

North Devon Homes Sustainability Reporting Standard



2024



Welcome message

I am delighted to present our latest sustainability report, which underscores our commitment to creating sustainable homes, neighbourhoods, and communities. At North Devon Homes, we recognise the impact that housing associations can have on fostering a greener future. Our dedication to sustainability is deeply embedded in our corporate strategy, guiding our efforts to maximise social value, maintain strong governance, and uphold our environmental responsibilities.

This report highlights our progress and initiatives aimed at enhancing energy efficiency, reducing our carbon footprint, and improving living conditions for our residents. We are proud to align our practices with the new Sustainability Reporting Standard, ensuring transparency and accountability in our environmental, social and governance performance. As we continue to navigate the challenges of

climate change, we remain committed to working smarter and more sustainably. From improving the energy performance of our homes to reducing waste and promoting eco-friendly practices, we are dedicated to making a positive difference in the communities we serve.



Martyn Gimber
Chief Executive
North Devon Homes

What are Sustainability Reporting Standards?

Sustainability reporting standards are guidelines and metrics that help Housing Associations like ours track and report on various aspects of sustainability. These standards cover a wide range of topics, including energy efficiency, waste management, water conservation, social equity, and governance practices. By adopting the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing, we aim to enhance transparency and accountability in our operations. This allows our customers, employees, and partners, to see our commitment to sustainability and hold us accountable for our actions.

- Sustainability reporting helps us identify areas where we can improve our environmental and social impact. By regularly monitoring and reporting on our performance, we can implement strategies to reduce our carbon footprint, conserve resources, and promote social well-being.
- Adhering to sustainability reporting standards ensures that we comply with local, national, and international regulations. This not only helps us avoid potential legal issues but also positions us as a leader in sustainable housing practices.
- Demonstrating our commitment to sustainability enhances our reputation among residents, partners, and the broader community. It shows that we are dedicated to creating a positive impact and building a better future for all.
- By focusing on sustainability, we are investing in the long-term resilience of our housing association. Sustainable practices help us mitigate risks, adapt to changing environmental conditions, and ensure the longevity of our operations.

The following pages are our assessment against the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing.

Environmental

T1 Climate change

C1

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

A rated = 0.4%
B rated = 11.5%
C rated = 69%
D rated = 16.5%
E or worse rated = 2.6%
Homes without an EPC rating = 0%

C2

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

B Rated 61.5% (8)
C Rated 38.5% (5)

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?

North Devon Homes is currently working on our full Environmental Strategy which includes setting out our net zero strategy. The Asset management team are working towards a long-term plan for retrofit for when we have achieved our medium-term plan for all properties to achieve a SAP band C by 2030.

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?

North Devon Homes continues to update SAP scores for properties when improvement works are completed that will affect the energy rating e.g. insulation improvements. Our asset management strategy sets out our plan for achieving SAP band C for all of our properties by 2030 and this is budgeted for in our business plan. We have accessed Government funding through SHDF wave 1 and wave 2.1 for a total of 168 properties. This has improved the EPC ratings for these properties up to band C and above

and we are currently working on the updating of the EPC scores. We also received funding via Energy Redress for retrofit to a further 18 properties. As a result we have retrofitted 48 homes under wave 1, 59 homes under SHDF wave 2.1 (with a further 61 to be completed in 24/25) and 18 homes under the energy redress project.

C5

**Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 Green House Gas emissions
Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 Green House Gas emissions
per home. If unable to report emissions data, please state
when the housing provider is expected to be able to do so.**

We are currently unable to report on this metric, but plan to by 2026.

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?**

North Devon Homes has mapped the flood risk for all of its homes and this is captured in our asset management database. We will be working with our involved customers to consider the advice and guidance that we can send to our customers depending on the flood risk of the home in which they live. We are also looking at our emergency response for areas where there is a high risk of flooding and whether there are temporary or long terms actions that we can take to mitigate the risks.

T2 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?**

North Devon Homes does not currently have a strategy to specifically promote Biodiversity Net Gain or any specific target. This is largely due to the fact that sites delivered have been outside of the scope of the standard, with small sites completed having gained planning prior to the April 2024 statutory target. Other new build units acquired have been from private developers under Section 106 planning obligations, so NDH have not been involved in the site master planning or unit design.

