

gentoo

Great homes
Strong communities
Inspired people
for Sunderland



ESG Report 2023–24

www.gentoogroup.com

Foreword

Welcome to our 2023/24 Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Report. This is Gentoo's second ESG Report. I hope it provides valuable insight into our ESG story.

Gentoo's vision is great homes, strong communities and inspired people for Sunderland. We provide homes to more than 60,000 people in this great city. We strive to deliver our purpose of providing safe and decent homes for our customers of today and tomorrow. A strong ESG track record, for a housing association as place based as we are, is critical to our success in delivering for our customers and communities.

Key to our environmental performance is our work to improve the energy efficiency of our customers' homes. We have made good progress on this in 2023/24, with 73% of our properties achieving a C rating for energy performance by March 2024. As developers of new homes, we are mindful of our environmental responsibilities. The priorities of our Sustainability Strategy are evidenced by the high energy performance and low carbon features of our new homes. We have a lot further to travel in delivering our environmental sustainability objectives. Our annual ESG Report will continue to document our progress.

As a large but local provider of social housing we are hugely committed to placemaking. This report contains just a few examples of the role we play in supporting our communities. The range of customer support services we provide reflect our commitment to supporting our customers to manage their tenancies, thrive in their homes and live fulfilling, independent lives. The safety of our customers in their homes is paramount. We have prioritised addressing damp and mould where it exists in our customers' homes and have made good progress in the year, with more still to do.

At Gentoo, we believe that good governance underpins all we are trying to achieve. We embrace the learnings available to us from the work of our peers, our regulators and the Housing Ombudsman. We are developing our work on building equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging in our workplace and in our communities. In August 2024, we were proud to be the largest housing association in England to obtain the Regulator of Social Housing's top "C1" grading for compliance with its new consumer standards, alongside maintaining our "G1" governance and "V2" financial viability gradings. From this platform we know we can continue to improve the quality of the services we provide to our customers and increase the role they provide in shaping our future.

I hope you enjoy reading this report and we look forward to updating you further on our ESG throughout 2025.

Louise Bassett
Chief Executive Officer



We are absolutely committed to all of the ESG agenda's social themes.

We want our customers to help us shape our services and expect them to hold us to account when we get things wrong.

About us

Our core purpose

Our core purpose is to provide safe and decent homes for our customers of today and tomorrow.

Our vision

Our vision is to provide great homes, strong communities and inspired people for Sunderland.

Our values

Our values are what we stand for and what we want to be known for. They are what make us, us.



We care about people.



We take accountability.



We shape the future.



We bring leadership.



We deliver.

Our priorities

The safety of our customers and colleagues will always be our number one priority.

We have identified six further priorities which will guide the delivery of our services. We live our values in everything we do from the board room to the front room, to deliver our priorities for our customers.



We know our customers.



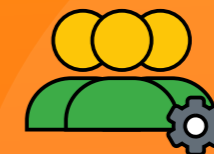
We help communities to thrive.



We provide great homes.



We are a great place to work.



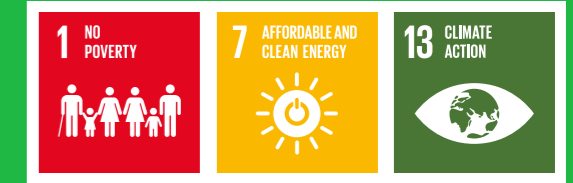
We are well governed.



We spend our money wisely.

Environmental

Climate change



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

We aim to ensure all our homes, where practical and affordable, meet at least an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C rating by 2030. The table below sets out the distribution of the EPC ratings for our homes. We have made good progress during 2023/24, with 72.9% of our homes at EPC C or above at the end of the financial year.

EPC Rating (Existing Homes)	Number	Percentage	Increase / (decrease) on existing EPC for previous year
A	230	0.8%	0%
B	3,090	11%	50%
C	17,489	61%	13%
D	7,431	26%	(28%)
E	113	0.4%	(37%)
F	32	0.1%	-
G	7	0%	-
Unknown	126	0.5%	(44%)
Total	28,518	100%	-

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

Our approach to the new homes we build and acquire is one that maximises their energy efficiency. All new homes are developed to at least EPC B, with the majority completed in 2023/24 at EPC A.

EPC Rating (NEW Homes)	Number	Percentage
A	41	66%
B	21	34%
Total	62	100%

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

If so, what is it and when does the housing provider intend to be Net Zero by?

Our immediate priority for this objective is to achieve an EPC C energy efficiency rating for our homes by 2030. Our approach is to align our energy efficiency objectives with the wider long-term goal of decarbonising our housing stock. Our approach to date is one of “fabric first,” focusing first on the thermal efficiency of our homes. We have worked with consultants to estimate the cost of decarbonising our homes to meet Net Zero and will use the outputs from this work to develop our Net Zero strategy, which we aim to achieve, in line with UK government targets, by 2050.

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

How do these activities align with, and contribute towards, performance against the housing provider’s Net Zero strategy and target?

In the last 12 months, 3,817 of our customers’ homes benefited from the following retrofit activities:

- 1,836 homes have received increased loft insulation
- 1,489 homes have received A rated heating upgrades
- 1,224 homes received windows and external door replacements

Delivering the above works led to a 10% increase in the number of homes achieving EPC Band C or above during this year with 72.9% of our homes now meeting this standard or better. These works have also led to a total carbon saving from our homes of 3,358,437kg of CO²/year.

