

Making an Impact

A summary of our work in 2023



**NATIONAL
HOUSING
FEDERATION**

Our year in numbers

In 2023 we championed housing associations with our public and political influencing work, and enabled sector collaboration across a range of member events and meetings.

8

We attended 8 government roundtables (5 hosted by government, 3 hosted by us).

Our media stories were featured in almost every national newspaper, including The Times, The Sun, The Daily Mail, The Mirror, The Metro, and The Independent.

1,300

In total, we were mentioned over 1,300 times in broadcast media, including Sky News, Channel 4 News and the BBC.

117

We ran 117 national member groups and network meetings, and 45 regional forums for senior leaders.

33

We hosted 33 webinars on the biggest issues affecting our sector.

3,000

We were mentioned over 3,000 times in online media across national trade and regional publications.

50

We had over 50 mentions in parliament.

73

We held 73 member roundtables to gather specific insight to inform decision making.

4,500

In total, our member meetings and events were attended by over 4,500 people.

30

Our teams met with over 30 senior politicians.

1.1m

We reached 1.1 million people on Twitter/X, up 45% from 2022.

Reflections from our Chief Executive



The National Housing Federation (NHF) exists to support you, our housing association members. Just as you use your resources to create the best possible outcomes for your communities, we use ours to create the best possible outcomes for you and your operating environment. In line with our business strategy, we do this by:

- **Supporting our members to deliver their social purpose.**
- **Building the conditions and culture for housing associations to deliver.**
- **Being the best trade body we can be.**

This year marked my fifth year as the NHF's Chief Executive and I am still motivated every day by seeing your social purpose in action. Across 2023 I met many members and saw a wide range of incredible homes, services and resident-focused initiatives.

Seeing this work makes it easy to be your champion. We had some very successful media stories and political engagement in 2023 that ensured your work is increasingly recognised by the public and politicians. Housing is now polling as a top political issue, our calls for a long-term plan are being echoed by political commentators, and both the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and the Shadow Secretary of State, have publicly supported housing associations.

“We’ve also worked hard to gain recognition for the significant financial pressure housing associations face right now.”

We’ve also worked hard to gain recognition for the significant financial pressure housing associations face right now. We know this is a top challenge for the sector, which is why we prioritised it in every political conversation across 2023. As a result, more politicians are now referring to the sector’s challenges, and calling for more support.

This report shares details on this and further activity in 2023. These are just our key highlights – you have your own personal point of contact at the NHF (see the end of this report) and I encourage you to contact them if you ever have any questions.

With all our work, we focus on where we can add most value, and how we can keep our operations efficient. This meant that in 2023 our annual fee change was below inflation.

Our goal is to add value to your organisation, and the whole sector. A sector that makes a massive contribution to our national economy and society, as well as to millions of individual families on a daily basis. We’re a sector that is united by a shared purpose and can speak with one voice. We are a sector that navigates change and disruption together. We are a sector that wants to learn, grow and support its fellow members.

I am proud of our sector. The work you do is needed by communities more than ever and I am excited to see what we can do next, together.

Kate Henderson
Chief Executive, NHF

Supporting our members to deliver their social purpose

In the public eye

In 2023 we supported our members to deliver their social purpose by securing a wide range of public announcements, including:

- **Changes to the government's Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) that unlock more grant funding**, with AHP funding now available for replacing existing homes as part of estate regeneration.
- **Amendments to the Infrastructure Levy that protect the delivery of new affordable housing**. We overturned plans that would have changed Section 106 agreements, putting at risk a system that delivers almost 50% of all new affordable housing.
- **More funding for energy efficiency measures, including an additional £1.25bn for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund**, £485m for the Green Heat Network Fund and £45m for the Heat Network Efficiency Scheme.