However, the North Devon Homes Development Strategy does reference alignment to the North Devon Homes Environmental Strategy, and the

Development Strategy will be amended to reflect the statutory requirement to meet 10% Biodiversity Net Gain and offset any negative impact in the design and delivery of our development schemes. Where we are acquiring new build units from a developer, due diligence will be carried out to ensure that a developer is meeting its obligations in respect of Biodiversity Net Gain.

Any development currently undertaken, however, will be designed in liaison with architects and an ecologist will be appointed to complete Ecological Impact Assessments, with mitigations incorporated into the design of any scheme. This will include species translocations, public open space improvements and contributions, and where applicable amendments to design such as wildlife corridors, protected hedgerows and diffused or recessed lighting.

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?

We have a waste management strategy in place. We have surveyed all of our homes in relation to asbestos and proactively remove floor tiles that contain asbestos and any items that are medium or high risk whilst a property is empty. This is all managed in accordance to the hazardous waste regulations. We are also working with South West Water who have identified properties with lead supply pipes and working to replace these. We are reducing the amount of oil fired boilers within our stock and currently only have 5 properties left with this type of boiler.

T3 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?

We look to use frameworks that indicate that consideration has been given to sustainable materials.

C10

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?

Our Waste Management Policy sets out how we will address all manners of waste throughout the organisation. While we do not specifically target waste management, we do ensure that all waste is dealt with in accordance with relevant legislative requirements.

C11

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

No.

Social

T4 Affordability and security



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 the LHA = 79.4%

C13

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

- General needs (social rent) 2285 (66.3%) - includes 16 managed properties
- Intermediate Rent 18 (0.5%)
- Affordable Rent 456 (13.2%) (General needs + Housing for older people affordable rent)
- Supported Housing 0 (0%)
- Housing for Older People 510 (14.8%)
- Low-cost home ownership 79 (2.3%)
- Care Homes 0 (0%)
- Private Rented Sector 8 (0.2%) Market Rented
- Other 89 (2.6%) Leasehold

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): 13 (72.2%)
- Intermediate Rent: 0 (0%)
- Affordable Rent: 0 (0%)
- Supported Housing: 0 (0%)
- Housing for Older People: 0 (0%)
- Low-cost home ownership: 5 (27.8%)
- Care Homes: 0 (0%)

C15

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

Our Energy and Wellbeing service has been an important part of our cost of living and hardship response. We issued the final winter fuel vouchers in February 2024 to 49 households identified as experiencing significant hardship who otherwise may not have been able to heat their home during the coldest months

Many customers find dealing with utility suppliers really difficult, especially when challenging decisions. Most cases can be resolved directly with the supplier but we have supported many customers to take their case through to the Energy Ombudsman service.

T5 Building safety and quality



C16

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

North Devon Homes offer all new customers starter tenancies which after 12 months convert to an assured tenancy.

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 = 100%
- % of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out = 100%
- % of homes for which all required electrical safety checks have been carried out = 96.9%
- % of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out = 100%
- % of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out = 100%
- % of homes for which all required communal passenger lift 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

100% (excluding strategic voids and tenant refusals)

C19

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

North Devon Homes has a damp, mould and condensation policy which is underpinned by a procedure. Our policy and procedure has been developed in conjunction with our customers and has recently been audited by an external provider and our involved customer scrutiny group.

We have developed a customer friendly leaflet to provide advice and guidance for customers in managing condensation. We have also increased resources in our surveying team to ensure that we have the resources to attend every report of damp, mould and condensation.

We identify properties with category 1 and 2 hazards from either surveyor visits, stock condition surveying or specialist monitoring such as radon monitoring. These are monitored either through our asset database or our repairs and tenancy database.

T6 Tenant 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?**

Date of survey - May to December 2023 (2023/24 TSM Perception Survey)
% of residents who responded =21%
The sampling method was by census

We have acted on these results directly, where customers reported a specific issue. We have also carried out further information gathering/consultation with customers to better understand results, focusing on customer groups with lower satisfaction scores.

An action plan has been created in response to feedback received and subsequent actions are underway, for example:

- Expanding estate clear up/consultation events which combine the work of grounds maintenance and the neighbourhoods teams.
- Improving the use of SMS text messaging to update customers on repairs issues and planned maintenance.
- Creating a permanent link between customer involvement work and the TSM responses and subsequent actions.

Here is the data we collected.