C5. Scope 1,2 and 3 greenhouse gas emissions

Scope 1 emissions are direct emissions from sources we own or control. Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions from purchased energy. Scope 3 emissions include all other indirect emissions that occur at sources we neither own nor control. Our emissions reporting remains a work in progress, particular regarding Scope 3, with the Scope 3 figure below not yet representative of the full scale of our operations. We will continue to develop the range and accuracy of our Scope 3 reporting.

Scope	FY2024
Scope 1 & 2 GHG emissions	2,788
Scope 3 GHG emissions	192
Total GHG emissions (tCO ₂ e)	2,980
Intensity per Employee	2.93



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?

How is the housing provider mitigating these risks?

Flood mapping has taken place to identify where properties are at risk from fluvial and surface water flooding, with 98.1% of properties identified as at low risk of flooding (less than 0.1% risk). We have developed a flood action plan and have in place established incident response arrangements to support the Group when responding to periods of severe weather. The Group has signed up to the Met Office's severe weather warnings, the Environmental Agency's flood warnings and have entered a partnership with Previsico who provide surface water flooding alerts. Our customer handbook has been updated to provide guidance on flood risk.

Regarding overheating, we ensure all modernisation work to our properties is completed in line with current building regulations, including the provision of enhanced ventilation in the form of extraction fans and trickle vents. A small number of our properties are fitted with smart thermostats which provide alerts where there is a risk of excessive heat within a home.



Ecology



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

If yes, please describe with reference to targets in this area. If no, are you planning on producing one in the next 12 months?

Our proposed developments will deliver Biodiversity Net Gain in line with statutory requirements. This will contribute to creating and improving natural habitats and ensure the development has a measurably positive impact on biodiversity. Green space with trees and landscaping for the enjoyment of future customers are always incorporated, along with consideration of children's play spaces and dog-walking.

We design all our affordable developments with sustainable drainage systems to help manage the water supply, provide habitats for wildlife and reduce flood risk. To improve wildlife corridors and increase biodiversity, we include new shrubs, tree-lined streets, wildflowers and wetland grasses.

Our approach to further promotion of biodiversity and enhancement of green space will be further developed in the next 12 months.



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

If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?

Pollutant Identification and Risk Assessment

Site Assessments: before construction begins, our contractors conduct detailed environmental site assessments to identify potential sources of pollution, such as contaminated land, asbestos, or chemical residues from previous uses.

Pollution Prevention Measures

Dust and Emissions Control: our contractors implement measures to control dust and airborne particles during construction, such as water sprays, dust barriers, and covering materials that could generate dust. They also ensure that machinery and vehicles are maintained to reduce emissions.

Waste Management: a key aspect of pollution control involves the management of waste. Our contractors develop waste management plans that include recycling, safe disposal of hazardous materials, and minimising the amount of waste generated. This helps in reducing pollutants that can contaminate land and water.

Water Pollution Control

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS): our contractors install SuDS to manage surface water runoff, reducing the risk of pollutants entering watercourses. These systems help to filter and clean water before it returns to the environment.

Spill Response Plans: these are in place across sites to ensure any accidental release of pollutants is quickly contained and cleaned up, minimising environmental damage.

Monitoring and Compliance

Regular Monitoring: our contractors engage in regular environmental monitoring during and after construction to ensure that pollutants are being managed effectively. This may include air quality monitoring, water quality testing, and soil sampling.

Compliance with Regulations: our contractors must comply with local, national, and international laws regarding pollution control. This includes obtaining necessary permits and following best practices as outlined by applicable regulatory bodies.

Resource Management



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

If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?

As part of our commitment to minimise our environmental impacts, we have a strategy in place to increase the use of responsibly sourced materials in our building works. This is captured via our specification documents, the Supplier Questionnaire (SQ), and qualitative questions regarding materials, carbon reduction, Environmental Management Systems, and the energy performance of our properties.

Via our stores contract, our supplier provides 100% traceability on all components, with timber products and timber coming from legal and sustainable sources, in line with the UK Government's Timber Procurement Policy (TPP). In addition, joint strategies have been created around packaging and waste, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and the monitoring of modern-day slavery risk.

For our affordable development activities, in addition to sustainably sourced timber, we also specify bricks that are from local manufacturers to limit transportation requirements.



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

If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?

In developing our new affordable homes, we recognise the critical importance of a robust waste management strategy that encompasses all aspects of construction, particularly the use and disposal of building materials. We request that our contractors aim for a reduction of waste at source by selecting sustainable materials and implementing efficient construction practices. We prioritise the reuse and recycling of materials wherever possible, ensuring that waste is minimised and managed responsibly throughout the construction process. This approach not only reduces the environmental impact of our developments but also aligns with our broader goals of creating sustainable, low-impact communities.

