

gentoo

Great homes
Strong communities
Inspired people
for Sunderland

Social Value Report

20-
21
Social Value

Seaburn Beach, Sunderland

Welcome

**“We provide
60,000
people with a place
they can call home...”**

Northern Spire Bridge, Sunderland

I'm delighted to introduce you to our Social Value Report for 2020/21 and showcase the amazing social value Gentoo and our partners have delivered throughout what was an extremely challenging period for our people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We believe that everyone deserves the right to live in a safe, secure and good quality home that they can afford and now more than ever, we're proud to provide this to our tenants. As a registered provider of affordable housing, we provide 60,000 people with a place they can call home and we're extremely dedicated to having a positive impact on tenants lives every single day.

But our role in Sunderland stretches beyond the bricks and mortar of our homes.

We have an opportunity every day to make a positive difference to the neighbourhoods we serve, and we provide services that deliver real social value. Services that have a long lasting, and often life changing impact on not only our people, but our communities too.

The last year changed the way we operate but despite these challenges we've still created opportunities for a wide range of people by building on digital engagement, transforming our frontline services, and adapting how we work with tenants and the community.

This report highlights the great work that we do to contribute to the prosperity of Sunderland and its residents and demonstrates our resilience, strength, and determination as an organisation to support our people.

We have measured the impact of our social investment and the outcomes of this using the HACT Wellbeing Valuation Approach and the national TOMs social value framework, both of which are robust social value measurement tools. By using these formulas, we have been able to accurately measure the social impact of interventions and activities that have a positive impact on our people and communities.

I am immensely proud of everything Gentoo has achieved over this difficult 12-month period and I hope you enjoy reading more about the amazing work my colleagues have carried out.

Nigel Wilson

Group Chief Executive Officer



About us

Our tenants are at the heart of everything we do. They set the direction of our business and ensure we remain true to our social purpose.

Our vision

Great Homes
Strong Communities
Inspired People
For Sunderland

Our values

Do the right thing
Give all you've got
Keep learning
Make a difference
Work together

Our corporate strategy and our 5Ps

Our corporate strategy centres around five strategic aims and our 5Ps:

Place

Provide homes and services that enable our customers and communities to succeed

People

Invest in people and communities to help realise opportunities and release potential

Perform

Be well governed and financially resilient, operating efficiently and responsibly, investing wisely to fulfil our social purpose

Partner

Work with others to influence and generate sustainable change

Pride

Harness the collective passion and energy of our people to support the city

Our social impact

summary 20/21

£4,035,434

total social value generated

Place

94%

overall tenant satisfaction with their neighbourhood

£30.9m

invested in major works and improvements to properties

100

homes under construction

170

new homes approved by planning committees

People

221

victims of anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse supported

Advised tenants on more than

£1m of debt

72

people supported by the Wise Steps work programme

Brought an additional

£1,075,421

income to our tenants

Perform

£144,000

of community grants to local people and groups via Empower Sunderland

£2.2m

reinvested back into the Group from Gentoo Homes

93%

of tenants satisfied with the standard of work in their home

Pride

Over

90

veterans re-housed

£17,000

fundraised by our colleagues for our corporate charities

Partner

200

Christmas dinners donated to tenants

49

adults and families provided with emergency temporary accommodation

£249,653

in social value generated through principal contractors

2,500

Easter eggs donated to beneficiaries

Place

We believe that everyone deserves to live in a good quality, safe and secure home they can afford, in a community they can be proud of.

Our aim is to provide homes and services that enable our customers and communities to succeed. To deliver on this, we will:

- Invest significantly in repairs and upgrades to our properties
- Ensure our homes are safe and secure
- Develop for rent and sale, quality homes that are affordable and that people aspire to live in
- Improve our communities, and their environment, through investment in local priorities



We provide more than 60,000 people in Sunderland with a place they can call home and believe everyone has the right to live in a good quality home they can afford.

We invest millions of pounds each year in keeping our homes safe, secure and compliant. Our significant investment in Sunderland as a place, also has a profound social impact.

£30.9m
invested in major works
and improvements to
our properties

1,274
heating systems
upgraded

170
homes approved
at planning

100%
of homes meeting
Government Decent
Homes Standard

1,279
installations of
double-glazed
windows

100
homes under
construction

New homes for the city

A new era of affordable housing began in Sunderland after major plans to build 170 new high-quality affordable homes were given the go-ahead by Sunderland City Council. The new homes form part of our planned **£172 million** investment into new affordable and desirable housing in the city, with more than **720 people** set to move into the homes once they're complete.

