age of the board	60 years	63 years	< 3 years
Average tenure of the board	4 years (NEDs only)	8 years (NEDs only)	< 4 years

We provide ongoing EDI training for all staff, Board, and Committee members, starting from their induction (see section C42).

#### Does the housing provider consider tenant voice at the board and senior management level?

- Until March 2024, Local Housing Boards, which included independent and tenant members, reported to the Flagship Board to ensure tenant voices were heard. We are now introducing a new Customer Committee to further amplify customer perspectives within our governance structure. This committee will monitor customer experiences, promote a customer-focused approach to service delivery, and will be supported by a Customer Engagement Framework that offers meaningful engagement opportunities for all tenants.
- We actively listen to feedback from our tenants through various channels, using this input to understand their priorities and continuously improve our services.

### C32. What % of the housing provider's Board have turned over in the last two years? What % of the housing provider's Senior Management Team have turned over in the last two years?

In May 2022, an Executive Director (ED) retired from our Flagship Board and was replaced in October 2023. Additionally, three Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) retired at the end of the 2022/23 financial year, with another NED retiring in February 2024.

The turnover figure has been calculated as a percentage of the average board size over the past two years. The Executive Management team also saw changes, welcoming a new member in December 2022 following the retirement of a previous member.



# 44%

Board members that have turned over in the last two years

# 25%

Senior Management team members that have turned over in the last two years



### C33. Number of board members on the housing provider's Audit Committee with recent and relevant financial experience.

Three members of our Governance, Risk and Audit Committee have recent and relevant financial experience.

### C35. Has a succession plan been provided to the housing provider's board in the last 12 months?

Succession planning has been discussed at board, and recent NED recruitment was conducted using insight from the external board skills review conducted by Altair. Succession planning work is ongoing by our People and Culture Committee and the Flagship Board.

### C34. What % of the housing provider's board are non-executive directors?

Our Flagship Board comprises four Executive Directors and eight NEDs, who play a crucial role in providing an impartial perspective on governance and management decisions. 67% of the Flagship Board Members are NEDs.

### C36. For how many years has the housing provider's current external audit partner been responsible for auditing the accounts?

PKF Littlejohn has been our external audit partner responsible for auditing our accounts for the last two years.



### C37. When was the last independently-run, board-effectiveness review?

An independent review of the Board and its governance arrangements was undertaken last year. In line with the UK Corporate Governance Code best practice, the Board conducts externally facilitated board-effectiveness reviews every three years. This latest review was conducted by Altair, with findings reported in November 2023.

### C38. How does the housing provider handle conflicts of interest at the board?

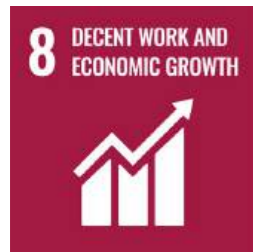
We have a robust process in place for managing conflicts of interest, detailed in Flagship's standing orders. These include:

- **Declarations of Interests:** A standing agenda item at each board meeting.
- **Formal minuting:** All declarations are formally recorded in the minutes.
- **Withdrawal from meetings:** If a declaration arises, the relevant board member withdraws from the meeting for the duration of the item debate/decision where the interest is clear and substantial.
- **Resignation offer:** The board member offers to resign if a conflict is likely to recur frequently.

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







# Theme 11 Staff Wellbeing



“ We ensure that all staff are paid the Real Living Wage

### C39. Does the housing provider pay the Real Living Wage?

We ensure that all staff are paid the Real Living Wage (except apprentices who receive the National Living Wage for their age bracket and their training costs).

### C40. What is the housing provider's median gender pay gap?

This year, we've combined our gender and ethnicity pay gap reports into one comprehensive document, demonstrating our commitment to transparency and accountability.





# Summary: Gender Pay Gap

Any UK company with more than 250 employees is required to publish its gender pay gap report. There is no legal requirement to publish its ethnicity pay gap information but we have voluntarily chosen to analyse this to understand the impact of our work so far and to set a benchmark for future years.

This report has been compiled using people data for Flagship Group and Gasway as at 5 April 2023.



Flagship (inclusive of Flagship Services) has seen an increase in both the mean (average) and in the median (middle) hourly pay gaps in 2023. The mean has increased from 3.13% in 2022 to 5.06% in 2023. The median has increased from -5.99% in 2022 up to 8.76% in 2023. These increases are because we have a higher proportion of men in the upper quartiles compared to the previous year.

**8.76%**  
median hourly pay gap

**5.06%**  
mean hourly pay gap



Gasway has seen a decrease in both the median and the mean hourly pay gap for 2023. The mean has decreased from 32.78% down to 25.09% and the median also has decreased from 37.86% down to 35.34%. Bonuses at Gasway have been awarded during this period to 4.76% of women and to 5.73% of men. We have seen an increase in the mean bonus gap up from 36.59% to 92.31% and also an increase in its median bonus pay from -60% up to 71.15%

**25.09%**  
mean hourly pay gap

**35.34%**  
median hourly pay gap

<sup>7</sup> As defined by the Living Wage Foundation, the real Living Wage is "the only UK wage rate based on the cost of living".

