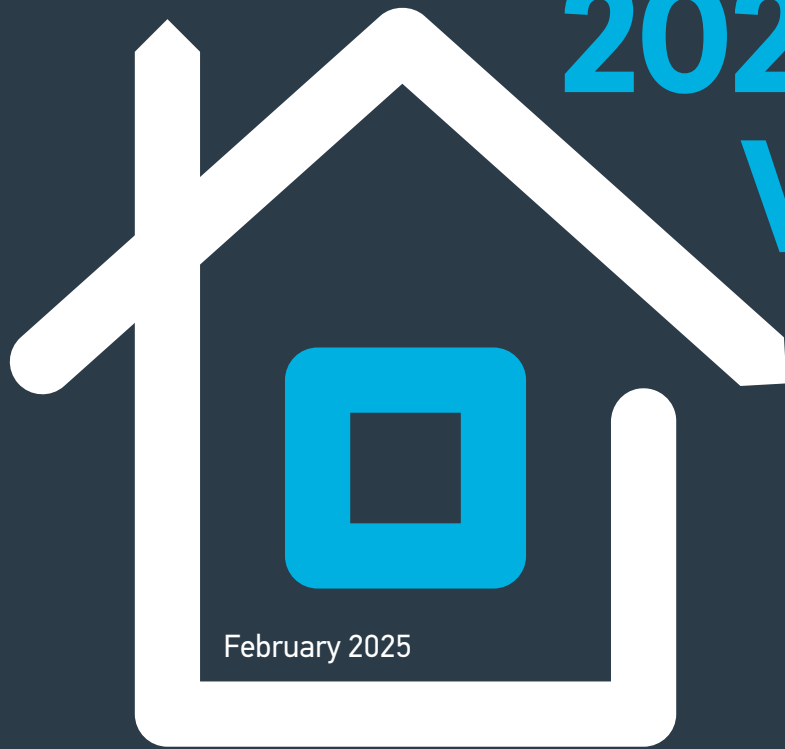


# 2024 Customer Wellbeing Report

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**In July and August 2024, over 5,700 Customers from our social renting Communities shared their views in our annual Wellbeing Survey. This survey helps us understand Customers' needs and preferences in key areas such as financial Wellbeing, employment and training, personal and physical Wellbeing, and Community support.**

We use these insights to identify areas where we can make a difference locally, building partnerships and co-producing solutions that matter to the Community. For Customers who opt in, we follow up directly after the survey to connect them with our support services — whether that's money and energy advice or guidance on getting involved in our employment programmes.

With 70% of respondents interested in one or more support service, we are excited to continue making a positive impact together.

# Key findings

48%

of our Customers

experienced severe financial disadvantage in the past year.



24%

of our Customers

reported being unable to put their heating on when it was cold in the last year.



60%

among those who often go without essentials

completely agreed that they felt anxious most of the time.



# Key findings

10%

of our Customers

cancelled their broadband or mobile phone contracts in the past year.\*



\*Customers who cancelled their broadband in the last year were four times more likely to report frequently going without essentials.

36%

of our Customers

rated their health as 'good' or 'very good,' compared to 77% of adults in a NHS Health Survey.



25%

of our Customers

reported low life satisfaction, which is five times the national rate of 5%.



# Key findings

26%

of our Customers

said they had no one to rely on if they needed support.



48%

of our Customers

felt unsafe walking alone after dark.



88%

of our Customers

stated that a long-term tenancy is very important to them.



# Our support

Delivered

**£334m**  
in social value

across Places for People, which includes:

**£175m**

generated by our housing business.

**£159m**

generated by Places Leisure.



# Our support

10,390

People helped who were homeless or at risk of being homeless.

4,295

People supported towards education, employment, or training.

14,697

People supported with financial and digital inclusion, including hardship funds.

23,855

People supported through projects targeting health and wellbeing.

29,808

People supported through projects targeting on building sustainable and resilient Communities.

We will use the findings from the Wellbeing Survey to shape new social impact initiatives in the coming year, supporting our Customers and Communities.

Because Community Matters





# Our support

**Our social impact and Community investment programme underpins our drive to be UK's Leading Social Enterprise. We deliver social impact and investment in four ways:**

- 1** Our social impact team of 60 people delivers direct services such as money advice, employment support, and help with the cost of living. This includes providing food and fuel vouchers, access to specialist support for energy debt and help accessing furniture and white goods.
- 2** Our team also manages a portfolio of 300 local and national charitable projects. This includes supporting Community hubs, funding Customer-led projects and backing food banks to offer essentials in our Communities.
- 3** We support our People by match funding charitable activities and connecting them to volunteering opportunities.
- 4** And we invest in other social enterprises to help them grow their work and make a positive difference for society.



# Financial wellbeing

Like many social housing tenants, our Customers are among those hardest hit by rising living costs. The BBC reported that, in the year up to September 2024, the cost of living rose by 8.2% for the poorest households, while benefits only increased by 6.7%<sup>1</sup>. According to our Wellbeing Survey, 31% of respondents reported often struggling financially, compared to 21% of YouGov respondents, and 6% stated they couldn't afford their costs and often had to go without essentials like food or heating<sup>2</sup>. The proportion of Customers struggling financially has almost doubled in three years - in 2021, 16% of Customers told us they were finding it difficult to manage financially.

For the past two years, our Customers have faced unrelenting financial hardships. 48% of Customers reported that they had experienced one or more the following severe financial disadvantages in the last year:

- 24% were unable to put the heating on when it was cold.
- 23% struggled with debt.
- 17% ran out of food and couldn't afford to buy more.
- 16% had fallen behind with gas or electricity bills.
- 15% struggled with paying their rent or mortgage.

31%

of Customers told us they often struggle financially.

6%

of Customers often go without essentials.

