The Pioneer Group

Creating Lasting Impact

Our Environmental, Social and Governance Report

2025/26

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Chief Executive's Introduction

Simon Wilson - *Chief Executive*

Our purpose here is simple, to provide great homes, deliver excellent services and create positive opportunities for the people and communities we serve.

Over the past year, we've continued to invest in what matters most to our customers. Our Tenant Satisfaction Measures improved across all 12 indicators, placing us in the top 25% of housing associations nationally. We also exceeded our year one energy efficiency target, with 93% of our homes now achieving an EPC rating of C or above.

We know many households continue to face financial pressures. That's why supporting customers remains at the heart of our approach. During the year, our Money Advice Service secured almost £1.5 million in financial gains for customers, while our wider community investment programmes continued to create opportunities, improve wellbeing and strengthen local connections.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to achieving net zero by 2050 and have increased our planned investment in energy efficiency improvements to £34 million. At the same time, we'll continue to focus on delivering safe, affordable homes, listening to our customers and creating lasting social value across the communities we serve.

This report highlights the progress we've made during 2025/26 and the positive impact we're delivering for customers, colleagues and communities. While challenges remain, we're proud of what we've achieved and ambitious about what comes next.

Report Themes

Environmental

Social

Governance

Unless otherwise specified, all information in this report is accurate at 31st March 26.

ESG 2025/26: At a Glance

Every number tells a story. Behind these figures are the customers we've supported, the homes we've improved and the communities we've helped to thrive. We've pulled together some of our standout achievements from 2025/26 to show the difference we're making. While these statistics highlight key successes, we're continuing to grow, improve and invest in delivering even better outcomes for our customers and residents.

Our Homes

A B C

93%
of homes have an EPC rating of C or above

99.8%
of homes meet the Decent Homes Standard

100%
compliance across key safety checks

Climate and Sustainability

£34 million
committed to achieving Net Zero by 2050

1,961
homes improved through our windows and doors programme

77 homes
retrofitted through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund

An increase of
£5 million
during 2025/26 to support future energy efficiency requirements.

Customers and Communities

Top 25%
nationally across all 12 Tenant Satisfaction Measures

£1.48 million
secured for customers through our Money Advice Service

99% satisfaction
with community regeneration services

Social Value

£2.93
social value generated for every **£1** invested in Community Safety and CCTV

More than double the previous year's return.

£100,000+
additional social value secured

£1 £2 £3 £4 £5 £6 £7 £8

£7.69
social value generated for every £1 invested in Estate Services

Up from £6.96 last year.

Governance

G1 / V2 Regulatory grading

Our People

Active EDI Networks Championing equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation.

Mental Health First Aiders *and* **Wellbeing Champions**

Supporting colleague wellbeing throughout the year.

Theme 1

Climate

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C1. Energy Performance of Existing Homes

93% of our homes now have an EPC rating of C or above, exceeding our Corporate Plan target for year one.

This means we have already surpassed our original target of achieving 92% by March 2028 and are ahead of schedule on our journey towards all homes achieving EPC C or above by 2030.

Our surveyors have assessed every home and found that just 7% remain below EPC C.

This progress has been driven by targeted investment programmes, including our £11 million windows and doors replacement programme and energy efficiency improvements delivered through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

Key figures

- 93% of homes at EPC C or above
- 7% of homes below EPC C
- Average SAP rating: 74

EPC rating (existing homes)	Percentage 2026	Percentage 2025	Percentage 2024
A	0%	0%	0%
B	7%	6%	6%
C	86%	63%	60%
D	7%	16%	17%
E	0%	1%	1%
Not yet assessed	0%	15%	16%

C2. Energy Performance of New Homes

We did not develop any new homes during 2025/26.

EPC rating (existing homes)	Percentage 2025-26	Percentage 2024-25	Percentage 2023-24
A	-	21%	31%
B	-	54%	69%
C	-	25%	-
Total	-	100%	100%

C3. Our Net Zero Journey

We are committed to achieving net zero by 31st December 2050 and have allocated £34 million within our business plan to help us get there.

During 2025/26, we increased this budget by £5 million, from £29 million to £34 million, to help prepare for potential future increases in Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) and make sure our homes remain fit for the future.

Our next milestone is to ensure all homes achieve an EPC rating of C or above by March 2030, helping us stay ahead of anticipated national requirements.

Key figure

- £34 million committed to improving energy efficiency and supporting our net zero ambitions

C4. Improving Net Zero in our Existing Homes

Over the past year, we've invested in making our homes warmer, more energy efficient and more affordable to heat.

Through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2 programme, we retrofitted 77 flats above garages, bringing them up to EPC C. Improvements included:

- New windows and doors
- External wall insulation
- Loft insulation
- Improved ventilation