“Viability matters, but so do our values and purpose, and the NHF has helped us to deliver both”

– Chair, Together Housing

“We value the support that the NHF offers its smaller members, ensuring it works for the sector as a whole”

– Chief Executive, PCHA

We also:

- **Gained recognition for the work housing associations are doing to improve quality and services** by publishing a Better Social Housing Review progress report that has been well received by the public and politicians.
- **Completed a comprehensive consultation exercise on regulatory changes** to ensure our members' voices were heard – across 2023 **we spoke to almost 1,500 different people** from over 400 organisations through webinars, networks, roundtables and individual meetings.
- **Became a leading voice on homelessness**, publicly calling to protect homelessness services from decommissioning and joining key government roundtables.

Gaining recognition for the sector's financial pressures

The social purpose driving our sector is very strong, but there is a limit to what it can achieve without new funding. We know that both the scale of work required, and the increasing costs to complete that work, are compounding to put the sector under significant financial pressure. This was a key message we landed in 2023.

Our team meets with government officials on an almost-daily basis to discuss a range of issues. As well as high profile meetings between our chief executive and MPs, including Secretaries of State and Ministers, our policy team has regular meetings with officials across the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Department (DLUHC), the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and Special Advisors at Number 10.

No matter what the topic, at every meeting we consistently made the point – our sector is under pressure.

Our credible voice and key relationships landed this point. As well as public acknowledgement from the Secretary of State, Michael Gove, the government has acknowledged the sector's financial pressures in a range of consultations and policy announcements. **We ensured government understood the critical need for rent policy to be applied without intervention in 2023, which allowed housing associations to increase rents by up to CPI +1%.** This meant greater financial security for the sector at a time when many other regulated industries experienced ongoing intervention. As a result of this work, we've secured over £145m additional income for investment in homes and communities.

“Of the many highlights, the Better Social Housing Review stands out as a game changer that aligns so well with consumer regulation and reinforces the sector's core purpose...”

– Group Chief Executive, MSV Homes

“With such a complex housing ecosystem, the role that the NHF provides as its trade body is priceless and should not be underestimated”

– The Abbeyfield Society

“Housing associations, our partners in the AHP, are facing a variety of pressures. Not only do they have to maintain and improve housing stock that is reaching the end of its natural life; deal with damp and mould; improve building safety for residents; they also have to retrofit for energy efficiency. And recently, they have had to keep rents lower than they would ordinarily charge in order to help people with the cost of living.”

— Michael Gove, Secretary of State for DLUHC



Building the conditions and culture for housing associations to deliver

In the public eye

On top of responding to the critical issues affecting our sector, we look ahead to shape the future landscape so that housing associations can always deliver at a local and national level. We're a well-known and credible voice on housing issues, and use this voice to drive long-term change.

Some of the ways we did this in 2023 were:

- **Designing a year-long general election campaign with a simple but highly credible message – we need a long-term plan for housing.** We've rooted this campaign in strong evidence that's focused on outcomes and the importance of social housing.
- **Building the public's understanding of social housing through powerful media stories that show the human cost of the housing crisis.** Based on our research, we secured coverage across The Times, The Guardian, the BBC, and other services showing:
 - The scale of the housing crisis, by revealing that 310,000 children now live in overcrowded homes.
 - The consequences of inaction, by calculating that nearly five million households will live in unaffordable homes by 2030.
 - The impact across society, by showing that two in five older private renters struggle to afford food, heating or clothes.
- **Progressing our long-term programme on equality, diversity and inclusion** by publishing an updated national report on workforce diversity and using it to drive important conversations on diversity in our sector.

“The EDI data tool has been invaluable as it focused us to refresh our data collection... and focus on the important areas we need to improve on”

— CEO of Manningham Housing Association

“Our sector is making its voice heard from the press to Parliament, thanks to the work of the NHF”

— Onward Homes

Developing a long-term plan for housing

The NHF has a history of impactful general election campaigns, developed through years of policy work and strategic political engagement. In 2023 we started laying the groundwork for our most strategic campaign yet.

We know our sector has high ambitions, but that any future government will have strict fiscal rules, so we made the decision to move away from traditional campaigns that call for specific funding or policies. Instead, we turned our focus to the broken system – to the opportunity for long-term sustainable change.

