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# ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE

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SUSTAINABILITY  
REPORTING  
STANDARD  
2023



# INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to introduce our third report on our Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) performance. This report provides an overview of activity over the period 2022/23 and shows the significant progress we have made on our ongoing ESG journey across all areas. We have included a number of case studies in this year's report which we think will bring to life our ESG journey.

We remain fully committed to increasing the sustainability of our homes, and this has been demonstrated with an expanded Sustainability Team and an ambitious investment programme for our homes. After committing £13m of internal resources to the investment programme, Riverside successfully secured over £12m of funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund in July 2023. We will provide an update on our initial investment activity in next year's report.

We have also made a significant financial investment of £2.5m into our charitable foundation, the Riverside Foundation. This funding went into a range of projects, support services and crisis grants to our customers during this unprecedented cost of living crisis.

In March, we approved a new three-year corporate plan, together with a series of supporting strategies covering a range of topics including, customer experience, care and support, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and asset management. We believe that this new strategic framework will continue to improve our ESG performance and we will provide an update on the impact of these new plans in next year's report.

We very much hope you enjoy reading this report.



**Cris McGuinness**  
Chief Financial Officer



**Patrick New**  
Executive Director Customer Services

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# SOCIAL

 Riverside

Welcome to  
your home



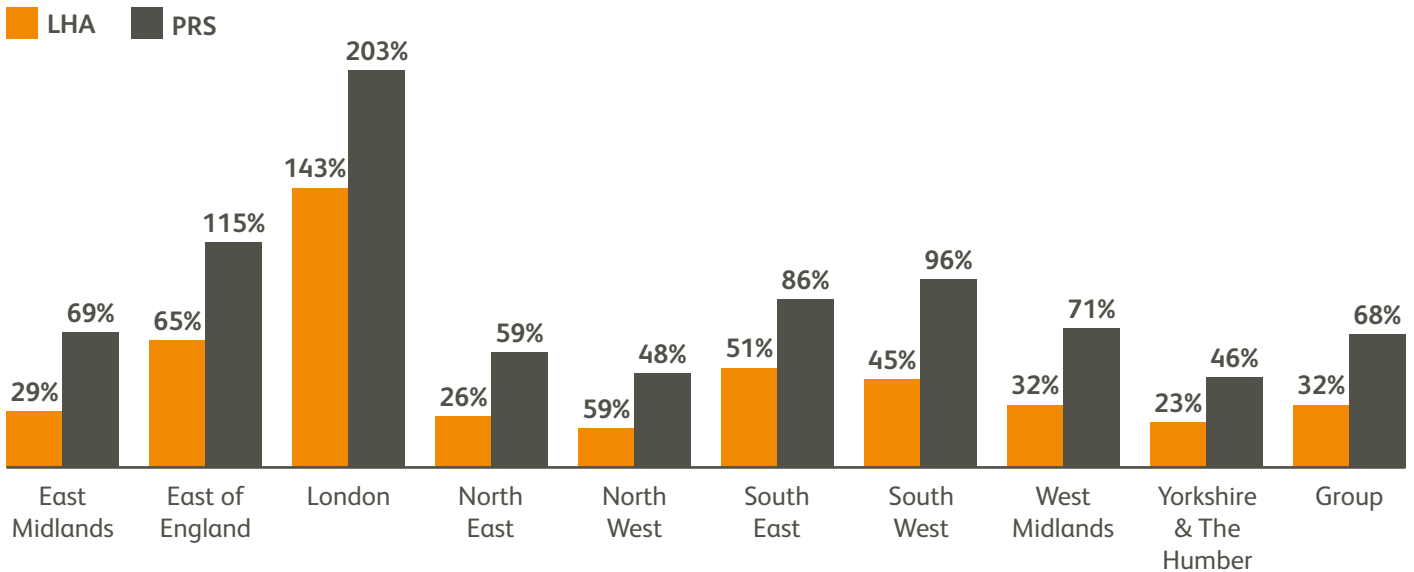
# AFFORDABILITY AND SECURITY

This theme seeks to assess the extent to which Riverside provides long-term homes that are genuinely affordable to those on low incomes.

## C1. Affordability Indicator: Rent compared to Local Housing Allowance and Private Rented Sector rents

On average, our rents are 29 % lower than Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates and 60 % lower than Private Rented Sector (PRS) rents. It is important to note that we operate nationally in several local authority areas. The chart below shows how our rents compared by region with LHA and PRS rents.

% difference by region:



## C2. Tenure of existing homes

Tenure of existing homes	Number of homes	Percentage
General Needs	32,035	55.4 %
Intermediate Rent	296	0.5 %
Affordable Rent	8,963	15.5 %
Supported Housing	4,895	8.5 %
Housing for Older People	4,870	8.4 %
Low-cost Home Ownership	4,413	7.6 %
Care Homes	342	0.6 %
Private Rented Sector	1,972	3.4 %





### C3. Tenure of new homes

Tenure of new homes	Number of homes	Percentage
<b>Newly built for rent</b>		
General Needs	16	2.3 %
Supported / Housing for Older People	0	0 %
Intermediate Rent	30	4.4 %
Affordable Rent	472	68.9 %
<b>Newly built for sale</b>		
Low-cost Home Ownership	216	24.4 %

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

We continue to provide our Affordable Warmth service. It is a national phone-based service which provides advice and assistance for those facing fuel poverty. Work can include helping with grant applications to Warm Home Discount Scheme and Trust Fund applications, while also assisting to reconnect gas supplies, changing energy behaviour plans and registration onto the Priority Service Register. It has been more difficult to help people save money by switching supplies to a cheaper tariff but we can still offer advice on making changes within the home that would save customers money and reduce carbon emissions.

The team work alongside the Money Advice team and can refer customers for specialist benefit and debt advice. Last year we attended a number of community events to raise awareness of the help that could be available to customers and are committed to increasing the number of events and develop stronger links with the communities we work in to reach as many customers as possible.

