



Ascend

Sustainability Commitment



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Foreword

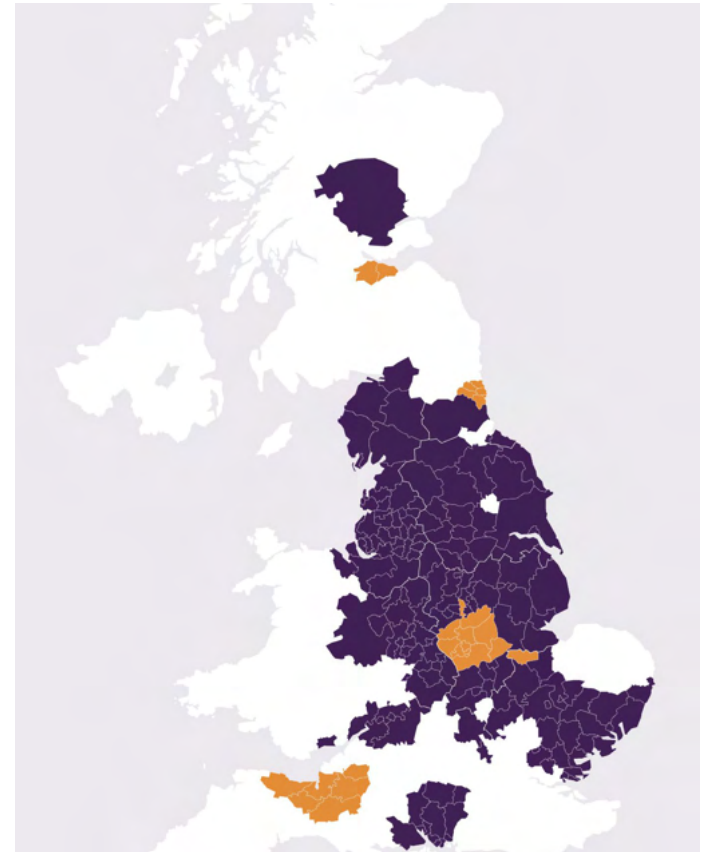
Dealing with climate change is one of the greatest challenges in human history and that's why we are highlighting our efforts to reduce our carbon footprint, protect our environment and be proactive in our social responsibility.

As a national estate agency and Build to Rent specialist, we are fully committed to being a responsible business and limit the environmental impact of our operations and across the services we provide.

We are excited to launch our first Sustainability Commitment - we have made 13 commitments, 8 to help protect the environment and 5 to support our social responsibilities. All 13 of these commitments are fully aligned to the United Nations Sustainability Goals (SDGs), providing the diligence and focus on key and important issues.

We know it's not just what we do that matters but how we do it. We are an industry-leading team of experts that exceed expectations in everything we do, and that includes delivering against our sustainability commitments. Our team is committed to acting with integrity, and we all know it's the right thing to do.

We recognise and are optimistic about the role we will play to address the climate crisis. But the task ahead is massive. As both a company and individuals, we take our responsibility seriously. We'll continue our sustainability work across our business and will share updates with you as we progress.



These are the locations of our managed properties across the UK.

Current Stock

Future Stock



Sustainability Vision & Values

Our Sustainability Commitments are built on our values, which distinguish us and guide our actions. We are committed to conduct our business in a socially responsible and ethical manner. Taking bold steps to protect the environment and benefit our customers, clients, investors and the communities in which we work.

Vision

Continue to build on our high standards and be recognised as an organisation who is doing the right thing – **protecting our planet**, whilst continuing to deliver the best service and experience for all our customers and clients.

Values

- Reducing our environmental impact
- Green-Living education
- Smart waste management
- Health and wellbeing
- Sustainable communities

Being a responsible business

At Ascend, we are committed to being a responsible business, whether that's by reducing our energy consumption and carbon emissions, recycling our waste, travelling sustainably, or supporting the health and wellbeing of our employees. We recognise the need to act responsibly across all aspects of our business and encourage our employees to do the same, both at work and at home.