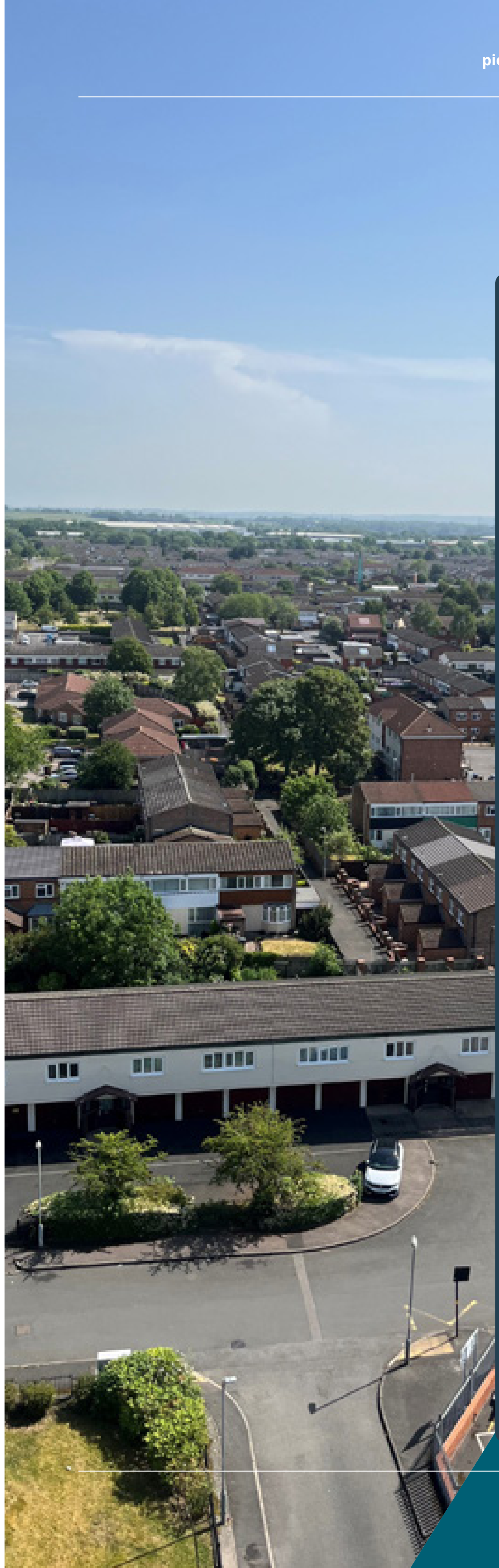
We also completed our windows and doors programme across Castle Vale, improving 1,961 homes by 31 March 2026.

Together, these projects have strengthened our progress towards achieving EPC C across all homes by 2030.

Key figures

- 77 flats retrofitted through SHDF Wave 2
- 1,961 homes improved through our windows and doors programme

Before and after shots of Matrix Partnership



C5. Measuring Our Carbon Impact

We are developing our reporting framework for Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions.

By 2028, we aim to have a clearer understanding of where emissions are generated across our organisation, helping us target future reductions more effectively.

C6. Managing Flood Risks

We regularly assess the impact of climate change on our homes and communities.

Over the last two years, we have completed flood risk assessments to identify properties most at risk and understand the likelihood of future flooding. We have also developed flood response plans to help protect people, homes and communities during flood events.

This year, we carried out a further assessment following completion of the Environment Agency's Bromford Flood Risk Management Scheme. The findings showed that the risk of fluvial flooding in Bromford and Castle Vale has now been significantly reduced.

C7. Water Stress

We do not currently have a dedicated water management strategy or formal water reduction targets.

As we continue to develop our approach to sustainability, we will consider whether a standalone water management strategy is needed to support future priorities.

C8. Overheating Risk

We will review overheating risks as part of the upcoming Decent Homes Standard Phase 2 requirements and any supporting guidance.

Alongside this work, we continue to invest in initiatives that reduce carbon emissions.

Theme 2

Nature

C9. Green Space and Biodiversity

While we do not currently have a formal biodiversity strategy, we continue to work with our partner, Community Environmental Trust to enhance green spaces and support nature and biodiversity across our neighbourhoods.

Over the past year, we have:

- Planted trees across the estate, including a new community orchard to improve air quality and encourage biodiversity.
- Added new hedgerows within the Conservation Area to create habitats for wildlife while helping to reduce noise from nearby roads and the railway.
- Introduced additional shrub planting in underused green spaces to support local wildlife.
- Installed swift boxes across Castle Vale to encourage nesting and help protect local bird populations.

These improvements are helping to create greener, healthier places for people and nature to thrive.

C10. Managing Environmental Risks and Pollution

Our Environmental Management Strategy helps us identify, manage and reduce pollutants that could cause harm to people, homes and the environment.

While we do not currently set formal numerical targets, we monitor progress against our environmental action plan and work closely with contractors to make sure they meet our environmental standards.

We also consider environmental impacts as part of our procurement processes and carry out regular stock condition surveys and Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) inspections to help ensure our homes remain safe and free from environmental hazards.

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Theme 3

Resource Management

C11. Sustainable Materials

We are exploring the development of a dedicated sustainable materials strategy. In the meantime, our Environmental Management Strategy includes actions to increase the use of responsibly sourced materials and support initiatives that contribute to our net zero ambitions.

When procuring services, we give preference to contractors that demonstrate a commitment to using responsibly sourced and sustainable materials.

While we do not currently set formal targets, environmental considerations form part of our procurement process. All materials must meet relevant building regulations, with environmental impact accounting for 5% of quality scoring during procurement evaluations.

C12. Waste Management

Reducing waste and limiting the amount sent to landfill remains a key priority across our organisation, homes and supply chain.

We look for opportunities to reduce waste, increase recycling and encourage more sustainable working practices. As part of our procurement process, we assess contractors on their environmental credentials, including their approach to waste management. These assessments help inform contractor selection and ongoing performance monitoring.

Rather than setting formal waste targets, we focus on delivering practical actions through our Environmental Management Strategy and working with contractors to improve environmental performance.

C13. Water Management

We do not currently have a standalone water management strategy, although we are considering developing one in the future.

Our Environmental Management Strategy includes actions to improve water efficiency, including incorporating water-saving devices into replacement and future development specifications.

