



**Environmental,  
social, and  
corporate  
governance**

2022

**Better  
Futures**

**Better  
Homes  
Communities  
Business**

[B3living.org.uk](https://B3living.org.uk)





# Our mission

To make a sustainable,  
positive change to  
the housing crisis for  
our customers and  
communities.

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## About B3Living

“B3” stands for better homes, better communities and better business. We work to create better futures for local people by providing safe, warm and affordable homes and excellent customer services.

We are a local, not-for-profit housing provider operating chiefly in Broxbourne, south-east Hertfordshire, and the surrounding areas. As a social business with a focused geographical footprint, we enjoy close ties to our community: our stock includes more than 5,000 homes and we have a team of 180 colleagues, many of whom live in the area.

86%

customer satisfaction



£50m

provision to tackle carbon emissions



£23.1m

customer save in rent compared to private market



G1/V1



88%

homes with EPC C or better



We pay the Real Living Wage

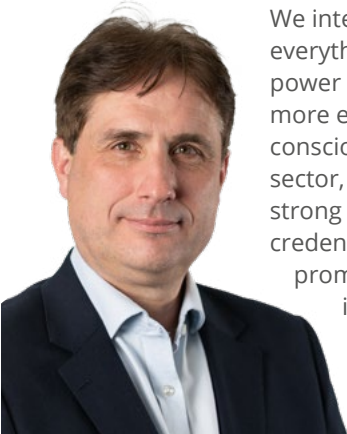


# Foreword

**Steve Woodcock**  
Chief Executive

## Welcome to B3Living’s second Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance Report.

As a social business, we exist to offer good quality homes and services to those who would be otherwise priced out of the housing market, therefore our core purpose has always naturally aligned with the themes of ESG. But as we seek to extend our impact in today’s context, this report is here to help our stakeholders track our journey and our contributions towards a more fair and sustainable future.




We intend to do everything in our power to create a more environmentally conscious housing sector, support its strong governance credentials and promote its increasingly important social purpose.

Going into the 2021-22 financial year, our position was positive. Historically, we have developed close links within our community, offered the living wage and invested in our homes. The latter was evidenced in our SHIFT sustainability assessment, in which our stock held the highest SAP ratings (i.e. energy efficiency ratings) among their client base.

Similarly, we matched the performance of our peers across all three dimensions in our Moody’s ESG credit impact score and were among only 10 housing providers to receive an environmental risk score of 2 (low to neutral).

Our plan is to build upon this momentum, continuing to invest in making our homes safe and efficient and in tackling the issues the wider issues affecting the lives of our customers and colleagues. In 2021-22, we invested a further £12m in maintaining and improving our homes and set aside a £50m provision in our business plan for carbon reduction initiatives.



Top SAP rating

Top 3 for homes with EPC C +

SILVER

**MOODY’S**  
INVESTORS SERVICE

Moody’s credit impact score: 2



ESG priorities flow through every part of our business and, for us, it is about approaching all three dimensions hand in hand. This will be particularly important in the coming year as rising inflation is predicted to trigger a cost-of-living crisis; therefore, our work to reduce home energy consumption will also be key to alleviating fuel poverty among our customers, in turn linking into our wider work around tenancy sustainment and understanding the customer voice.

Partnerships will also feature prominently in our ESG story. This report details the role of our supply chain and community networks, as well as our new “Greener Herts” partnership with two neighbouring housing associations. We believe this innovation is a great advert for

the sector that three outward-looking providers have come together to make a real difference in Hertfordshire and achieve more by working collaboratively.

This is our second year of formal reporting against the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing (both core and enhanced criteria – see Appendix, on page xx) and our first year delivering on our new “Better Futures” corporate strategy. Our three-year strategic ambitions correspond closely with our ESG responsibilities, highlighting how seriously we view these commitments.

I am pleased to report that our new strategy has had a galvanising effect on our ESG performance, leaving us well placed to achieve more as we move forward.

# ESG reporting at B3Living

For us, Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) reporting is not simply about accessing cheaper sources of new finance. It is about doing our bit in the drive to make society more considerate towards its community and environment, as well as raising awareness, internally and externally, of how we are progressing on our roadmap to tackle any negative contributions our business is making.

We have opted to report ESG using the Good Economy's reporting standard, which was developed in collaboration with Peabody, Centrus, Savills, Trowers & Hamlin, Clarion, Sovereign, M&G, etc.

This standard splits ESG reporting requirements into 12 themes linked to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. These themes allow us to tell our story, which includes B3Living's positive contribution towards ESG as well as those areas where we still need to learn to improve our performance and reduce our carbon footprint.

(See page 74 for the full SRS reporting framework)

The Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing

	Theme	Theme name
Social	T1	Affordability and security
	T2	Building safety and quality
	T3	Resident voice
	T4	Resident support
	T5	Placemaking
Environment	T6	Climate change
	T7	Ecology
	T8	Resource management
Governance	T9	Structure and governance
	T10	Board and trustees
	T11	Staff wellbeing
	T12	Supply chain management



When considering ESG, we recognise the opportunities available to us as a housing provider, but the limits to our reach and impact.

As the closest to our operations, we have the greatest impact on the lives of our customers. The further out we go, we become increasingly reliant on the cooperation of other like-minded people and businesses to achieve our wider goals of promoting a better community and tackling climate change.

However, in recent years we have invested significantly in our network and productive partnerships, both local and strategic. We believe that taking a proactive stance in building new and existing partnerships and giving our support to regional and national bodies will add to our momentum in achieving real and sustainable change.

# THE ESG STANDARD

1

No poverty

2

Zero hunger

3

Good health and wellbeing

4

Quality education

5

Gender equality

6

Clean water and sanitation

7

Affordable and clean energy

8

Decent work and economic growth

9

Industry, innovation and infrastructure

10

Reduced inequalities

11

Sustainable cities and communities

12

Responsible consumption and production

13

Climate action

14

Life below water

15

Life on land

16

Peace, justice and strong institutions

17

Partnerships for the goals





# Social

Strong social values are part of B3Living's DNA as an organisation. However, we have sought to go further with our Better Futures Strategy, with several of its strategic themes bearing strong links to this strand of our ESG agenda, for example our focus on "support when life changes", "safe, good quality homes and estates", or "building locally".

We recognise that instability in our customers' lives can be driven by external factors, which is why our service is broader than purely the offer of a home. As a local provider, we have been able to make the most of our closeness to our community and our customers, and we are pleased to report encouraging progress in our efforts to expand our support to customers, amplify the customer voice, and enhance our area through place shaping.



## Theme: Affordability and security



### Criteria 1

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 local authority.
- 2) Rent compared to Local Housing Allowance (LHA).