We have worked with other teams to get Switchee devices installed into many of our properties and can use these to gather data on energy use

and help us to reach customers who may not be using their heating efficiently or who are highlighted as being at risk from fuel poverty. We continue to work with our asset team to identify those who may be disconnected or who are experiencing damp and mould at their properties.

Last year the team had over 1,300 referrals and cash gains for customers totalled over £76,000.

### C5. What % of rental homes have a three-year fixed tenancy agreement (or longer)

Security of tenancies	Percentage
	1.98 %

# BUILDING SAFETY AND QUALITY

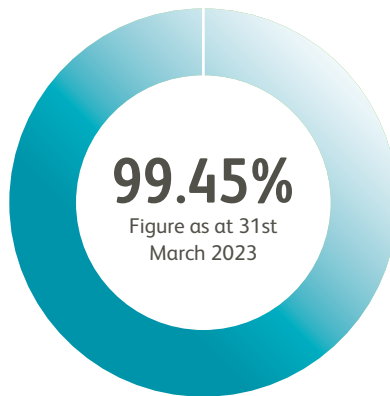
This theme seeks to assess how effective Riverside is at meeting its legal responsibilities to protect residents and keep buildings safe.



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



## C7. What % of buildings have an in-date and compliant Fire Risk Assessment?



As part of the Primary Authority Partnership with the London Fire Brigade, Riverside has risk rated its properties ranging from Level 1 to Level 5. Fire Risk Assessment reviews are undertaken based upon the risk rating of the property. Level 1 properties have the highest risk, and reviews are undertaken on an annual basis. Level 5 properties have the lowest risk, and reviews are undertaken on a 5 yearly basis.

## C8. What % of homes meet the Decent Homes Standard?





# RESIDENT VOICE

This theme seeks to assess how effective Riverside is at listening to and empowering residents.

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

The main consultative customer body for Riverside is the Riverside Customer Voice Executive (RCVE). The RCVE are consulted on all customer facing policies, as well as significant service developments or changes to the organisation. They have also been closely involved in the development of our three-year Customer Involvement and Engagement strategy.

Prior to the merger with One Housing Group (OHG) members of the RCVE joined with involved customers from OHG to form a joint group to help shape the values and customer pledges for the organisation moving forward.

The RCVE also manages scrutiny activities, they completed at the end of last year a lengthy review of our Anti-social behaviour (ASB) policies. This has resulted in an action plan moving forward which is updated to RCVE members at their bi-monthly meetings. They are currently in the process of deciding the topic for their next scrutiny review.

Wide-ranging consultation with customers took place prior to the implementation of our new Corporate Plan.

Riverside's Care and Support services offer local, inclusive and accessible opportunities to customers to be involved in the design and delivery of services. This includes opportunities such as involvement in the recruitment and selection of new colleagues and volunteers; service quality audits; local sign-up processes and resources; policy and procedure reviews. 94% of services now hold Service Involvement Commitments – pledges made between customers and colleagues in each service around what involvement opportunities are offered, what support (if any) is needed to get involved, and how customers would like to receive feedback on what has happened as a result. Care and Support have launched a Co-

production Policy. The Co-production Officer offers virtual training sessions and face-to-face workshops to over 300 customers and colleagues across Care and Support. A new tool kit has been developed to help staff become "Co-production Gurus" and this has created a network of colleagues and customers across the group who champion co-production in their area.

As part of the Customer Engagement Strategy closer links are being formed with Care and Support schemes. A trial by the RCVE to spend time in an area visiting multiple schemes in a week is currently being piloted to establish if this can enhance understanding of involvement opportunities.

Consultation with customers on policies and changes to services is supported by the iCommunity, which is an online panel with more than 1,300 members. The iCommunity have been sent surveys on a range of issues, including on the areas which make up the principles in the Together with Tenants Charter. This helps assist the RCVE in its annual assessment of how we are performing against the Charter.

We also have customer representation on several of our governance boards and committees, including a customer Group Board member and observer. In addition, there are customers on the Customer Experience Committee, Care and Support Committee, Riverside Foundation and Group Development Committee.

RCVE members are invited to the Group's Stakeholder Strategy Day, which is an annual event for our governance community focusing on the key strategic issues facing the organisation and allows discussion and debate. The RCVE are also assisting in the formation of our customer Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) groups to help give a voice to all communities.

Customer Inspectors continue with their inspections of Care and Support services listening to the views of these customers and helping to ensure their voice is heard. We are currently also exploring the possibility of further opportunities around Damp and Mould and planned maintenance inspections.



# RESIDENT SUPPORT

## C10. Resident satisfaction

Resident satisfaction	Percentage
2022/23	68.5 %

Satisfaction (Weighted)	Percentage
2021/22	70.7 %
2020/21	76.5 %
2019/20	73.7 %

## C11. 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 2022/23 we received 37 Housing Ombudsman Determinations. 23 out of the 37 determinations indicated a failure in service.

We carried out a full self-assessment in 2022 and published details on our website. Key outputs from the self-assessment include:

- clarity on how we deal with complaints through social media
- contact details of our Legal Team included in our procedure for when investigating complaints with issues relating to legal obligations (customer or landlord)
- procedure when declining to escalate a complaint
- procedure when unable to reach an agreement for extension
- procedure when customer raises additional complaints during the investigation
- ensuring that any changes reflect the removal of the Democratic Filter and the eight week wait for customers to approach the Ombudsman.

We will complete the next self-assessment in August 2023.

This theme seeks to assess the effectiveness of the initiatives that Riverside runs to support individual residents.

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

Riverside provides a number of services to its general needs housing customers that support them to sustain their tenancy as detailed below.

### Employment and Training

These services engage with customers to identify goals and develop plans to reduce barriers, build personal development and increase employability. This is supported by the innovative Ladders of Aspiration fund, which helps to pay for training and vocational courses. In the last year, we have registered 270 people for employment and training advice and 65 customers have moved into employment. We have also helped 54 people into formal training or volunteering. The Ladders of Aspiration fund provided funding for 13 courses allowing customers to undertake professional training to help them achieve their ambitions.

