

WE ARE

GSA



STAKEHOLDER NEWS

WINTER 2023





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:

- ◆ How we have helped secure our financial future by issuing a £400 million bond for the first time in our history
- ◆ Our new Chief Operating Officer Maxine Espley MBE who has been appointed to lead a joined-up operations function
- ◆ How we have transferred most of our branch-based homecare services which sit outside of our core geography of the Midlands and South West to a national home care provider called Cera Care
- ◆ How we're supporting our customers through the cost-of-living crisis and seeking to strengthen the communities they live in through outreach projects

- ◆ Our new monthly performance infographic covering the important things to our customers: repairs, contact centre and complaints handling.

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 and happy new year!

Kind regards,

Ruth Cooke
Chief Executive



SHARING OUR PERFORMANCE

We are committed to sharing our performance monthly.

Our commitment to service improvement means over the past few months we've made some changes to how we deliver our services, considering feedback and suggestions we have received from you and our customers.

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 you and our customers confidence we are putting our words into action.

Our new 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 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. Take a look at the infographic on the next page, or [view the performance section of our website](#) to find out more about our performance.



Customer Contact Centre

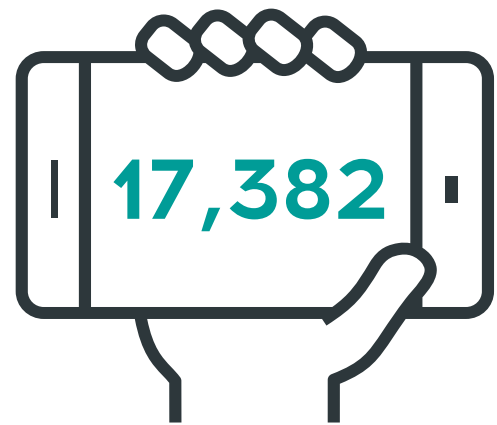
Customer satisfaction: **80%**



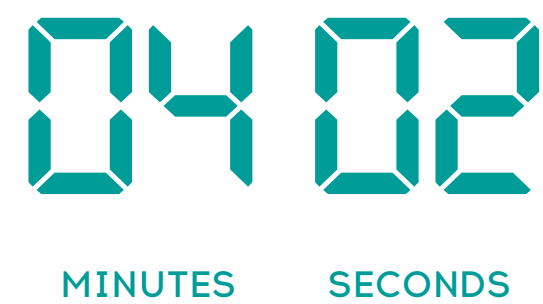
Calls answered within two minutes: **63%**



Calls received



Average call waiting time



Emails received



7,235

Average speed of answer to email



4 days



Repairs

Customer satisfaction: **90%**



Fixed right first time: **80%**



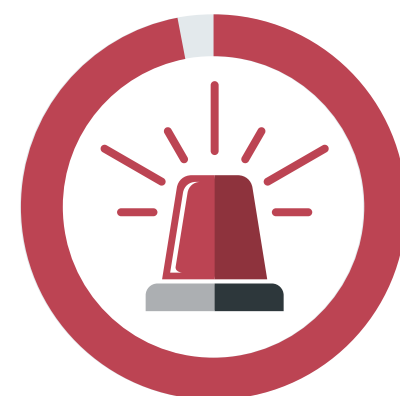
Repairs reported



Repairs completed



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



Routine repairs completed within 28 days: **55%**



Complaints

Customer satisfaction: **38%**



Formal complaints



Responded to within ten days: **100%**



Top 3 reasons for complaints



Delays/service failures: **55%**



Communication / information: **36%**



Incomplete action: **5%**

Resolution



Upheld: **76%**



Partially upheld: **15%**



Not upheld: **9%**

INVOLVING OUR CUSTOMERS



HELPING OUR
CUSTOMERS
KEEP WELL
AND WARM



We've recruited a new Customer Panel

In September we started recruitment for our Customer Panel members, who join our newly appointed Chair, Sarah Mason.

We received over 70 applications from customers, and we're pleased to announce we've now recruited 14 panel members, holding our first meeting at the end of last year.

The new Customer Panel will work in partnership with us to ensure customer-led scrutiny where the customer's voice is heard and used to influence and drive performance and service improvements.

The panel will also provide assurance that we are conducting ourselves in an open, transparent, and accountable way.

