

# 2022-2023

## Environmental, Social and Governance Report





## Introduction

Welcome to our second Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) report, covering the financial year ending 31 March 2023. This report sets out our ESG performance over the last 12 months against the themes and standards within the sector wide ESG Standard – the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing (SRS). ESG provides us with a framework to understand, manage and demonstrate the impact we have on people and the environment. It helps to demonstrate to our customers, colleagues and stakeholders that our work at Saha, the management and development of social housing, primarily for vulnerable single people, across our Lifehouses, our supported services, our older people's schemes and general needs accommodation, is naturally aligned to the themes of ESG.

## About us

Saha is an exempt charity and registered provider of supported housing and support services across England. The Association is registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 (Registration Number 15210R) and is also registered with the Regulator of Social Housing (Registration Number LH 2429). Motivated by our parent organisation, The Salvation Army, our mission is to provide those most in need with safe, affordable homes and support to enable them to thrive. We invest in people to help them lead fulfilled lives in a safe place. Our mission is 'Transforming Lives' by providing solutions to homelessness and enabling residents to develop their own potential.

## Our values

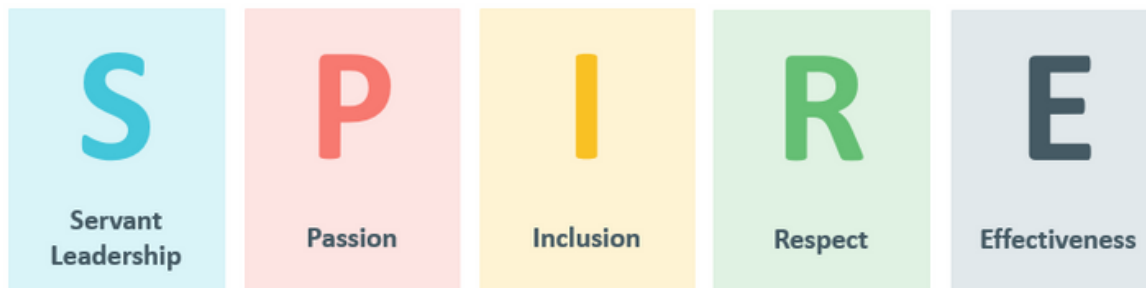
**Servant Leadership** We help people thrive, we set high benchmarks with an encouraging and supportive leadership style

**Passion** We love our work, we invest in the lives of residents and fight to do better for them

**Inclusion** This is a team effort, we provide an environment where everyone has a sense of belonging and feels respected and valued

**Respect** We show respect for all, we create a place where residents, colleagues and partners are all encouraged to contribute

**Effectiveness** We find a way, we deliver meaningful change and are committed to achieving our objective



# Our 2022 – 2025 Strategic Objectives

Saha's Corporate Strategy 2022-25 highlights the organisation's key strategic priorities. At the heart of our Delivery Plan is our commitment to Transform Lives, through the provision of high quality accommodation and tailored Support Services. The Strategy is built upon four pillars – Practice, Places, People, Pounds and our strategic focus therefore will focus on further enhancing:

**Our Practices** - Building for and serving customers

**Our Places** - Investing in decent, safe, and affordable homes

**Our People** - Being an employer of choice

**Our Pounds** - Achieving value for money and financial resilience



## About environmental, social, governance reporting

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



The Sustainability Reporting Standard (SRS) for Social Housing is the sector's framework for housing providers to measure and report their environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance in a consistent, comparable and transparent way. The voluntary standard was developed in partnership with housing associations, professional advisors and impact investment specialists and allows housing associations to demonstrate that they are in line with best practice industry standards comparable across their peer group. The themes within the Standard align with the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals.

We will continue to focus our efforts on improving ESG performance and we will publish annually our ESG performance, including our targets that we aim to achieve across the themes of the standard.

# ESG Achievements



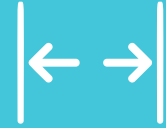
£1.25m  
improving energy  
efficiency



95%  
decent homes



73.86%  
homes EPC C or better



15.58%  
gender pay gap



239  
window and door  
installations



Together 4 Residents  
oversight and  
scrutiny



Saha pays the  
National Living Wage



75%  
planned resettlement



37%  
Female Board &  
Committee members



At least 5%  
social value weighting  
in procurement activities



8.87  
average sick days  
per employee



51% of residents who  
moved through  
supported housing  
gained employment



# Social

## Affordability and security

### Ensuring affordability of existing homes

Our focus is on delivering affordable and quality homes across our general needs and supported housing, enabling us to meet our mission of transforming lives.