### Money Advice

This service primarily provides advice and assistance on welfare benefits, and signposts customers to other support including foodbanks and local charities. In 2022/23, this service delivered £2.5m in cash gains/savings to people through welfare benefits advice.

### Affordable Warmth

This service supports customers to reduce their energy consumption and costs, through a variety of methods including switching supplier/tariffs, applying for discounts, and applying for Priority Services Register. The service delivered £73,119 in cash/gains savings in 2022/23.



### Housing Sustainment

This service engages with customers with complex needs or vulnerabilities to develop tailored supported plans, which can include budgeting advice, signposting to agencies, accessing grants and liaison with specialist organisations.

### Helping Hands

The above services are supported by a discretionary pot of funding called Helping Hands, which enables us to provide immediate financial help to households in crisis. The funding available through helping hands has increased from £25k to £600k. In 2022/23, our Helping Hands hardship fund has assisted 1699 customers (2067 total inc. OHG) to help with one off purchases for example replacing a cooker; providing fuel top up vouchers or interview clothing.

Our care and support business provides 360 accommodation, support and outreach services across England. In 2022/23, we supported more than 14,000 people in supported housing, floating support and retirement living. We provide specific services to the following groups:

- homeless people
- veterans
- people with an offending history
- people fleeing domestic abuse
- people with mental health illness
- older people
- young people, including teenage families
- people experiencing substance misuse or rehab.

### How our care and support services supported customers in 2022/23

**2,931**

homeless people supported on any one night.

**3,274**

people maximised their income when we referred them to the correct benefits and offered money advice. 1,458 had a financial debt and successfully reduced that debt.

**2,194**

people improved their mental health.

**2,449**

people obtained sustainable accommodation.

**299**

people were supported into paid work, a further 356 participated in work-like activities and 452 people engaged in work training or further education.

**930**

people improved their relationships with friends and family.

# PLACEMAKING

This theme seeks to highlight the wider set of activities Riverside undertakes to create well-designed homes and places that meet local needs and provide great places for people to live and enjoy.

## C13. Provide examples or case studies of where the housing provider has been engaged in placemaking or placeshaping activities.

Our regional plans direct the delivery of initiatives and partnership approaches to support the investment and delivery of actions locally. As part of our regional planning approach, we have a programme of smaller more targeted community plans for large estate areas, neighbourhoods, and focused patch plans. These support the alignment of activity across our teams to work together to solve issues whilst building local capacity. The development of the plans arises from the result of stakeholder and colleague consultation exercises and ensuring we use all available insight to form our action plans. Customers have been integral to developing these plans through taking part in consultations and co-producing some of the action plans. Community plans have been developed for over 20 neighbourhoods across England in the North East & West, Yorkshire and

The Humber, Midlands and South East Region. Local Offers have also been created for these neighbourhoods to keep customers informed and support continued engagement.

Our commitment to deliver place shaping regeneration in our neighbourhoods continues. We will deliver residential led neighbourhood and economic regeneration to create sustainable, mixed tenure, and inter-generational neighbourhoods providing high quality new homes underpinned by community facilities, upgraded open spaces and improved connectivity. These placemaking initiatives are being developed and delivered through a partnership approach with local, regional and national partners ensuring sustainability by maximising investment through various funding streams.



### Case study – Runcorn Regeneration

Through our regeneration project in Runcorn we are delivering the following.

- The refurbishment and restoration of Grade II listed buildings into housing.
- Safe, clear and accessible routes through improving sustainable transport routes with a focus on safety for all ages and alleviating crime and ASB hotspots through adopting designing out crime principles.
- A green avenue of trees and soft landscaping in the heart of one of the neighbourhoods to improve the character of the area and integrate open spaces and housing. With dedicated cycleway and footpaths the full length of the green avenue and pedestrian friendly surfaces.
- An enhanced landscape through a comprehensive landscape masterplan to transform the character and quality of the area including blue and green infrastructure.
- A diverse housing mix including apartments, bungalows and houses, dedicated veterans housing and an extra care scheme to support sustainability.
- Multi-purpose indoor and outdoor community space

More information can be found in our videos setting out the work we are doing in The Uplands and Halton Lea's Local Centre.







### Case Study – Dundonald Modular Development

Dundonald is the largest modular affordable housing project to be completed in Scotland. The £9.8million project by Riverside Scotland and Connect Modular, supported by the Scottish Government, has raised the profile of offsite construction in Scotland and the increasing use of modular construction in the future to meet housing and environmental targets.

The development consists of:

- 16 one-bed cottage flats
- 19 two-bed houses
- 16 three-bed houses
- 2 four-bed houses
- 10 two-bed amenity bungalows.

Over 10% of the development is allocated to military veterans, providing sustainable accommodation and support to veteran families. This development tackles the housing crisis at speed and scale, whilst addressing climate change and homelessness amongst veterans.

Each of the 63 homes were built off-site in the factory of modular construction specialist Connect Modular Ltd. Benefits of these modular homes include:

- Construction waste is up to 85% less than on traditional sites.
- Compared to an equivalent, traditionally built project, up to 67% less energy is required to produce a modular building.
- Controlled factory conditions make it easier to improve the future sustainability of homes. For example, better air tightness is achieved as standard.

- Homes are made wind and watertight on the same day they are delivered to site. This eliminates the potential for moisture to be trapped in the structure and reduces shrinkage.
- The factory environment allows for a stringent quality regime and minimal defects. With materials being stored in a dry, undercover setting, the risk of damaged materials is reduced significantly.
- Material off cuts are carefully sorted and stored for later use elsewhere in the production line.
- Cardboard and plastic packaging is kept dry prior to bailing, and recycling and general waste can be more efficiently segregated.
- Reduced on-site time minimises construction traffic and related emissions by up to 50% and disruption to neighbouring residents.
- The risk of weather delay is greatly reduced when working in a factory setting, which also diminishes the health and safety risks of extreme weather.
- All timber is sourced from sustainable FSC approved suppliers.
- The combination of a highly insulated building envelope and solar PV panels means huge savings on energy consumption and bills for tenants.
- All properties are fitted with energy saving light bulbs and living-area sockets include additional USB charging points to avoid less plugs being taken up by charging mobile phones and tablet computers.
- Infrastructure has been installed to facilitate the future use of electric car charging points for all residents.





