



# 2023

## ANNUAL REPORT

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## EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

Looking through this 2023 Annual Report, it is striking just how many challenges and changes the industry has faced during the last year or so. While the political chaos of 2022 has somewhat settled – with just the one Prime Minister and Housing Secretary in 2023 – a new set of challenges also came to the fore, most notably the impact of the Government's reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and an increasingly challenging market.

2023 saw some opportunities arise too, with housing and planning now a major part of the political conversation like never before. It is clear that housing will be a significant focus of the media, public and political debate of the election. HBF's reports, campaigns and wider engagement throughout the year have helped to seize on this momentum and our Annual Report summarises much of this work.

Turning first to planning, 2023 was even trickier than most thanks to the impact of the Government's reforms, which were confirmed in December. The changes to the NPPF, namely the removal of mandatory housing targets and the softening of the five-year land supply requirement, were a response to the threat of a backbench rebellion from the NIMBY wing of the Conservative Party led by Theresa Villiers MP. Even before the proposals were confirmed in December, they were having a significant impact, with over 60 local authorities withdrawing or pausing their local plan consultations in anticipation of the changes and many others seeking to reduce their housing requirement.

The new problems caused by the Government's policy choices have also exacerbated the existing issues within the planning process, with under resourced planning departments taking longer and longer to process applications to the point where work can start.

Another major focus of our work was the issues arising from interventions by Natural England, which persisted throughout the year. In the four and a half years since Natural England first issued the 'ban' on development in certain areas of the country due to concerns regarding nutrient pollution levels in rivers, the construction of 150,000 homes has been blocked. This is despite all experts accepting that the contribution from new homes is negligible. Furthermore, there has been hardly

any Government intervention to address the actual causes of river pollution – namely, agricultural run-off and the failings of the water companies.

There was a glimmer of hope over the summer, when the Government announced it would be amending the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to address the ban on housing. However, this was blocked by a coalition of parties in the House of Lords and the Government has instead opted to provide more funding for mitigation schemes, which will only unlock a fraction of affected homes over a five-year long period. HBF's work to communicate the impacts of the ban on housing delivery throughout the year are summarised in this Report.

All of these issues come in the context of the most challenging market I have known in some 40 years in the industry. Despite this we saw the closure of Help to Buy, probably the most successful demand side intervention we have seen in this country, marking the first time in 25 years there has not been some sort of support scheme from the Government to help first-time buyers.

I know all these issues are of increasing concern for members but, as mentioned above, it is encouraging that our messaging has been getting significant amounts of coverage as housing and planning become increasingly central to our political discourse. Most notably, these issues have been on the front pages of many national broadsheets throughout the year.

HBF published more research than ever before in 2023 to drive home our key messages, and this work has been cited by multiple senior parliamentarians, including Leader of the Opposition Keir Starmer at Prime Minister Questions earlier in the spring. Our research in 2023 included the Planning for Economic Failure report, which forecasts housing supply to drop to the lowest level since World War Two; Housing the Nation, which highlighted attitudes among the public towards the housing crisis; and an international audit, Housing Horizons, which found that the UK has fallen far behind its European and OECD counterparts on many indicators of affordability and condition.

Another key development in 2023 was the launch of the house building market study by the Competition and Markets



HBF POLICY CONFERENCE 2023

Authority (CMA). HBF provided an extensive amount of evidence to the CMA to inform the study, and the findings and recommendations released earlier this year highlight many of the constraints on housing delivery that we have long been communicating to the Government. The conclusions of this report present us with a real opportunity to build momentum for tackling some of the systemic issues which have been plaguing the industry for so long and we must hope the Government responds accordingly.

2023 also saw changes to a range of building regulations, with the transitional period for Parts F, L, O and S coming to an end in June. I know that members are working hard to ensure they are building to the highest possible environmental standards, yet these efforts are not being matched by the Government, with the publication of the consultation on the Future Homes Standard (although now published) and biodiversity net gain guidance delayed multiple times.

Our work in numerous other areas progressed throughout the year, including building safety, mental health and skills. I hope this Annual Report provides a useful summary of this work throughout 2023.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our members, the board of directors and my colleagues at HBM and HBF for their ongoing support in what has been a very challenging year for the industry. 2024 has been no less challenging or lively than 2023 as we head towards the election, but I know that the hard work and support of members and colleagues will continue to ensure the industry is effectively represented and has a clear voice.