We currently focus on delivering agreed actions rather than formal performance targets. As part of future bathroom replacement programmes, we will explore opportunities to introduce water efficiency measures and performance monitoring.

C14. Sustainable Procurement

Sustainability is embedded within our procurement policies and processes. Environmental impact accounts for a minimum of 5% of quality scoring across all procurement tenders.

Bidders are required to demonstrate:

- Their commitment to ISO 14001 or an equivalent environmental management standard.
- Their approach to achieving net zero or carbon neutrality.
- How they will implement sustainable practices, including green technologies, recycling and reuse, reducing landfill waste, and using cleaner energy and transport options.
- How environmental outcomes will be measured and reported.

This approach helps us work with suppliers who share our commitment to reducing environmental impact and creating more sustainable communities.

Theme 4

Affordability

C15. Properties subject to the Rent Regulation Regime

Providing affordable homes for people who cannot afford to rent or buy on the open market remains at the heart of what we do.

Last year, our customers paid rents that were, on average, 48% lower than private market rents in Birmingham, saving households more than £16 million compared with renting privately.

We continue to measure affordability against both Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates and average private sector rents to ensure our homes remain accessible to those who need them most.

Rent compared to Private Rented Sector (PRS):

All Properties	Our Ave. Weekly Rent (£)	% Rent Compared to PRS	% Rent Compared to PRS (2024-25)	% Rent Compared to PRS (2023-24)
One Bedroom	£99.31	52%	52%	52%
Two Bedrooms	£115.42	50%	50%	50%
Three Bedrooms	£131.10	51%	51%	50%
Four Bedrooms or more	£139.60	39%	38%	37%

Rent compared to Local Housing Allowance (LHA):

GN Properties	Our average weekly rent (£)	% Rent compared to LHA 2026	% Rent compared to LHA 2025	% Rent compared to LHA 2024
One bedroom	£99.99	63%	59%	72%
Two bedrooms	£113.39	66%	62%	69%
Three bedrooms	£126.95	67%	63%	71%
Four Bedrooms	£140.58	56%	52%	62%

Supporting Financial Wellbeing

The rising cost of living and changes to the benefits system continue to place pressure on many households. Our Money Advice Service provides free, confidential and independent support to customers on issues including benefits, debt and budgeting.

Demand for support remains strong, particularly around health-related benefits such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA). This reflects the growing link between financial wellbeing and wider health and wellbeing challenges.

While referrals have reduced overall, the issues customers face have become more complex. Many people require support with multiple challenges, including debt and benefit claims, often needing more tailored and longer-term advice.

Despite this, the service continued to deliver a significant impact. With an investment of £60,000, the service generated £1.48 million in financial gains for customers through successful benefit claims, debt write-offs and income maximisation.

For every £1 invested, almost £25 was returned directly to customers.

Key figures

- £16 million saved by customers compared with private renting
- £1.48 million secured through Money Advice support
- £25 returned to customers for every £1 invested
- £60,000 invested in the service

C16. Our Homes by Tenure

We provide homes across a range of tenures to meet different housing needs.

The majority of our homes (84%) are general needs or older persons' accommodation at social rent levels, helping to ensure affordable housing remains available within our communities.

Units (existing homes)	Number	Percentage
General needs (social rent)	2,201	79%
Affordable rent	31	1%
Housing for older people	128	5%
Intermediate rent	41	1%
Low-cost home ownership	45	2%
Private rented sector	111	4%
Non-social leasehold housing	219	8%
Total homes owned and/or managed.	2,776	100%

C17. New Homes by Tenure

We did not develop any new homes during 2025/26.

However, four market rent properties were added to our portfolio during the year. Two were acquired through open market purchases and two transferred from leasehold to market rent tenure.

Looking Ahead

During the year, work began on site at Burcote Road and Lindridge Drive, marking an important step in our future development programme.

We secured £1.44 million of funding from the West Midlands Combined Authority, enabling us to convert homes on both schemes from affordable rent to social rent, increasing the availability of genuinely affordable homes for local people.

We also secured £270,000 of additional funding from Homes England to support the use of modern methods of construction through timber frame technology.

Burcote Road will be our first EPC A-rated development, delivering the highest levels of energy efficiency and helping residents benefit from lower energy costs and more sustainable homes.

C18. Helping Customers Manage Energy Costs

Keeping homes affordable to heat is a key part of supporting customers through the cost-of-living challenge.

We continue to invest in energy efficiency improvements that help reduce energy use and lower household bills, prioritising homes with the greatest need.

In response to customer feedback and our commitment to affordable warmth, we invested £11 million in new windows and doors across our homes. This work improves energy efficiency, reduces heat loss and helps customers keep their homes warmer.

We also secured funding through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to improve 77 of our least energy-efficient homes. These upgrades increased EPC ratings and are helping customers reduce their energy costs.

While the Decent Homes Standard currently requires homes to provide reasonable thermal comfort, we support wider ambitions to improve energy efficiency across the social housing sector. Our goal remains to ensure all homes achieve EPC C or above by 2030, helping customers benefit from warmer homes and lower energy bills.

Key figures

- £11 million invested in windows and doors
- 77 homes improved through decarbonisation funding
- 2030 target for all homes to achieve EPC C or above
- Building Safety and Quality

Theme 5

Building Safety and Quality

C19. Condition of our portfolio

Keeping our homes safe is our highest priority. During 2025/26, we achieved full compliance checks across all key statutory safety requirements.

