

karbon
homes

Unlocking Social Value report 2023/24

About us

At Karbon Homes, we build, manage and look after affordable homes for people across the North.

And then we go further, we give them the strong foundations they need to get on with life.

Since our formation in 2017, we've focused on delivering our three strategic aims - to provide as many good quality homes as we can, to deliver excellent service to our customers and to shape strong, sustainable places for our communities.

Our group footprint covers the North East of England and Yorkshire, with over 34,000 homes across diverse communities, all facing different opportunities and challenges. We always make the effort to understand our customers. We believe that everyone deserves respect and everyone's voices should be heard.

Some customers just need an affordable home, or a way onto the property ladder. Others might need more – financial advice, community services, sheltered accommodation or even training that can lead to a new job. Whatever people need to feel more secure, confident and happy with where they're at, we'll work our heart out to provide it.

As a profit-for-a-purpose organisation, we invest any surplus we generate into improving our homes and communities, building new homes and delivering services which provide sustainable outcomes for our customers and communities.

We believe that by combining a sound business head with a strong social heart and staying true to our values, we can build strong foundations for even more people.

Unlocking social value

At Karbon Homes, we create strong, sustainable places for our communities.

One of the many ways in which we do this is through our Unlocking Social Value programme.

Social value measures the wider impact our activities and investments have on the wellbeing of our communities.

It goes beyond the cash value and looks at the benefits our support brings to our customers lives.

This could be helping customers find jobs, improving a community centre so more people can enjoy it, or investing in local services so people are able to do more.

Through our procurement process we ask contractors and suppliers about the social value they can bring to benefit our customers and communities. We can then work with them to identify how we create opportunities that maximise social value for our customers and communities.

Throughout 2023-24, we've been able to deliver £922,233.91* in social value outcomes to support our communities.

This report highlights some of the contributions that they have delivered in the last year and celebrates the difference they have made to our customers and communities.

There's more to come as well. This year, we've been working behind the scenes to improve our social value processes. This includes developing our 'Approach to Social Value Policy'. This has resulted in the creation of a Social Value Panel who oversee all of our activity and ensure we are delivering against our policy.

We've also introduced a Social Value Coordinator role to work with our stakeholders', colleagues and communities to coordinate and deliver social value commitments in line with the Karbon Group.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all of the contractors and suppliers who have made social value contributions. Your generosity has helped us provide our customers and communities with the support they need to build strong foundations for life.

Philip Pollard
Karbon Homes Assistant Director Customer and Community Engagement

*This figure was calculated using proxy values from the National TOMS framework.

Our procurement process

We believe in delivering high quality products, systems and service to our customers.

To make sure we deliver exceptional value for money, we use a procurement process to secure the best possible outcome for our customers.

As a registered provider of social housing we work in line with public procurement regulations which requires us to advertise and award tenders. Our procurement activities follow a clear process which allows all interested parties a fair chance to work with us.

We welcome interest from any size supply organisation who share our approach in the way they work.

Meeting our environmental and social responsibilities is very important to us and we expect all suppliers to follow our Contractor Code of Conduct.

We spend over £170 million each year covering a range of goods and services such as:

- food and care services for supported living
- repairs and maintenance
- construction materials

- utilities
- office supplies
- waste management
- professional services and transport
- ICT equipment

We also have a large capital investment programme covering building schemes, as we aim to build over 500 new homes each year.

To find out more about our procurement process, visit www.karbonhomes.co.uk/procurement.

Chris Smith
Karbon Homes Group Procurement Manager

Social value delivered

Measured using The National TOMs

Total social value delivered during 2023/24: £922,335.49

25 local direct employees hired or retained: **£692,526.00**

643 weeks of apprenticeships and Technical-Level qualifications:
£161,900.97

5 weeks of paid work placements: **£972.50**

127 hours of 'support into work' assistance delivered: **£13,408.66**

51 hours of school and college visits: **£863.43**

Incoming funding available to sponsor community projects: **£34,135.15**

In kind contributions made (materials and time): **£17,631.49**

53 volunteering hours delivered: **£897.29**

Jobs - Azure Charitable Enterprises

Azure Charitable Enterprises help people hit the ground running.

Social value is also about partnering with organisations that share our values and aims. Azure Charitable Enterprises are a key example of this. They're one of our contractors, carrying out grounds maintenance work on our behalf throughout Northumberland.

Azure are a supported employer which means they are committed to employing and supporting individuals who face various challenges, often disabilities, that previously may have stopped them progressing into employment. As a result of our contract, they have a team of 13 staff who deliver grounds maintenance service for our customers.

Andrew Robson, Director of Operations at Azure said:

“Our aim is to enable people to live and work more independently by building their skills through training and mentoring.

“Currently 15 operatives work on the Karbon contracts, with supervision and support allowing them to work independently in roles they may not have been able to before.

“The continued support from Karbon means that we're currently developing and improving the services we offer. We've been able to introduce taster days and training education opportunities for prospective employees - meaning we can heighten the opportunities we can offer.”

Apprenticeships - Metro Rod

Metro Rod unlock the value of apprenticeships.

The additional work our contracts bring can often provide apprenticeship opportunities that have helped young people and adults into employment.

Harrison Wass from Ashington, Northumberland was looking to get practical work experience that would complement his Level 2 Business Administration course at Newcastle College.

