



Environmental, social and governance report

This report sets out the performance and impact of United Welsh Housing Association Ltd in terms of the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) aspects of our business.

We have chosen to use the framework devised by the UK-wide ESG Social Housing Working Group. The Group developed a Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing (SRS) which was launched in November 2020, covering 48 criteria. The Standard develops the 3 ESG areas into 12 themes and each theme is aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Each theme has one or more criteria against which to measure; some criteria are classed a 'Core' (the most important) or 'Enhanced' (more aspirational).

This is our fourth report using this framework and shows results for all Core criteria (C) and those Enhanced criteria (E) where we have made some progress. The information will be updated annually.

Environment



Theme	Type C/E	Criteria	2023/24	2022/23 results
Climate change	C	<p>Distribution of EPC ratings of existing homes (those completed before the last financial year)</p> <p>We measure using SAP ratings, so the following bandings are approximate.</p>	<p>Band A: 3%</p> <p>Band B: 43%</p> <p>Band C: 50%</p> <p>Band D: 4%</p>	<p>Band A: 3%</p> <p>Band B: 41.2%</p> <p>Band C: 51.2%</p> <p>Band D: 5.8%</p> <p>Band E: 0.1%</p> <p>We now use a more recent SAP rating standard, which is more demanding, resulting in our EPC bandings changing.</p>

	C	Distribution of EPC ratings of new homes (those completed in the last financial year). New self-delivered schemes in the pipeline will be EPC A.	Band A: 38% Band B: 62%	Band A: 75% Band B: 25%
	E	Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 green house gas emissions	Not currently tracked.	Not currently tracked.
	E	What energy efficiency actions has the housing provider undertaken in the last 12 months?	We continue to participate in the Optimised Retrofit Programme and are completing energy efficiency works to a further 137 properties in 2023/24 and 241 properties in 2024/25.	Under the Welsh Government sponsored Optimised Retrofit Programme we have completed works to 243 properties, comprising the installation of air source heat pumps, solar panels and battery energy storage.
	E	How is the housing provider mitigating the following climate risks: - Increased flood risk - Increased risk of homes overheating	All of new homes that we deliver incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage and control surface water. By incorporating SuDs into our new developments we work to reduce the causes and impact of flooding.	Nothing to report yet.

	E	Does the housing provider give residents information about correct ventilation, heating, recycling etc. Please describe how this is done.	We provide home user guides on new developments. Otherwise, ad hoc advice is currently given on request, where a related maintenance issue arises. Development of a strategic approach to this will be considered over the coming years as part of our Net Zero strategy.	We provide home user guides on new developments. Otherwise, ad hoc advice is currently given on request, where a related maintenance issue arises. Development of a strategic approach to this will be considered over the coming years as part of our Net Zero strategy.
Ecology	E	How is the housing provider increasing Green Space and promoting Biodiversity on or near homes	Pilot rewilding project is underway in 2024/25 in relation to 17 green spaces which were previously subject to traditional seasonal grass cutting.	Nothing to report yet.
	E	Does the housing provider have a strategy to actively manage and reduce all pollutants? If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?	No current plans to develop a strategy.	Nothing to report yet.

Resource management	E	<p>Does the housing provider have a strategy to use or increase the use of responsibly sourced materials for all building works?</p> <p>If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>For self-delivered new homes our preference is to use timber frame construction through our own factory, which has PEFC Accreditation and has been certified by Earthly as a climate positive business.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>For self-delivered new homes our preference is to use timber frame construction through our own factory, which has PEFC Accreditation and has been certified by Earthly as a climate positive business.</p>
	E	<p>Does the housing provider have a strategy for waste management incorporating building materials?</p> <p>If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>There is a waste management strategy in place during the construction of new homes. This forms part of the Considerate Contractors remit that our Contractors will follow, so it's to entirely our strategy.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>There is a waste management strategy in place during the construction of new homes. This forms part of the Considerate Contractors remit that our Contractors will follow, so it's entirely our strategy.</p>
	E	<p>Does the housing provider have a strategy for good water management?</p> <p>If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?</p>	<p>New Welsh Housing Quality Standard contains measures to reduce water usage and management of rainwater discharge. These measures will be incorporated into our WHQS compliance works.</p>	<p>Nothing to report.</p>