48%

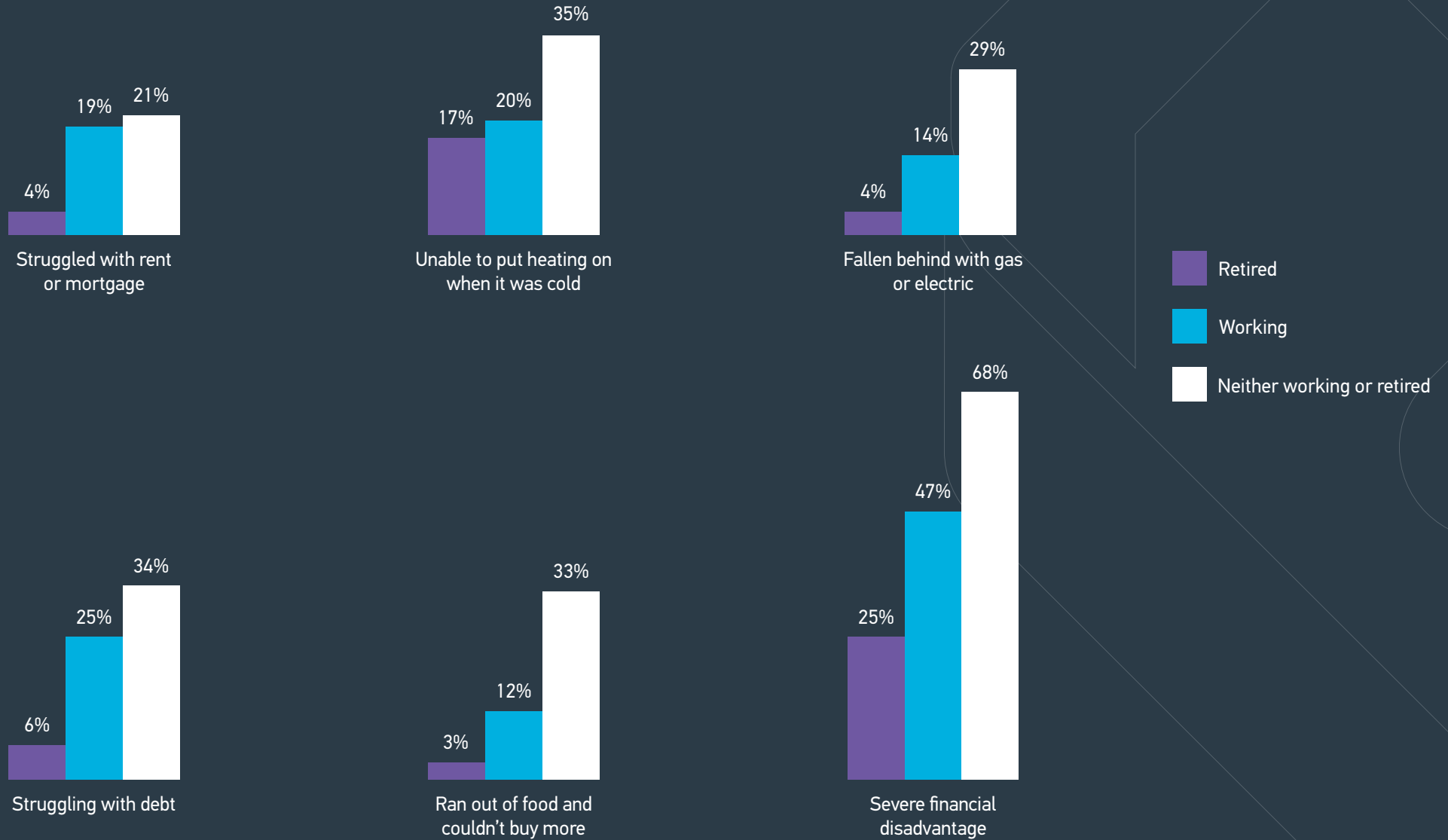
of Customers experienced one or more severe financial disadvantages.

1) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/67616610>

2) YouGov UK survey public opinion research from Summer 2024 based on approximately 1,500 adults across the UK. Source: <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/economy/trackers/financial-comfort?period=6m>



## PROPORTION OF CUSTOMERS REPORTING FINANCIAL DISADVANTAGE



During the energy crisis of 2022-23, 36% of Customers reported being unable to put their heating on when it was cold. Although this rate has dropped to 24%, heating remains a serious concern.

Customers who are neither working nor retired were the most likely to report severe financial disadvantages (68%, rising to 73% for households with children). Three quarters of these Customers face additional challenges due to being unable to work due to health conditions or disability.

**More than 1 in 3 respondents who can't work due to health or disability couldn't afford to put the heating on when cold.**

Employment has not sheltered Customers from the harsh effects of the cost-of-living crisis, 47% of working Customers experienced severe financial disadvantage, rising to 58% for households with children.

Fewer retired Customers reported experiencing extreme financial disadvantage (26%) and one in six retired Customers were unable to put their heating on when it was cold. Older people are at particular risk of adverse health outcomes associated with cold homes. However, they are disproportionately likely to opt not to put their heating on to avoid falling behind with bills.

Food insecurity and fuel poverty are closely linked to poor physical and mental health, placing additional demands on the NHS. In article published by **British Medical Association**, GP Dr Becky Haines shared that her patients' mental and physical health conditions are exacerbated by not being able to afford to heat their homes. Food insecurity also negatively affects health, and malnutrition is predicted to cost the NHS **£19.6bn a year by 2050**. We believe in a compassionate benefits system and would support a review of Universal Credit to ensure it adequately covers basic living costs.

Customers who often struggle financially reported higher levels of worry—60% of those who often had to go without essentials told us they feel anxious most of the time. This was compared to 35% of those who could only just afford their costs and often struggle to make ends meet, and 11% of those who are financially comfortable. Those who struggle financially also report lower life satisfaction.

**60%**

**of Customers who often go without essentials completely agreed that they felt anxious most of the time.**



## OUR SUPPORT

**44% of Customers said they were interested in some form of financial support. The most popular financial support options were low-cost food clubs and cheap mobile and broadband deals.**

In 2023/24 we helped 14,697 people with financial inclusion support, including money advice and hardship funds. Our money advice teams continue to work with Customers to manage their finances and increase their income, through unclaimed welfare benefits, backdated payments and charitable grants. Customers gain an average of £1,000 in under-claimed benefits or grants after receiving support from the service.

The team also manage our Cost of Living Hardship Fund, which provided £500,000 in emergency vouchers for food and energy for Customers in serious hardship in 2023-24. One Customer described the stress of not being able to afford essentials, which was having a negative impact on his wellbeing:

***“I went home and was just thinking about it, I couldn’t sleep. I actually called some of my family members to see if anybody could help a bit. Because of the cost of living here, everybody is struggling at the moment, so I was lucky. I got an email from her (PFP) and she provided me with an email address and phone number and told me about some support I could get.”***

Customer

| Support selected | Financial support type requested                    |
|------------------|---|
| 19%              | Low-cost food club/pantry                           |
| 19%              | Cheap mobile or broadband deals                     |
| 14%              | Help accessing benefits                             |
| 12%              | Advice on energy bills, efficiency and keeping warm |
| 9%               | Debt support  |
| 8%               | Budgeting help                                      |

Proportion of Customers interested in types of financial support.



