



# GSA

PARTNER NEWS

SUMMER 2023





# REPORTING BACK



## Welcome to the Summer 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:

- ◆ How we're seeking to strike the right balance between investing in our existing homes and building new ones
- ◆ How we're looking to recruit two new board members to help to set our strategic direction and work with our Executive Team to ensure we are held account for our overall performance
- ◆ The results of our innovative smart containers project with Jewson Partnerships Solutions (JPS) which was highly commended at the Housing Digital Innovation Awards this year
- ◆ How we're holding face-to-face events to engage with our customers right across our communities throughout the summer with our Customer Panel
- ◆ The new affordable developments we're leading on in the Midlands and South West and how we've made Inside Housing's list of biggest builders again this year.

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



## RUTH

## WRITES

### **GSA Chief Executive Ruth Cooke joins the NHF's calls for a long-term commitment to social housing.**

Finding the balance between investing in our existing homes and building new homes is harder than ever for housing associations with the knock-on effects of inflation and with the demand for social homes higher than ever.

In a blog for the National Housing Federation (NHF), Ruth reflects on the scale of the housing crisis and says housing needs to be a central focus ahead of the next general election.

[> Read Ruth's blog here](#)



# MEASURING

# SUCCESS

**Since December 2022, we have been sharing our performance monthly 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 recently launched our new 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

We know there's still more to do, but by being open and transparent about how we're doing, the progress we're making, and what we still need to improve, we hope this will give our colleagues and customers confidence we are putting our words into action.

See our latest performance infographic on the next page





## Customer Contact Centre

Customer satisfaction: **84%**



Calls answered within two minutes: **65%**



Calls received

**17,490**



Average call waiting time

**02 17**

MINUTES SECONDS



Emails received



**7,152**



Average speed of answer to email



**3 days**



## Repairs

Customer satisfaction: **86%**



Fixed right first time: **88%**



Repairs reported



**4 8 1 5**



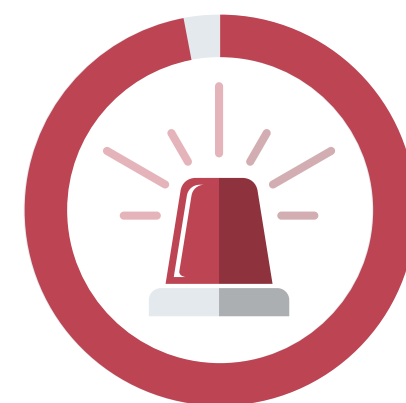
Repairs completed



**4,948**



Emergency repairs completed within 24 hours: **97%**



Routine repairs completed within 28 days: **60%**



## Complaints

Customer satisfaction: **50%**



Formal complaints

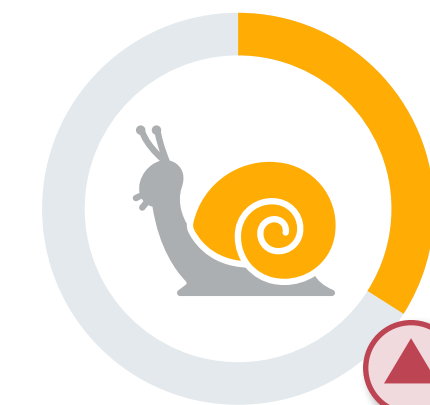
**176**



Responded to within ten days: **98%**



Top 3 reasons for complaints



Delays/service failures: **34%**



Communication / information: **47%**



Incomplete action: **6%**



Resolution



Upheld: **71%**



Partially upheld: **22%**



Not upheld: **7%**







# WALSALL

# HOMELESSNESS

# CONVENTION 2023

Next month, we will be hosting the Walsall Homelessness Prevention Conference 2023 on behalf of Walsall Council.

The highest number of people on record applied for homelessness support at the start of 2023 amid the dual crisis of housing and cost of living. This year's conference will explore how the rise in cost of living is impacting residents and communities across Walsall.

The half-day event will be held on Wednesday 6 September 2023 at Walsall Arena & Arts Centre and will bring together a variety of professionals within social housing and associated sectors.

The two main sessions of the Walsall Homelessness Prevention Conference 2023 will focus on:

## Housing

Almost 80,000 households in England contacted their local council between January and March 2023 because they were homeless or at risk of homelessness, the highest number since these records began in 2018.