**ENVIRONMENT**





## Riverside acknowledges the increasing importance of sustainability and understands the key contribution we need to make if the UK is to achieve its target to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Climate Responsibility was set out within our 2020-23 three-year Corporate Plan ('Our Riverside Plan 2020-23') as a cross-cutting theme underpinning activity under all of our strategic objectives. As part of this we published the Group's first Climate Responsibility strategy, setting out the steps we will take as part of a long-term commitment to play our role in tackling climate change through reducing carbon emissions associated with our housing stock and operations. Much of the activity in the period to 2026 will be focused on improving the energy efficiency of our homes.

As we move into our 2023-2026 Corporate Plan, Climate Responsibility remains a cross-cutting theme.

Riverside has committed to investing £70m in bringing properties up from EPC D to EPC C by 2030 by adopting a fabric first approach. Future retrofit plans will also be developed in this time as we grow capacity and secure funding to deliver a much larger, accelerated programme to bring the remaining properties up to EPC C by 2030.

Given the scale of the investment, we have invested in a dedicated energy modelling software that will allow us to identify energy efficiency measures and target and plan our spend. This allows us to test scenarios, understand the impact of packages of measures, and inform our planned investment programme with this knowledge. Our next steps are to develop methodologies used in applying the results of the modelling software and determine any stock rationality required. This also means that we will quickly be able to work up suitable packages of properties and works when and if funding becomes available.

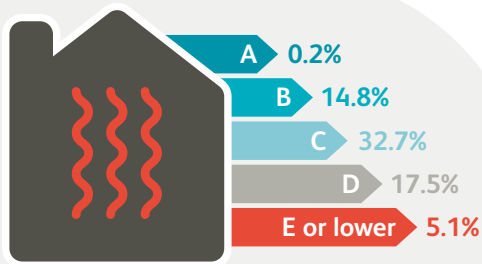
While many activities have already been taking place across the business in support of our sustainability strategy, we acknowledge the need for ownership to drive organisational change. We now have in place a Head of Sustainability, supported by a new team, providing a strength of dedicated sustainability colleagues that is at the leading edge of the social housing sector. They will be working on both long-term strategic planning for the huge investment required in our stock to achieve challenging energy efficiency standards out to 2050, as well as acting as both operational delivery and business partnering for the wide range of long-term sustainability objectives. The strategy will continue to be rolled out by teams across the business to give the range and depth needed to turn objectives into business as usual but will now be supported with dedicated expertise that means that core activities are not impacted, or sustainability initiatives side-lined. Riverside acknowledges the challenge of finding suitably trained staff and are committed to growing the abilities of new team members and internal colleagues, with a new Sustainability Graduate and an additional three members of staff. Another sector leading approach is that the Planned Investment team sits under the Head of Sustainability. This means that sustainability is intrinsically linked to every stock investment decision, allowing us to find streamlined routes to incorporate energy efficiency in the management of our homes.



# CLIMATE CHANGE

This theme seeks to assess how the activities of Riverside are impacting on climate change, and how they are mitigating the physical risks of climate change. This theme considers current practice, as well as the changes being made to improve performance in the future.

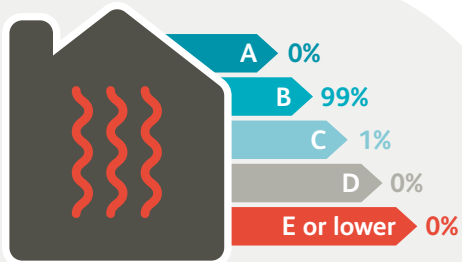
## C14. Distribution of EPC ratings of existing homes (those completed before the last financial year)



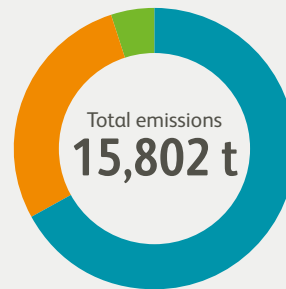
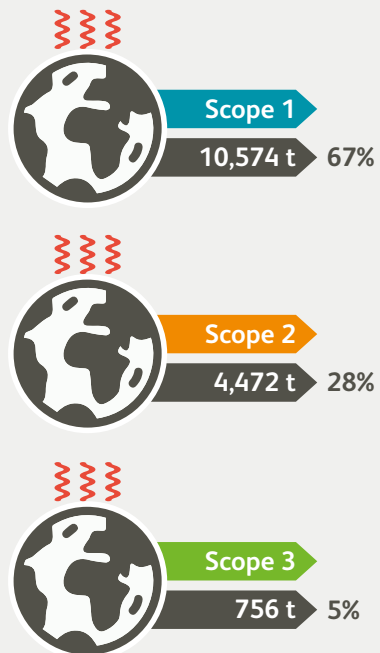
EPC not known\* 11.9%.  
EPC not needed\* 17.9%

\*Where the EPC is not known we do not have a current EPC, where the EPC is not needed the tenancy started before the EPC requirement was brought in.

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



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



### C17. What energy efficiency actions has the housing provider undertaken in the last 12 months

The Riverside Group Limited has undertaken the following energy efficiency initiatives during the 2022-23 reporting period.

- Full 12 months utilising 100 % renewable electricity tariff. Guarantees of Origin (REGO) certification.
- Recruited six new roles in Sustainability team to support delivery of Climate Strategy.
- Embedded Sustainability into Riverside Corporate Plan.
- Relocated Data Centre from Walton Road to The Getronics Data Centre, which allows Riverside to reduce our carbon footprint for IT hosting.
- Sustainability Fund Request established and delivering initiatives in Riverside Neighbourhoods.
- Ecosia search engine utilised at Riverside to offset carbon emissions now planted a total of 13,000 trees financed/planted.
- Worked to create a culture which is focused on environmental sustainability so that energy efficiency is ingrained within our culture and employee behaviours via 'Climate Change week' series of events and webinars.
- Supported 521 customers through Affordable Warmth Services.
- Established an internal working group to deliver a clear Electrical Vehicle Charging Point Policy.