Compliance Checks

- Gas safety checks: 100%
- Fire risk assessments: 100%
- Electrical safety checks: 100%
- Asbestos management surveys and re-inspections: 100%
- Legionella risk assessments: 100%
- Passenger lift safety checks: 100%

This performance reflects our ongoing commitment to maintaining safe homes and protecting the wellbeing of our customers.

C20. Quality of Our Homes

The Decent Homes Standard (DHS) sets the minimum standard for social housing and provides a nationally recognised measure of housing quality.

% of homes meeting the national housing quality standard?	Increase/decrease on housing with quality standard for previous year
99.8%	0.0%

As at 31 March 2026, 99.8% of our homes met the Decent Homes Standard, maintaining the same high level of performance as the previous year.

Homes Below the Standard

At the year end, five homes did not meet the Decent Homes Standard. Property condition is monitored throughout the year and action is taken as soon as any issues are identified to ensure homes are returned to compliance as quickly as possible.

Work is currently underway on all five properties:

Property 1 – Roofing repairs have been completed and contractors are working with the Housing Team to arrange access and complete internal ceiling repairs.

Property 2 – We are working with the resident to clear the property.

Property 3 – The Housing Team is working with the resident's next of kin to arrange the removal of large furniture items to provide access for works.

Property 4 – The resident has been decanted while the Development Team manages outstanding defects through the employer's agent and NHBC.

Property 5 – Following vehicle damage to the front of the property, the resident has been decanted and repair works have been approved by insurers. Pre-start activities are currently being arranged prior to works commencing.

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We assess property condition throughout the year and take immediate action whenever a home falls below the required standard. This helps ensure issues are addressed quickly and homes are returned to compliance as soon as possible.

Key figures

- 99.8% of homes meet the Decent Homes Standard
- Performance unchanged from the previous year
- 5 homes below the standard at year end
- Improvement plans in place for all affected homes

C21. Managing Damp, Mould and Emergency Hazards

Keeping customers safe in their homes is our highest priority.

During 2025/26, we continued to strengthen our approach to damp, mould and property safety in line with the introduction of Awaab's Law, which sets clear expectations for how social landlords respond to health and safety hazards in residents' homes.

Through our responsive repairs service, more than 76% of emergency repairs are attended on the same day, with all emergency hazards reported and monitored in real time.

We take a proactive approach to identifying and managing damp, mould and condensation. During 2025/26, we identified nine cases, all of which were investigated and managed in line with our procedures and the principles of Awaab's Law.

All cases are tracked through our central asset management system, enabling us to identify trends, monitor outcomes and target preventative action where needed.

A Customer-First Approach

We operate a "no lifestyle fault" approach, meaning we do not blame customers for damp and mould issues. Instead, we focus on understanding the cause, carrying out investigations quickly and working alongside customers to find practical solutions. Our priority is always to resolve issues as early as possible to improve living conditions and prevent further damage to homes.

Working with a specialist damp and mould contractor, reported cases are typically inspected within three working days, with remedial works agreed immediately and completed without unnecessary delay.

Importantly, we continue with repairs and remediation work regardless of any ongoing legal claims, ensuring customer wellbeing remains the priority.

Looking Ahead

We are exploring the use of smart technology to help monitor conditions within homes and identify damp and mould risks before they become more serious problems.

Alongside this, we continue to monitor Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) data and take prompt action to address any identified hazards.

Key figures

- 76% of emergency repairs attended on the same day
- 9 damp and mould cases identified during 2025/26
- Damp inspections typically completed within 3 working days

Theme 6

Residents and Community

C22. Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Our Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) improved across all 12 indicators during 2025/26, placing us in the top 25% of housing associations nationally.

This builds on the strong progress made in recent years, with satisfaction scores increasing by an average of 5% this year, following a 4% increase the previous year.

Our 2025–28 Corporate Plan puts customers at the heart of everything we do and includes an ambitious target of achieving 90% overall satisfaction by 2028

Tenant Satisfaction Measure	Current Performance			Benchmark
	23-24 Actual	24-25 Actual	25-26 Actual	Sector Median
Satisfaction with the overall service	82%	84%	89%	78%
Satisfaction with overall repairs service	76%	77%	82%	79%
Satisfaction with time taken to complete the most recent repair	78%	80%	82%	78%
Satisfaction that home well maintained	80%	82%	90%	78%
Satisfaction that home is safe	83%	88%	90%	80%
Satisfaction that their views are being listened to and acted upon	66%	74%	79%	71%
Satisfaction with being kept informed about things that matter	72%	78%	81%	76%
Agreement that landlord treats tenants fairly & with respect	80%	87%	90%	83%
Satisfaction with approach to complaint handling	45%	38%	49%	41%
Satisfaction that communal areas are clean and well maintained	78%	74%	77%	73%
Satisfaction that landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods	74%	83%	84%	71%
Satisfaction with approach to handling anti-social behaviour	53%	66%	71%	67%

Key improvements have been driven by:

- Completing the replacement of nearly 2,000 windows and doors.
- Strengthening our anti-social behaviour service, including appointing a dedicated Community Safety Manager.
- Improving complaint handling through new processes, clearer accountability and enhanced performance tracking.

Satisfaction Improvements

- Overall satisfaction: +4%
- Home maintenance: +4%
- Neighbourhood management: +5%
- Complaints and anti-social behaviour: +5%
- Listening and communication: +4%

C23. Holding Us to Account

Customers play a central role in shaping our services and holding us accountable.

Through our Customer Scrutiny Panel, Resident Champions and Readers' Panel, customers help review performance, challenge decision-making and influence service improvements.

We also gather feedback through customer surveys, consultations, focus groups and engagement activities to ensure residents' views inform our priorities.

