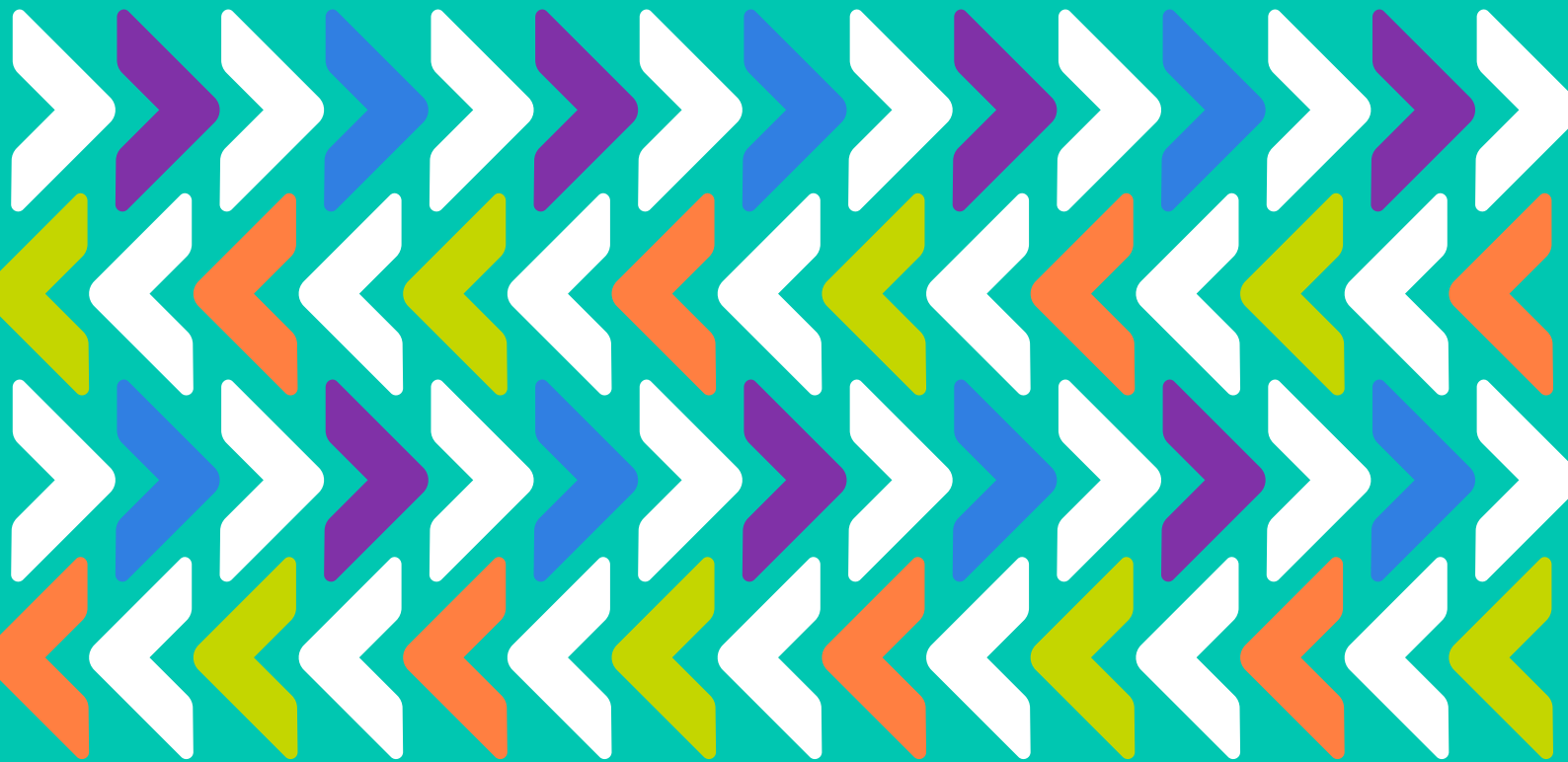


# Community Investment Strategy **2021**

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Building resilience and connection with  
our customers and their communities



Sanctuary



## Craig's foreword

“Our investment  
in communities  
supports our  
mission to build  
sustainable  
communities  
where people  
choose to live”

I am pleased to share our new Community Investment Strategy that explains Sanctuary's approach and objectives.

Our investment in communities supports our mission to build sustainable communities where people choose to live. This strategy is a key part of our commitment to sustainability. We are supportive of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and our investment in communities specifically contributes towards **No Poverty, Good Health and Well-being** and **Sustainable Cities and Communities**.

In creating this strategy, we sought insight from our customers, community partners and our employees, to establish a focus that supports the aspirations of our customers and their communities in the coming years.