## C18. How is Riverside mitigating the following climate risks:

- Increased flood risk
- Increased risk of homes overheating

Our Head of Health, Safety & Environment is actively engaged with our insurers to identify areas of risk across the portfolio in relation to changing climate. This includes evaluating flood risk and developing an appropriate mitigation and response plan.

This year we introduced a Flood Response Plan, developed to ensure that in the event of any flood disruption that might adversely impact our customers we are able to act and restore our service levels promptly.

Overheating is a particular risk in dense, over-populated urban areas. We therefore have specific requirements applicable to London, including:

- Contractors must procure an overheating assessment in accordance with the methodology outlined by the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers, which must be submitted to Riverside for approval.
- If the approved Overheating Assessment identifies overheating of any part of the building the Contractor shall implement the recommendations contained within the Overheating Report at no additional cost to Riverside.
- Any proposed site will need to adopt a comprehensive approach to mitigate overheating in residential apartments by providing guidance for early design stages.
- The criteria as set out by the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers must be met for naturally ventilated buildings, this sets limits for
  - the number of hours that the operative temperature can exceed threshold comfort temperature,
  - the severity of overheating within any one day, and
  - the absolute maximum daily temperature for a room.
- Any overheating mitigation should be, where possible, via passive ventilation using openings, subjected to viability of openable windows against air-quality, noise and future weather.
- Communal areas must have windows for ventilation and natural light. To minimise the possibility of overheating in communal areas, pipework shall be sized to the minimum necessary to satisfy the designed heat demand and insulation to communal heating pipework within risers and ceilings shall meet or exceed the required enhanced standard for insulation.
- Comfort cooling will not generally be required, unless the overheating criteria cannot be met or openable windows are not feasible for acoustic or air quality reasons.
- Pipework will be insulated with enhanced levels of insulation to minimise heat loss and to avoid summer overheating.
- Plantroom ventilation will be provided for combustion air purposes and/or to prevent plantroom overheating.
- In plantrooms where no fossil fuel/biomass fired heat generation plant is installed, but a risk of overheating may occur, ventilation shall be provided to ensure that the plantroom temperature meets with the current statutory requirements.

In Extra Care schemes, which are also particularly vulnerable to the risks of overheating, assessments are undertaken as part of the Planning Application and / or Building Regulations Application.

## C19. Does the housing provider give residents information about correct ventilation, heating and recycling.

As described above, Riverside has a team of Affordable Warmth Officers who support customers to use their heating systems most effectively and efficiently.

Our website includes a page on energy and heating. Within this we provide guidance on condensation and damp, heating your home hints and tips, cost of living help and support, information on our affordable warmth team and Switchee device information.

In December 2022, we launched our new Damp and Mould Policy and bespoke e-learning module for all frontline workers. Throughout the year all Technical Inspectors attended Building Pathology training to identify the root causes of damp and mould. Customers now have the ability to request damp and mould inspections through My Riverside and we have improved options for reporting ventilation repairs also. Our Damp and Mould Policy is also available to customers via our website and covers:

- identifying the types of damp: rising, penetrating and condensation dampness, including internal leaks
- identifying the responsibilities for Riverside and our customers in dealing with damp and condensation
- offering guidance, advice, and assistance throughout the process to all customers living in our properties
- data gathering and reporting, identifying proactive methods in mitigating risk of all dampness.

We have also published a comprehensive action plan to address the 26 recommendations in the Housing Ombudsman's spotlight report on damp and mould – some of these recommendations relate directly to communication with tenants about keeping their homes warm and well ventilated.



# ECOLOGY

This theme seeks to assess how Riverside is protecting the local environment and ecology.

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

We encourage biodiversity on all of our development sites and enhance current landscape by features such as street trees, proximity to local woodland, public gardens and open spaces. Any site based green infrastructure exists within a wider landscape context and we seek to reinforce and enhance local landscape character.

We work closely with our development partners to address the environmental and habitat enhancement aspirations of the Local Authority Planning Departments.

We are investing up to £500k per year through a sustainability fund, delivering local projects that will help the environment through actions such as tree planting, re-wilding, creating community gardens and supporting community groups to take climate action.



### Case study – International Day of Forests

The 21 March has been designated International Day of Forests by the United Nations in an effort to encourage local, national and international activities involving trees, such as tree planting campaigns.

To mark this significant day, the Riverside Sustainability fund provided funding for two tree planting events to go ahead.

The first event took place in Hull, where Riverside staff, volunteers and contractors came together to plant 215 mixed species

broadleaf trees (Oak, Red Oak, Beech, Purple Beech, Hornbeam, Scots Elm & Lime Trees) to enlarge the existing community woodland the Ash Plantation.

The second event was at the back field, Salterbeck, in Workington. Here, an avenue of large trees (Himalayan Birch, Maples and Chestnut trees) were planted to the Oval Community Centre and a snaking 165 linear metre hedge (Guelder Rose, Spindle, Dogwood and Holly) was also planted.





### Case study – Bromborough Woodlands

Funding was provided through the Sustainability Fund to create a woodland in Bromborough, Wirral.

This project aimed to increase woodland cover and diversify the local habitat through the following actions:

- Planting of 40 silver birch trees to increase woodland cover and carbon capture and also as a reference to the original meaning of Birkenhead.
- Planting of 20 hazel trees as a lower canopy woodland cover to create a small area of coppice and a food source for small mammals.
- Installation in the general area of 50 bird boxes to provide nesting habitats for various species of bird with each style of box designed for a specific species. The boxes were made and supplied by The York Bird of Prey Centre, a charitable trust.
- Planting 380 square meters of wildflower habitat to provide a food source for pollinating insects and in turn the insects provide a food source for the young birds in the above bird boxes.

- Recognition and enhancement of existing wildflower areas which can be left un-mowed to supplement the new wildflower planting.
- Implementation of identifying sites where tree planting can be sustainable with the right tree in the right place with little or no impact on existing services. Then at the end of this summer season a bid can be made for funding further tree planting.
- In the early stages of identifying domestic lawns within the Riverside housing stock which are of interest due to the diversity of wildflowers already established and maintained in the existing mowing regime.



