



# GSA

PARTNER NEWS

WINTER 2024



# REPORTING BACK



## Welcome to the Winter edition of our GreenSquareAccord partner update.

We want to continue to share news of our progress, challenges and opportunities with our most important partners. In this edition you can get an insight into:

- ◆ What actions we have taken to regain our G1 rating from the Regulator of Social Housing
- ◆ Which award we have been short-listed for at this year's Housing Digital Innovation Awards
- ◆ How we're performing through our performance infographic, which shows our performance for the three most important areas of our landlord service, based on what our customers have told us
- ◆ How we're investing in new, high quality and affordable homes across our localities.

We want this update to be useful for you and reflect what you want to know, so please take a few minutes to fill out the short survey at the end.

Thank you for being a valued partner of GSA.

Kind regards,

**Ruth Cooke** Chief Executive



## RETURN TO G1

### **We have returned to G1 status following an in-depth assessment by the Regulator for Social Housing.**

Towards the end of last year, we announced that we have regained our G1 rating with the Regulator of Social Housing.

The regulator is the body responsible for overseeing registered social housing providers. It rates providers based on their governance and financial viability. Following an in-depth assessment (IDA), we have secured the highest governance rating.

In its judgement, the regulator noted that we have strengthened our governance and compliance frameworks. It also said it was clear that our refreshed Board and Executive Team have set a revised strategy that simplifies our organisation's activities and structure while prioritising investment in existing homes.

[> Read more](#)

# MEASURING

# SUCCESS

**We report on key aspects of our performance each month which we share with colleagues, customers and stakeholders.**

Our *how we're doing* monthly performance infographic shows our performance for the three most important areas of customer service for our landlord service, based on what our customers have told us:

- ◆ Contact centre
- ◆ Repairs
- ◆ Complaints resolution

It includes customer satisfaction and our performance against aspects of our service customers have said make a difference to whether they have a good or poor experience.

Following feedback from our customers, we've also created our [performance web pages](#) which together with our performance infographic now include our key performance indicators (KPI's) and trends for:

## Contact centre

- ◆ Customer satisfaction
- ◆ Average call waiting time
- ◆ Average speed of answer to an email

## Repairs

- ◆ Customer satisfaction
- ◆ Fixed right first time
- ◆ Routine repairs completed within 28 days

