

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE JUNE 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



The Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) report is representative of the work Sigma Capital has undertaken in this area over the past year, covering the Company's own work, its management of ESG for the PRS REIT through Simple Life Homes and our joint venture work with EQT through Simple Life London.

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#### Foreword

When writing this report last year, in the early stages of the pandemic, we could not have envisaged the worldwide impact and the enduring nature of the consequences. While we are now on the road to recovery, we are still assessing the impacts and adjusting to the new normal. The last 12 months has been an unprecedented year of challenge and uncertainty for us all, a year when community, support, care and togetherness came into their own.

We have continued to place people and communities at the forefront of our engagement and support, with donations distributed, and partnerships built, nationally. This report highlights the many activities, initiatives and events we have had the very great privilege and pleasure to support.

Resilience and adaptability, alongside collaboration and strong partnerships have ensured our communities have thrived, and I have thoroughly enjoyed hearing of creative ways we have kept connected as communities. Such events as the very successful and special Christmas online bedtime stories form lasting memories and preserved that connectivity we felt was taken from us over the last year. Reading the nominations for our Peace of Mind month and moments of community togetherness, clearly illustrates our values in action.

As part of our ongoing commitment to our residents and the wider community, we continue to focus, alongside our building partners, on providing efficient, high quality homes, with support services and surrounding spaces which enrich their experience. We are also mindful of our impact on the environment, and installation of more solar panels; enhanced planting for biodiversity; opportunities for residents to access sustainably responsible products through the SaveMoneyCutCarbon club; and the addition of book boxes are all exciting expansions in this area. The launch of the *My Simple Life* mobile app is particularly exciting, further reflecting our commitment to making life that little bit easier for our residents.



I take this opportunity to thank two outgoing Sigma Board members, David Sigsworth and Jim McMahon, for their commitment, energy and support over the years. David's experience and knowledge was pivotal in promoting and driving the environmental agenda, and I am sure we will call upon his expertise and wisdom in the future.

As we move on from and out of the global pandemic, I am very optimistic about the next 12 months for the company as it drives ahead with ambitious plans and goals. I am pleased to share this report with you and I hope you enjoy the contents within, which brings to life the real stories behind all we stand for and do.

lan Sutcliffe, Chairman

#### Introduction

Starting a new job is a time of great change, anticipation and exhilaration, and I was super excited to join Sigma as Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Director, in November 2020, and the expectant set of experiences, challenges and adventures this afforded! However, joining the team at the height of the global pandemic definitely gave a different perspective, unique challenges and experiences.

With over 30 year's leadership experience in Education, people and the planet have always been a focus of my daily work and living. I saw my new role as a natural progression and opportunity, where teamwork, people, community and a keen sense of making a positive difference by my actions and activities continued to be my focus.

Working online was certainly different and I could never have envisaged it would be some months before I would meet people in person. Seeing the silver lining of those pandemic clouds has been wonderful, and having the opportunity to visit our many partners has been incredibly invigorating. As we find our way out of, and begin to recover from, the last year, I am amazed and inspired by the resilience, kindness and determination of so many.

ESG is all about our impact on people and the planet, and keeping our focus on these two areas results in positivity for partnerships, prosperity and peace. Being tasked with the remit to, 'make people's lives better, or simply a little bit easier, by our actions and activities', clearly reflects the values and ethos of all in Sigma and my personal values too. Meeting people, nurturing partnerships, searching for solutions and ways of supporting one another, and working with like-minded committed and determined people fires me! Since joining I have met many truly inspirational members of our communities, local and national, and building on these strong relationships is, I believe, key to progress and success.

As we move forward this is a time of great change and opportunity, a chance to ensure we are in the driving seat affecting positive change, creating and telling a great story, leaving a legacy of which to be proud. All in the Sigma team are committed to being leaders in our field, putting people first, as people will drive the

#### ESG»REPORT2021



overall change needed. I take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to outgoing Board members David Sigsworth and Jim McMahon for their insight, advice and support as I settled into my role, particularly David with his wealth of environmental experience and knowledge. I wish them well for the future and hope we keep connected.

I believe we all have a responsibility to look after one another and the world beyond our home, be that our close community environment or on a greater global level. We are here for such a short time and our legacy will be our lasting contribution. It is a privilege working as part of a team where such values as integrity, resilience, collaboration and innovation, alongside a passion for people, are at the root of all we do. Within this report I am delighted to share with you the wide range of activities and initiatives undertaken by all in Sigma and we look forward to building on this work in the months, and years, ahead.

#### Niamh Waldron,

ESG Director



# COLLABORATION

# INTEGRITY

# RESILIENCE

## PASSIONATE ABOUT PEOPLE

# INNOVATIVE

#### ESG»REPORT2021

We believe that strong partnerships lie at the very heart of our success. Relationships are our building blocks and we can't succeed without them. By marrying the diverse skill sets of our team and working with like-minded partners, everyone benefits. That's customers, investors and local authorities alike.

Quite simply, we focus on doing the simple things well. With the greater good always in mind, we believe in bettering the standards in the rental market to fulfil a genuine need.

We recognise that in today's world, change is constant. And we are nimble enough to learn, adapt and respond, which we believe is vital for the success of our rental brands, our investors and employees.

As well as delivering growth for our investors, our customers and communities lie at the very heart of everything we do. We truly are a people business. We know that people not only deserve a good place to live, but to be treated well and be connected to critical infrastructure. And this passion for people stretches to those within our business too.

At Sigma we're the one and only. The originators. The innovators. The ones who spotted a gap in a market, an alternative to ownership. Our position of uniqueness enables us to use our independent maverick spirit to look for new ways, new options, new opportunities. And to do the more traditional our way.

#### **Our Approach**

Recognising, reacting and responding to the sustainability and ethical impacts of all we do is the foundation of ESG. With this in mind, and to help focus and better direct our ESG efforts, Sigma has signed up to the UN Global Compact. and commits to complying and adhering to its 10 core principles, based on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Our management structure operates with clear policies and practices, to identify, address and manage ESG issues effectively throughout the lifecycle of our managed PRS assets. The appointment, in November 2020, of a dedicated ESG Director was designed to enhance and further develop our commitment to and engagement in this area.

Reflecting the growing importance of ESG globally, the Company intends to seek external assessment and recognition of its achievements in these areas. It is currently working towards submissions to achieve a rating from GRESB, a globally recognised benchmark for reporting real estate ESG performance, and to join the European Public Real Estate Association (EPRA) which represents the real estate sector by providing better information to investors and promoting best practice. To support these efforts, the Company has appointed EVORA, a leading sustainability consultant specialising in real estate solutions, to help direct strategies, plans and decisions going forward. Initial engagement and detailed gap analysis has been carried out, and the company has started work on recommendations and actions, including the formation of an ESG Working Group consisting of colleagues across all areas of the business.

We are aware that though voluntary at present, many of these frameworks are important investor tools, and though not certifications they increasingly reflect a 'license to operate' within the market. We are also mindful of the ever-evolving global legislative canvas, giving consideration to such regulations as the EU Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR), EU Taxonomy alongside growing National and indeed City level regulations. Such developments are a very important aspect to our future proofing and risk management. Defining Value is a challenge and we identify the growing significance of Social Value in real estate, with frameworks such as the Social Value Portal (SVP) and Housing Associations' Charitable Trust (HACT) providing matrix and dashboards reflecting performance and progress in these areas. The Company has engaged with the SVP and dialogue has started, with a draft strategy and policy document drawn up for consultation. Further to this project is reference and alignment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, drawing up an annual report illustrating our intent and position in relation to specific goals of the 17 listed. Identifying our key material issues and therefore which specific SDGs we believe we can have the greatest impact, will be the outcome of our team consultation.

Demonstrating transparency and meeting stakeholder expectations is important to us, therefore we are also reviewing other reporting frameworks, such as the UN Principles of Responsible Investment (PRI), and the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). We do however also know that there is no magic key, and that one size does not fit all in this area. Points and scores should not and will not direct our strategic journey, rather focusing on materiality is key.

#### **Operational Approach**

Sigma recognises that the PRS investments, which it undertakes and manages on behalf of its partners and funders, have an impact on the environment and can also affect the lives of our employees, service providers, supply chain, residents and the wider community, indeed all with whom we engage and interact. We therefore incorporate environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors into decision-making processes and the way in which we operate. Sigma strongly believes that all three elements of ESG are intertwined and are viewed as one entity, but for the purposes of this report, each element is reported below, with clear overlaps evident.





Social Value Portal

EVORA



# ENVIRONMENTAL



# OUR ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILTY

We are all aware that our world is a rapidly changing environment, and as industry leaders in the provision of private rental homes Sigma recognises the role it plays in helping to lead the way forward. This changing landscape is illustrated by the announcement of the Government's 10 Point Plan for a green industrial revolution, in which energy, nature, transport and innovation goals were revised to reflect the country's targets in relation to eradicating our contribution to climate change. The Company is acutely aware of the intense need for action on areas such as energy and water consumption, non-fossil fuel heating provision, biodiversity and the global goals for 2030 and 2050. The Net Zero agenda, and target, continues to be a focus for the Company, and we aim to work with partners who share the same outlook and are aligned with our commitments.

What we report in the following demonstrates our commitment and determination to support strategies and actions in these areas going forward, and highlights the excellent work being done at present in all areas of ESG in the Company.







#### **Building Strong and Sustainable Partnerships**

Sigma works with many partners in the course of our business, and ensuring these partnerships share our ESG values and goals is important to us.

Towards the end of 2020, our partner Countryside Properties appointed a new Sustainability Team to develop their strategy and pathway going forward, shared and published in May 2021. It has been encouraging to work alongside this team discussing pathways and our data requirements for our assets going forward. We are confident that continued engagement and data gathering targets will further enhance our ability to demonstrate progress in this area. As part of our interaction and collaboration we will review delivery in this area to ensure necessary adjustments and progress is maintained. **G G** .....I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your enthusiastic engagement and interest in our new approach, as well as your informed perspective on the issues and areas we should be addressing. This input was invaluable, and we look forward to working with you in the future as partners to help us meet the ambitions we've set." (Countryside Sustainability Team May 2021)

Since 2020 our partner, Countryside, have won 385 awards for design and sustainability, holding more Housing Design Awards than any other home builder, and they are the only home builder to have ever received the RIBA Stirling Prize for a housing development, demonstrating their dedication and passion to building places where people love to live. We share their vision and commitment to modern and efficient methods of construction, and their investment in MMC (Modern Methods of Construction) is evident in the ongoing development of their two modular timber framed manufacturing plants, at Warrington and Bardon, using sustainable timber which is 100% certified Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or Programme of the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). Our use of modular timber frame construction has clear environmental benefits, including reduced waste and energy consumption, and improved energy efficiency of these completed homes for our residents. Reduction in transportation and construction teams on site is also a clear benefit, alongside the many sustainable materials used, and Countryside are trialling further impact reduction through alternative fuels for forklifts and generators. Construction of these modular frames has also enabled us to contribute positively to considerable diversion of waste from landfill. Positive outcomes include: recycling of timber and general waste; use of plasterboard waste for animal bedding and new plasterboard; and plastics recycled as Damp Proof Course (DPC) and Damp Proof Membrane (DPM) products.

Working in partnership with EQUANS (previously Engie Places and Communities) and Sheffield Housing Council (SHC) we were thrilled to win Public Private Collaboration of the Year category at the Insider Yorkshire Awards for Prince's Gardens development. We are also delighted with our growing collaboration and partnership with Seddon Group, delivering high quality rental homes across the North West & Midlands.

Rob Moore, business unit director at Seddon, said:

We always aim to build the kind of homes people aspire to live in, where they can create a life for themselves. It's great to help Simple Life bring Stanley Park to life."

Vistry Group, with whom we also work, recently reviewed their ESG agenda, and are also committed to aligning with the UN SDGs, setting ambitious targets in relation to designing Net-Zero Carbon homes for the future, and retaining their recycling rate of over 95%. Such commitments and other examples of partner focus on ESG is shared within this document as relevant.

Joining forces with Springfield Group on our first Scottish development, near Perth, is another exciting milestone, and we look forward to building another strong partnership with this team.

Their focus on "new village environments" and family engagement is directly aligned with our approach in our numerous communities in England.

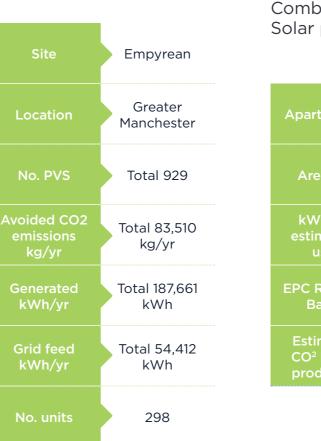




#### **Efficient Energy & Power**

Ahead of the Government's pledge to ban gas boilers in new homes by 2025, and possibly as early as 2023, and the expected transitional challenges, the Company is dedicated to meeting this challenge through proactive discussion and planning with our partners. The current provision of electric heating and hot water from District Heating (DH) systems at our London communities is a positive step in this transition, and a definite demonstration of the Company's commitment in this area. Investment in new technologies in energy saving, such as the addition of Green and Brown Roof and Dwelling PV panels at suitable communities, further highlights the Company's path going forward.

#### Empyrean Photovoltaic Data – product estimation



Fresh V (PED) k Combir

To begin the process of data gathering and fully understanding the benefits of alternative energy sources, data gathering from the photovoltaic panels at our rental community, Empyrean, in Salford, evidenced the positive impact and need to continue to install these wherever possible. The data below illustrates clearly the positive impact such technology offers. By way of comparison, the Primary Energy Demand (PED) needs of the 77 apartments in our first London rental community at Fresh Wharf, Barking, show clearly that one can balance and support the other, something we are keen to harness and develop further. Working with residents we aim to gather data from homes with PV panels in our Ashfield community, using this to establish impact and outcome, the first step in this regard.

#### Fresh Wharf Primary Energy Demand (PED) kWh/m2 – product estimation

Combined heat and power present & Solar photovoltaics present

ents	Total 77			
m²	4,943 m²			
/yr ated e	222,810 kWh/yr			
ting/ d	84 B x 6 (8%)	85 B x 34 (44%)	86 B x 36 (47%)	87 B x 1 (1%)
ated g/yr ced	41,500 CO <sup>2</sup> kg/yr			

#### **Photovoltaic Panels**

Installation of photovoltaic panels on our homes, where possible and appropriate, is a target going forward. The current status for this technology is a growing positive picture, and one we are keen to enhance. Monitoring the data gathered from PVs and assessing this impact is a goal going forward.