[Click here to read an interview with Sarah Mason, the Chair of our new Customer Panel to find out more about the panel and what she is looking forward to most in her role.](#)



As winter is upon us and energy bills are continuing to rise, our heating hub offers practical tips and information as well as access to financial guidance and support to help our customers.

The hub features a range of advice and guidance including how to check your heating is working, how to bleed radiators, how to prevent pipes from freezing, how to draught proof your home, how to tackle damp and condensation and how to access financial support.

[Visit our heating hub here.](#)





SUPPORTING OUR CUSTOMERS



Helping our communities with our new Community Impact Fund

In October we launched our Community Impact Fund, which offers grants of up to £500 to community groups and organisations whose projects benefit our customers and their local communities.

The fund is aimed to support the work of tenant and resident groups, local charities, voluntary and community groups, and organisations who operate in our areas to develop projects that:

- ◆ Provide opportunities to access employment and develop relevant skills
- ◆ Develop financial capability
- ◆ Improve digital inclusion
- ◆ Promote health and wellbeing

Our Customer Panel recently awarded funding to the following three projects:

- ◆ The Waste Not Want Not (WNWN) Fresh Start project in Chippenham received £500 to help them to continue to provide affordable furniture and essential goods free of charge under to those who are fleeing domestic abuse or emerging out of homelessness
- ◆ Blackbird Leys Community Larder CIC Open for All project received £500 to help them progress from being a food organisation to a more social and wellbeing focused group by hosting social events for their customers
- ◆ Barton Community Association received £400 to host a VIP Christmas meal for older residents in December.

[Find out more about our Community Impact Fund and how to apply here.](#)



OUR NEW CHIEF

OPERATING OFFICER

We have appointed Maxine Espley into the new post of Chief Operating Officer (COO).

Starting this month Maxine will lead a joined-up operations function which will provide services for more than 54,000 housing customers, across 25,000 homes, and within more than 100 care and support services.

As COO, Maxine will oversee the delivery of the services within our Operations Directorate including repairs and maintenance, customer service, homes and communities, asset management and all care and support services.

Maxine brings over 30 years of senior operational experience across housing, health and care and an in-depth knowledge of GSA with her into this crucial new role.

Maxine says: "I am delighted to have been appointed as the Chief Operating Officer.

"I have spent my whole career, including my time at GSA, striving to deliver high quality and customer-focused services and I carry this same ambition and determination into my new role.

"I am looking forward to working with our many passionate and committed colleagues, our customer panel and our stakeholders to ensure we continue to improve our services and deliver the very best we can for our customers."

IMPORTANT HOMECARE NEWS



In recent months we have been considering the geographical coverage of GreenSquareAccord.

Since we created our new organisation, we have significantly extended the reach of our operation and we have taken some time to consider the right core geography for our future business.

We have therefore transferred most of our branch-based homecare services which sit outside of our core geography of the West Midlands to national home care provider Cera Care this month.

This includes the following homecare branches from which we provided registered care services in the homes of our customers:

- ◆ Doncaster (including services for Barnsley)
- ◆ Oldham (including services for Salford)
- ◆ Tyneside (including services for Gateshead and Newcastle)
- ◆ Kettering
- ◆ Nottingham City
- ◆ Nottingham County
- ◆ Preston

The transfer also includes colleagues who deliver these services being successfully transferred to subsidiaries of Cera Care through a process known as a TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings - Protection of Employment).

We are very proud of all our homecare colleagues and the way they have responded to the many challenges over the past few years.

INVESTMENT NEWS

£400m bond to invest in our existing and new homes.