Through our Sustainability Commitments, we will be as efficient as we can be, whilst doing our bit to protect our planet.



Services we provide

Through the services we provide to our investors, landlords, residents and vendors, we want to deliver them in the most sustainable way possible. We will focus on actively supporting our residents to reduce energy, water and waste through Green-Living advice and guidance.

We will continue to support the communities in which we operate, whether that is through local businesses, charities or schools – so Ascend can stand proud and be a part of driving the behavioural change needed by us all.



Environmental

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Our Environmental Responsibility

We are fully committed to being a responsible business and protecting our environment.

We are known for our high standards, but this doesn't just mean the service we provide - we have high standards around protecting our planet too!

We have aligned our Sustainability Commitments to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as they provide a recognisable and proven framework that ensures we have everything covered, whether that's measuring the impact of our activities, delivering services or calculating our carbon emissions.



Affordable and Clean Energy

We are very aware of the cost of living crisis and support our residents may need. Protecting the environment requires similar action. Quite simply, we all need to reduce our energy consumption. We plan to help our residents by providing energy saving information, whilst taking action ourselves to measure and reduce our energy consumption across everything we do.



Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

We are committed to being as efficient as we can be and missed in-person appointments - such as scheduled maintenance works, property checks and viewings - means inefficiencies, but also a lot of unnecessary carbon emissions! We plan to work in partnership with our residents and suppliers to improve this key activity, which is important to protect our landlord's homes and the health and safety of our residents.



Sustainable Cities and Communities

We have already committed to transition our entire fleet to Hybrid by 2025. We recognise this is the step that every organisation needs to take, and we are already taking action. This is a significant contributor to carbon emissions and we are dedicated to reducing this.



Responsible Consumption and Production

We recognise we could do more to manage our waste in a smart and economical way. Therefore, we will promote recycling across all our branches and waste management across our operations and services, which includes providing our residents and employees with information and advice on implementing the 5 R's: Recycle, Reuse, Reduce, Repair, and Recovery.



Climate Action

The climate challenge is immense, so we believe our response must be meaningful. This is why our Sustainability Commitments stretch across our multiple functions, from operating our day-to-day activities to the multi-level services we provide. In addition to transitioning our fleet to EV, we are committed to becoming a net zero organisation and will be measuring and reducing our carbon emissions in order to do so.



Life on Land

Protecting our land and the multitude of lives living on it, we are committed to planting trees for every home we rent or sell. Trees are essential for people, wildlife and the environment. So, this is an easy commitment to make.

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



13 CLIMATE ACTION



15 LIFE ON LAND



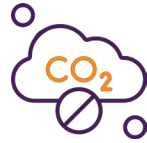


Our Environmental Commitments



commitment 1

We are committed to replacing our entire fleet to Hybrid Vehicles by 2025



commitment 2

We will report on our Scope 1 & 2 carbon emissions annually from 2023/24 and have targets in place to reduce emissions



commitment 3

We will reduce 'no access' visits by 20% over the next 12 months, reducing our carbon emissions.



commitment 4

We are committed to recycling waste at all our branches



commitment 5

We will actively promote and encourage Smart Meters with our residents to increase adoption



commitment 6

We will continue to promote virtual viewings and property visits, to reduce our carbon emissions



commitment 7

We will continue our Hybrid working policy, avoiding unnecessary commuting, to reduce our carbon emissions



commitment 8

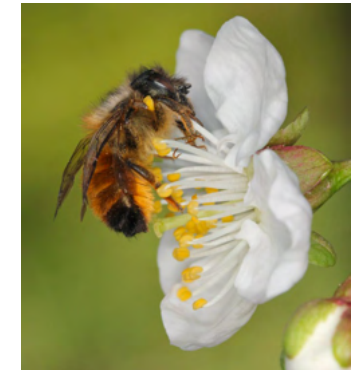
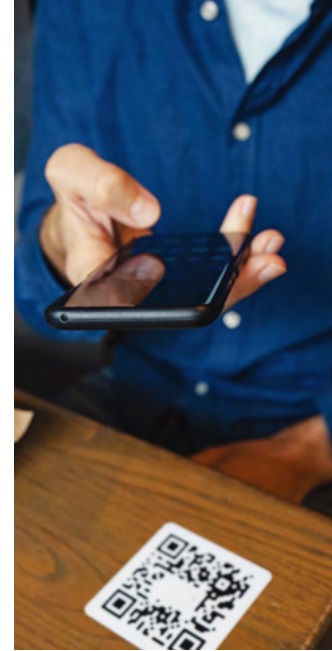
We will plant a tree for every property we rent or sell