More information: [livingwage.org.uk/what-real-living-wage](https://livingwage.org.uk/what-real-living-wage)

# Summary: Ethnicity Pay Gap

The data has been compiled using people data for Flagship Group as of 5 April 2023. Due to the high instance of undisclosed ethnicity data within Gasway, we have chosen to include them within the overall Flagship Group ethnicity pay gap data to ensure anonymity for those who have disclosed data within Gasway.

Flagship (inclusive of Flagship Services and Gasway) has a mean pay gap of 1% and a median pay gap of 0%. As of 5 April, Flagship employed 1383 employees, 975 of which are White British, 77 are ethnic minorities, and 331 are undisclosed\*

**1%**  
mean hourly pay gap

**0%**  
median hourly pay gap



\*Undisclosed ethnicity data currently makes up 24% of all employees across Flagship, which is a 2.4% decrease on last year. Gasway still has the highest instance of 'undisclosed ethnic group' sitting at 80%, due to being on a different HR system to the rest of Group until recently. The salaries of those with undisclosed ethnicities have not been taken into consideration in pay gap calculations but have been included in charts to benchmark where we are currently.





# Our journey to close the gap 2017-2030

We evaluate and track our gender pay action plan (GPAP) and ethnicity pay action plan (EPAP) to measure impact.

We will be brave in reporting what didn't work and we will be relentless in our pursuit of reducing the gap. Our pay gap actions will be aligned to our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy to elevate our culture from inclusion to one of belonging.



\*We have since updated the name of our ED&I policy to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, to reflect our commitment to ensuring all employees receive the individualised support they need to succeed in their roles.

## 2021-2024

- RFT transferred into the Group effective 1 April 2021 and became Flagship Services, a department of Flagship Group.
- In 2022 we published our first ethnicity pay gap (EPG) report to be transparent on the work we are currently doing to develop the diversity of our workforce and benchmark where we are now for comparison in future years.
- Blueflame transferred into Gasway effective 1 September 2022.

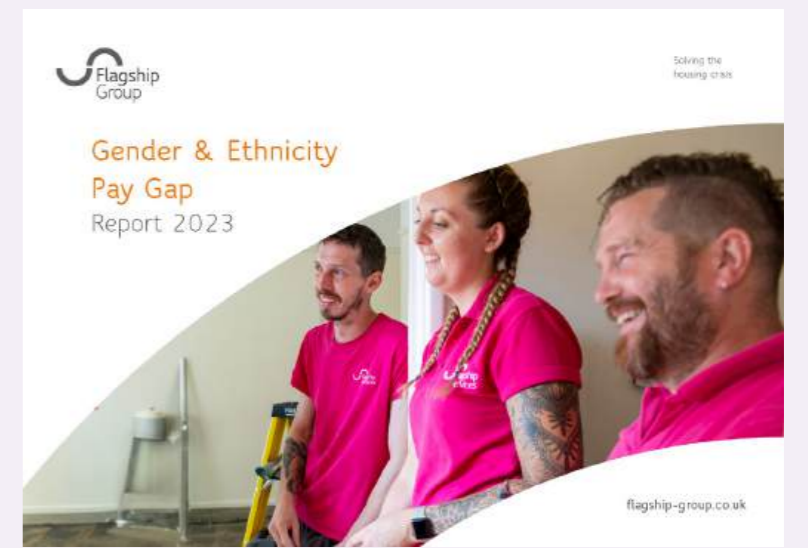
## 2017-2030

- Flagship and RFT reported their gender pay gap for the first time and spent time to understand the reasons for the gap.
- Gasway reported their gender pay gap for the first time. We continued to create actions to address and reduce our gender pay gap across the Group, and reviewed our recruitment processes and Equality\* Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) policy to support a culture of inclusivity.

## 2025-2030

- We have a sustained culture of belonging where our employees are comfortable to bring their whole selves to work. They are completely engaged and we have equal gender representation across the business. We have hit our target to increase our workforce ethnic minority representation to 15%, in line with the communities we serve. We no longer have a gender or ethnicity pay gap.

Our latest report can be found here: [www.flagship-group.co.uk/media/qcloijj4/fg\\_pay-gap\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://www.flagship-group.co.uk/media/qcloijj4/fg_pay-gap_report_final.pdf)





## C41. What is the housing provider's CEO: median-worker pay ratio?

The CEO-worker pay ratio demonstrates the pay dispersion between the CEO and the organisation's median earner. As at 01/04/2024, our CEO-worker pay ratio is 8.82:1.