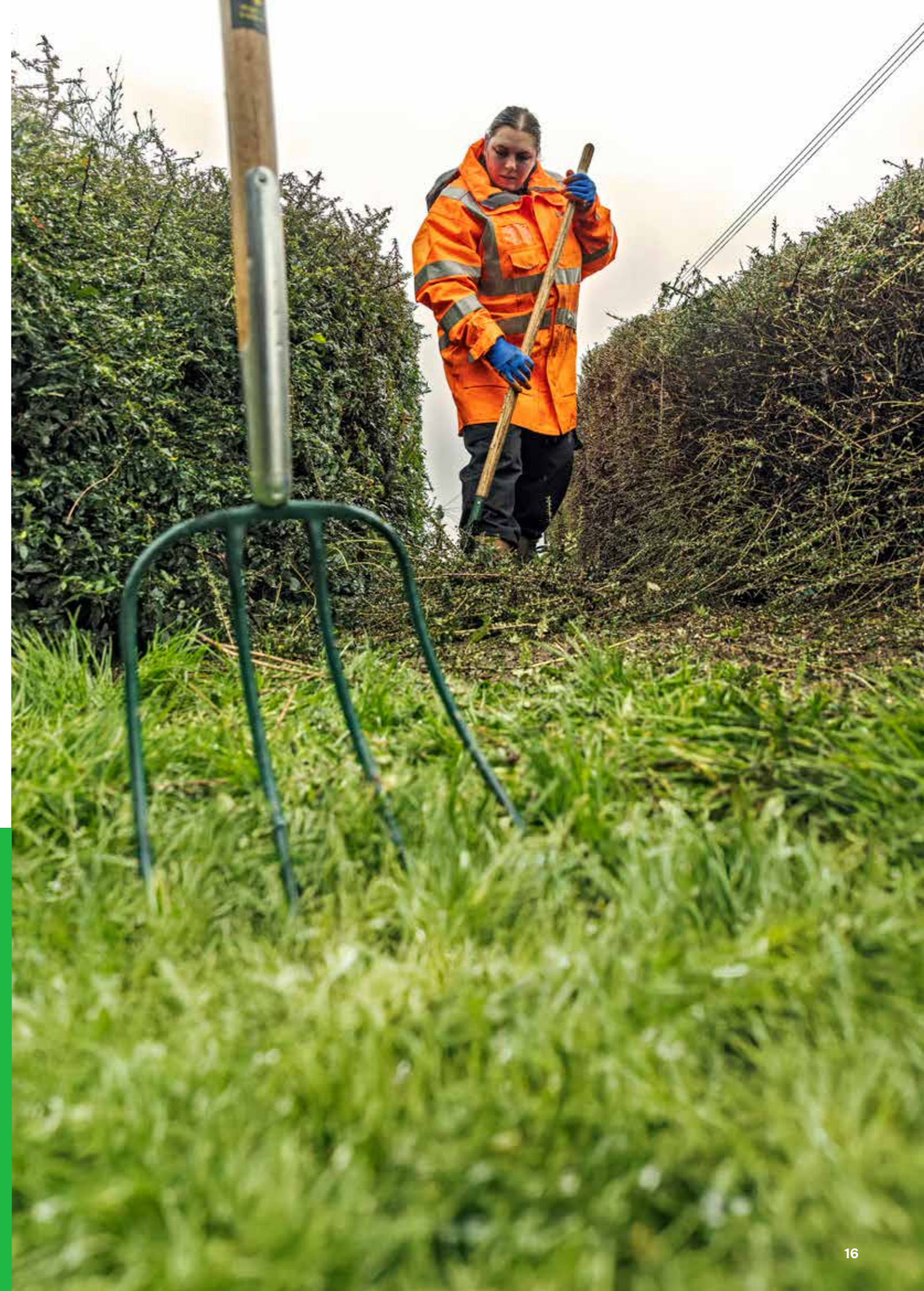
C11. Does the housing provider have a strategy for water management?

If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?

We do not currently have a specific strategy for water management.

We take the opportunity to improve the water efficiency of our homes when we carry out internal modernisation works. This includes ensuring flow rates for all outlets and bath and toilet cistern sizes are in line with, or above, the requirements of the current building regulations at the point of install. Reduced water consumption is also a consideration in our approach of installing showers as standard when carrying out bathroom modernisation works.

For new build homes, each development in our affordable homes plan is carefully designed to limit surface water discharge rates and help reduce flood risks. We use the hierarchy of drainage set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance wherever possible and use permeable paving to improve water quality.





C12. For properties that are subject to the rent regulation regime, report against one or more Affordability Metric:

- 1) Rent compared to median private rental sector (PRS) rent across the relevant Local Authority
- 2) Rent compared to the relevant Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

Rent compared to Private Rented Sector (PRS):

Number of bedrooms	PRS in Sunderland £	Average Gentoo Rent £
1 bedroom	103.62	81.08
2 bedrooms	129.23	89.35
3 bedrooms	154.38	98.19
4 bedrooms	221.54	107.87
All categories	121.75	87.91

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

- General needs (social rent)
- Intermediate rent
- Affordable rent
- Supported Housing
- Housing for older people
- Low-cost home ownership
- Care homes
- Private Rented Sector
- Other

Units (existing homes)	Number	Percentage
General Needs (social rent)	26,407	92.7%
Intermediate Rent	31	0.1%
Affordable Rent	1,703	6.0%
Housing for older people	196	0.7%
Low-cost home ownership	163	0.6%
Total Homes Managed / Owned	28,500	100.00