Site	Location	No. PVs	Estimated kWh generated	Estimated CO <sup>2</sup> emissions avoided kg/year	
Empyrean	Salford	929	187,661	83,510	
Prescot Park	Liverpool	72	16,120	7,174	
Earle Street	Newton-le-Willows	72	15,531	6,911	
Hollystone Bank	Runcorn	114	30,670	13,648	
Brookside Grange	Rochdale	76	16,046	7,140	
Havenswood	Eccles	76	16,473	7,330	
Canalside	Wigan	72	15,677	6,976	
Holyoake	Walkden	157	36,347	16,175	
Ashfield Park	Normanton	256	64,576	tbc	
Stonefield Edge	Wolverhampton	192	43,300	tbc	
Fresh Wharf	London	104	tbc	tbc	
Beam Park	London	121 (Block V65+ Block W56)	18,619 (Block V) tbc (Block W)	tbc	
Totals		2,241	461,020kWh	148,864kg/yr	



1kWh is enough energy for 4 hours of gaming



or enough to watch a 75W TV for 13 hours!



or boil a 3kW kettle 6 times so that's about 2,766,000 kettles boiled and a great many cups of tea!

Source reference: energy-uk.org.uk



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#### **Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) Data**

Given the Government's aspirations that as many homes as possible achieve EPC band C by 2035, as set out in the Department of Housing, Communities & Local Government's Action Plan, we are very proud to report that data in this area is strong within our portfolio. We are committed to working with our partners to make further improvements through the design and construction process.

	Portfolio Units	EPC rating A	EPC rating B	EPC rating C
Regions	3,421 (82%)	30	3,391	
Houses		1%	99%	
Regions	734 (18%)		66	668
Apartments			9%	91%
Regions	4,155	30	3,457	668
Totals		1%	83%	16%
London	157		100%	

Advice, for residents, on gas and electricity Inclusion of time-sensitive, switch-operated and efficiency is also available, and the Company is energy efficient LED ensures efficiency is a key committed to fitting our homes with appliances consideration in our construction. In line with which are energy rated A/B, in line with our this drive, Countryside site energy use has been commitment to more energy efficient homes and reduced through the fitting of passive infrared sensor (PIR) lighting, with generator switch to best practice. Meters are generally provided by British Gas for dual fuel, and British Gas provide energy-efficient mode facility, during site closures. electronic monitors as standard; though these Alongside the obvious energy saving benefits, can be changed to suit residents' choice. We are the benefits to our residents in terms of light committed to sourcing competitive renewable pollution, energy reduction and security is clear. energy supply for our residents, and as increase in availability and provision grows, we are confident Water Management of positive progress in this area. To support this We all understand the importance of responsible drive, all homes are set up on efficient tariffs at water use, and therefore 100% of our homes handover.

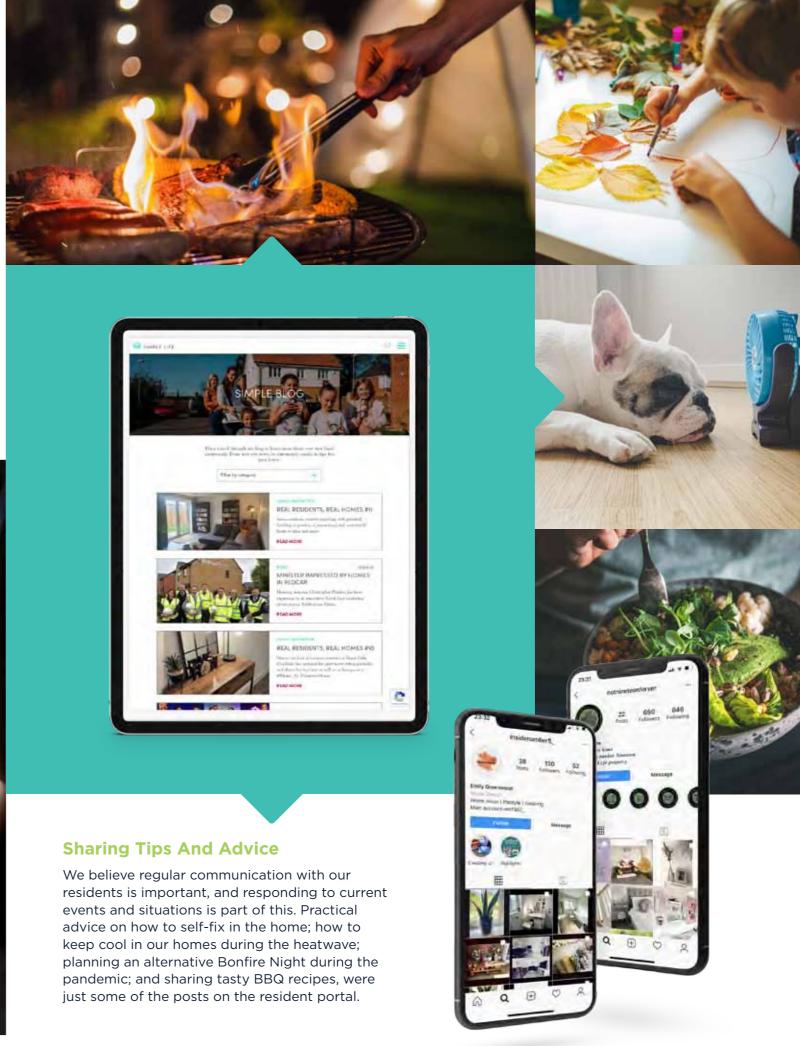
To further drive high standards, and encourage energy efficiency, at least 75% of all light fittings in our homes are classified as low energy. Photovoltaic panels are currently provided where planning dictates, and those on our apartments support energy needs in communal areas, including sensor lighting. The insulation standards are such that no communal areas require heating provision further saving cost and energy use.

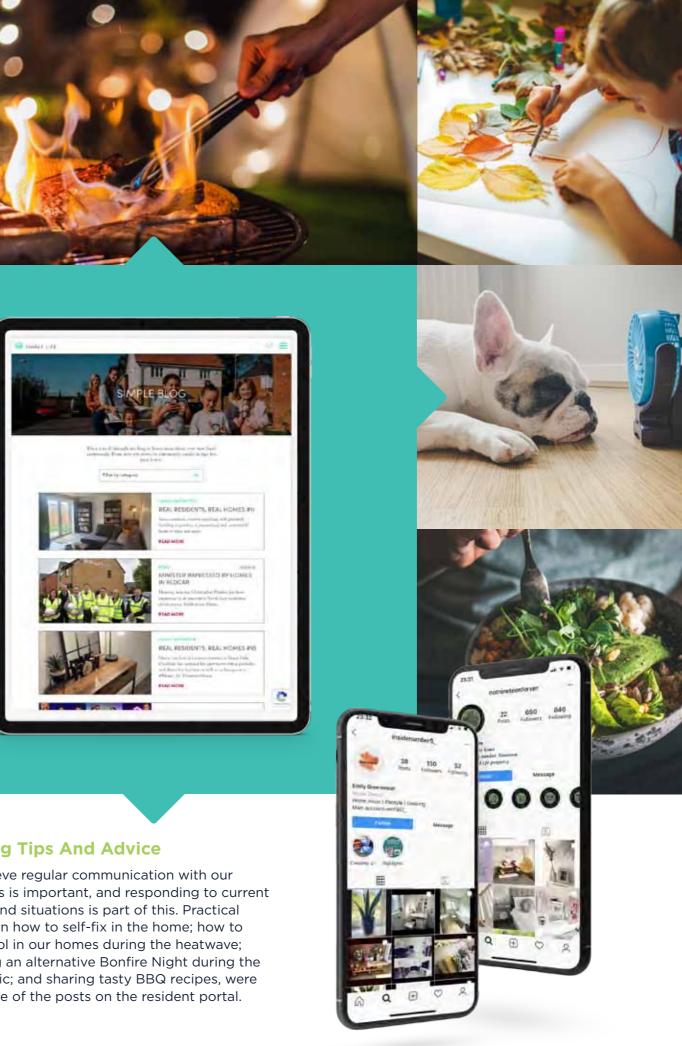
completed in the last year have been fitted with a water meter, flow restrictors on taps and dual flush cisterns, in line with current building regulations. Residents are given guidance on the basic principles for water conservation such as shower over bath, half kettle basics, and efficient tap use. Our construction partners, Countryside, also share this commitment to water saving, reducing company's site water use through regular inspections and providing water-saving fittings.

#### **Maintenance Support**

The use of online FixFlo maintenance IT platform continues to support our goals towards greater efficiency, centralising this provision, and thereby reducing call out traffic and emissions from a range of suppliers. Residents are guided through and encouraged to self-fix, and data is monitored, helping to direct future planning and support. Information on appliances and basic household maintenance is uploaded to the resident portal and new Simple Life App, to further support, as well as provide analysis of common faults, which can influence specification improvements, driving greater cost savings in the future. Review and evaluation of how this system can be delivered, improved and developed, is ongoing with plans to work with one appliance supplier thus ensuring consistency of provision for the residents.









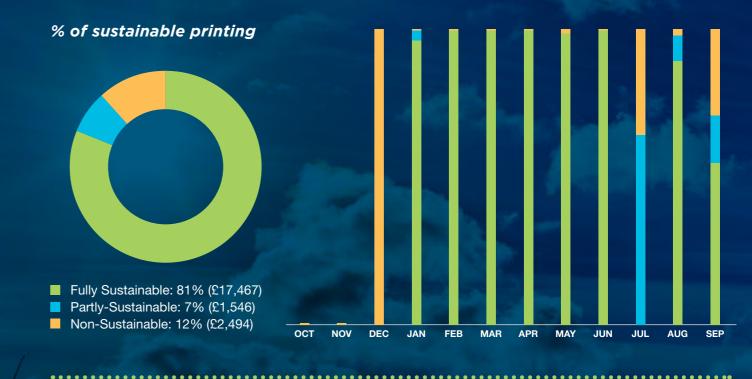


Total Number of Issues Raised on FixFlo: 13496

- Issues closed with Guided Assistance 6985 52% (Not escalated to a maintenance instruction) Escaleted to full maintenance 6511 48%

Maintenance raised via Fixflo from Jan to Aug 2021, this shows that of the 13496 issues raised in fixflo, 6985 Issues were Closed with Guided Assistance i.e. Not escalated to a maintenance *instruction (contractor attendance)* 

## SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE



#### 13.6T of CO<sup>2</sup> offset year to date **136 TREES PLANTED TO DATE**

# **OUR 13.6T CO<sup>2</sup> OFFSET ACHIEVEMENT IS EQUIVALENT TO ONE OF THE BELOW:**



kg of ocean bound plastic recovered

#### **Responsible Printing**

Pinksheep, our merchandising and printing partner, has sustainability at the heart of their business, and with them we continue to focus on improving our commitment to process improvements, reviewing how we print our materials, including this document, and where we source our reusable bottles and bags in our Welcome Packs.

We have joined their enhanced Ora scheme, collecting 'Eco points' which Pinksheep uses to off-set our impact by teaming with Trees for Life, planting trees and re-wilding the Scottish Highlands. The recent addition of Ocean Plastic Recovery to their service has afforded us the opportunity to select tree planting and plastic recovery as our positive actions, an addition to our sustainability intent. Their Sustainability Whitepaper, Lead Your Business through the Sustainability Minefield, published in March 2021, illustrates their awareness and commitment to leading the way positively, and sets out to help educate and make clear the impact of choices we make when selecting products and services, by stating sustainability credentials on all products.

Pinksheep report our monthly carbon offsetting and data, and audit our sustainability picture, based on our printing and marketing activity, helping us to make informed decisions for the future.

SUSTAINABILITY SCHEME

🚏 Pinksheep

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Official supporter

#### **Our Physical Environment**

The Company is mindful and aware of its responsibility to the environment and we are committed to ensuring that our management of this valuable resource is done in a responsible and sustainable way. We appreciate the health and wellbeing benefits of green spaces to people and the environment, and are focussed on the planting of trees and developing areas of rich biodiversity within our communities. We are working with landscapers to broaden our tree planting programme and implement a wildflower planting scheme that will promote a greater volume of invertebrate life, which will in turn support the wild bird population and greater overall biodiversity. As part of our focus on such initiatives we will work closely with our partners to target this area. Such projects

as Vistry's installation of hedgehog highways in all their communities, having joined forces with the British Hedgehog Preservation Society, and Countryside's alliance with NatureSpace Partnership in research on the protection of the endangered great crested newt, and their installation of bat and bird boxes to further protect local ecology on sites, supports our commitment in this regard.

Recent challenges and movement restrictions, and the importance of accessibility to outdoor space, and fostering links with such groups as Gone West, Homes England and The Woodland Trust, will be an Environmental focus going forward. We are committed to enhancing the physical environment in all our communities, to promote the best possible experience for our residents and the wider community. We regularly address and discuss options to further enhance the physical environment to encourage, and support, a healthy lifestyle, in respect of access to communal spaces and public transport links. We started 2021 with an internal Biodiversity Paper aimed at understanding our tree planting provision and a commitment to provide more trees than originally planned in our communities. This initiative has been developed further to include wildlife friendly nature gardens at Ashfield Park, Normanton, striving to develop areas of increased biodiversity. Collaboration and discussion with our construction partners and site managers across the portfolio, is ongoing, aiming to identify suitable open space for the introduction of mini forests, orchards, edible planting boxes, alongside wildflower planting. Work in this area is also underway in partnership with community members at Crossford Bridge Sports facility in Sale, alongside our ESG team and Gone West. A planned Sigma Simple Life Woodland, is taking root, with trees planted for each resident, and saplings planted by local school children, to form growing areas of increased biodiversity and provide related benefits to people and the planet. Feedback on this ambitious collaborative project will be reported in the future.

100% of Simple Life Homes enjoy a private garden, or access to vital outdoor space. We are keen to develop facilities in these spaces further.







#### **Our Responsibility To Our Planet**

Looking after and improving the local environment in which we live, is important to us. We strive to achieve positive impact in this regard through offering our residents and communities more sustainable choices for efficient water and energy use. We have future participation plans for The Great Big Green Week this Autumn, a national initiative to promote awareness of green issues.

