



Our Strategy

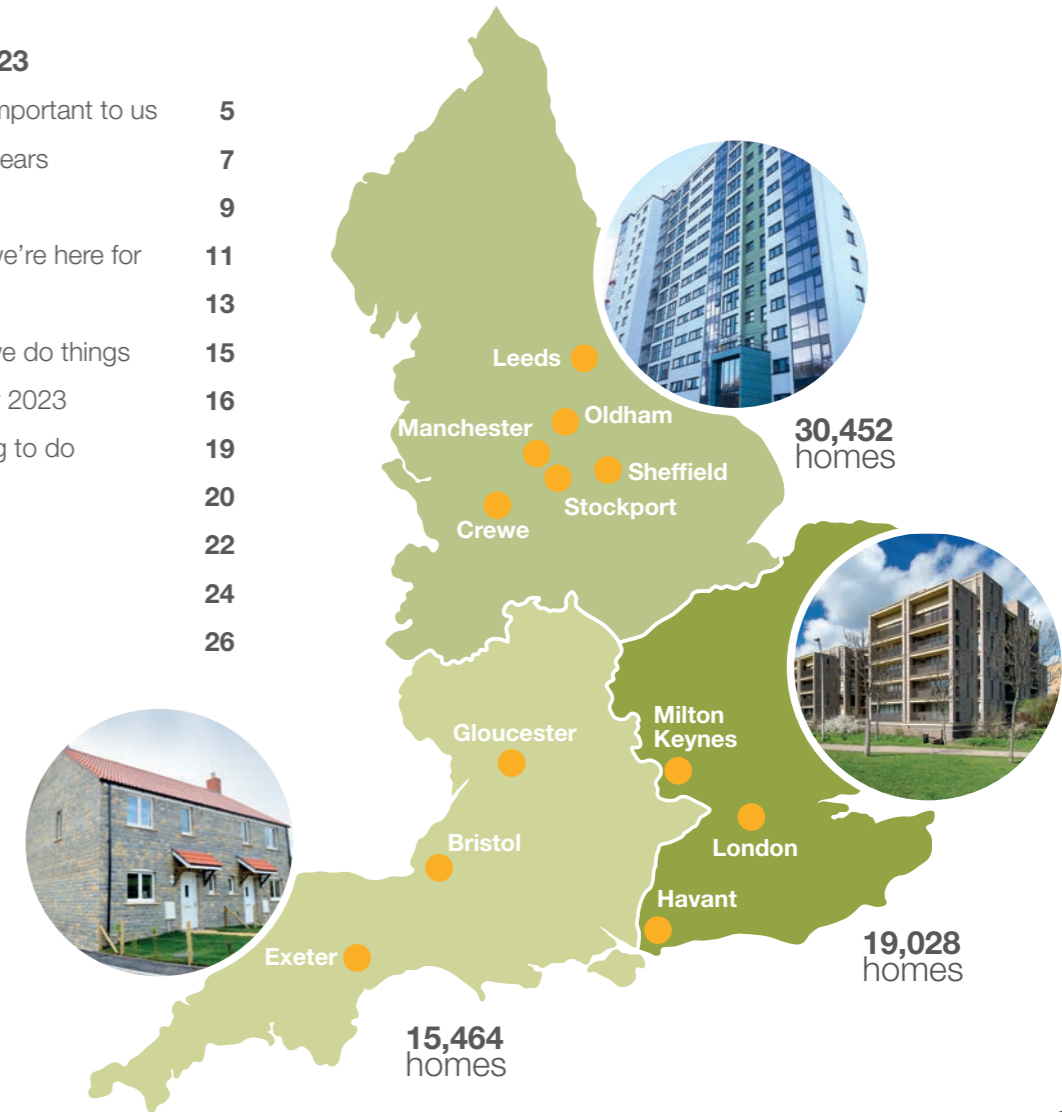
# Guinness 2023



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We're here to improve people's lives and create possibilities for them. This is our social purpose.