To stay connected to our communities, we provide opportunities for customers to engage with us in ways that suit them, including:

- Listening Hubs
- Estate walkabouts and neighbourhood inspections
- Building safety meetings
- Resident meetings in high-rise and older persons' schemes
- Customer surveys and consultation events

Our High Street reception service and contact centre also provide direct access to colleagues and managers, with around 500 customer visits to our reception each month.

We use customer feedback, performance reporting and community engagement to demonstrate how customers influence decisions and help shape the services we provide.

C24. Complaints and Learning

We use feedback from complaints to understand what matters most to customers and identify opportunities to improve services. During the year, we strengthened complaint handling through improved processes, clearer accountability and enhanced case tracking, helping us respond more effectively and learn from customer feedback.

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Complaints Metrics	%
% of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints responded to within target timeframes	87%
Average time in working days to respond to Stage 1 complaints	10 days
Average time in working days to respond to Stage 2 complaints	18 days

Area for improvement	Change
	• Introduced clearer communication standards, including defined timescales for keeping customers updated. • Strengthened internal triage and escalation, with clearer routes for involving senior managers where complaints are complex or delayed. • If an action from a complaint is to arrange a follow up meeting or repair, we are now booking this appointment prior to sending out the letter and including details in the closure letter.
Contractors	Improved contractor oversight, with complaints intelligence shared with asset management teams to inform contract management discussions
Processes	• Strengthened cross team working, particularly where customer vulnerabilities or complex circumstances are involved • Improvements to data, dashboards, and oversight to support monitoring and assurance.

C25. Supporting Customers to Thrive

Through the Pioneer Pledge, we invest in services that help people live healthy, independent and fulfilling lives. Our community regeneration programme focuses on four key areas:

- Education and employment
- Children and young people
- Independent living and family support
- Health and wellbeing

Customer satisfaction with these services remains exceptionally high at 99%. Using the TOMs Social Value Framework and HACT Wellbeing Valuation methodology, every £1 invested generated £9.66 of social value during 2025/26.

Key Figures

- 99% customer satisfaction
- £9.66 social value generated for every £1 invested
- 40 people moved into employment
- 1,656 young people engaged in activities
- £129,528 additional income secured for customers
- 823 families supported through the Early Help programme
- 586 people supported through social prescribing
- 117 counselling hours delivered

Education and Employment

We support unemployed and economically inactive customers to develop skills, access training and move into work. We also work with customers already in employment to help them progress and sustain their careers.

During 2025/26, we supported 121 people, helping 40 customers move into employment and 66 become work ready. We also supported three people into regular volunteering opportunities and helped eight people improve their wellbeing.

Our employment service exceeded its target, with 33% of customers supported moving into employment, compared with a target of 30%.

Skills Hub

A significant milestone during the year was the launch of our Skills Hub in Castle Vale. Developed through discussions with partners in the Birmingham Anchor Network, the hub brings together employment support, training providers and local employers in one community-based location, making it easier for residents to access skills development, adult learning and employment opportunities.

Opened in September 2025, the Skills Hub became the new home for our employment support service, including one-to-one advice, job clubs and group activities. Training courses are delivered in partnership with Birmingham Metropolitan College (BMet) and Birmingham Adult Education Service (BAES), creating more opportunities for residents to gain new skills and qualifications.

The hub has already become a valued community resource, attracting almost 300 attendances in its first three months, with more than half coming from Castle Vale residents. During the year, the hub also supported digital inclusion initiatives, including Get Online Week activities and the launch of the Digital Together project, helping residents build digital confidence, improve employability skills and access new opportunities.

Social impact: £16.84 social value generated for every £1 invested.

Children and Young People

Our Youth Team provides opportunities for young people through after-school clubs, holiday activities, football sessions, mentoring programmes and sensory-friendly support for young people with additional needs.

During the year, we delivered 1,656 engagements, resulting in 1,565 positive outcomes. Every young person who engaged with the service achieved at least one positive outcome, and 95% achieved a successful outcome overall, exceeding our target of 90%.

Social impact: £1.05 social value generated for every £1 invested.

Independent Living and Family Support

Our Independent Living and Family Support teams help vulnerable adults and families overcome challenges, build resilience and remain independent in their homes.

During the year:

- 149 adults accessed independent living support.
- 47 customers received ongoing case management support for more complex needs.
- £129,528 of additional household income was secured through welfare benefit and debt advice.
- 87 Castle Vale families received one-to-one support.
- 823 families were supported through the wider Early Help programme across Erdington.

The service achieved 100% positive outcomes, exceeding performance targets and helping customers maintain stability, improve wellbeing and build confidence for the future.

Social impact: £9.16 social value generated for every £1 invested.

Health and Wellbeing

Our Health and Wellbeing services support customers to improve both their physical and mental wellbeing through activities delivered across Castle Vale and The Sanctuary community hub. These services include social prescribing, digital inclusion support, counselling and access to community groups and activities.

During 2025/26:

- 1,138 people received support through health and wellbeing services.
- 2,607 engagements took place across wellbeing activities.
- 586 people were supported through social prescribing.
- 25 people received counselling support, with 117 hours of counselling delivered.

Sensory Room at The Sanctuary

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The service achieved 100% positive outcomes, helping customers improve their wellbeing, reduce isolation and access support within their local community.

Social impact: £24.99 social value generated for every £1 invested.

Making a Difference

Together, these services help customers improve their financial resilience, health, wellbeing and independence while creating stronger, more connected communities.

