

gentoo

A photograph of an elderly woman with short, light-colored hair, wearing a blue and white patterned dress, standing in a doorway. She is holding a small green plant. A black dog is standing on the step in front of the doorway. The background is a brick wall. The image is framed by orange and yellow geometric shapes.

Customer Annual Report

2024-25

www.gentoogroup.com



We're shaping Gentoo's future because our voices matter

An introduction from Gentoo's Customer Committee

We've just marked the first anniversary of our Customer Committee and what a year it's been.

From our very first meeting in November 2023, it was clear this wasn't just a tick-box exercise. Gentoo genuinely wanted to put customers at the heart of decision-making, and we've seen that commitment in action.

We care deeply about our communities and want to see real improvements in social housing. Meeting every two months, we've

had direct conversations with Board members, scrutinised policies, and helped shape how services are delivered. It's not just talk, our feedback is being acted on.

One of the biggest changes we've helped drive is how Gentoo responds to damp and mould. Together, we've worked to create a more empathetic, customer-friendly approach. It's not just about fixing the issue it's about how customers are treated throughout the process. That shift matters.

We've also influenced how Gentoo communicates with customers, especially around sensitive topics like rent updates. By sharing our own experiences, we've helped make sure the messaging is clear, respectful, and informative.

We've represented Gentoo nationally, contributing to the Social Housing Quality Resident Panel and sharing our views directly with government ministers. It's empowering to know our voices are being heard at the highest levels.

We're proud that Gentoo received the highest C1 grading for delivering the Consumer Standards - a recognition of how customer involvement is driving real change.

We will strive keep that grade by actively working for Gentoo customers ensuring we work together and continue with excellent service for the community.

As involved customers, we've worked closely with Gentoo on many of the improvement themes in this year's Customer Annual Report and we're proud of what it represents.

We know how important it is for customers to understand where their rent goes and how Gentoo invests in homes and communities. That's why we helped shape the content of this report to make sure it's relevant, transparent, and easy to understand.

We've seen first-hand how customer feedback can lead to real change. Whether it's influencing policies, improving communication, or shaping services, your voice matters.

We'd encourage you to take a look and if you feel inspired, get involved. Together, we can keep making Gentoo better for all of us.

We care about people.



Accountability.



Want to shape the future of Gentoo?

Email:
customerinvolvement@gentoogroup.com

Gentoo numbers in 2024-25



28,500

Homes



60,000

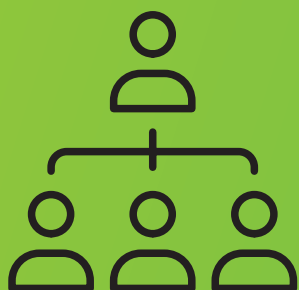
Customers

1,000+

Colleagues

79%

Live in Sunderland



£5 million

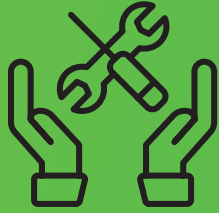
in additional benefits
and discounts for
customers



We will invest

£467 million

over the next 5
years to maintain
and modernise our
homes and estates



£1 million

a week invested in existing properties

79%

of homes are EPC C
or above



19,000

people on Gentoo's
social housing list



405

new homes for private
sale by 2029



G1,C1,V2

regulatory governance



700

new affordable homes built by 2029

76%



overall customer
satisfaction
(IFF independent score)



We're listening: How your feedback shapes our service

We're always looking for ways to improve the services we provide and the best way to do that is by listening to you.

That's why Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) are so important. They're a set of standards introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing to help us understand how well we're meeting your needs.

TSMs focus on the things that matter most to you, like:

- How quickly and effectively we carry out repairs
- How safe and well-maintained your home is
- How well we communicate with you
- How fairly and respectfully you're treated

Your feedback helps shape the way we work. TSMs give us a clear picture of what's working and where we need to do better. They also make it easier for you to see how we're performing and to hold us accountable.