# Our vision and what's important to us

**This is our Strategy for 2023. It articulates our aspirations and plans — the things we're going to do to deliver our vision.**

So let's start with why we're here. Our purpose and our vision. Why Guinness exists.

We were founded in 1890 to improve people's lives and create possibilities for them. What we're here for hasn't changed. We fulfil that purpose, our social purpose, by providing great homes and services — including care services — to over 140,000 customers across the country.

**Our vision is for Guinness to:**

- **Deliver great service** — to be one of the best service providers in the housing and care sectors
- **Provide great homes** — to provide as many high quality homes as possible, and to play a significant part in tackling the country's housing crisis

- **Be a great place to work** — to be one of the best employers in the country

**And to:**

- **Be a great business** — to be a strong and efficient business that does things well, and that people can trust and rely on

These are the things that matter most to us. This is our social purpose. Everything we do is about our customers, our communities and our people. And every pound we make is invested in achieving that purpose.



Neil Braithwaite  
Chair



Catriona Simons  
Group Chief Executive



**We've transformed our business. We're stronger, and we're excited about the future.**

# Our story, the last few years

**Our heritage matters to us. We're proud of our long history which gives us a real sense of purpose. It also creates a strong sense of responsibility, of having a legacy to protect for future generations and to make the most of today.**

We're also proud of our more recent past. The last few years are a significant part of the Guinness story. By working hard and asking ourselves tough questions, we've transformed the way we're organised, the way we do things and the systems we use.

We've invested in technology to make things easier for our customers and our people. We've grown to 65,000 homes, we're doing things better, and we've become stronger — more than ever we're a customer service business.

We're looking forward to the future. There is always more to do to deliver our vision and to be the best organisation we can be. We'll keep focusing on our customers and our people — so that our customers are proud to be Guinness customers, and so that Guinness is an organisation that our people love being part of.

We're really excited about this next chapter in the Guinness story.

Our Strategy must respond to the world around us. Housing and care are high on the agenda. Guinness is well placed to respond – and to manage risks ahead.

# The world around us

**Our operating context has changed since we developed our last Strategy. Housing and care, and social housing in particular, are high on the agenda in a way they haven't been for a long time.**

Housing associations make a vital contribution to addressing the national housing crisis, and this is now better recognised by policy-makers. After four years of rent reductions, rents will increase from 2020. That will create the financial capacity to do more for our customers and to build more new homes, responding to the imperatives set out in the 2017 Housing White Paper. And with public investment in social rented housing — through grant or land — we'll be able to do even more to provide truly affordable homes.

We look forward working with the Government to shape the future of both housing with care and supported housing.

We welcome the opportunities presented by this new policy environment, but at the same time we know that we — and our customers — are facing a period of increased economic uncertainty. Departure from the

EU presents clear risks to the construction industry — both in respect of labour and materials — and to the housing market, which generates important subsidy for our social housing activity. It also presents workforce challenges to the social care sector — adding further risk to a sector already under significant pressure. Welfare reform will continue to strain our customers' incomes, and inevitably Guinness's too. We must manage these and other risks facing us.

Regulation is an important part of our world. We reflect the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing and the Care Quality Commission in the way we run our business.

The tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in west London in June 2017 has changed our worlds forever. We have always prioritised the safety of our customers and continue to do so. We welcome the Hackitt Report on the Review of Building Regulations.

We support the focus on residents and communities which is at the heart of the 2018 Social Housing Green Paper.

We provide a range of housing and care products to meet a wide variety of needs. The ways we deliver services must respond to an increasingly diverse customer base.

# What we do and who we're here for

**We describe ourselves as a customer service organisation because it's our customers that we're here for.**

That means the people we provide homes to today — our tenants and leaseholders — and the people we provide care and support services to today. It also means our future customers.

We operate in 156 local authority areas across England. Most of our homes are homes for rent at prices significantly lower than those charged in the private market. And on tenancy terms which offer far greater security. We also provide affordable home ownership options and homes that people can purchase outright on the open market, recognising that the shortage of housing in this country affects those seeking to buy a home too.

