

Social Value

Case study

Barrhead Housing

Barrhead Housing is a community-based organisation with over 1,000 properties; the majority of which located within walking distance of its offices in East Renfrewshire. This proximity has long shaped its ethos: being embedded in the communities it serves. Barrhead recognised that while it had always delivered community-focused projects and kept community engagement central to its identity, it needed a more robust way to evidence the difference these activities were making.

> Put simply, it's incredibly easy to use, incredibly easy to understand and it gives us an edge. HACT know the housing sector. Why would we partner with anyone else?

This renewed focus led the team to partner with HACT, whose tools and methodology offered a credible and accessible way to measure social value across housing and community services. We spoke to Barrhead's Community Investment Manager, Bryan Dando, about working with HACT.

Benefits and impact

HACT's Social Value Insight Tool aligned seamlessly with existing data collection practices. The organisation was already tracking attendance, outcomes, and progression across its programmes.

The tool allowed them to translate this into measurable social value, without adding administrative burden. It became a way to quantify the impact of activities such as cooking classes, employability support, digital inclusion, and exercise programmes. This capability strengthened funding applications, supported internal decision-making, and helped them team prioritise projects with the greatest impact.



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For example, in employability programmes, the team could estimate the social value generated if a certain percentage of participants secured jobs. This added credibility and helped the work stand out in competitive environments.

Social value measurement also expanded into core housing functions. BHA began capturing outcomes from re-letting homes and annual tenant visits, including improved wellbeing, access to advice, and feelings of belonging. These insights helped shift the narrative around housing services, moving from reactive contact to proactive engagement.

One standout example was the welfare advice service, run by a single officer. In one year, the service helped tenants secure £650,000 in benefits. The social value tool allowed Barrhead to demonstrate the broader impact of these gains, including increased financial stability, reduced stress and demonstrating £1,064,674 in Social Value.

Barrhead's Brighter Futures programme, which includes cooking, drama, and toddler groups, generated £11 million in social value over just two years. This figure reflected the cumulative impact of multiple partners and volunteers, many of whom were tenants themselves. The tool helped everyone involved see the value of their contributions, reinforcing a shared sense of purpose.

HACT's methodology also helped Barrhead Housing identify which projects delivered the most outcomes. While some activities, like cooking classes, naturally aligned with multiple social value indicators, others, such as school uniform provision, had fewer measurable outcomes but remained essential. This encouraged a balanced approach, combining quantitative insight with professional judgement.

> We cleared £650,000 this year in benefits that went into people's pockets. It's not just about the financial gain. It's about how it makes people feel more comfortable and secure.



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Why HACT?

HACT's sector expertise and practical tools made it the natural partner for Barrhead Housing. The Social Value Insight Tool was praised for its simplicity and credibility. It required no specialist knowledge and integrated easily into existing workflows.

Community partners were asked to complete before-and-after questionnaires as part of their service agreements and were enthusiastic about the results. Seeing the impact of their work helped motivate continued engagement and fostered a culture of evidence-based practice.

> The toolkit is extremely simple to use. It's simple data entry that pops out an easy-to-understand figure at the end. You don't need to be a rocket scientist to understand the methodology, and the figure only ever goes up. It keeps on giving.

The tool's accessibility was a key factor in its success. Bryan described how he could input data from attendance lists, certificates, and surveys, and generate meaningful insights with minimal effort. This ease of use made it possible to scale social value measurement across the organisation, from community projects to housing services.

Barrhead Housing appreciated the credibility of HACT's methodology. The tool is endorsed by government and widely recognised across the sector, which added weight to funding applications and strategic reporting. It allowed the team to present its impact in a way that was both rigorous and relatable.

HACT's approach was not just transactional. It reflected shared values and a commitment to supporting communities through meaningful, measurable work. Barrhead Housing saw HACT as a trusted organisation in its mission to serve residents and demonstrate impact.



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Would you recommend HACT?

Barrhead Housing strongly recommends HACT to other housing providers.

The partnership has helped the organisation move from informal community work to a structured, evidence-based approach. Other housing associations have approached Barrhead Housing for advice, and several have adopted social value practices after seeing its success.

Social value is now embedded in Barrhead Housing's long-term strategy. One of its key performance indicators is to generate an average of £1,000 in social value per household by 2030. This reflects a deep commitment to measuring and maximising impact across all areas of the organisation.

> This wouldn't have been in our strategy without working with HACT and going through this process. We've never had a board member ask if we've saved £11 million. They understand it's not cash in the bank, it's impact.

The organisation has also won two awards for its Brighter Futures programme, one national and one local. While there are no guarantees, Barrhead Housing believes that its ability to articulate social value played a role in its success. The organisation continues to share its learning with peers, helping to build sector-wide confidence in social value measurement.

Barrhead Housing's influence is spreading. Former staff members have taken social value practices to new organisations, and local authorities are beginning to show interest. The partnership with HACT has positioned Barrhead Housing as a leader in the field, not just within Scotland but across the UK.



HACT

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Book a demo today.

If you'd like to see the Social Value Insight tool in action and explore the UK Social Value Bank, get in touch with our Social Value team today to start the conversation.