#### World Water Day, Earth Day 2021, Plastic Free July

We recognise the importance of looking after our planet, with key dates, events and challenges helping to stimulate action and raise awareness. It is so easy, in our busy day to day lives, to simply continue as before but it is possible to make small and impactful changes with a small amount of effort. Sharing these actions with others help further influence behavioural change, and ultimately have the desired positive impact on our planet, our wellbeing and our wallets! World Water Day in March, Earth Day 2021 in April, and Plastic Free July, saw the Sigma team rise to the challenges set. The focus for us all was on how we could make these small changes, and indeed question our awareness, and improve our understanding in these areas. The team's actions and observations are examples of the small, but important, changes and adjustments we can all make in how we use the precious and valuable resources we often take for granted.

Reducing shower time, and the addition of a shower timer to assist in this area worked for some, while remembering not to let taps run while brushing teeth or washing up worked for others. Checking outside taps for leaks after the winter and trying out the shorter economy settings on the washing machine and dishwasher, resulted in surprise results and clothes and crockery as clean as on a long wash! A try-for-the-day turned into a longer term change, with benefits for the planet and our purse! A win, win!

Giving Meatless Monday a go might have seemed a challenge too far, but a self-confessed carnivore did admit to enjoying the meat-free 'meatballs' and will try these again! Staying with the food theme,

planning meals (which can actually involve all And finally, as we spend more time outdoors and family members and be fun too) and only shopping walking becomes the new norm for a daily break, for what we needed, reduced the trips to the joining up with friends and helping clean up your shops, saved time in the car, and the resulting fuel neighbourhood as we walk, is both self-satisfying and a benefit to all in our communities. It was fun and emissions. Add to this our pledge to source local produce, and eat in season fruit and veg, and to see Dottie the dog join in too! the positive impacts soon added up! We actually found ourselves checking and making conscious The challenge with all these activities and actions, decisions as we shopped, resisting the stores' is can we maintain, build upon and see these as determined efforts to sell specific items to us! natural and normal.

Planting up a wildflower planter and setting down some young strawberry plants will see reward and benefits for some in due course. Many reported the fun they had doing this with family members. Planting a potato tub is a real surprise as one simply does not know how successful one has been until harvesting! The joy of fresh home grown fruit and veg, not only for taste and freshness but quite simply because you grew it yourself!

Turning out lights as we leave a room, making sure the TV is not left on, adjusting the thermostat a few degrees, only boiling the water we need for that cuppa (and not boiling the kettle time and time again as we forget to actually make the cuppa!) might not seem important but it saves cash and it saves energy use!



#### **Plastic Free July**

This month's challenge was reducing our reliance on single use plastic. As with all these initiatives being proactive and talking small meaningful steps is the key, building a change in behaviours which will hopefully become ingrained and simply what we do!

Responses to the challenge were many and varied, but all demonstrated awareness and an understanding of the importance and need for action. I'm partial to a coffee, however I'll try and have more in the office instead of outside. I'll also be conscious of buying plastic bags in shops and will encourage the lads in the office to do the same!"

To reduce plastic waste and to support local dairy farms I am going to change my supplier for milk to the 'modern milkman'."

We make a point of sharing these days with residents and colleagues alike, building awareness and hopefully influencing behaviours, and encouraging responsible and sustainable actions.

# Sustainability for Our Residents - SaveMoneyCutCarbon

When considering how we can play our part making a positive impact on the planet, we know that small changes can have a big impact. However, we also appreciate that making greener choices can seem more expensive or even a hassle to sort. Without exception, we all agree that saving money is a goal worth pursuing too! As part of our mission to do our bit to look after our planet and to encourage more sustainable lifestyle choices, we have teamed up with SaveMoneyCutCarbon to offer 100 residents a

https://www.savemoneycutcarbon.com/



FREE 6 month membership which gives access to plenty of environmentally friendly, everyday household products at a reduced rate!

As part of this pilot, Simple Life will gather anonymised data from SaveMoneyCutCarbon to establish popular products, actions and environmental impact, and undertake a short survey to find out which products residents would recommend and why. Following a review of results, we will offer a further 100 FREE year memberships to interested residents.





#### **Clothes banks**

Last year we began implementing Clothes Banks wherever possible on our apartment schemes, to encourage residents to recycle unwanted garments.

A representative from White Rose comments, "On behalf of White Rose we really wanted to write to say a sincere thank you for the donations generously given by your residents in quarter two and to share with you the data each has produced including the carbon offset."

Q2 2021 data shows the positive impact of small numbers in our communities can indeed be great.

After such a turbulent year, we really appreciate your continued support, it has helped us to carry on raising those vital funds at a time when help is needed more than ever and we could have not have done it without you."

This clearly illustrates how important recycled fashion is and helps us to achieve a wider objective to contribute towards a more sustainable future. By donating clothes, our residents are truly giving back to the local communities!

Brand	Clothes Bank Location	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020	Q4 2020	Totals / Bin (Kg)	Total Value	Carbon offset
Simple Life	Coral Mill, Newhay	0	0	230	225	455	£2,502	1638
DifRent	Petal Court, Walkden	0	0	235	195	430	£2,365	1548
Simple Life	Fenman Mews	0	115	220	360	695	£3,822	2502

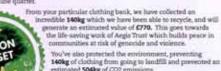
Brand	Clothes Bank Location	Totals / Bin (Kg) Q2 2021	Total Value £	Carbon offset kg
Simple Life	Coral Mill, Newhay	140	£770	504
DifRent	Petal Court, Walkden	170	£935	612
Simple Life	Fenman Mews	140	£770	504
Simple Life	Earle Street	140	£770	504
Simple Life	Prescot Park	110	£605	396
Simple Life	Hollystone Bank	195	£1,072	702

THANK YOU TO SIMPLE LIFE PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AND FENMAN MEWS RESIDENTS FOR DONATING YOUR CLOTHES	WH RO
Thank you for all your donations of clothing and access April to June quarter.	



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ing from going to landfill and prev ed 504kg of CO2

We are so grateful for your suppo

## WHITE ROS RECYCLED FASHION





e me www.whiterosefashion.com nds of passes kindly docated by you. You shay spot an area an deliver attraight to wron does

Your donations give hope for the future!

#### **Donating Clothes Saves Lives**

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#### tot imagine the impact"

The sidiff coming in it users, very a "It's a relief. A big one un, but it is a big, big relief

DON'T FORGET!

Without your help, it wouldn't be to carry out the work they do! Regif: Ordet your free White Rose Rep 2: Fill your long and attach a pre

Ship 2: Drop off year bag at any of 7,000 Collect+ Drop Off pennin matteriolde Every donation makes a difference and is a gift that keeps on giving.

Thank you.

From all of us at

you a wonderful

White Rose, we wish

Summer Season and Happy Shopping!



SECULE

#### ESG»REPORT2021



#### **Furniture**

It is important for us to build strong relationships with our many partners, and create positive links and connections in this field. Through their excellent sustainable policies we have been working with our furniture partners, LOFT in the regions and David Philips in London, to provide upcycled quality furniture for charities and local community projects, ensuring valuable funds can be more efficiently directed. We see this as a very natural circular economic drive and one we will foster and grow, going forward.

#### Electric Vehicles Company EV Policy

At the time of print we are proud to have 14 members of our team making use of the company EV policy or privately running electric vehicles, which equates as 30% of the team, a very encouraging statistic. Based upon predicted annual mileage of 206,000 miles, equates to a carbon footprint of 99 tonnes CO<sup>2</sup>e (based upon an average medium sized diesel car from 1.7-2.0 litre).

Stats calculated using: https://calculator.carbonfootprint.com/calculator

Given that it is generally accepted that I tonne of CO2 is equal to about 500 CO<sup>2</sup> fire extinguishers or a 500m<sup>2</sup> hot air balloon, and 50 trees must grow for a year to capture that tonne, our small team are certainly committing to making a positive impact as regards emissions.

When asked for comment on their decision to transfer to electric feedback was positive on the whole, but also highlighted two points going forward, firstly the need for continued development in this space with longer battery life, and secondly the need for improved charging infrastructure countrywide to see greater uptake from the population, particularly in rural areas, to support the government's 2030 EV targets.



The switch to EV felt like a step into the unknown, but I've been really delighted with the ease of charging and now I'm used to it, it's second nature. The scheme itself is fantastic, combining both a company contribution and salary sacrifice structure makes the switch from oil burners to EVs a piece of cake."

Rob Sumner, Residential Investment Director

I found the company's EV scheme financially very attractive and I really appreciated the opportunity to jump into the EV market. Personally, making the change to an EV car has reduced my household's monthly outgoings and has lowered my business travel impact on the environment."

Luke Lightfoot, Regional Director of Asset Management

*I'm very excited about it, not* only does the scheme offer a super pocket-friendly way of getting a dream car, it also helps me reduce my carbon footprint and contribute towards a better world. Absolute win-win, and a 'no brainer' in the truest sense of the term. I've also told everyone about it, so hopefully we'll see a few more on the road purely through my endorsement!" Dane Matthews, Associate Director

As I get more confidence in the charging infrastructure away from home, I suspect much more will be electric. However, I have to say that, to date, that experience has not been brilliant."

David Sigsworth, Senior Independent Non-Executive

We are still guinea pigs but it is good to be an early adopter!"

Mike McGill, Group Chief Financial Officer

Glad I have a green halo now rather than the dirty diesel one that I used to own."

Jason Berry, Regional Managing Director

#### Carbon Footprint message from Board member Duncan Sutherland

Information on the environmental impact of carbon and our personal carbon footprints, and how we can, and must, make changes in these areas, is everywhere. It is good to hear from Duncan on how he is making positive changes.

**G G** I am trying my best on the zero carbon front. I drive a fully electric car, with another hybrid in the family too. My average annual mileage is circa 12,000 although outside COVID times I think it would be quite a bit higher. Electricity

#### **Resident EV points**

We are very mindful of the growth in use of EV cars and the changing legislation in this area, meaning further growth is a certainty. We currently have 12 charging stations installed at our Empyrean apartments and plan to monitor their use as these represent our first community with good availability, with a further 6 chargers due for installation at Bilston Urban Village.

Going forward, Countyside, our key building partners, plan to install 7.5Kw wiring loom to a blanking plate on the external elevation to assist residents' easy installation of a charging box. This will start at Pullman Green in Doncaster.

wise I changed to Octopus (100% renewable) which charges my car at 5p/Kw giving me about 260 miles for £4.50! That's a considerable financial saving. Beyond transport, my 1750's Georgian House has a biomass heating system augmented by solar panels. I am also currently investigating a battery storage system. I really would encourage others to look at the wide variety of new options coming forward in this area. The opportunity to make positive changes is growing all the time."

# SOCIAL

## ESG»REPORT2021

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# OUR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# MEET OUR RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES

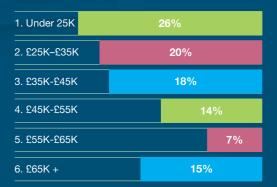
People are at the heart of our business, we are passionate about people. In all we do we aim to create thriving communities and neighbourhoods where families feel at home, comfortable and settled, close to local amenities, transport links and good schools. As a leading provider of build-to-rent family homes, we have delivered thousands of homes across the country under our own brand, 'Simple Life'. Regions Resident data

Age Brac	ket %				
1. Under 25			<b>28</b> %		
2. 26–35		41%			
3. 36-45			16	%	
4. 46-55				99	%
5. 56-65			5	%	
6. 65+				19	%

Based on new applicant data between July 2020-June 2021 – REIT and Sigma developments only.

#### ESG»REPORT2021

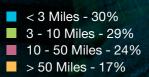
#### Household Income Bracket %



#### Child Brackets %

None - 59%
One Child - 8%
Two Children - 17%
Three Children - 3%
Four + Children - 13%

#### **Distance Travelled - per Applicant**







#### Ice Cream Dash 2021

The Simple Life Ice Cream Dash has become a staple in the event diary, and 2021 did not disappoint with a new van design and more developments than ever! Over the course of 8 days, our team travelled over 750miles visiting 47 developments up and down the country bringing plenty of soft-serve and flakes to our fantastic residents. 3,012 ice creams to be precise!

This was certainly our best turnout yet, with people lining the streets awaiting our arrival cats and dogs enjoying a few licks - but Hilton at almost every location. Whilst we've all been Park went above and beyond with their very own enjoying a bit more freedom this summer, we were T-Rex stomping along for some treats! We just very grateful for the cooperation of all attendees need to hunt down that pet application form... in using our queuing system both for safety and ease to ensure everyone got a chance to receive Torrential rain and thunderstorms in Rochdale, to a treat. As with all our events, we're often joined sunshine in Sheffield, spirits were not dampened by people who don't rent from Simple Life, but nor enthusiasm quashed. As always, it's our being part of that wider community is of real residents who make our events such a huge importance to us and we're delighted to spread a success, and we are delighted to make this little summer joy further afield! happen.



# ESG »REPORT2021

The animals were out in force this year too, with

# NOMINATE SOMEONE DESERVING

Pence of Mind Month



#### **Peace of Mind Month**

Simple Life's Peace of Mind Month ran throughout April, for the third year, and this year it was as relevant and engaging as ever.

Again, residents were encouraged to nominate a loved one who they felt deserved a little peace of mind. After what has been a sustained period of difficulty for so many people – emotionally, financially, physically – it was no surprise to receive nearly 100 nominations during the competition period. From stories of front line work or coming back from the brink of extreme illness, to those more day-to-day heroes who have helped friends and neighbours just by being there with a smile, each nominee had made a difference to someone. Everyone nominated deserved our thanks, recognition and acknowledgment for their incredible resilience, loyalty and compassion.

Winners again received vouchers tailored to them as individuals. From support with weddings, much needed respite and resources to make life easier, we were delighted to be able to offer some support.

#### WINNER BRIAN - BAYTREE LANE NOMINATED BY ASHLEY

I wanted to nominate my wonderful husband, Brian for the award.

Brian suffers from COPD and had been shielding since March 2020. In order to protect him from Covid, myself and our 2 daughters social distanced from him even in the house. This meant he wasn't able to hug us on his 50th birthday last May, or sit at the table and eat with us. I had to sleep in my daughter's room to keep him safe.

Unfortunately, in October 2020, despite all our efforts, we all contracted Covid. Brian was rushed to hospital and we had 1 minute to say our goodbyes over the phone before he was put on a ventilator. He went onto this machine with the understanding that there was a very slim chance of survival, however, when speaking to me on the phone he did so with bravery and courage that blew me away. For 5 long weeks I was told that it was likely he wouldn't make it, this was made worse by our inability to visit him and hold his hand. Finally, Brian turned a corner and started to wake up.