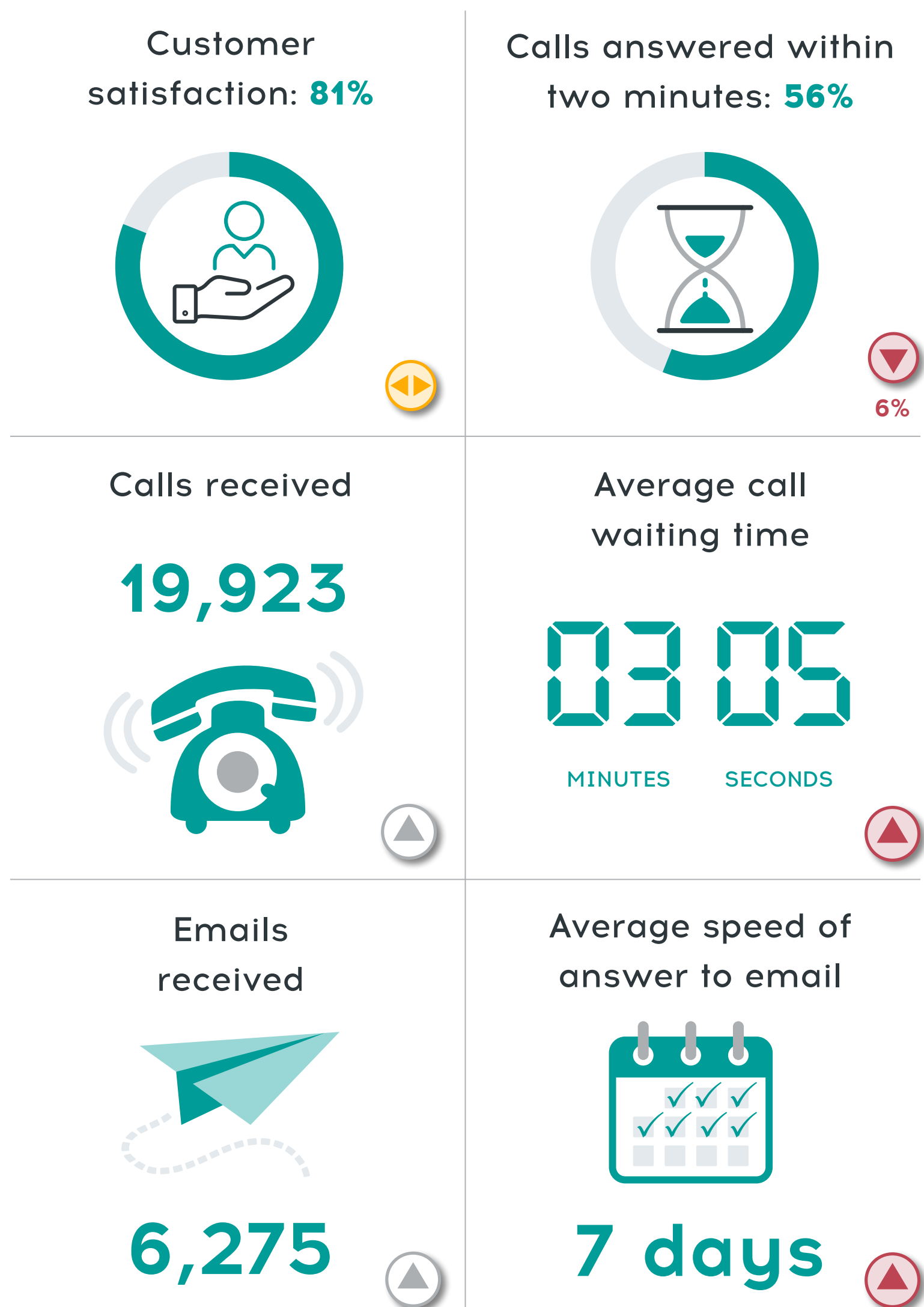
## Complaints resolution

- ◆ Customer satisfaction
- ◆ Responded to within 10 days

See our latest performance infographic on the next page



## Customer Contact Centre



## Repairs



## Complaints





## Robin Bailey to stand down following a successful full term as Chair

In December, we announced that Robin Bailey is planning to stand down as our Board Chair and he will hand over the reins to his successor in Spring 2024.

We recently celebrated our return to G1 status, after an in-depth assessment by the Regulator of Social Housing, meaning that Robin is leaving GSA on a high note.

The search for our new Board Chair has now begun. Our Board Members, and in particular our Board Chair, are responsible for overseeing delivery of our strategy and the provision of high-quality housing and care and support services to the people and communities we serve.

The successful candidate will serve an initial three-year term and will lead our Board's oversight of the organisation, working with our Chief Executive and wider Executive Management Team to deliver first class services to our customers.

Applications close on Friday 19 January 2024.

[> Read more](#)



## Welcoming two new recruits to our Board

In November 2023, we welcomed Gillian Durden and Craig Jones to our Board.

Our Board helps to set our strategic direction and works with our Executive Team to ensure we are held to account for the overall performance of our organisation and compliance with regulation and legislation. The Board also helps to ensure risks to the organisation are understood and managed, and helps to safeguard assets, finances, customers and our colleagues.

Gillian Durden has more than three decades of professional experience working in social housing holding many roles including Housing Officer and Housing Services Manager.

Now retired, Gillian's most recent job role was Head of Planned Maintenance for a housing provider leading on asset strategies for property, compliance, estate improvements and carbon retrofit projects.

Craig Jones is Chief Finance Officer at Aston University and sits on the Executive of the British Universities Finance Directors Group. Prior to his current role, Craig was a Finance and Corporate Services Director for two social housing and care providers in the Midlands and was a Non-Executive Board Member, and Chair of Audit Committee, at Black Country Housing Group for six years up to September 2023.

Welcome to GSA Gillian and Craig!

[> Read more](#)



## **We're expanding our provision of places of safety for domestic abuse survivors in Gloucestershire.**

Last Autumn, we successfully won a bid, prepared by Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Partnership, to expand our provision of places of safety in Gloucestershire.

Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Partnership is comprised of the county's six district councils, Gloucestershire County Council, the Integrated Care Board and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire.

