



Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) Report 2022/23

Welcome

I am pleased to share our first Environmental Social Governance (ESG) report under the Sustainable Reporting Standard (SRS) for Social Housing. This report sits alongside our general annual review, our diversity and inclusion update and our customer report, all of which contain great case studies and more detail about the work we are doing to deliver social value to our customers and communities. You can find copies of these documents on our website.

Look Ahead owns and manages around 1300 properties but our primary role is as a provider of care and support.

Our sector operates with very tight margins, meaning that unlike some larger providers we have very limited resources to invest in aspects of ESG such as place-making or place-shaping and to some degree in significant retrofitting of our services.

Our approach is to gradually embed ESG in our business, striving to make gradual improvements as we implement new systems, processes and contracts and looking for opportunities to support customers and staff particularly given the current cost of living crisis.

Adopting the standard is an important step on this journey and we are looking forward to reporting our progress in the year ahead.

Julie Blair Executive Director of Corporate Services



Affordability and Security

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)

Look Ahead's rents and service charges are 64.8% of the median PRS rents across the relevant local authorities and are 102.6% compared to the relevant LHA rates.

C2: Core

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

At 31 March 2023 Look Ahead owned the following number of homes:

Type	Directly Managed	Managed by another organisation	Total	
	No.	No.	No.	%
Supported Housing	1,075	59	1,134	91.5%
Care Homes	29	6	35	2.8%
Intermediate	26		26	2.1%
Non-Social	27		27	2.2%
Market Rent	17		17	1.4%
Total	1,174	65	1,239	

We also managed 1,195 homes on behalf of other landlords (1,171 supported housing units and 24 care home units).

C3: Core

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

No new homes were completed during 2022/23.

C4: How is the provider trying to reduce the effect of fuel poverty on its residents?

Communications:

We have information on our website and annually send out a newsletter to residents to provide information on reducing energy bills. We also have an ESG pack for services with a range of ideas for support staff to pass on to customers.

One to one support:

As a care and support provider, the majority of our customers are supported directly by support workers who support them to ensure they claim benefits they are entitled to and provide advice and support on managing bills and their money.

C5: What % of rental homes have at least a 3-year tenancy agreement?

Look Ahead is a specialist supported housing provider where many of our supported housing units are linked to a support contract commissioned by a local authority or the NHS. In many cases one of the main support goals will be that customers move on from Look Ahead accommodation to more independent accommodation, and our role is to support our customers to do this. In this context, security of tenure does not apply to our homes in the same way it does to other landlords.

However, support goals vary by contract and customers in our learning disabilities and mental health services tend to stay longer in their accommodation, as do those housed through the Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) that we are part of. At 31/03/22, 50.1% of current occupants had lived in their accommodation for three years or more.

Building Safety & Quality

C6: What % of homes with a gas appliance have an in-date, accredited gas safety check?

100% of our residential properties have an in-date, accredited gas safety check.

C7: What % of buildings have an in-date and compliant Fire Risk Assessment (FRA)?

Making sure our homes are safe is our absolute priority. As of the end of March 2023, 100% of Look Ahead owned buildings had an up-to-date FRA. This equates to 128 sites.

Our approach to compliance in this area is a six-weekly meeting where FRA status, fire safety works and fire risks / action plans are reviewed.

C8: What % of homes meet the national housing quality standard?

99.6% of our owned properties met the decent homes standard as of 31 March 2023.

We are currently implementing a new asset management system which will assist with stock performance modelling and help us focus on poorer performing properties.

Compliance on this measure is monitored by our Asset Management Group meetings, which are held with members of our Senior Leadership Team every six weeks.



Resident Voice & Support

C9: What arrangements are in place to enable the residents to hold management to account for provision of services?

Look Ahead has several opportunities in place to ensure customer engagement is effective, meaningful and impactful, and our customers have a variety of options to influence decision-making and service improvement. These are as follows:

Tenant and Landlord Panel

- Chaired by a Board member, this panel meets four times a year to scrutinise and challenge our performance as a landlord.

Care and Support Forum

- Again chaired by a member of our Board, this forum provides a safe and responsive environment for customers across all of our services to provide constructive feedback and identify areas for improvements around our care and support delivery.

