



Impact Report 2023





Introducing Heart of Sage

Heart of Sage is Sage Homes' Community Benefit Society for projects, organisations and individuals. Established in 2022 thanks to generous donations from Sage Homes' investors at Blackstone and Regis, the Heart of Sage team work hard to provide support to Sage customers most in need and to harness the power of our wider communities and colleagues. Our mission, spending and performance is driven by an independent committee, chaired by Sage Homes' Non-Executive Director Cindy Rampersaud.

2023 was the first full year of our activity and our activities are outlined in this annual report. These vary from hardship support, community engagement and events to volunteering and charitable fundraising.



Heart of Sage is already making a difference to our customers and delivers our commitment to improving lives and driving sustainable change in the communities we serve.



- Cindy Rampersaud, Chair of Heart of Sage and Sage Homes Non-Executive Director

We're open to all customers and colleagues, delivering our mission and sharing Sage Homes' values.

Our mission

Heart of Sage's mission is to help customers build sustainable communities, empowering them to grow. The fund improves outcomes for Sage Homes customers and communities in ways that align with Sage Homes' values.



A company that likes to be at the heart of the community supporting their residents. I finally feel at home.

- Sarah, Sage Homes customer
Milton Keynes



Our values

Inspiring change and improving lives is at the heart of everything we do. Heart of Sage funds projects which meet Sage Homes' values:



Home for everyone

We support programmes that help customers manage or alleviate financial hardship to improve their financial wellbeing and help them stay safe in their own home.



Enterprising to grow

We promote opportunities to build emotional wellbeing and personal growth. This could include learning new skills or building confidence through wellbeing programmes.



Powering positive impact

We provide opportunities to build social wellbeing through community programmes. We also harness the power of our colleagues and partners by offering match-funding and volunteering opportunities, empowering them to make real change in the areas and communities they live in.

Delivering social impact in our communities

Our financial advice and help to access benefits can be life-changing for our customers most in need.

In 2022, Sage Homes introduced the Financial Wellbeing Team, a dedicated support team. They've already helped 496 customer households with food and energy bills, as well as sourcing white goods and school uniforms where needed.

As of 2023, the Financial Wellbeing Team has helped customers find over £1million of support in unclaimed benefits. The team also secured £116,682 in external charitable funding for additional customer support and regularly advocate for our customers in court.

Heart of Sage has been able to step in and support customers where there is no external support available from the local authority or charities. The team have provided emotional and financial support to customers, helping them turn the corner in difficult moments of their lives and get back to stability.



// You have been supportive when no one believed me. You changed my life financially and I am now getting back to normality. //

– Customer supported by Financial Wellbeing Team


496
Households assisted


1,176
Customers assisted*

*including all members of the household


779
Vouchers issued


29
White goods awarded



Community grants to build cohesion

We offer financial support to help low- or no-income families get involved in sports and community activities

Heart of Sage helps customers shape their communities through small and medium sized grants. In 2023, we awarded grants of under £1,000 to support significant community events including a winter fair and an Easter Egg Hunt in Sheddingdean where neighbours came together to celebrate and build relationships.

We also awarded larger grants, supporting our ongoing partnership with Matipo Arts. This gives families in Essex the chance to take part in creative workshops. We also donated to a local boxing club in Doncaster, helping them improve facilities and equipment in addition to accessing London tournaments.



Sponsorship like this is brilliant ... and it means such a lot to the club. I can't tell you how much we can do with funding like this.



- Paul Harrison
Head Coach at Doncaster Plant Works ABC

Funding local celebrations

Our financial support gives a helping hand in bringing communities together.



We managed to get a lot of the street together for some fun, which was great as we hadn't met a lot of them – thanks!



- Customer and organiser of a King's Coronation street party, Leamington Spa



In 2023, we started offering small funding opportunities for customers to deliver their own events in their communities. We had 52 successful applications for community event support where we supplied vouchers and ultimately supported nearly 1,000 households.



The event was a huge success, it was very well received in the neighbourhood. There were roughly 150-200 people. ... It was great to see the excitement and buzz around the event, with many families still sharing photos and praising the set up a week later."



- Customer and organiser of a King's Coronation street party, Leamington Spa

Bringing neighbours together is a vital step in building strong communities. Events supported this year included street parties for the King's Coronation and spooky Halloween parties. We encourage customers to take the lead in organising their own events, which have also included children's workshops and community clean up events.

Opportunities for enterprise, education and training

Working with others, we provide resources to aid our customers to fulfil their potential, helping them find a job or manage their money. We also offer colleagues ways to support customers through volunteering and match funding.

Online skills and guidance

This year we've worked with partners like Barclays, MYNDUP and The Money Charity to support our customers with a range of online webinars, talks and guidance. All were free and accessible on our website, and covered topics such as:

- managing mental health during the rise in the cost of living
- developing CV and interview skills
- budgeting and managing money
- staying safe online.

