



Sigma Capital  
Group plc

# CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

**CSR REPORT 2020**

## Chairman Foreword

As I write this forward to our 2020 CSR report we will be nearly 8 months in to the Coronavirus pandemic which has touched us all, either directly or indirectly, and we find ourselves having to adjust to a different way of life. We are very much in this together, which is why, this year in particular, we have focussed our charitable strategy towards those organisations that are perhaps most relevant during these unprecedented times. Our online residents poll asked our customers to participate in how our donation of £100,000 was to be shared between Mind UK, The Trussell Trust, Women's Aid and Centrepont, whose invaluable services we decided to support. Our commitment to support local activities has continued throughout the year and over the following pages you can read about some great schools projects and wider community initiatives that it has been our pleasure to support.

There has been some adjustment this year to how we have undertaken our neighbourhood events. The Easter Egg hunt had to go online and socially distanced queuing for the ice-cream dash was the order of the day, but our belief that these events are core to the creation of communities is undimmed and it is with great pride that I read comments from customers such as Kelly and Charlie who are clearly passionate about being part of the Simple Life family, a family which now extends to over 2,500 households country wide.

As Simple Life grows, so does the importance of our approach to the rental experience for customers such as Kelly and Charlie, which is why we undertook a wide ranging study of the broader rental community during the year to better understand what renters do and don't want. The findings, which we have included here, are illuminating and will help to shape our strategies for the benefit of the Simple Life family into the future and on the subject of the future, we continue to explore a more sustainable approach to developing the communities we create. We have now delivered over 500 new homes which have been built off-site with modern methods of construction which bring with them not only great environmental benefits, but also social and economic benefits for those involved in their manufacture.

Our efforts to improve the services to our customers and to improve the environments in which they live is of the utmost importance to us and I hope you find the contents of our report of interest.

**Ian Suttcliffe,  
Chairman**



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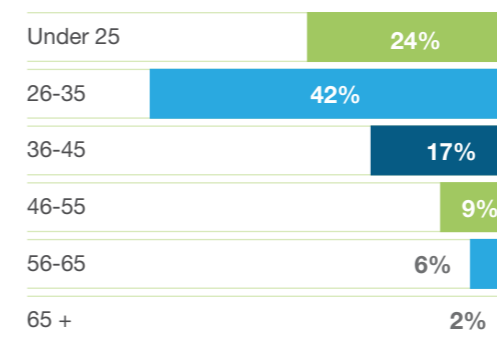


## Introduction

With support from our housebuilding partners, the government and investment, we're providing a higher standard of home and service within the rental market. We feel that renting a home is more than just bricks and mortar, but a lifestyle choice. Renting a home isn't just a product, it is a service and we, as a landlord take great responsibility in not only looking after our residents but our whole neighbourhood and the wider local communities too.

## Meet the residents

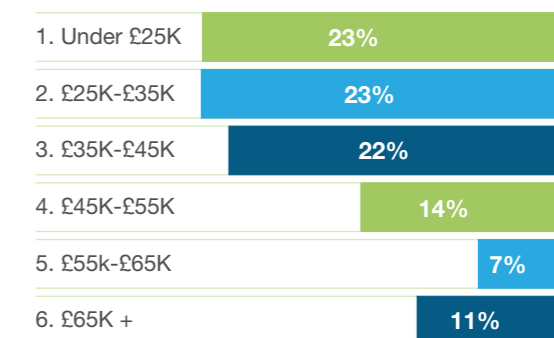
### 2020 Age Bracket %



#### Age Groupings

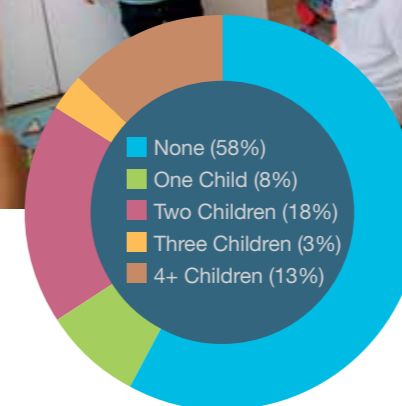
The % split by age of our renters appear quite consistent with last year. 26-35 age bracket still accounts for around 42% of our residents, which demonstrates our young family market. We can see a small increase in the under 25 bracket, and a small increase in renters aged 56+.

### 2020 Income Bracket %



#### Income Bracket

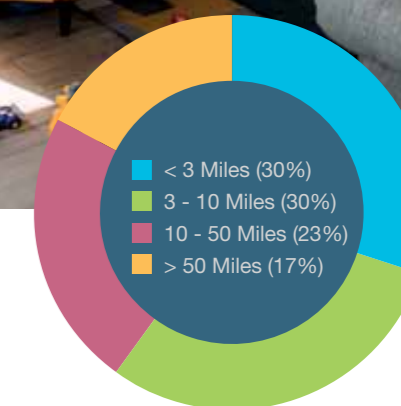
The household income brackets, again remain very consistent with last year's data. Around 54% accounts for residents with a household income between £35,000 per year (an increase of about 2%), and therefore around 46% of residents with a household income lower than £35,000. These statistics display the very diverse range of customers that our homes and locations appeal to.



### 2020 Child Brackets %

#### Tenancies with Children

In the last year, we can see an increase in applications without children (57.95%, compared with 43.11% last year). This could be attributed to the completion of new apartment schemes within the past 12 months. We can also see an increase of applications with 4+ children (only 7.19% last year, compared to 13.68% this year).