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

- General needs (social rent)
- Intermediate rent
- Affordable rent
- Supported Housing
- Housing for older people
- Low-cost home ownership
- Care homes
- Private Rented Sector
- Other

Units (NEW homes)	Number	Percentage
Affordable Rent	44	81.5%
Low-cost home ownership	10	18.5%
Total Homes Managed / Owned	54	100%

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

Our Money Matters Team supports customers to maximise their income through welfare benefits, better off calculations, budgeting and much more. The team also offers support to customers who are in fuel poverty. The service received 1,178 referrals for customers, and we assisted seven hundred of these customers to increase their cumulative income by £1.9m, an average of £2,716 per customer. Our Crisis Fund provides support to our most vulnerable customers who are in immediate need or at a crisis point. We provided 738 gas and electricity top ups to our customers during the year from this fund. We helped over 7,000 customers claim over £1.2m in discounted water rates. We work with partners to refer customers to specialist agencies such as Green Doctor for energy support, debt advice services and grant providers.

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

Offering long term tenancies, where possible, to general needs residents is deemed good practice. This provides security of tenure which makes a huge difference to people's lives. We aim to build strong and sustainable communities and we believe that offering long-term tenancies will help achieve this goal. We believe that assured lifetime tenancies provide valuable security to our customers and help our communities to thrive. As a result, none of our general needs homes have 3-year, or longer, fixed tenancy agreements.

Building Safety and Quality



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

% of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out.

% of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out.

% of homes for which all required electrical safety checks have been carried out.

	% of Homes
Percentage of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out	100%
Percentage of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out	100%
Percentage of homes for which all required electrical safety checks have been carried out	100%



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

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

99.93% of our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard.

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

Addressing damp and mould issues in our customers' homes remains a key priority. Our approach involves:

- A dedicated Damp and Mould Case Management System which ensures all reports of damp and mould are categorised in terms of severity and assigned a case manager to ensure works are completed within agreed timescales and aftercare support is provided to ensure the issue is fully resolved.
- The provision of a specialist Damp and Mould Team to ensure works are treated in a timely manner, relevant support and guidance is provided to customers and the root cause of the issues are identified and addressed.
- A Damp and Mould Policy which is aligned with the Housing Ombudsman's report on Damp and Mould and Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) guidance.