Social

Theme	Type C/E	Criteria	2023/24 results	2022/23 results
Affordability and security	C	<p>For properties that are subject to the rent regulation regime, report against one or more Affordability Metric:</p> <p>1) Rent compared to Median private rental sector (PRS) rent across the Local Authority</p> <p>2) Rent compared to Local Housing Allowance (LHA)</p> <p>We base our rents on affordability principles developed by JRF Foundation.</p>	<p>For general needs (social rent), our total charge (including service charges) does not exceed 33% of the Standard National Living Wage (adjusted for tax credits) or 28% of the standard National Living Wage figure (adjusted for tax credits) where there is no service charge. 2022/23 was the final year in transitioning so that all general needs rents meet these criteria.</p>	<p>For general needs (social rent), our total charge (including service charges) does not exceed 33% of the Standard National Living Wage (adjusted for tax credits) or 28% of the standard National Living Wage figure (adjusted for tax credits) where there is no service charge. 2022/23 is the final year in transitioning so that all general needs rents meet these criteria.</p>
	C	<p>Share, and number, of existing homes (homes completed before the last financial year) allocated to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General needs (social rent) Intermediate rent Affordable rent Supported Housing Housing for older people Low-cost home ownership Care homes Private Rented Sector 	<p>General needs: 66% (4308)</p> <p>Older persons: 13% (852)</p> <p>Supported housing: 15% (958)</p> <p>Affordable rent: 1% (78)</p> <p>Low-cost Home Ownership: 5% (295)</p>	<p>General needs: 66% (4245)</p> <p>Older persons: 13% (828)</p> <p>Supported housing 15%: (937)</p> <p>Affordable rent: 1% (75)</p> <p>Low-cost Home Ownership: 5% (295)</p>

	C	<div>Share, and number, of new homes (homes that were completed in the last financial year), allocated to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General needs (social rent),• Intermediate rent• Affordable rent• Supported Housing• Housing for older people• Low-cost home ownership• Care homes• Private Rented Sector</div>	<div>General needs: 59% (129) Older persons: 6% (14) Supported housing: 30% (65) Affordable rent: 4% (8) Low-cost Home Ownership: 1% (2)</div>	<div>General needs: 54% (74) Older persons: 18% (25) Supported housing: 12% (16) Affordable rent: 0% (0) Low-cost Home Ownership: 16% (22)</div>
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	C	<p>How is United Welsh trying to reduce the effect of fuel poverty on its residents?</p>	<p>Our Money Advice team support with managing energy bills. We are committed to building new homes to EPC-A standard, the highest rating of energy efficiency. Our new build homes use green energy sources and zero carbon technologies, and we will be piloting Octopus Zero bills tariffs on a number of homes on a new build development scheme to establish if this approach could work across our wider development programme. The zero bills initiative allows residents to move into homes equipped with green energy technology and have no energy bills for around five years. To be eligible, the homes require solar panels, home batteries and heat pumps.</p>	<p>Our Money Advice team support with managing energy bills. We are committed to building new homes to EPC-A standard, the highest rating of energy efficiency. Our new build homes use green energy sources and zero carbon technologies. We recognise that by improving the energy efficiency of our homes and moving towards cleaner sources of heat, we can reduce the carbon emissions and keep energy costs down.</p>
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	E	What % of rental homes have a three-year fixed tenancy agreement (or longer)? 2022/23 saw the implementation of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 which introduced secure forms of occupation contract.	All tenants except those in certain forms of supported housing have standard occupation contracts, which include security of tenure with no fixed term.	All tenants except those in certain forms of supported housing have standard occupation contracts, which include security of tenure with no fixed term.
Building safety and quality	C	What % of homes with a gas appliance have an in-date, accredited gas safety check?	99.90%	99.94%
	C	What % of buildings have an in-date and compliant Fire Risk Assessment?	100%	99.72%
	C	What % of homes meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (incl. Acceptable Fails)?	100%	100%
Resident voice	C	What arrangements are in place to enable the residents to hold management to account for provision of services?	We use a range of feedback mechanisms from telephone surveys, focus groups and online discussion forums. We are currently implementing a new Customer Involvement Strategy.	We use a range of feedback mechanisms from telephone surveys, focus groups and online discussion forums. We are currently implementing a new Customer Involvement Strategy.