## C42. How is the housing provider ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is promoted across its staff?

### Flagship's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (ED&I) initiatives

Our journey towards a diverse workforce is a pledge to value, respect, and provide equal opportunities for all. We believe our differences are strengths that drive creativity, innovation, and employee engagement.

We want Flagship to be a place where everyone can feel a sense of belonging and be empowered to represent the communities we serve. To support this ambition, we have dedicated ED&I roles, covering both employee and tenant initiatives and processes, that work to improve the experience of individuals from a wide spectrum of under-represented backgrounds. Our efforts and achievements include:



We are committed to creating an inclusive and diverse workplace through comprehensive EDI initiatives. Here's an overview of our efforts and achievements:

Mandatory training and compliance	Mandatory training and compliance	Reports and surveys
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>ED&amp;I e-learning:</b> 99% compliance</li> <li><b>Unconscious Bias Training:</b> Completed by all employees as part of the induction process</li> <li><b>Inclusive Leadership Training:</b> Mandatory for all line managers</li> <li><b>CX Communication Adjustment Training:</b> Completed by all employees with system access (81% compliance)</li> <li><b>Hate Crime and Antiracism Awareness Training:</b> Completed by all tenant-facing teams (98% compliance)</li> <li><b>Equality Impact and Proportionality Assessment Training:</b> Provided to all housing managers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pride Network</li> <li>Family Network</li> <li>Disability and Neurodiversity Network</li> <li>Social Mobility Network</li> <li>Gender Equity Network</li> <li>Domestic Abuse Champions</li> <li>Menopause Champions</li> <li>INTRAN Champions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Annual Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Report:</b> Combined to understand intersectional pay gaps in greater detail</li> <li><b>ED&amp;I related questions included in Flagship's annual Staff Engagement Survey:</b> Providing insight on key metrics that support an understanding of the progress and impact of our ED&amp;I initiatives, and identification of how we can continuously improve</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Community engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Norwich Pride March:</b> Annual participation with tenant influencers invited for the first time this year</li> </ul>	

Achieving true equality requires a multifaceted approach. Our analysis shows that the key factor affecting our ethnicity pay gap is the level of disclosure within our data. To address this, we have streamlined our systems, improved reporting procedures, and launched communication campaigns to encourage staff disclosure.

Beyond statistics, we are enhancing our school engagement and apprenticeship programs to build a more diverse talent pool. We have also appointed a dedicated Recruitment Business Partner to drive initiatives that break gender stereotypes and encourage diverse participation in traditionally gendered roles. Our active participation in recruitment events, with female trade operatives present, helps foster an inclusive environment.

In the coming year, we will launch three diversity networks focused on race and religion, gender equity, and social mobility. Additionally, our 2024 Management Training Programme, now including a module on inclusive leadership, equips our leaders to foster a culture where differences are celebrated.

Through these efforts, we are committed to creating a fair and inclusive workplace where everyone can thrive.



## C43. How does the housing provider support the physical and mental health of its staff?

At Flagship, we are dedicated to supporting the physical and mental health of our staff through various initiatives:

- **Employee rewards and wellbeing portal:** Flagship Rewards - Includes a wellbeing hub, employee assistance program, 'Thanks to U' reward and recognition portal, employee benefits platform, high street and supermarket discounts, and subsidised cash plan options
- **Free counselling:** Provided through a local specialist and a 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme, including the 'Wisdom' app with workout videos, a health tracker, and wellbeing articles
- **Menopause champions:** Trained across the business
- **Menstrual health assessment:** Offers tailored action plans for employees experiencing menstrual health challenges
- **Stress recognition and support:** Training for all line managers, along with an online stress risk assessment for employees
- **Guidance for line managers:** We launched our 'Ways of Working' intranet page with suggestions for workplace adjustments
- **Employee wellbeing & safeguarding procedure:** New procedure in place that outlines our commitment to supporting employee wellbeing and our approach to workplace safeguarding
- **Domestic abuse champions:** A team dedicated to supporting employees experiencing domestic violence
- **Occupational health:** Outsourced a team dedicated to occupational health and safety.
- **Mental and physical first aid:** There are now over 170 trained First Aiders across the business
- **Talent management scheme:** We offer comprehensive support for personal and professional development
- **Wellbeing activities:** There is a calendar of events which includes positive mental health campaigns and educational sessions for employees
- **Enhanced family-friendly policies:** leave and pay: We provide enhanced maternity, paternity, shared parental, and adoptive leave and pay, plus paid time off for IVF treatments
- **Agile working:** Flexible options with six guiding principles and the ability to buy or sell annual leave
- **Death in service benefit:** - providing three times the employee's annual salary to a nominated party in the event of an employee's passing
- **Additional support programmes:** Cycle to work and smart tech schemes: These include vouchers for smart tech, paid back via salary sacrifice
- **Warmer homes fund:** Discounts on boiler servicing and short-term staff loans
- **Volunteering procedure:** To support employee wellbeing through provision of opportunities to undertake activities and initiatives that benefit our local communities
- **Digital health and safety management:** Modern system for risk assessment, incident investigation, and reporting to minimise workplace injury or illness

By implementing these initiatives, we ensure our staff feel valued, supported, and inspired throughout their careers with us, promoting a healthier and more inclusive workplace.