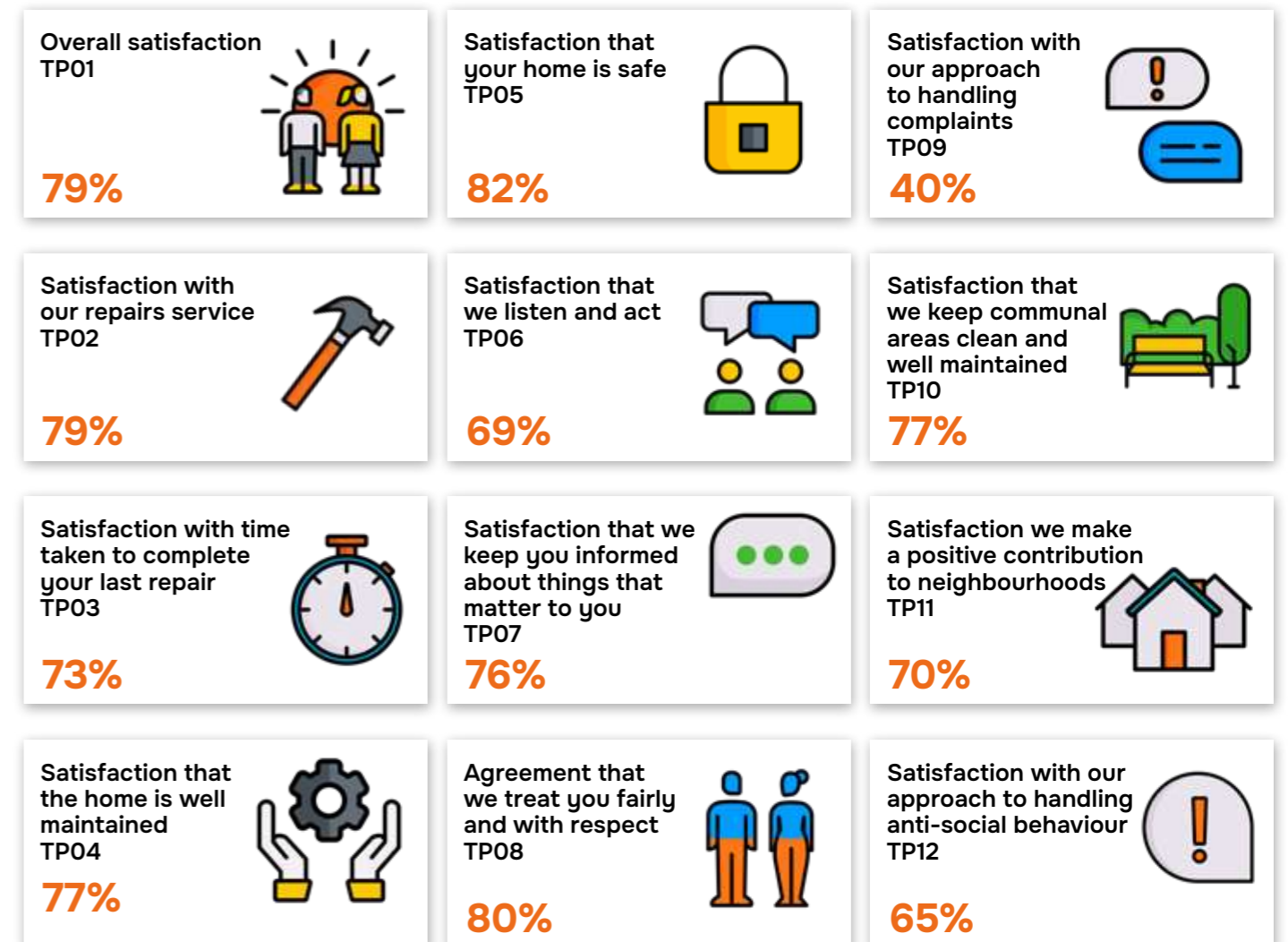
Resident Voice



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

How has the housing provider acted on these results?

Tenant Satisfaction Measures Perception measures 2023 / 2024



Following on from our 2023/24 TSM results, during 2024 we have recruited a specific customer insight role, working with leaders from across our business areas, to put insight into action, enhancing our services based on what our customers are telling us. There is a clear desire across Gentoo to deliver for our customers. In addition, over

7,000 hours of training have been delivered in 2024 to front line colleagues on customer excellence and complaint handling. Supported by learning, insight and triangulating our data into action we are developing a culture of continuous improvement, keeping the customer at the heart of what we do.

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

Gentoo's Customer Committee supports the Group Board in its oversight of customer engagement, scrutiny and the outcomes and actions relating to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures. As part of our commitment to transparency our Customer Voice team works closely with our Customer Committee members and our involved customers. The Customer Committee has a clear terms of reference with part of its role the scrutiny of the services we deliver as well as reviewing our policies and procedures. Each quarter we report on our TSM perception scores and complaints handling numbers, to contextualise the numbers and to allow for greater scrutiny. We have started to develop our reporting to be more insight driven, enabling us to bring the customer experience to life. We have also started work with Tpas, experts in customer engagement, to provide refreshed scrutiny training to our Customer Committee and involved customers so they are equipped and supported with their important roles. The Customer Voice Team Engagement Lead holds regular quarterly deep dives with our involved customers scrutinising Gentoo's processes and procedures whilst also looking for service improvements.

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

How have these complaints (or others) resulted in change of practice within the housing provider?

Gentoo received 10 Housing Ombudsman determinations in 2023-24. There were four findings of maladministration summarised as follows:

- five findings of service failure
- four cases where there were no findings of maladministration or service failure
- one case of severe maladministration

In April 2024, we appointed a Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC). The MRC will ensure that complaint handling drives service improvement for our customers and learning and business improvement for our organisation. The MRC will champion a positive complaint handling culture, seek assurance that complaints are being managed, change is happening and that our customers are being heard throughout the process.

Complaint feedback has influenced and improved the services provided to customers.



As part of the Annual Complaints Report we have in place a detailed Service Improvement Plan we are delivering on, an example being the introduction of a new, specialist damp and mould team. We have also introduced new roles within our Customer Voice Team to strengthen our focus, supporting learning from complaints and deliver insight to action.

Our priorities for the year ahead are shaped from what our customers are telling us, and our learnings from our continuous improvement approach over the past year. Our key areas of focus are based on the following ongoing themes:

- Data and insight
- Skills and training
- Early complaint resolution
- Knowing our customers
- Creating a culture of learning and continuous improvement from complaints
- Working more collaboratively across the group to identify root causes and trends to enable solutions

We have created a communication programme to promote the complaints process both internally and externally to customers and stakeholders. We have co-designed a 'customer friendly' complaints leaflet with the support of involved customers and distributed these across our areas of operation and have included the information in sign-up packs and newsletters. A review of our website material was carried out along with consideration around processing complaints received on social media, to ensure a consistent approach.



Resident Support



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

How successful are these services in improving outcomes?

We aim to support customers in the most suitable ways for them to help them manage their home, achieve sustainable tenancies and live independently. These include:

- Community safety and antisocial behaviour support
- Employment assistance and training
- Energy advice
- Extra care schemes that provide 24-hour care and support for those with care needs
- Furnished tenancies
- Home contents insurance
- Money, benefits, debt and financial management
- We support older customers with wellbeing services to provide aids and adaptations to their homes, promote healthy and active living, and reduce social isolation