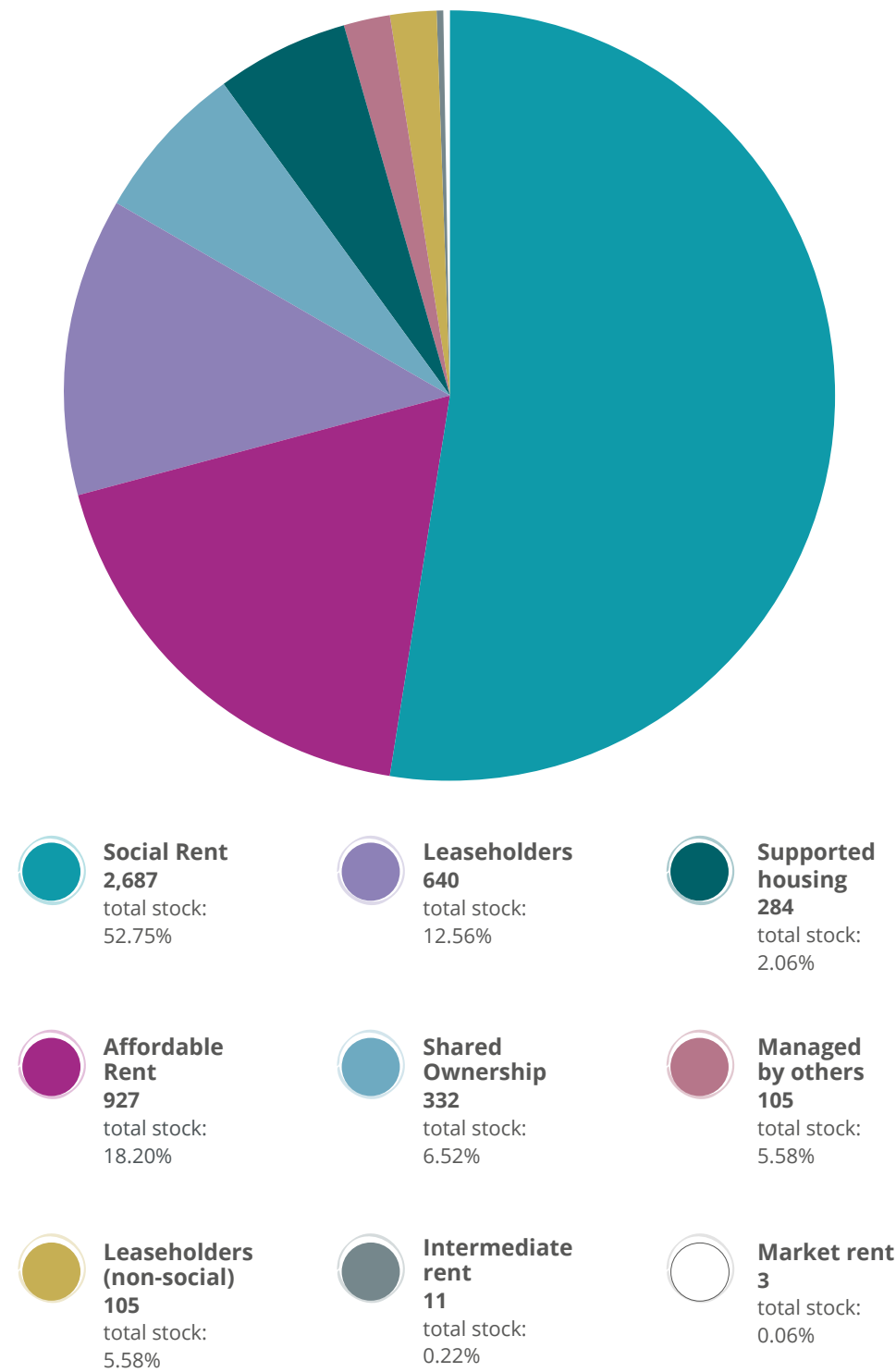


The graphic shows that we offer our customers substantial savings against the market and the local housing allowance. During 2021-22 we saved our customers around £16.5m against the local housing allowance and over £23.1m against the market.



Criteria 2

Share, and number, of existing homes allocated  
(homes completed before the last financial year).

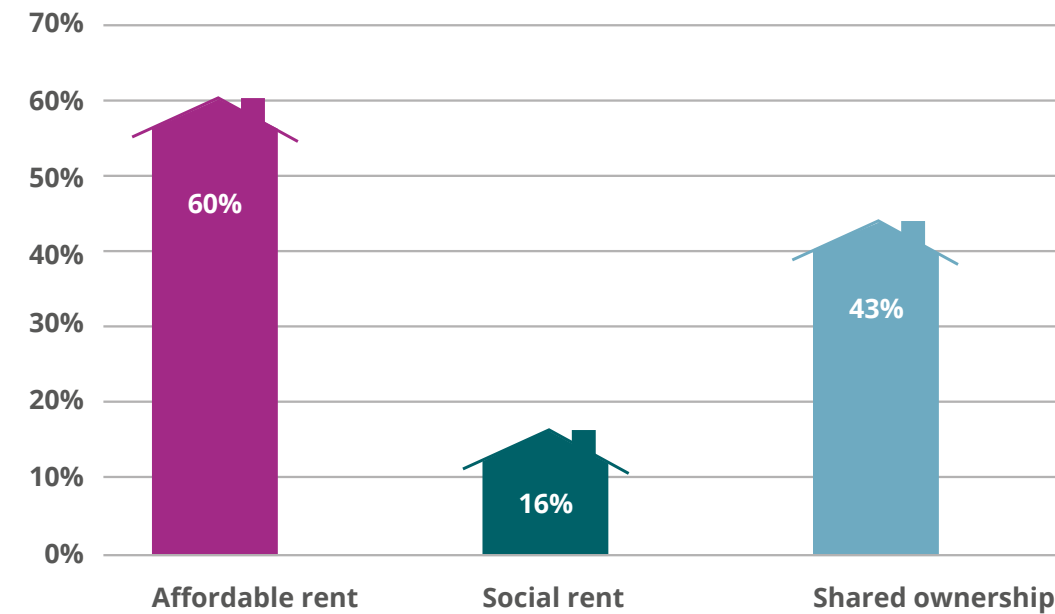


Criteria 3

Share, and number, of new homes allocated  
(homes that were completed in the last financial year).

Despite the disruption our construction contractors experienced from the pandemic, which resulted in shortages in the availability of materials and labour, we managed to deliver 119 new much-needed affordable homes for our communities. This equates to a 2.3% increase in our stock, which is greater than sector upper-quartile performance (2.0%).

In our Better Futures Strategy, we set a target to deliver 500 new affordable homes over its three years. Over 70% of these are to be built in the Borough of Broxbourne, which has historically seen very limited development of social or private housing, so our homes will represent a positive and significant contribution to alleviating the housing crisis in our local community.



“Our homes will represent a positive and significant contribution to alleviating the housing crisis in our local community.”





## Case Study

# Delivering for the community at Beech Walk

This site in Hoddesdon was previously home to 1950s buildings in need of significant modernisation. Following a complete redevelopment, we were able to provide 39 new homes for people over 55 in an ideal suburban location, close to the town centre.

Importantly, this project also includes 16 two-bedroom homes for social rent. These are some of the only homes for social rent built in our borough in recent years and represent a rare provision for this demographic, where our local authority partners had identified a need for more affordable, long-term housing options.






Criteria 4

How is the housing provider trying to reduce the effect of fuel poverty on its residents?

We signpost our customers to support agencies where we identify that there is a need for additional financial support, and through working closely with local government, we give our customers access to fuel poverty grants and fuel vouchers (approx. £17,000 in total was given to customers in the form of fuel vouchers during the 2021-22 financial year).

As an organisation, B3Living is signed up to LEAP (the Local Energy Area Partnership), which assists our customers to change energy supplier and access energy-efficient equipment to reduce their consumption, such as free low-energy light bulbs or draught excluders.

Every year we reach out to all customers via text to check if they are experiencing any financial struggles.



This continued to generate a significant volume of responses in 2022 and, as a result, we are able to support more customers to access fuel vouchers and other debt advice through local partners such as LEAP, Herts Help, the Money Advice Service, Step Change and Citizens Advice. Furthermore, we are working with our partners to access LAD3 funding, which will enable us to arrange home improvements to properties with EPCs in bands D or lower, supporting those residents to reduce their energy consumption, and thus, their costs.

Criteria 5

What % of rental homes have a three-year fixed tenancy agreement (or longer)?

0%



fixed term tenancy agreements

Many of our customers have in the past, or are continuing to, experience a significant amount of uncertainty, be it financial or in their personal lives. Therefore, to offer greater reassurance and stability, we have abolished fixed-term tenancies at B3Living.

In March 2021, our Board agreed to cease issuing fixed-term tenancies to our customers. Following legal advice, we wrote to all our customers who have an existing five-year fixed-term tenancy to let them know that once their current tenancy has elapsed, they will automatically roll onto an assured tenancy. Therefore, in effect, we do not have any fixed term tenancy agreements in place.





Theme: Building safety and quality



Criteria 6

What % of homes with a gas appliance have an in-date, accredited gas safety check?

Building and customer safety is a significant priority for our Board, and they have indicated a low tolerance of risk in this area.

In recent years we have significantly increased our investment in this area. We have commissioned a specialist consultant, Manifest, to support us to improve performance and tighten procedures to ensure we

meet the Board's expectations and keep our customers safe.

In 2022-23 Savills have been commissioned to complete a secondary review of our approach to ensure that we have fully embedded the recommendations and aligned ourselves to best practice where possible.



Criteria 7

What % of buildings have an in-date and compliant Fire Risk Assessment (FRA)?

We aim to be as robust as possible on fire safety, so undertake fire risk assessments regularly using specialist external contractors.

For all high-rise residential buildings (HRRB) and any other buildings where the structure, design or occupation type increases risks (e.g. supported housing schemes for older people), FRAs are completely yearly.

At 'standard' homes for general needs residents, we arrange FRA inspections every two years, unless there is a significant change that would warrant an earlier survey.

In the year, we completed external wall surveys on all of our high priority/risk blocks.



Criteria 8

What % of homes meet the Decent Homes Standard?

We have a long history of investing in our existing homes at sector upper-quartile levels.

All our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard and have done so for the last decade. Our past and forecast levels of investment

in existing homes will place us in a good position to meet any changes in the Decent Homes criteria.

100%



Theme: Resident voice

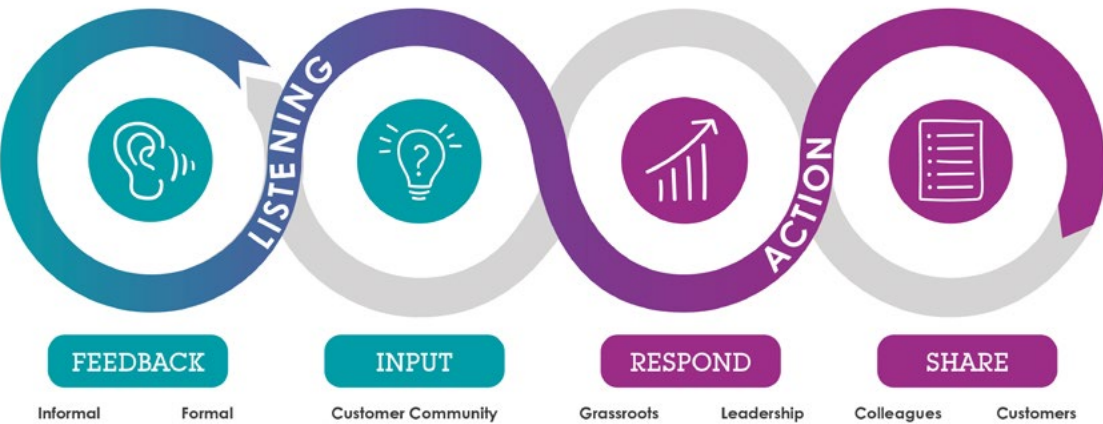


Criteria 9

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

Between 2020 and 2022, we have developed a Customer Influence Framework, which was finalised with the launch of our new Customer Influence Policy in March 2022.