### 2020 Distance Travelled per Applicant Brackets %

#### Distanced Travelled

The data displaying distanced travelled from previous address is very evenly split between those living locally (28.21% moving from within 3 miles of our homes) and those coming from over 50 miles away (19.15%).

## Sigma Values

COLLABORATION  
 INTEGRITY  
 RESILIENCE  
 PASSIONATE ABOUT PEOPLE  
 INNOVATIVE

## Understanding today's rental market

**Sigma, as investment adviser to The PRS REIT plc and as one of the leading build-to-rent providers focused on family housing in the UK, has launched its private rental sector (PRS) market research report, which reveals the nation's behaviours and attitudes around renting.**

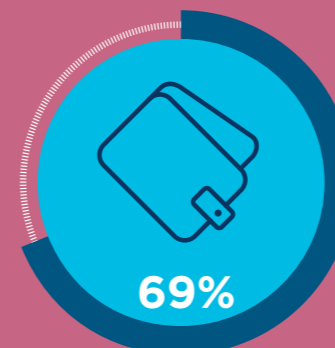
The Rental Experience: Setting the Standard, is based on in-depth qualitative and quantitative data collection concluding with a survey of 2,000 renters. The research reveals everything from who the modern day renter is, to what barriers they feel they face as renters, their reasons for renting and their experiences whilst renting.

This research was carried out on all renters across the country and is not representative of our own residents. Here are some key insights:



To view/download  
The Rental Experience:  
Setting the Standard  
go to [www.sigmacapital.co.uk/ress](http://www.sigmacapital.co.uk/ress)  
To listen to Sigma's market  
research podcast with EG  
visit [www.sigmacapital.co.uk/wrdw](http://www.sigmacapital.co.uk/wrdw)

## REASONS FOR RENTING



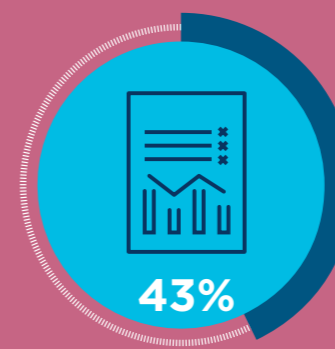
OF RENTERS AGREE THAT THEY ARE RENTING BECAUSE IT IS ALL THEY CAN AFFORD



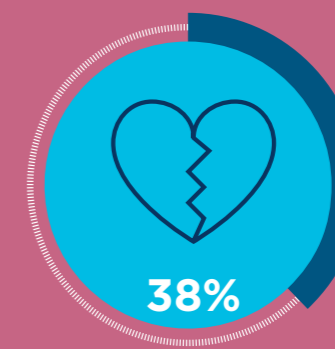
OF RENTERS AGREE THAT THEY CAN'T AFFORD TO BUY THE SIZE OF HOUSE THEY NEED



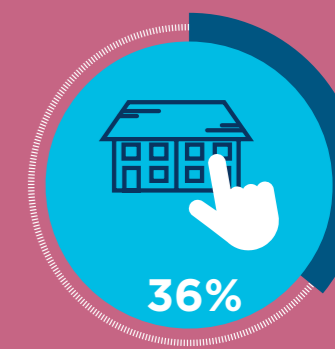
OF RENTERS AGREE THAT THEY ARE RENTING UNTIL THEY CAN AFFORD TO BUY



OF RENTERS AGREE THAT THEY CAN'T GET A MORTGAGE DUE TO THEIR CREDIT RATING OR INCOME



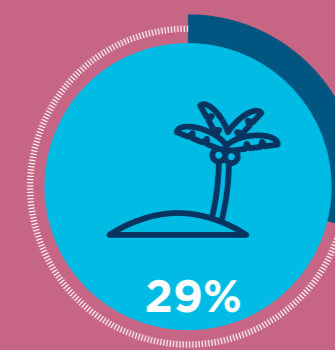
OF RENTERS AGREE THAT THEY ARE RENTING BECAUSE THEIR PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE CHANGED



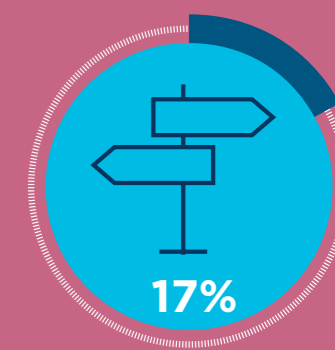
OF RENTERS AGREE THAT THEY LIKE THE FLEXIBILITY OF RENTING



OF RENTERS AGREE THAT THEY ARE NOT INTERESTED IN BUYING A HOUSE



OF RENTERS AGREE THAT RENTING HELPS TO FREE UP MONEY FOR OTHER THINGS



OF RENTERS AGREE THAT RENTING ALLOWS THEM TO GET TO KNOW AN AREA BETTER BEFORE BUYING

## WHO IS THE MODERN DAY RENTER?



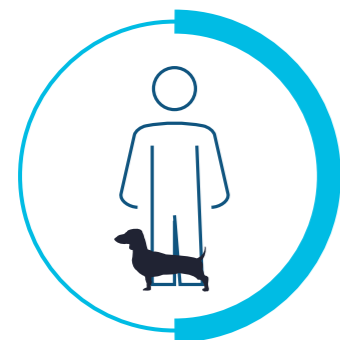
THE AVERAGE AGE OF THE RENTER IS 45



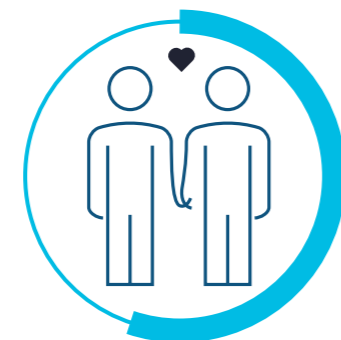
ON AVERAGE PEOPLE SPEND £661 PER MONTH ON THEIR RENT