The housing partnership received our application to expand the amount of temporary accommodation, known as 'Places of Safety', for domestic abuse survivors in Gloucestershire. This scheme is being supported by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities grant funding.

We currently provide 12 places of safety, reserved for survivors of domestic abuse who are homeless, within Gloucestershire. Following our successful bid to Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Partnership, we will initially double the number of Places of Safety we provide across the county with scope to increase the provision further.

The Places of Safety in Gloucestershire we manage are houses and apartments which are occupied, on a temporary basis, by adults and their children who have experienced domestic abuse. The homes provided under the scheme are fully furnished to help make the stay as comfortable as possible.

The accommodation is provided for those in the highest need, and people using Places of Safety stay until a permanent and suitable housing solution can be found and will receive specialist support while they are there. We work collaboratively with the county's six district councils to ensure survivors can access suitable settled housing options when moving on from Places of Safety.

[> Read more](#)

*Photo L-R: Beth Bennett-Britton, Public Health Consultant (Gloucestershire County Council), Cllr .Carole Allaway-Martin, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Commissioning (Gloucestershire County Council), Heather Downer, Head of Domestic Abuse Services (GSA), Sharne Maher, Housing Partnership Manager (Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Partnership) and Tessa Davis Davies, Service Manager (GDASS)*

**The Chartered Institute of Housing shines a light on our domestic abuse services.**



The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) published an interview with Heather Downer, our Head of Domestic Abuse Services, as part of their coverage of the 16 days of action against gender-based violence.

The CIH is a professional membership organisation for people who work in housing providing an independent voice for the sector as well as qualifications and continuous professional development for its members.

Heather's interview is available in 'CIH Unlocked' a members-only newsletter which is published fortnightly.

Throughout the interview, Heather discusses the vital work that our domestic abuse services deliver across the West Midlands and South West to assist people at all levels of risk and provide post-trauma support.

[> Read more](#)

# BUILDING NEWS



*GSA colleagues celebrate handovers at Lightmoor Road (L-R) Barbara Hamilton, Lettings Officer, Rachel Wood, Senior Regeneration Officer and Tina Lloyd, Visiting Officer.*

## Former Telford concrete works transformed into 52 affordable homes

We have worked in partnership to transform a former industrial site into 52 new affordable homes in Little Dawley, Telford.

The new development, Lightmoor Road, is named after the road it adjoins and is built on a four-and-a-half-acre plot where a concrete works once stood.

Working with MORRO Partnerships, LoCaL Homes and Telford and Wrekin Council we are providing 49 houses and 3 bungalows all available for an affordable rent. The development comprises two- and three-bedroom bungalows alongside two and three-bedroom houses therefore catering to a variety of local housing need.

Our new homes on Lightmoor Road have been constructed using prefabricated open-panel timber frames supplied by LoCaL Homes - our award winning, low carbon manufacturing facility based in Walsall.

[> Read more](#)



*Three generations of the Passingham family gather outside Passingham Place alongside Carl Taylor our Assistant Director of New Business and Growth*

## Our new social homes development named in honour of late Redditch Councillors

We've transformed the former site of the Redditch Trades and Labour Club, near the town centre, into 40 new high-quality apartments all available for a social rent and reserved for local residents.

The new development has been named 'Passingham Place' in honour of two late Redditch Councillors Betty and Ron Passingham.

The husband-and-wife duo clocked up more than half a century of service between them as Councillors representing wards in Redditch at both a County and District level.

Passingham Place is comprised of 30 one-bedroom apartments and 10 two-bedroom flats ideally situated just a short stroll away from Redditch Rail Station and town centre.

Sustainability has been planned into this development with ample cycle storage and 23 communal parking spaces are available each fitted with electric charging points. Passingham Place has been built using prefabricated timber panels supplied by LoCaL Homes.

[> Read more](#)



## Handovers complete at our Balds Lane development in Lye

With construction complete at our Balds Lane development in Lye (West Midlands) the final handovers took place in December last year.

Our Balds Lane development contains a total of 89 homes with 35 houses and 54 apartments all of which are let for an affordable rent.