Customer Incidents Panel

- This is a new panel launched last year, which is co-chaired by a former customer and our Head of Safeguarding and Quality. The purpose of the panel is to review anonymised versions of real incident reports of issues that have happened in our service and to analyse what can be learnt from them. Feedback from this panel is reviewed by SLT and our Board.

Co-production work

- Customers have numerous opportunities to get involved with Look Ahead. This includes being involved with interviewing new staff (our target is that 80% of our recruitment has customer involvement), quality audits and estate visits. We also have a range of volunteering opportunities including our Experts by Experience programme where customers provide training to staff about a whole range of topics including living with autism, alcoholic dependency and mental health needs.

Local services

- At a local level, most of our services hold monthly house meetings for customers to provide feedback on services and put forward ideas for activities and improvements.

Complaints process

- We regularly review complaints and use this data to improve our services and offer.

C10: How does the housing provider measure Resident Satisfaction and how has Resident Satisfaction changed over the last three years?

At a central level we send out an annual survey to ask for customer feedback. Individual surveys are distributed to customers through the post directly to their homes as well as being available online and via support teams.

Our customer satisfaction levels have remained broadly the same compared to the last financial year.

	2020/21	2021/22
Overall satisfaction	90%	85%
Choice and control of services	88%	90%
Quality of home	88%	77%
Repairs and maintenance	74%	69%
Repair improved from last year	new question	81%
Look Ahead listen and respect	92%	89%
Offer opportunities to get involved	80%	76%

C11: In the last 12 months, how many complaints have been upheld by the Ombudsman.

There have been no referrals to the Ombudsman, therefore nothing resulting in a complaint being upheld.

C12: What support services does the housing provider offer to its residents. How successful are these services in improving outcomes?

First and foremost, we are a care and support provider rather than a general needs housing association. We provide all customers with a range of support to meet their goals and needs. This will include developing support plans to help them meet their goals and aspirations, support with education, training and employment and support with building skills to live independently such as budgeting and cooking. Each resident has a tailored plan to meet their individual requirements.

C13: Provide examples or case studies of where the housing provider has been engaged in placemaking or place shaping activities.

As we are primarily a supported housing provider, we have not developed any new properties this year. We operate on tight margins which means we do not have the resources to invest in placemaking or place shaping activities. We do however work across local areas building partnerships with local communities, the NHS and external support agencies. This includes Safer Neighbourhood Teams, local authorities, Community Mental Health Teams and organisations such as Turning Point, colleges and other services that will benefit our customers.

Migigating impacts of climate change

C14: Distribution of EPC ratings of existing homes (those completed before the last financial year).

The makeup of our properties by EPC ratings was as follows:

A Rated	0%
B Rated	13%
C Rated	58%
D Rated	18%
E Rated	11%

C15: Distribution of EPC ratings of new homes (those completed in the last financial year).

We did not complete any new homes in this financial year.

C16: Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions.

Our carbon emissions have been calculated by Carbon Neutral Britain and are as follows:

Scope 1

284.86 – emissions occurred from the company mains gas, no other Scope 1 emissions occurred.

Scope 2

5463.34 – emissions occurred from electricity consumption within the reporting period.

Scope 3

1.57 emissions from business travel.

C17: What energy efficiency actions has the housing provider undertaken in the last 12 months? (specific actions any retrofitting etc?)

In the year ending March 2023 we installed cavity wall insulation to 224 homes saving 3750 carbon saving tonnes. This was funded with a grant of £275,000 from the Wall Front Fund.

We have also installed an electric charging point in one of our services in Kent. In the next year we are focused on improving the data we have available regarding our properties through a new asset management system. This will allow us to apply for more grants and support to carry out more retrofitting of our properties.

C18: How is the housing provider mitigating the following climate risks:

We have done this through a range of measures:

- **Increased flood risk**

We worked with our insurance company to review flood risk in our properties. As part of this work we provided Zurich with a list of our properties. This list is monitored against a new system Zurich has which alerts us if there are any flood warnings associated with our homes.

The majority of our properties are monitored and managed locally, many 24/7, so we are alerted by staff about any potential issues. In addition, we undertake property and estate-based inspections and where issues are identified we undertake ground works. We are currently managing a potential flood issue in one of our East London estates.