We have compared our results to national averages:



67.4%

National average 69.4%

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the overall service from NDH



68.9%

National average 70.4%

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the overall repairs service from NDH over the last 12 months



69.7%

National average 66.4%

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair after they reported it



63.5%

National average 69.4%

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that NDH provides a home that is well maintained



73.3%

National average 76.1%

Proportion of respondents who, when thinking about the condition of their property or the building they live in, report that they are satisfied that NDH provides a home that is safe



62.8%

National average 58.9%

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with NDH listening to their views and acting upon them



66.3%

National average 69.5%

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with NDH keeping them informed about things that matter to them



75.1%

National average 76.3%

Proportion of respondents who report that they agree with the statement: NDH treats me fairly and with respect



35.4%

National average 33.8%

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with NDH's approach to complaints handling



61.6%

National average 65.5%

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied NDH keeps communal areas clean and well maintained



54.7%

National average 62.5%

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied NDH makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood



56.0%

National average 57.0%


Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with NDH's approach to handling anti-social behaviour

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

North Devon Homes has customer groups in which all policies and customer correspondence are reviewed/co-designed. In addition we have a scrutiny group which set a yearly planner to carry out deep dives into areas within the business. A core part of our governance is our Customer Board Partnership who meet every 8 weeks to review performance and our Customer complaints review group meet quarterly to review the complaints received during that quarter and track the learning for the business. In addition we carry out customer satisfaction surveys on Customer Care, response and planned repairs and complaints handling.

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

Unusually for North Devon Homes, we received one housing Ombudsman determination of maladministration. As a result we carried out a review of our ASB policy and procedures, delivered refresher training for all staff on the management of reports of ASB including a new procedure for note keeping. In addition we have purchased and are in the process of implementing a mobile working app to ensure notes and systems are updated/ captured on site.



T7 Resident support

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

The Money Matters service supports customers to identify benefits that they may be entitled to, make and manage those claims and ensure that outcomes are in line with regulations. The team are a trusted source of advice and information for colleagues and the community.

Our Specialist Support Team continued to see an increase in the number of complex and challenging cases presenting to North Devon Homes as the services provided by the statutory authorities' retreat further. We know that we need to develop and focus our service offering and how we work to provide support to respond to these developing demands. We also know from our discussions with our colleagues that we need to continue to

introduce changes to allow us to better respond to this to help us provide more specialist and intensive support where needed.

We re-designed our existing services and team structures to enable us to make internal referrals, better respond to need and to provide the best service offer we can. By making these changes we created a specialist support offer which is available to those customers and families most in need across all of our communities.

Our Independent living team work within our communities to support our older customers, enabling them to remain in their homes. Our hardship fund provides direct support for those struggling with the cost of living, experiencing a temporary crisis or change of circumstances.

We have agreed to trial a new service provided by the social enterprise Pocket Power. This is a telephone service which saves people money on their household bills and connects them to financial support that they may not be aware of. Each household saves an average of £250 a year. They cover all bills in one 30 minute phone call and complete applications and switches on behalf of customers. We will initially offer to support 30 households to find ways to reduce their bills and put money back in their pockets. This has the potential to multiply the return for customers funded through a modest spend from our hardship fund.

The Home Movers Fund element of our hardship provision has supported 44 new customers this year with costs associated with moving and setting up a new home.

As part of the housing application process the Income Officers review the pre-tenancy interview and identify any potential benefits issues, discuss affordability, ways to pay the rent, the tenancy terms and conditions that relate to rent payments, the rent in advance and the various services offered by the Income Team.

The Income Officer looks out for customers who are likely to find it difficult to cover the cost of basic essentials such as carpets, curtains, furniture and white goods. Often this will be households who have been homeless and in temporary accommodation.



T8 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.

North Devon Homes has always taken a proactive approach to neighbourhood consultation, involving affected residents and involved customers in the planning phases of development projects. The development pipeline has not had any schemes at this stage in the 2023-24 Financial Year, but our work on schemes currently in progress has contributed to improvements in the estates we own and manage, or intend to acquire with private developers. We have worked with developers, contractors and our partners in communicating with stakeholders and the wider public on the development pipeline work in progress.

Pill Gardens, Braunton: One block left of old pre-reinforced concrete housing stock which had been stalled due to a long term leaseholder issue has now been unlocked, meaning we can complete regeneration of the overall estate.

The Shields, Ilfracombe: Working in partnership with Elan Homes, on a long term distressed asset. Will deliver the first affordable new build homes in the town for 19 years.