	C	How does the housing provider measure Resident Satisfaction and how has Resident Satisfaction changed over the last three years?	Rolling independent telephone perception survey surveying approx. 75 residents per month. Results monitored through quarterly reports to the Executive team. Under our Strategy for 2023/24 and onwards we have defined our ambition to improve our satisfaction levels in comparison with peer organisations. All but two of the metrics 2023/24 results have been above the peer median for 2023.	Rolling independent telephone perception survey surveying approx. 75 residents per month. Results monitored through quarterly reports to the Executive team. Under our Strategy for 2023/24 and onwards we have defined our ambition to improve our satisfaction levels in comparison with peer organisations.
	E	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?	10 complaints were escalated to the Ombudsman, two were upheld.	12 complaints were escalated to the Ombudsman, 1 was upheld.

Resident support	C	<p>What support services does the housing provider offer to its residents. How successful are these services in improving outcomes?</p>	<p>Jobs and training: schemes to place residents into meaningful work (22 in 2023/24), support to obtain training accreditations (69 in 2023/24), support to remove barriers to employment (44 in 2023/24), and hosting wellbeing and personal confidence courses (28 in 2023/24).</p> <p>Money advice: provide advice in how to manage money, supporting to make claims for UC, DHPs and other benefits (1396 referrals in 2023/24).</p> <p>Connect and Working Families: signpost to services around mental health and physical health, reduction of loneliness, connecting with neighbours.</p>	<p>Jobs and training: schemes to place residents into meaningful work (29 in 2022/23) and access to training (38 in 2022/23) and others supported with how to cope when they have lost their jobs.</p> <p>Money advice: provide advice in how to manage money, supporting to make claims for UC, DHPs and other benefits (1084 referrals in 2022/23).</p> <p>Connect and Working Families: signpost to services around mental health and physical health, reduction of loneliness, connecting with neighbours post-pandemic.</p>
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Placemaking	E	Provide examples or case studies of where the housing provider has been engaged in placemaking or placeshaping activities.	United Welsh is a signatory to the Design Commission for Wales Placemaking Charter. We ensure that the six placemaking principles of the Charter are incorporated into the design and delivery of our new homes, working to deliver people-focused, active and distinctive places to live.	United Welsh is signatory to the Design Commission for Wales Placemaking Charter, which builds on strengthening focus on Placemaking in policy and practice in Wales. The charter outlines six principles that cover considerations that contribute to establishing and maintaining good places. We look to ensure that these six principles are addressed in the new development schemes that we deliver.
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Governance



Theme	Type C/E	Criteria	2023/24 results	2022/23 results
Structure and governance	C	Is the housing provider registered with a regulator of social housing?	Yes - Welsh Government	Yes - Welsh Government
	C	What is the most recent viability and governance regulatory grading? <i>Green/Green is the highest possible rating for Welsh Government system of rating.</i>	United Welsh is Compliant for Governance and Compliant for Financial Viability signed as Green/Green (highest possible rating for Welsh Government system of rating)	United Welsh is Compliant for Governance and Compliant for Financial Viability signed as Green/Green
	C	Which Code of Governance does the housing provider follow, if any?	Community Housing Cymru and National Housing Federation	Community Housing Cymru and National Housing Federation
	C	Is the housing provider Not-For-Profit? If not, who is the largest shareholder, what is their % of economic ownership and what % of voting rights do they control?	Yes, not-for-profit	Yes, not-for-profit
	C	Explain how the housing provider's board manages organisational risks.	Strategic Risk Map with accompanying Assurance Map	Strategic Risk Map with accompanying Assurance Map

