

Environmental, Social and Governance Report 2022 to 2023



Foreword

Louise Bassett
Chief Executive Officer

I am delighted to introduce Gentoo's first Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Report, for the financial year 2022 to 2023.

Gentoo is an anchor institution of the great city of Sunderland. We are a values-led, charitable organisation that provides more than 60,000 people in Sunderland with a place they can call home. Our core purpose is to provide safe and decent homes for our customers of today and tomorrow.

The publication of our first ESG Report coincides with our early adoption of the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing (SRS). Launched in November 2020, the SRS provides a framework for transparent, comparable and consistent reporting by housing providers on their ESG performance. Like our colleagues in the UK social housing sector, we believe we have a strong ESG story to tell. Our adoption of the SRS will help us combine with other like-minded organisations to tell the sector's ESG story to our stakeholders with a consistent, collective voice.

We also see the SRS as a positive challenge to our organisation, highlighting our good work but also comparing our performance with other organisations who are further advanced in some aspects of their ESG story. We are, for example, in the process of developing a new Sustainability Strategy which will set out our key medium and long term sustainability priorities.

The ESG agenda is increasingly prominent in all that we do. In January 2023, we successfully completed the refinancing of £460m of debt funding. Integral to this process was our collaboration with funders and investors in agreeing ESG-related discounts in these facilities subject to our meeting agreed targets on the energy efficiency of new and existing homes and the creation of new apprenticeships, in line with one of our corporate priorities of helping our communities to thrive.

This report also coincides with the recent publication of the Group's new Corporate Strategy, 2023-25. This strategy, in conjunction with its supporting enabling strategies, will help position Gentoo to navigate the challenges, and access the opportunities, posed by an increasingly complex social, economic and political landscape for Gentoo and our customers.

The devolution of power to the North East embodied by the forthcoming North East Mayoral Combined Authority represents a huge opportunity to articulate the profile and value to our region of the work done by Gentoo and our colleagues in the social housing sector. We are absolutely committed to supporting the partnering and collaboration opportunities devolution will bring. Effective collaboration can bring hugely beneficial social, economic and environmental benefits to communities who urgently need and deserve the opportunities



that successful and meaningful devolution can create.

I do hope that this report gives you valuable insight into the positive contribution Gentoo makes to our customers and communities. I look forward to expanding further on Gentoo's ESG story in the coming years.

We are Gentoo

“ The publication of our first ESG Report coincides with our early adoption of the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing (SRS).”

Social



Affordability and security



C1. 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 local authority

2) Rent compared to local housing allowance

The table below compares Gentoo's average social rents with Sunderland's private sector rents and its Local Housing Allowance. The average weekly social rent for our homes is £84.35. This compares to a median weekly private sector rent of £126.92. Gentoo's average discount to a private sector rent is 33%.

| Number of bedrooms | Gentoo social rent | Private sector rents in Sunderland | Local Housing Allowance in Sunderland |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 bedroom | £73.50 | £103.85 | £89.75 |
| 2 bedrooms | £83.23 | £121.15 | £100.00 |
| 3 bedrooms | £91.57 | £138.46 | £113.92 |
| 4 or more bedrooms | £101.13 | £196.15 | £148.18 |

Please note: private sector rents have been provided via the Office for National Statistics, which notes that small sample sizes can impact reported results.

C2. Share, and number, of existing homes (homes completed before the last financial year) allocated across different rent types: general needs (social rent), intermediate rent, affordable rent, supported housing, housing for older people, low-cost home ownership, care homes, private rental sector

| Type of tenure | Number of properties | Percentage of total housing stock |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Social rent: general needs | 26,517 | 92.9% |
| Affordable rent: general needs | 1,621 | 5.7% |
| Social rent: housing for older people | 191 | 0.7% |
| Low-cost home ownership (shared ownership) | 154 | 0.5% |
| Affordable rent: housing for older people | 42 | 0.1% |
| Intermediate rent | 24 | 0.1% |
| Social rent: supported housing | 1 | - |
| Affordable rent: supported housing | 1 | - |
| Total | 28,551 | 100% |

C3. Share, and number, of new homes (homes completed before the last financial year) allocated across different rent types

| Type of tenure | 2022/23 | 2021/22 | 2020/21 |
|--|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Affordable rent: general needs | 54 | 121 | 22 |
| Low-cost home ownership (shared ownership) | 0 | 0 | 1 |

C4. How is the housing provider trying to reduce the effect of fuel poverty on its residents?