Our Customer Influence Framework



Our Framework is broad to help us build a representative picture of our customers' feelings, concerns, and suggestions for improvement. It also sets out the mechanisms that we use to ensure that the customer voice is heard at all levels in the organisation and used to guide our strategic decision making.

We recognise the value in both formal (e.g. surveys) and informal (e.g. events) opportunities for customers to give us feedback on our services, and we offer a broad range of channels which our customers felt was key for customer influence to be accessible and inclusive. In 2021-22, membership of our

more structured customer network (called our "Customer Community"), grew to 130 customers. This network is designed facilitate co-production and customer involvement in decision making, and during the year they contributed to 11 consultations. To appeal to a diverse audience with different levels of availability, these activities ranged in scope from short online polls (e.g. voting on blinds or carpets to steer our re-let standards) to strategic in-person focus groups (e.g. on rent changes). Closing the feedback loop is key, so we share our performance with our customers regularly via our email newsletters, magazines and our dedicated annual report to customers.



"When I come to these meetings, it's not like 'they're up there, I'm down here' - we're treated all the same. But I think the most important thing to me is that I'm listened to. There's a difference between listening and hearing, and you guys do both."

Maria, member of our Customer Community

Through these channels we also report back to our customer base on the work of the Customer Community and any service changes we have made in response to their feedback or input.

Within this Framework, we have included five touchpoints which ensure the customer voice is heard at Board level and we have launched specific events to enable customer to directly hold our leaders to account (for example, our annual review with customers, hosted by our Board members). This year, we also committed to advertise Board vacancies to our customers, which is set to take place later in 2022.

Overall customer satisfaction (STAR)







## Criteria 10

### How does the housing provider measure resident satisfaction and how has resident satisfaction changed over the last three years?

Within our broader Customer Influence Framework, we operate a suite of surveys to measure customer satisfaction and we align this data with themes emerging from other sources of feedback (namely, complaints, informal feedback or input from our Customer Community).

Our quarterly perception survey aligns with Housemark's STAR (survey of tenants and residents) methodology and is gathered by an independent agency.

Customer satisfaction peaked prior to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2019-20 but has remained comparatively stable since. We are pleased to maintain high scores throughout 2021 and 2022, despite the restrictions to our services during successive lockdowns and the increasing pressures faced by our customer base.

During the year we sought to expand our survey set to cover almost all core transactions our customers make with us. Our 2021-22 surveys monitored the performance of our repairs, complaints and lettings services, and in the upcoming year we also plan to measure customer satisfaction with our services for anti-social behaviour handling and shared ownership sales.

Customer satisfaction scores represent key performance indicators for B3Living: they are reported to our Board and leadership regularly; they form part of our Value for Money metrics, and are reported to our Customer Experience working group, where our Customer Ethos Champions plan, track and deliver continuous improvement.





# Our Green Panel

This year we have made a significant effort to amplify the customer voice and are seeking to move towards a model of coproduction. We consulted customers on which topics they felt most passionately about, and many wanted to an input on our approach to cutting carbon.

We have formed a Green Panel who will guide our net-zero carbon strategy from the start. Our Green Panel members will also have the opportunity to receive training and to work with customers from other housing associations.

The Green Panel  
will guide  
our net-zero  
carbon strategy  
from the start





## Criteria 11

### **In the last 12 months, how many complaints have been upheld by the Ombudsman?**

*How have these complaints (or others) resulted in change of practice within the housing provider?*

In 2021-22, the Housing Ombudsman investigated four formal complaints related to B3Living, representing no increase from the previous financial year. In three out of the four investigations the Ombudsman determined that there had been no maladministration, and in the remaining case they ruled that the case was outside of their jurisdiction.

In each case the Ombudsman noted that we had taken the complaint seriously and had already offered fair redress where needed.

Although feedback from the Ombudsman has been positive, we seek to learn from all complaints. Analysis of any trends in our complaints is brought to our Customer Experience Group and Leadership team who plan grassroots or strategic service improvements. For example, complaints related to our grass-cutting contractor has prompted us to plan a review and re-procurement of this service in 2022, which will involve our customers.

We seek to  
learn from all  
complaints.





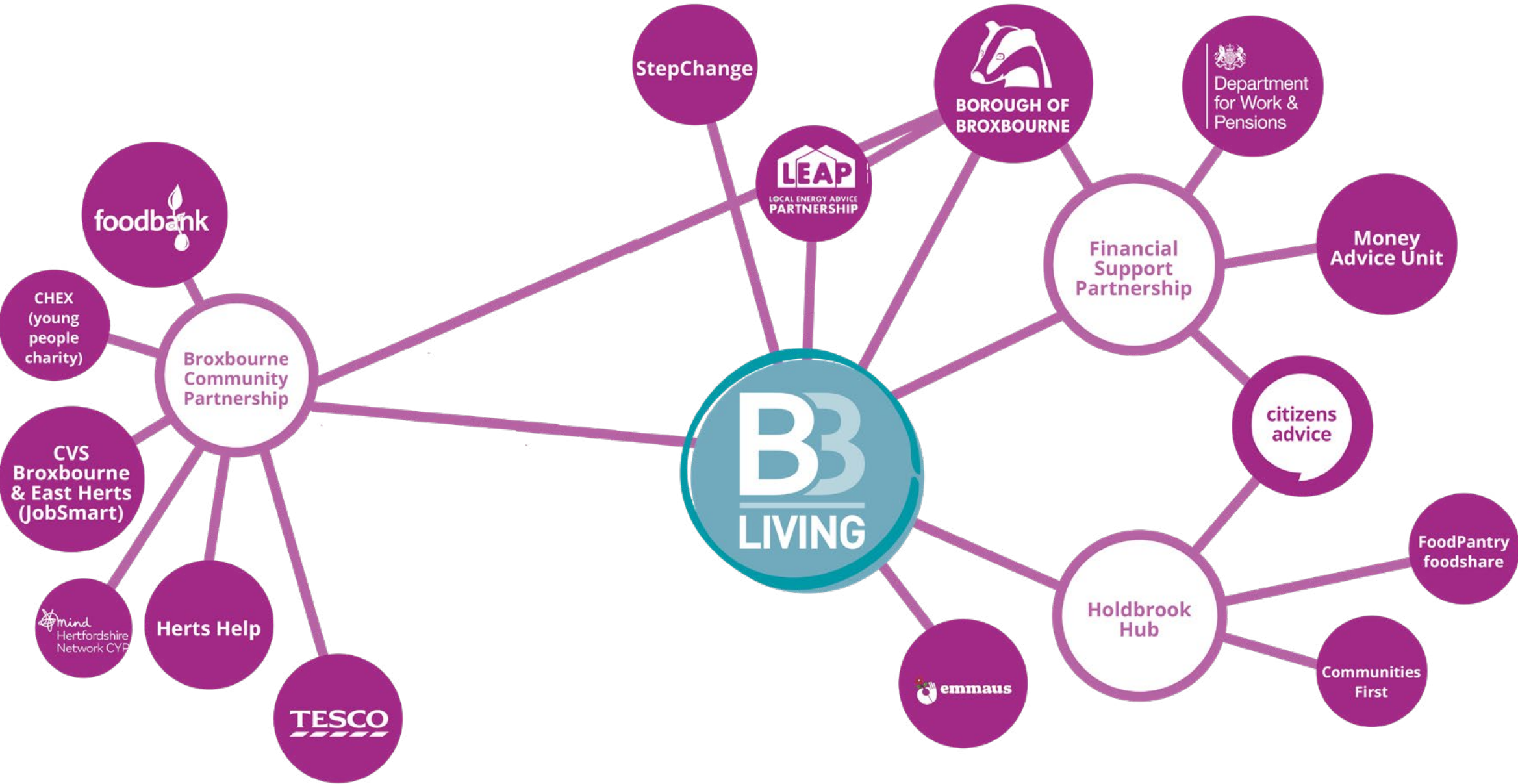
Theme: Resident support

11 Sustainable cities and communities

Criteria 12

What support services do the housing provider offer to its residents. How successful are these services in improving outcomes?

One of our seven strategic priorities is to increase our capability to offer 'support when life changes'. At B3Living, we recognise the excellent resources available locally and see leveraging partnerships as the most effective way to support our tenancy sustainment activities.



Snippet of our network of local partnerships



To ensure our customers have access to important services, we work with external organisations by offering venues for their activities, funding fast-track services for our customers, or playing a coordinating role to bring charities, public services and local businesses together. Some examples are included below:

### Host

**Community First** – volunteer base at our Holdbrook Hub coordinated the local vaccine rollout.

**Citizens Advice** – weekly advice surgeries from our office and hub. In 2021-22, they secured £42k for customers, and supported 184 cases with various issues (e.g. mental health, preventing homelessness, etc). *B3Living also supplies funding.*

**Food Pantry** – warehouse storage and venue for food parcel service, including a new Community Fridge hosted at our Holdbrook Hub where customers can access fresh food.

