

Statement of Corporate Social Responsibility

The Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT)'s mission is to build and develop strong, empowered communities without poverty or isolation. Together with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), we are working towards our shared vision of a prosperous UK without poverty.

Our heritage

Our commitment to social responsibility is embedded in our heritage. Our founder and namesake provided housing at affordable rents for his chocolate factory workers, planted fruit trees in their gardens, and gave them access to a dentist. He left us a mandate to use his funds wisely, to understand the root causes of social problems and use our evidence to “change the face” of where we live. The very nature of the work we do seeks to positively impact society – both at a local and national level.

Our communities

We are committed to building strong, inclusive communities for people of all ages, where they can live independently and well. Far from this being a transactional housing and care service provision, we actively work with our residents to ensure we address wider community issues too, such as loneliness and dementia, as well as providing community spaces where residents can come together to share skills and give/receive help from each other.

We are an anti-poverty landlord, with an in-house Money, benefits and debt advice service team offering money and benefits advice to assist our residents to manage their finances, increasing income and reduce debt where possible as well as helping them navigate the benefits system where required. We offer an affordable loan scheme with affordability assessments being conducted before an offer is made.

JRHT measures the social value of its work and we report on this annually. We take into account things like health, happiness, education and the strength of relationships in our communities. To measure it we look at the benefits residents see from our work, such as use of free facilities, from our Money, benefits and debt advice service team, or attending training workshops.

We have a volunteering policy which allows our staff time away from work to participate in our employer supported volunteer scheme in partnership with a local organisation, or other voluntary work that is aligned with our vision and missions.

Our staff

We are an anti-poverty employer, offering our staff a comprehensive benefits package, access to low cost loans and salary sacrifice schemes. JRF's work on the Minimum Income Standards provided the calculation for the Living Wage. JRHT was one of the first housing and care providers to become accredited and we have been a Living Wage employer since 2013.

Our anti-slavery statement outlines our commitment to understanding modern slavery practices and ensuring there is no slavery in our business or supply chains.

We are committed to employing a diverse workforce. Our LGBT+ and Disability staff networks engage in local events in the community.

We provide employment opportunities through our internship programme to increase skills and employability of people from disadvantaged communities.

In compliance with the Equality Act 2010 (Gender pay gap information), we have carried out Gender Pay Gap reporting and it is published on our website as well as the government website.

Our staff are able to join a Give as You Earn scheme, donating to a UK charity of their choice directly from their salaries and therefore tax free. We match each donation pound for pound, with 50% of that matched funding going to the same charity, and the other 50% going into a 'pot' which is distributed to different charities three times a year. This significantly increases the overall amount that charities receive from our staff.

Our investments

We have a Social Investment Strategy that enables us to have a direct social impact (such as affordable homes, employment, low cost finance, affordable energy) and an expectation that the money can be returned, so it can be invested again.

Our Procurement Policy ensures that work with external suppliers is compliant with our code of conduct, anti-slavery statement, equality and diversity legislation and our commitment to the Living Wage.

Sustainability

JRF and JRHT's sustainability policies are focused on social, economic and environmental sustainability.

We encourage biodiversity on our land, we have introduced electric and hybrid vehicles, and throughout the organisation we reduce, reuse and recycle where possible.