We want our customers to live in safe, decent homes that have good levels of thermal comfort. Circa £17m of our £43m 2022/23 stock investment programme included activities that directly or indirectly improved the energy efficiency of our customers' homes. Over 5,500 of our homes are fitted with rooftop photo-voltaic (PV) solar panels. The electricity generated from these panels saved an estimated £3.2m in electricity costs, an average of £578 per home.

Our Money Matters Team works with customers with a range of financial difficulties including fuel poverty. This team helps our customers with benefits, budgeting and energy costs, including agreeing payment plans with utilities providers. Our Crisis Fund

provides fuel top ups to our most vulnerable customers who are in immediate need or at a crisis point. 881 gas and electricity top ups were provided during the year from our £50,000 Crisis Fund. We also helped over **5,900** customers claim over £760,000 in discounted water rates. We also work with partners to refer customers to specialist agencies such as Green Doctors who provide fuel poverty support and access to grants.

C5. What percentage of rental homes have a 3-year fixed tenancy agreement or longer?

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



| Description | Percentage at 31.3.23 |
|---|-----------------------|
| C6. What percentage of homes with a gas appliance have in-date gas safety check? | 99.98% |
| C7. What percentage of buildings have an in-date fire risk assessment? | 100% |
| C8. What percentage of homes meet the Decent Homes Standard? | 99.67% |

The outstanding gas safety checks were for eight vacant properties, marked for demolition. 96 properties (0.33%) did not meet the Decent Homes Standard at the March 2023 year-end due to our stock condition surveyors identifying Housing Health & Safety Rating Standard (HHSRS) Category 1 hazards in these properties.

Addressing damp and mould issues in our customers' homes has been a key priority for us. Our approach has involved:

- Contacting all customers to ask if they had any damp and mould issues in their homes and setting up a dedicated phone line to receive this information
- Setting up a specialist team to address immediate customer concerns
- Producing a Damp and Mould Policy aligned with the Housing Ombudsman's report on Damp and Mould and Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) guidance
- Establishing a dedicated damp and mould guidance section on our website



HEDWORTH COURT

Resident voice



C9. What arrangements are in place to enable residents to hold management to account?

We reserve a place on our Board for a customer board member. Our Customer Voice Team summarises important issues from engagement activities and complaints at board meetings. The Tenant Scrutiny Group selects different subjects during the year for review.

Our six Customer and Community Voice Groups' role is to create opportunities for our customers to engage with Gentoo at all levels. They help Gentoo to understand the key challenges faced by customers and together look to solve problems and create opportunities to build strong neighbourhoods and communities. The Group also review our performance and consider issues that affect their respective geographical areas. We also have a group for customers aged 25 and under to support our aim of increasing the influence and voice of our younger customers. These Groups have improved the communication of our customers' priorities and concerns to our Group Board.

Our 'Your Gentoo Voice' platform allows us to digitally engage with customers on many different issues. We use online forums, surveys and polls to seek feedback on our performance, policies and services.

C10. How does the housing provider measure resident satisfaction and how has resident satisfaction changed over the last 3 years?

In 2022/23 financial year, we surveyed over 4,800 customers via telephone or in person and over 3,500 customers answered the question about satisfaction with Gentoo's service quality. 93.6% of customers surveyed were satisfied with our service quality.

The Group is committed to improving the quality of its collection of customer satisfaction information. Future monitoring of customer satisfaction will take place through Tenant Satisfaction Measures. This new standard requires all registered providers of social housing to collect data from April 2023 and report annually on performance. The Group has commissioned an independent market research agency to undertake customer surveys. Surveys are undertaken on a rolling monthly basis by telephone and email with results presented to the Group on a quarterly basis.

C11. In the last 12 months, how many complaints have been upheld by the Ombudsman? How have these complaints (or others) resulted in change of practice within the housing provider?