### Working to reduce fuel poverty

We know that fuel poverty is impacted by rising energy bills, household income and the energy efficiency of our homes. Our Winter Advice Booklet for residents, launched in winter 2022, provided advice and information on how to maximise Government financial support, as well as signposting to eligible payments and potential sources of financial assistance. Advice was given on health and well-being, tips to keep warm in winter and to maximise fuel economy, in addition to providing details of local sources of support and assistance, such as food banks and warm rooms, which residents can access.

| Property Type                  | General Needs<br>Average Weekly<br>Rent<br>£ | Supported Housing<br>and<br>Older People<br>Services<br>Average Weekly<br>Rent<br>£ |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Bed space (non self-contained) | 66.86  | 88.54   |
| Bedsit                         | 100.47                                       | 105.30  |
| 1 bedroom                      | 94.94  | 106.30  |
| 2 bedroom                      | 109.22                                       | 112.81  |
| 3 bedroom                      | 132.79                                       | 136.64  |
| 4 bedroom                      | 127.39                                       | -   |
| 5 bedroom                      | 176.44                                       | -   |

### Resident Support Fund

Alongside our dedicated Welfare Advice Team within our general needs services, we launched our Resident Support Fund in 2022. £20,000 was approved to support those residents in financial hardship.



## Building safety and quality

### Decent Homes

As at March 2023, 95% of Saha homes met the Decent Homes Standard. 94 properties were identified as not fully meeting the standard. These are prioritised for improvement within the 2023-24 planned works programme.



### Keeping residents safe in their homes

As at 31 March 2023, 89% of Saha homes had a Fire Risk Assessment with an expiry date of 12 months or more. 99.2% of our general needs (domestic) and 100% of our supported (commercial) homes had a compliant Gas Safety Certificate.



### Fire Safety

We have well established, cross departmental, Health and Safety and Fire Safety Working Groups. During 2022-23 there has been ongoing work to maintain fire safety in line with The Building Safety Act 2022 and The Fire Safety Regulations 2022. During the year, we have completed ten fully intrusive compartmentalisation fire surveys on our supported housing stock, with a further nine surveys commissioned for 2023-24.

### Damp and Mould

We have responded proactively to ensure we meet regulatory requirements around damp and mould. During the year we have developed a standalone policy, setting out how we will meet our obligations as a landlord and provide assurances that damp and mould safety is appropriately managed. Our policy sets out our processes and practices for dealing with incidents of damp and mould with clear timescales in place. We have reviewed our repairs data in relation to damp and mould and undertaken surveys in those schemes identified as being potentially high risk, with any associated works being undertaken.



## Resident Voice

### Holding us to account for the services they receive

Our dedicated Customer Insight Team work to improve engagement and communication with residents, making sure we understand their priorities. During the year, we commissioned Acuity to carry out our annual resident satisfaction survey across our general needs, older people, supported and agency managed services.

We know we have work to do to improve these levels of satisfaction and are committed to listening to our residents and improving the services we provide. Feeding directly into our Customer Strategy Action Plan, the 2022-23 survey results below, provide us with important regional and tenure-based satisfaction levels on which to focus our improvement plans for the forthcoming year.

Dashwood House residents and support team dedicated to social action through volunteering on Mitzvah Day



74%  
overall  
satisfaction

62%  
satisfaction with  
repairs

75%  
satisfaction home  
well maintained

63%  
satisfaction with  
complaint  
handling

64%  
satisfaction  
listening to  
tenant views

80%  
agreement being  
treated fairly and  
with respect

67%  
satisfaction in  
dealing with ASB

80%  
**agreement  
making positive  
contribution**

77%  
satisfaction with  
quality of home

## A resident focused approach to providing and improving services



Residents are directly represented within our governance structure with two resident members on our Operations Committee. We also have a fully resident-resourced Together 4 Residents (T4R) Scrutiny Panel, who have continued with their scrutiny of Saha services, co-regulating our compliance with the Regulatory Standards.