## C21. Does the housing provider have a strategy to actively manage and reduce all pollutants?

While Riverside does not have a specific pollutants strategy, we do have a wider Aspects and Impacts Procedure. The point of this procedure is the identification and evaluation of the environmental aspects and impacts of Riverside activities including, where relevant, those of their sub-contractors, to determine their significance and the establishment of appropriate controls.

Aspects and their impacts should include:

- Actual Direct aspects through consumption or emissions/releases/wastes under normal operating procedures.
- Indirect Aspects which can be influenced by the organisation e.g., contracted activities or supplier activities.
- Aspects arising throughout the lifecycle of the activity or service e.g., raw material use, end of life treatment.
- Past or future activities which can include the consequences of transitioning organisations or changing processes in the future.
- Aspects arising from abnormal conditions which would be planned but infrequent such as maintenance activities.

- Potential aspects / impacts from emergency situations which may occur because of spillage, accidents etc. or from potential environmental situations which may have an impact on the business (e.g., flooding)
- Environmental aspects can therefore be considered to include:
  - Controlled and Uncontrolled emissions to atmosphere/discharges to water, waste generation and management, particularly hazardous wastes.
  - Contamination of land from leakages and spills / pre-existing land contamination.
  - Use of land.
  - Use of raw materials and natural resources including fuels, electricity, and water.
  - Noise, odour, dust vibration and visual impact.
  - Local/ community environmental issues.
  - Flooding and severe adverse weather.



# RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

This theme seeks to identify the extent to which Riverside has a sustainable approach to materials in both the construction and management of properties.



## **C22. Does the housing provider have a strategy to use or increase the use of responsibly sourced materials for all building works?**

We do not currently have a strategy in place; however, we work to requirements that ensure that all materials for new builds are sourced from responsible and traceable suppliers.

## **C23. Does the housing provider have a strategy for waste management incorporating building materials?**

We have a waste management procedure in place, setting out our duties to ensure that all waste is disposed of responsibly and using approved, registered waste contractors.

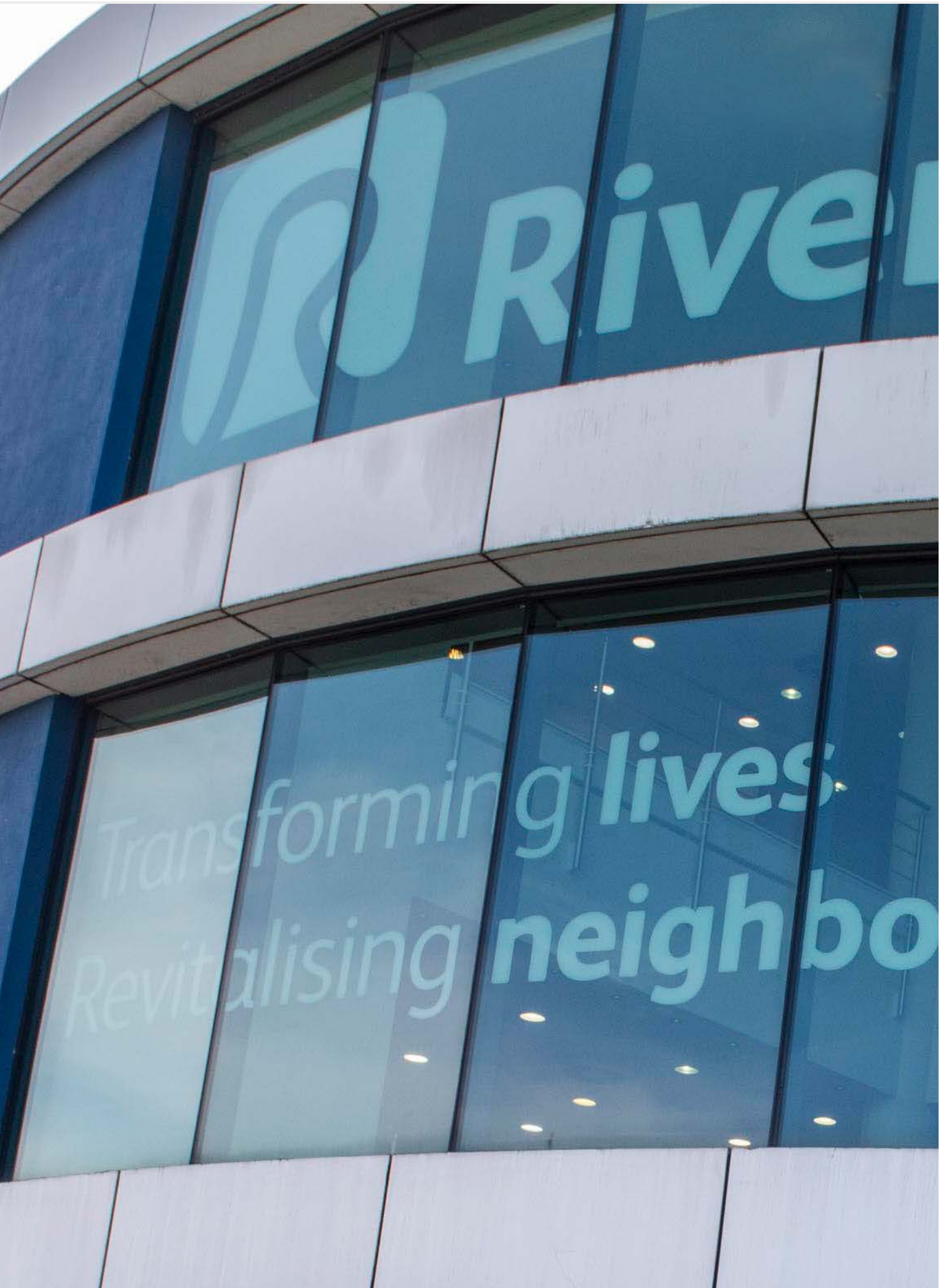
We also use waste management companies who provide regular updates and data to us.