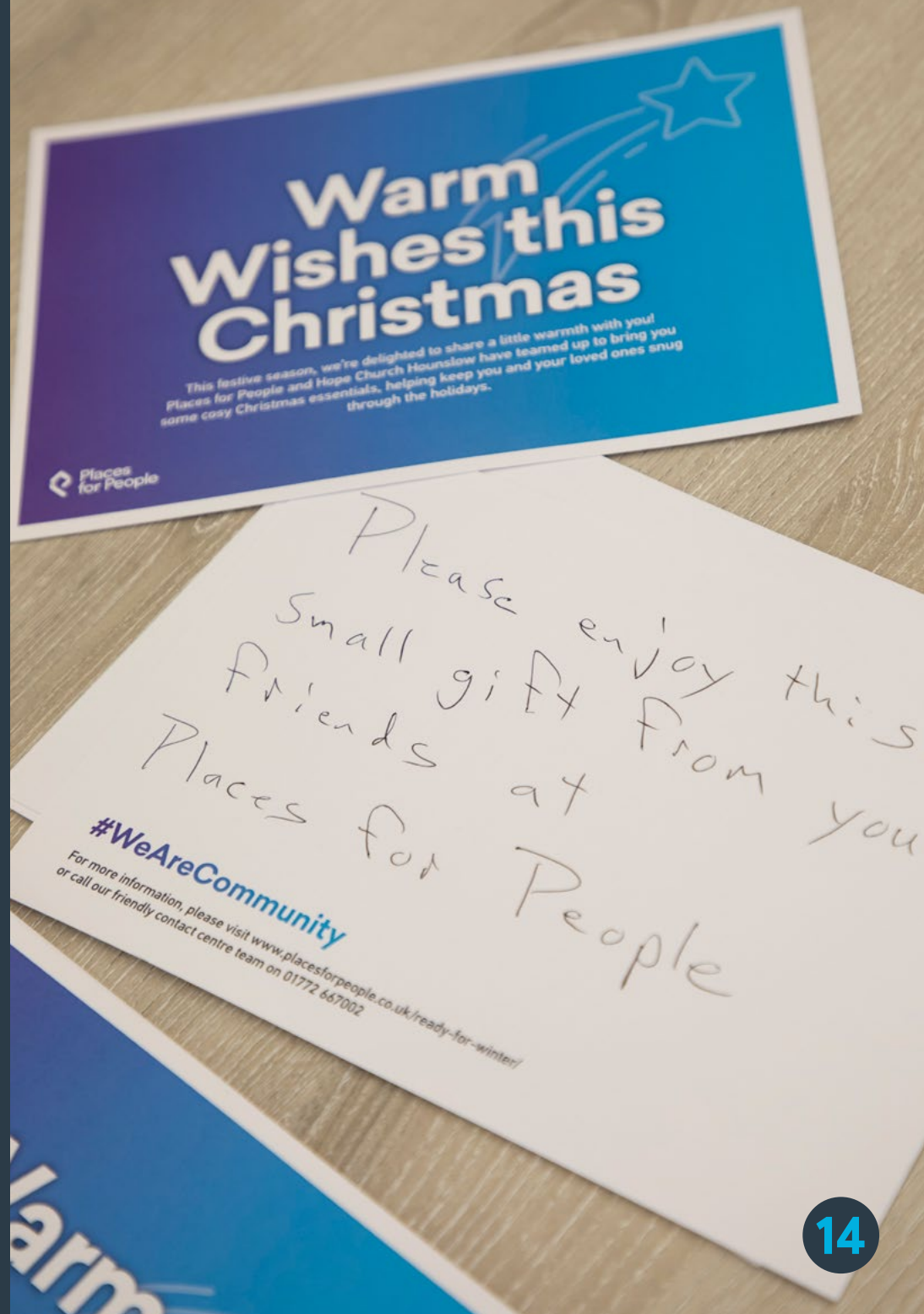
As well as hikes in the cost of living, our Financial Inclusion Team Leader told us that severe sanctions under Universal Credit, a six-week wait for the first payment, advanced payments that need to be paid back, and less generous allowances, particularly for mixed aged couples or people who are severely disabled, all contribute to making it difficult and stressful for Customers to manage on Universal Credit. Additionally, casual or zero-hours work contracts can make budgeting very difficult because income changes every month and sometimes Customers don't know what their income will be. This is particularly difficult for those on low incomes:



***“I’m on a zero-hour contract... my son has a lung condition... I do currently have both gas and electric supply (I wake up every day praying they don’t cut me off).”***

Customer

12% of Customers said they were interested in advice on energy bills, efficiency and keeping warm and 19% were interested in low-cost food clubs and pantries. Last year, we provided more than 300 warm packs to Customers to help them stay warmer in their homes. The packs include blankets, heat packs, radiator reflectors and energy monitoring plugs. Last financial year we committed £50,000 to 32 local charities who provide food banks and warm spaces in our heartland Communities. We also partner with organisations, such as the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, to provide additional financial advice and energy support for Customers.



We also helped 723 Customers to tackle furniture poverty, by supplying white goods, carpets and essential furniture items.

***“Because if they haven’t got cooker and they’ve only got a small amount of money (or a lot of people don’t have anything left at the end of the month, they’re actually in debit), they’re never going be able to save up for a cooker.”***

Team member

One Customer explained that he had a daughter with a disability which meant that she had to be fed through a tube. After moving into his property, he was unable to afford furniture, which made it extremely difficult to feed her. As a result of this, he was worried about how he would manage to buy the furniture needed and this was impacting on his sleep. Not having these essential furniture items would mean that he would have to make more trips to the hospital with his daughter, due to not having a suitable place to feed her, which would also impact on finances.



***“...That was the biggest relief of my life because at the time I didn’t have any bed. I had an airbed... that’s what my daughter was sleeping on... They (Pfp) sent me a voucher, that was the biggest relief. I have got furniture now. I have got a cooker and two beds. I’m really grateful for this help. If it wasn’t for this help, I would still be struggling now trying to find where we can sleep and all that other stuff.”***

Customer

Another Customer explained that if it wasn’t for the support, she would have fallen into debt furnishing her home. Because of harassment that she had experienced before moving, the Customer was off work on sick leave and so was spending a lot of time in her house. For this reason, she needed it to be somewhere that she felt comfortable and able to recover. She felt that Places for People understood this.