Starting with robust and impactful evidence, commissioning research to support our influencing, we ran a series of meetings with key stakeholders to build relationships and introduce **our simple but effective call: we need a long-term plan for housing.**

“The collective approach, to which the NHF have been vital, allows for public awareness raising and impactful engagement with policy shapers within central and local government.”

– CEO of English Rural

“As a small, independent provider, NHF membership ensures we are well informed, and our unique voice is heard.”

– CEO, Tyne Housing

Early signs showed how effective this message was across the political spectrum, so we built energy and momentum behind our campaign through new research and high-profile media, capturing the attention of the public and housing teams during manifesto writing.

Within a matter of months, our calls were being repeated by political parties and commentators.

We now enter a general election year with a growing consensus that the next government should commit to a long-term plan, with housing associations positioned right alongside that plan.

“The NHF’s experience of working in other devolved regions and the sharing of what’s worked has enabled the devolved housing arrangements in all three Yorkshire regions to develop at a much faster pace than would have been possible had this support not been available”

– Chief Executive, Yorkshire Housing



“The government are ultimately responsible for the state of social housing in England and have a significant role to play in assisting social landlords to improve their stock and tackle the underlying causes of problems such as damp, mould and leaks”

– Matthew Pennycook, Shadow Housing Minister

Being the best trade body we can be

So far this report has outlined how we support our members to deliver their social purpose, and build the strongest conditions and culture possible for the sector. But this work couldn't happen unless the NHF was striving to be an effective and efficient trade body.

Our staff worked hard in 2023 to ensure the NHF ran as efficiently as possible, and provided the best possible service to members. Hear some highlights from our team:



“The results from our 2023 member survey showed that 91% of chief executives think the NHF’s strategic priorities are right, and we saw overall satisfaction increase by 4%”

– Kevin Garvey, Head of Member Relations



“2023 was the year we announced The Housing Community Summit – a new collaboration between the NHF and Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) to combine our expertise and influencing into one exceptional conference. This is something our members have really wanted to see and I can't wait to deliver it.”

– Chris Bancroft, Head of Events



“Every floor in our London office is now occupied for the first time since the pandemic, significantly increasing our rental income in 2023, which is being reinvested back into services for our members”

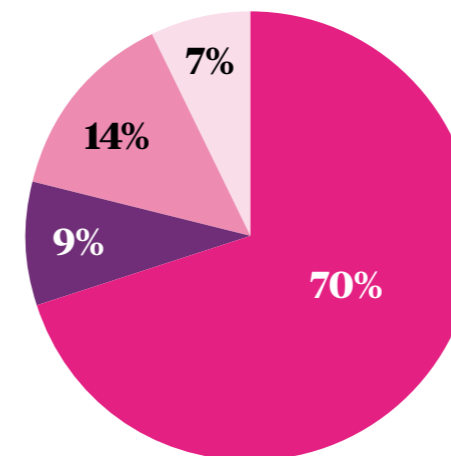
– Charles Kenneth, Head of Facilities



“In 2023 we connected our partners to over 260 NHF members, providing savings on a range of services from pensions and insurance, to IT services and property operations”

– Emma Robinson-Hodges, Head of Business Development

Our income and how we spend it



- Members fees
- Rental income
- Commercial income
- Other

Our income comes from the fees paid by our members, and revenue from our conferences, sponsorship and partnerships, and rental income from our London headquarters.

By generating commercial income and operating efficiently we're able to ensure annual member fee increases stay well below inflation, providing members with real-terms savings on our fees.

Most of our income is spent on our policy and influencing work. Largely our staff costs within our press, policy, research, external affairs and comms teams. We also spend a varied amount each year campaigning on behalf of the sector and commissioning research and reports from experts.

Our conferences and partnerships generate income that is reinvested back into our work. This includes funding our large programme of free events for members. On top of this, the sponsorship income we receive is used to offer lower ticket prices for NHF members. As with any organisation, part of our income is spent on keeping the NHF running, through the upkeep of our offices and business services teams like HR and finance.

