



**Network
Homes**

Community Impact 2017/18

**Because good homes
make everything possible**



Find out what we do beyond bricks and mortar to improve the lives of our residents and make a positive impact in the neighbourhoods where we work.

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► About us

Network Homes is a socially responsible landlord, high quality developer and expert in regeneration.

Our mission

To open up possibilities for as many people as we can, by continuing to grow a forward-thinking, service driven and financially strong organisation that builds, sells, rents and manages good homes in thriving communities.

Our social purpose

Our social purpose underpins everything we do. It's our reason for existing and the gauge by which we judge our success.

We invest over £1 million a year in the communities we work in, through economic development, employment and training, and social and environmental projects.

Our strategic objectives

We have an ambitious five year strategy with four clear objectives:

- **Maximising growth within our resources: 5,000** new homes in five years
- **Delivering first class customer service: 90%** overall customer satisfaction
- **Increasing financial strength: 35%** operating margin on core social housing business
- **Building a great organisation: A Sunday Times Best 100 Company to Work For.**

▶ Introduction

Network Homes is an award-winning housing association with over 40 years' experience of providing affordable homes. We own and manage 20,000 properties across London and the South East and we aim to develop around 1,000 new homes a year.

Building and managing homes is what we do and we take pride in doing it well. But that's not the whole story. We believe in giving back. We do this by investing in our communities, by contributing to sustainable initiatives, and by adding community value to everything we do.

This publication highlights what we do beyond bricks and mortar to improve the lives of our residents and make a positive impact in the neighbourhoods where we work.

We believe good homes make everything possible.



▶ Employment and training

At Network Homes we view employment and training as key to developing the communities we work in. We provide our residents with a variety of opportunities through our Worksmart programme which supports them to achieve their goals.

This year, the programme has had a revamp and now functions as a referral service pairing residents with local organisations who can provide the support they need. This could be looking for a job, thinking of a career change or exploring training opportunities.

Worksmart provides:

- ▶ Access to local organisations offering pre-employment support
- ▶ Training courses covering softer work-skills, digital upskilling and financial inclusion
- ▶ Access to vacancies with contractors
- ▶ Access to apprenticeships and training opportunities with contractors
- ▶ Training opportunities in construction

Key achievements:

In 2017/18 we:

- ▶ registered **98** residents onto the Worksmart programme
- ▶ delivered **851** hours of information and guidance
- ▶ helped **99** residents to develop their CVs
- ▶ provided work experience or accredited training to **28** unemployed residents
- ▶ organised work experience placements for **4** pupils from a local school
- ▶ appointed **2** apprentices (**1** at our subsidiary SW9 Community Housing and **1** at an external contractor)
- ▶ supported **49** residents into employment (**17** in London; **19** in Hertfordshire and Outer London; and **13** in SW9)
- ▶ partnered with Brent Council for their **jobs fair**
- ▶ recruited **8** residents onto training courses in construction. Our aim is for 50 in 2018/19.

In 2018, Worksmart expanded its network of partner organisations. This means we can now match residents with a wider range of organisations which are local, diverse and have the relevant expertise to help them find meaningful, long-term employment. The team have also been working hard with Network Homes' contractors to provide even more training and apprenticeship opportunities from gas maintenance and construction to admin support and security.

► Meet Fiona

Stockwell Park resident Fiona Rodrigues believes a two week placement with Network Homes has boosted her prospects. The University College London (UCL) student, who is in her third year studying Planning Design and Management, spent two weeks with Network's Regeneration Team.