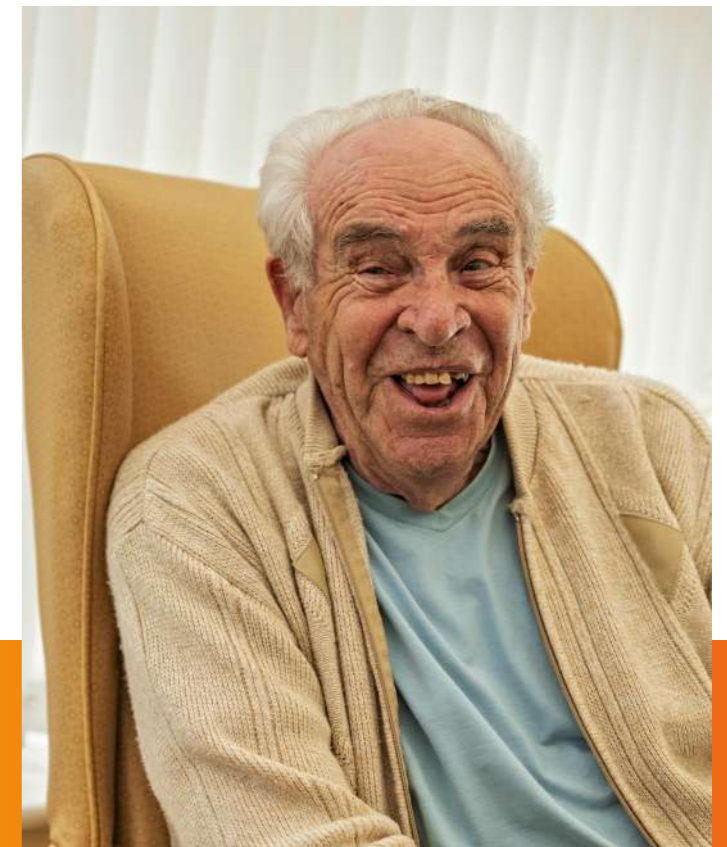
In 2023 to 2024, our specially trained support officers supported many people in different situations. These included:

- 1,829 support referrals
- 2,559 referrals to wellbeing support
- 1,214 social activities for people in sheltered or extra care schemes
- 215 people who faced antisocial behaviour and domestic abuse (151 DA, 64 ASB)
- 189 child, and 105 adult, safeguarding alerts, leading to referral of forty-five cases to the Together for Children service / Sunderland City Council
- 156 people with mental health, drug and alcohol conditions
- 143 young people through outreach support and twenty-three living at our supported housing scheme for people leaving care aged 16 to 21
- 11 young people living at our supported housing scheme for people leaving care aged 16 to 21 have moved on (2 into Gentoo Tenancies, four moved in with family/friends and five to other supported accommodation)
- Supported customers with Grant applications and secured £25,735 worth of Grant Funding



We also work with a number of key partners, including care providers and supported housing providers. Our partners support customers who are in abusive situations, are ex-offenders or have:

- Alcohol and drug misuse or dependency problems
- Learning disabilities
- Mental health conditions



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.

Provide examples or case studies of where the housing provider has been engaged in placemaking or placeshaping activities.

Easter Campaign

For a third successive year, hundreds of customers have benefited from Easter hampers filled with essential food and toiletry items, alongside chocolate Easter treats. The appeal is a collective effort with a number of our contractors.

Together, we collected hundreds of food items to create more than 80 Easter hampers. The hampers are filled with food essentials and are delivered to our customers across the city in time for the Easter weekend by their Neighbourhood Co-ordinators.

Positive Footprints

Hundreds of school children have continued to benefit from the Raising Aspirations career programme which is delivered by Positive Footprints and Gentoo. The programme inspires young people to identify their natural talents, believe in themselves and visualise a positive future. It builds on



natural curiosity and shapes how children perceive the world they live in.

During National Careers Week, children from Dubmire Primary School had the opportunity to take part in a career carousel and meet colleagues from local businesses including Gentoo, The University of Sunderland, St Benedict's Hospice, Wates Group, Equans, Waste Experts and Prosper to gain an insight into different sectors through talks and interactive activities.

The school has fully embedded the Raising Aspirations programme into their curriculum to support children in developing their thoughts around future careers throughout their time at school.

Jo Norwood, Customer Relationship Manager at Positive Footprints, said: "There is nothing like bringing a project to life and that's what we did recently with Gentoo and employers from across Sunderland for pupils at Dubmire Primary.

"The school is one of 20 primaries that Gentoo are funding to run our Raising Aspirations programme and the career carousel is a key element of this. We gave children the opportunity to hear about a variety of jobs and careers across different industries, it was great to hear them asking some fantastic questions!"

As part of the programme, children learn vital employability skills by discovering their unique qualities and skills in CV writing and preparing for an interview. Last year, we were awarded over £21,000 of Social Value Dividend funding from our procurement partner to fund the programme for a further year.

Aspire Grant programme

We awarded more than £20,000 in Aspire grants to 44 community groups across Sunderland in 2023-24. We offer Aspire grants of up to £500 to fund projects and activities in Gentoo neighbourhoods, with applications approved by our involved customer group.

Community groups that have recently benefitted from funding including Marta Card Craft, Choice Wellbeing Service and Houghton Boxing Club.

Lewis Walmsley, Customer Engagement Lead said: "Aspire grants offer an opportunity for people to make a positive difference in Gentoo communities, whether that be through sports clubs, wellbeing services or community events. The funding puts Gentoo customers at the forefront of decision making, with each Aspire grant being approved by our involved customers. The grants allow community spaces and organisations to maintain and improve their services for local people and I'm delighted we have been able to support more than 40 groups over the last year."

The funding allowed Marta Card Craft to stock up on craft materials, Choice Wellbeing Service to print copies of their special educational needs (SEND) directory and Houghton Boxing Club to buy new boxing gloves.

