



# Our Impact

2019/2020



Indie-Rae Grace and  
Amelia Harrison

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Cover photo:  
Ava and Laura Guzna

# 2019/2020 highlights – Year at a glance

## The investment



## Difference made





## Group Chief Executive's Introduction

Welcome to Our Impact report, which provides an insight into the work we do to empower our communities.

Community investment is a natural extension of our activities as a social housing provider. It underpins our mission and values and is integral to creating places where people are proud to live.

This year has brought challenges none of us could have expected with Covid-19, but I take immense pride in the resilience of our communities and staff to overcome these. We recognise the impact of Covid-19 on our residents and will continue to channel the necessary investment in our neighbourhoods to support them now and beyond the pandemic.

Our Impact report shows how we have worked closely with communities to support residents and projects that amplify their voices and bring positive change to their lives. It's about harnessing the skills of people whose unique contributions make their communities what they are, so together we can create long-term sustainable change.

I hope you enjoy reading the report and reflecting on our achievements. We're passionate about our community activities and would welcome the opportunity to talk more about our work, so please get in touch: [community@sanctuary-housing.co.uk](mailto:community@sanctuary-housing.co.uk).

**Craig Moule**  
Group Chief Executive

Amelia Hough,  
Shiregreen



## Head of Community Investment's Foreword

Our Impact report reflects our investment in community initiatives over the last year. These initiatives share one aim – for the people that we house and support to be happy, to feel part of and proud of their community. This report specifically looks at investments which go above and beyond our responsibilities as a social landlord and support provider.

With hundreds of initiatives across England and Scotland, from Aberdeen to Hove, Chester to Scarborough and Plymouth to Thanet, this report gives an overview of the money and time we invested and the difference it made. We also showcase some of the community groups who make this happen and their inspiring stories.

I wish to extend an enormous thank you to my colleagues and all our community partners for their incredible achievements over the last year.

With the impact of Covid-19 causing some of the biggest challenges communities have ever faced, we are taking time to review our community investment strategy, our role in communities and the opportunities this creates. We look forward to sharing our strategy in early 2021.

**Marie-Claire Wattison**  
Head of Community Investment

“

These initiatives share one aim –  
for the people that we house and  
support to be happy, to feel part of  
and proud of their community

”



## Who we are and what we do

Sanctuary's mission is to build affordable homes and sustainable communities where people choose to live.

We are a not-for-profit housing association, providing homes and care for more than 250,000 people in England and Scotland. Every penny we make is reinvested in improving homes, building new affordable homes and investing in communities. We are driven by our charitable and social purpose and our values.

We manage:

- more than 100,000 homes nationally
- more than 100 residential care homes
- more than 500 supported housing schemes
- more than 10,000 student rooms.

We work as one team, made up of over 13,000 people.

### Why we do it

We believe that no one should be excluded or left behind. We believe that everyone should have a home to live in and community they can belong to. We want to help build a society with opportunities for everyone, regardless of their background or circumstance.



Jane Bird and  
Dave Birds,  
Community Wellness,  
Sheffield



## Communities and Covid-19



Two Covid-19 response projects in action.  
Left, Crossroads Community Hub and right, Crafty Fox Café & Hub Food Bank

During 2020 we have learned a lot from the Covid-19 pandemic about resilience in communities across the world.

We have seen residents and colleagues working together to help each other through very troubled times. We have observed extraordinary acts of kindness and generosity, of mutual aid and concern for our fellow human beings.

We have witnessed communities helping each other with access to food, telephone support lines, and sewing masks and scrubs for health and care professionals. We have also seen our colleagues looking out for our tenants, making thousands of 'keeping in touch' calls to make sure that people had what they needed to get through the lockdowns, and waiting with tenants for help to arrive when lockdown left them with nothing to eat and no electricity.

We have all seen and heard these stories and, here at Sanctuary, they have helped us to reflect on our work in communities, our partners and our strategy. This year we are taking some time to consider our approach, our role in communities, and how we can harness our insight and support to build meaning, connection and resilience in communities.

In this report we share a selection of stories from the last year, featuring some of the people and groups for whom our community investment programme has helped to make a difference. The themes that emerge from these stories echo those of the pandemic: concern for each other's wellbeing and supporting each other to find personal and community resilience to deal with the challenges that life puts in front of us.

We hope these stories provide a window into the incredible achievements of our communities who have harnessed the knowledge, talents and spirit of local people.



## Stories from our community partnerships

### A community I never knew existed – Anthony’s story

“I hadn’t left the house in almost a decade, not even to the front steps. It’s a long story as to how I got myself into that state so it’s best I stick to where the progress truly began for me.