***“I felt like people would think ‘oh it’s just a house.’ No, that home was my world, I spent most of my time there while off work. And to have that taken seriously and someone acknowledge that. It’s a nice feeling... not minimising it. Obviously, there was some personal questions asked... but it was just handled very well, very dignified. It just felt like a comfortable situation.”***

Customer

# Digital poverty

Digital access is essential for staying connected with friends and family, accessing important Government information, and exploring career and training opportunities. Unfortunately, many social housing tenants experience digital poverty. NESTA defines data poverty as ‘individuals, households or Communities who cannot afford sufficient, private and secure mobile or broadband data to meet their essential needs or lack access to suitable digital devices.’

Customers who had cancelled their broadband in the last year were 4 times more likely to report going without essentials.

10% of our Customers reported cancelling broadband or mobile phone contracts in the past year to save money. We also estimate (through analysis of Ofcom's 2023 Technology Tracker and weighting of our Wellbeing Survey results) that around 30% of Customers do not have home broadband access. The Centre for Social Justice estimates that people who are offline pay a ‘poverty premium’ of £478 per year. These are the extra costs that people on low incomes pay for essential goods and services, such as energy, credit, insurance and food, compared to those that are financially better off. In Lloyd's 2023 Consumer Digital Index, 52% of people surveyed reported that the internet helped them save money – for example, by being able to regularly check price-comparison sites for utility providers.

10%

of Customers had cancelled their broadband or mobile phone contract in the last year.

Customers without broadband are amongst the most financially disadvantaged. They were three times as likely to report going without essentials, such as food and heating, compared to Customers with broadband. This increased to four times more likely for Customers that had cancelled their broadband contract in the last year.

Digitally excluded Customers on the lowest incomes are often focused on more urgent financial priorities than broadband or mobile access. Last year, we partnered with Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research to better understand digital exclusion amongst our Customers, and one stakeholder shared about her refugee Customers:







“They live on £5 a day, so they’re just concentrating on food at the moment, and digital access comes afterwards”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Stakeholder focus group, reflecting on their work with refugees, p. 15. Source: <https://www.placesforpeople.co.uk/media/iwankg34/digital-exclusion-and-the-cost-of-living-crisis-final-v2.pdf>





Customers without broadband were more likely to experience low life satisfaction and loneliness, and they were less likely to feel that there are people they can rely on for support, compared to other Customers of a similar age and employment status. These challenges were particularly prevalent among working-age Customers without broadband.

| Status                     | Home broadband  | Lonely always or often | Low life satisfaction | No one to rely on |
|----------------------------|---|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Neither working or retired |  No    | 39%                    | 49%                   | 51%               |
| Neither working or retired |  Yes   | 27%                    | 40%                   | 34%               |
| Working                    |  No    | 18%                    | 25%                   | 30%               |
| Working                    |  Yes   | 9%                     | 16%                   | 19%               |
| Retired                    |  No  | 14%                    | 17%                   | 19%               |
| Retired                    |  Yes | 8%                     | 12%                   | 18%               |

Customer wellbeing by broadband access and employment status.



## OUR SUPPORT

**In 2023/24, we helped 1,597 people to get online or use the internet. This year, 19% of Customers told us they would like help accessing low-cost phone and broadband deals.**

We will continue to support Customers to switch suppliers through referrals to our partner, Pocket Power, who save Customers an average of £250 by switching bill providers. This financial year, we have distributed over 400 SIM cards to Customers in need through our partnership with Vodafone and Good Things Foundation. We also provide digital training for our Customers through our Digital Access Points and in supported living schemes.

*“The phone arrived safely and its awesome and has taken a massive weight of stress off my shoulders so thank you so much for helping me with that.”*

Customer

We will continue to actively promote social tariffs – discounted broadband for people on benefits, which can save Customers up to £200 per year. According to [Ofcom's Communications Affordability Tracker](#), around 6.8 million UK households have difficulty affording a communication service, and around half of these households are eligible for social tariffs. In September 2023 only 8.3% of eligible households were on a social tariff and less than half of Universal Credit claimants were aware of their existence. We would welcome better advertising of social tariffs and the availability of contract-free home broadband options. We recently partnered with Vodafone to directly refer Customers for social tariffs.



# Employment, training and skills

25% of Places for People homes in England are in the lowest **English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IoD)** decile for employment; 78% are in areas that are worse than average for employment. Similarly, 26% of our homes are in the lowest decile for education and skills training, and 78% are rated lower than average.<sup>4</sup> In 2024, just over half of non-retired respondents were working, 37% were unable to work due to long-term sickness or disability, 6% were looking after home or family and 6% were looking for work.

Unemployment rate is calculated as the number of unemployed people divided by the economically active population. Our Customer unemployment rate stands at 10%, more than twice the national average of 4.1%<sup>5</sup> and is highest among young people at 28%.

Many of our Customers who are not in work are not registered as unemployed. The main reasons for not working are health problems, disability and caring responsibilities. The proportion of Customers who are not working due to health conditions or disability increases steadily with age – from 24% of Customers under 25 to 43% of 55 to 64 year olds. Conversely not working due to looking after home or family decreases through the age groups, from 23% of Customers under 25 down to 3% of 55 to 64 year olds.

In the previous survey in 2023, we asked our Customers about the employment status of all adults in the household rather than their individual employment status. Results revealed that in 39% of our working age households, no one was in work, compared to 14% nationally (ONS)<sup>6</sup>.

In 2023, in

39%

of our working-age households, no one was in work compared to 14% nationally.

To support social housing Customers toward meaningful secure employment, we need a benefits system that is easy to navigate, along with funding for high-quality employability support. One Customer shared that they tried using an online calculator to estimate their financial situation when returning to work but found it wasn't accurate enough:

*"I'm scared of going back to work because obviously they (online calculators) don't explain how much rent and everything you have to pay and that's the only hard bit. I think that's the only thing stopping me from going to work."*

Customer

<sup>4</sup> The English Indices of Deprivation (IoD) are a suite of seven domains of deprivation that form the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), the official measure of relative deprivation in England.

<sup>5</sup> Unemployment rate is calculated by the number of unemployed people divided by the economically active population. The UK unemployed rate (for aged people 16 and over) was estimated at 4.1% between May to July is 4.1%. Source: Employment in the UK - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

<sup>6</sup> The Office for National Statistics published that there were an estimated 14.4% of households in the UK where no member of the household was in employment. Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/workingandworklesshouseholds/januarytomarch2024>

## OUR SUPPORT

In 2023/24, we supported 4,295 people towards education, employment or training through our national employability offer and Community projects. 15% of our working-age Customers expressed interest in support to access training—this includes 12% of those currently unable to work due to health or disability. Additionally, 7% were interested in help starting a business, 7% in help to find work and 6% in work experience opportunities.