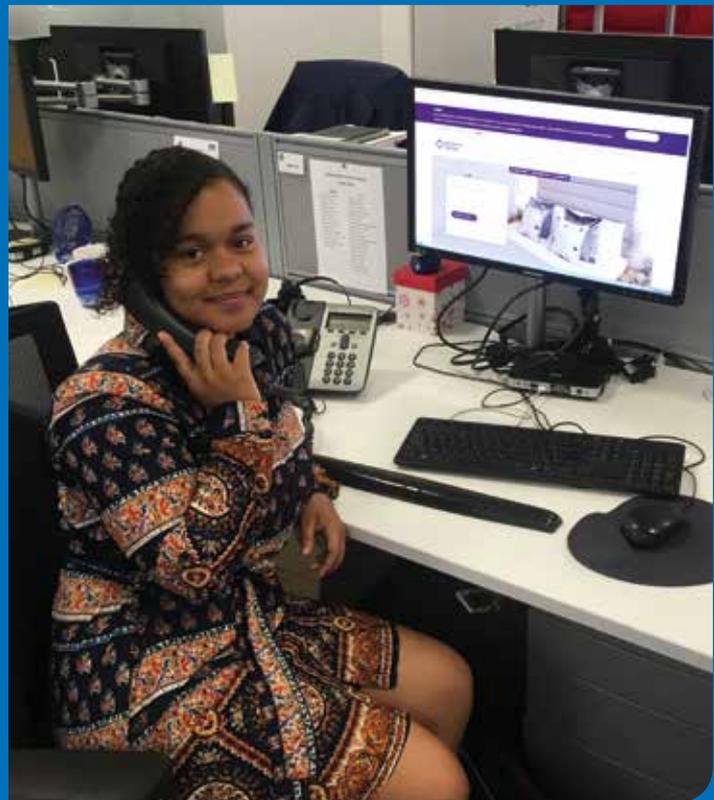
While volunteering with a youth project run by SW9 Community Housing, a subsidiary of Network Homes which manages Stockwell Park Estate, Fiona attended a CV workshop where she mentioned her interest in estate regeneration. She was urged to contact Network's Regeneration Manager Tim Goodwin who arranged work experience with his team.

Fiona said: "Over the two weeks we visited Network's regeneration sites in Ealing, Hertford, and Stockwell. We went to various meetings, met councillors, spoke to contractors.

"It was good to see how everyone came together, to discuss what's been done already and what's being planned.

"The work placement has definitely boosted my opportunities for when I graduate. One of the most important things is building contacts as having good contacts can get you far in life."

Since her placement, we've offered Fiona a temporary paid receptionist role at SW9 which is something else to add to her CV.



▶ Financial inclusion

Many of our residents are on low incomes and struggle to make ends meet. Whether they are parents working in low paid jobs, young people struggling to find work or older residents dependent on their pension, our Welfare Advice Team is there to help maximise their incomes by offering advice, support and access to benefits.

Key achievements:

In 2017/18 we:

- ▶ secured **£1.4million** in unclaimed benefits for our residents
- ▶ supported residents by raising grants of **£12,065** from local authorities, sourcing furniture and providing food bank vouchers.

Over the last year we've produced a number of leaflets to help both our colleagues and our tenants better understand what benefits may be available to them and how to claim.

“We secured £1.4million in unclaimed benefits for our residents...”



Laura's story

Laura was almost £4,000 in rent arrears when she was referred to our Welfare Advice Team. Her Personal Independent Payment (PIP) had been cut which in turn affected Laura's other benefits. She was also subject to the Benefit Cap.

We helped her appeal her PIP decision and she received £7,000 to make up for the lost entitlement over the past year. She also received ongoing payments of £145 per week. This cleared her arrears and placed the account in credit. Laura now has full Housing Benefit so she is no longer at risk of falling into arrears.

Laura said:

"The Welfare Team were really helpful and they also helped me secure Carer's Allowance and Income Support for my husband so that he can help support me."

Bedroom Tax

In November 2016 we launched a campaign to encourage under-occupiers to move to smaller homes. This is to help save residents money as they'll no longer pay the Bedroom Tax. We call it the Peachy Deal and provide incentives to make it more attractive like covering the cost of moving and any decorating costs. So far 11 residents have moved to smaller properties and 11 families have gained the space they need. Building on the success of this initiative we are looking at ways of adopting a similar approach for residents seeking mutual exchanges.

► Development and estate improvement

Whether it's new homes for first time buyers looking to get on the housing ladder, places for people unable to rent on the open market, or somewhere safe for older and vulnerable people to live, we operate across the whole housing spectrum, providing homes for people from all walks of life.

