

# Corporate Social Responsibility Annual Report - 2023/2024



## Contents Page

No	Content	Page No.
1.1	Introduction	2
1.2	Who we are	2
1.3	Corporate Social Responsibility	2
2.1	Organisational Governance	4
2.2	Human Rights	5
2.3	Employment Practices	5
2.4	Environment	6
2.5	Fair Operating Practices	7
2.6	Consumer Issues	7
2.7	Community Involvement and Development	8
2.8	Nehemiah Housing Future Commitments	9
3.0	Conclusion	11

## 1.Introduction

### 1.1. Purpose

The Corporate Social Responsibility Policy was approved in April 2023. This policy sets out the organisation's approach to corporate social responsibility which underpins the way we operate and ensures we are accountable in addressing the challenges which face us. It will also ensure the long-term sustainability of the organisation as we take account of the wider impact our actions can have on society, the workplace, the environment, and the economy.

### 1.2 Who we are

Nehemiah Housing Association provides homes for single people, families, couples and older people in Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, and Wolverhampton. The reason we exist as an organization is for a social purpose, providing good affordable homes excellent services for our customers, and to help to build thriving communities where all customers people of all ethnic backgrounds and protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 feel at home and valued.

Our commitment to our social purpose is reflected in our Vision, Mission, and Values:

<b>MISSION:</b> <b>Our mission is to build successful, sustainable, and diverse communities by providing housing and well-being services in a culturally sensitive way to our current and our future customers.</b>	<b>VISION:</b> <b><i>Our vision is to be the leading independent BAME housing provider in the UK delivering a range of services which are unsurpassed in the community.</i></b>
<b>VALUES:</b> <b><i>Passionate - we are passionate about empowering people to build communities alongside homes</i></b> <b><i>Diversity - we believe diversity is a strength in every aspect of our work and the communities around us</i></b> <b><i>Integrity - we act with integrity in all that we do even when that is not the easy option</i></b> <b><i>Sustainable - we believe our actions and their impact must always be sustainable</i></b>	<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</b>  <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To be effective and grow</li><li>2. Deliver excellent services</li><li>3. Strong governance, finance and risk management</li><li>4. Investing in our Homes</li><li>5. People development and wellbeing</li></ol>

We recognize that, over and above our core social purpose, we have a wider responsibility to society and the environment we operate in. So, our approach to corporate social responsibility underpins all our activities and the way we operate as a business.

### 1.3. Corporate Social Responsibility

Definition: Corporate Social Responsibility refers to the way in which businesses regulate themselves to ensure that all their activities positively contribute to society.

Corporate Social Responsibility: ISO26000 was introduced in 2010 and provides guidance rather than requirements, so it cannot be certified unlike some other well-known ISO

standards. Instead, it helps clarify what 'social responsibility' is, helps organisations translate principles into effective actions and shares best practice relating to social responsibility, globally. It is aimed at all types of organisations regardless of their activity, size or location and is used by many social landlords to help them measure success.

The seven key principles, advocated in ISO26000 as the roots of socially responsible behaviour are:

- **Organisational governance**
  - Practising accountability and transparency at all levels of our business
  - Leadership which uses values of CSR when making business decisions
- **Human rights**
  - Treating all with respect and making efforts to help vulnerable groups
- **Labour practices**
  - Providing fair, safe and healthy working conditions for staff
  - Engaging in two-way dialogues to address employee concerns.
- **Environment**
  - Identifying and improving the environmental impacts of our operations
- **Fair operating practices**
  - Upholding the law, practising accountability and fairness
- **Consumer issues**
  - Providing safe homes, giving accurate information, and promoting sustainable consumption.
- **Community involvement and development**
  - Investing in the local communities that we operate in

## 2.What we do

### 2.1 Organisational governance

#### Current position

We have an agreed set of values which guides our operations

We have agreed a five-year Corporate Plan

Regular timely and accurate reporting to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)

Nehemiah has retained its G1/V2 grading from the RSH in November 2023

Our Value for Money Strategy has been approved and is monitored by our Audit & Risk Committee

We have adopted the National Housing Federation (NHF) Code of Governance

We have a risk management process, and this is regularly under review to ensure it provides assurance

We have in place a suite of formats that deliver consistency to board reporting

We have open recruitment by advert for our Board and Committees

We have in place a process for Board appraisal and the provision of learning and development that strengthens the capacity of the Board to deliver its remit

We currently hold the highest rating awarded by the Regulator of Social Housing in Governance

We have a very experienced Leadership Team leading the organisation

We have developed a suite of performance reports to monitor performance, and these are regularly reported through to Board and published for tenants

We have embedded the 'golden thread' of business plan, operational plan, vision, and values all linked through to colleague objectives and this has been tested through our achievement of Investors in People Gold

We value our customers and the benefits that are realised from meaningful customer engagement

Our customer satisfaction survey showed significantly improved results

We currently have two tenants as members of our Operations Committee

#### How did we do / Future Plans

Nehemiah will be going through the In-depth Assessment with the RSH sometime in 2024 to assess its governance and financial viability rating.