Building the homes across six sites on Wearside will also help to kick-start economic and social recovery in the city

following the pandemic, with **279 jobs**, expected to be created as a result.

Councillor Graeme Miller, Leader of Sunderland City Council said:

"High quality housing for everyone in Sunderland is an absolute priority for this City Council. As a council we work closely with all developers and are supportive of Gentoo's plans and its contribution to making Sunderland more dynamic, healthy and vibrant."



River Quarter

We believe everyone has the right to feel safe in their home and River Quarter, an apartment block located in the city centre, has recently undergone major modernisation works to bring it in line with current Government fire safety legislation.

In partnership with EQUANS, we installed lifesaving sprinklers in each property and within the car park, replaced cladding throughout the building, fitted fire rated composite doors and we upgraded the buildings smoke detection and fire alarm system. These vital improvements protect our tenants and ensures their long-term safety in their homes.



Gentoo Homes

Our profit for purpose HBF five-star private housebuilding arm, Gentoo Homes, generates a surplus to support the delivery of affordable rented homes across the city. Despite the housebuilding industry being halted by the national lockdown, a major **£2.2 million** was reinvested into the Group last year helping to support Gentoo's Affordable Homes Plan to create new affordable homes in Sunderland.

As a result, Gentoo Homes enjoyed a successful year of sales, with the industry experiencing one of its strangest twelve months for a number of years.



Empower Sunderland Community Fund

Gentoo is contracted by Empower Community Solar to manage more than 5,000 solar panel systems in Sunderland. In 2020-21, profit share from the portfolio generated income of **£90,221**, all of which was reinvested back into the Group's housing services.

Other shared profit from the solar panel scheme is allocated to Empower Sunderland Community Fund – which is run independent of Gentoo. The pandemic led to a surge in demand for the services of the voluntary sector, and to ensure these voluntary and community groups were supported, Empower funding was donated to community and voluntary groups that were delivering frontline services to the city's residents.

30 organisations in Wearside received donations totalling over **£104,000**, using **£87,000** of grant funding from Empower Sunderland and an additional **£17,000** donations from Gentoo's Tenant and Community Voice Forum budgets. The funding was granted to organisations to continue with key volunteering services ranging from delivering hot meals to shielding tenants to supporting the victims of domestic abuse.



"It was a huge relief to receive this funding into our sixth week of delivering hot food and engaging with the tenants of the care schemes. We engaged with more than 100 tenants on a weekly basis and this funding helped us to carry on helping to reduce social isolation in all of the schemes we visited."

Michael Ganley, Founder of Fans Museum



Our neighbourhoods

We strive to create communities and neighbourhoods that our tenants are proud to call home and ensuring our estates are safe and attractive places to live is a vital part of what we do.

From cutting grass to clearing waste, our teams know that greener and cleaner estates can help our tenants to live more sustainable lifestyles.

5,979 trees inspected



2,346 fly tipping and graffiti reports actioned

3.4m square meters of grass cut – equivalent to 478 football pitches



People



We believe that by putting people at the heart of all that we do we can build great homes and create strong communities.

Our aim is to invest in people and communities to help realise opportunities and release potential. To deliver on this we will:

- Always provide a great service to our tenants and communities
- Help our tenants and communities to become more resilient and support independent living through a range of support services
- Be an inclusive employer of choice in Sunderland by offering a range of recruitment opportunities, including apprenticeships, and by investing in and developing our colleagues to achieve their potential

Safety and support services

Our tenants are at the heart of everything we do at Gentoo. We have specialists teams that work with tenants to offer a range of services. Our Positive Engagement Team provide support regarding mental health, drug and alcohol addiction, and we also have a specially trained Victim Support Team.

40
tenants empowered to achieve a better quality of life

The social value generated from this was **£248,200**

Our Safeguarding Team coordinates all safeguarding alerts and refers concerns to Together for Children (which deliver children's services on behalf of Sunderland City Council).

71
adult safeguarding alerts, **44** of which resulted in formal referrals

The social value generated from this was **£649,633**

221
victims of anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse supported

The social value generated from this was **£401,433**



166
child safeguarding alerts, **61** of which resulted in formal referrals

Young Persons' Team

Our Young Persons' Team offers a range of vocational, educational and housing-related services to equip young adults aged 16-25 with the skills, experience and confidence to become independent and maintain a home.