Launched in 2003, our Aspire grant programme has awarded over £220,000 since it launched and has benefited hundreds of local groups and organisations over the years, including art, music and drama clubs, toddler play groups, local football clubs, older people's clubs and resident and community associations.



Water rates discount

Our Money Matters team have been working in partnership with Northumbrian Water to support more than 8,000 customers with discounts to their water rates.

The scheme supports eligible customers on a low income by reducing their water bill by up to 50%. The partnership began in 2018 and customer referrals have increased year on year, with discounts totalling over £1.3 million last year alone.

The Money Matters Team further worked with Northumbrian Water and the Department for Work & Pensions to identify 3,000 customers in receipt of Pension Credit who were eligible for the discounted water rates but were not claiming it. These customers will now automatically receive the discount year on year moving forward, with most saving between £150- £200 a year.

Churchill Square

Recently, alongside our partners at Bell Group and Esh Construction, we supported the opening of Houghton's first Sunderland Foodbank at our Churchill Square Community Centre, in Fencehouses. Following on from the opening, colleagues from our housing and repairs and maintenance teams volunteered to paint

the community centre, giving it a new lease of life.

Local resident Jean Campbell runs a coffee morning every month at the centre and says the painting has made the room 'much brighter.' Jean said: "The centre is looking much brighter since the painting. Many residents from nearby use the centre so improving the interior is beneficial to everyone and the ladies at our coffee mornings really appreciate it!"

Columbia Community Association

Alongside our partners at Equans, we have recently helped to transform a popular community centre with a stylish makeover. Columbia Community Association is proving to be a huge hit with local customers as a home from home while their own properties benefited from improvement work.

Volunteers and groups using Columbia Community Association, in Hillthorne Close, Washington, say they are delighted with the new facilities that will be enjoyed for years to come. Working on behalf of Gentoo, Equans has completed internal improvement work in more than 650 properties in Washington, most of which involved kitchen replacements and rewires.



Knowing that such work can be quite disruptive for our customers, we worked with Columbia Community Association to adjust their opening hours and provide a warm and safe place for customers to go while work was being carried out in their homes. Equans installed a brand-new kitchen, decorated an IT room and we donated 12 laptops so the centre can help local customers improve their online skills.

The centre has also benefitted from the award of £3,309 from the Empower Sunderland Local Community Fund towards the installation of new solar panels. The community fund was set up by Gentoo and Empower Community, with funds being generated and distributed to local community groups with sustainability and low-energy related projects. This funding was also matched by Sunderland City Council through their BREEZ (Business Renewables Energy Efficiency Sunderland) fund.

The Bread and Butter Thing

In partnership with RE:GEN, we recently opened Sunderland's first The Bread and Butter Thing (TBBT) hub in Pennywell Neighbourhood Centre. TBBT is a mobile food club that provides low cost, nutritious food and toiletries, as well as access to services offering advice and support on finances, employment and health. Since opening, the hub has welcomed 827 members and sold 2,256 bags of food, which is the equivalent to 64,431 meals. Members of TBBT pay just £7.50 to get shopping bags filled with a minimum of £35 worth of quality nutritious food. Since November, members have collectively saved £56,400 on their food budgets.



Governance

Structure and Governance



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

Yes.

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

On 28 August 2024, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) published a regulatory judgement, reflecting the outcome of the routine inspection that took place in 2024. The judgement confirmed a consumer grading of C1, a governance grading of G1 and a financial viability rating of V2.

The judgement concluded the following:

- that overall Gentoo is delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards.
- that Gentoo meets the RSH's governance requirements, having provided evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of its governance arrangements, and that it continues to manage the risks of its activities, allowing it to deliver its strategic and charitable objectives.
- that Gentoo meets the RSH's financial viability requirements, has the financial capacity to deal with a reasonable range of adverse scenarios and has demonstrated both an improvement in its financial performance and capacity, and resilience to external economic risks.

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

The National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020.

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

Yes.

C29. Explain how the housing provider's board manages ESG risks. Are ESG risks incorporated into the housing provider's risk register?

The Group tracks and manages ESG risks as part of its risk management framework. The framework defines the Group's strategic risks and embeds risk management activities in the Group's day to day operations. The framework, and the Group's risk appetite statement, are presented annually for review and approval to the Risk and Audit Committee (RAC) and Group Board. The Group's risk appetite statement sets out the approach the Group will take on a range of risk categories.

The Group's strategic risks are reviewed regularly by the Executive Team, RAC and Group Board. The risk management framework integrates with the business planning process, with regular stress testing and mitigation planning in place to quantify the impact on the Group's corporate

strategy of risks crystallising. Risk considerations are embedded and explicit in all key executive and board decisions.

The Group's internal audit strategy and plans are designed with reference to the Group's key risks.

We track and review threats faced by the social housing sector, including the Regulator's annual Sector Risk Profile report. Our established risk management framework allows us to identify, assess,

analyse, track and report important risks. This includes putting in place proportionate improvements and treatment plans.

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?

No.



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 consider resident voice at the board and senior management level?

Does the housing provider have policies that incorporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) into the recruitment and selection of board members and senior management?