Taw Wharf, Barnstaple: Nearing completion of Phase 4, and design work on Phase 5 (final phase), which will complete the most significant brownfield regeneration in the town in decades. The overall site has involved clearing old derelict factory units, creating a sustainable mixed tenure community, with commercial and retail units, allowing gift aid receipts back to NDH which contribute to affordable housing delivery.

Buckland Brewer: Working with Allison Homes as an affordable housing partner in a new development area in Torridge District. This partnership has helped the developer move forward with the project despite low local interest. We have agreed to work together under a development agreement, which provides cash flow for the project. They are also actively involved in designing and specifying the housing units to ensure they are built as planned.

Governance

T9 Structure and governance

C25

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

Yes (Registration Code: LH4249)

C26

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

Following inspection by the Regulator we have been issued the gradings of G1 , V2 and C1 in the regulatory judgement published on 14th August 2024.

C27

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

NHF Code of Governance (2020)

C28

**Is the housing provider a Not-For-Profit?
If not, who is the largest shareholder, what is their % of economic ownership and what % of voting rights do they control?**

Yes, NDH is a registered Charity (Registered Charity No. 1164142)

C29

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

ESG Risks are incorporated the on Risk Register, and managed in line with the North Devon Homes Risk Strategy. Risk updates are provided to the Group Audit & Risk Committee as well as Board, and there is an annual Risk Workshop.

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.



T10 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 is made up in the following way:

- (1) 25% female
 - (2) 75% male
 - (3) 0% residents
 - (4) 0% disability
 - (5) Average age - 60.3 years
 - (6) Average tenure - 3.65 years
- (includes 2 new board members who were co-opted in May 24)

The board has an EDI Champion who works with the staff EDI champion to promote the EDI agenda. Our Customer Board Partnership works with the board to represent the residents' voice

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?

16.6% Board turnover - we have had 2 new Board members in last 2 years. A further 2 joined as co-optees in May 24 to replace 2 members who are due to leave at the end of September.
0% - SMT turnover.

C33

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

At 31st March 2024, of the six members of the Audit & Risk Committee, two had relevant and recent financial experience.

C34

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

100%

C35

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

Yes.

C36

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

One.

C37

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

The last independent review was carried out in October 2016. The Regulator of Social Housing has recently completed its four yearly Inspection resulting in a G1 grading for governance (published in August 2024)

C38

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

Conflicts of interest declared and updated at the start of every meeting. Any issues are dealt with in line with Group probity, hospitality gifts and interests policy.



C39

Does the housing provider pay the Real Living Wage?

No.

C40

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

8.9% (calculated annually based on 5 April 2024 salaries)

C41

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

1:4

C42

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

- EDI specific training - last completed Feb/Mar/Apr 2023
- Mandatory EDI e-learning course, within the first 6 months for all new starters and every 3 years thereafter for all staff.
- Monthly EDI blogs on intranet
- EDI Champions - Board & Staff
- Avoiding unconscious bias in recruitment workshop provided for managers
- Disability Confident Employer

C43

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

- Mental Health First Aiders - 8 across the company
- Wellbeing Team (whose remit is: health & wellbeing initiatives & support)
- Health & Wellbeing Hub (available on our intranet)
- Annual Health Fair (an event providing all staff access to a choice of health & wellbeing activities)
- Weekly / Monthly wellbeing activities - for example singing, yoga, pilates
- Dedicated on-site wellbeing nature walk
- Occupational Health Advice & Support
- Annual Health Surveillance for Maintenance Operatives
- Cash Plan
- Employee Assistance Programme

C44

How does the housing provider support the professional development of its staff? What % of employees have received qualification that are relevant for their professional development, within the last year?
- Split result by demographic.

We've created a five-year internal development plan for staff in housing roles, covering levels 2 to 5. This plan will support 65 staff members and cost around £100,000. Priority will be given to Level 4 and 5 staff due to transition needs starting in April 2025/26, with enrollment planned for 2024/25.

3 x staff have received a qualification, demographic split as follows:

1 x female - 30-34

2 x male - 20-24 / 50-54

2 x Apprentices

1 x female - 18-20

1 x male - 16-17

TOTAL = 3%



Supply chain

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 work closely with Advantage South West who lead on the majority of our procurement frameworks and use other frameworks such as Procurement for Housing. These frameworks are delivered with social value incorporated as part of the assessment criteria.

C46

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

We work closely with Advantage South West who lead on the majority of our procurement frameworks and use other frameworks such as Procurement for Housing. These frameworks are delivered with social value incorporated as part of the assessment criteria.



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Version 1.0