Providing affordable homes

We're one of the country's leading housing association developers, building a range of homes in a variety of locations – from high-rise city developments to low-rise homes in rural communities. We're currently building over 1,800 new homes and have 3,200 in the development pipeline for completion by 2022 (80% of these will be affordable homes).

In 2017/18 we built 284 new homes of which 175 were for affordable rent and 49 for shared ownership. This a big contribution to the communities we serve by providing affordable homes for local people.

Regeneration

Much of our work involves the regeneration of run-down estates and we are currently leading on three major projects: The Ridgeway in Hertford; Stockwell Park in Lambeth; and Rectory Park in Ealing. Together with our recently completed project in South Kilburn (pictured opposite), we have provided over 2,000 new and refurbished homes. In 2018 we also signed a £200 million joint deal with Stanhope Plc to build around 550 homes in the Southall Housing Zone.

Innovation

Our Le Bon Court development in Harrow (photo right) transformed a dilapidated hotel into 27 new quality affordable homes for local people in the borough.

It's one of the first developments in the capital to offer the Mayor of London's London Living Rent tenure. Rents are based on a third of borough-wide median household income, giving residents the chance to save for a deposit to buy their home on a shared ownership basis.



Homes at Le Bon Court are offered on assured shorthold tenancies, initially for 18 months with the option to extend until the end of the rental period, which runs to January 2023. Tenants are encouraged to save and put down a deposit for a share of their home during this time.

Consultation

We consult with local people from start to finish ensuring our plans deliver what they need. For example, for residents in Rectory Park, keeping the community centre was really important. It was always at the heart of the community but the old one was in need of major work. We built a brand new community centre which was opened to residents in October 2018.

During a refurbishment programme at Tyler House in Stockwell Park, residents were able to choose their kitchen units, tiles and flooring and more. All residents and leaseholders were kept informed of progress through regular newsletters and coffee mornings and if any design changes take place we ensure they are kept up to date.

Creating communities

Our work isn't simply about building and selling or renting homes. We want to create sustainable communities and continue to invest in them after the developers have left. That means having a local presence, so our Resident Liaison Officers are on hand to work with residents and build relationships with the local community while the work is happening, plus we have a Resident Engagement Team at our head office who continue to invest in those relationships once the builders have left.



▶ Supporting and engaging with residents

Involving residents in what we do and consulting them on how we do it is a key feature of the way we work. We listen to our residents, we want them to have a say in the services they receive and we support them to make their communities as good as they can be.

In 2017/18 we hosted 92 activities throughout the year. Over 1,000 residents gave us feedback on our services and suggested ideas for community development.

Our Summer and Winter activity programmes enabled us to share services with more than 400 residents across London and Hertford at fun days, community events and resident outings.

Residents' Panels

Residents' Panels provide a vital link between us and our residents. They help ensure residents' views are heard locally and enable them to influence our organisation at the highest level. We have three Local Panels, each with up to 12 members: Hertfordshire and Outer London; London (North and West); and SW9. Together they make decisions on local issues, set local priorities, monitor service delivery and hold service providers to account.

Highlights

Some highlights include:

- ▶ Launching our first allotment space at our Ealing Road development
- ▶ Seaside day trip to Southend-on-Sea in Essex
- ▶ Fun days with partner housing associations.

Supporting older people

The profile of the UK population is changing: people are living longer and the number of older people is growing. By 2027 one in five people in the UK will be aged 65 or over.

We provide specialist housing for older people, with 1,435 homes in total and a third of these in Hertfordshire. Included in this figure are 336 flats in extra care accommodation where tenants have their own modern self contained flat. This has the benefit of an on-site care service commissioned by the local council, supporting them to live independently in the community.



Older resident highlights

1. Satisfaction levels of **92%** from our London based older residents
2. **91%** of London residents said living in our sheltered housing has improved their sense of well-being
3. Over **£500,000** worth of social value delivered by social activities and events
4. A dinner and dance at the Wembley Hilton.

▶ Investing in our communities

We're passionate about the neighbourhoods we work in and invest £1million a year in community development.