**“ HBF published more research than ever before in 2023 and this work has been cited by multiple senior parliamentarians, including Leader of the Opposition Keir Starmer at Prime Minister Questions earlier in the spring ”**

# FORWARD

# HBF YEAR



ISSUED AROUND **130**  
**BRIEFINGS**



PUBLISHED MORE  
THAN **15 PIECES OF**  
**RESEARCH**



LAUNCHED **3 NEW**  
**CAMPAIGNS**



HELPED TO  
DELIVER OVER  
**200 BRICKLAYING**  
**MASTERCLASSES**



PRODUCED **10**  
**RESOURCES TO**  
ASSIST MEMBERS  
WITH **STAKEHOLDER**  
**ENGAGEMENT**



SECURED **£3 MILLION**  
**CITB FUNDING**  
TO ATTRACT AND  
DEVELOP THE FUTURE  
WORKFORCE



PARTICIPATED  
IN OVER **25**  
**LOCAL PLAN**  
**EXAMINATIONS AND**  
**CONSULTATIONS**



RESPONDED TO OVER  
**40 CONSULTATIONS**



PRODUCED **4**  
**RIDDOR DATA**  
**REPORTS AND**  
**3 HEALTH AND**  
**SAFETY GUIDANCE**  
**DOCUMENTS**



CONTACTED OVER  
**200 PROSPECTIVE**  
**PARLIAMENTARY**  
CANDIDATES

# IN REVIEW



FEATURED IN **800 BROADCAST MEDIA PIECES**



DOUBLED OUR TWITTER FOLLOWER COUNT TO **24,000** AND INCREASED OUR LINKEDIN FOLLOWERS **BY 70%**



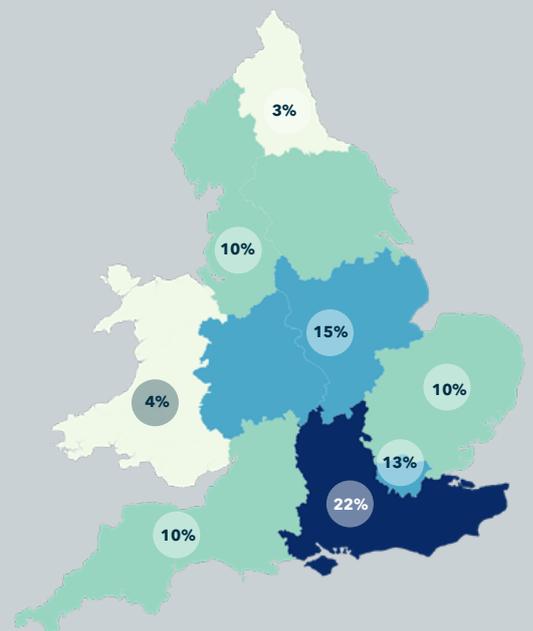
FEATURED IN MORE THAN **4,300 MEDIA STORIES**, INCLUDING **123 ARTICLES** ON THE TELEGRAPH'S WEBSITE

## MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW

- HBF has over **450 members**, including over **250 house builders - from FTSE 100 companies to small family firms**
- Over **70 new members** have joined us since the start of 2023

HBF has members based in every region:

- 13% in London
- 10% in South West
- 22% in the South
- 3% in the North East
- 10% in Yorkshire and the Humber
- 10% in East
- 15% in the Midlands
- 4% in Wales
- 10% in the North West
- 3% cross-UK with headquarters in Scotland and Northern Ireland





# COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

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HBF's committees reflect the day-to-day work of the in-house team. They provide invaluable member feedback on issues or policy implementation that helps to inform HBF in its discussions with ministers, officials, journalists and sector stakeholders or for industry responses to consultations. HBF is extremely grateful to the people who give their time for committee meetings and especially to the Chairs.

HBF also establishes working groups, with specific terms of reference, to address new issues of concern to the industry or a significant group of members. HBF encourages members to offer their expertise to these groups and to play a full part in contributing to the debate and, therefore, inform HBF's response to key issues.

We have a range of committees and working groups, including:

- Health and Safety Committee
- Highways Group
- Tall Buildings Group
- Utilities Group
- Water Matters Group
- Regional Technical Meetings (7 English regions + Wales)
- Regional Planning Groups (7 English regions + Wales)
- Career Attract Group
- Skills & Supply Chain Engagement
- Future Talent Group
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Group
- Mental Health Awareness Group

NEIL JEFFERSON, FUTURE TALENT  
CONFERENCE 2023



Find out more and how  
to join a group on our  
website.