Our customer excellence promise

This year, we've delivered over 7,000 hours of customer excellence and complaints training for our colleagues focused on delivering the best possible service, every time. At the heart of the training is our new CARE model (Clear, Assured, Respectful, Empathetic). These four values guide every conversation, visit, and interaction ensuring you feel listened to, understood, and supported.

When we gather feedback for the TSMs, you might be contacted by IFF Research. They are an independent research agency.

You may be contacted by:

- opinions@iffresearch-dm.com
- 0191 721 0004

Taking part is completely voluntary. If you'd prefer not to take part, just let the surveyor know and you won't receive any further contact.

Thank you for helping us shape better services, your voice really does make a difference.



Our Tenant Satisfaction Measures for 2024 - 2025

76%

Overall satisfaction

78%

Satisfaction with repairs

79%

Satisfaction that your home is safe

80%

Agreement that we treat you fairly and with respect

76%

Satisfaction that your home is well maintained

76%

Satisfaction that we keep you informed about things that matter to you

36%

Satisfaction with our approach to handling complaints

74%

Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair

68%

Satisfaction that we make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods

75%

Satisfaction that we keep communal areas clean and well maintained

63%

Satisfaction with our approach to handling anti-social behaviour

66%

Satisfaction that we listen and act

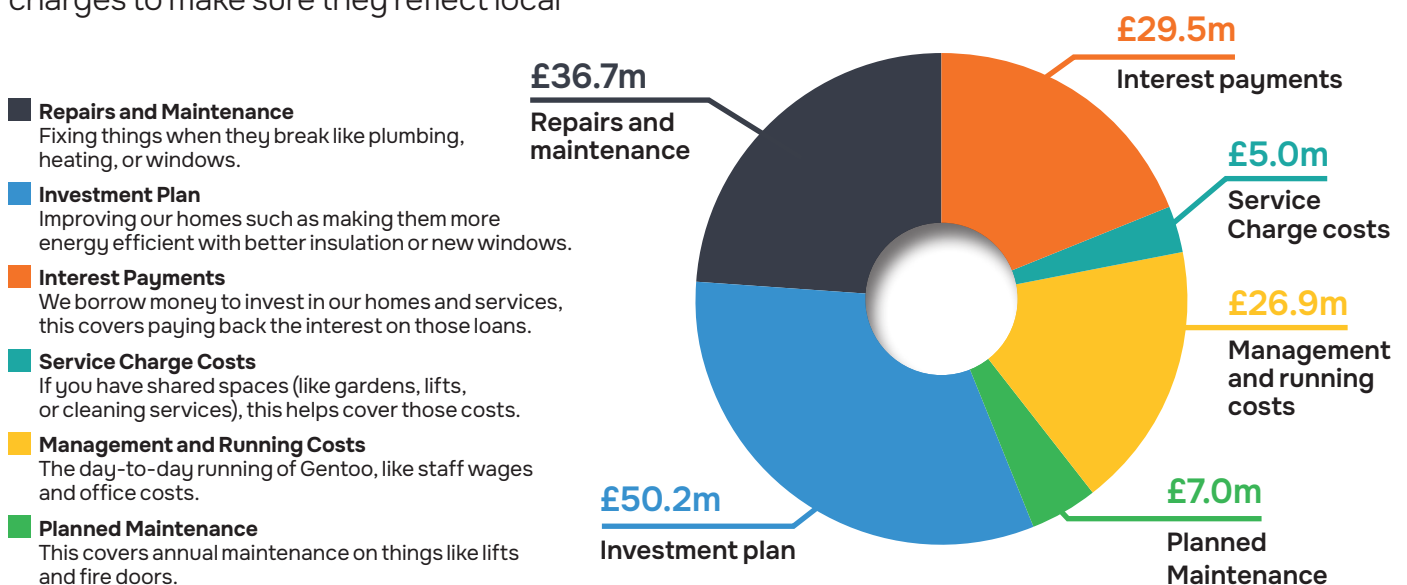
Where your rent is spent

We are a not-for-profit housing association, which means that every penny we receive in rent and service charges is reinvested into delivering high-quality homes and services for customers. Our core purpose is to provide safe and decent homes for our customers of today and tomorrow and to do that, we need to ensure that our rents are both fair and affordable for everyone.