The Association is working towards formally adopting the NHF Model Rules 2015 at the AGM to be held in September 2024.

Development of the Corporate plan 2025- 2030 will begin at the June 2024 Board Away Day

We have re-opened recruitment by advert for our 3 Board and Committees member vacancies.

The tenant satisfaction survey 23-24 conducted by MEL research showed overall satisfaction decreased by 3% compared to the previous year.

RSM observed a Board Meeting that took place in February 2024 where overall performance was assessed as high performing.

## 2.2 Human rights

### Current position

We ensure that our policies and procedures comply with good practice and UK law

All Board reports have a requirement for a statement on the equality impact of the report

We have developed our values to include the principle of being 'open and honest' in its integrity.

We have an approach to equality which seeks to ensure fairness and the affording to all of equality of opportunity

We conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for all new policies, procedures and initiatives

Our employees reflect the local communities within which we work and our vacancies, where permanent, are openly advertised

### How did we do / Future Plans

Nehemiah's position remains the same

## 2.3 Employment practices

### Current position

All employment is carried out in strict accordance with employment law and best practice in human resources and includes our statement to operate within the Equality Act 2010.

All colleagues, when appointed, receive a formal induction process that includes meeting the Chief Executive, other members of our Senior management team and colleagues

During 2023 we independently benchmarked our remuneration package for Board and Staff against the market to ensure that we have a fair pay system. We regularly review and update all colleagues' terms and conditions to ensure they are fit for purpose

Our office is open Monday to Friday each week during the day, excluding public holidays, to ensure we are accessible to our customers

We achieved accreditation through Investors in People at their 'Gold' level in 2021. This award represents our commitment to employees' training and development, demonstrating a solid foundation of good practice

All colleagues have a regular one-to-one meeting at which issues can be raised, personal development and progress towards organisational goals discussed

Each colleague receives an annual appraisal

We provide a fair, safe and healthy working environment for all colleagues with relevant health and safety training provided as required. We have a Risk Management and Health and Safety Committee which meets regularly to gain assurance in this area

We provide a remuneration package that includes a health and wellbeing package and other benefits for our colleagues

We support the local employment economy by offering trainee contracts to the organisation

We have a Human Resources Strategy which sets out the future ambitions of the Association and this is reviewed every three years

Management adopts an open-door policy and are always available to assist employees.

#### How did we do / Future Plans

Nehemiah's position remains the same

Nehemiah is also accredited as a Mindful Employer and Disability Confident Employer

Well-Being – Employees are encouraged to continue using the Mind Wellness Action Plan to be personally aware of any triggers which could negatively impact on their mental well-being.

## 2.4 Environment

### Current position

We continue to recycle a high level of waste materials through our waste disposal

We ensure that we better co-ordinate visits across the organisation to minimise the distances travelled

Property services team currently reviewing and looking into ways to improve the Energy efficiency of our stock (EPC ratings). Contributing to carbon reduction

#### How did we do / Future Plans

Nehemiah's position remains the same

## 2.5 Fair operating practices

Current position
We strive to always operate within the law across all our policies and procedures
We aim to abide by the payment periods as set by suppliers – where they are unreasonable, we will raise this and negotiate an improved position. We pay within 30 days on average, and this is good.
Where possible we will support the local supply of goods thus benefitting the local economy and employment prospects
We continue to operate to a high standard of ethics and expect all colleagues, Board members and partners to uphold this. We operate with an 'Dealing with Fraud Policy' and 'Anti-Money Laundering Policy' and will report any incidence of fraud or suspected misuse to the Money Laundering Reporting Officer: Finance Director or in his absence the Operations Director as deputy who will report to the National Crime Agency (NCA). We have a 'Code of Conduct' which all colleagues and Board members sign-up to
We seek added value in the development of services in communities from our relationship with our partners

How did we do / Future Plans
All points above remain the at the same position
No incidences of attempted fraud/ fraud were reported occurred during this period
In July 2023 a suspected case of anti-money laundering was reported to the Association's money laundering reporting officer who notified the NCA. The Association have not since been contacted by the NCA.
We held a mandatory anti-money laundering training session for all staff provided by HQN in October 2023 to support our E-learning modules on this topic.

## 2.6 Consumer issues

Current position
We have in place a Customer Engagement Strategy which aims to improve the participation of tenants and other residents in a range of our activities
We continue to support our scrutiny group, 'Tenant Scrutiny Panel', to review areas of our operations and make recommendations to improve our services
Where appropriate, we take on-board feedback from tenants and regulatory expectations in producing and publishing our Policies and leaflets
We consult with tenants and set our annual rent increases within regulated levels



We issue a Tenant Handbook for each new tenancy, and this ensures that tenants are fully aware of all of the services relating to their tenancy and their new home

We are continuing to develop further our website which makes relevant information easily accessible for tenants and prospective tenants

Nehemiah Housing is GDPR-compliant, and we ensure that all customer data is handled and managed in a confidential and appropriate manner

We have developed Business Continuity Plan which should ensure that we can retain business continuity and protect the interests of tenants and other customers should a disaster arise

We use mobile technology to increase the presence of our Housing Officers out on-site

### How did we do / Future Plans

All points above remain the at the same position

The Association's Customer Engagement strategy will be reviewed annually with tenant input

There was one incident of a data breach as a result of human error. An ICO self-assessment was submitted on 26th March 2024 to which the ICO considered the information and decided not to take action.