# MEET THE TEAM

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In 2023, HBF welcomed some new colleagues to its team:

- Helen Moore, Group Director of Orbit Homes, joined the HBF board in January this year.
- In early 2023, Rhodri Williams joined HBF as Technical Director.
- Rachel Danemann also joined us in early 2023 as part of the regional planning team.
- Steph Calder joined HBF in April as Executive Assistant.
- Laurence Thompson joined us in May as Policy and Campaigns Officer.

Emma Ramell became Director of External Affairs and Rianna Fry became Digital Communications Director at the start of this year.

John Slaughter, who has worked in senior roles at HBF for over 20 years, is now seconded to the Future Homes Hub.

## HBF TEAM

Stewart Baseley, Executive Chairman

Mark Behrendt, Planning Manager (London and Southern)

Catherine Bullough, Project and Relationship Manager, Skills Partnership

Steph Calder, Executive Assistant

Rachel Danemann, Planning Manager (Midlands and South West)

Rianna Fry, Digital Communications Director

Hannah Gillman, Communications and Campaigns Officer

Joanne Harding, Planning Manager (Northern)

Mark Harris, Planning and Policy Advisor for Wales

Jenny Herdman, Director, Skills Partnership

Tracey Hill, Project & Contract Manager, Skills Partnership

Razia Iqbal, Senior Bookkeeper

Neil Jefferson, Managing Director

Marian Macdonald, Office Manager and PA

Laura Markus, Policy and External Affairs Manager

Rachel Myers, Membership Manager

David O'Leary, Executive Director

Emma Ramell, Director of External Affairs

Deena Shaw, Project Co-ordinator, Skills Partnership

John Slaughter, Director of External Affairs (now seconded to the Future Homes Hub)

Sam Stafford, Planning Director

James Stevens, Director for Cities

Lynda Tahri, Head of Communications, Skills Partnership

Mark Thackstone, Finance Director

Laurence Thompson, Policy and Campaigns Officer

Steve Turner, Executive Director

Rhodri Williams, Technical Director

Catherine Wilson, IT and Digital Manager



# POLICY AND

## GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION CHANGES

The most significant change in the Government was the appointment of Lee Rowley as the Housing and Planning Minister in November - the sixteenth Planning Minister since 2010, replacing Rachel Maclean. We have met with the new Minister and continue to work closely together on several issues. Relations have also improved with Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Secretary Michael Gove, who has taken more of an interest in planning and engaged more closely with the industry in recent months.

On the Labour side, Angela Rayner was appointed as Shadow Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Secretary in September. We continue to have a close working relationship with both Rayner and Matthew Pennycook, the Shadow Housing and Planning Minister, and attended meetings and roundtables with them throughout the year.

We hope this ongoing engagement, and our wider well-developed links into Government and other stakeholder bodies, will allow us to shape the thinking of both parties on issues relevant to the industry as we head towards the election.

## ENGAGING WITH POLITICIANS

HBF actively reached out to MPs, Peers and Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs) to update them on the work of HBF, and to provide briefings on the challenges facing the industry. In 2023 this engagement included:

- Briefings for Parliamentarians ahead of debates on SME developers, various aspects of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, estate management fees, and housing supply. Many of these briefings were referenced in debates in Parliament.
- HBF's regular Parliamentary Newsletter, outlining HBF's latest research and key messages.
- Responses to over 40 consultations including submissions for the Budget, Autumn Statement, and the Labour Party's annual National Policy Forum consultation.

## COMPETITION AND MARKETS AUTHORITY (CMA) MARKET STUDY

The CMA launched its house building market study last February, and HBF engaged with the public consultations launched by the CMA as well as the direct requests for information that were issued throughout the year.

HBF's submissions and responses to the initial Call for Evidence, the Update Report and other requests for information are available on the CMA's Market Study webpage. It was pleasing to see the CMA's conclusions and recommendations reflect many of the issues HBF raised in our extensive submissions to the CMA.

## NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

The changes to the NPPF were confirmed by Michael Gove in December, and of particular concern are the changes on housing targets and five-year housing land supply.

HBF has taken every opportunity to outline the impact the Government's NPPF proposals will have and are having on housing supply, economic activity and the industry. In 2023 we outlined our view to the Government in meetings, roundtables and consultation responses, and to the Housing Select Committee as part of its inquiry into the reforms.