### Fund

**JobSmart** – employability support helping with CV writing, interview and digital skills. They've supported 181 claimants in Broxbourne, as of 31 March 2022.

**StepChange** – fast-track debt advice where customers benefit from same-day appointments and 'warm' handovers from B3Living staff.

**Money Advice Unit** – dedicated advisor two days per week. Currently, our advisor supports up to 30 live B3Living cases, all of which require complex support around benefits, unemployment, ill-health, etc.

### Co-ordinate

**Household Support Grant** – £21k secured in partnership with the local authority and DWP. This funding supported 40 customers to clear arrears, access food vouchers or purchase appliances or flooring for their homes.

**Broxbourne Financial Support Partnership** – working party of up to 12 local agencies, chaired by the B3Living Community Development team.

Whilst developing local partnerships has been a successful approach, in the last financial year we opted to also strengthen our own in-house team by recruiting a full-time customer coach. They provide additional support and signposting to customers who are risk of losing their tenancies and have other financial/mental health challenges. Following feedback from customers in our rent consultation, we also set aside a dedicated support fund for 2022.

We are in the process of developing a social impact reporting framework that captures see the full range of positive outcomes we see from our support work. Nevertheless, we can report no evictions for 2021-22 and sector-leading scores for rent arrears (1.27%) suggesting that our interventions have supported some families to avoid rent debt or potential homelessness.





Theme: Placemaking

11

  
Sustainable cities  
and communities



Community gardening for the Safer Streets project

Criteria 13

Provide examples or case studies of where the housing provider has been engaged in placemaking or place shaping activities.

In our borough, we are the largest social landlord and the only provider developing affordable housing currently, so we are mindful of the role we play as a placeshaper in our community.

We have engaged in many activities in this regard throughout the year, either through our community partnerships or new homes programme – some examples are as follows:

Safer Streets

In the summer of 2021, we completed a neighbourhood transformation project in partnership with the Hertfordshire police, fire service and local council. B3Living homes received £350,000 in funding for security upgrades, such as CCTV, new front doors and ring doorbells, as well as a complete redesign of a large communal garden by local award-winning landscape gardener, John Van Hage. After the project, 66% residents felt safer in their homes.

New housing for older people

During the year we increased the supply of homes for people over 55 in our hometown of Hoddesdon, with 61 new rented homes addressing the need for long-term affordable homes for older people. Our Brewery Road site is adjacent to the high street, thus ideal for the client group; includes lifts and adaptable bathrooms; and incorporates design features which nod to the town’s industrial heritage.



Homes for people over 55 at Brewery Road, Hoddesdon



Holdbrook Hub

In 2021 we re-opened our Holdbrook Hub in Waltham Cross. The Hub is well placed to support some of the most deprived communities in our borough and hosts several local agencies such as: PCSO surgeries,

‘Grab and Go’ breakfasts for school children, holiday sports programmes, drop ins with the charity Herts Young Homeless, and more.



Citizens Advice partners and volunteers at our Holdbrook Hub



CGI of the green corridors coming soon at Cheshunt Lakeside

Cheshunt regeneration

Work continued at our flagship scheme, Cheshunt Lakeside, throughout 2021-22. Throughout our deal with Inland Homes, we will deliver an additional 195 homes on top of the Section 106 requirements for the regeneration scheme as a whole. With its environmentally conscious design, including ‘pocket parks’ and green corridors, the project is set to transform

the area while the wider regeneration will deliver a new primary school, 19,000m² of commercial space, eight football pitches of green space and £14.1m in community infrastructure improvements.



## Case study

### Shirley Close Harmony Garden

We have partnered with local permaculture specialists, Wyld Edges, to bring greater biodiversity to our estates and help us engage our customers in place shaping.

This year, they worked with residents in Cheshunt to transform a disused, barren patch of land into a community garden, run by volunteers who use the space to grow fruit and vegetables. Alongside Wyld Edges, we arranged for another contractor to donate garden hardware as well as fencing, lighting and dummy cameras to deter fly-tipping.

**Cutting Carbon  
is one of the  
themes of our  
Better Futures  
Strategy**







# Environment

Housing represents 25% of all UK carbon emissions. Therefore, it is clear that social landlords like B3Living cannot only seek to adapt to a low carbon future; we must be a key player in delivering it.

Our Better Futures strategy sets bold targets for reducing our carbon footprint, and our ambition is to achieve net-zero carbon by 2050 or sooner. However, we proceed from an encouraging position owing to a track record of investing in our stock.

We are pleased to see our progress in this area gather pace over the 2021-22 year. This will help us to make a difference both in conserving our environment and in sheltering our customers from fuel poverty and any energy / cost of living crisis.



## Greener Herts

In 2021 we launched the Greener Herts partnership. Working with neighbouring associations, Watford Community Housing and Settle, we are building a shared delivery plan to move our combined 20,000 homes towards net-zero carbon in the shortest timescale.

'Action' is the underlying principle of our shared net-zero carbon strategy, and we believe that combining our resources learning will enable us to more effectively bid for funding, share costs or launch pilot projects.

The first step in our collaboration was to appoint a shared Sustainability Lead in November 2021, with further projects planned for the year ahead.

**greener  
herts**  
plan to move our  
combined 20,000  
homes towards  
net-zero carbon in  
the shortest  
timescale.



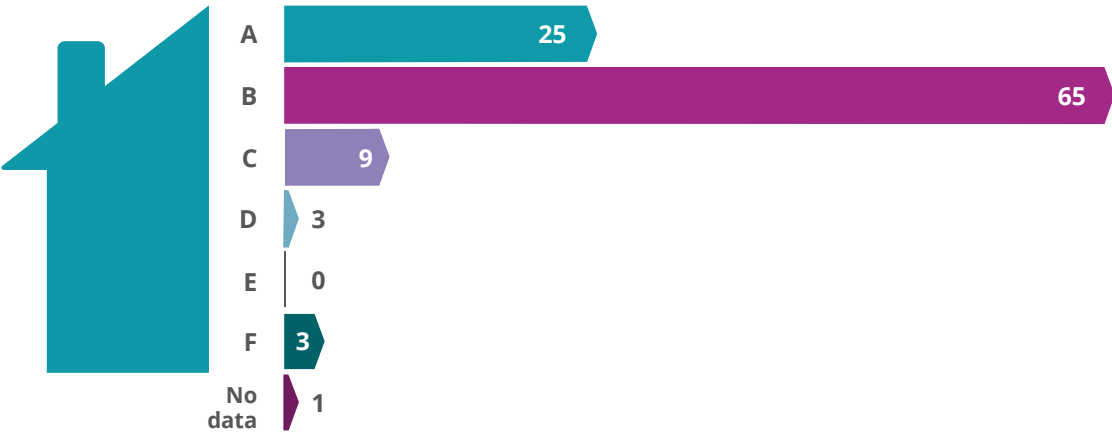


Theme: Climate change

13   
Climate action

Criteria 14

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



In Suss Housing’s SHIFT client group, we are in the top quartile for homes with EPC C and above ratings. Previously our major boiler replacement programmes used A-rated boilers, and there has been significant investment in insulation.

In 2020-21 our Board approved an update to the Asset Management Strategy which sets out our approach to reducing the amount of EPC D and E rated homes in our portfolio and improve our data quality.

We aim to significantly reduce the number of homes rated D and under in the upcoming year through our Warmfront project, which began towards the end of 2021-22 (see page 50).





### Warmfront project

Energy-saving specialists, WarmFront, have conducted a thermal-imaging survey of all our homes to identify which properties could be better insulated. In the next phase of the project, WarmFront will work with us to access ECO (Energy Company Obligation) funding to pay for and install the recommended property improvements (i.e. loft and cavity wall insulation).

Through this project, we now have an action plan to upgrade 480 homes (approx. 10% of our total stock), representing a significant step in getting 100% of B3Living homes to EPC ratings of C and above.