A further 3 weeks saw Brian learn how to breathe for himself. Eventually, he came home to us and the rehabilitation started. He had to learn how to speak, walk, hold a pen, use a knife and fork and how to chew. He did all this again with remarkable courage and perseverance.

Last week Brian was able to enjoy his first day out after his shielding ended. My daughters and I are incredibly proud of him as he continues to battle the symptoms of long Covid, including PTSD. But being back with his family is what he calls 'the best medicine'.

Thank you for reading our story xxx

Prize: A new, more accessible bed

#### **Health & Wellbeing Series**

As part of Simple Life's Peace of Mind month in April, we were thrilled to return our popular Heath & Wellbeing series to offer support to those struggling through lockdown. This year was entirely resident focused as we shared eight videos all created by our customers who had a skill to share to make up our virtual series.

Many have found repeated lockdowns increasingly challenging and staying connected to a community is a key resource in looking after our wellbeing. Over the course of four weeks, our series saw a range of videos posted to our social channels, focused on themes connected to Health and Wellbeing. Taking part in home exercise video or baking something tasty and nutritious, often taking small steps can take the edge off turbulent times.

Week 1 focused on **exercise**, arguably the most effective way of looking after our health and wellbeing. With access to gyms and facilities closed at the launch of the series, we were all looking for ways to keep active from our homes.

Week 2 featured **beauty**. We all agree that looking after our appearance boosts selfesteem. This theme was perfectly timed as restrictions gradually eased and we prepared to transition from virtual meetings to some much needed face time.

To quote Mary Berry; 'Cooking and baking is both physical and mental therapy' and if it's good enough for Mary, it's good enough for us, so Week 3 was all about **food and baking**. Residents shared videos to celebrate the theme with little helpers joining in.

To close, in week 4, we celebrated **Mental Wellbeing**. The importance of looking after our mental health cannot be understated.

All resources can be viewed anytime on our YouTube Playlist.

youtube.com/SimpleLifeHomes



#### ESG»REPORT2021

WEEK 1

WEEK 2

WEEK 3

#### **Top Tips to Unwind**

#### Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental health and wellbeing is very close to Sigma's heart. At the core of our rental brand Simple Life, is peace of mind and much of our efforts and initiatives for residents are centred around being valued, treated well and remaining happy and healthy.

We recognise that it is important to look after ourselves, so as part of Mental Health Awareness Week, we took the opportunity to reflect on what our team likes to do to unwind and de-stress. We shared our top tips more widely with the industry, and created a video featuring key Simple Life personnel to share with all our customers. https://youtu.be/FdxyA7WCUgY

Planned training of internal Mental health first aiders, alongside the current First Aid provision, illustrates the Company's awareness of and commitment to overall Company wellbeing.



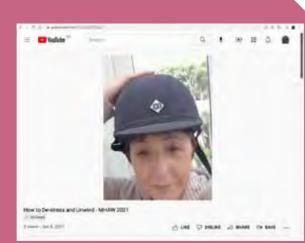


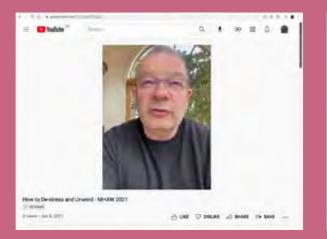


#### Virtual Easter!

April's Virtual Easter Egg Hunt returned with more fiendishly clever clues than ever! Simple Life residents were encouraged to search high and low across the website to hunt down our eggs – each one revealing the clue to the next location. Over 150 entrants each received chocolate bars from our friends at Love Cocoa, with 10 lucky winners receiving a deluxe hamper!

# VIRTUAL EASTER EGG HUNT! ENTER NOW







Town Action Control and Action Actions



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#### ESG»REPORT2021









#### **Date Night**

As the dark evenings closed in and the second national lockdown was announced, we decided to launch a resident date night competition. Residents were invited to tag their other half or housemate in to our social post, noting their favourite takeaway cuisine. One winner per development was selected at random to receive £50 Just Eat Vouchers for a dine-in takeaway on Simple Life, whilst also helping to support local eateries. Needless to say, this was a huge success with over 280 entries!



#### Christmas 2020

With the end of a very difficult and unexpected year for us all, Christmas in our communities was a time to come together virtually, and share some joy, hope and happiness.

Our favourite annual competition was back by popular demand, – our Christmas tree competition - with prizes galore! A massive 174 entries made this year's competition our most popular yet, and definitely brought festive cheer!

We also ran our site-wide competition again this year, which saw our residents come together in a bid to win the best-dressed development! Following Silkin Green's amazing display last year, the competition did not disappoint, with Belmont Place just scooping first place. All residents at this site enjoyed a welcomed £100 cashback on their January rent!



#### **Christmas Storytelling**

As Christmas preparations intensified, Simple Life parents benefitted from some time, with our live Facebook bedtime storytelling sessions running over 4 nights in the lead up to Christmas. Books read and enjoyed, included favourites such as Paper Dolls, What the Ladybird Heard, and The Gruffalo's Child, for younger children, and Christmas classics - A Christmas Carol and Oliver Twist for the older children, and some grown-ups too!



#### **Christmas Santa, his Elves & Reindeer**

Despite all the uncertainty throughout 2020, we were extremely pleased to be able to end the year on a festive high and still provide a little Christmas magic for our residents. Santa, his Elves and Reindeer were able to visit 31 Simple Life developments over 7 days. Due to restrictions, Santa's team paraded through the neighbourhoods, enabling children young and old to have photos taken safely from their doorsteps. We were, once again, overwhelmed by the turnout and support, a true mark of community spirit. Even more importantly, we were very grateful to see everyone staying mindful of the distancing rules to ensure Santa and his helpers remained safe and well throughout the run up to the big Christmas day.

FATHER CHRISTMAS

#### **Car Park Panto**

Unable to go to a traditional festive favourite, the Panto, Car Park Party brought the Panto to us! In partnership with Birmingham Stage Company and Horrible Histories, they presented Horrible Histories on an outdoor stage in locations across the country. Simple Life was lucky enough to partner up with the scheme for its Manchester Boxing Day performance at AJ Bell Stadium. 150 Simple Life's North West Residents enjoyed a free family ticket!



#### **Pizza Evenings**

Despite the challenges of social distancing and lockdown, Simple Life customers enjoyed 2020's Autumn Pizza Events! Our biggest yet, we once again teamed up with the Wood Fired Pizza Company to serve up warming slices across 8 of our developments. The weather threatened to dampen the fire but residents braved the rain in order to get their made-to-order pizza.

Cooperation from all joining us when it came to queuing up safely and keeping a clear distance between households greatly helped us to run successful events like this over the past year! Such opportunities for neighbours to catch up safely, and welcome new residents, has been so important.

Fingers crossed for more relaxed, not to mention dryer conditions next year!

#### **Bonfire Night with a difference!**

With organised fireworks displays cancelled this year, and encouragement for us all to stay home as much as possible to keep safe, we provided ideas and inspiration for making bonfire night at home still a memorable occasion! Camp-Ins, treasure hunts, pumpkin pies and toasting marshmallows, alongside firework arts and crafts, we kept this day fun!



# **EMPYREAN** RESIDENTS CAN S WING O S MONTH'S O S MONTH'S **RENT BACK** 0



#### **Online Engagement and** Connection

Keeping connected and sharing stories, and photos, has been so important during the repeated lockdowns and time at home, and our Facebook, Instagram and YouTube platforms have been a busy with plenty of competitions and fun extras, keeping us all connected and smiling. Events and competitions such as Selfie Contest, Christmas trees, festive house lighting, Valentine's competition, home inspirations and of course Lockdown Learning support, and many more were so well supported and much needed.

66 Winning was amazing, being a month's rent up is very nice, we did put some towards our holiday in October! ,,

0











#### **Supporting Colleagues' Initiatives**

We are always keen to support colleagues with their chosen charity activities and events, and this year those supported were varied and personal.

Money was raised for **Run for Heroes** through a gruelling challenge to run 48 miles over 48 hours. The charity, set up last year in light of the pandemic and has since raised over £7 million for NHS linked charities. Donations raised from this event will go directly to supporting Mental health initiatives; Support for NHS workers welfare & wellbeing; and Youth & disability initiatives that promote greater community inclusion within sport. The team raised over £8k with a £1k donation from Sigma.

The challenge to complete 280,000 steps to raise money for Children's Hospices around Scotland (CHAS), saw one colleague walk come rain or shine, reaching her target early with the help of some special guest walking partners! CHAS support children throughout Scotland with lifeshortening conditions. No matter how short their time together may be, it is filled with happiness. She raised £1,195 with Sigma donating £1,000.



KATASHA HOME DECOR

#### **Supporting Small Businesses!**

As a direct result of Covid, we have seen many small businesses struggle over the course of this year. In a bid to do our bit to help we have ran a few resident focused campaigns.

From October 2020, we have invited residents across our 4000 homes UK wide to share with us their small business or a small business they work for. In response to this we were able to give them free promotion across our Simple Life network, encouraging residents to shop small and local in support of each another. We had such a brilliant response to this campaign that what was intended to run for just a month, lasted for the rest of the year. We are now looking for this to become an ongoing initiative – supporting residents for the long-term.









Scan to download our Resident Business Directory

#### **Book Guardian Project 2021**

We all agree that reading is a life skill but also a wonderful means of relaxation and 'time out', information gathering, discussion and debate. Losing oneself in a good book, following a new recipe, sharing a story with a child, and reading together, are just some of the many benefits of books! So what do we do with our books when finished? Sharing and swapping is a wonderful way of accessing great reads, clearing space and meeting people. The launch of our Simple Life Book Guardians and boxes was a chance to facilitate and achieve such opportunities. With further initiatives for Book Groups and story-times, this project can grow with our guardians and in our communities. Our first boxes were installed in the front gardens of our volunteers at Shrewsbury Close, Coral Mill, Brookside Grange and Rochwood Rise in early August, with another six to follow for communities in Greater Manchester and Lancashire. With over 20 volunteer Book Guardians committed to this project reading and sustainability will thrive together.

The boxes have a great story in themselves, built for Simple Life in Scotland by a creative, talented joiner/apprentice team at HM Raitt & Sons Ltd, the focused project of their apprentice joiner Rodrigo. His natural ability with tools, creativity and positive outlook is clear in the beautiful boxes. The materials used in the construction was three-fold, a repurposed hardwood chest of drawers, salvaged from Indonesian fishing boats; and original c1900s wood panelling from an Edinburgh book store, historically an old bank. The final element is reclaimed 1980 Swedish hard wood flooring. The boxes are mounted on a base plate constructed out of repurposed metal from a decommissioned road gritter. These are manufactured in conjunction



#### ESG»REPORT2021

with Cuthbertson engineering who have been in operation from 1936. Again the design and fabrication was undertaken by the apprenticeship team, an important goal in this project. With surplus Perspex for the doors, and hinges and nails salvaged from old windows, our boxes are a real story in repurposing materials.

Like a good book, there is a great story and history behind the boxes, and a wealth of creativity and determination from partners to act in a responsible and sustainable way. Skills have been developed and nurtured, a love of reading encouraged, communities drawn together, and a resulting reduced carbon footprint through care and vision. Yes, it takes time, and yes it costs a little more, but the impact for people and the planet cannot be disputed. It is simply a matter of choice for positive impact that feels right, and a legacy and story worth writing.

**Shrewsbury Close Coral Mill Brookside Grange Rochwood Rise** Holyoake Road **Reynolds Place Queen Victoria Place** Canalside Abbotsfield Woodford Grange James Mill Wav **Stonefield Edge Prince's Gardens Kirkleatham Green** Empyrean **Fernhurst Primary school** 



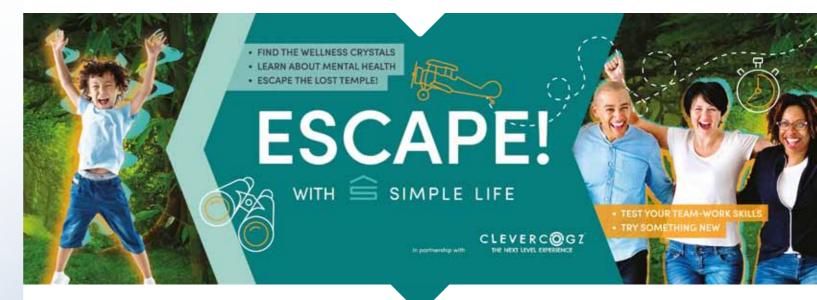
#### 'Building for my Future' with The Outward Bound Trust

Moving on from school or from within care is an exciting time for a young person, but it is also a time of considerable personal growth, questions and challenge. We are thrilled, and extremely excited, to be partnering with The Outward Bound Trust on a project aimed at 16-18 year olds as they take the next steps on life's journey -'Building for My Future'. The course will be open to 16-18 year olds from our resident families, and our many partner groups, including Centrepoint, The Salford Foundation, local secondary schools in our communities, NSPCC, Park Palace Ponies' volunteers, Sale Girls Football, apprentices from supply chain partners, and many more. The focus will be young people, who would not otherwise get such an opportunity, are recommended to apply for a place on the course, which we fund. They meet other young people setting out on life's journey, build relationships and return with increased self-belief and skills, ready to give something back to their community and achieve their personal potential. This first pilots, March and October 2022, will centre on the North West, but the aim will be to extend this provision countrywide! The Outward Bound team will track the impact of the course in two stages, with an initial review after the April course (to be submitted in advance of September 2022) and a further review when the pilot courses conclude in November 2022.



Such projects are only possible through the company's vision, values and work, and we firmly believe this will have huge benefits to so many, well beyond the courses themselves, but wider communities and society in general. There will also be places available for colleagues to volunteer and be a part of the courses, as

accompanying adults. Plans and discussions with our wider partners are well underway, and we look forward to sharing developments in the near future.



#### Amazon Rainforest Escape Rooms Roadshow - Clever Cogz

The past year has certainly demonstrated the importance of, and need to support and nurture, resilience and confidence in young people and families. We are very excited to introduce our first Wellness Roadshow, in conjunction with a resident's business, Clever Cogz, a mobile escape room.

In line with Simple Life's key brand value peace of mind, and the work we do to promote health and wellbeing, we will offer this health and wellbeing themed experience free of charge to local schools and our residents. Activities within the experience will include some tasks around physical wellbeing, mindfulness, empathy, guided meditation, gratitude and mindset among other topics.

Given that schools have been closed for some time, and therefore school trips unavailable, we plan to bring the school trip on site, reducing the stress, cost and uncertainty around these at present. Through engagement with the schools, the provision and visit can be tailored to fit the PSHE and wellbeing programme of participating schools. Further news on this Roadshow initiative will follow.