## LEVELLING-UP AND REGENERATION ACT

The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act received Royal Assent in October and, while the Act will not make much of an immediate difference to the industry, we have continued to raise concerns about the proposed Infrastructure Levy, which the Act makes provisions for. A letter criticising the Levy was sent to the Secretary of State for Housing in June, and was signed by an unprecedented coalition of thirty planning, development, housing, and local government bodies, including HBF.

## NUTRIENT AND WATER NEUTRALITY

Nutrient neutrality became the subject of much political debate in 2023, and it was unfortunate that the Government's amendment to the Levelling-up and



# PLANNING:

Regeneration Bill was defeated by a coalition of Lords in the upper House.

Throughout the year HBF has taken multiple opportunities to make the case for urgent action to resolve this issue, including:

- Meeting with Government and Natural England on several occasions throughout the year to discuss the issue;
- Hosting a roundtable with Natural England in February. The roundtable was attended by representatives from a large range of organisations involved in nutrient neutrality requirements, including Defra, DLUHC, 10 Downing Street, Homes England, several home building companies, local authorities and other membership organisations;
- Submitting evidence to the House of Lords Built Environment Committee as part of its inquiry into the impact of environmental regulations on development;
- Publishing research highlighting that developers have contributed over £1bn to water companies in the past three years;
- Publishing research, carried out by Brookbanks consultancy, which found that the occupants of new homes account for just 0.73% of total phosphorus emissions and 0.29% of total nitrogen emissions each year.

Members in certain regions also continued to face delays due to issues relating to water neutrality and the protection of certain species of snail. The problem is delaying the delivery of around 20,000 homes and has the potential to spread through the country. HBF discussed the water neutrality issue with the Government, Natural England, and the Environment Agency throughout the year, and we will continue to raise this issue to try and agree on a more appropriate and proportionate solution.

## LOCAL PLANS

Representations on Strategic and Local Plan consultations are a key part of HBF's work. Throughout 2023, we responded to 13 local plan consultations at the Main Modifications stage and attended 14 examinations. We also responded to nearly 50 Reg 19 and Reg 18 consultations. HBF has also introduced new ways of working with members on our responses, increasing our online meetings, to better inform our representations.

More information and updates on planning reforms and local plan consultations are also available for members in our monthly planning bulletins.

## BUILDING SAFETY

Following lengthy discussions throughout 2022 between HBF and the Government, at the start of 2023 the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) published the Self Remediation Terms and Deed of Bilateral Contract. The contract turns the commitments made in the building safety pledge into a legal agreement. 55 developers have now signed the contract, including all eligible HBF members.

DLUHC also consulted on the design and implementation of the Building Safety Levy, which will seek further funding from all home builders. Given the substantial contribution the industry is already making, HBF has made its opposition to the Levy clear in consultation responses to the Government, available on the HBF website, and has been encouraging DLUHC to pursue other parties.

## RETIREMENT HOUSING

The Government's Taskforce on Older People's Housing, of which Stewart Baseley is a member, has progressed significantly since its launch in 2022. We are working with our members and the Retirement Housing Group to input to the Task Force's work.

In 2023, HBF has:

- Provided a submission to the Taskforce's call for evidence, helping to shape the Taskforce's policy proposals to the Government.
- Conducted a survey of HBF members and Housing Associations to understand why more companies are not involved in developing older people's housing.
- Held a roundtable with a cross-section of members for the Taskforce to dig into and confirm the survey results.

This work has enabled us to provide a substantive contribution to the Taskforce's thinking on measures to encourage an increased supply and diversity of older people's housing.

# REPRESENTING HOME BUILDERS TO GOVERNMENT

## **CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY (CSS)**

HBF once again published results from the industry CSS last year. The 2022-23 HBF Customer Satisfaction Survey Awards published in March showed that 90% of new build home buyers would 'recommend their builder to a friend', the fourth successive year that the industry has upheld a score of 90% or above.

We continue to work with members and stakeholders on how we evolve the industry CSS and star rating scheme to ensure it remains fit for purpose and reflects emerging developments - including Ipsos Mori's review of the survey, and the recommendations of the CMA's market study.

## **DEPOSIT UNLOCK**

The Deposit Unlock scheme has continued to grow and now has over 70 participating builders, with an increasing number set to join the list. The number of lenders also continues to grow, with Bluestone Mortgages and Perenna recently joining.

In 2023, HBF launched a dedicated website for Deposit Unlock to enable homebuyers to find and compare new build properties available with low deposits.

## **DIGITAL IDENTITY**

Work continued throughout the year to agree on a set of standards and processes for how customers provide their identity digitally during the home buying process. This comes ahead of new Government legislation on digital identity this year.