**Through this project, we now have an action plan to upgrade 480 homes**



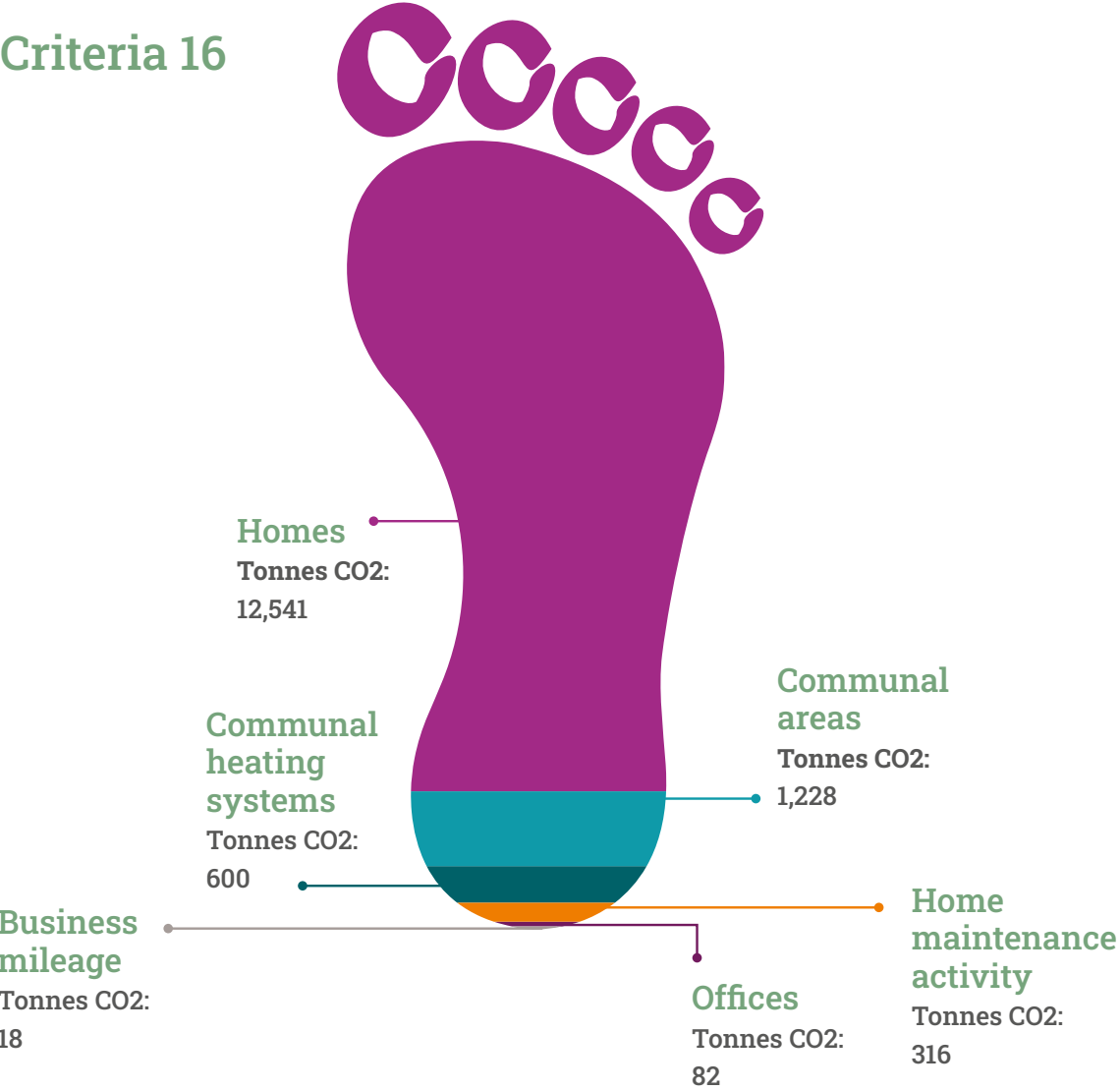


Criteria 15

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

Of the 119 new homes developed in 2021-22, all of them were EPC rated **B**

Criteria 16



Scope 1, Scope 2, and Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions.

The infographic clearly and unsurprisingly shows that our existing homes are the largest contributor to our carbon footprint. Our latest business plan contains a £50m provision to tackle our carbon emissions.

Criteria 17

What energy efficiency actions has the housing provider undertaken in the last 12 months?

In March 2021, we adopted a new three-year Better Futures Strategy, including a commitment towards achieving net-zero carbon by 2050. To support this ambition our Asset Management Strategy was updated to include a net-zero carbon section that focuses on sustainability and environmental initiatives.

Our strategy is initially concentrated on upgrading our existing homes with “tried and tested” technologies and bringing those EPC D and E-rated homes to C by 2030. While we wait for technological advances in home heating to bring forward viable solutions, such as in air source heating, we will continue to replace aging boilers with A-rated appliances.

In the year we invested around £1m in our roof replacement programme, which significantly improves insulation levels, and we also conducted a window replacement programme to improve thermal performance of our properties. Our reactive repairs service and work to empty properties continue to fit low flow taps and dual flush toilets, but now they also fit recycling bins and water-saving devices (e.g. shower aerators).

In the year we created a Net-Zero Carbon working group who have developed a comprehensive action plan aimed at reducing the carbon footprint within the day-to-day running of the business, such as replacing our trade vans with hybrid vehicles (to date we have acquired 21 new hybrid vans), reducing the use of paper, sourcing our energy and products from sustainable sources, etc.

Moreover, our new Greener Herts partnership will enable us to combine our efforts to bid for funding and thus increase our investment in areas such as property insulation, new solar panels and green heating solutions.



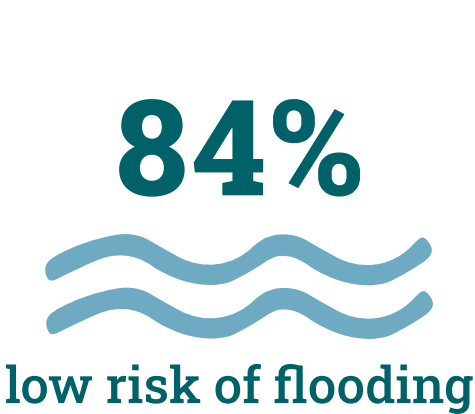


Criteria 18

How is the housing provider mitigating the following climate risks?  
- Increased flood risk - Increased risk of homes overheating

We have proactively assessed fluvial, tidal, groundwater and surface water flooding and identified that 84% of homes are at low risk of flooding. For the homes at medium or high risk, we will ensure they are signed up to early flood alerts and ensure responsive actions are in place from us in the event of flooding. In areas of surface water flooding liaise with the relevant drainage authority to ensure drains are fully functional and maintained. We are committed

to carrying out further reassessments of flood risks at appropriate frequencies.  
The SHIFT overheating risk assessment tool estimates that 100% of our homes are at low risk of overheating. We are committed to ensuring our new homes address risk factors and have suitable measures to prevent overheating.



Criteria 19

Does the housing provider give residents information about correct ventilation, heating, recycling etc? Please describe how this is done.

**Yes.** Our frontline teams, both technical and customer service, regularly advise customers on heating and ventilation to avoid condensation and over-heating. Within our main Net-Zero Carbon action plan, we have a communications workstream which seeks to raise awareness among our customer base and internal teams. This includes building advice into key transactional communications (i.e. our website, letters and leaflets), where appropriate, and several campaigns to promote good practice:

- **‘One by One’** – this campaign breaks down energy advice into bitesize chunks to help customers make gradual adjustments to their lifestyle. We also partner advice for customers with reports on what we’re doing

to reduce heating bills, etc to help improve buy-in by pitching change as a collaborative effort.

- **‘Dump me properly’** – this campaign aims to educate customers on recycling, waste and fly-tipping using a tongue-in-cheek take on dating apps.

All our new homes are provided with a Home User Guide (HUG) that explains how a new home and the installations work. The HUG covers all areas such as, use of heating systems, ventilation, recycling, etc. Furthermore, as part of our annual gas appliance safety checks our contractor helps customers to learn how to use, or make better use of, the installations in their homes.