20
young people were provided with a place they can call home through Holmewood House support centre

232
referrals to our outreach support service

97
young people were provided with a secure home

The team dealt with **253** young person cases and provided ongoing tenancy support for **228** young people

The social value generated from this was **£47,648**

Money Matters Team

The wellbeing of our tenants is paramount, and our specialist Money Matters Team provide advice and support to help tenants maximise their income, reduce debt and remove financial barriers to ensure they can maintain their tenancy's.

1,041
tenants supported to make financial gains and improve their financial management skills

£3,434
grants were awarded through our crisis fund

3,013
referrals to water rate discount schemes, resulting in **£340,015** in discounts



£1,075,421
worth of benefit claims and gains facilitated



Wellbeing service

Our Wellbeing service supports tenants to live independently in their home through aids and adaptations. Gentoo also manages six sheltered and two extra-care schemes across the city for those who chose to move into a residential building, or those with care needs.

During the pandemic, the essential government guidance on social distancing resulted in many tenants and residents being confined to their homes alone and unable to see friends and family. To combat this social isolation, our Wellbeing service hosted COVID secure social activities and events including singers, arts and crafts, bingo, and quizzes.

The eight sheltered schemes were also supported by various local community and voluntary groups who donated activity packs, afternoon tea's, Easter packages and so much more.

8 musical performances

2,501 support referrals received



Financial inclusion

Working in partnership with Aviva, we provide a low-cost, weekly home contents insurance scheme for tenants. During 2020-21, 6,337 tenants benefitted from this scheme.

Employment and skills

Our Wise Steps programme continues to provide one-to-one specialist support to help tenants take positive steps towards securing employment. Partnering with other organisations, tenants can access a range of employment and training opportunities to remove barriers to work. Through our ongoing Affordable Homes Programme we're also able to support work experience on our developments. Working with our partners EQUANS, Tolent and Sunderland College, we've supported students to get their first steps on the construction ladder by completing placements on the sites alongside their studying.

2 people successfully completed vocational training

5 people successfully gained employment

6 people moved from claiming benefits to job searching activities

72 people supported by Wise Steps job coaches

The social value generated from this was £59,166

Apprenticeships

Since being formed in 2001, we have created 277 apprenticeship opportunities, with 90% of recruits successfully completing their apprenticeship with us.

The uncertainty of the pandemic last year meant we were unable to offer apprenticeship roles in the business. We remained dedicated to our people and continued to work with our existing apprentices, with eight people completing their apprenticeships in 2020-21 and gaining permanent employment with Gentoo.

The social value generated from this was £51,353

Investing in our people

We believe that our strength comes from the dedication, passion, skills and energy of our colleagues and volunteers and we are committed to their development and growth.

In 2019-20 we invested £601,078 on upskilling our colleagues (approximately £583 per colleague) and an additional £347,890 on wellbeing initiatives (approximately £334 per colleague).

Brenda named TPAS Tenant of the Year

We hugely value the commitment of our engaged tenants and residents, and we are dedicated to ensuring their contribution and knowledge is celebrated across the business. We are delighted that Brenda, an inspirational tenant who became a domestic abuse champion in her local community, was crowned 'Tenant of the Year' at the National TPAS Awards. This major accolade was awarded to Brenda for her active role in the community, including her role as Chair of our Washington Tenant Voice Panel. Since winning the award, Brenda has joined our Board of Directors to ensure the voice of tenants is at the forefront of Gentoo's decision making.



Perform

We believe that in order to achieve our goals, we must operate as a compliant, efficient and effective social housing provider.

Our aim is to be well governed and financially resilient, operating efficiently and responsibly, and investing wisely to fulfil our social purpose. To deliver on this we will:

- Always listen and respond to the voice of our tenants and communities
- Through digital technology seek to improve our tenants' and communities' experience of our services
- Demonstrate how our services deliver value for money
- Continue to ensure our corporate and governance structure is compliant and maintains high standards of governance



161,250
repairs and servicing
appointments

2,207
door faults rectified

197
properties rectified
with condensation
and mould growth

346
properties rectified
with penetrating damp

As a social housing provider, we are well governed and financially strong, operating efficiently and responsibly and investing wisely to fulfil our social purpose

100%
of tenants satisfied
with our Positive
Engagement service

93%
of tenants were
satisfied with the
condition of their
new home when
moving in

94%
of tenants were
satisfied with the
service they received
from our Property
Maintenance Team

94%
of tenants were
satisfied with the
work carried out
during upgrades
to their home

Investing in our existing homes

We believe everyone has the right to live in a good quality home. With people spending more time at home than ever before, our dedicated repairs teams continued to provide vital services throughout the pandemic.