We understand the significant impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on our customers lives, their families and their communities. We have taken time to reflect on the insight drawn in through our community partners, and adapt our approach to give greater flexibility.

Together, we are excited to share our plan to invest in the best way possible to positively impact the lives of our customers.



**Craig Moule**  
Group Chief Executive



# Introduction

from Marie-Claire  
Wattison, Head of  
Community  
Investment

Our mission here at Sanctuary 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 that we make is reinvested in improving homes, building new affordable homes and investing in communities.

The aspiration we hold for our investment, is that it is led by our customers and communities. This helps us to contribute in a sustainable way, by helping people to realise their aspirations and by building local capacity for communities to drive change for themselves. We also aim to harness the wealth of insight and learning that we gain through the hundreds of initiatives we support each year to benefit our customers, community partners and our business.

The impact of Covid-19 has been enormous and this changed the perspective on our priorities for investment in communities. Now, more than ever, people need a sense of ownership of their community

and to feel – and genuinely be – empowered and listened to, to drive change.

We felt it was important that we reviewed and reshaped our Community Investment Strategy with our customers, community partners and colleagues. We want to be confident that our approach offers a level of flexibility and responsiveness that is helpful. We are privileged to work with hundreds of trusted and knowledgeable community groups and so we turned to them and their ability to reach our customers to understand where our investment should be directed. The key focus of our new strategy is on building connection and resilience to support our customers and their communities.

We are very pleased to share our new Community Investment Strategy with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MC Wattison'.

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

# Our strategic goal



We aim to **build resilience and connection** with our customers and their **communities**.

► We will do this by:

- Supporting people to create conditions in which they can **thrive**, **increasing their ability** to adapt to **adversity** in a **positive** way.
- Supporting people to maintain and **build relationships**, increasing **connection to others**, knowing their community and feeling **part of it**.
- Supporting community groups to access funding, advice, peer networks and training to **build resilience and connection** in our **communities**.

► The people that we house and support, our customers, are the reason that we do everything that we do as a business. Our investment in communities is an enduring commitment to helping our customers and communities to thrive. We believe in helping people to have a sense of belonging, to feel connected to and part of their community.



Shiregreen fitness project

**“There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about”**

Margaret J. Wheatley

- Global citizen, teacher, community worker and adviser



# Our aims

## Create

- A virtual network for community partners across the country to share insight, build capacity and maximise impact for customers.
- A revised approach to evaluation, in consultation with community partners and community investment professionals across Sanctuary resulting in:
  - Simplifying what we measure and report, focusing on what is helpful and streamlining the process for recipients of our support.
  - Improving our evaluation systems, to enhance our ability to analyse and share insight.

## Grow

- A trauma informed and trauma-responsive approach to Asset Based Community Development resulting in:
  - Establishing a champion network in our business.
  - Understanding the impact that trauma can have on individuals and a community.
  - Using the principles of trauma-informed practice through our investments – choice, collaboration, empowerment, trust and safety.
- The geographical reach of our programme, increasing support in more key neighbourhoods.

## We will:

## Continue

- To work through community groups to support our customers via funding, advice and employee volunteering time, to help them to realise their ambitions.
- To review and update our approach to communications, creating a plan to increase opportunities for community voices to be heard.

## Engage

- Community groups, customers and staff through improved communications and processes to make it simple to understand and access our funding and bring our story together under one umbrella.
- More effectively with external funding opportunities to increase social value for our communities through including charitable grants, our building contractors and supplier network allowing more space to innovate and trial new initiatives.



# Our approach to Community Investment

## How we work

- We directly invest around £1.4 million each year through funding and support to community groups and organisations that support our customers. We aim to attract £1 of external investment for every £1 that we directly invest. External investment comes through local charitable funds, national grants for example Lottery Funding through Sport England, and social value from our building contractor and supplier network.
- We aspire for our investment to be community-led and sustainable, to build community capacity and not dependency. Our approach is based on the model of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). This means we believe that everyone is an asset, with skills, aspirations and abilities and that by building relationships in communities, these become stronger and better connected.
- We recognise that an integral part of community development is consistency, relationships and trust, and that all of these take time. Therefore, we aim to support people in the ways that they want to be supported, shaping projects with long-term and reliable support. This helps us to build trust and foster meaningful relationships.



Gascoyne digital project, Hackney

- We work flexibly to respond to changing needs in communities, our business, Government and regulators. Customer involvement is key, we seek out and plan regular opportunities for customers to influence our approach to investment in their community.
- We value local relationships and work collaboratively to create cohesion and empowerment in the community. We work with trusted community partners (charitable groups) to draw on their expertise, harness collective support and improve connections to existing local services and support.