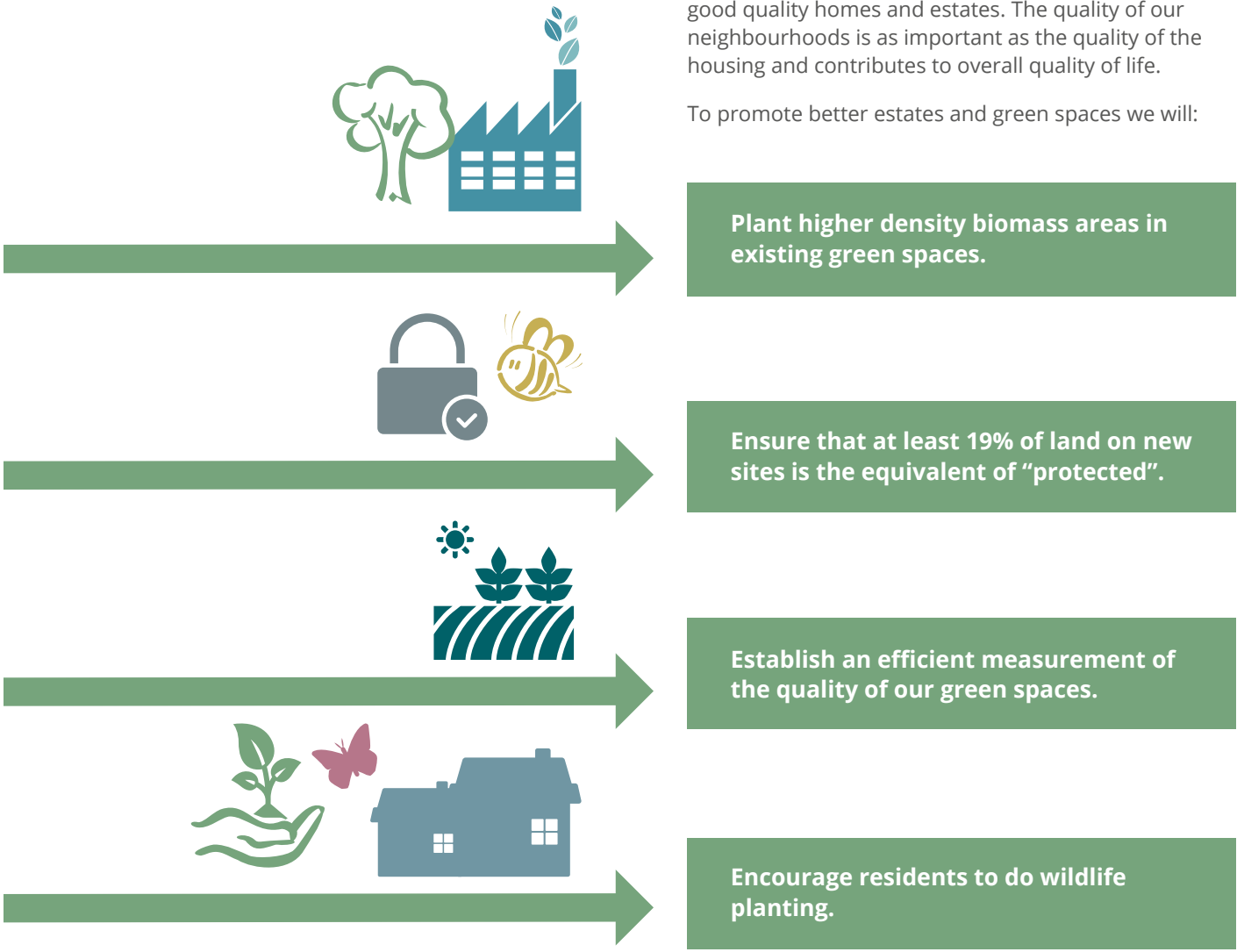
Theme: Ecology

13 Climate action

Criteria 20

How is the housing provider increasing green space and promoting biodiversity on or near homes?

A theme of our 2021-24 corporate strategy is safe, good quality homes and estates. The quality of our neighbourhoods is as important as the quality of the housing and contributes to overall quality of life.  
To promote better estates and green spaces we will:



Examples of these commitments in action are our partnership with the Wyld Edges charity (see page 39) or the designs for new developments such as Cheshunt Lakeside (see page 40).



Criteria 21

Does the housing provider have a strategy to actively manage and reduce all pollutants? If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?

**Yes.** We have a team that collect waste including paint to a recycling centre. Also 21 vehicles out of our fleet of 48 have hybrid engines. Furthermore, we have invested in a new dashcam and telematics system that allows

us to collect data on fuel usage, CO2 emissions and driving styles using this information we have set up benchmarking for our drivers comparing against other teams within the business and within the wider fleet sector.

Theme: Resource management

12 Responsible consumption and production

Criteria 22

Does the housing provider have a strategy to use or increase the use of responsibly sourced materials for all building works? If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?

**Yes.** As part of our procurement process, we aim to better understand each contractor's own carbon footprint and to contract with suppliers that will help us further of net-zero carbon ambitions.

We have started to include more sustainability criterion within our tenders to allow us select contractors and/materials that are more sustainable and align to our carbon reduction values. For example, through our recent procurement we sourced a cleaning materials supplier using 100% renewable energy and with their own carbon offsetting scheme, and on our Cheshunt Lakeside development only 1% skip waste went to landfill in 2021-22.

We are still developing our thinking around targets and performance monitoring of individual contracts, but once this research piece has been complete, we will set appropriate targets.

Our Better Futures Strategy and Asset Management Strategy are designed to lead our organisation to be carbon free by 2050, with potential to bring forward that date closer to 2040 if feasible. Within these we have set targets to achieve a Silver Plus SHIFT accreditation by 2023 and Gold by 2024.

We also seek to:

- **Employ local contractors, where possible, to reduce travel times.**
- **Use products, where possible, that are from sustainable and responsible sources.**



**Our current score**  
**2022 = Silver**  
**2023 = Silver Plus**  
**2024 = Gold**



Criteria 23

Does the housing provider have a strategy for waste management incorporating building materials?

**Yes.** Waste generated at our Scania House office has dropped in absolute terms by two tonnes. Additionally, due to more staff members working from home or using of digital alternatives, we have reduced our overall use of legacy paper-based systems.

Our current option is energy-from-waste solution, but we will also be looking to work with a different office waste management contractor to increase waste recycling. We will seek to appoint a supplier who can provide a breakdown of spend areas, products, and green credentials.

Criteria 24

Does the housing provider have a strategy for good water management?

**Yes.** Water use is 7.63 m³ per employee, which exceeds the SHIFT Platinum target of 8.43m³ per employee. We have a long-term target to reduce this further to 3m³ per employee by 2030.

We are working with Thames Water (our local water utility supplier) to provide free water

efficiency devices for our customers and help us improve communication in this area. Furthermore, we are installing water-saving measures in our void properties. Where water facilities are already efficient, but usage is high, we check for leaks or incorrect billing.



# Net-Zero Carbon working group

Cutting Carbon is one of the themes of our Better Futures Strategy, so in 2021 we mobilised an internal working group with an action plan guided by recommendations from SHIFT.

The group has made quick progress already and its action plan has moved into its second phase. Through their efforts we have invested in a variety of changes, big and small, to our homes, materials and working practices. Examples of these include installing electric car charging points at our office and on new developments, installing low-energy sensor lighting, and trained our electricians in solar PV maintenance.

**Cutting Carbon  
is one of the  
themes of our  
Better Futures  
Strategy**







# Governance

We embed good governance and robust risk management in the way we are structured and operate. We believe in holding ourselves to high standards around corporate governance to maintain the trust of our customers and partners.

Improving awareness, culture and good practice around diversity and inclusion is a core workstream for us and we were pleased to see an improvement in diversity at Board level. Another area of focus is around procurement as we seek to develop more socially responsible and sustainable supply chains into the future.



Theme: Structure and governance

16

  
Peace, justice and strong institutions

Criteria 25

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

yes

Criteria 26

What is the most recent viability and governance regulatory grading?

V1 (Viability)  
G1 (Governance)

Criteria 27

Which code of governance does the housing provider follow, if any?

In 2021-22, we fully adopted the National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020.

NATIONAL HOUSING FEDERATION

Criteria 28

Is the housing provider not-for-profit?

yes

Criteria 29

Explain how the housing provider’s board manages organisational risks?

Our Board approved a new Risk Management Strategy in the 2020-21 year, which breaks our approach into five distinct elements:

- 1

**Risk appetite**

Categorisation of key risk areas to the business and consideration of the amount and type of risk that the organisation is willing to accept to meet its strategic objectives and tolerance levels.
- 2

**Identifying and recording risk**

Categorisation and identification of individual significant risks to the organisation. This is discussed at every board meeting and Audit and Risk Committee meeting, and time is set aside at board away days to promote ‘blue sky thinking’ about potential risks.
- 3

**Evaluating and managing**

We evaluate risk based on the multiple of the likelihood and impact of each risk, before and after management actions have been applied (residual score), as well as setting a target risk score based on the Board’s risk appetite. The impact score is not solely based on financial cost but also considers reputation, health and safety, achievement of corporate objectives, etc.
- 4

**Governance**

The Board is responsible for ensuring that B3Living maintains an appropriate Risk Register and Risk Management Framework. The Board reviews and debates all corporate risk with a residual score greater than 11 at each meeting. The Audit and Risk Committee and the Executive Team have been delegated authority to review and maintain the entire corporate risk register. B3Living also manages risks via a three lines of defence model and annual risk maturity reviews.
- 5

**Risk management culture**

B3Living maintains and promotes a risk aware culture across the business. To promote a proactive Risk Management culture all the members the Executive and the Leadership teams ensure that risk identification and management is a regular agenda item on all team meetings so all risks can be effectively recorded and escalated. To support and embed our risk management, we provide annual training for the Leadership team and a risk section is included within all board and committee reports.

Criteria 30

Has the housing provider been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last 12 months that resulted in enforcement or other equivalent action? (e.g. data protection breaches, bribery, money laundering, HSE breaches or notices)

None.





Theme: Board and trustees

16 Peace, justice and strong institutions

Criteria 31

What are the demographics of the Board? And how does this compare to the demographics of the housing providers residents, and the area that they operate in?

The Board is pleased to be representative of our community's gender and ethnic diversity, and we have also started to make inroads in recruiting younger board members.

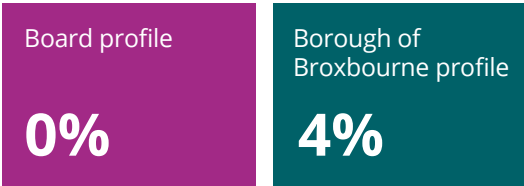
We have been actively promoting board vacancies to people from different ethnic backgrounds, those living with a disability, those from the LGBTQIA+ community, and those with

lived experience of social housing to better reflect the diversity of our community.

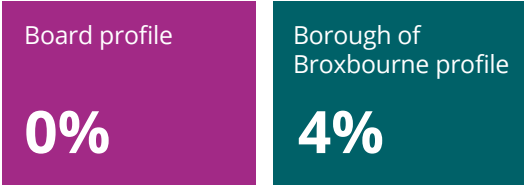
Exploring non-traditional routes for recruitment and being candid about our current position has yielded a very positive response from a wider pool of applicants, and we welcome two new Board members at our September AGM.