Through targeted support and early intervention, we continue to invest in opportunities that enable people to thrive.

Social Return on Investment

- Education and Employment: £16.84 generated for every £1 invested.
- Children and Young People: £1.05 generated for every £1 invested.
- Independent Living and Family Support: £9.16 generated for every £1 invested.
- Health and Wellbeing: £24.99 generated for every £1 invested.

Overall programme social return: £9.66 generated for every £1 invested.

C26. Building Stronger Communities

We were established to support the regeneration of Castle Vale, and creating strong communities remains central to our purpose.

Through our Pioneer Pledge, and across the life of our corporate plan which runs to 2028, we will invest £1.5 million in community services that customers tell us matter most.

These include:

- Estate services
- CCTV and community safety
- The Sanctuary community centre
- Health, wellbeing, youth, employment and family support services

We also facilitate the Castle Vale Partnership, bringing together residents, community groups and local organisations to coordinate activity and deliver positive outcomes for local people.

Estate Services

We invested £146,266 in estate services during 2025/26 to help keep Castle Vale clean, safe and welcoming.

The team continued to deliver proactive inspections, neighbourhood improvements and day-to-day support for residents, while responding to challenges such as the ongoing Birmingham bin strikes since 2024 and severe cold and warm weather.

During the bin strike, additional resources were deployed to remove waste from communal areas, with an average of five tonnes of waste collected each week to help maintain safe and clean neighbourhoods. The team also supported vulnerable residents during periods of severe winter weather, helping ensure access routes remained safe and accessible.

Building strong relationships with customers remains a key part of the service. Through regular estate inspections, neighbourhood visits and direct engagement with customers, the team works proactively to identify and resolve issues before they escalate. This approach contributed to a significant reduction in complaints, with only one formal complaint relating to grounds maintenance received during the year.

Customer involvement also grew through our Resident Champions programme, helping strengthen communication, local pride and community ownership across our estates.

Customer satisfaction with communal area cleanliness increased to 78%, exceeding our target.

Using the HACT Wellbeing Valuation methodology, estate services generated £7.69 of social value generated for every £1 invested, an increase from £6.96 in the previous year.

Key figures

- £146,266 invested
- 78% satisfaction with communal areas
- Five tonnes of waste removed per week during the bin strike
- One formal grounds maintenance complaint received
- £7.69 social value generated per £1 invested

Pioneer Investment	Outcomes Generated	Social Value Generated
£146,266	Litter & rubbish problems	£69,502
	Vandalism & graffiti	£80,976
	Anti-social behaviour in local area	£107,350
	Like living in neighbourhood	£866,964
	Total	£1,124,792

Community Safety and CCTV

We invested £103,825 in community safety and CCTV services during 2025/26.

Working alongside West Midlands Police and partner agencies, our CCTV team helps prevent crime, support investigations and improve community safety across Castle Vale.

During the year:

- The CCTV upgrade programme was almost fully completed.
- 550 incidents were captured and supported through the CCTV network.
- Vale Watch partnership activity continued to strengthen local safety initiatives.
- Residents and businesses continued to access the service directly to report incidents and support investigations.

Our CCTV control room works closely with the local neighbourhood policing team, who are based within the same building. This close partnership enables intelligence sharing, quicker investigations and a coordinated response to issues affecting the local community.

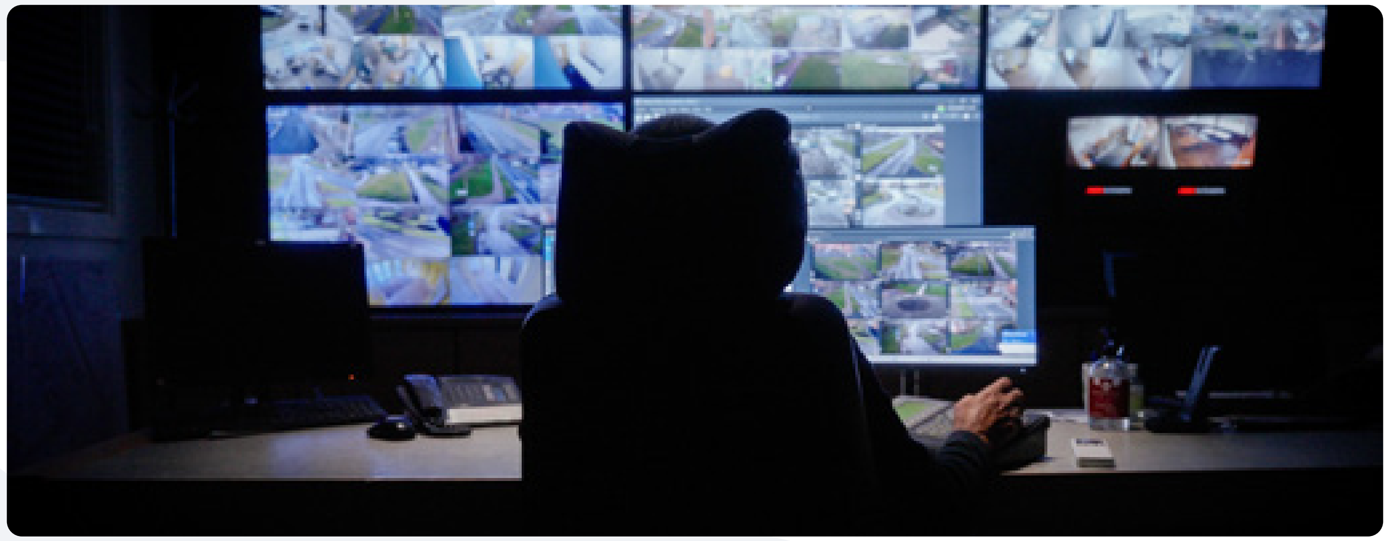
With coverage of key routes into and out of Castle Vale, the CCTV network helps identify vehicles and individuals linked to incidents, supporting both crime prevention and community reassurance. The service continues to play an important role in helping residents feel safe in their neighbourhoods.