This session will look at the impact of the cost of living for Walsall residents and housing providers, exploring what can be done to reduce the risk of homelessness in the borough, particularly for individuals and families on low income.

## Domestic Abuse

New research by Women's Aid reveals that 96% of victims say that the cost-of-living crisis is making their abuse worse, and 73% of victims say they are scared to leave their abusive home because of fears over finance.

The session will look at the housing sector in Walsall, who alongside other key agencies, has a significant role to play in supporting people to manage tenancies, access funds and put plans in place to help the most vulnerable live a life free from abuse.

[> Book your free place at the conference here](#)



# SEEKING

# BOARD

# MEMBERS

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 the 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. We are seeking two new board members to bring their skills, passion, insight, and expertise to our organisation. We are looking for candidates with experience of working in the social housing sector at a senior level or with expertise in a complimentary field. Applications close on Thursday 31 August and interviews will take place on Tuesday 12 September.

[> Find out more an apply here](#)





# JEWSON

## INNOVATION SUCCESS

### In April last year, we announced that we would be working with Jewson Partnership Solutions (JPS) to deliver a ground-breaking repairs and maintenance scheme.

Starting with a pilot project in Wiltshire, we installed several smart containers which our operatives use to manage their own supplies of materials to help them complete repairs first time.

We currently have smart containers in Swindon, Chippenham and in the Midlands region.

Our smart containers work in a very similar way to Amazon Hub Lockers or Inpost machines. When operatives need parts, they order them to the locker via an app, Avail, which alerts them when they are ready to collect along with a code to gain access.

Since we launched the initiative last year, our customers have seen real benefits such as an increased number of repair jobs completed first time and faster turnaround times due to reduced waiting periods for materials.

The highlights include:

- ◆ Travel time to collect materials reduced to 67 hours in April 2023 from 130 hours in March 2022
- ◆ The percentage of jobs fixed first time rose above 80% at the start of 2023, compared to 73% in March 2022
- ◆ Special parts and materials are now sourced on average within six days (this was 14 days with previous suppliers).

Earlier this year, our smart collection points with JPS were highly commended in the Best Repairs and Maintenance Innovation award at the Housing Digital Innovation Awards and they were also recognised at the UK Housing Awards last year.

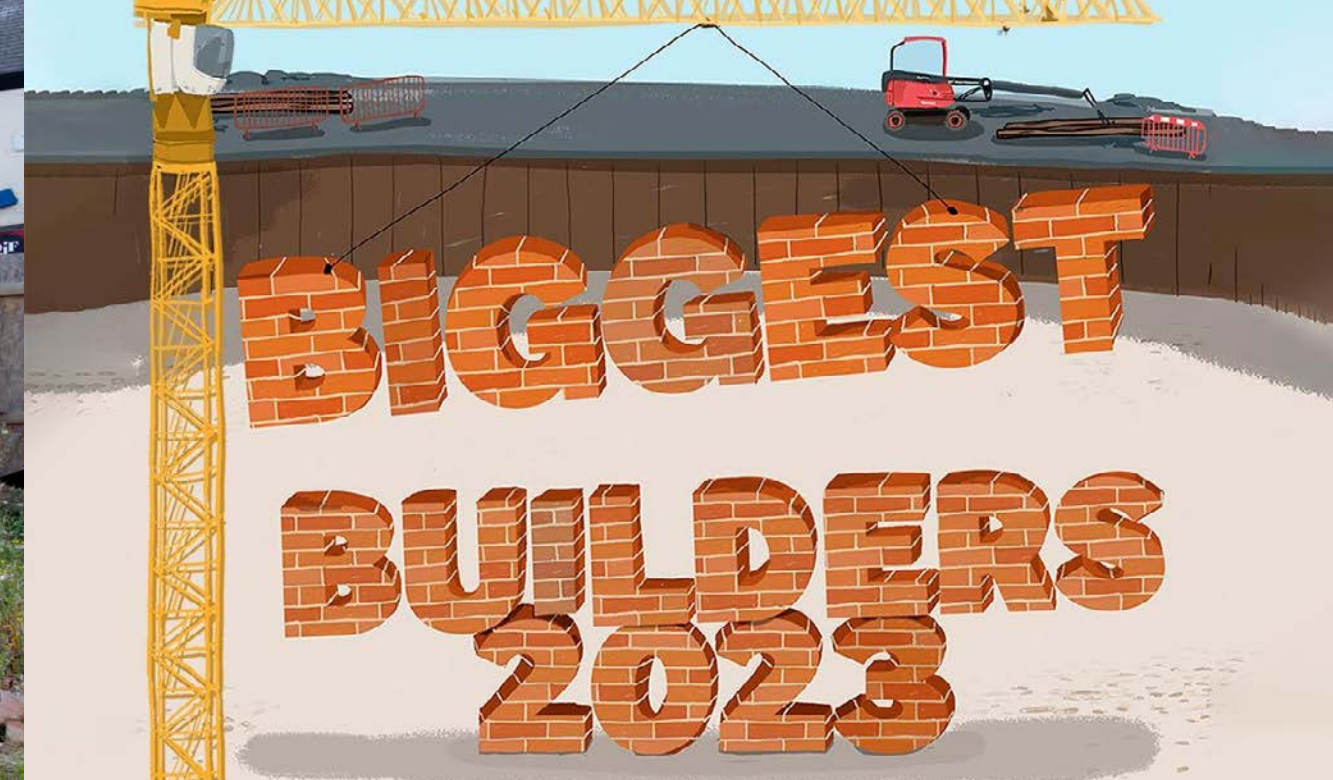
[> Read more](#)