Board diversity profile

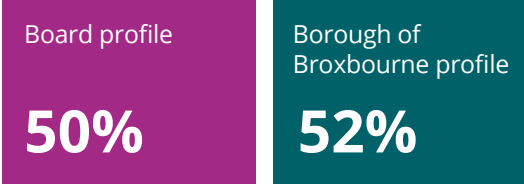
LGBTQIA+



Minority religion



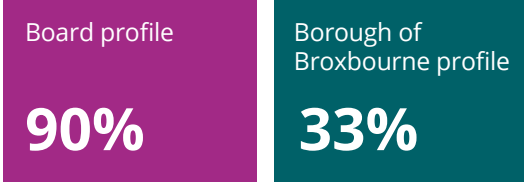
Female



Aged under 30



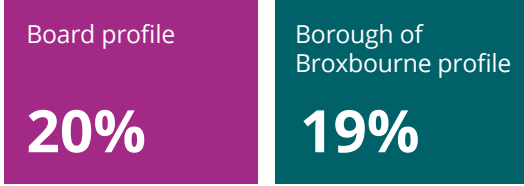
Aged 50 or over



Disability



Any ethnic minority (i.e not white British)





## Criteria 32

What % of the Board AND management team have turned over in the last two years?



**26.6%**

None of five Directors and four out of 10 Board members.

## Criteria 33

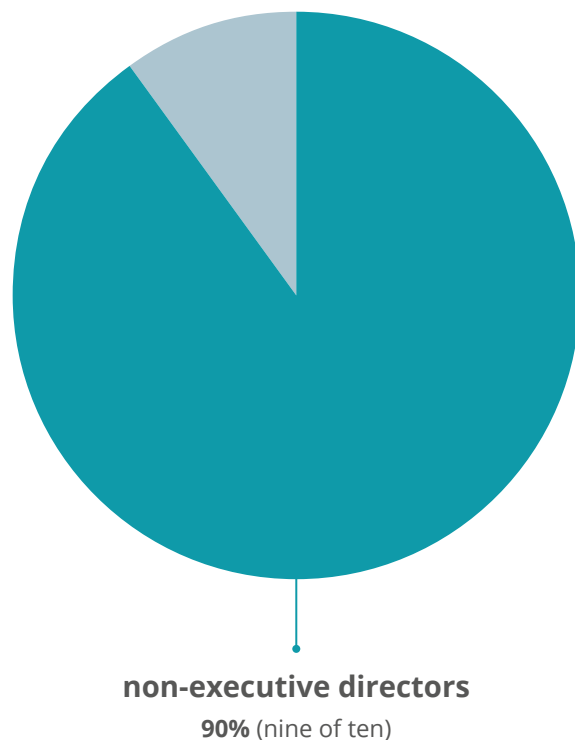
Is there a maximum tenure for a board member? If so, what is it?



In line with National Housing Federations Code of Governance 2020, the maximum tenure for a board member is normally up to six years. Board members are required to reapply after the first three years. In exceptional cases after six years, and where it is in the organisation's best interests, tenure may be extended up to a maximum of nine years, but in this case they would be required to reapply every year.

## Criteria 34

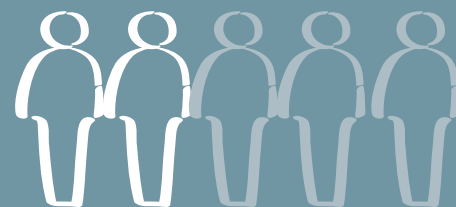
What % of the Board are non-executive directors?



## Criteria 35

Number of Board members on the Audit Committee with recent and relevant financial experience.

Two out of five. We are currently recruiting to this committee.



## Criteria 36

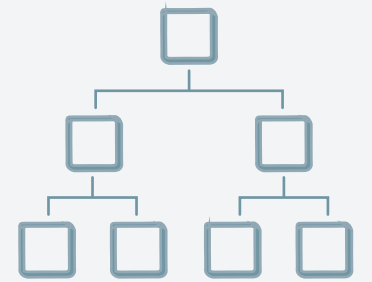
Are there any current executives on the Remuneration Committee?

No.



## Criteria 37

Has a succession plan been provided to the Board in the last 12 months?



The Board considered a succession planning report in January 2022.

## Criteria 38

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

**16 years.**

A full and open tender process was conducted in 2019 and Beever & Struthers were the only creditable applicant, despite the best efforts of the business to attract new auditors to complete a tender. Due to B3Living having a public bond it is a Public Interest Entity, the additional scrutiny this entails dampened tender interest.



## Criteria 39

When was the last independently run board-effectiveness review?

This took place in the autumn of 2019 and was reviewed by the Board in December of that year.

## Criteria 40

Are the roles of the Chair of the Board and CEO held by two different people?

Yes.



## Criteria 41

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

We have a Board Conflicts of Interest Policy that sets out how these instances are handled. Our register of interests is presented at every board meeting as a standing item at the beginning of each meeting, and members are prompted as to whether there are any interests that affect any of the agenda items.



## Develop, advance and embed EDI

At B3Living, we strive to be a great, inclusive place to work. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and action plan consolidates our commitments to develop and embed our thinking around EDI.

We are working on our employer brand to attract a more diverse workforce, updating our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process, and raising awareness internally, such as through our “What inclusion means to me” campaign. Adapting our culture is a core part of this work, so we making an effort to learn from best practice and through mentors, such as from Disability Connect who are helping us to develop “disability positive” recruitment practices.

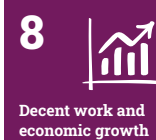
**At B3Living,  
we strive to  
be a great,  
inclusive place  
to work.**







## Theme: Staff wellbeing



### Criteria 42

#### Does the housing provider pay the Real Living Wage?

**Yes.** We are also an accredited Living Wage Employer. This means we have also made a commitment to ensure that those working in our properties employed by third parties also receive the living wage, creating a more socially-conscious supply chain.



### Criteria 43

#### What is the gender pay gap?

April 2021



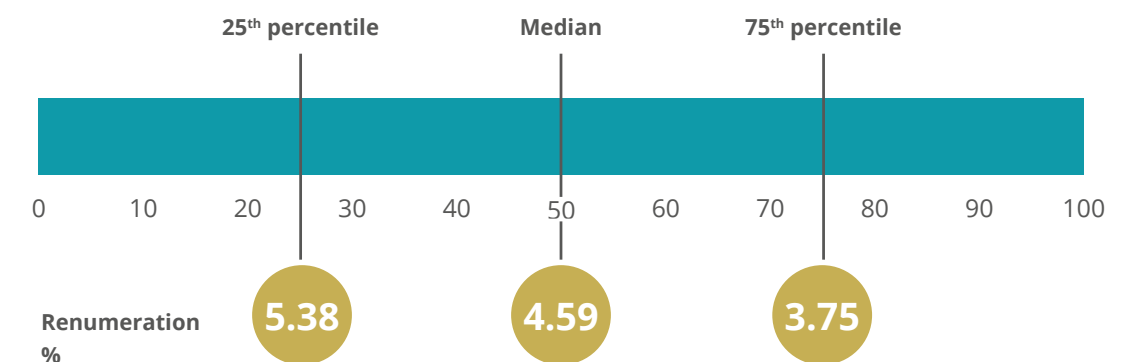
### Criteria 44

#### What is the CEO-worker pay ratio?

We report the CEO-worker pay ratio based on the Business, Energy and Industry Strategy (BIES) methodology. The methodology followed applies a ranking from low to high of all permanent staff, adjusted for part-time staff members, and fixed-term employees to derive a single total figure of remuneration at each 25th, 50th (median) and 75th percentile.

At B3Living we have one standard pension offer, however not all employees either opt to contribute to a pension or maximise on the benefit we offer. Therefore, for this exercise we have removed pensions from the calculation.

Year 2021-22





Criteria 43

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

We have a range of initiatives in place to support the wellbeing of our colleagues. Flexible working is one way staff can achieve a work/life balance and a large proportion of staff value this highly.

All colleagues are eligible to benefit from subsidised private medical insurance, which also includes a cash-back scheme for dental and optician costs. An employee assistance line and app are available to staff 24 hours a day, where necessary face-to-face counselling is also accessible through this service. We also offer generous sick pay entitlements, carry out health

surveillance, and refer staff for occupational health assessments where appropriate.

We seek feedback from our workforce every six weeks and conduct dedicated wellbeing surveys to understand whether colleagues feel supported at work and to identify any additional support we can offer to enhance their physical and mental wellbeing. Alongside this we promote awareness events and campaigns around topics like stress management, mental health and hidden disabilities.



Flexible working



Subsidised private medical insurance



24hr employee assistance line



Generous sick pay entitlements



Health surveillance



Occupational health assessments



Feedback from our workforce every 6 weeks



Wellbeing surveys

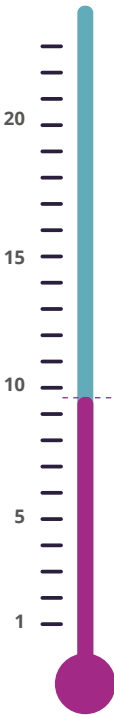


Awareness events and campaigns



Criteria 44

Average number of sick days taken per employee?



9.56 days

(including Covid-related absences).



# Theme: Supply Chain



## Criteria 45

### How is social value creation considered when procuring goods and services?

We procure products, services and works that affect people’s lives on a daily basis. When resources are allocated to activities that create social value, our aim is to maximise positive outcomes, whilst minimising the negative outcomes from any procured activity. We identify the right outcomes for a framework by asking the right questions, to the right people, at the right time during the procurement process. This maximises the social value for the people experiencing the change by reducing any separation between how we procure goods and services and their subsequent impact on our community.