	E	Has the housing provider been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last 12 months (e.g. data protection breaches, bribery, money laundering, HSE breaches or notices) - that resulted in enforcement or other equivalent action?	No	No
Board	C	What are the demographics of the board? And how does this compare to the demographics of the housing providers residents, and the area that they operate in? Add commentary if useful	Board: 55% women, 18% minority ethnic, none have a disability, average age is 52, average tenure is 4.2 years. Residents: 61% female, 8% minority ethnic, 73% of residents are between 25-64.	Board: 44% women, 11% minority ethnic, none have a disability, average age is 50, average tenure is 5.1 years. Residents: 58% female, 8% minority ethnic, Median age for new residents over the last three years is in the range 45-54.
	C	What % of the board AND management team have turned over in the last two years? Add commentary if useful	30%	38%
	C	Is there a maximum tenure for a board member? If so, what is it?	Yes - 9 years for non-executive board members	Yes - 9 years for non-executive board members
	C	What % of the board are non-executive members?	82%	78%

	C	Number of board members on the Audit Committee with recent and relevant financial experience	2/4 Audit and Risk Committee members have experience as finance directors, or heads of risk.	3/5 Audit and Risk Committee members have experience as finance directors, group financial controllers or heads of risk.
	C	Are there any current executives on the Remuneration Committee?	No	No
	C	Has a succession plan been provided to the board in the last 12 months?	Yes. A recruitment plan has been agreed.	No
	C	For how many years has the housing provider's current external audit partner been responsible for auditing the accounts?	2023/24 was the current engagement partner's fourth year. The firm rotate the engagement partner at regular intervals.	2022/23 was the current engagement partner's third year. The firm rotate the engagement partner at regular intervals.
	C	When was the last independently-run, board-effectiveness review?	2024	2021
	C	Are the roles of the chair of the board and CEO held by two different people?	Yes	Yes

	C	How does United Welsh handle conflicts of interest at the board?	For a matter coming up to a board decision, if there is a conflict of interest the Chair determines whether it is appropriate for the board member to stay in the room (possibly to answer questions of clarification) or to leave the room. In relation to other code of conduct issues the Chair will discuss the matter with the board member and agree a way forward.	For a matter coming up to a board decision, if there is a conflict of interest the Chair determines whether it is appropriate for the board member to stay in the room (possibly to answer questions of clarification) or to leave the room. In relation to other code of conduct issues the Chair will discuss the matter with the board member and agree a way forward.
Staff wellbeing	C	Does United Welsh pay the Real Living Wage?	Yes	Yes
	C	What is the gender pay gap?	9%	10%
	E	What is the CEO-worker pay ratio?	As of 31st March 2024, the ratio of CEO pay to median staff salary was 4.4.	As of 31st March 2023, the ratio of CEO pay to median staff salary was 4.54.

	E	How does United Welsh support the physical and mental health of their staff?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full time Staff Wellbeing Lead • Provide counselling service • Space in our Teams network for staff to post helpful articles or comments • Collective Voice - our team who collaborate with management on staff issues (also act as trades union reps) • Free eye tests • Health scheme benefit on offer • Totally flexible trust-based working in terms of hours to support work/life balance • Hardship Fund to provide financial support to cover emergencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Totally flexible trust-based working in terms of hours to support work/life balance • Full time Staff Wellbeing Lead • Provide counselling service • Space in our Microsoft Teams network for staff to post helpful articles or comments • Collective Voice - our team who collaborate with management on staff issues (also act as trades union reps) • Free eye tests • Health scheme benefit on offer • Hardship Fund to provide financial support to cover emergencies.
	E	Average number of sick days taken per employee	No longer tracked. With a relatively small workforce, it is subject to distortion by a few serious absences.	6.82 days for the year ended 31 March 2023

Supply chain management	E	How is Social Value creation considered when procuring goods and services?	Development contracts have a value base in either providing apprenticeships or by including a % of contract value to gift to our Together Fund which funds community activities.	Development contracts have a value base in either providing apprenticeships or by including a % of contract value to gift to our Together Fund which funds community activities.
	E	How is Environmental impact considered when procuring goods and services?	Nothing to report yet.	Nothing to report yet.