This covers a wide range of initiatives, from building playgrounds and gardens for everyone to enjoy, to tackling homelessness and supporting older people.

Tackling homelessness

Providing people with good quality homes at affordable prices is the core of what we do. So, helping homeless people find a safe and secure place to live fits perfectly with our values. Over the past few years we have established a number of initiatives to support homeless people.

In 2017/18 we:

- ▶ provided temporary accommodation for over 700 homeless families across 12 London boroughs
- ▶ continued to work in partnership with New Horizon Youth Centre to provide homes for young homeless people and help them become self-sufficient
- ▶ provided **65** rooms for Mace Housing Cooperative which houses single homeless people
- ▶ worked with St Alban's District Council and the Refugee Council to house five Syrian refugee families
- ▶ encouraged private landlords to work with us to provide temporary accommodation and help to keep families out of bed and breakfasts
- ▶ worked with public sector employers such as the police, NHS etc to provide affordable rented accommodation for their employees.

Highlights

- ▶ donated £2,500 to a homeless shelter in Bishops Stortford (pictured right)
- ▶ donated flasks to the homeless charity Streets2Homes so that their clients could keep drinks hot during the winter
- ▶ helped out with St Lawrence's Larder an organisation in Brent which provides food and support for those struggling financially (pictured opposite).





Project Vista homeless project

One of the projects we're particularly proud of is the work we're doing to support homeless young people.

Project Vista is an award winning initiative which provides safe, stable and affordable accommodation for young people who are on very low wages or seeking employment and who are in urgent housing need.

Working in partnership with New Horizon Youth Centre (NHYC), we provide homes for 16-21 year olds who have been made homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless. They might be sleeping on the streets, living in the family home but experiencing conflict or abuse, or just sleeping where they can – from friends' sofas, to cars and even strangers' beds.

Currently we have 20 young people living in four flats in Islington and Hackney. Each flat has a minimum of four bedrooms with en-suite facilities and a communal living area. They are equipped with all the basic essentials including bedding and crockery.

The flats are provided by Network Homes at a discounted rate to NHYC who manage them and provide specialist ongoing support. This includes career development, training, and emotional support and advice – something that many young homeless people miss out on. The aim is to empower them to improve their situation, live independently, and save for a deposit before they move on after a year, or earlier if they're ready.

Project Vista continues to make a real difference to the young people involved. Most had jobs or apprenticeships but their wages were too low or unpredictable to enable them to rent on the private market and too high to get into specialist hostels. They were stuck and at risk of losing their jobs. Now, with access to a stable home, they can stay in work and improve their lives. Many have secured promotion at work, moved onto a permanent contract, and increased their wages.

Key achievements

- ▶ **41** people housed
- ▶ **18** successfully moved into new accommodation
- ▶ **12** moved into shared private rented accommodation
- ▶ **5** returned safely to the family home after reconciliation
- ▶ Each had managed to build up enough savings to afford a move-on deposit, whether through decent pay or stable employment to be able to rent privately. Repeat homelessness is also less likely as residents develop their independent living skills, such as rent payment, financial literacy, and dealing with repair procedures, also through the help of the Housing and Support Worker.

41
Housed



18
New
accommodation



12
Shared
accommodation



5
Returned
safely

Sadie, 19 tells her story

“I was living in a dysfunctional, overcrowded family home, which had a negative effect on everything; it was very far from where I worked and things were just going downhill, with lots of tension and arguments. When I moved into the Project Vista flat everything changed, getting to work was so much easier and I was even able to take on another part-time job. The accommodation is lovely and my housemates are like a little family. I feel like I can enjoy my life, it’s so much more peaceful and I love learning how to look after myself, even the little things like cooking and decorating my room are a big deal.”

► Award winning

In October 2017 Project Vista won first prize in the London Homelessness Awards in recognition of its innovative approach. The judges were impressed by the collaborative approach between the two organisations and the way young people are placed at its heart. The £30,000 prize money went direct to NHYC and will be used to extend frontline services.



▶ Giving something more

We believe in giving something back to the communities we work in. Everyone who works at Network Homes gets two volunteering days a year to spend helping support social or charitable causes.