During the year the T4R panel undertook Scrutiny Review Training with tenant engagement experts TPAS. This helped to equip them with the skills and knowledge to provide a strategic resident perspective when reviewing our approach to Service Charge Setting and the role of the Neighbourhood Manager.

T4R will continue to provide a critical resident insight into helping Saha improve our services. At their recent AGM, repairs and planned maintenance, neighbourhood and communities and customer services, were agreed as focus areas for next year.

### Striving to achieve best practice in complaint handling

In 2022–23, we had one Housing Ombudsman determination upheld and we are committed to improving the time it takes us to respond to complaints.

We continue to take valuable learning from complaints, to improve our complaints handling and service provision. In response to feedback, we have provided all dedicated Complaints Officers with Customer Friendly Writing Training to improve the quality of communication to our residents. The T4R Panel have undertaken resident scrutiny in those areas of dissatisfaction that have featured to a stronger degree in the complaints we have received. In addition, we have restructured our Customer Service Centre Teams to deliver a right first time response to customer enquiries.



## Resident Support

### Offering quality support and resettlement pathways, leading to improved outcomes for Saha residents



#### The Cowan Fund for Personal Development

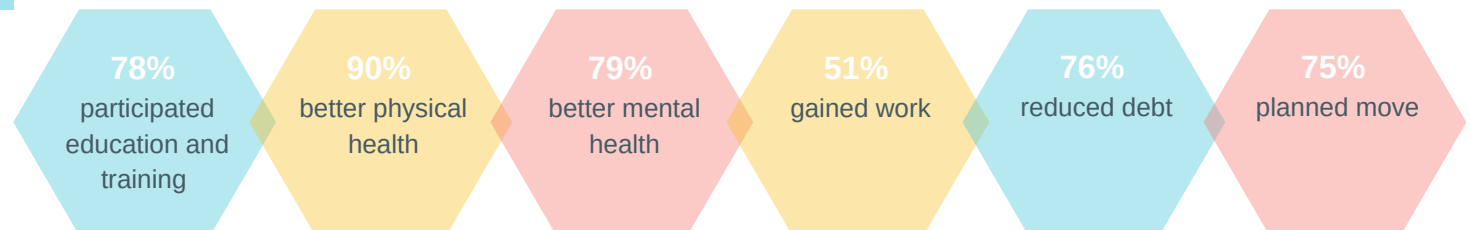
Each year Andrew Cowan, Partner and Head of Social Housing at Devonshires Solicitors, donates and raises funds to support our residents through the “Cowan Fund for Personal Development”. This provides much needed financial support towards costs associated with education, training and employment opportunities that otherwise could present as barriers on their personal development journey.

One of the Dashwood House residents arrived into the UK Immigration System three years ago from Vietnam as a victim of human trafficking. She was granted her refugee status in July 2022 and was keen to start her education. The Cowan Fund was able to support a Student Starter Kit, Uniform and Locker for the Hair and Beauty Course which she started in September 2022 at West London College.

#### Resident impact metrics

Our approach when delivering services is based on the principles of inclusive practice, psychologically informed environments and is underpinned by trauma informed care. This year, and continuing into next, all our front line colleagues will have received training in trauma informed practice, equipping them with the resilience to work alongside residents with complex needs.

Tracking the outcomes achieved by those residents who journey through our accredited foyers and specialist supported housing services, enables us to demonstrate the significant positive impact that our transforming lives activities have on residents' health, wellbeing and personal development. Of all residents moving on from our supported housing services in 2022-23, the following outcomes were reported:



## Working in partnership with The Salvation Army

During the year, over 20 residents from our Braintree Foyer have benefited from volunteering opportunities with the local Salvation Army Recycling and Donation Centre. Residents have undertaken hours of volunteering activity, working with The Salvation Army for the benefit of the wider community. Supporting with house clearances, furniture upcycling and furniture deliveries, residents have been able to support this valuable community resource.

The Salvation Army play a central role in the successful resettlement pathway of residents living in the Foyer, supporting them with affordable access to essential furniture items when they gain independent accommodation, building employability skills, strengthening community networks and reducing social isolation.



## Placemaking

### Enhancing our green spaces and connecting our residents to nature

We want to make a positive difference to the communities we serve. We improve green spaces across our neighbourhoods and create community gardens as positive wellbeing spaces within our supported housing services. Enhancing these spaces directly with residents, and working on planting and growing initiatives, promotes the importance of biodiversity within their homes now, and in the future.