Advice on benefits and childcare are key to helping Customers to feel confident about looking for work.

We provide in person and online training and support to Customers anywhere in the UK, including support with job search, applications and signposting to education and training. One Customer who came to our employability team for support had given up a successful administrative career to care for family members but had lost confidence during her period of non-employment. She highlighted how much things have progressed with the job market during her years of caring and felt she needed some refresher training to help boost her confidence. The support helped her feel more motivated, confident and with updated skills to help her move into employment:

*“Thank you again. You’re the one that’s made me believe in me again. I’m sure I wouldn’t have tried any of this without you.”*

Customer

15%

of non-retired Customers would like help to access training, including 12% of those who are unable to work due to disability or sickness.

Building confidence, receiving advice on childcare, and getting clear guidance on benefits are essential for helping Customers feel ready to re-enter the workforce. Following conversations with working mums at Places for People, one Customer decided to return to work when her first child was young, which was unusual within her circle of friends and family. She has loved going back to work as a mental health support worker.

*“We looked at schemes and hours that I could get support for and the Universal Credit if I did decide to send her to nursery early.”*

Customer

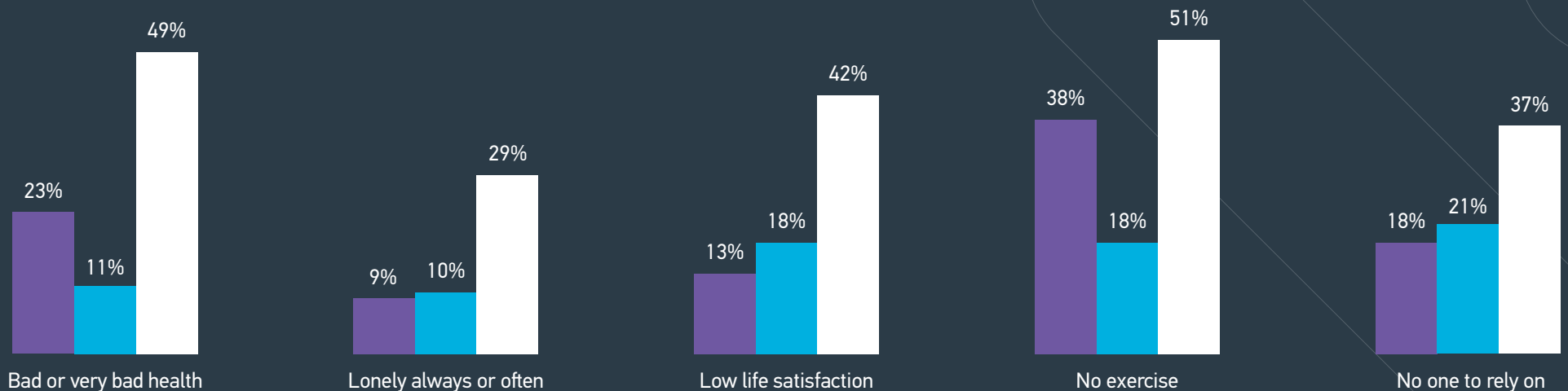
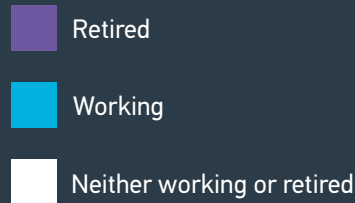
# Health and wellbeing

There are significant health inequities in the UK. People in lower socio-economic groups are more likely to have long-term health conditions and a shorter life expectancy. 52% of our Customers have a disability or long-term illness and 16% feel lonely always or often.

Customers who are not in work or retired continue to report the lowest levels of health and wellbeing across every indicator - 49% reported bad or very bad health and 42% low life satisfaction. This was over double the levels of those retired or working.

## WELLBEING INDICATORS BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Proportion of Customers reporting low health and wellbeing indicators:



Customers who are neither working or retired report the lowest levels of wellbeing for every indicator.





Retired Customers answered the most positively across personal wellbeing questions – 9% were lonely often or always and 13% had low life satisfaction. We know that financial wellbeing can affect personal wellbeing. Levels of poor financial wellbeing amongst retired Customers are very concerning but are at a lower than for working-age Customers and retired Customers are also less likely to live in the most deprived areas. Research by **Joseph Rowntree Foundation**, also indicates that retired people are less likely to be in poverty than working-aged people.

For some questions, it was not clear, if older Customers actually have higher levels of personal wellbeing or were just more inclined to answer the questions positively. Some older retired Customers completing the survey by telephone rated their loneliness as average but anecdotally spoke about being lonely at the end of the call. Some mentioned having limited contact with neighbourhoods and the wider Community, but mentioned being grateful for having a carer, good neighbours, and phone calls and visits from family.



## PERSONAL WELLBEING

**One in four (25%) Customers reported low life satisfaction. This was five times higher than figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) around the same time as the survey.<sup>7</sup>**

Analysis by the ONS has found that health and marital status are major factors contributing to life satisfaction.<sup>8</sup> Our Customers are more likely to have a long-term illness or disability and live in single-person households than national averages.

**Low life satisfaction amongst our Customers is five times the national rate.**

According to the English Housing Survey 2022-2023, 56% of social rented households had at least one household member with a long-term illness or disability, compared to 28% of private renters.<sup>9</sup> We didn't ask about disabilities in our 2024 Wellbeing Survey but previous surveys revealed that 52% of our Customers have a disability or long-term activity-limiting condition.

The English Housing Survey also found that social renters are more likely to be single person household types (45%) or lone parent households (15%) than other tenures<sup>10</sup>. This was similar to our results, 51% of Customers said they lived in one-person households, and were 13% lone parent households with dependent children.

There is a clear link between poverty and life satisfaction: overall 72% of Customers who said they cannot afford their basic costs and often go without essentials reported low life satisfaction, as did 39% of those who said they can only just afford their costs and often struggle to make ends meet. In comparison, just 9% of those who are financially comfortable reported low life satisfaction.

Deeper analysis highlights statistically significant effects of extreme poverty on Customer wellbeing. The biggest impact is between the worst financial wellbeing category (I cannot my costs and often have to go without essentials like food and heating) compared to the second worst category (I can only just afford my costs and often struggle to make ends meet); a difference of 1.289 units of life satisfaction on a scale of 0-10 after controlling for the influences of gender, health, age, household composition, working status, region and IMD.