#### ESG»REPORT2021



#### **Supporting Others in Our Wider** Community

We are committed, and work hard, to support local charities and community initiatives where possible, engaging with our residents and partners as to where our support is needed and can be directed. The continued challenges of COVID, throughout 2021, for all charities, and the rise in needs in many areas, has been immense. The resulting connections mean we have fostered new partnerships and relationships upon which we will build going forward. Linking our partners with one another, and exploring the many possible links and collaborations has also been a positive impact of the current situation for all.

#### **Park Palace Ponies**

We have continued our support of the marvellous work that Keith, Bridget and their team and volunteers do at Park Palace Ponies. Moses, our Sigma sponsored pony, continues to provide lessons and experiences for the children aged 7-10 years in Dingle, Toxteth. He is certainly a character, cheeky and inquisitive, but alongside his stablemates he brings joy and that empathetic connectivity between animals and people.

We look forward to continued support of this superb small Charity and are excited for them as they expand their offerings of pony management and riding lessons to the local community. It has been wonderful to see the development of their summer camps in conjunction with Aintree Racecourse.



Salford Loaves and Fishes Salford Loaves & Fishes is absolutely over the moon We have been delighted to support two that Sigma Capital have funded the important projects for Loaves and Fishes, Salford. Prior to the lockdown we funded the cost of installation of a new client database for fitting a built in Panic Alarm System at their Drop the organisation. This is so much more in Centre which was a much needed asset for the than just another database, it will be organisation. game changing for Salford Loaves and Nicola Daly, Administrator, stated "many of the Fishes. In-Form is a complete client relationship and service management system for housing and homelessness organisations. It will help us to build stronger relationships with clients and improve the productivity our service. In-Form will be a huge improvement to the system we are currently using. Jonathan Billings, CEO, Loaves and Fishes adds: It will enable us to have much better communication, it will save lots of time. We are delighted to receive freeing up workers to deliver even such fantastic support from more support to people in need. In June 2021 we provided 346 support sessions which resulted in preventing 105 people from becoming homeless. We also managed to support 15 other people directly off the streets and in to accommodation. Work like this is often complex and challenging, having a powerful efficient database behind us to record and monitor our work ensures that we give people the best possible support to get off the streets is game changing for our charity. I would like to express our sincere thanks to everyone at Sigma Capital for their much appreciated ongoing support of Salford Loaves and Fishes Ensuring clients are well supported is key to this and the people we support."

people we see are at their lowest point, desperate and often experiencing significant mental health issues. The Panic Alarm System is a large step towards ensuring that our staff and volunteers and all who visit our Centre remain safe from harm while on site." Due to the pandemic and lockdown the work on the Panic Alarm System was delayed but is now completed and fully active.

Simple Life. The support we have received has enabled us to work in a safe environment. It has been a very challenging 12 months during the lockdowns and this has had a very negative impact on hundreds of local people. We have remained open and operational during the lockdowns. Without the support of organisations like Simple Life we would not have been able to do this. Thank you very much Simple Life for everything you do for Salford Loaves and Fishes and the hundreds of people who use our services."

team, and accurate data forms a cornerstone in this regard. Updating their system was something we were very pleased to support with a £6000 donation and we look forward to hearing how this improvement supports their work in the community.

Jonathan Billings Chief Executive Officer

#### Centrepoint

We are excited by our growing relationship with Centrepoint, who 'from housing and health, to learning and engagement, we aim to help vulnerable young people move on from homelessness and build a future they can believe in'. Providing much needed funds but also links to access valuable resources and further support, Sigma aims to support Centrepoint with their ambitious and extensive refurbishment of their Manchester base on Oldham Street.

Hannah Winter, Corporate Partnerships Manager, Centrepoint comments, "Sigma have now been supporting Centrepoint for over a year. Financial donations over £27,000 have supported our vital work giving a future to homeless young people. This could support 66 young people through our Homelessness prevention Service. Thanks to opening up conversations with David Philips and other partners, we hope to work together in coming months to furnish



our refurbished Manchester office, and homes for young people moving on from homelessness."

Staying up late was always something you looked forward to as you grew up. Attending a party, given late leave, going away with friends, special occasions! And staying up all night was even better - a really eventful and fun time! But what if you had no choice because you were simply too scared to go to sleep, because you were sleeping rough, homeless or in an unsafe environment. A small Sigma team decided to take action and join our partners at Centrepoint for their STAY-UP night, to raise funds to support young people, and help prevent homelessness but also to simply raise awareness of this ongoing situation in our towns and cities. Donations raised over £2,000. £1,000 from Sigma. Find out more at https:// centrepoint.org.uk/



#### British Heart Foundation

Heart and full body health is so important and awareness and knowledge of CPR and Defibrillator use has never been more in the news and important. Speed of action can vastly improve survival rates. Plans to develop a national

register for locations of defibrillator is something we support and welcome, and hope that our donation of £5000 supports this project. Through partnership with the BHF we have ensured our residents have regular access to support and guidance in these and many areas, through online training provision and information booklets on good overall health. Our growing partnership will extend to staff training and installation of defibrillators in our three offices. We are very grateful to the BHF for sharing information and advising on how we can all take positive steps in supporting one another in terms of general overall health.

"Thank you so much, we really value your support and kind donation. We can only continue what we do with people like you on our side, thank you."

Claire Williams Fundraising Manager East of Scotland and Islands British Heart Foundation



#### **Sheffield Flourish**

It has been a pleasure meeting the team from Sheffield Flourish this year, and we were incredibly grateful to receive and share their free mental health booklet with our residents. The guide, Sheffield Wellbeing Colouring Workbook,

pinpoints services available in the area, making access easier for people. The activities include colouring-in pages designed by local artist, Hannah Flynn, recognising the well-researched benefits of colouring-in on mental health and a sense of time, calm and personal space.



Access to music has similar health benefits, and we are pleased that our £1800 donation and repurposed Apple Mac will help enhance the facilities for users of Sheffield Flourish's Open Door Music hub.

"Open Door Music supports people living with mental ill-health to take part in musical activity through weekly jamming sessions, music production, a singing group and monthly artist gathering. The group also play on the psychiatric wards, sharing their music with mental health inpatients. Open Door Music Production is an activity that has proven popular for certain people who struggle to engage with more mainstream mental health activity, including men and people for the Black community. Music production is a great enabler to be creative and build social connections. Music production is heavily reliant on digital software, particularly compatible with Macs. It is quite difficult trying to find funders who are willing to support this, so your offer of help has been such a wonderful surprise."

#### Josie Soutar Managing Director, Sheffield Flourish

The importance of this facility and support is evident from the feedback of those attending.

"Meeting new people has always been hard for me, I don't share many interests with people. So coming to Open Door Music with a whole host of different people with different tastes in music has been a huge benefit to me to be able to discuss and play the stuff that I like as well as discover new music as well, something I've always enjoyed doing."

"Open Door Music has changed my life. Absolutely incredible, would recommend to anyone! Wouldn't be without the group and the people!"

#### NSPCC

Throughout 2020, Sigma and NSPCC have been working together to help keep Simple Life families up to date with how they can best communicate all things related to Covid to their children. This included advice on supporting children returning to school after lockdowns and where to seek support.

For Christmas 2020, we chose to donate £2,000 to the NSPCC rather than send out Christmas cards. They've shared with us what the donation means in practical terms to their organisation and the children they support.

- Answer 250 contacts to Childline to help children who need someone to turn to
- Answer 200 contacts to the NSPCC Helpline for adults who have concerns about a child

"I am so immensely grateful that you were there to listen without telling me I am lying, judging me or making me feel worse about myself and that is the amazing thing about these chats, they can save lives." Girl, 14

"Sometimes people will say they're scared of making a mistake. I've had a few people saying 'supposing I'm wrong?' I always say that's what we are here for, to talk things through and you are right to phone, because suppose you are right."

#### NSPCC Helpline Counsellor

As part of our developing relationship with the NSPCC team in Liverpool we aim to offer support as they strive to achieve a sensory garden at the centre, a very exciting project.





#### Thank You from Women's Aid

Supporting others, through engagement with our residents, is very important to us and we very much appreciate hearing about the resulting impacts. One such charity, Women's Aid, who received £25,480, shared feedback showing the lasting impact their work has on the women who access their support. With the donation they were able to expand their Live Chat service, giving more women the chance to seek help discretely and privately. They have also released a free to access Expect Respect Toolkit, to help parents, guardians and adults tackle challenging conversations with young people.

women's aid

#### 'Motherhood' by Something Good Theatre

Motherhood is a wonderful time but it can also be a time of great change, challenge and uncertainty. Supporting new mothers and families at this time has never been in more demand, with the need for food parcels formula feed, sadly, on the rise. We were delighted to be able to support Francesca Maia, an Empyrean resident closely involved in this wonderful initiative, purchasing 30 online tickets for our team. The evening was a wonderfully sensitive and thought-provoking series of short solo performer plays on the array of experiences and feelings, reflecting genuine awareness and honesty of 'Motherhood'. Each ticket sale went towards helping a low income family receive direct lactation support. Last year 1.9 million food parcels were handed out and whilst many choose to formula feed, with increasing costs of formula, sterilisation and bottles many woman struggle ultimately to achieve their goals due to lack of support. Supporting the work of those helping mothers in this area is wonderful and indeed powerful. Further information at https://www. Imjinfantfeedingsupport.com/contact

Thank You

This incredible donation will make a huge difference to the lives of women and children experiencing abuse.

Thank you so much to everyone who has made this donation possible, those who nominated us and all your residents who voted to support Women's Aid.

women's aid

## SOMETHING GOOD THEATRE PRESENTS

# -

MOTHERHOOD



#### £4k for 4K

We celebrated the release of our 4000th home this year and to acknowledge and celebrate we invited our residents to nominate a charity of their choice to receive a £4,000 donation. We were overwhelmed by the nominations of so many fantastic organisations, from over 30 residents. We were delighted to donate £4,000 to Zoe's Place in Middlesbrough to support their amazing work with families and young children. In addition, we will be providing a small £1,000 donation to Wigan & Leigh Deaf Children's Society and Blac



Deaf Children's Society and Black Country Touring, as further support of their brilliant work.



#### Zoë's Place, Middlesbrough

Zoë's Place is an independent registered children's charity providing palliative, respite and end of life care to babies and infants aged from birth to 6 years suffering from life-limiting or life-threatening conditions. Compassionate care is at the heart of our philosophy and this will be provided to all who access our facilities. There is no cost to the families for this service.

We have 3 hospices located across the country – Middlesbrough, Liverpool and Coventry. We believe every child should be afforded the right to live their life to the maximum potential. The care we offer is provided in a safe home from home environment by our specialist team of Nurses.

The £4,000 kindly donated by Sigma Capital, on behalf of their 4,000 residents, will go such a long way. It currently costs around £3,000 to keep our doors open for one day, for up to five children. During a typical day, we offer specialist services and care such as, a state of the art sensory and play room, therapy spa bath, specialised transport for days out, one to one care plans, art, music and play therapy, as well as physiotherapy and a beautiful garden area which hosts a playground, gingerbread house and quiet spots, for children to enjoy some solitude and to relax amongst our beautiful surroundings.

Every single penny raised by Sigma Capital will go towards helping us provide these wide range of specialist services to all of our beautiful children for another day.

From everyone at Zoë's Place Baby Hospice, Middlesbrough, we would like to say a huge thankyou to Sigma Capital for such an amazing gesture and we look forward to working with the team in the future.

Sara Benson Corporate and Major Donor Fundraiser

## The Children's Society

# Wigan & Leigh Deaf Children's Society

Wigan & Leigh Deaf Children's Society was established in 2013 by the parents of 3 children who were newly diagnosed as deaf. Since then we have grown considerably and we now include any child and their families with any Sensory impairment.

We arrange regular activities for children and their families of all ages from pre-school to teenagers. We are a local source of support as we know 90% of deaf and visually impaired children are born onto families with no experience of hearing loss or blindness. This means that the majority of the people that we deal with are experiencing great uncertainty and are seeking answers to questions that they never thought they would need to ask. From our experience we know that this time is very daunting and we offer reassurance through facilitating the sharing of experience and knowledge.

The money donated by yourselves will be used to continue our deaf and visually impaired swimming lessons. These lessons aim to build confidence and self-esteem, they help children and their families realise that their disability does not need to be a barrier.

Also, the money donated will help towards British Sign Language (BSL) lessons. We have found that parents find it helpful especially when children are young to use sign language to communicate.

Diane Roberts WLDCS Co-ordinator



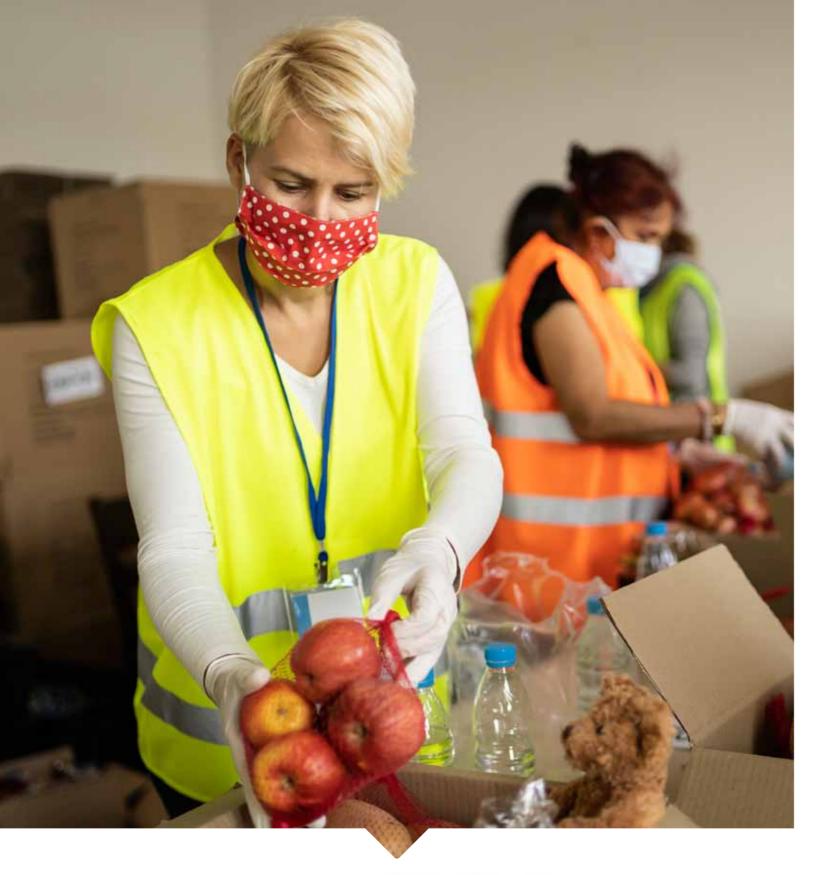
#### **Black Country Touring**

This grant of £1,000 will support Black Country Touring as they resume activity in local communities following the pandemic. Working across Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton, the performing arts charity supports local people to programme live theatre and dance in small community venues, in areas where there are few opportunities to experience arts and culture. Black Country Touring believe that the arts have the potential to change lives by allowing us to see new possibilities, develop new skills and provide opportunities to reflect on our own lives, communities and the wider world.