# Environmental



## Climate Change

We know, as a national landlord, we have a part to play in ensuring our communities benefit from energy efficiency and a greener environment that zero carbon homes will bring.

## Distribution of energy efficiency (EPC) ratings in our existing homes

| %<br>of homes<br>EPC rating<br>A | %<br>of homes<br>EPC rating<br>B | %<br>of homes<br>EPC rating<br>C | %<br>of homes<br>EPC rating<br>D | %<br>of homes<br>EPC rating<br>E | %<br>of homes<br>EPC rating<br>F |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 0.16%                            | 4.70%                            | 69.00%                           | 22.03%                           | 3.61%                            | 0.49%                            |

73.86% of our eligible homes are already at EPC grade C and above. Of those below C, the majority are at EPC grade D.

Within our current and future investment programme, upgrades to windows, doors and heating systems will all have a positive impact on energy efficiency ratings.

## A proactive approach to energy efficiency

During the year, we have invested in a new housing management system, Rubixx, which is due to go live in July 2023. This system includes software called SAVA, which will enable us to analyse and model future energy-related works to ensure we maximise our return on investment to improve the energy efficiency of our homes.

The replacement of key components is a fundamental part of the energy efficiency of our homes. Over the year we have been committed to ensuring that all plant room boiler replacements have included the installation of more efficient boiler and pump systems.





A feasibility study into the installation of solar panels at Braintree Foyer, a Service providing accommodation with support to people aged 18-35, commenced in early 2023. One of the residents felt passionately that the Service could benefit from improved energy efficiency measures, and made a suggestion that Saha consider the installation of a solar PV system on the roof the building. Work is currently ongoing to investigate the potential for taking this forward as a pilot during 2023-24. Should this work be undertaken it will positively impact the EPC rating of the building.



## Ecology

### Promoting biodiversity and minimising the impact that our activities have on the environment

Residents are keen to become more environmentally responsible and to reduce the impact that they have as individuals on the planet. We work collaboratively with others in our local communities to deliver these outcomes. Taking part in the annual Great British Beach Clean, residents in our mental health service in Middlesbrough headed to the coast and worked with volunteers in their quest to clear the local beaches of litter.



# Governance



## Our charitable purpose

We are a charitable provider of Social Housing, reinvesting our surplus into improving our homes, providing new homes and investing in people and communities to realise our vision and mission of transforming lives.

## Our Code of Governance

We have adopted the National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020 and are working to publish a statement of compliance with our annual accounts 2022–23.

## Our regulatory grading

We are registered with the Regulator of Social Housing. Our most recent viability and governance regulatory grading is G2/V2 (Governance / Financial Viability) published in May 2023.

## Monitoring Board effectiveness

Subsequent to a comprehensive independent review of the Board and Committees' effectiveness in early 2022, supported by HQN, a follow up review to assess the progress of the resultant governance improvement plan was conducted during autumn 2022. This review provided assurance to Board and third party stakeholders that the governance improvement plan had been fully delivered.

## Managing organisational risks

Our Board is responsible for setting the organisation's appetite and direction for risk management. Our Board-approved Risk Management Framework was most recently reviewed and updated in November 2022. The Board has ownership of the strategic risk register which is reviewed each quarter at Audit and Risk Committee and Board meetings. Audit and Risk Committee obtains external assurance that robust risk management arrangements are in place, as well as identifying new and emerging risks and ensuring that appropriate mitigation is planned and taken.

At an organisational level, our Leadership Team, regularly review the risk register, with an added focus on horizon scanning and consideration of emerging risks. This ensures a collaborative approach to identifying the impact of risk on performance and any additional controls and mitigations.

## Our external audit partner

Our current external auditors, Grant Thornton, have been in place for six years having been appointed in 2016. In line with good practice we will be reviewing our external auditor arrangements during the 2023-24 financial year.



## Board and trustees

### The demographics of our Board and Committees

We recognise that a diverse governance structure promotes stronger performance, both organisationally and on behalf of our residents. When recruiting new members we are conscious of balancing the need for the skills and experience required to perform the respective role with our ambition to proactively attract a diverse range of candidates.

Of all Board and Committee members, 37.5% are female and 25% are from ethnic minority groups.