Alongside planned investment into modernising our homes, we respond to thousands of repairs calls each month to ensure our communities and homes are kept safe and maintained for our tenants to safely enjoy.

The social value generated
from this was
£1,660,540



My Gentoo

Our online self-service portal, My Gentoo, has struck success with tenants with the number of tenants registered for the service more than doubling over the past year. The successful launch of our online repairs service which allows users to report, amend and cancel routine repairs to their home has seen thousands of tenants using the service daily from home and on the go.



"I don't have time to call and report repairs during working hours, so having the option to report repairs any time of the day has been so convenient. It's great to have a service which works around you."

Sheila Sproates, a Gentoo tenant from Silksworth



8,439
tenants registered
with My Gentoo

Putting the voice of our tenants at the heart of Gentoo

Our tenants' voice is at the heart of everything we do, and we want to ensure their voices are heard and they have the opportunity to influence and shape the services we deliver for them.

We've transformed our approach to tenant engagement and introduced our new, dedicated Tenant Voice Team, who are proactive in how we listen, learn and put issues right for our tenants. The team has been put in place to deal directly with complaints, work with our tenant groups and liaise with community and voluntary organisations.

We actively work with 69 tenants across various groups and forums such as our Tenant and Community Voice Forums and Ustoo. While we were unable to meet with tenants and residents in person during the pandemic, we hosted online consultations, arranged phone calls and created WhatsApp groups to make sure our tenants still had a say in decisions being made within the Group.

The social value generated from this was
£444,692

Top governance rating

We were awarded G1 governance rating by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in recognition of the way we have transformed the organisation by making huge improvements and positive change across the business.

We have changed our culture, structure and strengthened our governance controls to provide reassurance that previous issues and concerns could not, and will not, happen again. The recognition is testament to Gentoo colleagues and tenants who have worked tirelessly to refocus the business on our core social purpose of servicing our tenants in Sunderland.



Partner

We believe that by working with others we can achieve far more than we can on our own, for the good of our tenants, communities and the city.

Our aim is to work with others to influence and generate sustainable change. To deliver on this we will:

- Develop Sunderland into a vibrant, healthy and dynamic city through effective partnerships with Sunderland City Council and other local anchor institutions
- Working alongside organisations such as Northumbria Police, local schools, community groups and businesses to improve the safety of our neighbourhoods and wellbeing of our tenants and communities
- Collaborate with key partners and other housing associations to influence matters that affect our tenants, communities, colleagues and society locally, regionally and nationally

21 Christmas pantomime performances in local schools in partnership with EQUANS

Spreading Christmas cheer

Christmas is a time for fun and celebration and while the festive season was different last year, at Gentoo we still helped to spread some much-needed Christmas cheer.

From pantomime performances to donating hundreds of toys to families across Sunderland, we partnered with organisations across Wearside to guarantee it was still the season of giving.



Partnering with the police

We work closely with Northumbria Police to tackle issues such as anti-social and criminal behaviour in our neighbourhoods and during the COVID-19 pandemic we supported Northumbria Police to enforce emergency coronavirus laws.

As part of the partnership, our Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers investigated all reports of Gentoo tenants breaking social distancing guidelines and worked with the police to investigate reported households and deter any further breaches.

The aim was to protect other residents who were at risk and help to reduce the spread of the virus by ensuring social distancing was adhered to.