Black Country Touring also runs the pioneering Young Promoters scheme which sees children in primary and secondary school transform their school into a venue for professional live theatre dance, programming for their wider community. All aspects of the show are managed and organised by the young people involved. They lead on all decisions: from programming and marketing to running the box office and front of house. They host the visiting company and even fundraise for the show. It not only gives children agency and real-world responsibility, it also develops key life skills such as collaboration, resilience and effective communication.

Black Country Touring is also a producing theatre company, making new shows that reflect and celebrate the rich cultural diversity of contemporary Black Country life. They are developed specifically to engage audiences with limited experience of theatre, often taking place in small spaces - libraries, shops, even caravans - and inspired by the stories and lives of local people.

Matt Andrews Fundraising & Development Manager Black Country Touring









#### Foodbanks

Accepting that in modern Britain we have a huge and growing need for Foodbanks is difficult. We recognise that our, £4,000 donation is very important to each of these charities and we will continue to provide support in whatever way we can. Funding and donations are clearly vital, and we are also looking at broader areas where we can support, by volunteering across the myriad of provision these charities offer. It is clear from these messages of the need for, and positive impact of, our support.

#### **The Big Help**

"As the Big Help Project - Knowsley foodbank enters its 10th year of supporting local people in poverty, we recognise the enormous contribution from our volunteers, staff and so importantly our donors and contributors who ensure that we have always been there for people. Our need to provide food to people in crisis has never felt more required than in the past 18 months. Our ability to increase the volume of our packing and delivery 10 fold, virtually overnight, would guite simply have been an impossible task without the continued support we receive. Our food parcels used to be based on a balanced provision of dried and tinned products to sustain individuals and families across 3 days. During the pandemic we committed to extending this to provide: fresh fruit and vegetables, cheese, butter, bread and eggs. This was well received and we continue to provide these as a basic provision in every food parcel we provide. The generosity of Sigma's recent £4000 donation will ensure that our work can continue despite the adversity and challenges faced by ourselves and most upsettingly by our clients. Thank you from all of us and all the people who benefit through us."

Simon Cowie Chief Operating Officer Big Help Group

#### **The Well**

Thank you so much for this very generous donation. This kind of support really underpins the growth of the work we do to support the community.

Caroline Price-Project Leader The Well Wolverhampton

#### **Atherton and Leigh Foodbank**

On behalf of Atherton & Leigh Foodbank may I thank Sigma Capital for providing this generous grant of £4,000 in supporting our local Foodbank. In normal times we have a very close relationship with our local supermarkets doing food collections on a regular basis. The people in these areas are extremely generous in their food donations through the local supermarkets and collection points, so successful that we need premises in order to store these donations which peak after harvest in September and of course Christmas. Unfortunately warehousing costs are yet another cost that needs to be paid for in order to provide the service of helping people in The Atherton & Leigh areas, who find themselves in a food crisis situation. Without a warehouse facility an enormous amount of food would be wasted so thank you all once again for this much needed grant. Furthermore vehicle costs, fuel, light and heating plus distribution centre rents all add to the fundraising necessary in order to keep the charity running efficiently.

#### David Hughes Treasurer Atherton & Leigh Foodbank

Building relationships with local charities is important to us and we are delighted to be able to support the work of all these charities, in response to resident engagement, local and national need, and look forward to a growing partnership.



#### **Supporting Local Sports Teams**

Access to and participation in sport is so important for overall health and wellbeing, but has been hugely curtailed over the past year. We are looking forward to seeing fields and centres full of activity again soon. We have been proud to support teams and clubs in the past, and re-engaging with our partners going forward is important to us.

We are pleased to announce continued sponsorship with Sale United Girls Football Club and Upton Panthers.

Having originally sponsored Sale Girls to update their team's kit to feature Sigma's private rental brand, Simple Life, alongside the Manchester Bee on one arm and the NHS logo on the other, continued sponsorship for away and training kit, will feature Sigma's support of the charity Centrepoint, a charity working to prevent youth homelessness.

This support will also feature on the new Upton Panthers kit, needed as the squad has grown in size and number! We are delighted to highlight the wonderful work Centrepoint are doing in this area. With restrictions now lifted we look forward to seeing Sale United Girls Football Club and the boys at Upton Panthers, progress over the next year.

#### Mark Noakes, (Head Coach, Sale Girls) comments,

"We are delighted to receive the support of Sigma for all of our girls teams during the 2020/2021 season. With currently 6 teams and over 90 girls loving their football, Sigma's support has been invaluable in helping the Club encourage and promote girls football across the Trafford area. We look forward to a long and ongoing relationship with Sigma"

Ric Bengree, (Head Coach, Upton Panthers) comments, "The Panthers players are thrilled to receive the support of Simple Life for a second season. In what has been a tough year for all children, football has been something that has really helped our players get out into the fresh air, exercise and socialise in a safe environment. It's really important to the players and their parents that football is there for them and, thanks to the support of Simple Life and their generosity. On behalf of the club and the Panthers players, I would like to say a massive thank you to Simple Life".



#### **Supporting Local Schools**

Supporting initiatives and projects at local primary schools is a key focus for us, and it is true to say that schools and young people have been greatly impacted by Covid-19. To support parents through the challenges of home schooling we set up Lockdown Learning, an online support network, providing advice, guidelines and reassurance through the new experience of 'teaching and learning at home' for all.

We are looking forward to working with our local schools more closely as life returns to some normality. We are delighted to have received such positive feedback from schools on completed projects, and we will follow the impact of the trim trail installation at Mesne Lea Primary School, Walkden; the use of fitness equipment at St Richard's RC Primary in Atherton; and the effect of the new gazebo on outdoor reading, at Moat House Primary, Coventry, with great interest. We look forward to engaging on future projects and visiting schools with our Wellness Roadshow later this year.

#### **Tree-mendous! Lifting trees a-LOFT!**

Research and literature highlight the importance of trees, for the planet but actually equally, if not more, important for our wellbeing. So when the opportunity to join our furnishing partners, LOFT, in May alongside their many friends and partners, to plant trees with Gone West, we were keen to support. LOFT commit to planting a tree for each of the homes they furnish, which for us at Simple Life is 298 homes at Empyrean, Manchester. Once fully grown it is recognised that a typical tree can sequester about 21 kilograms of CO2 per year, though this absorption varies according to the species, density of wood, location and growth condition. A tree can therefore, over its 100 year lifespan, sequester a tonne of CO2, Hurlston Hall, Ormskirk was the venue for this enhanced planting and the chance to engage with partners and build new contacts. A networking lunch and presentation of the work Gone West do, was a fitting end to the day. Forging new partnerships is important and links have been made with Gone West for future community projects in this area.





#### **Volunteering - Salford Foundation**

The past 15 months have been challenging for us all but particularly difficult for those leaving school and about to head off into the world of further study, work and training. Being interview ready is something we all work on continuously throughout life! Sigma Capital is very pleased to support The Salford Foundation and their efforts to support young people in this area. Activities and events to help guide and support many age groups through transition from primary to senior school, and preparation for life after school, have been inventive and fun, whilst also informative and life-skill building. We were delighted to be able to help with recent virtual Mock Interviews at All Hallows RC High School. It was a real pleasure meeting the young people and discussing their ambitions and desires going forward, and also helping guide and advise on possible pathways and ideas. Interviews are daunting enough face-to-face but on Zoom in a room with headphones takes the nerves, and skills needed to communicate confidently and clearly, to another level. The young people our team volunteers met were enthusiastic and engaging, and all did extremely well under these unusual circumstances. We are looking forward to being involved in the forthcoming Transition Day Yr 5 Survival Island on 25 June, and events in the future.

> salford foundation CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

This certificate is awarded to

Sigma Capital Group

ing the Take Five' Initiativ

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# DIFRENT

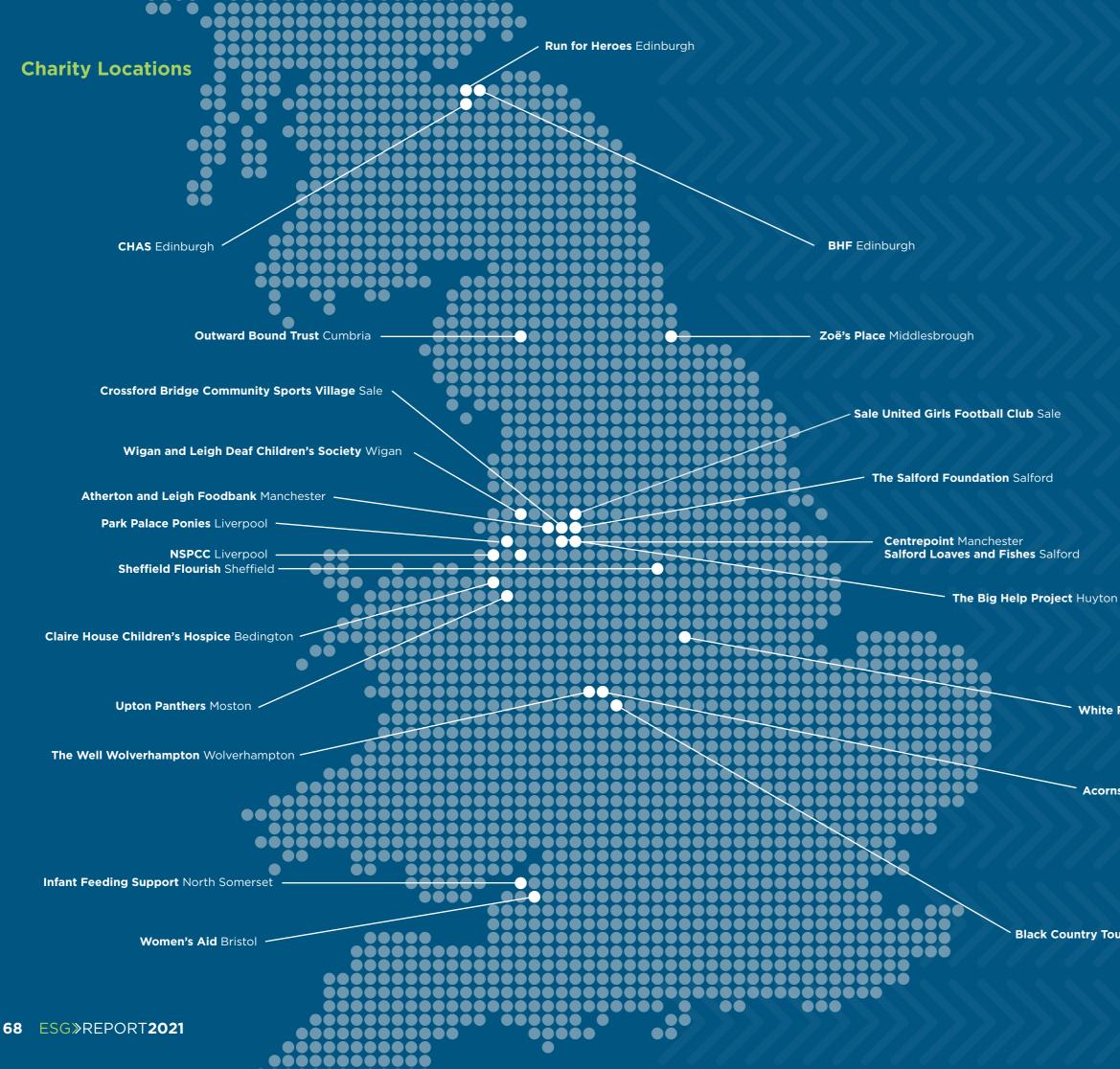
#### DifRent

We continue to value our relationship with DifRent and are pleased to be able to support their ongoing charitable efforts, through a donations to the following children's hospices.

Claire House and supporting charity shops near Ellesmere Port and Bedington, https:// www.clairehouse.org.uk/;

Acorns Children's Hospice in Walsall, https://www.acorns.org.uk/our-care/care -for-children/our-hospices/

Supporting families is key to building strong communities and these charities all make an enormously positive difference to the lives of so many.



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White Rose Clothes Nottingham

Acorns Children's Hospice Walsall

Black Country Touring West Bromwich

#### **Meet Jon**

With bold colours and statement pieces, Jon has put together a stunning country-inspired home which he proudly showcases at @our.simplelife.home.

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

We chose our Simple Life Home due to wanting a new fresh slate to stamp our mark on. The main thing we fell in love with was the kitchen in the Ellesmere, particularly the skylights! We were so excited to move in, that on the first day of moving being allowed after lockdown 1, we were packed and in!

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

The lounge was our favourite room to design. We wanted a country gentleman style with a modern flair. I have an eye for a bargain, so I spent the days before moving scouring the internet for the perfect sofa, then went from there. We love foxes and stags, which is the main inspiration behind how we have designed the rooms.

## What were your biggest design 'mistakes', and how did you fix them?

For us, it would be plants. I do not have much joy keeping them alive and I tend to buy them too big for the space I want them! We alternate the placement of them now and mix with artificial succulents to give the rooms a modern but "green" feel.

#### Yes, for sure! We always thought we wanted a vintage, country style design to our rooms. However, with the clean slate moving into a

Simple Life home specifically?

Simple Life home gave us, we were able to incorporate a modern twist to this. We used a mix of wood and metal to compliment the bold colour of our feature walls\* and used mirrors to really capitalise on the other bright walls.

How have you changed your style to suit your

#### Where's your best source for home inspiration?

We get our inspiration from country pubs, how they decorate in a warm and homely manner. We also look for alternative ways to expand on this, using websites such as Etsy for custom/ small line made pieces which is where we found our industrial twist. This really helps to make our home individual and showcase our tastes.