Our Board and Executive Team recently completed a facilitated Equity, Diversity and Belonging (EDB) leadership session. We will be further developing our approach to EDB in 2025.

Demographics of the board	
What % of the board are women?	75%
What % of the board are BAME?	0%
What % of the board are residents?	8%
What % of the board have a disability?	33%
Average age of the board	59 years
Average tenure of the board	3 years



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?

Six Board Members have left the Board in the last two years. Most of these members had reached the end of their respective tenures, and new Board Members have been appointed in their place.

From September 2024 Gentoo’s Executive Team comprises five members. Three of its five members have been appointed in the last two years. Previously, the Executive Team comprised four members, two of whom have left the organisation in the last two years.

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

There is currently one board member, the current Committee Chair, on the Group’s Risk and Audit Committee who has recent and relevant financial experience. However, there is other, non-professionally qualified financial experience on the Committee, including significant budgetary management experience.

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

All Group board members are non-executive directors.

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

Yes. Oversight of the Group’s succession planning is delegated by the Group Board to the People Committee, as outlined in the Group’s Standing Orders and Committee Terms of Reference. This covers both Executive and Non-Executive succession planning. The Group Board has oversight of this via Board Reporting.

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

Beever and Struthers are our external auditors. 2023/24’s financial statements were the first to be audited by them.

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

The last independent, external review of our board’s effectiveness was completed in

November and December 2021. We also undertake internal effectiveness reviews of Boards and Committees annually in line with governance best practice. An independent, external review of board effectiveness is being carried out in November/December 2024.

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

Board members complete a declaration of interest form on their appointment, and annually thereafter, and inform the Group of any changes during the year. Board members are encouraged to discuss any potential conflicts of interests before taking up other interests. At Board and Committee meetings, Members disclose any potential conflicts of interest where relevant to business under discussion. Group Board Members are also Directors of Gentoo Homes Limited on a co-terminous basis. A Board Policy is in place which stipulates the management of actual or potential conflicts of interests between these two roles.



Staff Wellbeing



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

Yes. We are also accredited by the RLW Foundation, and the Head of HR actively works with the Foundation to build Sunderland businesses' membership and accreditation to the RLW.

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

As of 31 March 2024, our median gender pay gap is 9.2%.

	FY2024	FY2023	Increase/(decrease) on median gap for previous year
Median Gender Pay Gap Using Hourly Pay	9.2%	9.4%	(2%)

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

	FY2024	FY2023	Increase/decrease on CEO worker pay ratio for previous year
CEO: Median Worker Pay Ratio	6.08:1	7.53:1	(19%)

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

Our Equality, Diversity, and Belonging Policy is shared Group-wide and is promoted through our colleague forum and trades union representatives. We have extensive actions and events throughout the year that our newly created EDB Working Group, which includes colleagues from all business areas, is responsible for promoting.

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

Robust Occupational Health support is in place, offering advice, guidance and support to both managers and colleagues.

- The Group continues to promote good mental health through reviewing practices and encouraging colleagues to access support available via the Employee Assistance Program, Westfield Health for cash back and private medical cover, Maximus and Occupational Health.
- Mental health advocates from across all business areas are in place to support colleagues.

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

We encourage our colleagues to take ownership of their own personal and professional development. All colleagues have a Brilliant Conversation every quarter with their line manager to agree their goals and any development needs that would support them in their current role, or a role that they may aspire to in the future. They also agree a specific development goal and

associated actions.

Professional development can take many forms at Gentoo. Colleagues can apply to do a formal qualification, request attendance on various courses, attend conferences or seminars, access elearning courses or undertake self-study. Equally, professional development can be achieved by involvement in new areas of work, a project or taking on additional responsibility for certain tasks.

We also initiate organisational wide programmes of learning that support corporate objectives that we invite colleagues to attend throughout the year. We have ongoing programmes around health and safety, management & leadership development (our Lead Together Programme) and in 2024 we began our customer skills programme for all frontline colleagues.

New colleagues joining the Group are welcomed with a formal on-boarding and induction process. This enables them to find out everything they need to know to carry out their role effectively with planned activities throughout the first six months of employment.



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 to driving social change through our procurement policies and processes.

Social Value is a key element in the evaluation of procurement tenders, and the monitoring of contracts. In accordance with the Procurement Act 2023, and the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, social value is considered at tender stage for all tenders worth more than £100,000, alongside other quality measures, and price. We continue to use the Social Value Portal to capture social value, and this allows us to effectively monitor the social value promised and delivered by our procurement activities.

In 2023/24 we created a Social Value Committee to monitor the financial delivery of social value. Meeting quarterly, and representing the Group as a whole, the intention is to ensure that social value is delivered in the parts of the Group where most benefit is generated for our customers.

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?

Through our sourcing and contract management processes, on tenders worth more than £100,000 the environmental impacts of a contract are measured through the Social Value Portal. In addition, we ask specific questions around the environmental impacts of the operation of a contract, with specific focus on carbon emissions, recycling, responsibly sourced materials and waste disposal. KPIs cover this in our Tier 1 supplier contracts.



We aim to be open and accountable and publish our performance on our website so our customers can understand how we are performing and hold us to account. For more information visit **www.gentoo.com/performance**

If you have any questions relating to anything in the report, please email **communications@gentoo.com**

References

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