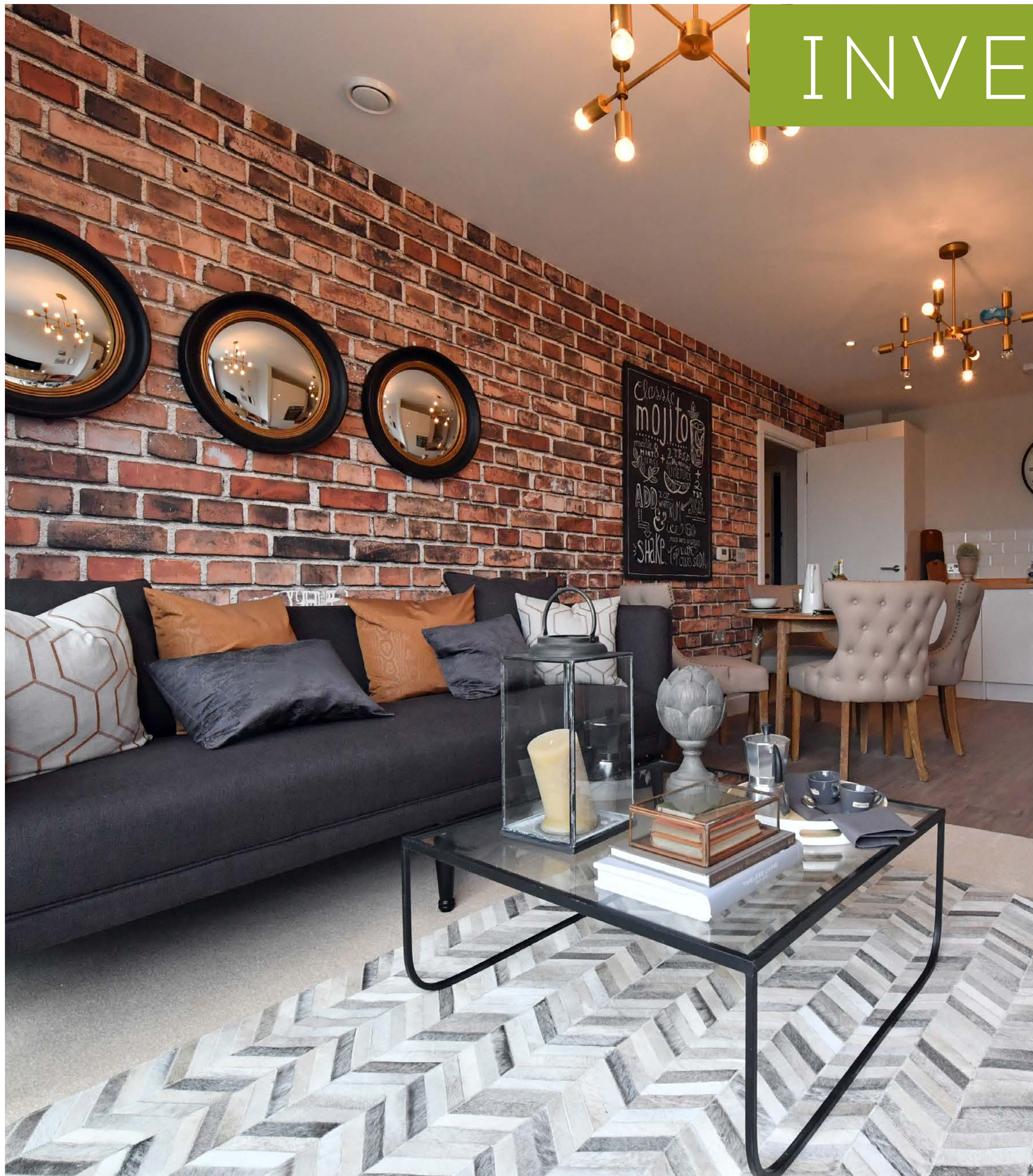
We've recently received some good news on our long-term funding position after going to the bond markets on the back of the positive messages in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement.

We've successfully secured a 25-year bond at a rate of 5.25% with a £100m retained element. This is an interest rate which is 0.75% below the rate assumed in our financial plan, creating welcomed headroom in our 2023-24 budget.

The bond is the first housing association bond issued since April, as we took advantage of the fact investors who favour social housing have not had anywhere to put their money until now.

It was issued to us in line with our new sustainable finance framework and will help us refinance our existing debt and help us continue to fund the delivery of a range of projects including proactive investment into our existing homes and our delivery of new homes.

[Read more >](#)



RECEIVING

RECOGNITION



Highly commended at UK Housing Awards

Our innovative smart collection points project with Jewson Partnership Solutions (JPS) has been recognised at two prestigious housing sector awards.

Our partnership with JPS is delivering a fresh approach to social housing repairs thanks to the UK's first smart collection points which give operatives round-the-clock access to materials or tools they've ordered, whenever and wherever they need them.