Following the success of 2017's Giving Something Back project, we pledged to Give Something More in 2018, with staff from across Network Homes coming together to raise over £17,000 for a variety of causes and give hands-on help to local charities. Our staff chose to support Bowel Cancer UK, Alzheimer's Society, Young Minds, Shooting Star Chase, and many more.

Forty members of staff hiked the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge, raising over £21,000 for St Mungo's, our Charity of the Year. Combined with 2017's challenge this brings the overall total we have raised for charities to nearly £90,000.



► Focus on East Hearts

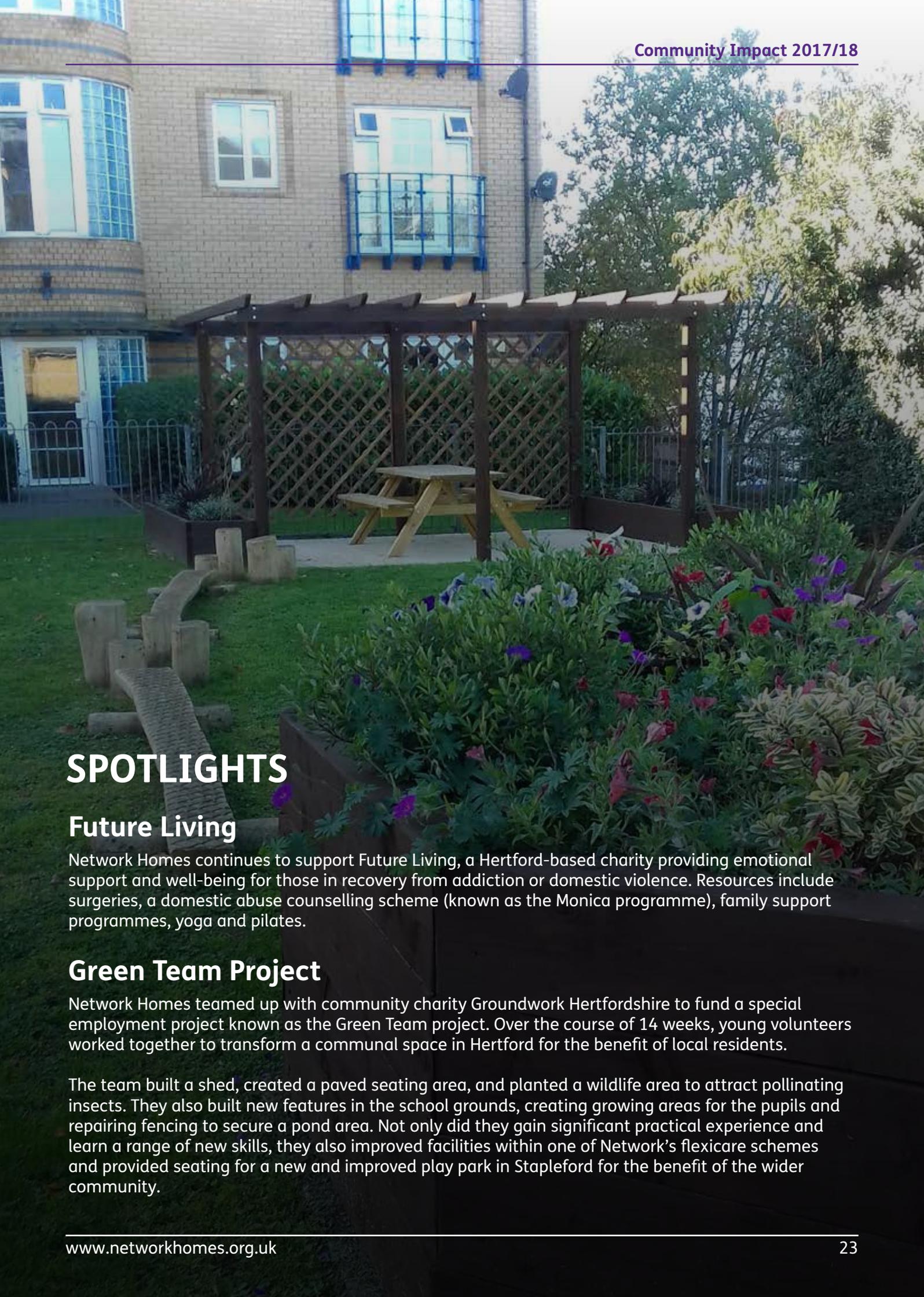
We fund a full-time Community Engagement Officer through the Community Voluntary Service (CVS) for Broxbourne and East Herts.