Environmental Activities

In addition to our 8 Environmental Commitments, we will continue to support wider environmental activities across the communities in which our customers live, and through the services we provide:

- We will provide Go-Green hints and tips on our website - including waste and recycling information
- Consider sponsorship to local school events that support green living initiatives or biodiversity installations, such as: butterfly gardens, bug and insect hotels, green walls for indoor play
- We will provide digital information to residents through QR codes and our website wherever possible - reducing paper waste and emails





Social





Our Social Responsibility

As individuals, we can make a small contribution to society; as a whole business, this impact can be far greater. As an industry leading property company, our customers, clients and employees are at the core of everything we do.

Our social reach is broad through the management of our nationwide portfolio of 11,000 homes. Along with our clients and investors who specialise in Build to Rent and PRS family homes, we are all committed to our social responsibility.

As we continue to grow, we will build on our social commitments and our duty to act in the interests of the environment and society.



Good Health and Well-Being

We already offer our employees a comprehensive employee benefits programme, but we want to take this further to encourage and promote both green living and good health. This will include introducing a sustainable living category to our employee awards, vegan payday lunches, promoting health and wellbeing events and the launch of a wellness subscription service.



Green Living – Water, Energy and Waste

Recognising the energy crisis we are all facing, coupled with the need to act differently to support climate change - we are committed to providing our residents with as much support as possible.



We plan to step up to the challenge and optimise the engagements we have with our residents, as this is an ideal opportunity to educate and inform them on how to live a greener life. To achieve this, we will train our employees to become Green Living experts!



We will be able to share practical advice and information, specific to their home, on water, energy and waste efficiencies. We believe this is a fantastic platform to start driving the behavioural change needed.



In addition, we will provide information and advice on our website, so it is accessible to all our residents, at any time, to access at their convenience.



Partnerships and Sustainable Communities

We will continue to support and partner with local charities, businesses and local communities – either through sponsorship of events or providing volunteering to actively contribute to making a difference in projects that we are passionate about.





Our Social Commitments



commitment 1

We will ensure our employees have access to employee wellbeing services and an in-house mental health first aider



commitment 2

We will train our Property Managers to provide our residents with Green Living advice when they move in and during our inspections, including water, energy and waste efficiencies in the home



commitment 3

We will continue our commitment to support local charities and a variety of activities to achieve an annual contribution



commitment 4

We will enhance our employee benefit programme to encourage green living and reward sustainable working



commitment 5

We will commit to support local communities, charities, schools or businesses through employee volunteering



Social Activities

In addition to our 5 Social Commitments, we will continue to support wider social activities across the communities in which our residents live, and through the services we provide:

- We will provide support to local food banks within our communities
- We will support delivery of landlord welcome boxes to our residents when they move in, which often provide water, energy and waste saving products
- We will partner with local and diverse businesses and social enterprises (e.g through voucher schemes or sourcing of products)





Our Governance Statement

Governance is the final component of any effective sustainability plan for ensuring an organisation has the right foundations in place to deliver their commitments alongside environmental and social responsibility.

We ensure the right Corporate Governance is in place through our leadership team and branch managers, providing accountability and oversight across our entire operations and workforce.

Health and Safety of our employees and residents is a key priority for us. To maintain high health and safety standards, we ensure any risks are managed swiftly – and through our regular property and site inspections, we act proactively to prevent issues, should we need to.

It is important to us to create an environment which supports individual differences, and everyone's contribution is valued and respected. We do not tolerate any forms of unacceptable behaviour between colleagues and/or with our customers. We create an inclusive environment, where we treat everyone as a person, not a number.