**“We often have ideas but nowhere to go with them. Sanctuary came to us without an agenda and helped us to deliver our own”**

**Sam Weaver**

- Chair of STAR Community Organisers in Barne Barton, Plymouth

# “You can’t know what a community needs, until they first know what they have”

**Cormac Russell**

- Managing Director of Nurture Development, the leading Asset-Based Community Development organisation in Europe

- We work with people in a way that promotes core values such as respect, dignity, equality and independence. We work strategically with the local authorities and other statutory organisations to align our work for maximum benefit to communities.
- Our role in communities varies across the country. Reviewing our role is key, we expect it to change over time to respond to each community, our business and resources.
- We have a central team in place that oversees our community investment programme across Sanctuary. The programme encompasses the investments that we make in communities which are over and above our responsibilities as a social landlord and support provider. This includes cash, time, materials and resources.
- In key locations where we have a large density of customers, we have community investment experts based locally who work with and are part of the fabric of the community. This localised approach helps us to map local assets, charitable groups, community networks, services, aspirations and opportunities. This helps us to play a flexible role and channel investment considerately.



^  
Get on Track initiative in Hartlepool  
with Dame Kelly Holmes Trust

- We offer grant funding and guidance to community groups and charities. We assess all requests for funding to ensure that the motivation, aims and intended impacts complement our strategy. We ensure that investments will benefit our customers. Where appropriate, we can advise on alternative grants and support.
- We evaluate the impact of our investments in collaboration with our partners, to expand our learning, build on success, influence change and prioritise future funding.
- The learning and expertise that we gain enables community investment to act as an insight and expertise hub which supports decision making, partnership building and thought leadership.



# A story

## - building resilience and connection

### The Crafty Fox

The Crafty Fox is a grass roots initiative building connection and resilience in Paignton. Through a space in the heart of the community, residents can access advice, guidance and support or simply connect with each other. There are many demands on the service and volunteers work hard to develop their services to meet these needs.

The initiative was born out of conversations with local residents looking for a suitable and safe community space. Alongside the offer of tea, cake and a chat, the group run free activities including a book club, a baking circle, employability workshops, benefit advice and access to telephones and computers.

The group has very successfully grown the capacity and confidence of the volunteers. Relationships have been developed and a strong network has been built, helping to expand support for young people and create a safe space for education and mental health support.

We have worked with the people behind The Crafty Fox on their journey and our support has evolved with them. Along the way we have given advice, support and funding including helping to access a little used office space as a hub.

The Crafty Fox have many stories to tell which can be found at - <https://www.facebook.com/craftyfoxcafe>



◀ Crafty Fox café and community hub, Paignton



## How we prioritise our activity



## How we tell our story

- We will use stories to build respect for and a deeper understanding of our communities, of their challenges and talents
- We will listen more and communicate more clearly, creatively and frequently
- We will help people to tell their own story, creating greater opportunities to share community voices
- We will help our community partners to share their stories and expertise more widely including with our employees, key stakeholders and the media
- We will use multiple considered communication channels to reach people in the ways that suit them



Gascoyne digital project

“Nothing about us, without us, is for us”

Poverty Truth Community

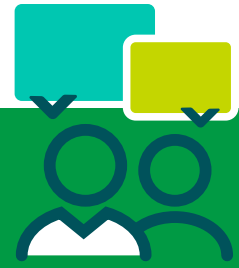
- A movement for change led by people experiencing poverty



Resident Laura Whittington and son, Archie

“It is important that communities are empowered to decide how best to utilise funding and direct it to where can be of most use. Who better to decide on what they need than those who have the need?”

Resident in Cumbernauld, North Lanarkshire



# A story

- building resilience and connection



← Ignite Imaginations Reimagine project, Sheffield

## Ignite Imaginations

Ignite Imaginations Reimagine project aimed to offer people in Shiregreen, Sheffield, the chance to talk about how the events of the last year affected them and how they can reconnect with their community. By talking to residents they were able to explore their hopes and dreams for the coming year, helping local people to develop ideas and design future initiatives for the community.

Ignite Imaginations is an arts charity using art to start conversations with people about how they feel and what they want. Reimagine, a Lottery funded project, set out to offer local communities a chance to talk about their experiences during lockdown through workshops with artists.

Ignite created a large doorway along a regularly walked route. The outer frame was covered in pictures drawn by school children as well as photographs from a competition which they ran in Shiregreen.

A video of the project can be viewed here - <https://youtu.be/Atu5Z1yJN-A>



In a time where lots of people aren't excited about much, it's nice to see people excited and happy

↑ Ignite Imaginations Reimagine project, Sheffield

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# Sanctuary

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Registered office: Sanctuary House, Chamber Court, Castle Street, Worcester, WR1 3ZQ  
Registered as a provider of social housing with the Regulator of Social Housing No. L0247  
Registered Society No. 19059R

Published September 2021