We regularly review our rents and service charges to make sure they reflect local

affordability and meet the expectations of customers. This helps us strike the right balance between keeping costs manageable for customers and maintaining the quality of our homes and services.

Below, you can see a breakdown of how we have spent your rent and service charges so you can see exactly how your money is helping to support your home and your community.



Your home. Your safety. Our priority.



Your safety and comfort are our top priorities. Everyone deserves to feel safe, comfortable, and proud of where they live. That's why we've made big changes to how we tackle damp and mould, with a new approach that puts you first.

Over the past year, we've taken a more proactive, customer-focused, and caring approach to dealing with damp and mould. We've always taken these issues seriously, but now we're doing even more to respond quickly, support you throughout the process, and prevent problems from coming back.

We've listened to your feedback and taken real action. In the last year, we've carried out over **19,644 repairs** in **4,356 homes** from small fixes to full treatments. And we're not stopping there. We're keeping in touch with you as part of our aftercare process, which is how we continue to support you once the work is done. Whether it's checking in, offering advice, or helping with any questions, we're here to make sure everything keeps working as it should. So far, **3,818 homes*** are being supported through our aftercare process.

*Figure correct as of June 2025.



A new approach

We've changed the way we work to make things easier and more reassuring for you:

- **One point of contact** – When you report damp or mould you'll now have a dedicated person, so you're never left wondering who to speak to.
- **Faster help** – We've set up a special damp and mould phone line **0191 525 5500** and brought in more staff to respond quickly.
- **Rapid response** – For urgent cases, we can now send a team to clean down affected areas within 48 hours.

We won't just fix the problem and walk away. Our case coordinators check in with you after 8 weeks and again 12 months after work is done to make sure the issue hasn't come back. It's all part of our promise to stay with you every step of the way.

We've also introduced a new Damp and Mould Policy that puts your wellbeing first. It's based on a zero-tolerance approach and was shaped with customers. We've also created easy-to-follow guides to help you spot and report any issues early.

You can read them both on our website

www.gentoo-group.com/damp

And with our new customer database system, our teams can now see everything in one place so we can respond quicker and keep you updated every step of the way.

We've also trained our staff to spot signs early, improved how we inspect homes, and proactively target the neighbourhoods most affected. And with 79% of customers saying their home feels safe, we're proud of the progress but we're not stopping there. We're committed to doing better by listening to you, training our teams, and taking action early.

From 27 October, Awaab's Law will require all social landlords to fix serious issues like damp and mould within strict legal timeframes.

This means emergency repairs must be completed within 24 hours and damp and mould problems must be investigated and resolved quickly.

We are fully committed to acting fast and keeping your home safe. If you notice any signs of damp, mould, or other hazards, please report them to us immediately so we can take action.

Awaab's Law is here to protect you, and so are we.



Local voices, local impact.

Want to get involved
with Gentoo?

Visit [www.gentoogroup.com/
get-involved](http://www.gentoogroup.com/get-involved)



We believe the best ideas come from the people who know our communities best, you. Over the past year, your feedback has helped shape real change, from neighbourhood improvements to service redesigns.

In 2024-25, we hosted 13 Customer and Community Voice meetings across Sunderland. These sessions gave customers the chance to raise concerns, share ideas, and work with us to improve their neighbourhoods.



Scan the QR code to watch the video and feel the difference customer involvement makes.

You said, we did

“We want more transparency.”

- We introduced Tenancy and Estate Reports to keep you informed about what’s happening in your area. These were shared with involved customers at Customer and Community Voice meetings.

“We want to speak to someone in person.”

- We organised face-to-face drop-ins across the city.

“We need more support in our communities.”