#### What are your decorating do's and don'ts?

Always lay everything out and read the instructions before building furniture! We have had a few mishaps with missing screws and pieces upside down, meaning a few wasted hours! Also remember to clean your brushes... I've lost track of how many we have had to buy!

**jpstacey** Can not speak highly enough of SLH! Our house became our home within moments of moving in. #faultless #beautifulhomes



## **Meet Jasmine**

Meet Jasmine, who uses her account @ourellesmeregreyhome to find inspiration to suit her monochromatic style.

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

We came across Simple Life Homes on Rightmove and were instantly drawn tot eh Ellesmere. The kitchen was a huge selling point for us, and the fact the house came with integrated appliances and flooring throughout was just a bonus. We have been in our home nearly 2 years now, and still love it as much as we did when we moved in.

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

The kitchen! It's the heart of the home and is perfect for entertaining. It's so modern and the skylights make such a huge difference.

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

I love to have family photos around the home, but coloured photos can clash with our theme. Instead, I get all our photos printed in black & white. It looks really effective, and I still have our memories on the wall. I am planning a gallery wall on our stairs, I am really excited to see how it turns out.

#### ESG»REPORT2021





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

My interior style is minimalistic and modern. I have always been a fan of grey, and I like to play around with different tones and textures. My style has definitely changed over the years, but I am confident now with what I do and don't like. Certainly makes buying furniture easier! I would say it reflects my personality, and it is mirrored in my wardrobe!

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

Pinterest and Instagram! I have recently set up a home account, and I'm really enjoying finding other homes and using them as inspiration.

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

The spare room has been the trickiest for us, as it has just been a dumping ground since we moved in. however, thanks to working from home, this room has now changed into an office. It's still a work in progress and I can't wait for it to come together!

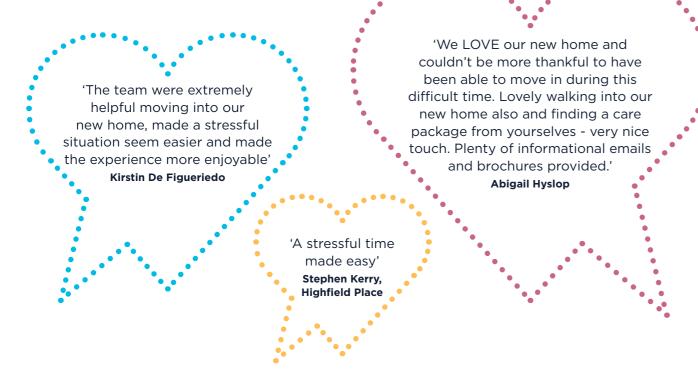
#### **Customer Testimonials and Reviews**

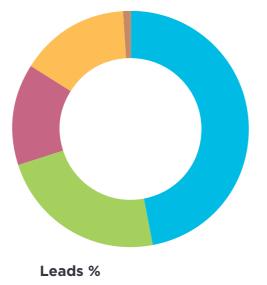
#### **Interesting facts:**

- Consistently we are seeing between 10- 14% of people 'leaving Simple Life' actually not leaving us at all and are choosing to upsize/ downsize/relocate within the brand.
- The Simple Life website is our biggest lead driver over the portals such as Rightmove (in some cases driving almost double the volume of enquiries), which is testament to the strength of the brand and what we stand for.
- The Simple Life website often accounts for the largest number of applications.
- Of people enquiring with us (whether by email, phone, web form), referrals/ recommendations accounts for one of the highest % of where people first heard of us.

Feedback is important to us and this is used to evaluate, improve and develop our product and service. We acknowledge that feedback will come in both forms, and we value and respect all feedback. We do not shy away from this, rather use it to learn and develop.

## Feedback and comment from New Move ins:





- Simple Life Website or Phone 47%
- Rightmove 23%
- Zoopla 14%
- OntheMarket 15%
- Agent 1%

#### Feedback from existing customers:

'As a Simple Life tenant for the last (almost) 2 years I can honestly say they really do treat their tenants as they say. We moved into our brand new house and felt at home straight away. Yes there were teething issues but when aren't there? If only more landlords were like Simple Life there would be less of a stigma around renting' Wiggleman12345 5 star review left on Apple podcasts (**The Simple Life Chat**).

Customer Satisfaction is important to us and monitoring, and responding to results, is a key part of our company goals and care of all residents.

Such a perfect first home for me and my partner, we couldn't ask for more! Its clean, well laid out and every little detail has been thought out carefully. The support on house DIY is great for people moving into their first home with plenty of simplelifehome youtube videos! Windows are cleaned!! Communication between the staff at simple life homes is fast, if you ever have an issue with something they are quick to respond and deal with it for you. They have lovely event days for residents and great online competitions and promote simple life homes residents if you have a business. Honestly the best!' Sasha Moore 5 star review on Trust Pilot

'Very good experiences as a tenant: from a very beginning during the application process to living in one of their houses. Good cooperation: phone calls are answered and you are being listened. A good quality house which makes living in it as a very pleasant experience which is very important for a foreigner who needed to have found a new house in a new country. The company philosophy, ethos seem to represent very personal approach. I recommend that company as a trustful one.' Aleksandra Marta 5 star review on Trust Pilot

#### ESG»REPORT2021

'Not sure what to say about Simple Life. The agent I dealt with Max was excellent. He was very helpful, reassuring and quick to respond to anything I asked. The service was almost too good. For anyone thinking
about renting a property with Simple
Life, stop thinking and do it.'

> Andrew Stephenson, 5 star review on Trust Pilot

'Won't be moving! Been a simple life tenant for 9 months now.... best landlord by far couldn't ask for more.'

5 star review

on Trust Pilot

'It's been an absolute pleasure to deal with Simple Life. From our very first enquiry to becoming a tenant on their Dutton Fields site. Moving house is often stressful for the majority of us! It was reassuring to know that the Simple Life Team were on hand to answer the many questions we had. The property is absolutely beautiful and extremely well presented. Thank you to the Simple Life Team, you've been fantastic in every way.' 5\* Highly Recommended' Keith Jones, 5 star review on Trust Pilot

#### 2021 Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey Results (July 20-June21)

Move in survey	10 month survey		
<b>96%</b> said the team made it easy to apply	<b>96%</b> said they are still happy with their home		
<b>87%</b> said they were kept well-informed during the application process	<b>89%</b> said they are happy with the service provided		
<b>91%</b> said they received all the information they required	<b>79%</b> said they felt they have been kept well-informed		
<b>89%</b> said they found the process of moving in to their home straight forward	88% said the communal areas are well maintained		
<b>89%</b> said the quality of the home met with their expectations	86% said they feel part of a community		
<b>96%</b> said they would recommend Simple Life	<b>93%</b> said they would recommend Simple Life		

All results are based on responses from neutral – strongly agree



#### **Awards**

A winning strategy (Sigma on behalf of The PRS REIT plc)

- Property Week RESI Awards Landlord of the Year 2020 SHORTLISTED
- Yorkshire Insider Property Awards Public Private Partnership 2020 WINNER
- Yorkshire Insider Property Awards Large Development of the Year 2020 SHORTLISTED
- Insider Midlands Property Awards Large Development of the Year 2021 (Lea Hall Gardens) SHORTLISTED
- Insider NW Residential Property Awards Residential Operator of the Year 2021 WINNER
- Property Week RESI Awards 2021 Best Covid Response SHORTLISTED winner to be announced
- Property Week RESI Awards 2021 Health and Wellbeing Award SHORTLISTED winner to be announced
- Property Week RESI Awards 2021 Residential Company of the Decade (Sigma Capital) SHORTLISTED winner to be announced
- Property Week RESI Awards 2021 PRS Deal of the Year (EQT and Sigma JV London Fund) SHORTLISTED winner to be announced
- UK Housing Awards The Neighbourhood Transformation Award (Equans, Sigma Capital and Sheffield Housing Company) SHORTLISTED winner to be announced

#### ESG»REPORT2021



insider Property Industry Awards YORKSHIRE 2020

SHORTLISTED











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**Residents' Newsletter** 

The third edition of our 'Simple Life' Annual Resident Newspaper was delivered to all residents in June 2021. The publication gives residents

a roundup of the previous 12 months, including events, competitions,

campaigns, testimonials, charitable donations and school initiatives. It

also informs residents of plans for the months ahead.



# the SIMPLE LIFE

Question 1:

What does ESG stand for?

Niamh

What do you coll a baby bird who's just learny to Ry?

Question 2:

Question 3:

he answer may surprise you!

Clothes Banks CO2 impact

LAST

Going Green with Pink Sheep!

Bringing Nature to Normanton etopretty, faithets land, fastions is the good



It's Over To You!

Email us at: marketing@sin with your feed

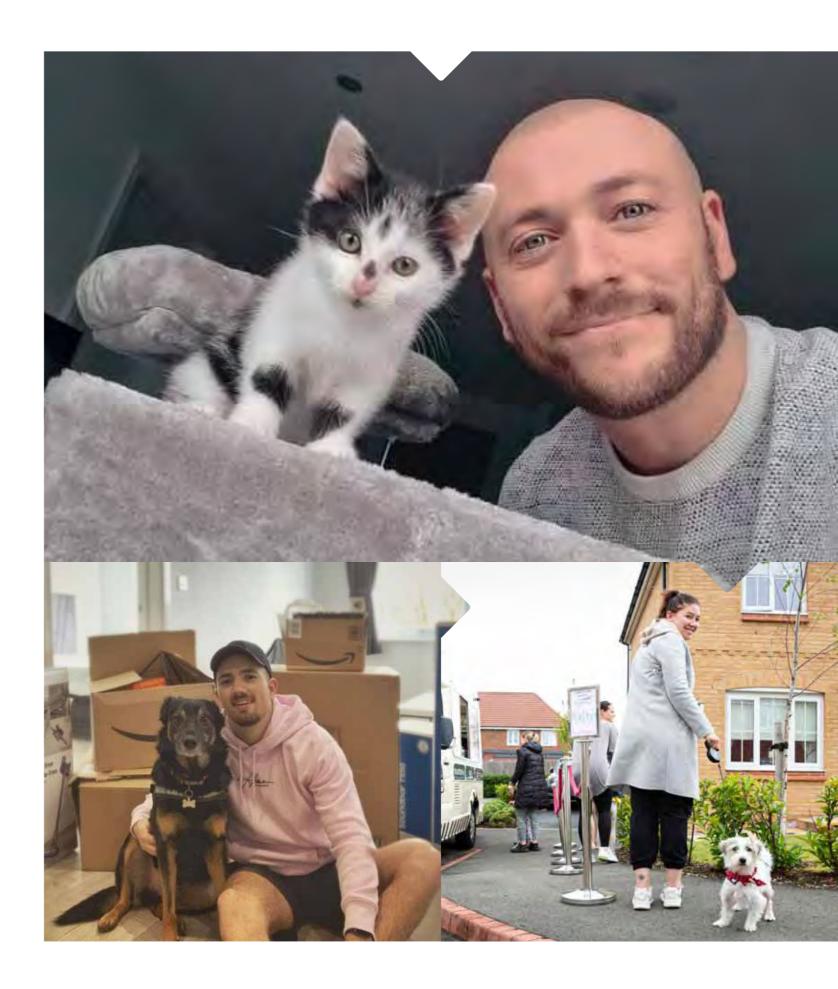
#### Pets

We understand that pets are important, loved and very much family members. Responding to our market research on the impact and the pet picture nationally we made significant adjustments to our policy on pets. There is much evidence to show the many benefits and positives of having pets, including wellbeing for residents, helping with loneliness, and particularly this past year, companionship during Lockdown. The key for us is achieving balance and respect for all members of our communities, given the possible increased noise and inconvenience for neighbours and maintenance needs.

#### Key facts are:

- Pets stay free of charge with Simple Life
- Permission is required to maintain balanced % of pets in communities
- Residents complete a pet application form to ensure we are aware of pets present
- % allowance of pets per community is in line with % of households with pets across the UK
- % is monitored to ensure communities support and respect both pet and non-pet owners

We have engaged with Battersea Cats and Dogs Charity to provide invaluable guidelines and information for our residents. Pets have been keen and active members of our communities this year, featuring in selfie competitions, enjoying an ice cream, and simply looking cute!



#### ESG»REPORT2021

## $\widehat{\square} m y$ simple life

#### My Simple Life Mobile App

Having reviewed a number of off-the-shelf portal options, due to our scale and needs, last year we embarked on building our very own resident mobile app. We are delighted to have launched our new 'My Simple Life' mobile app to all residents in August 2021, with a very large number of residents subscribing and using the app right away. The app is available on Google and Apple app stores.

The app is designed to make residents' lives that bit easier and acts as a one stop shop for all their needs, including:

- Accessing all important documents such as their tenancy agreement, inventory, EPC, Gas and EICR certificates
- All the information they need about their home and how to work their appliances, including a manuals section
- Ability to view their statement and make any overdue payments via the app
- Access to a closed forum, allowing residents to get to know their neighbours on their development
- Ability to report maintenance by accessing FixFlo via the app
- Exclusive affiliate offers and discounts
- Latest news
- Information about their area
- Information about their property including floorplans and measurements
- Ability to leave feedback for the team



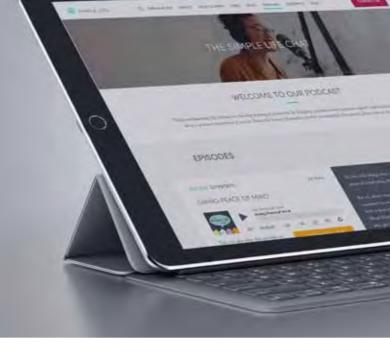
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MY STATEMENT





#### **The Simple Life Chat - Podcasts**

We want to readdress the balance in the way renting is perceived. The new Simple Life Chat podcast brings discussions between experts and residents to showcase what a positive experience it can be. From the homes themselves, the communities they create and any topics that are important to our renters.

The podcast was launched in June 2021, featuring radio presenter and journalist, Jen Thomas as our host. Episodes so far have included: interviews with various people at Simple Life, what their roles are and what Simple Life means to them; interviews with real residents, looking at their



#### Website

We aim to ensure all can access our homes and to support this we have updated our Simple Life regional website to be WCAG A-rated for the visually impaired. The Simple Life London website is also being updated in order to achieve this badge.

## <sup>the</sup> Simple Life *chat*...

reasons for renting and their rental experiences; and interviews with experts in mindset and mental resilience (including one expert Simple Life resident), which discusses the stresses of moving home and every day tips on how to cope with everything life brings.