“I met Caroline and Kieran from Sanctuary in October and after a few talks with them they guided me through options and opportunities to reintroduce myself into a community I never knew existed. The local Hall, that holds breakfast clubs on Tuesday mornings amongst other events throughout the week, and The Village Story Telling Centre being two that have been particularly helpful for me.

“Their authenticity and sincerity surrounding community and showing me ways in which I could take part at my own pace and with guidance helped me get back on my feet, literally.

“Walking to the Hall every Tuesday got me used to feeling comfortable leaving the house again, which in turn got me hooked on simply just walking. That is what has been helping me during lockdown, walking – something that started as just less than half a mile to the Hall every Tuesday progressing into walking up to 10 miles almost every morning.

“Caroline and Kieran from Sanctuary and Stephanie from The Village Storytelling Centre have also kept in touch via phone over lockdown. This has also been extremely helpful in keeping me feeling grounded in community during an isolating period for everyone.

“Other than community, lockdown has also ironically put a perspective on what I was putting myself through when I never left the house.

“I feel lucky and thankful to have been able to get myself in the right direction during lockdown, all of the above would have to be my silver linings.”

This story was written by Anthony Thomas. Anthony got in touch with Sanctuary Scotland via a Welfare Rights referral. Our community team engaged with him to begin creating a relationship of trust to support him to feel that he was capable of contributing to his community. This involved lots of conversations and work with partners, including The Village Storytelling Centre, to be able to tell his story. Since then Anthony has reached out to other tenants who are facing similar situations and is helping us to engage with them.

“**I feel lucky and thankful to have been able to get myself in the right direction during lockdown, all of the above would have to be my silver lining**”



### Evolving together – a community partner story

One of our community partners is Banbury Youth & Community Enterprise (BYCE). The group was borne out of Banbury Women’s Support Group, after they began helping mothers whose children are at risk of criminalisation, child sexual exploitation, or county lines and the transportation of illegal drugs.

The group has worked hard over the last few years to respond and grow with their community. BYCE has great ambition and so together with Cherwell District Council, our role at Sanctuary has been lending advice or a hand when it is needed, by brokering relationships to build support or giving small grants.

Starting from small weekly support groups encouraging mums to attend, some of whom would not leave the house, BYCE has come a long way. They are now developing enterprise activities to earn income to continue their work and offer positive activities and experiences to young people. They are also developing detached youth work to engage with young people at risk of criminalisation and setting a base for their outreach work.

The group do not stand still and, by expanding their knowledge and expertise through engagement tools and trauma-informed approaches, they are now directly empowering young people. The group has adopted a Freedom Forever and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) recovery toolkit and will help to raise awareness in these practices in other local services available to families.

“**I feel more calm, able to cope, I feel I am not on my own. It is the most wonderful supportive group**”

“**This has been so beneficial to my sons who are witnessing their mum working in the community, learning about our local matters and participating in fundraising events. They have both said they are proud of me and feel inspired by the positive changes to our lives in the last six months**”



## Responding to communities – a youth club story

Morningside Youth Club, a youth partner based in Hackney, engaged over 200 young people in their summer programme.

The programme set out to engage seven to 19-year-olds living in and around the Morningside and Gascoyne estates; build opportunities for young people during the summer; raise aspirations; and develop peer to peer support networks. This was to be achieved through sport, social enterprise, volunteering opportunities, advice and guidance.

As the programme went live, the community was faced with serious shooting incidents. At a time when engagement could have been affected detrimentally, Morningside Youth Club responded by adapting their plans to add workshops on safeguarding, grooming and gangs.

The club received an increase in interest from younger children and decided to lower their admission age to five years. This gave support to parents whose children would not usually be old enough to attend.

The impact that the programme has had on young people is significant and includes increased confidence, and the ability to speak up for themselves and address issues that impact their lives. Young people are now more confident in travelling between venues, enabling them to expand their friendship circle further and engage in more activities.

We have worked with this group for over a decade and they are extremely well embedded in their community, a great example of a trusted local community partner.

“  
The impact of the programme on young people includes increased friendship circles, more confidence, and the ability to speak up for themselves and address issues that impact their lives  
”



Volunteer, Daniel

“  
After volunteering for over two years, Daniel was offered paid work within our organisation  
”

## Daniel's journey – a volunteer story

The following story was shared by Morningside Youth Club.