## **C24. Does the housing provider have a strategy for good water management?**

We have a Water and Wastewater Management Procedure in place, with the purpose of setting out how to manage site discharges and drainage and the various requirements for surface water and foul water discharge consents and water abstraction. This procedure also highlights the need for efficient use of water.



# GOVERNANCE



# STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

This theme seeks to assess Riverside's overall structure and approach to Governance.

## **C25. Is the housing provider registered with a regulator of social housing?**

Yes, Riverside is registered with the Regulator of Social Housing. Registration number L4552.

## **C26. What is the most recent viability and governance regulatory grading?**

Grade G2/V2.

## **C27. Which Code of Governance does the housing provider follow, if any?**

The National Housing Federation's 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 take a robust approach to managing risk with risk management embedded into all activities undertaken. The Board and Executive Directors own and dynamically manage risk across the organisation. They are supported by a Director of Risk and Audit. The risk register was overhauled in 2023 and is a standing item at every Board meeting.

The risk register gives a clear line of sight between risk, mitigation and assurance. Group Audit Committee has deep dived into some of the most significant elements of the risk register.

There are also a number of operational risk registers across the business including in Social Housing, Customer Services and Riverside Home Ownership. A series of policies set out strategies for managing individual risks including Treasury Strategy, Health and Safety Policy and the Investment Policy. However, Group Risk Management Policy provides the overarching policy for the business.

A separate risk map has been developed for the integration of One Housing Group.

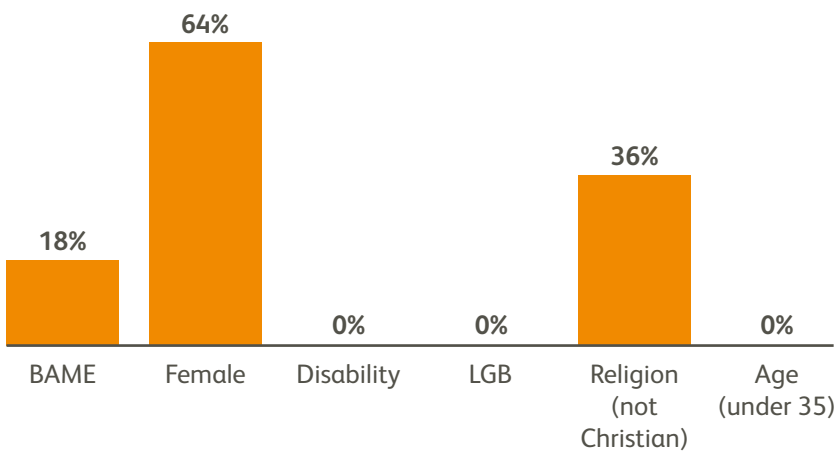
## **C30. Has the housing provider been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last 12 months that resulted in enforcement or other equivalent action?**

No.

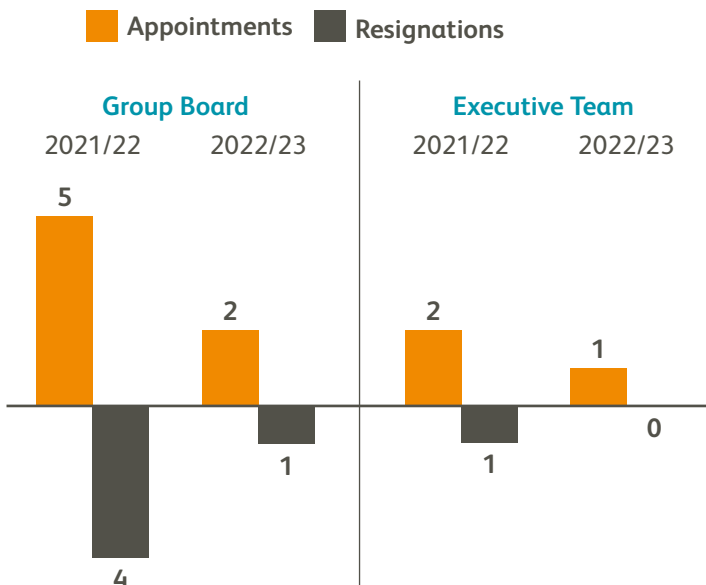
# BOARD AND TRUSTEES

This theme seeks to assess the quality, suitability and performance of the board and trustees.

## C31. What are the demographics of the Board?



## C32. What % of the board AND management team have turned over in the last two years?



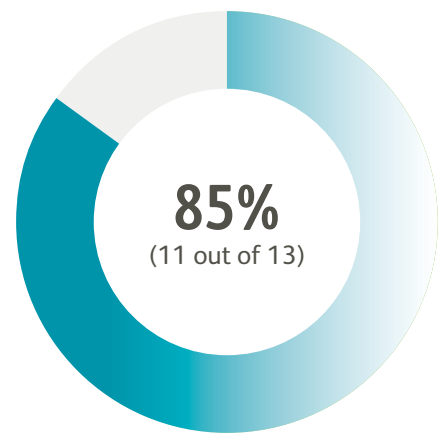
## C33. Is there a maximum tenure for a board member? If so, what is it?

Six years, with an option to extend where there is a business case to do so.

## C34. Registered charity

Riverside is an Exempt Charity registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 (C&CBSA) (Registration number: 30938R) and with the Financial Conduct Authority as a Society. Housing associations which are charitable Registered Societies under the C&CBSA are exempt from registration with the Charity Commission.

## C35. What % of the board are non-executive directors?



The Chief Executive Officer is co-optee and 1 Board Member is a customer representative.

## C36. Number of board members on the Audit Committee with recent and relevant financial experience

Three.

## C37. Are there any current executives on the Remuneration Committee?

No.

# STAFF WELLBEING

This theme seeks to assess how staff are supported and how their wellbeing is considered.

## C38. Has a succession plan been provided to the board in the last 12 months?

No – the Board has delegated approving and monitoring the implementation of the succession plan to its Governance and Remuneration Committee. The Committee takes into account the challenges and opportunities facing the Group, what skills and expertise will be needed on Boards and Committees in the future and diversity objectives.