As part of this work, HBF collaborated with Etive Technologies (Etive) and members to develop the MyIdentity scheme for the house building sector, which enables consumers to carry out digital identity and anti-money laundering checks and share them with organisations as and when they need to. The scheme is set to go live this year.

## **HELP TO BUY**

The Help to Buy scheme closed in March last year after a decade of supporting first-time buyers onto the housing ladder. The scheme has assisted over 387,000 households to purchase a new build home, 85% of whom were first-time buyers. HBF continues to press the Government for a new, targeted home ownership scheme for first-time buyers.

## **CONSTRUCTION LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (CLC)**

The CLC increasingly focused on planning and nutrient neutrality last year, with a new CLC task and finish group on planning set up. HBF is collaborating with the other bodies involved in the group to develop shared proposals and representations to the Government for improvements in the system and planning service.

Throughout the year, HBF also worked closely with Mike Woolliscroft of Vistry, the CLC Housing Chair, to shape the future role of the CLC's Housing Working Group, and to consider how it could best add value to policy formulation through its engagement with DLUHC and other Government Departments.



JENNIE DALY, HBF POLICY  
CONFERENCE 2023

# TECHNICAL AND

## **FUTURE HOMES HUB**

The Future Homes Hub has been well supported by members and undertook a range of important work on behalf of the industry throughout 2023. This included:

- A report for DLUHC looking at possible specifications for the Future Homes Standard and the issues involved in delivering these, which informed the recent consultation on the Standard.
- Valuable work on the measurement of water efficiency and the implementation of biodiversity net gain. The industry guides the Hub has produced on implementing new rules have been well received, particularly by smaller developers.
- An initial report, produced in early 2023, looking at establishing a baseline for measuring the whole life carbon emissions of new homes and ways of reducing this.

## **FUTURE HOMES STANDARD**

DLUHC published the consultation on the Future Homes Standard on 13 December - after delaying multiple times. The consultation looks at a range of proposals, including new performance requirements; options to reduce running costs balanced against built costs; heat networks; and guidance on fabric and fixed building services. HBF has responded to the consultation and is urging the Government to provide certainty as soon as possible.

## **BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (BNG)**

The HBF team frequently liaised with officials from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and DLUHC last year to make the transition to mandatory BNG as smooth as possible ahead of its launch in February 2024. This included pressing the Government on the urgent need for guidance to be published.

RHODRI WILLIAMS,  
HBF TECHNICAL  
CONFERENCE 2023

# ENVIRONMENT

## BUILDING REGULATIONS

There were updates on numerous Building Regulations throughout the year, and HBF worked with its members to respond to the consultations on proposed changes as they were announced. The updates included:

- **Part B:** Following consultation on amendments to Part B, the Government confirmed in the summer that the threshold for dual staircasing would be 18m. In the months since, and following discussions with HBF and other organisations, the Government has also confirmed that there will be a transitional arrangement of 30 months for existing schemes, together with a further 18 months for commencement on site.
- **Part L 2021:** New building regulations came into effect on 15 June 2023 for all new properties commencing from that date forward.
- HBF is also preparing for updates and changes to six Building Regulations in 2024 and 2025. Changes are due to Parts B, G, K, L, M and the introduction of a new building regulation Part T.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

In 2023 HBF's health and safety working groups completed a range of guidance documents that are available to members on the website, covering several issues including Fire in Construction, Dumper Truck Safety Checks, Stairwell Protection and Site Security.

The RIDDOR data platform, which has been custom-built with SSUK and is looking specifically at the UK housebuilding sector, is also now complete. We hope the platform will shine a positive light on the quality and safety associated with UK housebuilding. Quarterly RIDDOR information is available in a report format for 2022 and 2023.

## BUILDING SAFETY

In 2023, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) published guidance documents relating to Gateway 1, which requires fire safety information about proposed building works. The HSE also published a control overview guide to Gateways 2 and 3, the Code of Conduct for Registered Building Inspectors (RBIs), and Professional Conduct Rules for Registered Building Control Approvers (RBCAs). Registration for building-control professionals, which is now mandatory, also opened in October.

HBF worked with our members throughout the year to help interpret the guidance and explain these changes as they came into effect.

## OFWAT CONSULTATIONS

Ofwat, the Water Services Regulation Authority, consulted on numerous areas of regulation throughout 2023 including charging rules, measure of experience and environmental incentives. HBF submitted responses to these consultations and will ensure members are kept updated on the outcomes.