“Daniel attended Morningside Youth Club as a young person for a number of years. He moved off the estate a few years ago but continued to attend sessions. When he was 16, he asked if he could volunteer.

“Volunteering as a young person is not always easy. It can, and often does, lead to arguments and some resentments, however Daniel demonstrated a high level of maturity in his dealings with the young people and staff members, quickly becoming a fixture within the staff team.

“Due to his commitment and work ethic, Daniel was given more responsibility and successfully completed a young sports leader course, enabling him to lead on sport projects at the youth club.

“After volunteering for over two years, Daniel was offered paid work within our organisation. We have seen him grow into a confident and professional young man who continues to show a tireless commitment to the youth club and the young people who attend.

“He is never short of ideas and has no hesitation in leading on projects and encouraging others to lead. Young people see Daniel as a role model, and it is in part due to this that we have a number of young people volunteering with us and a waiting list.

“Daniel has enthusiasm for everything he does and is hoping to not only continue with his youth work but is also branching out into filmmaking. He made a short film during lockdown detailing our work delivering food. He turns up every Thursday, on a voluntary basis, to deliver food and put together food parcels. Young people turn to him for advice and help and he always makes time for them.

“His filmmaking is taking off and he uses his skills to teach other young people who are interested in filmmaking. He is a talented musician, donating equipment to the youth club to ensure that others are given the same opportunities he had. He is a genuinely nice person whom we have watched grow and mature from a young person to the young man he is today, making time for everyone.”



“  
I’m interacting  
with people  
now. I am less  
scared to  
go outside,  
approach  
people and I  
can feel myself  
taking part in  
the community  
”

Ibrahim Mohammed, athlete Anna Turney, Hani Rina and Bleona Rina

### Get on track – a mentoring story

Get on Track is a personal, social and emotional development programme led by world class athletes who mentor through the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust. Over a six-month period, the mentors worked intensively with 38 young people at Sanctuary Supported Living accommodation in Brighton, Weston-Super-Mare, Hartlepool and Banbury.

The programme was tailored to each person to develop the skills and attributes needed to enter or return to work and move towards a more independent life. As well as preparing for the world of work the young people, supported by Sanctuary, have gained ASDAN and First Aid qualifications and undertaken activities such as rock climbing, sailing and high ropes adventures to escape their comfort zones and build confidence.

By the end of the programme the young people were more reflective and took more responsibility for their actions and behaviours, striving to change and improve them. Many set themselves goals that previously felt out of reach, but they felt motivated and supported to achieve them.

These have included mapping out a journey through college, training courses and volunteering that would take them forward into a job or vocation they were passionate about such as animal welfare work, firefighting, the automotive industry and security work.

A third of the young people who took part in the programme are now in employment, education or training. 70 per cent feel confident in having a go at new things compared to 40 per cent at the start of the programme. The impact on wellbeing was seen in many ways including young people feeling relaxed and close to other people as a result of taking part. With many of the young people disconnected from their family and friends, getting to know each other and strengthening new friendship bonds has helped to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.

To watch a short video about the Get on Track initiative and hear our young people’s stories, click on the link below:

<https://youtu.be/RXE37PUkwTY>

### Man with a pan – a peer group support story

A group of men in Rochford, aged 65 and over, came together to learn basic cookery skills and how to eat more healthily by cooking their own food and reducing the amount of processed convenience foods.

The men earned a raft of new skills including knife skills (peeling and chopping), how to time cooking a meal, batch cooking and freezing, how to make soup and use up leftovers.

The activities were led by the men taking part, which led to a sense of ownership and control among the group. There was a lot of peer support, which made for a fun and encouraging atmosphere. Everyone cooked, learnt new skills and tasted new foods.

One person described their experience:

“I live on my own, so it’s good fun working together in a group. I’m 70, retired a couple of months ago and I wanted to keep busy.

“When my partner passed away, I threw out all the cooking equipment. They did all the cooking and I thought I wouldn’t use it. I’ve been living on ready meals since but I’ve ordered some basic kitchen stuff now and I’m going to give it a go. I’ve got lots of ideas. I asked for a list of store cupboard basics and I’m going to stock up.

“I enjoyed the fish dish with the tomato sauce we made. I’m going to cook that at home and hopefully invite some friends around. I’m thinking of volunteering at the café they’re starting up here. It’ll be a good way of keeping my skills going and meeting new people.”

“  
I wanted to make some  
friends and learn something.  
I’ve done both  
”



The Man with a pan group in action



## Added value through partnerships

  
 Last year our construction partners alone contributed  
**£109,670**  
 to community projects and supported 53 apprenticeships

Beyond our own investment, we work closely with our development and supply chain partners to secure additional investment for our communities.