<sup>7</sup>) 5.3% of UK adults rated their life satisfaction as low in January to March 2024 in the Annual Population Survey from the Office for National Statistics. Low life satisfaction is a score of 4 or less on a scale of 0-10 in response to the question, 'Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?'. Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/ukmeasuresofnationalwellbeing/dashboard>

<sup>8</sup>) Personal well-being in the UK: April 2022 to March 2023. Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/april2022tomarch2023>

<sup>9</sup>) Long-term illness and disability from the English Housing Survey 2022 to 2023. Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2022-to-2023-rented-sectors>

<sup>10</sup>) The most common household type within the rented sectors in 2022-23 was one person living alone, making up 45% of social rented households and 33% of private rented households. The second most common household type for social renters was lone parents with dependent children (15%) Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2022-to-2023-rented-sectors/>

## LONELINESS

**Customer loneliness remains a concern, with no improvement over the past three years. In both 2024 and 2021—when the country was still affected by Covid-19 restrictions—16% of Customers reported feeling lonely always or often. This was over double the national rate from English Housing Survey of 7%.<sup>11</sup>**

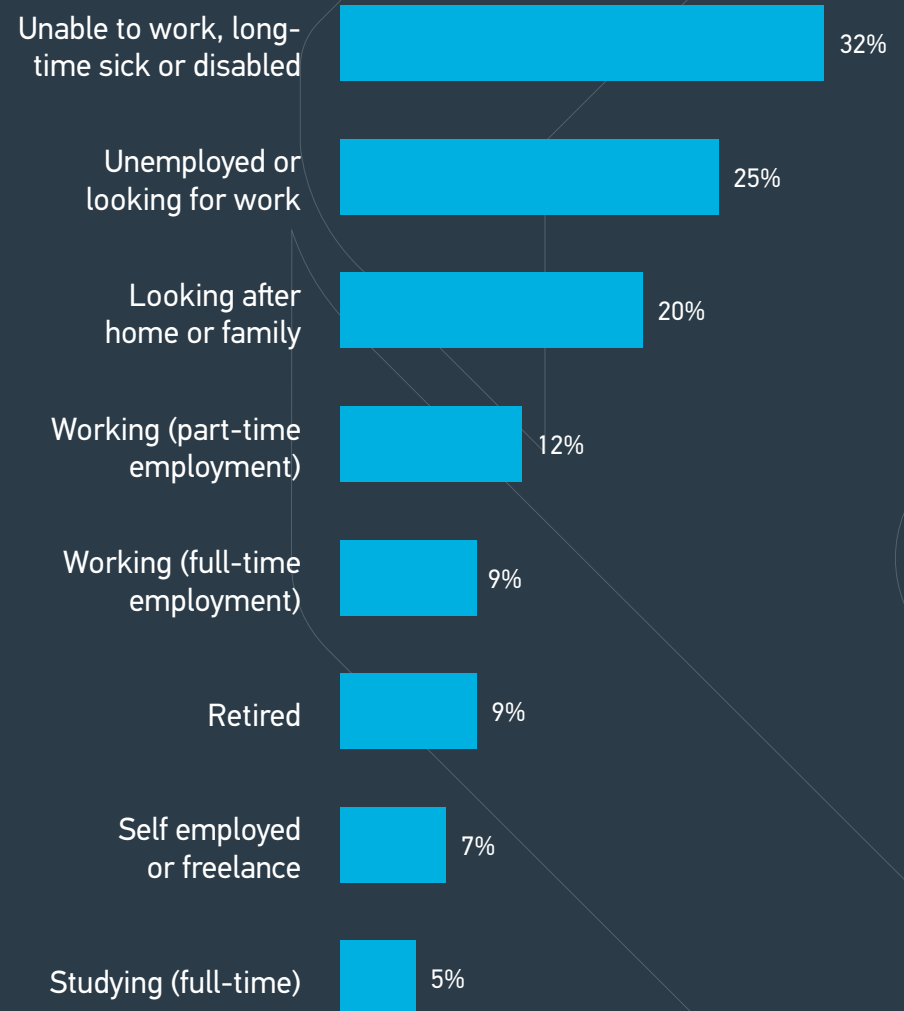
Customers who are unable to work due to health or disability were the most likely to feel lonely, with around one in three (32%) reporting feeling lonely ‘always or often’. On the other hand, employed Customers and retired Customers appear to be the least lonely – around one in ten felt lonely ‘often or always’ (10% and 9% respectively). This was still higher, however, than the national rate from English Housing Survey 2022-23 of 7%.

Loneliness also appears to be linked to difficulties with finances. Almost half (49%) of Customers who couldn’t afford their basic costs reported feeling lonely always or often, compared to only 7% of those who were financially very comfortable.

Additionally, around one in four Customers (26%) disagreed that if they needed help, there are people that would be there for them. This was higher than in 2021 (21%), and significantly higher than the national figure from the Community Life Survey in 2021/22 of 5%.

## LONELINESS BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Proportion of Customers reporting loneliness by employment status.



Percentage of respondents feeling lonely 'always or often'

<sup>11</sup> 16% of Customers responding to our first annual Wellbeing Survey in 2021 reported that they felt lonely often or always. Estimated 7% of people reported feeling lonely 'always or often' in Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) survey results from Great Britain, 5 to 28 July 2024. Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/people-populationandcommunity/wellbeing/datasets/publicopinionsandsocialtrendsgreatbritainpersonalwell-beingandloneliness>



## PHYSICAL HEALTH AND EXERCISE

Our Customers are only half as likely to report good general health compared to the national average—just 36% described their health as good or very good, compared to 77% of adults responding to the NHS Health Survey for England 2021-22.<sup>12</sup> Our Customers also exercise less than average: 23% reported being unable to do physical exercise due to a health condition or disability, almost three times higher than figures from a YouGov survey.<sup>13</sup> 35% of Customers said they did no exercise in past week, compared to 21% of YouGov respondents. For those who did engage in physical activity, running, walking, or cycling were the most common activities.



<sup>12</sup> Results from Health Survey England, with data collected from 1 January 2021 to 31 March 2022. Respondents are asked 'How is your health in general?' and offered five response options, ranging from very good to very bad. Source: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/health-survey-for-england/2021-part-2/adult-health-general-health>

## OUR SUPPORT

In 2023/24, we supported 23,855 people through projects targeting health and wellbeing. 25% of Customers said they were interested in wellbeing support and 25% in relaxation activities.

Customers were also interested in fitness activities (22%), social activities in the Community or residents' groups (18%) and Community gardening (12%). We analyse Customer wellbeing and project preferences against geography and demographics to help us target our local and national support delivery.