We regularly review our structures, policies, rules and controls to ensure we meet legislation, and they enable efficient operations and growth of our business.

We support the growth of our employees and where possible, provide opportunities for our younger generation, either through Apprenticeship schemes or trainee roles.

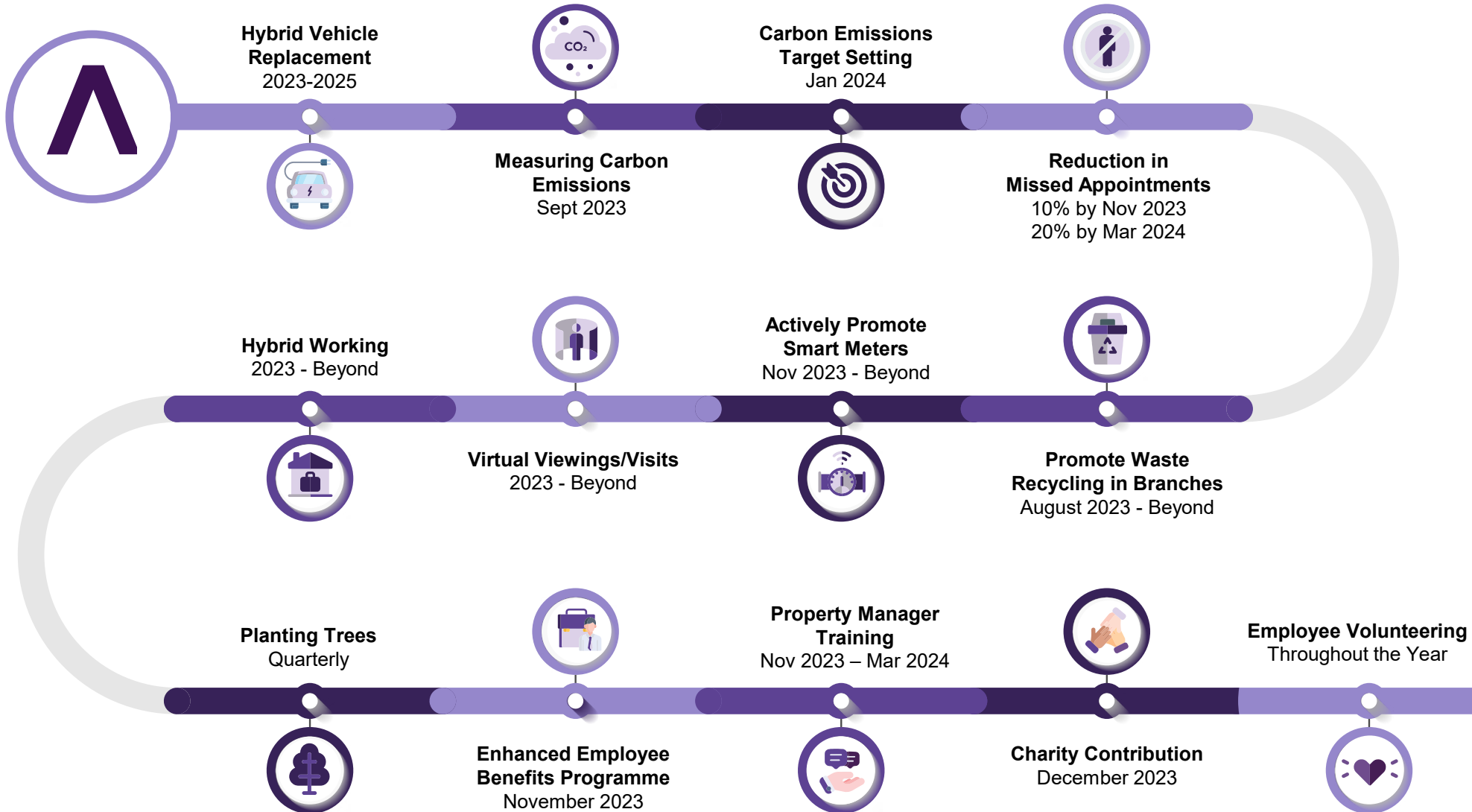
Overall, we are recognised for being a diverse, energetic team with a supportive and down-to-earth approach – which is something we are proud of.