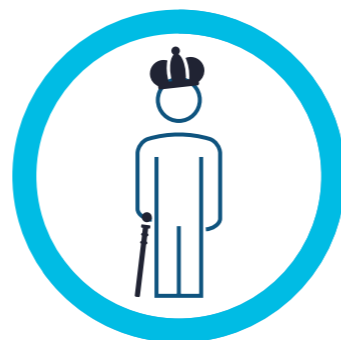
THE AVERAGE PRIVATE RENTER HAS BEEN RENTING FOR 7 YEARS



50% OF RENTERS HAVE PETS

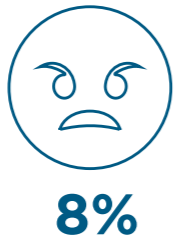


54% OF RENTERS LIVE WITH A PARTNER



RENTERS ARE AFFLUENT WITH OVER HALF CATEGORISING AS ABC1

ATTITUDES TO RENTING



OF RENTERS WOULD PREFER THE SECURITY OF A 2+ YEAR CONTRACT DURATION

Our research showed that almost half of renters (46%) are quite happy renting, while 24% are very happy, 22% are not very happy and 8% are not at all happy.

WHAT ARE THE PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF RENTING?



ACCESS TO DISPOSABLE INCOME



REDUCED FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



MINIMISING COST OF MAINTENANCE



LEVERAGE ON LOCATION & PROPERTY SIZE/TYPE

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO RENTING?



OF RENTERS WORRY THAT THEIR LANDLORD MIGHT DECIDE TO SELL



RENTING CAN SEEM EXPENSIVE AND INCREASINGLY SO



RESTRICTIONS OF WHAT IS ALLOWED IN RENTAL HOMES E.G. HANGING PICTURES AND DECORATING



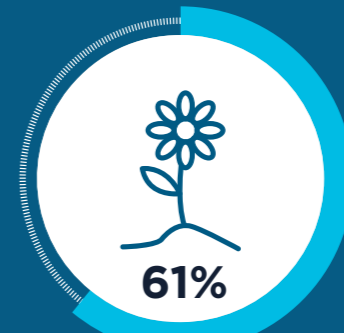
RENTING CAN BE SEEN AS DEAD MONEY



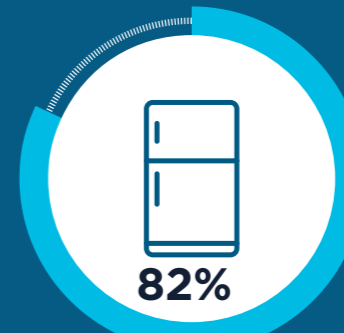
RENTAL SECTOR HAS A POOR SERVICE REPUTATION



WHAT WAS PERCEIVED AS HIGHLY IMPORTANT WHEN SEARCHING FOR A PROPERTY?



VIEW THE GARDEN AS BEING ONE OF THE REQUIREMENTS AT THE TOP OF THEIR LIST

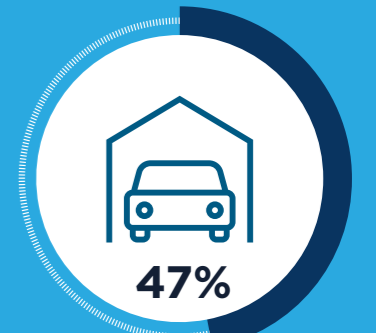


STATED A GOOD QUALITY KITCHEN WAS IMPORTANT

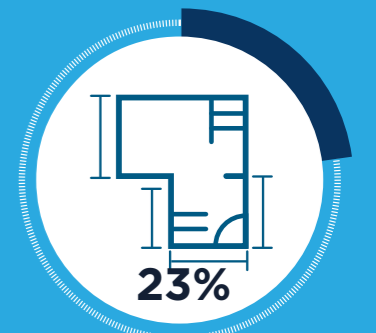


STATED THE PROPERTY LOCATION WAS IMPORTANT

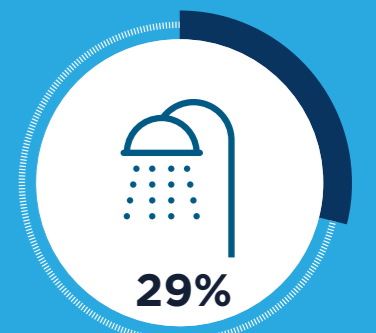
WHAT WAS PERCEIVED AS LESS IMPORTANT WHEN SEARCHING FOR A PROPERTY?



STATED THE GARAGE WASN'T IMPORTANT



WOULD OPT FOR AN OPEN PLAN KITCHEN, DINING AND LIVING AREA



STATED THAT HAVING AN EN-SUITE WAS IMPORTANT



## Creating an award winning build to rent brand

Our aim is to deliver a long term rental solution for our customers, which goes above and beyond the rental industry standards. The awards we have been shortlisted for and won over the course of the last 12 months is testament to the high quality product, service and partnerships we have created with our house builders and investors alike.