Our national wellbeing project continues to offer practical help and signposting to Customers. By the end of 2023/24, 590 Customers had benefited from the volunteer befriending advice, signposting to local services and access to specialist partners such as Cruse, which helps Customers with bereavement. Our national wellbeing project engages Customers with practical ways to improve wellbeing, including access to social activities and early tenancy support to Customers to settle into their Community. The teams also deliver local social events to reduce isolation and signposting to specialist wellbeing services.

9% of our Customers said they had visited a Places Leisure centre. There are over 100 Places Leisure health and wellbeing centres across the UK, welcoming over 30 million members. We continue to fund collaborative projects, such as Community Out-reach and Big Sister through our Healthy Communities Strategy. Big Sister has provided over 3,000 free leisure memberships and distributed over 350,000 free sanitary products to girls. We also provided funding for chair-based exercise sessions in our schemes to support the 23% of Customers said they were unable to do physical exercise because of a health condition or disability.

<sup>13</sup> 8% of Brits responding to the YouGov survey reported not being able to do physical exercise because of a health condition or/disability and 21% had done no exercise in the past week. Results are from 21 July 2024. Source: <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/society/trackers/how-often-brits-exercise-january-to-march-2024>

# Sustainable and resilient Communities

88% of Customers told us that long term tenancy is very important to them. Social housing offers more secure tenancies compared to private renting, and **research by Shelter** shows strong positive links between social housing and stability, family and career aspiration.<sup>14</sup>

Our 2024 Wellbeing Survey was distributed during a time of widespread unrest, at a time when anti-immigration demonstrations and riots were taking place across the country. Although most Customers reported being satisfied with their local area as a place to live, the proportion of Customers agreeing has declined since 2021. In 2024, 62% of Customers reported being 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their local area as a place to live, lower than the 75% of Customers in 2021 and the national figure from Department for Culture, Media & Sport Community Life Survey 2022/23 of 76%. The Community Life Survey also found that people living in more deprived areas tended to be less satisfied with their local area; two-thirds of our homes are in areas more deprived than average<sup>15</sup>. Our data shows that local area satisfaction is linked to deprivation, but also to local assets, and the age, ethnicity and tenure mix in localities.

We will monitor shifting trends closely and our Community Housing Managers and Community Connectors will use this feedback to identify local areas to reach out to, to build partnerships and co-produce solutions to issues that matter to local people.



<sup>14</sup>) [https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press\\_release/living\\_in\\_a\\_social\\_home\\_is\\_over\\_60\\_more\\_affordable\\_than\\_private\\_renting](https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_release/living_in_a_social_home_is_over_60_more_affordable_than_private_renting)

<sup>15</sup>) Results from Places for People's 2021 Wellbeing Survey and the 2021/22 Community Life Survey distributed by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport to adults throughout England. Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/community-life-survey--2>

## OUR SUPPORT

**18% of Customers said they were interested in social activities in their Community or residents groups and 12% in Community gardening. Our Community Connectors work in the heart of local Communities to organise a variety of Community-focused events, including coffee mornings, summer picnics and gardening projects. We also provide small grants to Customer-led activities, which supported 50 projects last year.**

In Nottingham, we worked closely with a Customer to provide funding for the Sneinton Community Festival's 40 year celebration. Over 30 volunteers and almost 4,000 local people attended the free celebrations, which included a parade, workshops, bake off, choir performance, town tours and a picnic.

In Edinburgh, the Hay Avenue Community Hub acts as a base to deliver our own Financial Inclusion and housing services, but also hosts a wide range of external partners including the Sudanese Community in Edinburgh, the Pet Foodbank, Grassroots Clothing and a Community Pantry. Over 1,400 local people regularly visit the Hub each year. The Project Lead from Sudanese Community, who are given free use of the Hub said that being able to run their project has:

***“Made great impact on our Community, tackling isolation, mental health, education and exam revision for disadvantaged children, men meeting and socializing, women gathering ... teens and youth meeting and forming friendships and having fun together every week.”***

Project Lead

We currently run similar Community Hubs in buildings that we own in Sheffield, Hull, London and Clayton Brook and aim to ultimately have Community Hubs in all our heartland areas over time.

In Leeds, we collaborated with Unity Housing, Connect Housing and Leeds City Council to lead the Harehills Community Matters Day. Over 1,000 people attended the event, which was supported by 50 volunteers from Places for People. We have formed an ongoing partnership with East Leeds Housing Partnership following the successful Community day.

We also provide funding to offer arts, crafts and reading activities to improve the mental health of homeless Customers in our Huntingdon schemes.



## CRIME AND SAFETY

We know that crime and safety are important issues to our Customers - 23% of our homes in England are in the worst Indices of Deprivation for crime, and 67% are in areas worse than average.<sup>16</sup> Unsurprisingly, Customers in the worst 20% of areas for crime were nearly three times as likely report that crime was a serious problem in their area than Customers living in areas with better than average crime levels.

Retired Customers were least likely to report that crime was a serious problem in their area even when considering areas with similar crime levels - for example, in the worst 20% areas for crime 17% of retired Customers said crime was a serious problem in their area, compared to 25% of non-retired Customers.



48% of Customers reported feeling unsafe walking alone after dark. Women (56%) and people defining their gender as other (62% of 21 respondents) were more likely to feel unsafe than men (34%). Unsurprisingly, Customers in the worst areas for crime were more likely to feel unsafe.

48%

of our respondents feel unsafe walking alone after dark.

Concerningly, social renters have been found to experience the highest levels of crime and victimisation by tenure type. Long term analysis by **Nottingham Trent University** found that social renters experienced 70% more household thefts, 40% more criminal damage and 40% more personal crimes within a 15-minute radius compared to owner-occupiers. They are also 85% more likely to be assaulted at night.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IoD). Source: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d8e26f6ed915d5570c6cc55/loD2019\\_Statistical\\_Release.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d8e26f6ed915d5570c6cc55/loD2019_Statistical_Release.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.ntu.ac.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0038/488972/Pages-from-Resolution-83-with-NTU-QSCwork.pdf](https://www.ntu.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0038/488972/Pages-from-Resolution-83-with-NTU-QSCwork.pdf)



## OUR SUPPORT

In 2023/24, we supported 29,808 people through projects targeting sustainable and resilient Communities. We use feedback from the Wellbeing Survey, supplemented by direct feedback from our Customers and Community-based teams, to help us to highlight key areas where we need to do extra work in partnership with Customers and local agencies such as police, probation services, councils and other landlords to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.