(L-R) Michelle Hyde, Development Director at Backhouse, Sally Nelson, Housing Strategy & Development Officer at Swindon Borough Council and Corrina Johnson our New Business Manager

# BUILDING NEWS



**Our new homes at Tadpole Garden Village comprise 36 properties for affordable rent and another 15 homes reserved for customers seeking to buy under a low-cost home ownership scheme.**

Tadpole Garden Village is a purpose-built residential development which includes a primary school, independent eateries, nature trails, play parks and is well connected with regular bus services into Swindon with a short drive away from the A419.

We will also be providing a total of 27 homes with 19 earmarked for affordable rent and a further 6 homes available under a shared ownership scheme as part of Backhouse's Blunsdon development.

Our new homes at Blunsdon will include one- and two-bedroom apartments and two- and three-bedroom houses.

The scheme is well appointed with decorative landscaping around the boundaries of the homes and vegetation on the edge of the development to ensure privacy. The Blunsdon development also includes a local area of play within its confines. Both developments are well situated with all the conveniences of a large town available in nearby Swindon while being surrounded by the stunning Wiltshire countryside.

[> Read more](#)

**Construction will now soon begin on a democratically owned and run development of 39 new homes and three fit-for-purpose retail units for long-established Stirchley businesses.**

GSA have provided significant support for this innovative development and will continue to be involved until construction is complete. The overall cost of the progressive development is set to be £10.4 million, which will provide:

- ◆ 39 affordable rental homes with laundries and common garden spaces. Secure, sustainable and fit-for-purpose premises for three existing co-operative businesses that are currently renting privately in Stirchley
- ◆ A new community space including a pedestrian walkway, seating, a shared garden and cycle parking
- ◆ Closed timber frame panels, provided by Walsall-based LoCaL Homes, will reduce the overall carbon dioxide emissions and heating bills versus traditional built properties due to its fabric first design principles and high-quality factory fitted insulation.

As the site is close to public transport, cycle routes and parks. It will include over 100 secure bike parking spaces donated by the Commonwealth Games organisers and car ownership will be restricted through membership agreements.

[> Read more](#)

**We have once again been included in the top 50 biggest builders list compiled by Inside Housing which outlines the housing associations that are building the most homes in the UK.**

Ranked at number 36 out of 50, we completed a total of 451 homes between 01 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. During 2022/2023, we provided 24 homes for social rent, 300 for affordable rent and the remainder available under a shared ownership scheme or for open market sale.

Across the West Midlands, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire we have delivered maisonettes, one- and two-bedroom apartments alongside two- and three-bedroom houses.

[> Read more](#)





# INVESTING IN

# OUR COMMUNITIES

## More than 3,500 Black Country residents are online thanks to our Click Start project

The Black Country Click Start project, which was led by whg and GSA helped 3,591 participants learn how to access online services and make the most of the internet.

The £6.9m project, which was jointly funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and European Social Fund (ESF), was set up in 2016 to help vulnerable people use the internet to manage their money, find training, volunteering opportunities or paid work. The scheme was targeted at social housing tenants who would be affected by the introduction of Universal Credit and other changes to the welfare system which came in after 2010.