- **Increased risk of homes overheating**

We review overheating risk along with our property and living standard inspections that are conducted by staff in our supported living properties.

In addition, we have external specialists advising on venting solutions to aid the air flow in properties. Where we have experienced overheating in properties, we have developed bespoke solutions such as adding air conditioning units, air extraction or heat deflection techniques such as insulation and blinds. Where we are reviewing new build proposals we will include thermal modelling as part of our decision making.

C19: Does the housing provider give residents information about correct ventilation, heating, recycling etc? Please describe how this is done.

We provide customers with a range of information relating to these areas including damp and mould and energy saving through our customer newsletter 'Heads-Up' as well as directly through our support teams. We have fully briefed and trained support workers on the ground about things to look out in relation to damp and mould for when they are conducting regular room/welfare checks on customers.

In terms of recycling, energy saving and other environmental information we recently produced a service ESG resource full of ideas for services to work with customers to implement. This included information on recycle and reuse.

At a local level, our services work with residents to ensure they are recycling correctly in line with local council requirements as part of their support work with customers.

C20: How is the housing provider increasing Green Space and promoting Biodiversity on or near homes?

In this year, we procured two ground works maintenance contracts where we have identified biodiversity as a high priority for social value return.

We have also launched a service awards and grants scheme, 'Love Your Home'. Through this programme, over 30 services received small grants and support from corporate and internal volunteers, to enhance outdoor and community spaces.

In the next year we will continue to work with contractors, undertaking biodiversity assessments of our green and amenity spaces, using the biodiversity tool kit for housing providers.

C21: 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?

Within our contracts for works we instruct that the Contractor shall comply with the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and exercise the duty of care required under Section 34. In addition, the Contractor shall comply, as appropriate, with the Control of Pollution (Amendments) Act 1989. We raise with the contractors any amendment to the banned material lists and highlight any further advice from HSE. We do not report on a specific performance indicator to monitor this.

C22: 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?

Within our planned and repair contracts we advise our contractors that all materials are to be new unless otherwise specified and procured. We have developed Employers Requirements and whilst a number of sustainable conditions are generally attached to approvals, we also highlight the need to consider material selection and the sustainable use of utilities and water management. At this time we do not have a target or measure around this performance measurement.

C23: Does the housing provider have a strategy for waste management incorporating building materials? If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?

At this stage we do not have a full strategy around waste or targets or measures. We outsource all development and repairs at Look Ahead as part of this we have a requirement specified with external contractors which requires them to comply with the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and exercise the duty of care required under Section 34. In addition, we specify that the Contractor shall comply with the Control of Pollution (Amendments) Act 1989, the Controlled Waste (Regulations of Carriers and Seizure of Vehicles) Regulations 1991 and the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations.

Contractors are required to provide consignment notes in respect of the disposal of all hazardous materials as required by the Environment Agency. The cost of providing these consignment notes is included in the contractor's rate.

In addition, we recycle in our office locations including separate disposal units for paper, plastic, glass, general waste and batteries. We have secured confidential waste bins for office paperwork which is collected and disposed of by a licensed carrier.

C24: Does the housing provider have a strategy for good water management? If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?

At this stage we do not specifically monitor water usage or have a target in this area although we do consider the type of components we use with wet systems.

When replacing bathrooms in our properties as part of our planned or repairs maintenance programme, we use low cistern flush toilets and aerated taps.



Governance and structure

C25: Is the housing provider registered with the national regulator of social housing?

Yes we are registered with the national regulator of social housing.

C26: What is the most recent regulatory grading/status?

Our most recent grading is V1/G1.

C27: Which Code of Governance does the housing provider follow, if any?

We follow the National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020.

C28: Is the housing provider Not-For-Profit?

Yes.

C29: Explain how the housing provider's board manages organisational risks.

We have a detailed risk map and this is reviewed annually by our Board. In addition, we hold workshops annually with both the Board and Senior Management team to review our organisational risks. We have a separate Audit and Risk Committee who monitor this area independently.

C30: Has the housing provider been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last 12 months (data protection breaches, bribery, money laundering, HSE breaches etc) - that resulted in enforcement or other equivalent action?

No.

C31: What are the demographics of the board? And how does this compare to the demographics of the housing providers residents? Add commentary if useful.