- We got to work on launching our new Mobile Housing Hub to bring services directly to customers and neighbourhoods.

Find out where it’s going to be at www.gentoogroup.com/hereforyou



Your Gentoo Voice

More than 1,400 customers are now part of Your Gentoo Voice, our digital platform where you can share feedback, ideas, and help shape the services that matter most to you.

Thanks to your input this year, we've made real improvements, including:

- **Move the Dial** – launched projects to improve your experience with repairs and customer service
- **Rent statements** – making them clearer and easier to understand
- **Customer charter for property** – setting out the standards and service you can expect from us
- **Lettable Standard** – creating a checklist of what your home should include when you move in
- **Complaint letters** – improving how we communicate when things go wrong
- **Creation of new Service Standards** - we want to provide you with the best possible service, and that's why we've created new Service Standards which explain what we will do, and when, and what we ask of you in return. These standards help us stay accountable and ensure that every customer receives a fair, respectful, and reliable experience. They were shaped with input from customers, so they reflect what matters most to you and they'll help us improve the way we work together.

You can read them on our website

www.gentoo-group.com/service-standards

We've partnered with customers to review and redesign services through several major initiatives:

Tpas accreditation assessment

Tpas is a national organisation that helps customers and landlords work together to improve housing services. They support customer involvement making sure customers like you can have a say in decisions that affect your home and community. The accreditation is a nationally recognised award that shows a landlord is excellent at involving customers in decisions about their homes and communities. 20+ customers helped review our self-assessment and evidence. We expect to know if we've got this in 2025.

Complaints Self-Assessment

In May 2024, customers helped validate our approach to ensure we meet the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

Gentoo Together tender process

Customers joined interview panels and helped select contractors for our long-term home improvement programme.

Empty Homes Deep Dive

- 30 customers visited 25 properties. Their insights led to:
- A new Lettable Standard
- A new feedback process for customers moving into homes

Community Fund redesign

- Customers told us the current process was outdated. Together, we co-designed:
- A new application form and guidance
- A centralised customer panel to review applications city-wide. Read more on page 14.

Your voice continues to shape the way we work. Whether it's through meetings, digital platforms, or community events, your feedback helps us build stronger, more responsive services.

Your Gentoo Voice at a glance

2,000+
project views

350+
responses received

Putting customers first, all year round

Community is more than just a place, it's a feeling and we want to help communities to thrive.

Whether it's festive celebrations, career-building opportunities, or green-fingered fun, we're proud to support our customers in ways that make a real difference, season after season.

Bringing people together

From The Big Lunch at Farringdon Youth and Community Centre to another sold-out family fun day in the summer, we want to create moments that matter. With glitter face painting, teddy bear adoptions, planting competitions, and free school uniforms, our events are made possible by generous partners and volunteers.



Festive magic for all

Following the success of our first summery fun day event, we kicked off the festive season with over 1,000 customers for a magical family fun day at the Beacon of Light complete with football, bouncy castles, UV dance parties, gingerbread decorating, and a visit from Santa and Mrs Claus! Families also enjoyed free food, arts and crafts, and pre-loved winter clothing and gifts.

The festive cheer continued with:

- A special trip for 200 customers to see Jack and the Beanstalk at the Sunderland Empire
- 200 turkey dinners hand-delivered on Christmas Eve
- Hundreds of surprise gifts through our Your Gentoo Christmas campaign



Scan the QR code to
watch the highlights
from our Festive Family
Fun Day.

Giving back

In 2024, Gentoo colleagues raised an incredible £10,928 for Sunderland children's charity Love, Amelia.

From summer BBQs and sponsored runs to raffles, tuck shops, and payroll giving, our teams went above and beyond. We also rolled up our sleeves to volunteer at the charity's warehouse and supported key campaigns, donating over 2,000 back-to-school kits, 250 Christmas presents, and thoughtful gifts for Mother's Day.



This partnership is especially meaningful, as many of the families supported by Love, Amelia live in our homes. Together, we're making a real difference to address the challenges in our community.