Property Management Awards - Build to Rent Provider of the Year 2019 **(Winner)**



INSIDE HOUSING AWARDS  
- Best Partnership 2019  
**(Shortlisted)**



INSIDER NORTH WEST RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY AWARDS  
- Social Impact Award 2020  
**(Shortlisted)**



PROPERTY WEEK RESI AWARDS  
- Landlord of the Year 2020  
**(Shortlisted - winner to be announced)**



YORKSHIRE INSIDER PROPERTY AWARDS  
- Public Private Partnership 2020  
- Large Development of the Year 2020  
**(Shortlisted for both - winner to be announced)**



NORTHERN MARKETING AWARDS - Property and Construction Campaign 2019  
**(Shortlisted)**



“MY SIMPLE LIFE STORY”

**CHARLIE SAY**

Charlie Say is at a pivotal and exciting time in his life – he’s about to get married and wanted to take the hassle out of his living arrangements, opting for a Simple Life home in Walkden, Salford.

**IT’S ALL ABOUT THE LOCATION!**

“One of the great things about living here is the location. Walkden is an up and coming part of Manchester where a lot of our friends have moved to recently. The centre is undergoing a lot of regeneration and there are plenty of new build homes being built in the area. We are so close to the train station meaning an easy commute for me and my spouse, who will be moving in after we get married.”

**AESTHETICALLY PLEASING...**

“Something else that we found attractive about Simple Life was how modern the apartments are. It’s above and beyond the rest of the properties we looked at. The décor and colour scheme is fresh and modern; perfect for relaxing after work in front of the TV!”

**COMMUNITY**

“The site itself has a nice vibrant community feel, it’s really fun to live in. There’s a good vibe about this apartment block in particular. We also have a Facebook group where everyone talks about the practical things, like bins, parking spaces and things like that which I find really helpful.”

**“I COULDN’T RECOMMEND SIMPLE LIFE AS A LANDLORD ANYMORE HIGHLY!”**

“Honestly, Simple Life are very caring landlords - you are a person to them, not just money in their books. I’m organising a wedding so I didn’t want the stress of buying a house at the same time and Simple Life make renting easy. It just makes sense at this stage of my life. They’re accessible and easy to talk to and I like that maintenance isn’t my problem, but if I do have any issues they are on-hand to fix them straight away.”

“When I first moved in on a Saturday, there was a problem with my toilet and the maintenance team were here on the Sunday to fix it, which is brilliant service.”



I COULDN’T RECOMMEND SIMPLE LIFE MORE; IN FACT, SOME OF MY FRIENDS ARE ALREADY RENTING SIMPLE LIFE PROPERTIES!



“MY SIMPLE LIFE STORY”

**KELLY WOOD**

Kelly Wood and her partner, daughter and family cat live in a three-bedroom Simple Life home in Telford. Kelly needed a home close to her daughter’s school and fell in love with the homes on the Silkin Green site and had to have one...

**LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT**

“A friend of ours had purchased a property on the site and as we had a look around, we fell in love and knew that we had to have one too.”

“What struck me was as a brand-new build, it was a blank canvas to make our own and much more spacious than anything that we’ve rented before.”

**DANCING IN THE KITCHEN**

“We spend most of our time in the family kitchen as it’s so big and airy. I can be cooking while my daughter is doing her homework or crafting – there’s usually glitter everywhere. We stick the radio on and there’s plenty of dancing around.”

“We love the Velux windows especially, and we have double doors that open out to the garden which feels like an extra room – everything is so big. Having all new appliances is brilliant – if anything breaks we know we don’t need to fork out thousands of pounds to fix it.”

“The front room is nice and cosy and now that the winter months are coming too, we have been spending a bit more time there but the kitchen is our favourite place to be.”

**GREAT TRANSPORT LINKS**

“The area we are in is fab! We are right by the park, off the main road and the transport links are really good – we can walk into town and everything is on our doorstep.”

**RECOMMEND TO A FRIEND**

“One of my friends is just across the road, then another friend lives on the site too and I’ve recommended another Simple Life property to a colleague.”

“The actual process of organising moving in was so easy, the contact was great, and we were always updated on progress. We’re not on top of one another like with some new builds, everyone has at least one car parking space and the garden is nice.”

**PEACE OF MIND**

“One of the main perks for me is the peace of mind we have. We don’t have to worry if there’s any issues in the house, maintenance are straight there and just get it done, get it fixed, whereas with a normal private landlord it could take weeks.”

“It’s a really satisfying feeling knowing our landlord is looking after our needs, we don’t have to worry about if they are going to sell or them taking months to get something fixed – they care about the property.”



IT’S A REALLY SATISFYING FEELING KNOWING OUR LANDLORD IS LOOKING AFTER OUR NEEDS.



CSR»REPORT2020

## SUPPORTING THE WIDER COMMUNITY

With a heritage in regeneration, it is of utmost importance to ensure that we not only look after our residents but we look out for the wider local communities in which we develop. Our support focuses on employment opportunities, local charities, local schools, as well as continually looking to meet with local authority objectives when planning our developments.



Work with the Salford Foundation has continued this year, supporting young people with an insight into the property and construction industry. Five members of staff have contributed time to mentor students on topics as diverse as self-image and careers in property, whilst also undertaking mock interviews for those about to enter the world of work.