“We try to keep our fees low, making sure any annual increases stay well below inflation – over the last ten years this has translated into a real-terms fee reduction of 28%”

– Jackie Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Business Services

After staff costs, the largest costs are the pension deficit recovery costs. We use our commercial income to contribute to our pension deficit, so that member fees are only spent on services that directly benefit your organisations.

You can read more detail in our 2022/23 financial review on our website.

Coming up in 2024

Members of our Leadership Team share highlights of what's coming up in 2024.



Rhys Moore, Executive Director of Public Impact

Positioning our sector as partners with the next government

Building on the work we've done in 2023, we'll gather increasing momentum throughout 2024 for the general election. Our goal is to ensure the next government understands our sector and sees how valuable we are as strategic partners in delivering a long-term plan for housing.

We'll amplify these calls through a series of **media stories, MP meetings, and continued engagement with Secretaries of State, Ministers and Officials**. We'll also post campaign packs to every housing association across the country to ensure our members have access to campaign materials that both amplify our sector's calls and support individual political engagement plans.

We will take full advantage of the opportunity a general election year presents – in 2024 we will unite and gain recognition for the importance of our sector's social purpose.



Alistair Smyth, Director of Policy and Research

Leading the sector through more significant change

2024 will be another big year as the new regulatory consumer standards come into effect. We also expect further consultations that will have significant implications for our sector. From the Decent Homes Standard and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard to the new system of regulatory oversight for supported housing, we'll work across government departments and our membership to ensure each consultation has a strong sector response.

We'll also take forward proactive initiatives of our own – including Knowing our Homes proposals, new supported housing research, policy proposals around new supply, and our continued programme of work taking forward the Better Social Housing Review action plan.

Across 2024 we'll navigate the changing policy landscape together.



“My goal as the NHF's chair is to support housing associations to make a difference. Through our committed board, and the NHF's talented staff, in 2024 we'll work together to influence, campaign, and engage on behalf of the sector, and be resilient to future challenges”

– Maggie Galliers, NHF Chair

The year of collaboration



Simon Nunn, Executive Director of Member Services

A big part of our role as the sector's membership body has been to connect the sector – supporting our members to collaborate and take collective action. In 2024 we take this to the next level with **The Housing Community Summit, a first-of-its kind collaboration with CIH** that will bring the sector together like never before in September 2024.

Through this, and our annual programme of networks, groups and forums, members will have more opportunities than ever before to share insights and form partnerships.

We are uniquely placed to connect our sector and this will be a priority across 2024.



Jackie Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Business Services

Planning our next business strategy

Our work planning cycle matches our financial planning cycle, from April to March, with a new overall business strategy produced every three years. Across 2024 **work will begin to shape our next business strategy**, which launches in April 2025.

We'll speak to staff, members and stakeholders outside our sector with different perspectives to shape the next three years of work, and **my team will make sure the NHF has the systems and long-term financial sustainability to deliver** work that has a lasting impact.

In 2024 we'll look ahead to 2028 and shape a positive future for our members.

Keep in touch

The NHF is the voice of England's housing associations.

Our housing association members provide homes for around six million people, and are driven by a social purpose: providing good quality housing that people can afford.

We deliver positive change for our members by understanding and anticipating the critical issues affecting their businesses and the sector.

To find out more about our work, and how you can get involved, get in touch with your local External Affairs Manager by contacting eam@housing.org.uk

Upcoming events

You'll also see us at our award-winning conferences taking place across 2024. To find out more about these ticketed conferences, and our other free member events, scan the QR code opposite.



Board Excellence in Housing 2024 1-2 February, Manchester

Customer Experience and Resident Engagement 2024 29 February, London

Housing Finance 2024 13-14 March, Liverpool

Affordable Home Ownership 2024 6 June, London

Housing Governance 2024 19 June, London

The Housing Community Summit 2024 9-10 September, Liverpool

Treasury in Housing 2024 10 October, London

Asset Management 2024 16-17 October, Leicester (TBC)

Audit and Risk 2024 13-14 November, Birmingham (TBC)

Leaseholder and Tenant Service Charges 26 November, London

National Smaller Housing Associations' Conference 4 December, Virtual