Harnessing our colleagues' energy

Our colleagues are all offered two days' volunteering leave a year, letting them donate time and effort to causes close to their own hearts. We've supported litter picks, homelessness projects and tree planting schemes as well as **match-funding over £34,000** of Sage Together and individual colleague fundraising.



Volunteering with the homeless was a great chance to give back, offering support at a weekly event where they had opportunities for showers, clean clothes and a proper meal. ... I valued the opportunity to get to speak to homeless individuals and hear their stories.

- Hugo, Sage Homes colleague



16

Charities supported



11

Sage Homes colleagues match-funded



1/3

of Heart of Sage's funding supports fundraising events and schemes, including sponsoring colleagues' events

Integrating with Sage Homes

Heart of Sage integrates seamlessly with Sage Homes, weaving into how the organisation operates.



Supporting customers

Heart of Sage's Financial Wellbeing Team and grant-giving are used to support customers and communities. Sage Homes' Resident and Field Services Teams are able to use these opportunities to link in with communities and help alleviate any community safety issues.

Digital for all

Heart of Sage's work with Barclays Digital Eagles offers digital e-learning opportunities which reflects Sage Homes' Customer Service Strategy with a 'Digital for all' pillar. Sage Homes' Customer Scrutiny Panel were also involved in selecting the content for this platform and continue to be involved in many Heart of Sage strategic decisions.

Connecting communities

Heart of Sage's grant-giving helps to connect communities and engage customers, as laid out in Sage Homes' Customer Engagement strategy. Sage's Customer Scrutiny Panel continues to link in with Heart of Sage, directly influencing how grants are given out.

Delivering social value

Heart of Sage's activities support customer wellbeing and connected communities. These are both themes in Sage Homes' ESG strategy, known as Strong Roots. Strong Roots lays out how Sage Homes delivers social values in the communities they serve.

All activity is tracked and measured to make sure we understand the social value we provide, informing future decisions.

Engaging employees

Heart of Sage offers colleagues the chance to match-fund any fundraising they undertake alongside offering two paid volunteering days a year. This reflects both Sage Homes' employee engagement strategy and employee wellbeing strategy. The most recent employee engagement survey showed 82% of colleagues feel Sage Homes make a positive difference to the diverse communities we work in and 91% felt this to be an important value for Sage Homes.



Looking ahead...

In 2024, Heart of Sage's charitable status will be certified, helping us to support even more customers through being able to access increased sources of funding. Heart of Sage partners will benefit from a wide range of exemptions and reliefs, including gift aid, corporation tax relief and some VAT exemptions. Our committee will govern the Community Benefit Society (CBS) to make sure it remains fully customer-focused and it will have separate financial accounts.

Funding Heart of Sage's important work

We're looking to broaden our range of donors to supplement the generous donations of our investors Blackstone and Regis. We're looking for Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) sponsorship programmes where partners (including our insurers, bankers and developers) can sponsor specific projects to meet their own ESG targets such as carbon reduction programmes (through solar installation), food bank support in regions that work for mutual geographical priority areas and customer hardship support.

Becoming a donor or continuing to donate will mean helping some of the most vulnerable communities in England to build strength, stability and a solid base from which they can aspire to achieve their own ambitions and dreams.

Appendix 1:

Heart of Sage Committee attendance



Cindy Rampersaud

Chair



Lucian Smithers

Chief Customer Officer



John Goodey

Chief Financial Officer



Nadine Ofori-Atta

Head of Compliance,
Regulation & Commercial
Agreements



Sharan Ansong

Community Creator



Julia Messenger

Senior ESG Manager

2022

Committee member attendance	06/05/22	10/06/22	14/07/22	25/08/22	14/10/22	18/11/22
Cindy Rampersaud	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lucian Smithers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
John Goodey	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nadine Ofori-Atta	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Sharan Ansong	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓
Julia Messenger	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

2023

Committee member attendance	20/01/23	24/02/23	05/04/23	19/06/23	07/08/23	23/09/23	27/11/23
Cindy Rampersaud	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lucian Smithers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
John Goodey	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nadine Ofori-Atta	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sharan Ansong	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Julia Messenger	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

✓ Attended ✗ Unavailable

Note: Sharan Ansong joined Sage Homes in September 2022

Appendix 2:

Financial breakdown: 01/06/22 up to 31/12/23

	2022	2023	Total
Food & energy vouchers	£11,460	£45,604	£57,064
White goods & furniture	£8,154	£9,540	£17,694
Uniforms	-	£500	£500
Sub-total	£19,614	£55,644	£75,258
Match funding	£17,815	£16,971	£34,786
Grant giving	£2,100	£10,190	£12,290
Sub-total	£19,915	£27,161	£47,076
Total spend	£39,529	£82,805	£122,334
Contributions			£150,000
Remaining (currently covering 2024 spend)			£27,666



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