However, we will always strive to do more. Continuing to understand what's important to our customers and employees is important to help shape our future and ensure we focus on the right things. We will continue to gather this insight through our annual surveys, and where possible develop our Sustainability Commitments further.



Ascend

High Level Roadmap





Our Environmental Targets

	Commitment	2022 achievements	2023 Targets	Future ambition
1	We are committed to replacing our entire fleet to Hybrid by 2025	3 vehicles moved to Hybrid	30% complete (12 vehicles to Hybrid)	100% (40 vehicles) Hybrid by 2025
2	We will report on our Scope 1 & 2 carbon emissions annually from 2023/24 and have targets in place to reduce emissions	n/a	Annual reporting established and targets set for 24/25	We are committed to reducing our operational carbon emissions by 1.5% every year and becoming net carbon zero in our business operations by 2030
3	We will reduce 'no access' visits by 20% over the next 12 months, reducing our carbon emissions	c.10% of all appointments are missed (Baseline position)	20% improvement over next 12 months	10% improvement per annum
4	We are committed to recycling waste at all our branches	n/a	All branches	Influence Head Office building and local government to implement recycling
5	We will actively promote and encourage Smart Meters with our residents to increase adoption	n/a	10% increase in adoption over next 12 months	Continue to promote Smart Meters / work with local Supplier to fit smart meters when properties are vacant
6	We will continue to promote virtual viewings and property visits, to reduce our carbon emissions	Launched	On-going commitment	On-going commitment
7	We will continue our Hybrid working policy, avoiding unnecessary commuting, to reduce our carbon emissions	Launched	On-going commitment	On-going commitment
8	We will plant a tree for every property we rent or sell	2,886 Trees	c.3,000 Trees	Yearly commitment



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Our Social Targets

	Commitment	2022 achievements	2023 Targets	Future ambition
1	We will ensure our employees have access to Employee wellbeing services and an in-house mental health first aider	Employee Assist Programme	Mental Health First Aider in place	On-going commitment
2	We will train our Property Managers to provide our residents with Green Living advice when they move in and during our inspections, including water, energy and waste efficiencies in the home	n/a	Develop and launch training programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target % of visits • All employees trained • Incorporate into Induction process • Accreditation for employees
3	We will continue our commitment to support local charities, and through a variety of activities to achieve an annual contribution	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £5,000 (Charity selected for 2023 financial contribution: Embassy) • Plus, actively supporting other charities throughout the year 	Yearly commitment
4	We will enhance our Employee benefit programme to encourage green living and reward sustainable working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hybrid working • Reduced hours • Day off for your birthday • Absence incentive • Employee of month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch Sustainable Employee of the Month category • 1 Vegan payday lunch event • Promote 1 wellbeing event over next 12 months 	On-going commitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch wellbeing App subscription
5	We will commit to support local communities, charities, schools or businesses through employee volunteering	n/a	1 day per year	On-going commitment



Ascend

2022 Highlights



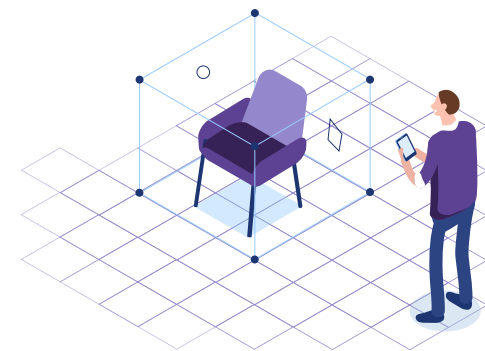
2,886 Trees Planted
One for every home
we sold or let



Reduced Emissions
by implementing a
home/hybrid working policy



Company fleet moved to
7.5% Hybrid Vehicles



Reduced Emissions
by promoting virtual
property viewings and inspections



Ascend

to a sustainable future

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