The table below lists the formal complaints received in the financial year 2022/23 and those considered and upheld by the Housing Ombudsman. Our approach is to embrace the learnings from all complaints we receive and apply them to improve our services to our customers.

| Description | Number |
|--|------------|
| Formal complaints (Stage 1) | 420 |
| Formal complaints (Stage 2) | 103 |
| Cases taken to the Housing Ombudsman | 8 |
| Cases upheld by the Housing Ombudsman | 4 |



Resident support



C12. What support services does the housing provider offer 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 2022 to 2023, our specially trained support officers supported many people in different situations. These included:

- 2,425 support referrals
- 1,944 referrals to wellbeing support
- 1,102 social activities for people in sheltered or extra care schemes
- 188 people who faced antisocial behaviour and domestic abuse
- 163 child, and 128 adult, safeguarding alerts, leading to referral of 44 cases to the Together for Children service / Sunderland City Council
- 139 people with mental health, drug and alcohol conditions
- 133 young people through outreach support and living at our supported housing scheme for people leaving care aged 16 to 21
- 64 young people provided with a secure home
- 40 people coached through the Wise Steps jobs programme

We also work with different 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



C13. Provide examples or case studies of where the housing provider has been engaged in placemaking or place shaping activities.

We have a clear social purpose and, as the largest provider of affordable housing in the city, provide more than 60,000 people in Sunderland with a place they can call home.

One of the main aims of our affordable homes plan is to reuse previously developed land wherever possible to develop sites in sustainable locations that:

- Encourage active travel
- Utilise Sunderland's public transport infrastructure
- Promote healthy lifestyles

We build high-quality homes that have a clear design philosophy to be modern, bright and spacious and meet the needs of local people. All our homes meet nationally described space standards.

Pennywell Regeneration Project

This is an innovative three year project that will regenerate 1,162 properties in Pennywell, Sunderland. Work began in October 2022 and the project's benefits will include an increase in the thermal performance of the properties to an energy performance certificate (EPC) band C.

As part of the project, our customers have helped shape the future community vision by directing social value funding into improving the community green spaces and the biodiversity of all corner plots. As part of their regeneration works package, our principal contractor, RE:GEN Group, intends to achieve £1.55m of social value over the course of the three year contract.

Leeway Green, Carley Hill

Leeway Green is one of our latest completed affordable homes developments. It consists of 24 properties that provide high quality new homes for local people, replacing flats demolished in the late 1990s. The development consists of 18 two and three bedroom houses and six two bedroom bungalows. It includes open landscaped spaces and all properties are designed to emphasise volume and light.

The development reflects our commitment to providing high quality, high sustainability homes for our customers. All properties have a simple design and include:

- a garden
- a view from the front door to the rear of home
- higher than standard ground floor ceilings to allow larger windows

Partnerships

As part of our placemaking activities, we work in partnership on a range of initiatives with different stakeholders, including local communities and schools, Northumbria Police, Sunderland City Council and the voluntary and community sector. Projects include Hetton Aspirations Linking Opportunities (HALO) Project and Southwick Altogether Raising Aspirations (SARA) Project.

Empower Sunderland Local Community Fund

We work with Empower to help fund energy saving projects or community-based activities within Sunderland. The fund is administered by a panel that meets every three months. The panel includes Empower trustees, Sunderland residents, employees from Sunderland City Council and Gentoo. An organisation can receive one grant each year. For example, the 25th Castletown Scouts were awarded a £11,400 grant for rooftop photovoltaic (PV) solar panels that allow them to generate almost all of their own electricity.

Bell Group redecoration contract

Our contract with Bell Group includes social value provisions to help the partnership make the most of the positive effect that our work brings, whether that is in our customers' homes or in community spaces. Bell Group has 14 local employees working on our programmes, including four local apprentices. They also run employability sessions in local schools and colleges, and to unemployed local people. This includes help writing a CV, interviews and how to create a helpful first impression. Work experience often leads to an apprenticeship in painting and decorating or joinery. 117 hours of work experience was completed during the 2022 apprentice recruitment process.



Environmental



Climate change



C14. Distribution of EPC ratings of existing homes (those completed before the start of the previous financial year)

We aim to make sure all our properties, where practical and affordable, achieve at least an energy performance certificate (EPC) band C by 2030. At 31 March 2023, 62.2% of our homes are at EPC C or above.

| EPC band | Number | % of homes |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| A | 230 | 0.8% |
| B | 2,064 | 7.2% |
| C | 15,524 | 54.2% |
| D | 10,381 | 36.3% |
| E | 180 | 0.6% |
| F | 21 | 0.1% |
| G | 3 | - |
| Unknown | 225 | 0.8% |



C15. Distribution of EPC ratings of new homes (those completed before the start of the previous financial year)

Our new affordable homes include measures that meet energy efficiency standards and all are at EPC band A or B.