## C44. How does the housing provider support the professional development of its staff?

- **Coaching:** Employees can train to become coaches or receive coaching from trained staff, boosting confidence, resilience, self-awareness, and skills. Our internal Coaching Network is accessible to all staff for personal and professional development
- **Apprenticeships:** We have been recognised for our commitment to apprenticeships, receiving awards for our programmes which invest in people to attract and retain top talent
- **Training:** We offer health, safety, compliance, and personal development training. Needs are identified through risk assessments, individual meetings, and our talent management process. Our Learning Management System provides bite-sized modules for continuous learning
- **Talent management:** Our process helps measure performance, identify potential, and nurture future leaders
- **Shadowing:** Employees are encouraged to shadow other teams to gain knowledge in different business areas
- **Professional memberships:** We support and fund memberships relevant to employees' roles.
- **Management training programme:** All line managers complete a 4-day training program covering key people processes across the employee journey, including managing diverse, hybrid working teams, performance management, disciplinarys, grievances, absences etc
- **Lunch and Learns:** We offer events for employees to enhance their understanding of various topics not directly related to their roles
- **Leadership Development Programme:** Our tailored program supports our leadership talent pipeline, ensuring future leaders are well-prepared

### Apprentices

To date we have recruited 270 apprentices and have a completion rate of 78.49%, compared to the national average of 54.6%

- 21 apprentices enrolled during 2023/24
- 24 apprentices completed in 2023/24
- We have 102 current apprentices across levels 2-7

### Pipeline programmes



In 2021, we formed a partnership with West Suffolk College to establish a true employer-educational model. This collaboration empowers us to cultivate a proficient talent pool among students, facilitating their progression into our apprenticeship roles and actively contributing to our vision to solve the housing crisis. Our commitment to supporting local colleges is vital in nurturing the essential skills required for both regional development and maintenance of affordable housing, especially considering the prevailing construction skills shortages in the East.

Our programme is in its third year. This year, we have provided 33 individuals with PPE, work experience and access to additional learning opportunities including a level 2 health and safety qualification, application and interview skills and an introduction to social housing. Students completing this programme have a guaranteed interview for an apprenticeship within our repairs and maintenance or gas engineering teams. In 2023, 80% of our apprentices were sourced directly from this programme. We plan to expand this programme across our operating area during 2024/25.



**Work experience**

We have supported 20 individuals with work experience placements across the Group.

**T Level placements:**

We are currently supporting two T Level students with work experience placements. Working within Customer Experience and Electrical, the students will be able to develop their practical skills and knowledge during an industry placement of at least 315 hours (approximately 45 days).

**Awards**

- **East of England Apprenticeship Awards:**  
Regional Highly Commended Winner in the British Army Large Employer of the Year Award
- **Eastern Education Group (West Suffolk College) Awards:**  
Outstanding Apprenticeship Employer Award
- **Norfolk Apprenticeship Awards:**  
Highly Commended Higher Apprentice Award



# Theme 12 Supply Chain Management





## C45. How is social value creation considered when procuring goods and services?

### What measures are in place to monitor the delivery of this Social Value?

We are committed to delivering social value and driving social change through our procurement policies and processes.

The social value is considered at the stage when the procurement need is identified, and the specification is drafted. Flagship has a pool of awards criteria and questions. From these, the most suitable and appropriate for the contract is selected and are used as the criteria and quality assessment questions for the social value.

These questions include areas such as the environment, decarbonisation, safeguarding, diverse supply chain, skills and employment, inclusion, staff mental health and wellbeing, and safe and secure supply chains.

## C46. How is sustainability considered when procuring goods and services?



### What measures are in place to monitor the sustainability of your supply chain when procuring goods and services?

We are committed to ensuring that we consider our environmental impact through our procurement policies and processes.

The environmental impact is considered at the stage when the procurement need is identified, and the specification is drafted. Flagship has a pool of award criteria and questions. From these, the most suitable and appropriate for the contract is selected and are used as the criteria and quality assessment questions for the environmental impact.

The questions include areas such as carbon emission reduction, air pollution reduction, safeguarding of the natural environment, resource efficiency, and circular economy solutions.

This year we amended our supply chain framework to include the consideration of environmental impacts.

# Thank you for reading our ESG Sustainability Report







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