# REPORTS AND ENGAGEMENT

## REPORTS AND RESEARCH

HBF published numerous reports throughout the year, highlighting both the work of the industry and the difficulties faced by home building organisations. The reports have enjoyed widespread attention from national media and parliamentarians, being cited in parliamentary debates regularly and at PMQs by Labour Party leader Keir Starmer. Alongside those mentioned in the foreword to this report, our other research includes:

- State of Play, which looks at the main barriers facing SME home builders.
- Home Building Workforce Census, which looks at the make-up of the home building industry's onsite workforce, to see how the industry has changed post-Brexit and post-pandemic.
- Watt a Save looks at the financial and environmental savings that new build homes offer. This was released twice during the year to reflect changing energy prices.
- Section 106 agreements and unspent developer contributions, which finds that local authorities could be collectively holding £2.8 billion in unused home builder contributions, with an average of £8m in Section 106 contributions held unspent per council.
- Housing Pipeline Report, which looks at the impact of recent policy changes on planning permissions. This is released quarterly.

## PROSPECTIVE PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATE (PPC) ENGAGEMENT

HBF started its pre-election engagement with PPCs far earlier than usual this year. Our engagement included holding several site visits for PPCs throughout the year, and sharing our Parliamentary newsletters, research and key statistics with candidates. This engagement is building momentum and helping to establish HBF as a helpful and reliable source of information among the next generation of potential MPs.

HBF also launched a new 'Election engagement toolkit' in October to assist members in their engagement with PPCs and MPs in the run-up to the next General Election. The toolkit includes several resources designed to help members organise a site visit with a local candidate in their constituency, and resources outlining the industry's key messages.

## PARTY CONFERENCES

In 2023 HBF once again hosted a panel discussion (fringe) at both the Labour and Conservative Party Conferences, partnering with Conservative Home for the Conservative Party Conference and with Policy Exchange for the Labour Party Conference.

The theme for both events was home ownership and what needs to be done by the next Government to help more aspiring homeowners onto the property ladder. Both events were extremely well attended.

Both the Labour and Conservative events were live-streamed and are available to watch online.

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

HBF's Diversity and Inclusion Group has had another active year under its Chair, Madi Pilgrim of Persimmon Homes. Topics discussed in the quarterly meetings have included mentoring schemes, Pride Month, networking groups and Black History Month.

Analysis was also undertaken by HBF this year to understand how the home building industry was faring in relation to other sectors. With a gender pay gap of 17.6%, home building is performing better than construction generally (22.1%), but we still have a pay gap significantly above the Great Britain average of 9.4%.

## MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health awareness, including the work of the Mental Health Group, continued to be a significant focus for HBF last year. In February, HBF's Mental Awareness Parliamentary Reception took place and was attended by around 40 industry colleagues and almost 20 MPs. The purpose of the event was to raise awareness of the important work the home building industry is doing to improve the mental health of its workforce.

Free mental training sessions for SMEs were also held throughout the year, with around 200 individuals trained in total. The Mental Health Group also meets regularly and continues to share best practice and communications toolkits.

## DEVELOPMENT FINANCE SEMINAR

In a continuation of our work to help SME developers overcome the barriers they face, HBF held a Development Finance Seminar in November for members in London. The event featured a broad range of development finance providers, each of whom gave a short presentation before taking part in a Q&A session. It provided a unique opportunity for SME house builders and development finance providers to explore the available opportunities to access finance.



JO MANN, MENTAL HEALTH  
PARLIAMENTARY EVENT 2023

# MEDIA AND

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

The focus on increasing our social media and digital communications footprint in 2023 has ensured our industry messaging is reaching wider networks and audiences.

During 2023 HBF increased its LinkedIn follower count by more than 70%, to 19,300 - generating more interactions than any other housing body. In addition, we doubled our Twitter followers from 12,000 in January 2023 to 24,000 by the end of the year and our content appeared in Twitter feeds 182,000 times. Importantly, this Twitter presence has enabled us to generate public advocacy and support from industry and political opinion makers including Brandon Lewis MP and Simon Clarke MP.

In 2023 HBF also attracted more than 125,000 users to our website, resulting in 400,000 page views, including 40,000 views of our news stories.

## MEDIA COVERAGE

In 2023 HBF achieved 4,300 media mentions, including coverage across 128 stories covered by The Telegraph online, more than 96 articles from The Guardian and more than 50 stories by The Times. HBF has been a prominent voice on nutrient neutrality, planning and challenges impacting housing supply, with our messaging informing 1,310 stories on nutrients alone.