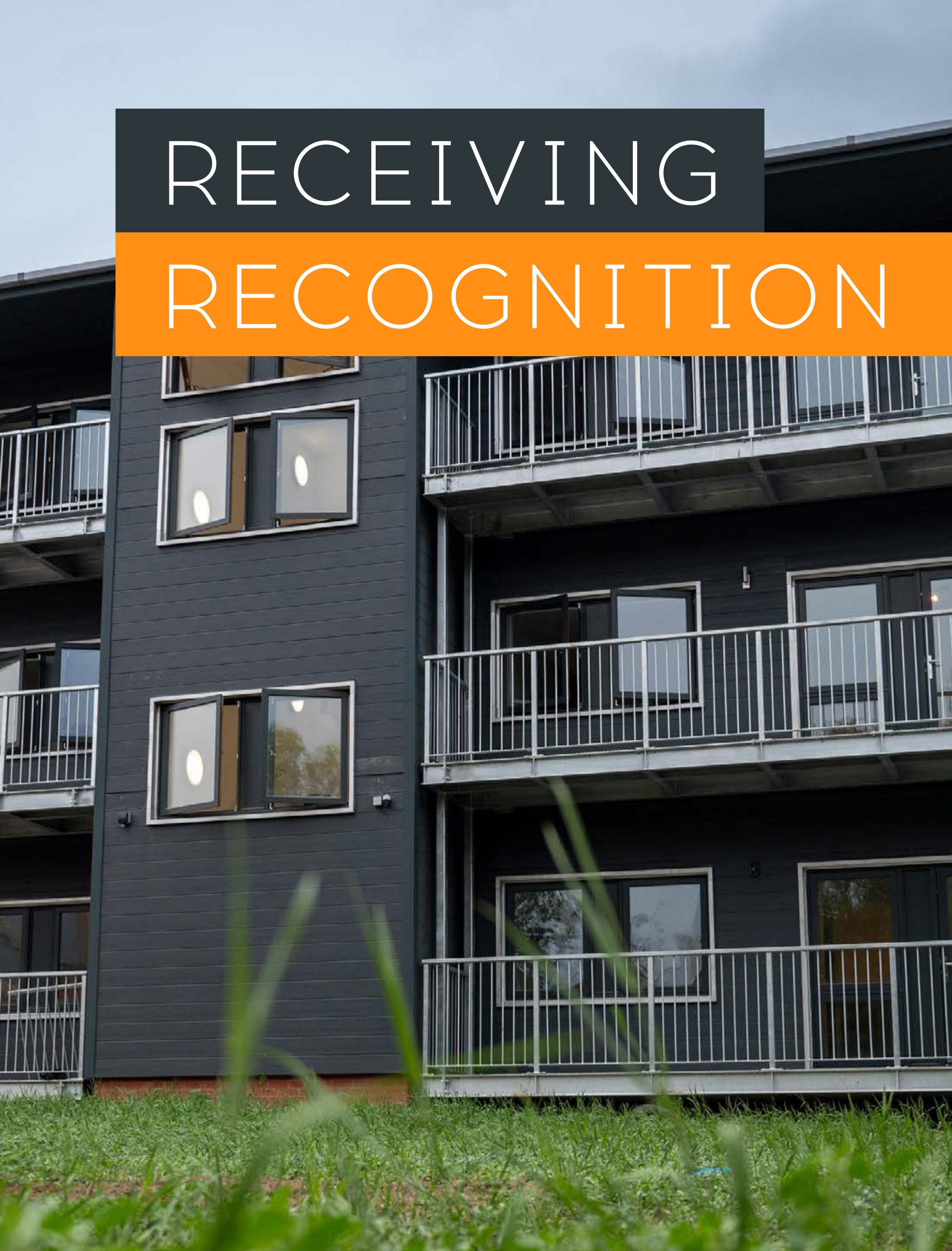
All the new homes at Balds Lane, have been built using low carbon LoCaL Homes Eco-100 off-site construction panels, which will achieve savings overall in terms of carbon release.

By constructing the houses using LoCaL Homes' Eco-100 timber frame panel system in a quality-controlled factory environment, the overall speed of construction was accelerated, resulting in quicker handovers and earlier occupancy for customers.

Our recently completed development in Lye is catering to a variety of local housing need by providing a range of homes including one and two-bed apartments and two, three and four-bedroom houses.