Black Country Click Start was extended twice, coming to an end in April 2023.

Between 2016 and 2022, 3,587 participants increased their ability to use the internet with confidence, and 2,005 benefited from financial and money advice such as maximising welfare benefits, reducing debt and securing savings through websites.

Black Country Click Start is one of four projects within the Building Better Opportunities programme across the Black Country. The projects are helping people across Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Sandwell move into or closer to the labour market by developing their financial and digital skills.

[> Read more](#)

## Jewson Partnership Solutions have contributed more than £8,000 towards supporting community projects which benefit our customers

Since April 2021, Jewson Partnership Solutions (JPS) have been our main materials supplier and together we have launched an innovative smart lockers partnership which has streamlined our repairs and maintenance service.

As part of the tender process, Jewson Partnership Solutions committed to making an annual payment to our Community Impact Fund in the form of a social value rebate. The value of the rebate is linked to the sales turnover in our contract with Jewson Partnership Solutions.

Our Community Impact Fund offers grants of up to £500 to community groups and organisations whose projects benefit our customers and their local communities.

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.

We have recently received the social value rebate for the January – December 2022 period of our contract with Jewson Partnership Solutions. As a result of this, our Community Impact Fund has been bolstered by an £8,343.71 contribution from Jewson Partnership Solutions. This money will now be put towards funding projects, in the financial year 2023-24, that directly benefit our customers.

[> Find out more](#)





# SUMMER ROAD SHOWS

**This Summer our Locality Teams in partnership with our Community Involvement & Investment Team and our Customer Panel will be holding face-to-face events to engage with our customers right across our communities.**

Having commenced on July 6, our roadshow will be making stops in Bilston, Calne, Dudley, Oxfordshire, Chippenham, Swindon and Wolverhampton to name just a few of the locations.

We're committed to listening to our customers and working with them to improve our services. We're inviting our customers to attend their nearest summer roadshow event to:

- ◆ Meet the colleagues providing services in their area
- ◆ Ask questions and give feedback
- ◆ Find out how they can get more involved with GSA such as through our Customer Panel or customer focus groups.

We will also use insight gathered from these events to inform the development of our Community Investment strategy and priorities along with our social value strategy and supplier framework.

In April this year, we launched our new [Customer Involvement and Empowerment Strategy](#) along with a menu of engagement options that customers can choose from depending on their level of interest and capacity to get involved.

The Community Involvement and Investment Team is responsible for developing and coordinating this strategy, working closely with other teams to ensure its successful delivery.

Any customers who attend a roadshow event will be entered into a prize draw to win £250 worth of shopping vouchers.

[> Read more](#)





### Senior GSA colleagues help equip next generation of housing professionals

Earlier this year, GSA were approached by the University of Wolverhampton to ask if we would be able to share our expertise with learners on their Undergraduate Higher Education Certificate in Housing programme.

Julianne Britton our Director of Customer Services, David Loon our Head of Localities and Elaine Moore our Head of Customer Voice volunteered their own time to share their knowledge and experience with tomorrow's housing professionals.

David delivered a lecture which focussed on the possession process in relation to social housing and the key aspects of housing law and tenure, which students need to understand before starting a career in the sector.

While Julianne and Elaine gave a presentation which looked at effective customer service, the tenant involvement standard and the role of the Housing Ombudsman

The modules are drawn from the undergraduate degree (BA (Hons) Housing Management and Social Care) also delivered from the University of Wolverhampton which is accredited by the Chartered Institute of Housing.

[> Find out more](#)

### Approval received for second stage of our Springvale development

We have been given the greenlight by the City of Wolverhampton Council to build another 33 new affordable homes next to our current development on Millfields Road, Bilston.

The new homes are comprised of one and two-bedroom flats built on land where the Springvale Sports and Social Clubhouse once stood. The former clubhouse has given its name to our new development.

This is the second stage of our Springvale scheme with the initial phase seeing [office space previously used by Accord Housing Association](#) converted into 24 one- and two-bedroom apartments available for an affordable rent.

The development will be built using sustainable timber frames manufactured and supplied by our LoCaL Homes facility in Walsall. A fabric first approach has been taken to the design of the apartments which will help customers save money on their heating bills.