### Membership of our Board and Executive Management Team

This year has seen significant changes within our Board and Committee Structure. In September 2022 a new permanent Board Chair was appointed following a period during which the Chair position was filled on an interim basis. Also during the year we have strengthened our Board with the addition of two new members who bring specific skills and high level assurance around the areas of housing management and strategic HR. These appointments were made in line with our Board succession planning, as two members have retired within the period and a further member is due to retire in the coming year.

Following the retirement of our Chief Executive in August 2022, the Executive Director of Corporate Services, Lynne Shea, was appointed Interim Chief Executive. A robust and competitive recruitment process to the permanent position concluded in May 2023 with Lynne being appointed to the role.

### Audit and Risk Committee

Of the four members of the Audit and Risk Committee, three are Board members and one is an independent Committee member.

### People and Organisational Development Committee

Amongst its other responsibilities, Board delegates oversight of a number of areas to the People and Organisational Development Committee. These include Board succession planning, and oversight of the People Strategy and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

### People and Organisational Development Committee

Saha is committed to providing safe homes and services which meet a decent standard of quality, whilst complying with all relevant regulatory standards. To support our Board with their oversight of performance in these key areas, we have implemented a new Operations Committee which comprises Board members, independent members and two resident members. The two independent members of the Committee bring extensive experience in the areas of housing and asset management.



## Conflicts of interest at Board and Committee level

In line with our Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interests Policy, all Board and Committee members are required to complete an annual declaration of interests and to provide updates during the year in the event that their circumstances change.

An annual report of declarations of interest is received by the Board. Where relevant, declarations of interest are also made verbally at the start of every Board and Committee meeting for the matters to be discussed and are recorded in the minutes. Where there is a conflict of interests, members may be excluded from voting, asked to remove themselves from the meeting whilst relevant items are discussed or, where necessary, may be asked to resign their Board or Committee member position.

## Board and Committee member training and development

We are committed to ensuring that our Board and Committees comprise an appropriate level of skills, knowledge and experience to deliver our corporate strategy and mission to transform lives.

All Board and Committee members are subject to individual and collective annual appraisals, and, at least bi-annually, a robust, externally facilitated appraisal process is conducted. The results of the appraisals, along with other needs identified during the year, contribute to the annual Board and Committee learning and development plan which is monitored by the People and Organisational Development Committee.





# Investing in People

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

We believe that EDI is integral to a successful place of work and, as a result of this, our employees and residents come from differing backgrounds, bringing with them a diversity of viewpoints, beliefs, attitudes, and approaches which enrich our mission of 'Transforming Lives'. This year we launched our EDI Strategy that sets our approach, provides a framework and outlines our commitments for the next three years. We will report against these commitments each year.

## Strategic Objectives

- Embed a strong and visible culture, based on the principles of EDI, into all we do at Saha
- Obtain and use EDI data to provide insight, identify areas for improvement and monitor progress, performance and satisfaction across the organisation
- Attract and retain a diverse workforce and Board that can support and represent the resident communities we serve



## Dedicated to reducing the Gender pay gap

Our mean gender pay gap at April 2023 was 15.58 %, an improvement of 2.96 % on the previous year. Our People Strategy puts in place actions to work towards reducing this further. Our EDI Strategy and associated action plan commits Saha to conducting an Ethnicity Pay Gap analysis from 2024.





# Supporting staff health and wellbeing

## Hybrid working

We are a geographically dispersed organisation and we want to minimise the impact that our operations have on the environment. 2022 saw the adoption of new ways of working in our hybrid approach. This allowed us to provide more flexible, technology enabled teams, who can work more efficiently to deliver excellent services whilst reducing the need for travel and improving the relationship between work and home life. The year ahead will see the decommissioning of our London office alongside investment in our Customer Service Centre in Bolton.



## Investing in talent

A Management Conference in January 2023 launched the new Saha Leadership framework, creating a standard and setting out expectations of the management and leadership qualities required in our Managers. The subsequent roll out of a Management Development Programme, investing in our people to ensure behaviours and qualities are aligned to our values and culture, aims to positively impact on our employee experience of Saha.

## Saha commitment to the Living Wage

Saha maintained its status of being a UK Living Wage employer in addition to awarding a 7% pay increase for all colleagues in April 2023.

During the year, we also undertook a full pay and benefits review introducing a new range of employee benefits including Retention Payments, Long Service Awards, Employee Recognition Awards and Birthday Day Off.