We also continue to support Park Palace Ponies by sponsoring a pony and covering riding lessons for the pupils at Monksdown School in Knowsley.



## Schools/Education

We have continued to support 10 schools close to our developments throughout the 2019-2020 academic year. Completion of a number of these projects has been delayed because of Covid-19, but it is anticipated that all will be completed by the end of the calendar year. A brief summary of the projects as follows:

- St Theresa's School, Sheffield, *sensory room and IT equipment (£5,000 donation)* - completed
- Galton Valley Primary School, Smethwick, *memorial garden, gardening and healthy eating lessons (£5,000 donation)* - still underway.
- Galton Valley Nursery School Smethwick, *regeneration of inside and outside of building (£6,000)* - still underway.
- Mills Hill Primary School, Middleton, *daily mile running track (£5,000)* - completed.
- River View Primary School, Broughton, Salford, *Pond regeneration (£5,000)* - completed.
- St Richard's Roman Catholic Primary School, Atherton, *fitness equipment including rowing machine, running machine and ski machine (£8,000)* - completed.
- Mesne Lea Primary School, Walkden, *playground regeneration including trim trail (£8,000)* - completed.
- St Peter and Pauls RCP, Tower Hill, Knowsley, *outdoor sheltered play area (£8,000)* - still underway.
- Moat House Primary School, Coventry, *outdoor gazebo and playground equipment (£8,000)* - completed.
- Bilston C of E, Wolverhampton, *landscaping and adventure park improvements (£8,000)* - still underway.





From August 2019, £5,000 was donated to each of the following foodbanks: Coventry Foodbank, Atherton and Leigh Foodbank, The Big Help Project in Knowsley and The Well Wolverhampton. In an immediate response to the lockdown an additional £5,000 was donated to each of the foodbanks to assist through the CV19 pandemic.

A further £5,000 was donated to local homeless charity Loaves and Fishes in Salford. This year's donation was used to purchase personal alarms for staff.



As part of Sigma's Christmas donations, we chose to support homeless charity Crisis UK by giving enough money for 40 homeless people to have somewhere to enjoy Christmas dinner this year. This initiative also gives them the opportunity to seek advice about training, education and housing.



Throughout the Covid-19 outbreak, we encouraged our residents to support their local NHS, this included clap for heroes, donating Simple Life Easter chocolate to some of the local hospitals and donating £500 worth of raffle prizes for Hillingdon Hospital staff raffle. In support for our own NHS residents, we decided to give them 20% off their rent for 3 months.



## SIGMA DONATES £100K TO 4 SELECTED CHARITIES

In June 2020 Sigma launched a Simple Life charitable poll in which we agreed to donate £12,500 towards four selected charities considered to be most relevant in the current climate:

- Trussell Trust (foodbanks)
- Women's Aid (domestic violence)
- Centrepont (fighting homelessness amongst young people)
- Mind UK (mental health)

The total budget for the poll was £100,000. Simple Life invited residents to vote for their preferred charity of the four to help decide how the remaining amount is divided. The poll closed in early July and the division of the monies was as follows:

- Mind: £31,980
- Women's Aid: £25,480
- Centrepont: £24,840
- Trussell Trust: £17,700



During lockdown and an extensive amount of time where all Sigma employees have been working at home, Sigma sent out a 'Well Box' full of healthy snacks and treats to all staff, Sigma and REIT board members. For every box that was ordered, 3 meals were donated to a local homeless shelter. In total, this equated to over 140 meals.



We continue to support some of the local children's sports clubs within the areas that we develop. Our sports clubs include:

- Sale Girls Football Club
- Sale Rugby Club (under 18's)
- Wolverhampton Tennis Club



River View Primary School, Salford



Project: Regeneration of pond area  
Donation: £5,000

Daniel Gauld, Head Teacher at River View Primary School said:

“We’re really grateful for the second donation from Sigma. Nature and being outdoors is brilliant for the children’s mental health and wellbeing and the new pond area is brilliant.

“The outdoor greenhouse built from the first donation allows us to associate reading time within playtime and has made a huge difference to the school.”

Mills Hill Primary School, Middleton

Project: Daily Mile Race Track  
Donation: £5,000

Ian Mason, Head Teacher at Mills Hill Primary School comments:

“The childrens’ daily walks around the playground eventually developed into them running three times a week and it’s brilliant to see that fitness levels have improved.

“We encourage our children to be both active physically and to be creative with their environment. The much-needed money from Sigma has transformed our playground and facilities and allowed our pupils to reap the benefits of keeping fit.”

The running was inspired by the Scottish Daily Mile initiative, created by Elaine Wyllie, a head teacher who was concerned about the pupils’ lack of fitness in her school. Elaine introduced The Daily Mile in 2012 as a sustainable way of combating inactivity, and it was so successful that the Scottish Government wrote to every primary school in the country recommending that they implement the scheme too. In addition, in August 2016 the UK government’s Childhood Obesity strategy identified and supported The Daily Mile’s contribution towards the recommended hour that children should spend taking daily exercise in school.



## Sustainability

Sigma recognises that it is a long-term stakeholder in the communities and neighbourhoods it creates, and takes this responsibility very seriously. The Investment Adviser has joined the United Nations Global Compact (“UN Global Compact”), which is a voluntary initiative designed to encourage business leaders to implement universal sustainability principles and in particular the UN Global Compact’s Ten Principles. These are derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organisation’s Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

The Company is therefore committed to aligning its strategies and operations with the Ten Principles and to taking action to advance broader societal goals. Most specifically, the Company aims to create residential environments that promote societal and individual well-being through the provision of:

- high-quality, well-designed, energy efficient homes;
- the potential for stable, long-term tenancies;
- well-located developments that offer ready access to centres of employment, good local primary education, public transport and retail centres;
- professional repair and maintenance;
- high levels of customer service; and
- regular community events.