## C39. For how many years has the housing provider’s current external audit partner been responsible for auditing the accounts?

One – the auditors (BDO) were appointed at the AGM in Sept 2021.

## C40. When was the last independently run, board-effectiveness review?

This was run by Campbell Tickell in May 2021.

## C41. Are the roles of the chair of the board and CEO held by two different people?

Yes.

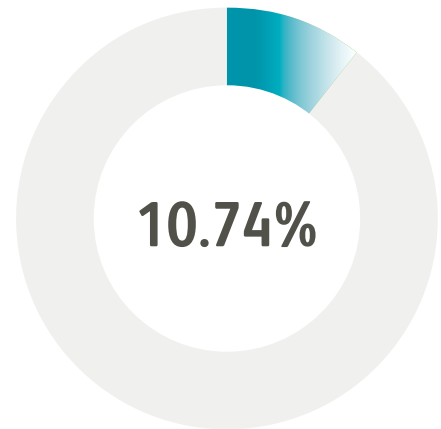
## C42. How does the housing provider handle conflicts of interest at the board?

The Governance Policy includes a statement on conflicts of interest that Board members must always put the interests of the organisation before their own personal interests. This is also captured in the Code of Conduct and Agreement for Services that each member must adhere to. There is a standing item of Declaration of Interests on all agendas. A comprehensive report on interests is submitted annually to the Group Board as well as a reminder of obligations which is also submitted to all committees and subsidiary boards.

## C43. Does the housing provider pay the Real Living Wage?

Yes.

## C44. What is the gender pay gap?



## C45. What is the CEO-worker pay ratio?

Median ratio (50th quartile): **11:6**

25th quartile: **13:5**

75th quartile: **8:5**



#### **C46. How does the housing provider support the physical and mental health of their staff?**

Our colleague mental health & wellbeing is extremely important and something we take very seriously as an organisation. In fact, we take colleague wellbeing so seriously we've recently recruited a full time Wellbeing Advisor to help drive our colleague wellbeing agenda.

Whether working on the frontline, in an office, or working from home, work shouldn't come before wellness, and our health and wellbeing support is available to everyone whenever it's needed.

We have many policies in place to help guide and support our colleagues with their physical and mental wellbeing such as our workplace stress policy, health surveillance policy, reasonable adjustments and DSE policies. We also have guidance and support for bespoke health matters such as fertility.

In addition to our policies, our colleagues are given two volunteering days per year to support their community or a cause close to their heart. We also have our Employee Assistance Programme supported by AXA, plus we can offer additional financial assistance in times of need when it matters most, via our own in-house charity 'Workplace Trust' which is fully funded by colleague donations direct from their salary tax free.

We are lucky enough to have a number of mental health champions across the business who are there for colleague support and signposting as well as several peer support groups which have a clear focus on physical and mental wellbeing. These groups have helped colleagues through life changing experiences such as cancer, bereavement, menopause, and parenthood.

We also have a wide range of initiatives and support networks available to all colleagues including our Enable staff group which supports colleagues who have a disability or illness and promotes wellbeing across the group.

Our annual colleague surveys have a bespoke section dedicated to health and wellbeing with clear action plans to support the findings.

Our Ways To Wellbeing site is our one stop wellbeing hub and is linked to the five ways to wellbeing. The hub provides colleagues with bespoke support to help colleagues connect, stay active, learn, work smarter and give back. With a focus on staying mentally and physically fit and healthy it has a wealth of information available at the touch of a button to encourage users to take responsibility for their own wellbeing.

#### **C47. Average number of sick days taken per employee**

17.33.



# SUPPLY CHAIN

This theme seeks to assess if Riverside procures responsibly.

## C48. Social value – Procurement

We ask a weighted qualitative question as part of our tender process on social value.

Riverside’s work in social value will align with the strategic priorities of the Group-wide Livelihoods and Communities and the priorities of the Riverside Foundation, which are:

- Prevent evictions and homelessness by proactively working with customers to sustain their tenancies.
- Support the livelihoods of our customers through projects that provide advice and support and build capacity for people to improve their own lives – going beyond the traditional landlord service.
- Promote community resilience and empowerment by supporting new and existing voluntary groups who are trying to make life better in our neighbourhoods.

We want a coordinated approach to social value that will bring maximum opportunities and benefits to our customers and communities to support their economic prosperity, health and wellbeing, and independence. We want to ensure we can genuinely measure the impact of our social value projects and services and be confident in communicating this story to our customers, staff and stakeholders.

Over 2022/23 Riverside received £8,642 in community donations, which refers to contributions towards the GROW programme, Job Start pack fund, home starter packs or feed a family scheme. Partner organisations contributed 42 hours of volunteering which equates to £711.06 in monetary value (at the £16.93ph) and £2,000 into our Foundation which supports a diverse range of projects aimed at promoting community action and cohesion and breaking the cycle of poverty in our neighbourhoods.

## C49. Environmental Impact – Procurement

Before we sign up a new supplier they have to complete an eligibility questionnaire with one of the questions being as follows:

“Has your organisation been convicted of breaching environmental legislation, or had any notice served upon it, in the last three years by any environmental regulator or authority (including local authority)”?

Within our tenders, depending on what is being procured, a question will be asked around what they are doing to reduce carbon emissions and any other initiatives they may have. This will carry a weighting of at least 5%.

Finally, depending on what is being procured, the specification will be aimed at environmental improvements e.g., fleet procurement.






## Get in touch or find out more

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email: [info@riverside.org.uk](mailto:info@riverside.org.uk)  
Follow us on X (formerly known as Twitter)  
[@RiversideUK](https://twitter.com/RiversideUK)

### Customer Service Centre

 **24** hours, **365** days a year. So you can call  
at the weekend or even on Christmas Day  
**0345 111 0000**

 Speak to a member of our team

 We are happy to accept **Relay UK** calls.

### The Riverside Group Limited

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A charitable Registered Society under  
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(Reg No 30938R)

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