We are working to understand and deal with how climate change may affect our homes. This process begins at design stage and includes consideration of property orientation, window sizes and insulation levels. All new developments include flooding and overheating risk assessments.

C16. Scope 1, Scope 2, and Scope 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 is a work in progress with Scope 3 in particular at an early stage of development. The reported Scope 3 emissions figure is from business travel and transmitting and distributing UK national grid electricity. It does not include supply chain emissions. We are working to improve our data capture for each category and scope.

| Scope | Emissions in CO2 tonnes (tCO2e) |
|---------|---------------------------------|
| Scope 1 | 1,747 |
| Scope 2 | 979 |
| Scope 3 | 146 |

C17. What energy efficiency actions has the housing provider undertaken in the last 12 months?

We have a number of energy efficiency initiatives in place.

| Measure | Saved emissions in CO2 tonnes (tCO2e) |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Photovoltaic (PV) solar panels | 9.3 |
| Electric vehicles | 1.3 |
| Heating upgrades for 261 properties as part of Washington district heating system replacement | 741 |
| Domestic gas boilers in 981 properties | 385 |
| Communal boilers in Aldenham Tower and Altrincham Tower | 79 |
| Fabric improvements to improve the thermal performance and energy efficiency of homes | 4,829 |

Fabric improvements include:

- Installation of double-glazed windows in 2,717 homes
- Installation of thermally efficient external composite doors to 150 homes
- Increase of insulation levels in 382 homes
- Completion of 20 whole-house retrofits including external wall and flat roof insulation

We are also building affordable homes that go beyond the requirements of the current building regulations. We have already installed many energy efficient features that help us to achieve the Future Homes Standard before 2025. These will help us achieve net zero status by 2030. We are also working closely with Homes England and other agencies to understand how we can use modern methods of construction to lower our carbon footprint further.

Excluding the Section 106 properties we acquire, we fit our new affordable homes with a range of energy efficient features, including:

- Air source heat pumps in place of gas combination boilers
- Thermal battery storage in place of water cylinders to reduce heat loss and take advantage of off-peak energy prices and store extra electricity produced by solar panels
- Full fill insulation to keep heat inside our homes
- Dedicated electric vehicle charging points at each home or allocated car parking space
- Glazing with U values below 0.95 to improve energy and thermal efficiency

C18. How is the housing provider mitigating the following climate change risks: increased flood risk, increased risk of homes overheating?

We commissioned SHIFT Environment to complete a flood risk assessment across our housing stock. This identified low flood risk from seas and rivers, and a higher flood risk through surface water. SHIFT Environment is now developing a flood risk action plan for Gentoo.

With our new build properties, we:

- Complete flood risk assessments during the pre-planning stage and build in measures to reduce flood risks
- Complete local land and environmental searches that include flood risks
- Have sustainable drainage systems, including ponds and tanks, and permeable paving at all sites to help drain water and reduce the risk of flooding
- Complete overheating risk assessments

We need to do more work to better quantify the risk of overheating in our homes.

C19. Does the housing provider give residents information about correct ventilation, heating, recycling etc.? Please describe how this is done.

We provide information about heating and ventilation in our Tenant Handbook and on our website. This includes information on how to:

- Check electricity and gas supplies
- Check thermostats and boiler pressure
- Check and bleed radiators
- Stop moist air reaching other rooms
- Produce less moist air
- Help air to circulate and leave the home

When we complete heating upgrades, like new boilers and thermostats, and for our new build properties, we provide specific information to customers to help them understand and get the best out of their heating system. We also direct people to free, impartial advice to help them with their energy supply, bills, keeping warm and fuel debt.





Ecology



C20. How is the housing provider increasing green space and promoting biodiversity on or near homes?

We are improving the quality of green spaces and promote biodiversity around our properties. We design all our affordable developments with sustainable drainage systems to help manage the water supply, provide habitats for wildlife and reduce flood risks. To improve wildlife corridors and increase biodiversity, we always try to include:

- New shrubs
- Tree-lined streets
- Wildflowers
- Wetland grasses

As we develop our Sustainability Strategy we will consider the use of external standards to develop our approach to promoting biodiversity.