Our Springvale development is conveniently located with a supermarket, pubs and all the amenities of Bilston high street less than half a mile away.

Construction is expected to start on the second stage of the Springvale development in the autumn of this year.

[> Read more](#)

### GDASS praised at meeting of domestic abuse support practitioners

In June our Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS) hosted an event which brought together support services across the county.

The event was organised by Gloucestershire County Council and attended by Anna MacGregor Geographic Lead for the Southwest for the Domestic Abuse Commissioners Office alongside representatives from Gloucestershire Constabulary, GreenSquareAccord, Victim Support and others.

At the close of the event, Anna McGregor praised GDASS and other services for the work that is taking place across the county, particularly highlighting the strong partnerships which have formed to tackle domestic abuse in Gloucestershire.

The event focused on the fantastic work of the commissioned providers and the excellent partnership working of the key statutory agencies involved in addressing domestic abuse in Gloucestershire.

GDASS provides support to women and men aged 16+ who are victims of domestic abuse. It is managed by GSA and is commissioned by Gloucestershire County Council, with support from the county's Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

[> Visit \[gdass.org.uk\]\(https://gdass.org.uk\)](#)



### LoCaL Homes launch new website

LoCaL Homes, our Walsall-based manufacturer specialising in off-site housing solutions, has launched its new website.

Established in 2011, LoCaL Homes offers high quality, high performance, low carbon housing solutions to housing associations and local authorities across the UK.

The revamped LoCaL Homes website includes:

- ◆ Case studies which showcase LoCaL Homes' work on projects including WV Living's Hampton Park development in Bushbury consisting of 184 brand new homes.
- ◆ An overview of the products which LoCaL Homes offers such as the open and closed panel systems, external finishing and insulation options.
- ◆ A who's who in the LoCaL Homes team.
- ◆ A directory of the services which LoCaL Homes offer ranging from design, contract management, manufacturing and supply.
- ◆ The latest news about LoCaL Homes and their projects.

LoCaL Homes is a part of GreenSquareAccord group and is committed to increasing the environmental sustainability of its manufacturing, operational processes, and systems.

In addition to partnering on many of our developments, LoCaL Homes also works with other leading housing associations, developers and commercial projects.

[> Visit localhomes.co.uk](https://www.localhomes.co.uk)

### GSA colleagues support University of Worcester research into Dementia Care

Earlier this year, colleagues and customers at Arden Grove participated in a University of Worcester research project which explores different models of extra care housing for people living with dementia.

The study, funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research School for Social Care, delves into various extra care housing models and their potential to enhance the wellbeing of individuals living with dementia.

Arden Grove opened its doors to academics based at the University of Worcester's Association for Dementia Studies, who were given the opportunity to interview our colleagues, customers and their families. This helped provide vital insight into the functions of a dementia care setting.

The researchers have now developed resource booklets pitched at three key audiences: individuals and families affected by dementia, as well as organisations engaged in providing extra care housing for people living with dementia, adult social care commissioners and professionals.

Arden Grove is one of our specialist housing care services for people with dementia located in Tile Hill, Coventry.

[> Read more](#)

### Women in Social Housing Midlands visit LoCaL Homes factory

A group of women working in the social housing sector visited our LoCaL Homes factory recently to learn about modern methods of construction (MMC).

The visit, organised by Women in Social Housing (WISH) Midlands, was an opportunity for participants to see how MMC is used to build high-quality, high-performance homes.

The visit included a tour of the factory floor, as well as presentations from Katie Gilmartin, WISH Board Co-Chair and Head of Business Development and Innovation at Platform Housing; Luke Boekestyn, Director of Burmor Construction and Eddie Hughes MP, MP for Walsall North and a former Housing Minister.

The tour began with a presentation by Katie Gilmartin which discussed the benefits of MMC, including its speed, efficiency, and sustainability through her experience working with LoCaL Homes and Burmor Construction on Platform Housing's latest development in Kirton, Lincolnshire. She also highlighted the importance of women in the MMC sector, which is still largely male-dominated. After the presentation, participants networked over lunch before taking a tour of the LoCaL Homes factory. They saw how homes are built through offsite manufacturing, starting from raw materials all the way through to the externally finished, completed panel.

The factory visit was a great opportunity to learn more about the innovative technology of offsite manufacturing and understand how it can be used to build a variety of high-quality, high-performance homes.

[> 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.