*We build homes which are suitable for a wide range of tenants, levels of affordability and life-stages, offering families and individuals the opportunity to move to larger or smaller homes dependent on their needs. In this way, the Company’s developments support a diverse demographic profile and help to create sustainable neighbourhoods.*

## Environmental

Many of Sigma's Simple Life developments are part of larger regeneration programmes built on brownfield sites, which not only repurposes former industrial buildings and disused land, but clears the areas of contaminants making it safe and useful once more.

The development process however is under the direct responsibility of Sigma's house building partners. As part of Sigma's due diligence process when relationships are established, we undertake a thorough examination of house building partner policies regarding environmental practices. We require delivery partners to be able to demonstrate policies on the management and origination of their supply chain, usage of resources and their approach to biodiversity. Our two key delivery partners, Countryside Properties and Vistry are both classed as being a 'Low Risk' by Sustainalytics in their overall approach to Environmental, Social and Governance and are both rated in the top 10 out of 76 of their peer group for their approach.

Homes are constructed to relevant building regulations and have a minimum energy performance rating of 'B' and feature energy efficient LED lighting or low energy bulbs, whole house ventilation systems and efficient gas central heating systems. Innovation is important and Sigma works with housebuilding partners to improve the performance and future proofing of the homes through regular specification reviews.

The most significant change to housing delivery over the year has been the increasing use of Countryside Properties' new sectional-building technology. This has reduced waste, increased on-site efficiencies and decreased build period. Additionally the system allows for increased control of cost and availability of raw materials, improved quality control, lower transportation usage (and thereby reduced vehicular emissions), and a reduction in Health and Safety risk, due to the controlled internal production environment.

In its use of materials, the system is accredited to PEFC ST 2002:2013, which requires the demonstration of the chain of custody of forest-based products, ensuring the use of sustainable sources. The system recycles 80% of timber waste and 80% of plasterboard waste, which is reused for new plasterboard (the paper lining being used for animal bedding). Plastic wrapping is baled after use and recycled to produce damp proof courses and membranes.

Employees at the factory are drawn from the local workforce and an apprenticeship scheme has been established, which currently employs nine apprentices from Wigan College, who are studying for NVQ's.

The alignment and synergies between the new sectional-building technology and the Company's values is close, and it is intended that the technology's usage is increased.

## Additional environmental initiatives

- Sigma has continued its commitment to plant 1,000 trees across all developments.
- Sigma has launched an electric vehicle scheme as part of its wider initiative to promote more sustainable transport practices. The scheme enables all staff to finance an electric vehicle through salary sacrifice with a proportion of the financing costs being paid by Sigma.
- White Rose Clothes Banks continue to be used across all apartment schemes. Clothes are either upcycled, sold or recycled in aid of Aegis Trust. White Rose supports 'Green Fashion.' We now also promote the White Rose collection scheme amongst all residents in our houses, where the banks are unavailable.
- Customer welcome boxes continue to include 'green' items, including reusable shopping bags and reusable flasks.
- Our partner printer also has measures in place to off-set our print by planting trees and re-wilding the Scottish Highlands.
- One of our new sites in Crewe will see wooden swift boxes being implemented in the eaves of the houses, and hedgehog access plan routes through the garden fences in order to accommodate the existing wildlife.
- Some of our houses in Merseyside and all our apartment schemes feature solar panels fitted to the roofs. Whilst energy is being generated, this immediate supply will be provided to the houses/ apartment communal areas.
- At some of our newer developments, in particular Prince's Gardens in Sheffield and Empyrean in Salford, we have the availability of car charging points for our customers to use.
- Now that our portal is live for all residents, we will be encouraging further resident run green initiatives such as on-site swap shop events.



## MORE THAN JUST A HOME

Simple Life homes puts customers and the local community at the heart of its proposition. Since launching the Simple Life brand, and in particular over the last year, we have seen an increased sense of community forming amongst residents both on and off-line.



All developments with apartment blocks enjoyed our usual Autumn visit from The Wood Fired Pizza Company giving neighbours a chance to mingle over a nice slice of their favourite pizza.

## EASTER EGG HUNT 2020

During the lockdown period this year, our usual Easter Egg Hunt took on a virtual guise. 12 eggs were craftily hidden across the Simple Life website, and we invited residents to go on their own online hunt. Following clues that took them to the four corners of the site, we ensured that there was an excellent mix of quick wins and brain teasers to keep things interesting.

We had an incredible 133 entries over the course of the week - without a doubt the biggest response to a competition ever!

10 lucky winners received a fantastic chocolate hamper from Love Cocoa - a sustainable chocolate company founded by the great-great-grandson of John Cadbury himself. Whilst all our entrants received a unique branded chocolate bar as a well done treat.



At Christmas 2019, our visits from Santa, his elves and reindeer continued across 20 completed developments. Over the course of 5 weekends Santa visited sites throughout Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire, West Midlands, Shropshire and South Yorkshire, handing out 2000 bags of chocolate money in exchange for some very lovely Christmas lists!