C21. Does the housing provider have a strategy to actively manage and reduce all pollutants? If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?

We will consider our approach to the management and reduction of pollutants as we develop our Sustainability Strategy.



Resource management



C22. Does the housing provider have a strategy to use or increase the use of responsibly sourced materials for all building works? If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?

We work with partners, suppliers and contractors to make sure that work is undertaken with minimal environmental impact. As part of achieving this, we make sure building materials have been responsibly sourced, where practical and affordable.

C23. Does the housing provider have a strategy for waste management incorporating building works? If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?

We manage operational waste and its environmental effects through our stock investment plan. Environmental effect is a core success measure indicator within each main framework agreement.

Our target for contractors working on our stock investment and affordable development programmes is to divert at least 95% of waste from landfill. Contractors are also required to separate material and hazardous waste onsite.

We have two operational waste transfer sites that receive all our waste from trades and operational buildings.

| Transfer site | % of total waste recycled | % of total waste to landfill |
|---------------|---|------------------------------|
| Biffa | 95% with 70% total waste to energy | 5% |
| Suez | 96% with 89% total waste to energy | 4% |

C24. Does the housing provider have a strategy for good water management? If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?

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.

In its design of new developments the Gentoo Homes business works closely with the Lead Local Flood Authority to agree drainage strategies that use the hierarchy of drainage

set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance for all proposed developments. This makes sure Gentoo Homes use the most sustainable means possible to discharge surface water run-off from development sites, including onsite sustainable drainage systems or permeable paving.

Where Gentoo Homes identifies surface water management as a potential risk during construction, it develops a site-specific surface water management plan to ensure the lowest risk possible to nearby watercourses. The Lead Local Flood Authority will review and approve the plan before onsite works begin.



Governance



Structure and governance



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

Yes.

C26. What is the most recent viability and governance regulatory grading?

A G1 (governance) / V2 (financial viability) grading was granted in November 2020, following a regulatory In-Depth Assessment. The Regulator has reconfirmed this grading since 2020 via its annual stability check.

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

The National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020.

C28. If the housing provider not-for-profit?

Yes.

C29. Explain how the housing provider's board manages organisational risk

The Group's risk management 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 (such as data protection breaches, bribery, money, laundering, Health and Safety Executive breaches or notices), that resulted in enforcement or other equivalent action?

No.

Board and trustees



C31. What are the demographics of the board? And how does this compare to the demographics of the housing provider's residents, and the area that they operate in?

We use the National Housing Federation (NHF) EDI data tool to analyse diversity indicators.

| Gender % | Board | Customers | Sunderland |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Female | 80% | 60% | 51% |
| Male | 20% | 40% | 49% |

| Average Age | Board | Customers | Sunderland |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Years | 59.8 | 54.6 | 49.5 |

| Ethnicity % | Board | Customers | Sunderland |
|--|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| White | 100% | 86.43% | 99.36% |
| Asian/Asian British | - | 0.34% | 0.31% |
| Black/Black British/ Caribbean/ African | - | 0.41% | 0.03% |
| Other ethnic group | - | 0.69% | 0.30% |
| Unknown | - | 12.12% | - |

| Disability % | Board | Customers | Sunderland |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| Current disability | - | 31.32% | 18.04% |
| No disability/ unknown | 100% | 68.68% | 81.96% |

C32. What percentage of the board and management team have turned over in the last two years?

Since 2021, 50% of our board members have changed. Each time a board member resigns or retires, our resulting recruitment process considers the Board's optimal skills mix, any skills gaps and Board diversity, including diversity of thought.

The Executive Team consists of a CEO, appointed in May 2023. One of the three Executive Directors was appointed in September 2023, with an additional Executive Director joining the Group in November 2023. This is data from 2023/24.

C33. Is there a maximum tenure for a board member? If so, what is it?

In line with the NHF Code of Governance 2020, the maximum tenure for our Board members is usually six years, comprising two three-year terms. Where a board member has served six years their tenure may, in exceptional circumstances, be extended in one year terms up to a maximum of nine years, if considered to be in the Group's best interests.

C34. What percentage of the board are non-executive directors?

All Group board members are non-executives.

C35. Number of board members on the Audit Committee with recent and relevant financial experience

There are currently two board members, both the current and former Committee Chair, on the Group's Risk and Audit Committee who have recent and relevant financial experience.