Significant additional investment comes through our MORE programme, where we work closely with construction partners to channel their funding and resources to communities where we are building new homes. We make the best use of the skills and resources on our construction sites to benefit existing and new communities. Our partners share our values and enjoy giving back, whether through access to jobs and training on-site, renovating green spaces and community buildings, or giving surplus materials to allotment projects.

Aside from MORE, we continue to explore our supply chain partnerships more broadly to increase their investment and make their contributions more meaningful for communities.

Here we share some examples which illustrate the added value these partners bring.

### Recycling Lives – an ex-offenders enterprise story

Our development operation, Sanctuary Homes, is supporting a recycling enterprise in the North West. Recycling Lives is not only a business which offers a recycling service to our construction sites, but their entire model is built around providing work, training and homes to people inside and those leaving prison.

In the last four years they have supported 228 ex-offenders through rehabilitation and into work. They provide homes for the homeless in their own premises. They also take their recycling business directly into prisons, where men and women can earn money and save for their ultimate release, making the transition from prison to working and domestic life much easier.

The support continues outside prison, where training, apprenticeships and jobs are offered including work placements on our sites.



Recycling Lives Processing Facility in Preston

### ENGIE – an employment and training story

At our Cooks Lane site in Sittingbourne, our construction partner ENGIE has offered an intensive and varied series of employment and training opportunities to local people, including opportunities for young people supported by Sanctuary Supported Living in the area. ENGIE also has two young women on-site who are advancing their careers through apprenticeships in construction-related roles. Fran and Vicky shared their experiences with the young people who were on work experience and site visits. Fran said:

“During my apprenticeship I have seen the number of women working within construction increase through many different job roles including quantity surveyors, designers, architects, painters and decorators, and managing directors.



“My advice to women that would like to work within the construction industry is to go for it! The industry has so many opportunities for women, as well as men, and can be an inspiring and fulfilling career path for many no matter what your background or previous experience. One of the things I have learnt, through meeting people in construction over the years, is that there are so many different job roles for women to suit many talents and interests. Whether you are artistic and creative, are good at maths and with money, if you have an interest in technology, or if you like to be ‘hands on’ and physical, there really is something for everyone.”

Milton Creek

### Westridge – an environmental impact story

When new homes are built in any area, there is always consideration of infrastructure and community services to accommodate the needs of new residents. This includes access to food, water, education, leisure, transport, health services and environmental plans to enhance natural areas and make room for wildlife.

Westridge, our construction partner at the School Hill site in Merstham, wanted to ensure that their skills and resources would benefit the community and match local priorities. After visiting community projects and local schools, the team worked with the local parish council to draw up a project wish list, much of which focused on environmental improvements and education. This support helped the local community implement projects including: the installation of outdoor little libraries; butterfly projects; bug hotels; hedgehog highways; small mammal homes; and improving outdoor natural play space.



Some of the bug hotels in place

## Rexel – a supply chain coaching story

Through funding from Rexel, one of our supply chain partners, we are piloting a new approach to employment support for our residents in Liverpool. We have designated colleagues in our local Housing teams who help our residents with employment, building relationships and trust on the ground to make it easier for residents to access support.



Lisa Rice (pictured), a dedicated work coach, is now in place within our Neighbourhood team to coach and support residents in Liverpool towards employment, training and volunteering goals. So far, we have helped 25 people, with outcomes including work experience, gaining employment and CV workshops, supporting some of our most vulnerable residents.

As well as practical help with CV writing and interview skills, our coach can help with signposting to support for addiction, linking with mental health services and disclosing health issues to a prospective employer.

### Sania's story

Sania had relocated from Manchester to Liverpool and was finding it tricky to meet new people, as well as look for employment. She was feeling isolated and disheartened. Sania identified that she would like to support women who have suffered from domestic violence, having fled an abusive relationship years earlier.

With support from the work coach to update her CV, Sania secured an interview with a charity that protects women and children from domestic abuse and began volunteering, which she enjoyed immensely. Her confidence soared, she found the experience very positive and this has helped to add recent experience to her CV.

*(Names and personal details have been changed to protect anonymity)*



## Want to find out more?

If you would like more information about anything you have read in this report, you can contact us by emailing [community@sanctuary-housing.co.uk](mailto:community@sanctuary-housing.co.uk)

If you would like this publication in an alternative format or language, please email [pr@sanctuary-housing.co.uk](mailto:pr@sanctuary-housing.co.uk).



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