Our Summer 2020 ice cream dash was bigger than ever before. Over the course of 6 days our branded ice cream van visited **29 sites** across the country.



# Peace of Mind Month

2020

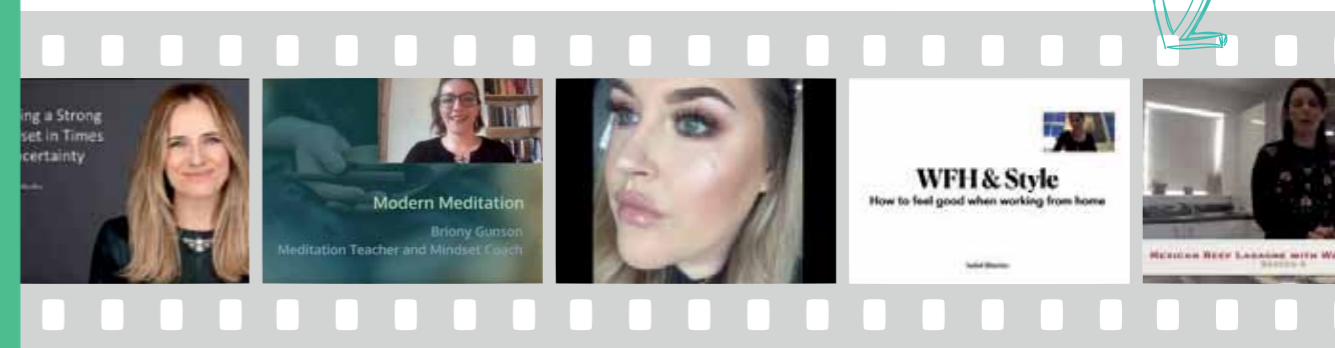
## COMPETITION

### Health and Well Being Series

A prolonged lockdown period saw many people being furloughed and stuck at home, so we sought the opportunity to keep our residents busy and engaged with plenty of free added-value content. Our Peace of Mind Month was extended with a special 'health and wellbeing series' which helped to spread positivity and helped to keep residents healthy both mentally and physically.

Throughout the series we have also seen a huge sense of community develop by encouraging everyone to stay connected online whilst also helping residents to feel safe, secure and a sense of belonging.

Our series saw a number of videos posted to our social channels created for us by professionals, partners and even our very own residents across a range of themes, from meditation, to make-up, to pilates and baking!



As the number of properties has grown, so has our following and engagement amongst residents on social media.

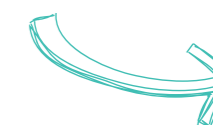
Our annual Peace of Mind month took place throughout April. Residents were encouraged to nominate a loved one who they felt deserved a little peace of mind. From resident friends, neighbours and family members, nominations included anything from a small 'thank you for putting up with me' to frontline NHS staff, to those with life-threatening diseases. In total we received over 50 entries, with 8 final winners.

Our winners received a spa day for two, and a bespoke peace of mind prize, tailored to them. Prizes included shopping vouchers, holiday cottage vouchers, DJ equipment, football tickets and motorbike lessons.



We have also seen a huge increase in resident Simple Life Instagram home accounts being set up – all dedicated to making their Simple Life rental house, their home. This has encouraged residents to form a community online, sharing their best home style tips.

Meet a few of our resident bloggers:



follow us @Simplelifelives



## MEET EMILY

Emily @insidenumbers\_ who shares her Simple Life home on Silkin Green with her boyfriend. Emily talked us through her take on Home inspiration and shared some fabulous tips.



## MEET ASHLEY

Ashley, @oursimplelifehome shares her Simple Life home with her partner Chris. She fills us in on her unique and evolving style as well as revealing her love of grey.



### What made you choose a Simple Life Home?

I chose my home because it's a nice modern new build. It's very spacious and in a great location surrounded by beautiful walkways. I also love that it's a blank canvas to work with which made it really easy to apply our sense of style when we first moved in.



### What's your favourite room in the house?

My favourite room is the kitchen because it's the main hub of the house when we have visitors. It's spacious, bright and the big patio doors open up to our garden, which is great in the summer! Another great thing is that it came equipped with fitted appliances which saved us lots of money.



### Best home-hacks to personalise your space?

My home hacks would be to add pops of colour throughout the house and have a few house plants dotted around, I think these help bring the outside in. I also like to fill my house with photos and souvenirs from when we travel.

### How would you describe your interior style? Does this reflect your personality?

I would say my style is very modern and simple. I like to include lots of plants and colours such as yellow and pink within each room and I like to include photographs of family and travelling to give it a real personal touch.

### Where do you go for interior design inspiration?

There are some great places online for interior inspiration. I follow a lot of home accounts on Instagram and a few blogs. Another great site is Pinterest, on there you can find anything from cupboard organisation to whole room transformations.

### Which rooms do you find the hardest to get 'right'? What are your specific tricks to get around this?

I'd say one of the spare bedrooms we have. It's very easy to just make spare rooms a storage room, which can get messy very quickly. We've turned our spare rooms into places where we can each chill. My boyfriend has his consoles in his, and I have a separate place where I get ready and can have some me-time.



### What made you choose a Simple Life Home?

We love new builds, and everything about them. With Chris's job, his next step in work may have meant moving far away, so to buy a new build wouldn't have been a good step for us. When we heard about Simple Life and the different styles of homes they offer we knew instantly it was the best option for us. The process was really easy and quick, and the offer they had on at the time was great. They also have so many locations to choose from! We loved how the kitchen came fully fitted with all appliances. Best decision we ever made.