In December our smart containers partnership was Highly Commended for the Innovator of the Year - housing association or local authority award at the UK Housing Awards.

The scheme was also short-listed for the Most Innovative Partnership award and the Best Repairs and Maintenance Innovation award at the Housing Digital Innovation Awards.

[Read more >](#)

Seal of Excellence for Chalkwood development

Paul Edwards, Site Manager for our Chalk Wood development in Gloucestershire, was recently presented with a sought-after Seal of Excellence Award at the National House Building Council (NHBC) Pride in the Job Awards 2022.

Every site manager managing a site registered for NHBC Buildmark is automatically entered in the Pride in the Job Award and they compete against each other at a regional level to win Quality Awards, Seals of Excellence, and the overall Regional Awards in their categories.

The Pride in Job Awards are widely regarded as the Oscars of the house-building industry and the awards this year have been paced over three stages; the first part saw Quality Award winners being announced in July, Regional Award winners and Seal of Excellence receipts published in the autumn and the National Award winners will be chosen this month.

[Read more >](#)

Recognised as an inclusion employer

In November 2022, we were given Silver status in the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) Employer Recognition Scheme showcasing our commitment to the Armed Forces and their families.



We also recently renewed our Level 2 Disability Confident badge as a member of the Disability Confident government scheme. We have now been a Disability Confident Employer for five years running.

[Find out more about the AFC Employer Recognition Scheme here.](#)

[Find out how we continue to be a disability confident employer here.](#)



We're building 84 affordable homes in Walsall, West Midlands

Planning approval has been granted by Walsall Council for [GSA to build 33 affordable homes](#) on disused industrial land close to the Wyrley and Essington canal and another 51 dwellings on the former site of the [Eagle Works factory in Willenhall](#).

All the new homes across both schemes will be built using low carbon LoCaL Homes Eco 200 off-site construction panels, which will reduce construction times on site, and achieve savings overall in terms of carbon release.

Both developments will help to meet a range of local housing need by providing one and two bed apartments alongside houses with two and three bedrooms.

We attended ASB All Party Parliamentary group launch

In November we attended the launch of an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on anti-social behaviour (ASB) at Westminster.

We were approached by housing association Midland Heart to be part of the group alongside whg, Accent, Karbon, EMH, and Sanctuary.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group are committed to frequently discussing how ASB affects customers and the issues impacting local authorities, housing providers, and other stakeholders in addressing it.

The group will meet over a series of planned workshops that will discuss topics such as the types of ASB and what impact it has on customers, communities, and stakeholders.

[Read more >](#)

Helping Wolverhampton youngsters get more active

GreenSquareAccord, Planning for Real and TLC College have been commissioned by Wolverhampton Voluntary and Community Action (WVCA) to work with children attending school in St Peters Ward, Wolverhampton, to gain a deeper understanding of what barriers exist to increased physical activity and how they can be overcome.

To date, the project team has held several mapping sessions with pupils at West Park Primary School, SS Peter & Paul Catholic Primary Academy and Dunstall Hill Primary School to understand what the current level of provision is for sport, games and recreation and what the children would like to see in future. More sessions will be held involving local schools early in the new year.

[Read more >](#)

First residents move into our new homes in Sutton Courtney

We have handed over the keys to the first residents of our brand-new affordable homes located in Sutton Courtney, Oxfordshire.

The new homes, part of the larger Orwell Park development built by Linden Homes, are comprised of two and three-bed houses and one and two bed apartments.

We are providing a total of 32 affordable homes with eight available under a shared ownership scheme and another 24 homes for affordable rent.

[Read more >](#)

Electric vehicle trial provides a boost to repair operations

Recently, we have embarked on an electric vehicle trial which aims to explore new ways for us to become more sustainable and reduce the environmental impact of our activities.

The initiative has seen GSA add three Renault Zoe vans, which are powered by an electric engine, to our fleet with two in use in our South region and one in the Midlands area.

The electric vans have been leased for a three-year period and over the course of that time we expect them to help reduce our carbon footprint. Renault Zoe vans have been classified by the UK Government as low-emission vehicles because they have an CO2 output of less than 50g/km and can travel at least 96km (60 miles) without any emissions at all.

[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

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.