We also featured in more than 800 broadcast pieces - including more than 200 BBC features, and 129 Sky News stories.

## NEW HOMES WEEK

New Homes Week in 2023 was a great success and was based around the theme 'Make your move'. The campaign highlighted the benefits of new homes versus older properties in the current climate. The creative concept - 'Get on with living' - tapped into the comfort of a new build home, from chain-free buying and developer incentives to the cost-savings on energy bills and peace of mind in not having to carry out costly upgrades.

## SME CAMPAIGN

Following the publication of our latest State of Play survey report on SME home builders earlier this year, which was developed in partnership with Travis Perkins and Close Brothers, we secured over 160 signatures to a letter to the Prime Minister outlining the challenges facing SME home builders.

The letter and survey results were presented to Downing Street on 6 July, launching our 'Save our SMEs' campaign and garnered significant media coverage including in The Times and The Sun, as well as social media commentary from Labour's Shadow Housing team. The campaign was also shortlisted in the 'Media Campaign of the Year' category at the Trade Association Forum Awards.

## PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN

A significant aspect of our pre-election work is a public affairs campaign, which was supported by Lexington Communications last year. As part of this work, we published an international housing audit titled Housing Horizons which found that the UK falls behind EU and

# CAMPAIGNS

OECD counterparts in terms of housing availability, affordability and condition. This was followed by our 'Firmer Foundations' action plan, outlining 10 actions that the Government could take without passing legislation that would alleviate many of the day-to-day difficulties that businesses face.

## **NUTRIENT NEUTRALITY: FOUR YEARS ON CAMPAIGN**

In June, HBF marked four years since Natural England first issued advice preventing local authorities from granting planning permission for new development unless nutrient neutrality could be achieved. Our campaign page and social media activity highlighted the impact of the requirements on home builders and our membership.



CANDIDATE WORKING AS PART OF THE WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION SCHEME.

# SKILLS

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The Home Building Skills Partnership (HBSP) has continued to work on a range of initiatives to attract new talent into the industry:

- The HBSP has been awarded funding from the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) as part of its £3 million investment into initiatives following the creation of the Home Building Sector Skills Plan. The Plan sets out agreed CITB actions and support to meet priority industry requirements.
- The Partnership developed the Plan with key home builder members, along with contributions from the Association of Brickwork Contractors (ABC), Federation of Master Builders (FMB), NHBC and the National Federation of Builders (NFB). The Plan outlines the priorities and activities needed to attract and develop the workforce of the future and change the culture of the home building industry.
- As part of the £3 million investment from CITB, the HBSP has been awarded funding to extend its successful Brickwork Masterclasses, which has already trained 10,200 bricklayers; and to introduce a new Roofing Masterclass that will deliver practical skills and knowledge on common issues found by NHBC Inspection teams. The new masterclasses will be delivered by NHBC and have been developed in partnership with the Association of Brickwork Contractors (ABC) and the National Federation of Roofing Contractors (NFRC). The new funding will allow home builders to continue to access the training for free over the next two years across sites in England, Wales and Scotland on their own sites to avoid disruption.
- The Women into Home Building collaborative project launched in January 2023, with three cohorts completed. 47 women have been supported through the three-week insight and site management experience programme.
- During the 22/23 academic year The School Outreach Company (TSOC) engaged 1,126 secondary schools within economic cold spot areas, equating to a third of all secondary schools in England and reaching over 800,000 students. Home builders (Barratt, Bellway, Redrow, Tara Group/Cameron Homes and more recently Taylor Wimpey) are also working with TSOC in other areas of the country, ensuring maximum coverage.
- Over 8,000 Home Builder Visitor Cards are now in circulation, with over 115 home builders taking part in the scheme. The Go Smart/Smart Check App check function has now been replaced by the Checarda App.
- HBSP held numerous events throughout the year including the Future Talent Conference, which was attended by 120 delegates across 29 employers in 2023. The Haydock Park Home Builder Careers Event also saw 280 students from schools and colleges meet 19 different home builders.

# WALES

## PLANNING AND TECHNICAL

A particular focus of HBF's work last year was the phosphates issue that has affected the industry for some time. Natural Resources Wales has taken a different approach to that taken in England and, where a new development discharges to a wastewater treatment works (WwTW) with capacity and a new permit review has taken place, in most cases there is no requirement for the development to prove neutrality. Some permit reviews have identified the need for improvements at the WwTW; in these cases, Grampian conditions can be used to grant planning consent subject to the works being undertaken.