Using HACT and Social Value+ methodologies, these services generated £2.93 of social value for every £1 invested, more than double the previous year's return.

Key figures

- £103,825 invested
- 550 incidents supported
- CCTV upgrade programme substantially completed
- Partnership working with West Midlands Police and Vale Watch
- £2.93 social value generated per £1 invested

Pioneer Investment	Outcomes Generated	Social Value Generated
£103,825	Arrests due to CCTV *	£77,622
	Concern about being victim of crime	£226,620
	Total	£304,242



Community Sport at the Heart of Castle Vale

Castle Vale Stadium continues to play a vital role in the community, creating opportunities for people of all ages to be active, connect with others and improve their health and wellbeing.

2025/26 at a Glance

- **210+** young players competed in the ESFA U11 Pokémon Cup Midlands Regional Finals
- **21** schools represented across regional football competitions
- **54** trialists attended the England Walking Football Over-50s national trials
- **£10,000** surplus generated, supporting long-term sustainability

Inspiring the Next Generation

Throughout 2025/26, the stadium welcomed local residents alongside regional and national sporting events. Highlights included hosting the English Schools' Football Association U11 Pokémon Cup Midlands Regional Finals, bringing together more than 210 young players from 21 schools, as well as the U11 School Teams Midlands Regional Finals, attracting teams from across the Midlands.

The stadium also welcomed professional footballers with strong Castle Vale connections, including Reyes Cleary of Barnsley FC and Samuel Iling-Junior, following his success with the England Under-21 squad, providing inspiration for local young people.

Supporting Participation at Every Age

We continue to create opportunities for people of all ages to enjoy the benefits of sport and physical activity.

During the year we launched our free Dads vs Dads football sessions, helping fathers stay active, improve wellbeing and build local connections. The stadium also hosted the England Walking Football Over-50s trials, welcoming 54 players from across the country, and supported the Birmingham County Women's Walking Football League, recognised nationally as England Football's League of the Year.

A Growing Football Hub

Castle Vale Stadium strengthened its position as a key footballing venue for Birmingham, becoming the new home ground of Birmingham United FC, a club dedicated to developing talented young players from across the city.

More Than a Stadium

Beyond sport, the stadium brings people together through community events, youth activities and charity fundraising initiatives. Our investment continues to support healthier lifestyles, reduce social isolation and create positive opportunities for local residents.

> "Generating a surplus of approximately £10,000 in 2025/26 represents an important step towards long-term sustainability while maintaining affordable access for community use."

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C27. Creating Social Value Through Procurement

We use procurement as a way to create lasting benefits for local people and communities, not just to deliver services.

A minimum of 5% of quality scoring is allocated to social value in all procurement exercises. This encourages suppliers to demonstrate how they will contribute to wider community outcomes, including:

- Local job creation
- Investment in local supply chains
- Volunteering initiatives
- Support for community events
- Donations and in-kind contributions
- Environmental and conservation projects
- Carbon reduction activities

We measure social value using recognised methodologies, including the HACT Wellbeing Valuation and TOMs (Themes, Outcomes and Measures) frameworks. These help us understand the wider social and economic impact of our investments and the value created for individuals, communities and public services.

Creating Local Impact

A strong example of our approach is the windows and doors replacement programme delivered with Nationwide Windows and Doors.

As part of the contract, Nationwide committed to investing 1% of the contract value back into Castle Vale, generating more than £100,000 of additional social value investment for the community.

During 2025/26, this funding supported a wide range of community projects including:

- A new sensory room and acoustic improvements at The Sanctuary community centre.
- Improvements to facilities at Castle Vale Stadium.
- Support for local schools and community organisations.
- Community festivals and events that brought residents together and strengthened community pride.
- Christmas support and practical assistance for local families through our Christmas Hamper initiative
- Environmental initiatives including swift box installations to support biodiversity across Castle Vale.

This partnership demonstrates how procurement can deliver benefits beyond the contract itself, creating lasting value for residents and communities

Key figures

- 5% procurement weighting for social value
- £100,000+ additional community investment secured through a supplier partnership
- Investment supporting community facilities, inclusion and neighbourhood improvements

Theme 7

Structure and Board

C28. Regulatory Rating

We continue to hold a G1 governance rating and V2 financial viability rating, following our most recent assessment by the Regulator of Social Housing in November 2025. These ratings remain unchanged since November 2023.

Our most recent In Depth Assessment took place in July 2022. We have not yet received a Consumer Standards (C) grading under the new inspection process, with our next inspection expected during 2026/27.

Key figures

- G1 Governance
- V2 Financial Viability
- No change since 2023

C29. Managing ESG Risks

ESG considerations are embedded within our governance framework and risk management processes.

Our Environmental Strategy sets out how we manage key environmental priorities, including net zero, climate resilience and flooding. Progress against these objectives is monitored through our governance structure, with both flood risk and net zero included on our corporate risk register.

Governance and regulatory compliance are considered in all Board reports and form part of our corporate risk management framework.

The corporate risk register is reviewed regularly by the Executive Team, Audit & Assurance Committee and Board, with oversight of all significant risks.