We have 10 board members, the percentages in terms of gender and cultural diversity are below and how this compares to our customer base (where the data is known regarding customers).

Diversity Stats	% of customers	% of Board members
Male	68%	60%
Female	31%	40%
White	47%	80%
Black or Black British	28%	20%
Asian or Asian British	14%	0%
Mixed	6%	0%
Other ethnic group	5%	0%

The ethnicity data indicates that our Board is less culturally diverse than our customer base. In terms of recruiting new Board members part of our criteria is to ensure we always have a diverse applicant list.

C32: What % of the board and management team have turned over in the last two years? Add commentary if useful.

From ten board members, three left and three joined in the last two years. In terms of our Leadership Team, one Executive Team member left and one new person joined in the last financial year.

C33: Is there a maximum tenure for a board member? If so, what is it?

Yes, it is six years.

C34: What % of the board are non-executive directors?

All of our ten board members are non-executive with the exception of our Chief Executive Chris Hampson.

C35: Number of board members on the Audit Committee with recent and relevant financial experience.

Two of ten board members - Kevin Gould and Sarah Willows.

C36: Are there any current executives on the Remuneration Committee?

Yes three non-executive directors are on our committee.

C37: Has a succession plan been provided to the board in the last 12 months?

Yes this is reviewed every year and led by our nominations committee.

C38: For how many years has the housing provider's current external audit partner been responsible for auditing the accounts?

We are coming into our sixth year with the current auditors.

C39: When was the last independently-run, board-effectiveness review?

This was held in 2022.

C40: Are the roles of the chair of the board and CEO held by two different people?

Yes

C41: How does the housing provider handle conflicts of interest at the board?

We have a Conflicts of Interest policy for board members. We also have a Vice Chair (Richard Jones). In the role description for the Vice Chair there is an explicit mention of responsibility for handling conflicts of interest at the Board.

Supporting colleagues

C42: Does the housing provider pay the Real Living Wage?

Yes we are a living wage employer.

C43: What is the median gender pay gap?

Our median gender pay gap is 0% (more information can be found on our website).

C44: What is the CEO:median-worker pay ratio?

Our CEO:median-worker pay ratio was 1:7.2.

C45: How does the housing provider support the physical and mental health of their staff? We offer a significant amount of support available to our staff.

In terms of physical health, staff that need reasonable adjustments would complete an assessment which their manager would discuss with them to see what support can be provided. When required we would work with Access to Work to support staff living with disabilities to remain in employment.

We have an in-house health and safety team who can advise on DSE and reasonable adjustments.

We have a range of employee networks including a DisAbility network that champions disability, mental health, wellbeing and neuro-diversity at Look Ahead and is led by staff members. In terms of mental health, 134 staff (13% of our workforce) are trained as Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) and repeat the course to increase our network of MHFAs at least annually.

We have an area on our intranet dedicated to support on mental health and wellbeing so staff have easy access to this. In addition, we provide a 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) that provides free counselling for staff. In addition, we offer a separate counselling service for teams where there has been a serious incident in one of our services to support them, whilst our managers' induction programme includes a section focused on supporting wellbeing.

Staff have access to discounts to gyms and other wellbeing offers via Reward Gateway which we fund to support employees' wellbeing. We also offer a health cashback plan which means employees can claim back money if they use health services such as dentistry, opticians or physiotherapy and the cash plan provider also has sections on their website, which employees can access, on physical and mental health.

C46: What is the average number of sick days (both long and short term) taken per employee?

At the end of March 2023, the average number of sick days per employee is 6.1 days long-term and 5 days short-term.

C47: How is Social Value creation considered when procuring goods and services?

With contracts of large value that we procure (for example repairs and maintenance) contracts are scored against social value and investment in additional value-added support for our customers. For smaller value contracts, we do not consider social value at this stage.

For contracts we hold with local authorities we commit to certain social value measures. This may include for example the employment of apprentices, investment in staff training or other measures aimed at creating social value in a local area.

C48: How is Environmental impact considered when procuring goods and services?

As above, we include measures around this in larger contracts but not in all procurement of goods and services.

For further information on ESG at Look Ahead contact:

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www.lookahead.org.uk

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Look Ahead Care
and Support