## 2.7 Community involvement and development

### Target Position

Each year we carry out a series of walkabouts in our key areas when colleagues across the organisation meet to tour areas, highlight environmental improvements required and record where action needs to be taken - other stakeholders and locally involved residents are also welcome to attend

We will continue to issue a minimum of three tenant newsletters each year to inform our tenants about our activities and key policy information.

We will continue to increase our presence in the community by effective communication in the press and web and increase our visibility on social media

Colleagues continue to support a wide range of local charities through various team and personal fund-raising activities

We support local foodbanks with donations from colleagues

## How did we do

For the period of April 2023 - March 2024 Nehemiah donated a total of £8,381.61 to charities/organisations such as: MacMillian Cancer support, Erma Jamaica hospital appeal fund, Birmingham empowerment forum, Jamaica ex-Soldiers association UK, the pioneer group and more.

Members of the staff team volunteer their time at their local churches/organisation in their personal time

The Association did not make a foodbank donation however we will resume this for Christmas 2024.

## 2.8 Nehemiah Housing Future Commitments

Target Position	How did we do
We will return holding an annual Colleague Conference which successfully blends learning with corporate and organisational development with fun	We have postponed the annual staff conference to later in the financial year to incorporate a staff consultation session for the development of the new Corporate Plan.
We will continue to work through our Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) performance review action plan which aligns with our corporate social responsibility	We developed an Environmental Sustainability Strategy which outlines the Association's priorities for action to reduce our carbon emissions over the next 6 years, 2024 to 2030. The action plan will be brought to Board on an annual basis to monitor our progress and outcomes achieved.
We will establish a Colleague Consultation Group and this meets regularly to consult on any proposed changes to policy or other colleague-affecting issues	We currently don't have an established colleague consultation group however where there are changes to HR related policies staff will provide feedback via surveys (i.e. Pay & Reward strategy)  Managers are expected to discuss changes within the organisation during 1-2-1's or catch-up meetings and raise any staff concerns to HR.
We will consider introducing improved recycling within our offices – with the removal of waste-paper bins at each desk in favour of larger recycling-segregated bins at convenient points in the offices and kitchens	At head offices there is one large recycling bin located in each kitchen.  Staff are instructed that where paper documents containing company information need to be destroyed, that they are confidentially disposed. The organisation that

	facilitates the Association's confidential shredding recycles 100% of paper waste.
We will develop our own Contract Management Framework which seeks to ensure a high standard of contract relationship, including an adherence to fairness and openness.	Currently there are elements of the managing the contractual process within the Finance Policy: Controls and Procedures which includes Standing Orders and Delegated Authority.
We will produce a Procurement Policy which ensures that we operate to a high ethical standard when purchasing goods and services	Nehemiah's Finance Policy provides assurance that value for money is obtained, probity in the awarding of contracts and fairness and equality in the treatment of contractors and suppliers during the procurement process.
We support the tenant skills development initiative which aims to help tenants acquire the skills they need to manage their household budgets effectively	Nehemiah works in partnership with Birmingham Settlement to provide free and independent advice to help tenants manage their finances.  Budgeting tips are posted on the Nehemiah website and social media accounts and different points of the year i.e. Christmas or debt awareness week
We will hold several 'Community Cafe' events each year, at which residents are given the opportunity to come and meet with a range of organisations and hear, in a café environment, about developments in our services	Nehemiah has held online wellbeing sessions in partnership with external organisations as well as an online rent consultation meeting with tenants.  Nehemiah Housing hosted a community meeting at a sheltered scheme which was attended by the former metro Mayor Andy Street. The mayor outlined future developments within the social housing sector which will benefit our tenants.  A surgery with a Labour Councillor is held on a quarterly basis at McCalla House
We will continue to hold an annual 'Gardening Competition' each year where the number and quality of entrants is always very high at our supported schemes	A gardening competition was not held last year however we hosted a range of engagement activities at our supported schemes: carers support group, coffee mornings, dominos, Christmas party, coronation celebration, Windrush celebrations, exercise classes, health classes, breakfast club, curry nights, evening church services,

	luncheon club, housing officer surgery and resident meetings.
We will donate old company electrical equipment where possible	Functioning IT equipment is donated by the Association to schools in Africa.  Nonfunctioning IT equipment is disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner
Regular expertise cleaning of the bins and bin areas	The bin areas are maintained and cleaned immediately where a tenant reports an issue.

### 3.0 Conclusions

This is our first CSR Annual report reflecting on the commitments in the CRS Policy. Overall we are making steady progress and we are in a good position to move forward in a better position.