This range of housing meets a range of needs, and any profit we make on homes for outright sale helps us invest in and build more affordable homes.

Some of what we do is specifically for older people. This includes providing housing for older people, as well as care at home services for those who prefer to stay in their own homes. As the population ages, these homes and services are in increasing demand.

The range of housing and services we provide means our customer base is increasingly diverse. We must provide services in a way that responds to this — and we must provide the right homes and services — recognising that expectations are changing all the time, and the ways in which technology enables us to respond in 2023 are likely to be very different.

The work that housing associations do is important, and there is an extraordinary demand for our homes and services. We want to do as much as possible to meet that demand, and to be here for as many people as possible.



**Customer voice has always been important to Guinness – but it has never been more important than it is now.**

# Customer voice

**We know that to be good at what we do, we must listen to our customers. This has always been important to Guinness, and we've been doing it more and more over the last few years.**

It is at the heart of our approach to service. It goes beyond asking our customers to help shape and improve our offer — it's also about how we make our customers feel. This matters because our customers are relying on us as a long term service provider.

Housing association customers, including Guinness customers, took part in the national conversation with the former housing minister in 2017. What they said, and what they say to us, is that they want:

- To be able to trust us
- For us to respect them and their time
- For us to engage with them and listen to them

- For us to put things right when they go wrong, including when we get them wrong
- Not to be stigmatised because they live in social housing

We can't always do everything for everyone, because our resources are finite, but we always prioritise customer safety. It has never been more important for us — for all landlords — to listen to our customers than it is now, in the aftermath of the Grenfell fire. It is fundamental that people are safe, and feel safe, in their homes. If they have concerns, they need to know that we will listen and act.

And we must do everything we can to address the stigma associated with social housing.



**We care about  
our customers,  
our social purpose  
and each other.**

# Who we are and how we do things

**Guinness people believe in what we're here for, our social purpose. They are committed to our customers, and each other. To our future and our reputation.**

Guinness people have shared values and ways of doing things which are described in the Guinness Behaviours. They sit at the core of our business and underpin our language, culture and service style. At Guinness we:

- Deliver great customer service
- Make things possible and inspire success
- Take responsibility
- Focus on performance and excellence
- Work together and communicate
- Are always professional and principled

Our Leadership and Management Standard recognises the challenge of running a business for social purpose. Our leaders and managers have the skills, knowledge and determination to shape our future and make us successful today. They do this by expecting a lot of themselves and others, by creating the conditions for us all to succeed, and by always giving their very best.

Everyone at Guinness is ambitious for the organisation and themselves. They want us to be really good at what we do. We invest in them so they can give their best to make that happen. To deliver our vision.



Our headline targets for 2023 are:

80%

customer satisfaction

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85%

employee engagement

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5,500

new homes

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\*by March 2024



28%

operating margin

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This is  
what  
we're  
going to  
do

# great service

is about getting things done, making things easy, and how we make our customers feel. it's about listening. it's about customers knowing they can trust us.

80%  
customer satisfaction

## Over the strategy period providing great service means:

- Being a customer service business, working continuously to improve our services and to make things easier for our customers. We'll give customers more choice and control by offering more services online. Our new customer liaison and estates services will provide customers with face to face contact where that's needed. We'll hold our contractors to high standards — we'll make sure they share our values and deliver great service to our customers.
- Going further for customers who need more. We'll do this by investing in tenancy sustainment, financial inclusion, access to work and by providing funds to alleviate extreme hardship. We'll make sure people know we're here to help if they need a bit more support.
- Going further for the communities we work in. We'll maintain our focus on addressing Anti-Social behaviour and promoting activities which create cohesion — so our communities and neighbourhoods are pleasant and safe places for everyone who lives there. We'll work with partners to maximise our impact.
- Knowing our customers. We'll use appropriate data and insight to anticipate our customers' needs and preferences, so we can provide relevant services that feel really personal.
- Ensuring our customers' voices are clearly heard. We'll maximise the opportunities for customers to shape the way we do things and the services we provide. We'll continue to develop the ways in which our customers can give us feedback, raise concerns and tell us if we're getting things wrong.