And it doesn't stop there, watch this space!

Building brighter futures

We're passionate about helping young people thrive. Through the Gentoo Trades Academy, in partnership with Sunderland College and Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust, 14-16-year-olds are gaining hands-on experience in construction—plus mentorship and real career pathways.

We also welcomed our largest-ever group of 28 new apprentices, continuing our proud tradition of creating over 350 opportunities since 2001.

As part of our commitment to our customers and communities to help them thrive, we guarantee interviews for customers and any young person leaving care.



Greener, happier communities

Our communities are blooming!

- Rickleton Primary School won our Ready, Set, Grow competition with a vibrant organic garden, supported by school children and local volunteers.
- A green-fingered couple from Hetton took home the top prize in our gardening competition, inspiring neighbours with their colourful home garden.

Going the egg-stra mile

Our Easter campaign delivered essential support to families across Sunderland. With the help of generous contractors and colleagues, we created and delivered over 80 Easter hampers filled with food staples, toiletries, and chocolate treats, bringing comfort and joy to customers facing the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.



Small grants, big change

Strong communities are the foundation of a thriving society. That's why our Aspire grant programme is dedicated to supporting grassroots organisations that bring people together, promote wellbeing, and create opportunities for all.

Aspire grants offer an opportunity for people to make a positive difference in our communities, whether that be through sports clubs, wellbeing services or community events.

What makes this programme unique is that Gentoo customers are at the heart of the decision-making process, with each grant approved by our involved customers.

In the past year, we awarded 50 grants totalling **£22,142** to local groups across Sunderland. These small but powerful investments are helping to build safer, more connected, and more inclusive communities, many of which directly benefit customers.





Highlights

- North East Dementia Care received £500 to fund craft supplies and awareness leaflets for their day centre in Pennywell. The centre provides a lifeline for people living with dementia and their families, offering creative activities and a welcoming environment
- The Box Youth & Community Project used their £488 grant to transform an unused outdoor space into a vibrant picnic area. Now used by over 240 children and young adults, including youth clubs, walking groups, and adults with learning disabilities, 50–60% of whom are Gentoo customers, this space is a hub for connection and inclusion.
- Lambton Raptors Basketball Club received £500 to cover hall hire and branded kit, helping young people stay active, build confidence, and feel part of a team.

If you or someone you know could benefit from an Aspire grant, visit:
www.gentooogroup.com/aspire

From roofs to roots: Pennywell's £19m transformation



Scan the QR code to
watch the video and
find out more

We're proud to share the success of a £19 million regeneration project that's transformed over 1,100 homes in Pennywell.

Since October 2022, we worked alongside our partners at RE:GEN Group to deliver a wide range of improvements that have made homes warmer, more energy-efficient, and more secure.

More than 1,100 homes have received upgrades such as new roofs, windows, loft

insulation, and improved fencing and gates. These changes have not only enhanced the appearance of the estate but also improved comfort and reduced energy costs for customers.

We used a 'whole house' approach, which looks at how all the parts of your home work together, rather than just improving one thing or area. This way, we can give you the best results, helping you stay warm, save money, and reduce energy waste.

We made a wide range of upgrades, including:



864
new roofs



870
new windows



1,510
new fences



838
steel gates
installed



190 new walls
and
99 wall repairs



42
garage
conversions



905
lofts insulated



828
outhouses rendered



Our commitment goes beyond bricks and mortar. We are committed to investing in the communities we serve. That's why this project also delivered around £900,000 in social and local economic value. We launched The Bread and Butter Thing (TBBT), a mobile food club offering affordable foods and access to support services. We also invested nearly £30,000 in the Pennywell Community Centre, created employment and training opportunities, and carried out local litter picks to help keep the area clean and welcoming.



Scan the QR code to find out more about how we supported Pennywell Community Centre

Customers living in the area gave us overwhelmingly positive feedback, over **92%** of customers said they were satisfied with the improvements.