### What's your favourite room in the house?

I love every room in our home! It's tough to pick my favourite between the lounge and the kitchen. I'd probably say the kitchen because we spend most of our time in there and it's so spacious, great for having people over and the lounge because on a lovely sunny day to have the doors wide open is amazing! Both are great sizes and have been so fun to design.

### Which space did you have the most fun designing and why?

I have to say the lounge. It's not your typical lounge, it's different/quirky. It's grey & oak pretty much like the rest of our house! I love a blank canvas so our simple life home was perfect for that. The patio doors are beautiful. I loved how light it made the room, and where our home is, we're not looked over at the back which is wonderful so when I didn't want to have huge curtains I went for white voile which made it look so beautiful but didn't take away any light!

### Where do you get your home inspiration from?

So many places! I absolutely love Chris's mum's house, which is grey and that's where I got my love of grey from! Of course the fabulous Mrs Hinch has a beautiful home and some of her ideas are wonderful! I love walking round B&M, The Range, Ikea and so many more shops that aren't expensive but sell the most beautiful little bits.

### How would you describe your interior design style? Does this reflect your personality?

Grey .. grey & more grey is pretty much my style! I love flowers and making things look pretty, Chris says putting flowers on the hob is ridiculous but now he loves it so they're even on the bed too! I like things that are simple but look so effective. I love doing things differently and if I can do it on a budget then even better. Like the voile, to do a whole window including the pole and tie costs £18 but it looks beautiful, and it's something you don't see very often.

I don't like following the crowd too much and I don't care what other people think, if I think it makes my home look nice and it makes me happy, then it's staying!

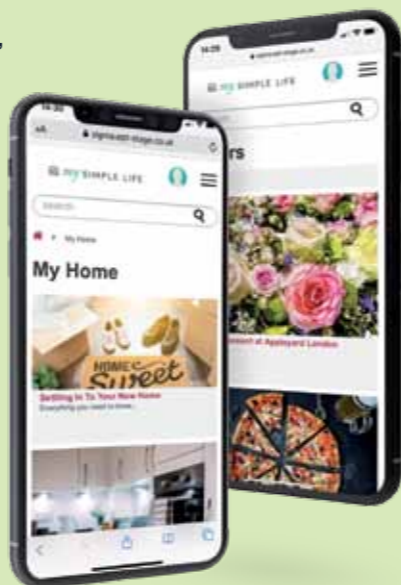
### What are your tips for decorating your home on a budget?

Your home can be wonderful no matter what your budget, as I said about the curtains. A company wanted £500 to do my patio doors and by the time I'd finished it cost me £40 and I've had lots of compliments. When saving money and wanting to improve your home it can be really difficult, we wanted a new dining table because we didn't like the chairs anymore so I went online and found some beautiful grey and white chair covers for £13 and now it's like a whole new table! I love finding little bargains and making them look stylish!



## Resident Focused Initiatives and Tech

The 'My Simple Life' resident portal went live for residents in September. Residents will be able to access all their tenancy documents, how to guides, news, affiliate offers, payments online, an open forum with other residents on the same site and their maintenance requests, all in one place.



A constituent part of the portal is the online maintenance reporting tool, FixFlo. It is a proven software tool to empower residents to self-fix issues by accessing online tutorials thereby reducing the number of call-outs. It also offers a much more streamlined and easy approach for residents with the ability to upload pictures of their maintenance issue, ability to talk to the contractor via the portal (also allowing Sigma more control) and a live status update of their requests.



**FASTER FIXES.**  
Detailed reports help us fix your issues quickly and efficiently.



**CLEARER COMMUNICATION.**  
Available in over 40 languages.



**EASY TRACKING.**  
You get a time and date stamped record of your repair request.

The second Simple Life Annual Resident Newspaper was delivered to all residents in June. The publication gives residents a roundup of the previous 12 months including events, tech, competitions, campaigns, testimonials, charitable donations and our support for schools initiative. It also informs our residents as to plans for the rest of the year.

## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

All residents receive an automated resident satisfaction survey email 1 week into their tenancy and 10 months into their tenancy. This helps us to monitor the resident experience with our lettings and move in team and then later their experience as one of our customers. The following stats are based on tenant satisfaction results for a 12 month period from July 2019 – end of June 2020.

Move in survey	10 month survey
<b>97%</b> said the team made it easy to apply	<b>96%</b> said they are still happy with their home
<b>89%</b> said they were kept well-informed during the application process	<b>89%</b> said they are happy with the service provided
<b>96%</b> said they received all the information they required	<b>73%</b> said they felt they have been kept well-informed
<b>91%</b> said they found the process of moving in to their home straight forward	<b>94%</b> said the communal areas are well maintained
<b>87%</b> said the quality of the home met with their expectations	<b>85%</b> said they feel part of a community
<b>94%</b> said they would recommend Simple Life	<b>95%</b> said they would recommend Simple Life

*All results are based on responses from neutral – strongly agree*



Understanding that pets are important to our residents and especially so during lockdown we undertook analysis of end of tenancy works from households with and without pets and established that there was very little variance in the costs of end of tenancy rectification works. As such, we have ceased to charge the usual pet premium across the whole of the Simple Life Portfolio. Simple Life are one of the first BTR landlords to make such a move and the response from the tenants have been overwhelmingly positive and puts the brand at the forefront of the market in this regard.





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