Through social value, drainage company Metro Rod were able to support Harrison with an Office Administrator apprenticeship that's been perfect for him.

Amy Williamson, Office Manager at Metro Rod was full of praise for Harrison and the apprenticeship programme:

“Harrison brings fresh enthusiasm to the business and he's so keen to learn. The apprenticeships give people the chance to further their education whilst still earning a living to support themselves.

“Harrison is now looking to start at Level 3 Business Administration Course and he'll continue his development whilst working at Metro Rod.”

Paid placements – Castle Scaffold

Taking careers to new heights.

Newcastle-based scaffolding company Castle Scaffold were able to use social value to provide a paid work placement opportunity for Karbon customer Joseph.

Castle Scaffold worked with our Foundations for Life Team who help to support customers to realise their potential. They were able to promote the opportunity directly to Karbon customers through our communications channels.

This was a great opportunity for Joseph to get the training and experience needed to become a fully qualified scaffolder. After completing the placement, Joseph was offered full time employment.

Adam Mitchell, Operations Manager at Castle Scaffold said:

“Joseph did really well. I was impressed with him. He was very willing and wanted to learn which is rare for the younger generation.

While Joseph decided to follow an alternative career path, the placement shows how social value can help to create life changing opportunities for customers.

Support into work – Equans

Equans ignites potential.

Technical service provider Equans is committed to supporting those furthest from the jobs market to move into a positive direction.

While completing works on our Athol House project, Equans showcased this commitment by delivering a bespoke employability skills programme to nine of our customers in our Stanley Skills Hub. This was part of our ongoing employability work at the Hub and our placeshaping mission in Stanley to create a strong, sustainable place that empowers residents.

Over the course of five weeks, eleven individual workshops were conducted covering a variety of topics related to employability.

All participants had their CVs and cover letters reviewed and updated as a result of the programme with the support of Equans Social Value Team. They were also given a robust action plan to progress forward in their career aspirations. This included one participant who secured a place at New College Durham.

Ryan Wilson, Social Value Officer at Equans was delighted to work with the group:

“It’s great to see a change in people as they get more confident and believe in their own ability. They’ve all got great skills that would be a real boost to any employer, it’s just getting them to have that belief in themselves.”

School visits - T Manners & Sons Ltd

T Manners & Sons construct better futures.

Sixth formers and Year 8 students at Thirsk School in North Yorkshire were able to get an insight into working in the construction industry thanks to family owned construction company T Manners & Sons Ltd.

T Manners took part in construction and planning workshops for the students during a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) event. The sixth formers were able to take part in mock interviews whilst the Year 8 students were able to learn more about the roles in the industry and how they work together.

Kylie Jackson from Thirsk School said:

“The students really benefited from T Manners attending the event. While we can still do these events with our own members of staff, having companies attend makes them so much better and more enjoyable.”

Community sponsorship - Prosper

Prosper helps fund Benwell community centre.

Thanks to a vital boost in funding from North East based procurement consultancy Prosper, the Merton Lodge community centre in the heart of the South Benwell estate has reopened its doors to the community.

The £25,000 of funding comes from Prosper’s Annual Social Value Dividend Fund, established to support the communities its landlord partners serve.

The funding is being used by local community interest company NE14 Productions to take over the lease of the centre and run a variety of new services and activities.

Bessie Williams, Founder and Company Director of NE14 Productions, said:

“When Karbon approached me about taking over the running of Merton Lodge I jumped at the opportunity. I’m from Benwell originally, the area is very close to my heart, and I wanted to play my part in supporting this community and making it a great place to live.”

Rod Brasington, Chief Executive at Prosper, said:

“We’re proud to be able to work with Karbon Homes to support this excellent community project which is bringing residents together to harness the potential of the Merton Court area”.

Supporting community organisations

Helping make better communities for future generations.

Support and Grow North East are a dedicated and like minded team of volunteers. They work in the community of Shiremoor to fight poverty and isolation, supporting people across North Tyneside and Northumberland. They support people in crisis in any way they can, offering activities to bring the community together.

They recently took over a building to enable them to deliver support at the heart of the community in Shiremoor and beyond.

Through our Unlocking Social Value programme our contractors have supported them to create a safe and welcoming environment including bringing into use the 'black room' which will be used for one to one and small family appointments.

Ogilvie Fire Projection supported the renovation of the 'black room' to create a safe and welcoming environment, this included plaster boarding, creating shelves in an alcove and plastering.

Fortify Electrical replaced lighting throughout the building with new LED lights and installed additional sockets in office and kitchen.

The project has also been supported with advice from Stephen Stewart, Technical Surveyor, from Karbon's Investment Team.

Volunteering - Practical Landscapes

Practical support in the community

Family run landscaping and gardening company Practical Landscapes were able to support a big tidy up in Hayton Bridge.

The local company provided members of staff and equipment to support The Nurture Project CIC with a community litter pick.

They also provided free of charge tree surgery for local community organisations including Haydon Bridge Football Club and The Nurture Project's Forest School.

However big or small, the commitments from our contractors and suppliers make a huge difference to the lives of our customers.

Get in touch to find out more about our Unlocking Social Value programme, mycommunity@karbonhomes.co.uk.

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Karbon Homes is a charitable registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. Registration No.7529.