This work is part of our wider five-year investment plan, which will see over **£200 million** invested in existing homes and neighbourhoods across Sunderland.



Rose Taylor who has lived in her Pennywell home for 52 years, said:

“I’ve had new fencing, windows and a new garage roof. It’s been wonderful. The house is a lot warmer, and the team were really good. It’s made a big difference to Pennywell.”

Thank you to all our customers in Pennywell for your support and feedback.



What's to come in 2025



Our customers have always been at the heart of everything we do. But in 2025, we're stepping it up.

We're building on what matters most, your voice, your needs, your neighbourhoods and taking meaningful steps to make sure that support goes further and reaches more people.

We're hitting the road with our Mobile Housing Hub



Your voice matters more than ever

Our new Customer Engagement Strategy 2025-2027 is all about making it easier and more meaningful for you to connect with us, so we can build better relationships and improve our services. Here's how:

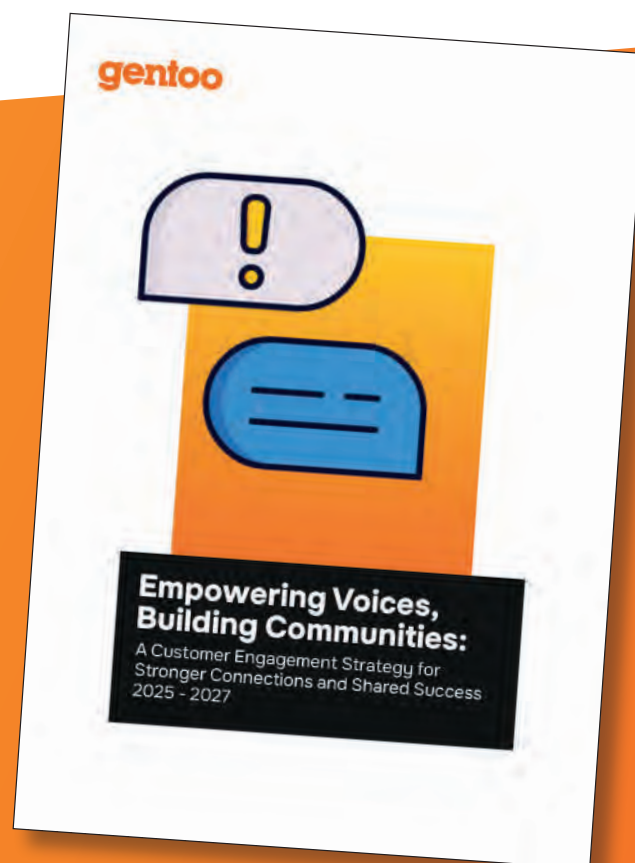
- We'll keep you updated through newsletters, social media, and our website so you always know what's happening
- From quick surveys to community events and estate walkabouts, there are more ways than ever to tell us what's working, and what's not
- Join groups like the Customer Committee, Building Safety Group, or Task and Finish Projects to help design and improve the services you use every day
- Whether it's influencing local decisions or helping us meet national standards, your feedback will help shape the future of social housing

You asked for more accessible, face-to-face support and we listened. This summer, we're launching our Mobile Housing Hub, a travelling service that brings our team directly to your neighbourhood.

Whether you want to talk about:

- Rent or tenancy issues
- Repairs and maintenance
- Financial or wellbeing support
- Digital access or community grants

...you'll be able to speak to us in person, right where you live. We'll be visiting community hotspots across Sunderland all summer long.



- **Our goals for 2025 and beyond**
- Build trust through open, honest communication
- Improve services based on your feedback
- Support vulnerable customers with tailored help
- Make it easier for everyone to get involved

Tell us what you think about this report

Did you read it cover to cover? Skim the highlights? Or just admired the front page? Whatever your thoughts, we want to hear them.

What did you like? What could be better? Did it make you yawn or feel informed?

Your feedback helps us make future reports more useful, more relevant, and (hopefully) more interesting.



**Scan the
QR code to
let us know.**