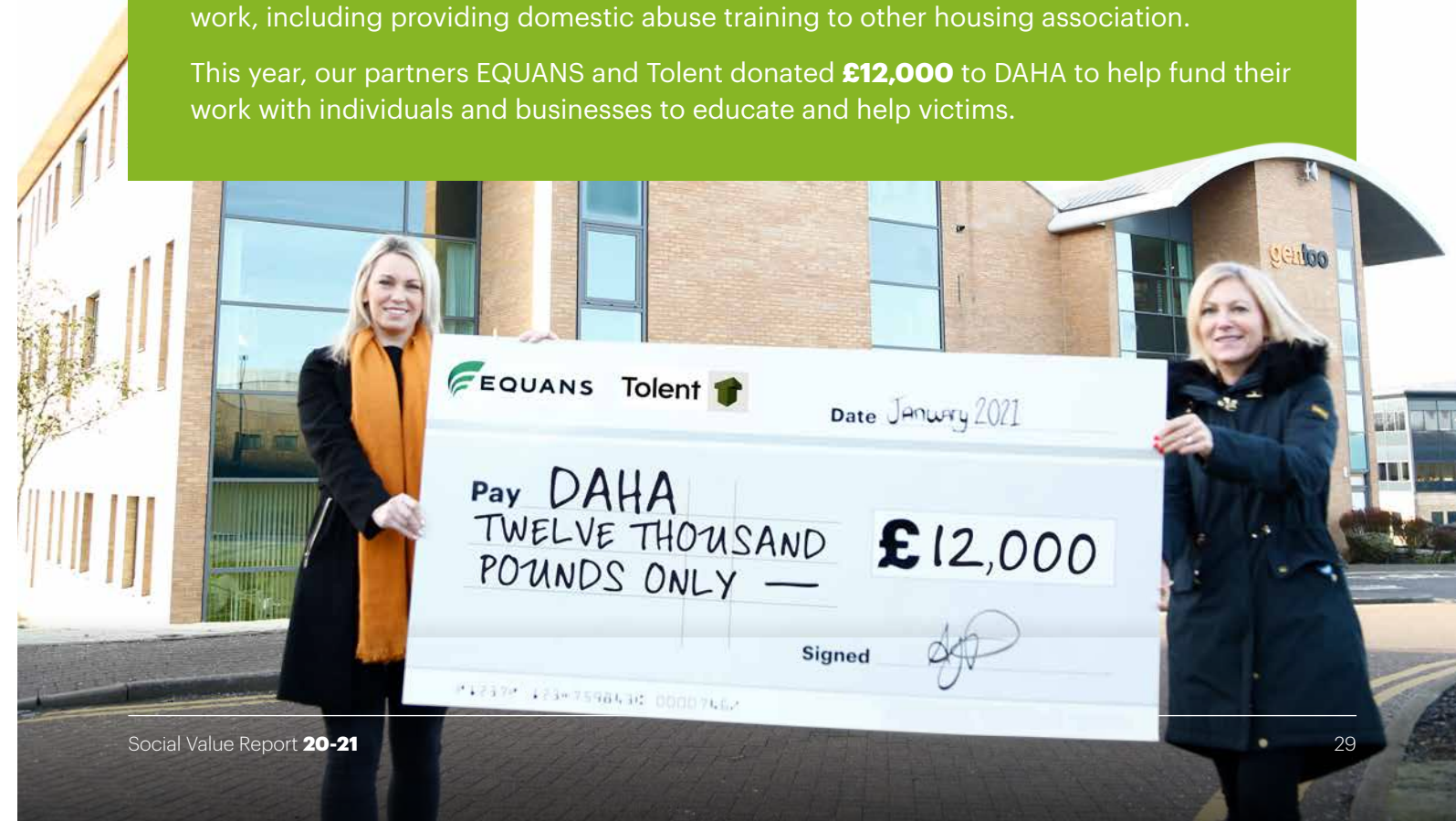
Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)

We're a proud co-founder of the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) and this year we donated **£21,500** to support the organisation. We play a key role within DAHA's work, including providing domestic abuse training to other housing association.

This year, our partners EQUANS and Tolent donated **£12,000** to DAHA to help fund their work with individuals and businesses to educate and help victims.

200 Christmas dinners and desserts were delivered to our tenants in partnership with Sunderland City Council

Hundreds of gifts donated to local tenants and their families



Foundation of Light

We're an official community partner of Sunderland AFC (SAFC) and Foundation of Light (FoL), a registered charity of the football club.

The FoL delivered a number of activities and employability courses to help our tenants build skills for employment such

as self-esteem, and literacy and numeracy and supported one person into part time employment.

This created a social value of **£27,042**

Positive Footprints

Our work with Positive Footprints changes the lives of children and young people by delivering personal development programmes in local schools that allow self-discovery, raise aspirations, and open the world of work.

The closure of schools and phased reopening due to COVID-19 impacted the ability to deliver as intended, but three local schools completed

the programme using technology to stay connected. The programme is potentially life changing and the benefit to young people can be seen for years to come.

This created a social value of **£12,432**

Providing homes for those in need

Everyone deserves the right to live in a safe and secure home. We work with Sunderland City Council and charity, Changing Lives, to provide homes for people sleeping rough in the city. This work was amplified and extremely important during the pandemic with the Government's aim to keep people off the street.