# great homes

a great home is safe and secure, warm and dry, and one where everything works. a great home is affordable and it is a place people are proud to live.

# 5,500

new homes

## Over the strategy period providing great homes means:

- Providing high quality and safe homes that people are proud to live in. We'll keep investing in our existing homes, maintaining them to a high standard, upgrading them, and ensuring they always meet or exceed building safety requirements. We'll use smart technology so we know more about how our homes are performing and when work is needed.
- Making sure our homes are a good standard when people move in. Where empty homes are uneconomic to maintain or no longer meet the needs of customers, or are likely to be obsolete in the near future, we will sell them so we can reinvest the proceeds in improving other homes.
- Building more new homes. We'll build 5,500 new homes, including 5,000 affordable homes. We'll acquire larger sites so we can develop at scale, and we'll work with partners in our key areas to maximise our capacity.
- Providing homes for older customers. We'll develop more extra-care housing that gives customers access to the support they want as they grow older. We'll offer some of these homes for sale, for people who may already own homes and want to downsize to meet their changing needs. We'll invest in upgrading our existing housing for older people so that shared spaces are more modern, comfortable and welcoming.

# a great place to work

is one where people share a vision, have a real sense of purpose and feel really valued. it's a place people are proud to work.

85%  
employee  
engagement

## Over the strategy period being a great place to work means:

- Creating a great employee experience, making Guinness a great place to work, learn and succeed. We'll ensure our people feel valued, not just by offering a competitive reward and benefits package, but by supporting their growth and learning, and always remembering to say thank you for the contribution they make.
- Empowering our people. We'll give them the tools, knowledge and support they need to succeed.
- Being an open, diverse and inclusive organisation. We'll promote a culture in which everyone can contribute their ideas and shape the way we do things, by increasing the ways in which people can connect and engage with our vision.
- Promoting a healthy and happy working environment. We'll develop our health and wellbeing offer, support our people to work flexibly wherever possible, and keep investing in our workspaces and estate facilities.
- Embedding the changes we've made. We'll consolidate and build on the work we've done over the last three years, providing a period of stability so that our people can invest in an exciting and fulfilling future with Guinness.

# a great business

is one which performs, and is strong and resilient. it invests in the future. it does things well.

28%  
operating margin

## Over the strategy period being a great business means:

- Meeting our legal and regulatory requirements. We'll make sure we have an outstanding compliance record. We'll make sure we do things in the right way and get things right. We'll make sure our governance structures and our assurance framework remain fit for purpose and operate effectively.
- Making sure we're strong. We'll maintain our focus on efficiency and value for money, looking for better and more cost-effective ways of doing things. We'll target an operating margin of at least 28% — getting a balance between what we spend day to day, and what we generate to invest in our homes in the future.
- Managing risk. We'll take measured risks, but we'll make sure we manage risk so that the strength of our organisation is protected for our customers, our staff and those who succeed us.
- Raising our profile. We'll promote Guinness and our social purpose.
- Investing in the future. We'll invest in research and encourage innovation so our offer to our customers and our people meets future needs as well as today's. We'll keep investing in technology to make us more efficient and to make things easier for everyone. We'll invest in sustainability — in our homes, our fleet, and the way we work.
- Strengthening our care business to protect its long term viability. We'll invest in growing our offering to private payers, so we create new sustainable income streams to support our local authority funded care at home work.
- Being open to merger opportunities which make the most of our capacity. We'll partner with organisations who share our values and whose geography complements our own. We'll also buy homes from other housing associations in areas where we have a strong presence and can provide services efficiently.
- Being focused. We'll be focused about what we do, where we operate and where we grow. We'll concentrate on where we can make the most difference and we'll work with partners where that improves outcomes.





**We deliver our care services through Guinness Care. This is a separate legal entity, with its own more detailed plan.**

**We'll update this Strategy periodically over the coming years to ensure it remains relevant and reflects the scale of our ambitions to be a great organisation.**



**great service  
great homes  
a great place to work  
and a great business**



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