



CLARION
HOUSING GROUP

**THE
WILLIAM
SUTTON
PRIZE
2023**

Accelerating a just transition to net zero

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The William Sutton Prize 2023

The science is indisputable, climate change is happening and the impact is profound. We are no longer at a decision-making crossroad. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change delivered its 'final warning' earlier this year, stating 'everything, everywhere, all at once' is needed if we are to limit global warming to below 1.5 degrees and prevent a climate catastrophe.

We cannot shy away from the role of the housing sector in the current crisis. UK homes are the least energy efficient in Europe, and residential housing is estimated to have been responsible for emitting over 20% of all UK CO₂ emissions¹ in 2020.

Whilst this impact must be acknowledged and addressed, the housing sector can also be seen as an incredible force for good. It is uniquely placed to drive the change in carbon reductions while bringing to life the benefits that more green spaces and greater biodiversity can have on the health and wellbeing of residents, communities and the planet.

As the country's largest housing association and a sector leader,

we recognise our role in stimulating creative thinking and adopting breakthrough solutions that moves us closer towards a net zero carbon era.

However, the scale of the challenge is enormous, and we cannot do this alone.

Solving these complex, cross-sectoral problems require collaboration with forward-thinking individuals and organisations on the ground both in and out of the housing industry.

New ideas and faster uptake is urgently needed if we are to successfully reduce our collective carbon footprint at pace and create a more promising future for generations to come.



A catalyst for new ideas

The William Sutton Prize is the social housing sector's leading innovation catalyst, which cultivates and incubates high potential ideas that tackle our most urgent sustainability challenges.

Achieving a **just** transition to a net zero carbon future

The 2023 edition of the William Sutton Prize invites disruptors and innovators — tech and social entrepreneurs, SMEs, start-ups, academics, architects and more — to submit new, breakthrough and radical ideas that can accelerate the sector's transition to net carbon zero in a just and fair way.

A just transition aims to ensure no-one is left behind as we move to a net zero future, so that the benefits are felt by everyone in society in a way that is equitable and inclusive².

Lower income families and disadvantaged individuals are battling with a cost of

living crisis and rising energy costs. They tend to contribute least to causing climate change and yet are most vulnerable to its effects. And because their voice is seldom heard, they often pay proportionally more and benefit the least from new climate policies and programmes³.

Scope for ideas and innovation

The William Sutton Prize welcomes *any idea and innovation that has the potential to improve the carbon footprint of the social housing sector and of its residents.*

We are particularly interested in receiving (*but are not restricting*) submissions that also work towards one or more of the following interrelated sustainability outcomes.

1

Increasing energy efficiency, reducing bills

The UK has some of the least energy efficient properties in Europe, with leaky homes across the country contributing to approximately 20% of UK carbon emissions annually.

Updating and improving boilers, doors, floors, windows, and walls of social housing is already underway. However, the sector also needs to find and support new approaches and technologies that will remove barriers and accelerate the implementation of retrofits if targets are to be met^{4,5}.

In parallel, we think there are also the opportunities for residents and communities to become more actively engaged in greener living. This could include changing attitudes and behaviours around energy and water consumption, as well as more effective and engaging tools, technologies and programmes to help residents manage their usage.

2

Cleaner air in and around communities

Toxic air is a matter of life and death. Every year, poor quality air is linked to up to 64,000 premature deaths in the UK⁶. Groups most adversely impacted include infants and children, women and older people, especially those from lower income households and living in high density urban environments.

New and existing residential buildings are a significant source of pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter.

We believe that the answer to achieving cleaner air — both indoors and out — lies in new interventions and innovations such as on-site clean energy production, increased biodiversity, green transport infrastructure, and better building design and planning processes.



3

Better health and wellbeing of residents through nature

Tree-lined streets, parks, community gardens and urban forests benefit local populations by providing essential spaces to rest and recharge, socialise and exercise. They also help to improve local air quality, reduce noise and moderate temperatures during hot periods⁷.

However not everyone enjoys equal access to nature. Research shows that lower socioeconomic and lower income groups have the worst access to green spaces. At the same time, these are the people who would benefit most from more contact with nature in terms of improving mental health and reducing mortality and morbidity rates from chronic diseases.

We are keen to receive submissions for ideas that help improve the health and well-being of social housing residents and communities by bringing nature back into cities and urban environments through enhanced biodiversity and accessible green infrastructure.

4

Homes that are resilient to the impacts of climate change

We are all witnessing more intense and frequent weather extremes due to climate change, which will get worse in the future. Our built environment, and in particular older housing stock, is not prepared to cope with these conditions.

Flooding is already a severe risk and the likelihood of more frequent extreme rainfall has increased significantly. Overheating homes is a growing concern. Greater water scarcity in the future could disrupt the flow of household water, which in turn could exacerbate health, social and economic inequalities.

Buildings are also at risk. Fabric can be affected by damp due to intense rain and flooding, structures can be damaged due to high winds and subsidence caused by drought.

All of these impact the health and wellbeing of residents and create potentially avoidable costs that could be better invested elsewhere.

References

- 1 Climate change and the residential sector: what role does housing play? ([savills.co.uk](https://www.savills.co.uk))
- 2 Navigating a just transition to net zero ([pwc.co.uk](https://www.pwc.co.uk))
- 3 Climate change and social justice: an evidence review ([jrf.org.uk](https://www.jrf.org.uk))
- 4 Energy efficient homes made possible with retrofitting (www.innovationnewsnetwork.com)
- 5 Green Finance: Removing financial barriers to help decarbonise UK homes ([es.catapult.org.uk](https://www.es.catapult.org.uk))
- 6 The Government must improve air quality in the UK ([ukparliament.shorthandstories.com](https://www.ukparliament.shorthandstories.com))
- 7 Who benefits from nature in cities? ([eea.europa.eu](https://www.eea.europa.eu))

What's on offer

Winners of the William Sutton Prize will each receive between £5,000 and £50,000 in grant funding and a tailored package of business support from Clarion to help grow their ideas and turn them into reality.

- 1 **Grant funding:** Applicants can bid for between £5,000 and £50,000 of grant funding to further develop their idea. The amount of funding requested should reflect an amount that is needed to take the idea to the next stage of development.
- 2 **Tailored support:** Winners will also receive a 12–18 month programme of business support from Clarion — such as business advice and mentoring, access to user groups, sites for testing, validating and piloting — to help further develop and scale their ideas.

Who's it for?

- ✓ Do you have a big idea that could help the social housing sector and its residents to improve their carbon footprint? Are you looking for funding or infrastructure to help develop your idea further? Could a partnership with Clarion help to catapult it forwards?
- ✓ The Prize is open to any organisation registered in England and all UK residents aged over 18.
- ✓ We are particularly interested in hearing from architects; designers; social and tech entrepreneurs; engineers; scientists; academics and researchers; construction contractors; social enterprises and CICs.
- ✓ You don't necessarily have to have worked directly in the social housing sector before. What's more important is that ideas can have a tangible impact on the fair transition to net zero, with the potential to create lasting change on a national scale.

To download the guidelines and apply online visit
clarionhg.com/william-sutton-prize

The application deadline is 12 noon Monday 3 July 2023

If you have any questions about the prize or applying,
 please email williamsuttonprize@clarionhg.com



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