[> Read more](#)

# RECEIVING RECOGNITION



**We've been short-listed in the Housing Digital Awards 2024.**



Our [virtually plastic free homes in Redditch](#), the CHARM building, have been short-listed in the 'Most Innovative New

Build' category at the Housing Digital Innovation Awards. Our submission to the awards focussed on the pioneering nature of this development being the first of its kind in Europe.

The CHARM building has been constructed using timber panels from our low carbon manufacturing facility LoCaL Homes. Each apartment features high end finishes, with plastic free alternatives installed such as wooden kitchen units and aluminium window frames, wiring using a mineral based insulation rather than the usual plastic, and solar thermal heating systems which will provide low running costs and help to prevent fuel poverty.

Our revolutionary virtually plastic free development provides 12 affordable homes built using carefully sourced plastic free alternatives as an example of what can be achieved to reduce environmental impact.

The Housing Digital Innovation Awards are taking place on Thursday 8 February at the Edgbaston Cricket Ground in Birmingham.

[> Read more](#)



### Flower Beds installed at Hambury Court thanks to Travis Perkins Partnership

In November, employees from Travis Perkins Managed Services and Benchmarx Kitchens and Joinery volunteered their time, alongside GSA operatives, to install raised beds outside Hambury Court, one of our supported living schemes in Birmingham.

The new raised beds are in the communal garden at Hambury Court and Travis Perkins Managed Services have provided all the materials to build them alongside donating handheld garden tools, a watering can and a contribution towards seeds and plants.

Our Community Involvement and Investment Team work with our supply chain partners to encourage them to make social value offers to GSA when tendering for our contracts. Hambury Court is an eight-bed supported living scheme in Kings Heath, Birmingham, that paves the way for adults with learning disabilities to live independently.

[> Read more](#)

### We've adopted the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing

We have signed up to the Sustainability Reporting Standard (SRS) for social housing.

We've joined over 130 housing associations and funders as an Adopter of the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standard for social housing.

The SRS is a voluntary reporting framework, covering 48 criteria across ESG considerations such as affordability, safety standards and zero carbon targets.

By adopting the standard this means that we commit to report against the standard on an annual basis, and publicly disclose our report on our website.

[> Read more](#)

### Our Community Impact Fund grant has been increased

Our Community Impact Fund grant allowance has been increased to £1,000 instead of the previous £500 limit, allowing customer and community groups to access more funding for their projects.

The fund is aimed at supporting the work of tenant and resident groups, local charities, voluntary and community groups, and organisations who operate in our areas to develop projects that deliver outcomes that benefit our customers and the communities we work in.

Once applications have been received, they are reviewed by the Community Involvement and Investment Team and the relevant Locality Management Board. All eligible applications are then assessed by our Customer Panel.

In 2022-23 our Customer Panel reviewed nine applications and awarded eight projects £3,760 of funding.

[> Read more](#)

### We've reached 100% compliance with the Care Quality Commission

The CQC is the independent regulator of health and social care in England. They make sure health and social care services provide people with safe, effective, compassionate, high-quality care and they encourage care services to improve. They monitor, inspect and regulate services and publish what they find.

We have 21 locations registered with the CQC and of the 19 that have been inspected, all 19 are rated as Good, which is a compliance rate of 100%.\*

This compares to a national position of 79% for adult social care, as reported in the latest CQC State of Care Report.

Our Director of Quality and Compliance Alex Hicken said: "We're thrilled to have achieved 100% CQC compliance. It is testament to the fantastic work that our Care and Support colleagues do every day. Well done everyone and keep up the good work!"

\*Awaiting formal CQC removal of services in Stoke that are no longer provided by GSA.

[> Read more](#)



# OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

**We strive to provide the best service we can, but we recognise sometimes things go wrong. When this happens, we will do everything we can to resolve the issue.**

We have a dedicated customer contact centre and complaints team. If a constituent or member of your community contacts you about issues with our services, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us:

**Call** 0300 111 7000

**Email** [info@greensquareaccord.co.uk](mailto:info@greensquareaccord.co.uk)

**Visit** [greensquareaccord.co.uk](https://www.greensquareaccord.co.uk)

**Connect** [linkedin.com/company/greensquareaccord](https://www.linkedin.com/company/greensquareaccord)

**Like** [facebook.com/greensquareaccord](https://www.facebook.com/greensquareaccord)

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## TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

We want future editions of this update to reflect what you would like to see. Please take this **short survey** to help us make sure they do.