It's a really valuable post which enables us to work together to deliver community projects and support for voluntary groups. The initiative provides a model for joint working in other areas and it has generated over £100,000 of additional funding across a number of community projects.

Activities and achievements in 2017/18 include:

- Completing the Hertford Heath community play park
- Sponsoring of Ware Joggers annual fun run
- Funding to Easts Herts Diversionary Action Group, which provides a range of activities for young people during the school holidays
- Providing new village play equipment in partnership with Wareside Parish Council
- Secured funding for a community mural on the Pinehurst Estate in Hertford (pictured below).





SPOTLIGHTS

Future Living

Network Homes continues to support Future Living, a Hertford-based charity providing emotional support and well-being for those in recovery from addiction or domestic violence. Resources include surgeries, a domestic abuse counselling scheme (known as the Monica programme), family support programmes, yoga and pilates.

Green Team Project

Network Homes teamed up with community charity Groundwork Hertfordshire to fund a special employment project known as the Green Team project. Over the course of 14 weeks, young volunteers worked together to transform a communal space in Hertford for the benefit of local residents.

The team built a shed, created a paved seating area, and planted a wildlife area to attract pollinating insects. They also built new features in the school grounds, creating growing areas for the pupils and repairing fencing to secure a pond area. Not only did they gain significant practical experience and learn a range of new skills, they also improved facilities within one of Network's flexicare schemes and provided seating for a new and improved play park in Stapleford for the benefit of the wider community.

► Energy and environment

Building to high environmental standards is part and parcel of what we do. Every new Network Homes property is built to be warm, energy efficient and economical to run.

Increasing numbers of our properties are served by Combined Heat and Power (CHP) systems, making use of energy that would otherwise be wasted, and we have installed solar panels on many of our sites. We provide free electricity to all communal areas, install thermal insulation to cut down heating bills and fit smart meters as standard.

Innovation in construction

Our newly completed Printworks scheme in Neasden (pictured opposite) was constructed using innovative building methods such as cross laminated timber (CLT). This kind of development can take up to 40% less time to build than traditional developments and overall the Printworks only took 15 months to build.

Key features include: solar panels on roofs to reduce energy costs and usage; green/brown living roofs to help insulate the building; electric vehicle charging points in the car park car club space to encourage shared usage; and substantial bike storage to encourage car free mobility.

The Printworks has net zero carbon footprint due to the carbon hidden and isolated in the building structure. The development will stay carbon negative for five years.

Offsite construction requires on average of 85% fewer deliveries to and from site compared with deliveries for a concrete frame structure, reducing neighbourhood congestion, pollution and disturbance.





► Calculating social value

Our whole business is based on corporate social responsibility and our social purpose underpins everything we do by going beyond bricks and mortar.

We measure the social impact of what we do by using the HACT social calculator. It shows that in 2017/18 Network Homes generated nearly £1.4 million through a range of ventures including:

- Domestic abuse support and psycho-social group therapy programme offered by Future Living Hertford project for female survivors of domestic abuse
- Resident events including forums, resident choirs, community breakfasts, bingo nights and other activities
- Employment and skills training, apprenticeships and placements to help residents into full-time employment
- Investing in a variety of additional security features including CCTV, security gates, lighting, new bike sheds and bin stores for our developments.

But the HACT calculator does not tell the whole picture, and the real value generated is likely to be higher.

By providing secure and affordable housing, as well as support services and community investment, social housing landlords such as Network Homes produce savings for public services and help people into employment. Recent research by the Hyde Group found that a typical social tenancy provided by Hyde generates almost £17,000 in social value annually.







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