We're aiming to produce 6 episodes per year. Future episodes will include discussions around the benefits of BTR, how can we aim to have more sustainable lifestyles, including a focus on Simple Life's green initiatives, the importance of pets, building businesses from home and the influence of reviews and ratings. Wherever possible, we will be including various guests including partners, suppliers and residents.





# GOVERNANCE



# OUR RESPONSIBILTY TO GOVERNANCE

#### **Health and Safety**

In order to maintain high standards of health and safety for those working on our sites, we commission monthly checks by independent project monitoring surveyors to ensure that all potential risks are identified and mitigated. These checks supplement those undertaken by our house building and construction development partners. Outputs from these reviews are reported to the Board immediately in the event of an incident and on a quarterly basis in the event of a nil return. We are pleased to announce that there have been no reportable incidents in the year.

#### Equality

Sigma is committed to creating and sustaining a positive and inclusive working environment for all of our employees. Our aim is to ensure that all employees are equally valued and respected and that our organisation is representative of all members of society. We define diversity as valuing everyone as an individual and this is reflected within our values and behaviours and our leadership habits which provide a collaborative and supportive working environment for all employees. A key part of this is that equality of opportunity is a core value and our goal is to ensure that the best person for any role has the opportunity to apply for, be appointed to and excel in it.

#### **Our Team**

We are a dedicated and growing team currently based in Edinburgh, Manchester and London, committed to delivering high quality, professionally managed rental homes where people and communities can thrive.

	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	July 2021
No. of Employees	32	37	43	46
% Male	63%	59%	53%	54%
% Female	37%	41%	47%	46%

## Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

The Board considers that all stakeholders stand to benefit when diversity of thoughts, ideas and ways of working from individuals with different backgrounds, experiences and identities are embraced. To this end, the Board is focused on the following:

- Creation of an environment in which individual differences and the contribution of all team members are recognised and valued;
- Not tolerating any form of unacceptable behaviour, harassment, discrimination, bullying (including cyber bullying) or victimisation in any area of employment or in the provision of our services to our customers;
- Encourage anyone who feels they have been subject to or witnessed discrimination to raise their concerns in an appropriate forum and provide appropriate forums and pathways for such concerns to be raised;
- Make every person aware of their personal responsibility for implementing and promoting equal opportunities in their day to day dealings with people and encourage employees to treat everyone with dignity and respect;
- Regularly review all our employment practices, policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the requirements of this statement;
- To monitor the effectiveness of our commitment to diversity and inclusion, and the supporting policies and procedures at least annually.

The Board of Directors has overall responsibility for ensuring that we operate within a framework of equality of opportunity. Senior management have overall management responsibility, delegated to all managers throughout the organisation.

All employees have a duty to support and uphold the principles of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and the supporting policies and procedures.

As part of a wider review, the Directors have again assessed whether they have both the breadth and depth of skills and experience to fulfil their roles. Full biographical details of the directors and their skills and experience can be found at https://www. sigmacapital.co.uk/about/ and https://www. theprsreit.com/company/board-of-directors/

The Directors who have been appointed to the Company have been chosen because of the range of skills and experience they offer and which are appropriate for the strategy and objectives for the Company. The Nominations Committee assists the Board in determining the composition and makeup of the Board. It is responsible for periodically evaluating the balance of skills, experience, independence and knowledge of the Board.

The Board recognises the value of broad experiences and diversity within its membership and enhancing this aspect will form future recruitment consideration. At a senior management level recent female appointments to the PRS REIT Board of Non-executive Director, PRS REIT Head of Finance, ESG Director, Marketing Director and Group Financial Planning & Treasury Manager, reflect the policy outlined above.

#### PRS REIT Board Appointment -Geeta Nanda, OBE

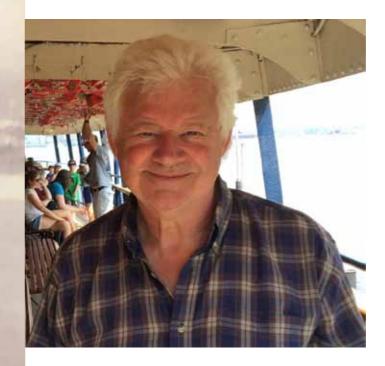
We were delighted to welcome Geeta Nanda, OBE, to the PRS REIT Board team, this year, bringing with her over 25 years of experience and knowledge of the property sector. She is currently Chief Executive Officer of Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing Association. She is responsible for the management of 60,000 homes with 100,000 residents, and an ongoing new-build programme. She also has Private Rented Sector ("PRS") experience, having established 'Fizzy Living', the PRS subsidiary of Thames Valley Housing Association in 2012.

Geeta is an Advisory Board member of Cities Restart, the body helping cities to restart during and after COVID-19, a Board member of The National Housing Federation, the industry body representing housing providers, and Vice Chair and Chair-elect of G15, the group of London's largest housing associations.

Previously, she was a Non-executive Director of McCarthy & Stone plc, the retirement communities' developer, a Non-executive Director of The St Mungo Community Housing Association, the homeless charity, and Vice Chair of SCOPE, the disability charity. Geeta was awarded an OBE in 2013 for services to social housing.

The Company encourages continuing education of its directors, officers and employees where appropriate in order to ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to meet their respective obligations to the Company. This includes supporting personnel through external examination and qualification programmes ranging from ACCA to Company Secretarial to Association of Corporate Treasurers.

## Remembering Our Friend & Colleague, Ron



Being a team is very important to us, and as a team we welcome and say goodbye to members from time to time. Like so many we have been hit by loss over the Covid pandemic. Ron Dawson was a hugely respected and valued member of our team, and his loss, in December 2020, will be felt in many areas for a long time. He meant so much to us as individuals, to the company and to all those fortunate enough to have known and had contact with Ron, including family, friends, colleagues and the wider community. His contribution and passion for community, making a positive difference to the lives of others, was evident in all he did. In order for Ron to be ever present in Sigma's ongoing ESG plans and charitable donations, our annual contributions to local schools will now be known as the 'Ron Dawson Donation'. The first project in Ron's memory will be our planned Wellness Roadshow, for schools and our residents, later this autumn.

#### Duncan Sutherland, Chairman, remembers:

I met Ron in the mid 1980's just We will miss him greatly - his ability to laugh after the Toxteth riots as we set at himself, his complete mastery of accents, about a visionary strategy for Liverpool City his support and his respect for others. I Centre. Ron immediately struck me with his will miss his friendship, his humour and his deep-rooted concern for the future of the city wisdom. It is difficult to imagine him not he loved alongside his core values of helping being around but he will remain strong in our communities and those in the city affected memories as we go forward, personally and as by economic hardship. This was to define our a company, through the challenges ahead." relationship for over 30 years.

Later we joined forces to manage 100 acres of City Council Estate on London Road. It was a tribute to Ron that this was achieved against a backdrop of turbulent times for the city. But politicians and community leaders of all sides and beliefs, backed Ron and respected him which gave testament to the success of this project – at no little cost to him personally.

Over the next few years we worked together in Coventry and Edinburgh after Ron moved to Bovis to lead their regeneration company. In that move he was ahead of the game nationally stamping his values, his fairness in dealing with people and his absolute prioritisation for people in communities that were suffering. ESG before ESG became mainstream.

With the birth of Inpartnership in 2000 Ron was the first person to approach us with a project in Salford. He felt that our values as a company and as people matched his for the regeneration of Higher Broughton. The partnership with Ron at Bovis started a 20 year close relationship with him becoming a core part of the team at Inpartnership and latterly, Sigma.

He brought us wise counsel, not just on the politics of local government but also strongly expounded his values into all the organisations he worked with of fairness, community and doing what we could for disadvantaged people.

Close colleague and friend, Matt Townson, Development Director adds,

Working with Ron was a pleasure. His experience, knowledge and professionalism supported numerous decisions and frequently clarified uncertainty, while his calm balanced approach naturally drew people to him and he became. unofficially but willingly, a trusted mentor to many in the office. As an advocate of society he focussed on the ability of the industry to provide social benefit and enhancement to the wider community for which the development served, a policy that remains engrained in the heart of Sigma today, and to that end is a fitting legacy."

#### Jason Berry, Regional MD remembers Ron as

a pure gent who loved banter. It was fascinating to see the strength and genuine nature of his relationship with senior colleagues".

Rob Sumner, Residential Investment Director recalls,

a colleague and friend - we came from diametrically opposed viewpoints but we got on well because we both shared the belief of the value of regeneration and our approach to the creation of functional, happy communities."

#### Vicky Hurcomb, Director of Marketing, who worked closely with Ron on ESG and community engagement says: What can I say about Ron?

He always put a smile on your face with his witty impressions and accents! He could spend all day long educating you on the ins and outs of Liverpool, he even earned the title of 'Mr Liverpool' in the Sigma Manchester office. He became a renowned part of the Sigma *initiation for new staff – giving the mandatory* 'Ron's Tours' within your first fortnight – taking you around lots of sites, giving you a company

download, and it didn't take long for him to work us all out! I worked closely with Ron on the community work we did, to which he was admirably passionate and about which he cared so much. I will always miss my long chats with Ron, and the days we put the world to rights."

#### Luke Lightfoot, Regional Director of Asset Management, fondly recalls:

I think all colleagues who have been with Sigma for more than 2 years can remember Ron's Magical site tours - new starters initiation, where nervous in a new role, a few days in and keen to show your professionalism, you met Ron at his home in Bolton, 'just after the traffic has cleared' (about 9:30) and off you went. Ron would scope you out in the first 30 minutes, kind of like a mini interview, to ensure you were a 'good addition' for the Sigma Team then you are good to go and he would open up. Out would come the various accents, guick wit and unbelievable background knowledge of Sigma. 'Bad' driving and many stops at Greggs later the day has gone....What a character and is sincerely missed!"

Ron's commitment to the wider community, reflecting the true values of this company, is aptly summed up by Keith Hackett, from Park Palace Ponies, Liverpool.

Ron and I met first, in 1987, when Ron worked for Liverpool City Council and I was a nearly elected councillor. His job at the time was leading a capitalfunded design group focussed on recreational and environmental projects and I was his Chair. Ron's attitude and abilities shone out. So he became key to us driving structural changes through the local authority. But unlike some (maybe most), Ron was motivated by a genuine passion to do things well and for the shared good, rather than for personal prospects. So, he'd take risks and think differently. In short, Ron wanted to do stuff,

there were other places to do this and so we both moved on. By then, we had become friends - meeting occasionally and catching up when we had both time.

and the more, the better. We both concluded Palace Ponies .... but it is about horses. As his Chair, over thirty years back, I (along with others) had to review and agree the Council's bids for the environmental strand of the Government's Urban Programme. Amongst the schemes that Ron had submitted was In late 2017, when Park Palace Ponies couldn't an improvement scheme for a cluster of close as planned, and we needed Pony woodlands adjacent to the M57 in Knowsley. Sponsors to help us remain open, I rang Ron. I picked it out and gave him a very hard time "I'll ask and see what I can do" he said. In that about it saying it wasn't even in Liverpool. moment I knew that he understood and got it. He said (robustly) that it mattered. I was Why wouldn't he: for Ron a pony riding school sceptical but let it through. Over thirty years for young kids in a Victorian theatre in L8 was later, I ride my horse Miranda passed those an obvious thing to do. And so he spoke to woodlands most days, and when I do, I think people in Sigma, and he and Vicky visited, and of Ron. Buzzards fly overhead. He was correct we had a pony sponsor. about that one ... and so very much more

Fast forward to now. As I write this I have tears in my eyes. I miss his wit, his mimicry, and his incisive mind. And I miss his 'can do' approach to the world.

So here's a last thought and it isn't about Park

## 'Sometimes it is not about the journey or the destination, but about the people you meet along the way' (Nishan Panwar) and it is true to say Ron was definitely part of all our



#### ESG»REPORT2021

Our bits of the world are so much better for Ron Dawson's time spent in it.



## **Governance & Compliance**

The Group is subject to statutory reporting requirements. The Board has a balanced range of complementary skills and experience, with independent non-executive directors who provide oversight, and challenge decisions and policies as they see fit. The Board believe in robust and effective corporate governance structures and are committed to maintaining high standards and applying the principles of best practice.

The Board has adopted the Quoted Companies Alliance (QCA) Corporate Governance Code which requires companies which follow those rules to adopt and comply with a recognised corporate governance code. As part of the appointment of Ian Sutcliffe as Chairman, the Board of Directors reviewed the Company's performance against the QCA guidelines and updated Sigma's Corporate Governance Statement accordingly. An independent consultant with governance experience within a FTSE100 company was engaged to assist the Board in this regard.

The Board considers that the Company continues to comply with the QCA Code in all respects but following the review has made a number of changes to enhance disclosure and transparency of its operations in line with the spirit of the QCA code. These areas include the following:

- Clarifying principles for the appointment, service and independence of Directors on appointment and during their tenure
- Appointment of a Senior Independent Non-Executive Director
- Additional disclosure around the decisionmaking of the Remuneration Committee

- Inclusion of an Audit Committee report
- Revised policies have been developed and there is a timetable in place for consultation before implementation of more up to date policies in respect of the following:
  - Anti-bribery and Corruption PolicyRemuneration Policy

Consistent with the QCA code, the various policies and procedures are subject to continuous review and updating by the Board of Directors.

#### ESG»REPORT2021

Finally, we are delighted to share news of our move to be a part of PineBridge Investments Group as we embark on the next stage of our company's development. Following the acquisition by PineBridge, we are no longer listed but plan to maintain high standards of corporate governance. We look forward to sharing developments and ambitions with all stakeholders as we move forward.

#### **Future Ambitions**

Going forward we have lots of plans to boost and encourage environmental impact:

- Retrofitting Electric Vehicle charging points
   on our older properties
- Looking into water butt installation in back gardens
- Investigate the possibility of local milk delivery
- Reviewing what is permitted in terms of planting in gardens
- Research the provision of fitness opportunities within communities, cycle routes, mile run, Padel courts.

Close and proactive engagement with our communities is important to us at Sigma and Simple Life, and we are excited to build upon our work to date, and develop our plans for the year ahead. These plans include:

- Growing partnerships with charities, local businesses and clubs, and our building partners.
- A Woodland Project
- Growth of volunteering opportunities with local foodbanks and charities
- Literacy & Book Bus project;
- Enhanced School & Community Wellbeing Roadshow to include local businesses and clubs; teaming with residents to create partnership projects;
- Net Zero home project with building partners.
- Enhanced Biodiversity planting schemes





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