During 2020-21, we helped to provide a home for four adults who had no permanent home and were sleeping rough. We also provided secure housing for **45 adults and families** who were living in temporary accommodation.

This partnership work helped to generate a social value of **£762,487**



Working with contractors

We work closely with our principal contractors to help fulfil our social purpose in our communities. Our contractors commit to supporting the delivery of social value initiatives.

Throughout 2020-21 we worked closely with four contractor partners, Engie, Tolent, Kier and Bell Group.

From working with local community organisations and schools to supporting our Give it a Grow gardening competition, our contractors have worked across the city to provide unique and

exciting opportunities for our tenants and Sunderland's residents.

More than £20,000 was donated by Tolent to local schools, and colleges in Houghton-le-Spring to fund new laptops to support at-home learning, fund breakfast clubs and provide Christmas toys to local families.

These created a social value of **£294,653.55**



Pride

We believe that Sunderland is an outstanding city. It is our heart, our homeland, and somewhere we will always be proud to shout about and give something back to.

Our aim is to harness the collective passion and energy of our people to support the city's plan. To deliver on this we will:

- Remember our roots in all that we do
- Celebrate the history and heritage of our city
- Be an excellent provider of housing in Sunderland, demonstrating the quality of our service
- Actively work to reduce our carbon footprint in line with Sunderland City Council's ambition for the city to be carbon neutral by 2040

Decarbonisation

Climate change is the challenge of our generation and Gentoo is fully committed to helping to reduce the national carbon reduction targets set out by Government and local targets in Sunderland. Through innovative property investment schemes such as Core 364 and the inclusion of carbon reduction and environmentally efficient technology in our new build developments, we're working to create homes that are fit for the future.

Give it a Grow

Our annual gardening competition returned for the fifth year to recognise and celebrate the efforts of green-fingered tenants. Gardening is known to be beneficial to mental health and during the COVID-19 restrictions more people took to their gardens to unwind.

25 tenants entered the competition last year, and in partnership with EQUANS, five tenants were recognised for their fantastic gardens.

This created a social value of
£29,629



Easter egg appeal

Each year we run an Easter campaign to collect donations from our staff and our contractors to provide our most vulnerable tenants and residents across the city with Easter eggs and chocolate. We received the largest donation of eggs ever which were distributed to several local charities and voluntary and community groups including Sunderland Foodbank and a range of homelessness services operating in the city.

"We're so grateful to Gentoo and all who donated eggs which went to vulnerable kinship children in Sunderland. Many kinship families have struggled throughout the pandemic with many having little prospect of a visit from the Easter Bunny and Gentoo made this possible."

Melanie Nichols, CEO at More than Grandparents



Fundraising for our corporate charities

Despite living and working under COVID-19 restrictions for most of the year, our colleagues rallied together to raise much needed funds for both Action on Dementia Sunderland and St Benedict's Hospice. **£17,000** was raised across the year through fundraising activities including raffles, bonus balls and a regular payroll deduction scheme. These charities play a vital role in the local community and we are proud to be supporting them through both resources and fundraising again in 2021.

Recognising the contribution of our colleagues

As one of the largest employers in Sunderland we're proud of the people we employ and the difference our employees make to the lives of our tenants every day.

Our 'You Are Gentoo' scheme continues to acknowledge and celebrate the brilliant work delivered by our colleagues each and every day.

We celebrated the achievement of **45 colleagues** who were given awards from **more than 400 nominations** in our two awards last year.

All Gentoo colleagues are paid the Living Wage and we continue to be an accredited Living Wage Employer.

Investing in our colleagues is hugely important to us and we're proud to hold a Gold standard Investors in People accreditation.

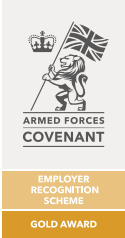
On average we invest
£583
per employee in training and development

Veterans in Crisis

We're extremely proud to support Sunderland's Armed Forces Community and in partnership with Veterans in Crisis we work to provide safe and secure homes to veterans who need housing or re-homing. Since starting this collaboration we have provided a home to **90 veterans**

in the city, and most recently we have joined with Veterans in Crisis, Engie and Springboard Sunderland to launch a pilot programme of construction training for veterans to equip participants with real world skills and experience to help them build a career in the construction industry.





References

Community investment and homelessness values form the Social Value Bank, HACT and Simetrica (www.hact.org.uk / www.simetrica.co.uk).
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Gentoo Group Limited is a charitable community
benefit society, registration number 7302

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