Projects and interventions aimed at reducing crime and helping Customers feel safer benefited over 4,000 Customers.

Our 'Get Stuff Done' Fund empowers Colleagues to organise physical interventions for our Customers, such as installation of CCTV. These projects and interventions benefited over 4,000 Customers in 2023-24. After installing CCTV cameras through the Fund, Colleagues shared:

***“The Customers feel safer & secure in their own home. It has reduced the anti-social behaviour as the cameras appear to be a deterrent to individuals dealing drugs, groups of individuals gathering in the vicinity of the scheme to drink and take drugs, rough sleepers and prostitution.”***

Colleague

***“Flytipping was historical at this property which is next door to a children’s play park. Hopefully this will be a deterrent for future ASB for all who live at the property.”***

Colleague

***“Customers now feel more secure that there is a CCTV camera directly facing the main entrance door so any persons entering can be clearly identified.”***

Colleague

We also support projects through our grant funding that aim to combat anti-social behaviour. For example, we have partnered with Street Games and Chorley Youth Zone to provide young people opportunities to come to a safe place and participate in activities chosen by them or to receive mentoring support.



***“Tension has been building up in the Community for some time, all these postcodes have issues with gang affiliation.”***

Street Games Project Leader



***“The sessions have been a crucial intervention in the area, and we are really pleased with the impact they have had on easing tensions brought about by gangs operating around the housing.”***

Colleague



***“The only way I can get him to do any schoolwork is to promise he can come here afterwards.”***

Parent



## GARDENS AND GREEN SPACE

People who live in neighbourhoods with greater amounts of green and natural spaces tend to be happier, healthier and live longer lives, according to a [review by Natural England](#). 70% of our Customers agreed that their local green spaces are within easy walking distance, slightly higher than 65% nationally.<sup>18</sup> However, only 48% of our Customers reported that their local green spaces are of a high enough standard to want to spend time in, much lower than the national figure of 69% from the Adults' People and Nature Survey by Natural England.

Customers living in the most deprived areas were three times as likely to disagree that the local green spaces were of a high standard.

Customers living in the 20% most deprived areas (IMD 1 and 2) were three times as likely to disagree that the local green spaces were of a high standard than Customers in the least 20% deprived areas (IMD 9 and 10). These results suggest that improving access to and the quality of green space should be prioritised, particularly in areas of deprivation. This was also evident from the response to our ESG Consultation in 2023, as 80% of Customers said that enhancing access to green spaces is very or extremely important.<sup>19</sup>

Around half (49%) of our respondents have access to a private garden and a further 10% have a private yard, balcony or patio. 55% of those who have a private garden said that their garden is an important place to them and 48% like spending time in their garden, similar to findings from [Natural England](#). Customers who have access to a communal garden (26%) were less likely to say that the garden is an important place to them (32%) or that they like spending time in there (29%).

55%

of Customers with a private garden say it is an important place to them but garden maintenance is a struggle for 29% of Customers.

29% of Customers with a private garden find it difficult to maintain. Garden maintenance appears to be more of a struggle for Customers over the age of 80 (40% find it difficult) and those unable to work due to health or disability (38% find it difficult).

<sup>18</sup> National results from the third wave (between April 2022 and March 2023) of the Adults' People and Nature Survey for England by Natural England. Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/the-people-and-nature-survey-for-england-data-tables-and-publications-from-adults-survey-year-3-april-2022-march-2023-official-statistics/adults-year-3-annual-report-april-2022-march-2023-official-statistics>

<sup>19</sup> 716 Customers took part in an ESG survey in 2024. Source: <https://www.placesforpeople.co.uk/media/tcjl1gre/pfp-group-esg-strategy.pdf>



## OUR SUPPORT

Green space is important and widely accepted to affect how people feel. These survey findings are used to target support and improvements to green spaces and communal gardens. 12% of Customers also indicated an interest in Community gardening projects. We will continue to projects such as Herdings Community and Heritage Centre in Sheffield, which provides gardening sessions for older people with physical and/or mental disabilities:



*“Our two weekly sessions provide regular activities where people can socialise, do some gentle exercise, volunteer in the garden, do games and crafts, and have some food & drinks, all in a safe, welcoming environment.”*

Project Lead







We also provide funding through our 'Get Stuff Done' Fund to improve communal spaces for our Customers:



***“The Customers at Ammandale can now enjoy their space in the garden with their benches and table. It is a big space that was unused and tenants have improved the space by clearing up the weeds and put in raised flower beds and are growing their own vegetables.”***

Colleague

Our Colleagues and supply chain contractors frequently volunteer to clean up and improve disused communal areas. For example, we recently cleaned up a pond in Astley Village so that Community fishing classes could be run:



***“The clean-up worked a treat and our funding of £1,200 for fishing classes helped the local Community to use the area and get fishing again. The Community at Astley Village said the Pond once used to be the heart of their Community and through Covid it just stopped it's so great we have been able to start a new journey for the local people and bring it back into all their hearts.”***

Colleague

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## **#BeyondHomes**

We will use the findings from the Wellbeing Survey, along with insights from our People and Customers, to shape new social impact initiatives in within our Communities. This will include a mix of direct services and addressing issues like hardship, employment, and wellbeing, as well as partnerships with local organisations that drive social impact in our heartland areas.

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# Methodology

## PURPOSE

Our annual Customer Wellbeing Survey enables helps us to understand the evolving needs of our Customers and Communities. We use the insights to:

- **Help Customers directly** – e.g. provide money or energy advice and link Customers to training or employability support.
- **Develop strategy** for national and Community support.
- **Improve targeting** – Analyse along with other data sets to understand the characteristics of Communities in need of intervention or further investigation.
- **Access funding** – Use evidence to support bids for external funding.
- **Understand social impact**, and economic benefits of our work.

## SCOPE & METHOD

**SCOPE:** The Wellbeing Survey 2024 explores the need and preference in areas of:

- Financial wellbeing.
- Employment and training.
- Personal and physical wellbeing.
- Community wellbeing.

**SAMPLE:** All Customers opting into online surveys were given the opportunity to respond. A sample of Customers without email addresses were contacted by telephone. Over 5,700 responses were received in July and August 2024.

**MODE:** Responses are mainly online, the survey aims to be short, easy to read and accessible via mobile phone. A small sample of targeted telephone responses are collected. To encourage completion by under-represented groups a shorter version of the survey was sent at the final follow up.

**LIMITATIONS:** Our most vulnerable Customers are least likely to fill out surveys and less likely to be digitally included. We are sensitive to this in our interpretation of results and service design.



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Because Community Matters