## Staff sickness

The average number of sick days taken per employee during 2022-23, was **8.87 days**. We have a range of health and wellbeing initiatives including occupational health support and Westfield Health subscriptions. We also have a number of fully qualified mental health first aiders, who can provide a support service to colleagues who are experiencing mental ill health or distress. We have a continued focus on the health and wellbeing of our employees, and 2023 will see the launch of our new Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

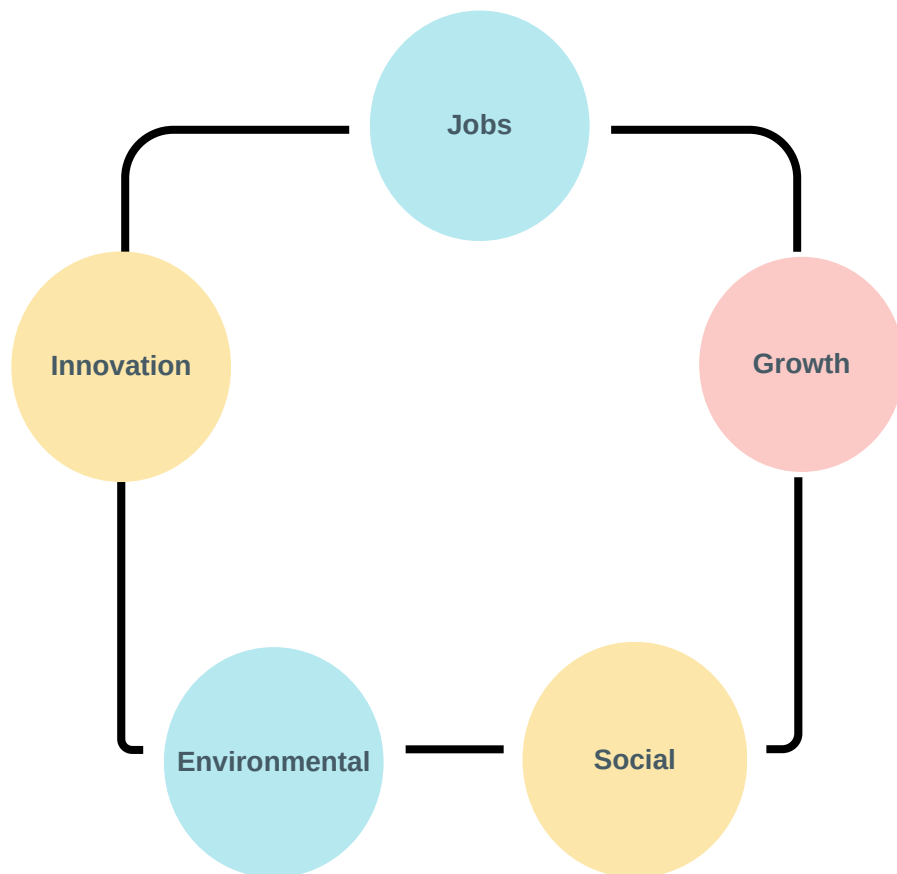


# Supply Chain

## A commitment to creating social value

We know it is important to actively promote and deliver social value through our contracting. We always consider how social value can be determined including the wider social, economic and environmental benefits through our procurement processes as well as the delivery or commissioning of goods, works and services.

To improve the social value delivery of our supply chain, and to also improve our own social value record when bidding for new contracts, we are developing a Social Value Policy that will identify the key social value themes and aims that we will commit to.



In consultation with our Senior Management Team, we have identified 20 targets under our key themes which will be used in tenders as options for bidders to select and forming contract KPIs. We are now working on identifying how we will measure these targets in order to report during 2023-24.





saha  
Transforming Lives

### **Servant Leadership**

*We help people thrive*  
We set high benchmarks and lift those around us

### **Passion**

*We love what we do*  
We invest in the lives of residents and fight to do better for them

### **Inclusion**

*We work as #SahaOneTeam*  
We work closely with residents, the Salvation Army, partners and other stakeholders

### **Respect**

*We embrace contributions*  
We welcome new people, new ideas and new approaches

### **Effectiveness**

*We find a way*  
We face adversity head on, identify solutions and deliver meaningful change.

**#SahaOneTeam : living our values**