C30. Regulatory Compliance

We were not subject to any regulatory enforcement action, data protection breaches, bribery investigations, money laundering findings or Health and Safety Executive enforcement action during 2025/26.

C31. Customer Voice in Governance

We are committed to ensuring that customer voices are represented throughout our governance and decision-making processes.

Our Customer Influence Committee, which has a customer majority, reports directly to the Board. A committee member also serves on the Board, ensuring customer perspectives are reflected at the highest level of the organisation.

Customers also help shape services and policies through:

- Customer Scrutiny Panel
- Vale Voices
- Readers Panel
- Resident Champions

Feedback from these groups helps influence service improvements, policy development and operational decisions. For example, customer feedback on grounds maintenance performance directly contributed to changes in contractor arrangements.

C32. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across Board and Senior Management

We are committed to ensuring our leadership and workforce reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy sets out our approach and action plan for creating a more inclusive organisation.

To support this commitment, we:

- Include our EDI commitment in all Board recruitment materials.
- Work with the Housing Diversity Network to promote diverse recruitment and leadership opportunities.
- Support trainee Board Members through the Housing Diversity Network Board Trainee Programme.
- Tailor recruitment approaches to attract a broad range of applicants.
- Use anonymised CV shortlisting for staff recruitment.
- Require recruitment agencies to demonstrate a strong commitment to EDI.

These measures help ensure we attract diverse talent and create fair opportunities at all levels of the organisation.

C33. Board and Senior Management Turnover

Board and senior leadership succession is monitored to ensure continuity, effective governance and the introduction of new skills and perspectives where needed.

Turnover	2026
Board members that have turned over in the last two years	27%
Senior Management team that have turned over in the last two years	20%

C34. Financial Expertise on the Audit & Assurance Committee

Four members of our Audit & Assurance Committee bring recent and relevant f inancial expertise.

Collectively, their experience includes:

- Chartered Accountancy
- Banking and financial services
- Audit and assurance
- Risk management and governance

This expertise supports effective financial oversight and robust scrutiny of organisational performance.

C35. Board Independence

All Board members are Non-Executive Directors.

C36. External Audit

Our current external audit partner has been responsible for auditing our accounts for three years.

C37. Board Effectiveness

An independently facilitated Board effectiveness review was completed in March 2025.

In line with the National Housing Federation Code of Governance, we commission an external review every three years to ensure our governance arrangements remain effective and continue to support strong organisational performance.

C38. Managing Conflicts of Interest

We maintain high standards of governance through our Probity Policy and Board Conduct Policy.

Board members must:

- Declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest as soon as they arise.
- Complete annual declarations of interests.
- Disclose relevant relationships, employment and external appointments.
- Declare any relevant interests at the start of Board meetings.

These arrangements help ensure decisions are made transparently and in the best interests of the organisation and its customers.

Theme 8

Staff Wellbeing

C39. Real Living Wage

We are a Real Living Wage employer, and all colleagues are paid at least the Real Living Wage as a minimum.

C40. Gender Pay Gap

At 31 March 2026, our median gender pay gap was 16%, compared with 11% in 2025.

Women make up:

- 55% of colleagues paid above the median pay level
- 71% of colleagues paid below the median pay level

We continue to review our people practices and workforce data to better understand pay differences and support greater equality across the organisation.

Key figures

- 16% median gender pay gap
- 55% of higher-paid roles held by women
- 71% of lower-paid roles held by women

C41. CEO Pay Ratio

At 31 March 2026, our CEO-to-median employee pay ratio was 4.2:1.

This ratio has reduced over recent years, reflecting our commitment to maintaining a fair and proportionate approach to pay across the organisation.

2024	2025	2026
4.5:1	4.4:1	4.2:1

C42. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion with our Staff

We are committed to creating a workplace where everyone feels valued, respected and able to be themselves.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy is supported by an action plan, colleague-led working groups and staff networks representing a range of protected characteristics and lived experiences, including race, religion, LGBTQIA+, neurodiversity, age, health and disability.

During the year, we continued to promote inclusion through:

- EDI training for all colleagues
- Awareness events led by employees
- Celebrations including Eid and Diwali
- Fair and inclusive recruitment practices
- Ongoing reviews of people policies through an EDI lens

We have also introduced practical measures to support inclusion, including CV redaction during recruitment, focus boxes in each of our meeting rooms, flexible working arrangements, inclusive facilities and accessible support for colleagues.

Our aim is to ensure everyone feels supported to bring their authentic self to work.

C43. Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of our colleagues remains a priority.

We provide a range of wellbeing support, including:

- Trained Mental Health First Aiders
- Wellbeing Champions
- Employee Assistance Programme through our Bupa Health Cash Plan
- Occupational Health support
- Stress and resilience training
- Mental health training for all managers

During the year, we strengthened our wellbeing approach by reviewing key policies and introducing a Menopause Awareness Policy. We also embedded wellbeing conversations into regular one-to-one meetings, helping managers identify and respond to support needs at an early stage.

These initiatives help create a healthier workplace and ensure colleagues can access support when they need it.

C44. Learning and Development

We invest in learning and development to help colleagues build skills, progress their careers and deliver great services for customers.

Development needs are identified through regular one-to-one meetings and annual performance reviews, supported by a new organisational skills matrix.

We offer a range of learning opportunities, including:

- Professional qualifications
- Internal and external training courses
- Webinars and workshops
- Coaching and mentoring
- Job shadowing opportunities

By supporting continuous learning, we help colleagues reach their potential while ensuring the organisation has the skills and expertise needed for the future.

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