During the year HBF attended the second and third Welsh Government river pollution summits to discuss the phosphates issue; engaged with several working groups established after the summits; and has been an active member of the Welsh Government's 'Action Plan Owners Group', a new project management structure.

Furthermore, HBF attended the first meeting of the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Community of Practice following the publication of the Welsh Government's SuDS review in July. We highlighted that a lack of resources and an inconsistent approach by the SuDS Approving Body (SABs) continues to cause significant delays to developers.

The other main issue in Wales is slow progress in replacing and updating Local Development Plans (LDPs). We wrote to Housing Minister Julie James and then-Economy Minister Vaughan Gething earlier in the year to raise concerns over these delays, which are in part caused by objections from the Welsh Government to several plans at Preferred Strategy stage. HBF has also made its views known on many of these plans via representations throughout the year.

Finally, members with buildings affected by fire safety issues have now signed a legal agreement with the Welsh Government to ensure remediation is completed, and in

many cases work has commenced. Negotiations with the Welsh Government Building Safety team were completed earlier in the year, with the Housing Minister detailing the £20 million Welsh Building Safety Developer Loan Scheme at the start of the summer. As a member of the Building Safety Strategic Stakeholder Group, HBF also continues to work with the Welsh Government and the UK government over wider changes to building safety.

## POLICY AND RESEARCH

In 2023 HBF provided consultation responses on a range of issues in Wales, including submissions to the Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) call for evidence on its market study; Ofwat consultations; and a submission to the Welsh Conservatives Policy Board on housing supply.

We also issued a new Parliamentary Newsletter in Wales which was sent to all Members of the Senedd (MSs) and highlights the latest research and industry key messages. 'Key Messages' resources for our members in Wales were also launched to assist members in their political and external affairs engagement.

Furthermore, the Help to Buy Wales scheme continues to operate, having been extended to March 2025. HBF contributed to a Welsh Government commissioned research project exploring the current and future needs of prospective homebuyers in Wales and an understanding of the place of the Help to Buy Wales scheme in this. The results of this work are yet to be published.

Finally, the HBF team produced several pieces of research to support our messaging in Wales. This included Watt a Save energy efficiency data, HBF Freedom of Information (FOI) research into unspent developer contributions, and a workforce census in Wales. All our Wales research is available on a new Wales policy webpage.



CANDIDATE WORKING ON A ROOFING MASTERCLASS 2023

# HOUSEBUILDER MEDIA

2023 proved to be an extremely successful year for Housebuilder Media which delivered its full range of successful events and saw magazine advertising revenue continue to grow, defying the trend in the wider media industry.

Throughout the year HBM has been able to continue to provide important business useful information to the housebuilding industry while creating opportunities for the industry to come together to network, learn and celebrate. The company benefits from a unique position at the heart of the industry through its ownership by HBF and special partnership with NHBC.

With the disruption of Covid now in the past, HBM's events for HBF started the year strongly with a successful Policy Conference, Midlands Dinner and AGM as well as a well-attended Golf Day. The Autumn events - which included the HBF Planning and Technical conferences and the Housing Market Intelligence conference - were well attended, while once again 700-plus guests enjoyed the Housebuilder Awards in November.

In 2023 HBM also once again partnered with the Marie Curie charity to deliver the highly successful Housebuilder Brain Game which raised £250,000.

HBM's expertise in delivering industry events resulted in the team being asked to help the Future Homes Hub deliver its first annual conference in November.

Furthermore, despite some concerns about a dampening housing market, sponsorship and advertising sales continued to thrive in 2023. Housebuilder magazine, the

core of the HBM business, had another excellent year with advertising revenue growing year on year.

Housebuilder is published physically and digitally throughout the year, distributed every month to its comprehensive readership cohort and providing unrivalled coverage of the many issues affecting the housebuilding industry. While the demand for online information continues to increase - which HBM serves through its website - the healthy magazine advertising revenue suggests that the paper edition still has much value.

## HBM'S TEAM

Ben Roskrow, Publishing director

Helen Board, Business manager

Rob Houghton, Sales manager

Kellie Kent, Events manager

Suzie Mayes, Deputy editor

Lisa Sweeney, Deputy events manager

Ruth Greenwood, Team administrator



JOEL DOMMETT, HOUSEBUILDER  
AWARDS 2023