C36. Are there any current executives on the Remuneration Committee?

No.

C37. Has a succession plan been provided to the Board in the last 12 months?

Gentoo's Group Board, People Committee and Chairs' Group have all discussed our succession plan in the last 12 months.

C38. For how many years have the housing provider's current external audit partner been responsible for auditing the accounts?

Our current external auditors are Grant Thornton UK LLP. They have been responsible for auditing our accounts for the last years having been appointed via a formal competitive tender process.

C39. 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.

C40. Are the roles of the Chair of the Board and CEO held by two different people?

Yes. Emily Cox MBE is the Chair and Louise Bassett is the CEO.

C41. How do you 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-terminus basis. A Board Policy is in place which stipulates the management of actual or potential conflicts of interests between these two roles.



Staff wellbeing



C42. Does the housing provider pay the Real Living Wage?

We are an accredited Real Living Wage employer and continue to pay all employees a living wage. We also work with our third-party contracted and sub-contracted partners to enable them to pay a Real Living Wage.

C43. What is the gender pay gap?

| Hourly rates | Mean | Gap | Median | Gap |
|--------------|--------|------|--------|------|
| Male | £17.96 | 6.5% | 16.90 | 9.4% |
| Female | £16.80 | | 15.31 | |

We have a higher proportion of men than women in the upper and upper-middle pay quarters. This includes roles in construction and site management, so we continue to review how we recruit for these roles to attract more women. There continued to be a higher proportion of women in the lower-middle pay quarter, although this was 3.4% lower than in 2021.

We publish a gender pay gap report every year.

For more information, see:

www.gentoogroup.com/gender-pay-gap

C44. What is the CEO-worker pay ratio?

| Year | 25th percentile pay ratio | Median percentile pay ratio | 75th percentile pay ratio |
|--------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2020 to 2021 | 9.55 | 7.27 | 5.98 |
| 2021 to 2022 | 11.60 | 7.53 | 6.16 |

C45. How does the housing provider support the physical and mental health of their staff?

We support all employees' physical and mental wellbeing. We have a comprehensive occupational health service. The support ranges from individual health screening to designing return-to-work plans for colleagues returning from long-term absence.

We strive to remove the stigma of mental ill health and allow our colleagues to talk freely about mental health issues. We recognise how important physical health and encouraging a healthy lifestyle is and how it benefits our colleagues' overall wellbeing.

We offer a range of support to colleagues through external partners, including an occupational health service, an employee assistance programme and cash health plan. We promote positive mental and physical health through internal communication channels and offer a range of internal support including our 'Managers' Guide to Mental Wellbeing' and mental health advocates. We have various policies in place to help colleagues, including our Employee Health and Wellbeing Policy, Substance Misuse Policy, Smoking Policy and work-life balance policies.

C46. Average number of sick days taken per employee?

In 2022 to 2023, the average number of sick days for each employee was 10.2 days.



Supply chain management



C47. How is social value creation considered when procuring goods and services?

We have a performance and evidence-based approach to social value, to make sure we comply with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. Since 2021, we have partnered with the Social Value Portal to achieve the most social value possible from our suppliers. Our partnership with the Social Value Portal aims to continue to improve the way we create social value and to more effectively monitor how it is provided and reported.

At the tender stage, interested companies can access and enter the social value they plan to achieve. All tenders worth more than £100,000 have at least a 10% weighting for social value. At the contract stage, successful companies enter the actual social value they provided through the course of the contract. We have created our own version of the Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOM) Framework, through collaboration with the Social Value Portal. Suppliers are free to choose those measures within the framework that are relevant to their business and a specific contract.

We proactively manage all tenders and contracts. Once we award a contract to a supplier, an important success factor for the supplier is to show they can achieve the social value they claimed they could achieve.

C48. How is environmental impact considered when procuring goods and services?

Within our standard supplier and contract documents, we include questions about environmental effects. These concentrate on the programme of works and include questions about:

- Carbon emissions
- Recycling
- Responsibly sourced materials
- Waste disposal

We monitor these effects through a series of key performance indicators and through the Social Value Portal.

Electricity

In 2022 to 2023, we used a green tariff for all the electricity from the National Grid. This allowed us to use 4,665,104 kilowatt hours from renewable energy sources. All our electricity contracts over the last two years and next three years will come from sustainable sources.