For all procurements above £25,000.00, we measure social value impact by engaging our stakeholders, which may involve our customers, operational teams, or suppliers. Areas we have typically focused on include reducing our carbon footprint or supporting our local economy by using local suppliers and services which minimise their negative impact on the environment, for example.

Our long-term aim is to change the way that social value is accounted for in our procurement process. We plan to achieve this by advocating for a framework based on the “principles, practice, people and power” model. Using this framework, we can ask the right questions to understand the impact we already have and, more importantly for commissioning, it will help us to understand the impact that we want to have.

## Criteria 46

### How is environmental impact considered when procuring goods and services?

The environment is one of our principal concerns, which is demonstrated by our relationships with our suppliers and local communities.

Since the launch of the procurement function within the business, we have introduced and embedded a new Procurement Strategy, with associated policy and procedures.

This strategy recognises that improving our procurement performance is an ongoing process but are committed to understanding and managing the environmental and social impact of our activities and see our suppliers, both large and small, are important partners in our journey to becoming more socially aware, sustainable and carbon neutral.

We will ensure that the goods and services we purchase are manufactured, delivered, used, and disposed of in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. We are also committed to reviewing our contract management processes and supply chain risks to ensure that sustainable principles are embedded within every aspect of the procurement journey.

We use open market forces when selecting products, services or works. We intend to utilise and promote supplier innovation and encourage suppliers to minimise their environmental impact and deliver wider-reaching community benefits in their operations or supply chains. Our purchasing decisions give preference to those who can support our strategic ambitions for corporate sustainability.

As a contracting organisation, we expect our suppliers to ensure that their practices are supportive of our approach. We seek to procure and deliver goods and services with the least and minimal impact on the environment and with regard for social issues such as employment conditions and welfare.





Appendix

Theme	SDG Goal	Criteria #	Type of Criteria	Criteria	Measurement Unit
Affordability and Security	Sustainable Cities and Communities  Reduce Inequality	C1	Core	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 Local Authority 2) Rent compared to Local Housing Allowance (LHA)	% of PRS rent % of LHA rent
		C2	Core	Share, and number, of existing homes (homes completed before the last financial year) allocated to: General needs (social rent) Intermediate rent Affordable rent Supported Housing Housing for older people Low-cost home ownership Care homes Private Rented Sector	% properties, number of properties
		C3	Core	Share, and number, of new homes (homes that were completed in the last financial year), allocated to: General needs (social rent), Intermediate rent Affordable rent Supported Housing Housing for older people Low-cost home ownership Care homes Private Rented Sector	% properties, number of properties
		C4	Core	How is the housing provider trying to reduce the effect of fuel poverty on its residents?	Qualitative response
		C5	Enhanced	What % of rental homes have a 3 year fixed tenancy agreement (or longer)	% of homes

Theme	SDG Goal	Criteria #	Type of Criteria	Criteria	Measurement Unit
Building Safety and Quality	Sustainable Cities and Communities	C6	Core	What % of homes with a gas appliance have an in-date, accredited gas safety check?	% of homes
		C7	Core	What % of buildings have an in-date and compliant Fire Risk Assessment?	% of buildings
		C8	Core	What % of homes meet the Decent Homes Standard?	% of homes
Resident Voice		C9	Core	What arrangements are in place to enable the residents to hold management to account for provision of services?	Qualitative response
		C10	Core	How does the housing provider measure Resident Satisfaction and how has Resident Satisfaction changed over the last three years?	Qualitative response
		C11	Enhanced	In the last 12 months, how many complaints have been upheld by the Ombudsman.  How have these complaints (or others) resulted in change of practice within the housing provider?	Qualitative response
Resident Support		C12	Core	What support services does the housing provider offer to its residents. How successful are these services in improving outcomes?	Qualitative response
Placemaking		C13	Enhanced	Provide examples or case studies of where the housing provider has been engaged in placemaking or placeshaping activities.	Qualitative response



Theme	SDG Goal	Criteria #	Type of Criteria	Criteria	Measurement Unit
Climate Change	Climate Action	C14	Core	Distribution of EPC ratings of existing homes (those completed before the last financial year)	% of Homes rated A % of Homes rated B % of Homes rated C % of Homes rated D % of Homes rated E or worse
		C15	Core	Distribution of EPC ratings of new homes (those completed in the last financial year).	% of Homes rated A % of Homes rated B % of Homes rated C % of Homes rated D % of Homes rated E or worse
		C16	Enhanced	Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 green house gas emissions	kg C02 equivalent
		C17	Enhanced	What energy efficiency actions has the housing provider undertaken in the last 12 months?	Qualitative response
		C18	Enhanced	How is the housing provider mitigating the following climate risks: - Increased flood risk - Increased risk of homes overheating	Qualitative response
		C19	Enhanced	Does the housing provider give residents information about correct ventilation, heating, recycling etc. Please describe how this is done.	Qualitative response
Ecology	Life on Land	C20	Enhanced	How is the housing provider increasing Green Space and promoting Biodiversity on or near homes	Qualitative response
		C21	Enhanced	Does the housing provider have a strategy to actively manage and reduce all pollutants?  If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?	1. Yes 2. No, but planning to develop a strategy 3. No, no plans to develop a strategy

Theme	SDG Goal	Criteria #	Type of Criteria	Criteria	Measurement Unit
Resource Management	Responsible Consumption and Production	C22	Enhanced	Does the housing provider have a strategy to use or increase the use of responsibly sourced materials for all building works?  If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?	1. Yes 2. No, but planning to develop a strategy 3. No, no plans to develop a strategy
		C23	Enhanced	Does the housing provider have a strategy for waste management incorporating building materials?  If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?	1. Yes 2. No, but planning to develop a strategy 3. No, no plans to develop a strategy
		C24	Enhanced	Does the housing provider have a strategy for good water management?  If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?	1. Yes 2. No, but planning to develop a strategy 3. No, no plans to develop a strategy

Theme	SDG Goal	Criteria #	Type of Criteria	Criteria	Measurement Unit
Structure and Governance	Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	C25	Core	Is the housing provider registered with a regulator of social housing?	Yes/No
		C26	Core	What is the most recent viability and governance regulatory grading?	G1/V1 etc.
		C27	Core	Which Code of Governance does the housing provider follow, if any?	Name of code
		C28	Core	Is the housing provider Not-For-Profit?  If not, who is the largest shareholder, what is their % of economic ownership and what % of voting rights do they control?	Name, %, %
		C29	Core	Explain how the housing provider's board manages organisational risks	Qualitative
		C30	Enhanced	Has the housing provider been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last 12 months (e.g. data protection breaches, bribery, money laundering, HSE breaches or notices) - that resulted in enforcement or other equivalent action?	Yes/No



Theme	SDG Goal	Criteria #	Type of Criteria	Criteria	Measurement Unit
Board and Trustees	Decent Work and Economic Growth	C31	Core	What are the demographics of the board? And how does this compare to the demographics of the housing providers residents, and the area that they operate in?  Add commentary if useful	Qualitative response
		C32	Core	What % of the board AND management team have turned over in the last two years?  Add commentary if useful	%
		C33	Core	Is there a maximum tenure for a board member? If so, what is it?	Yes/No, Length of tenure
		C34	Core	What % of the board are non-executive directors?	%
		C35	Core	Number of board members on the Audit Committee with recent and relevant financial experience	Number and description of experience
		C36	Core	Are there any current executives on the Remuneration Committee?	Yes/No
		C37	Core	Has a succession plan been provided to the board in the last 12 months?	Yes/No
		C38	Core	For how many years has the housing provider's current external audit partner been responsible for auditing the accounts?	Number of whole years
		C39	Core	When was the last independently-run, board-effectiveness review?	Date
		C40	Core	Are the roles of the chair of the board and CEO held by two different people?	Yes/No
		C41	Core	How does the housing provider handle conflicts of interest at the board?	Qualitative

Theme	SDG Goal	Criteria #	Type of Criteria	Criteria	Measurement Unit
Staff Wellbeing	Responsible Consumption and Production	C42	Core	Does the housing provider pay the Real Living Wage?	Yes/No
		C43	Core	What is the gender pay gap?	% gap
		C44	Enhanced	What is the CEO-worker pay ratio?	Number
		C45	Enhanced	How does the housing provider support the physical and mental health of their staff?	Qualitative response
		C46	Enhanced	Average number of sickdays taken per employee	Number of days
Supply Chain		C47	Enhanced	How is Social Value creation considered when procuring goods and services?	Qualitative Response
		C48	Enhanced	How is Environmental impact considered when procuring goods and services?	Qualitative Response





## Environmental, social, and corporate governance

2022

For more information about our operations  
and strategy, please visit our website

[www.b3living.org.uk](http://www.b3living.org.uk)



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[www.b3living.org.uk](http://www.b3living.org.uk)

Regulator of Social Housing registration no. L4455

Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act registration no. 29876R

HM Revenue and Customs (Charities Division number XR92753)

We comply with the National Housing Federation Code of Governance and are  
regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing.

# Better Futures

**Better  
Homes  
Communities  
Business**

[B3living.org.uk](http://B3living.org.uk)