



Brighter News



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Alliance approved to cover all repairs

Meet Alliance Homes Repairs Service (HRS)



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Resident action for murals by Bristol artists

Community voices behind large-scale street artworks for Lower Ashley Road

Residents in St Paul's, Bristol, saw their homes transformed in October with the addition of two large-scale street artworks on Lower Ashley Road.

Through consultation with local residents, we commissioned a large-scale work for our development of 31 affordable homes on Lower Ashley Road.

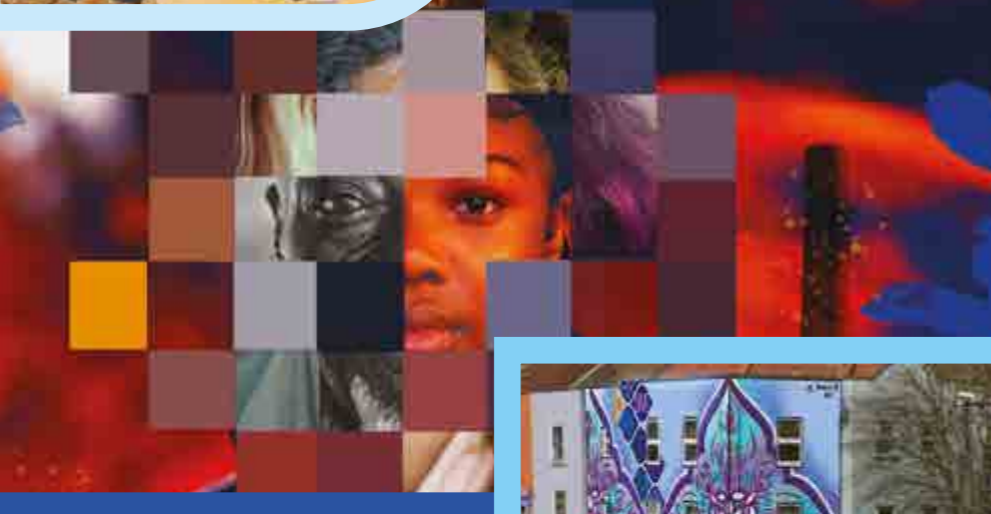
Artist HazardOne was selected to create a design for this work at this summer's Upfest, Europe's largest street art and graffiti festival, held in Bristol.

In October local residents (see below) workshopped their ideas with HazardOne, who lives round the corner, to explore which design captured the spirit of the

community. The pixelated face (see large image below) was felt to convey a sense of the local diversity. Residents talked about how they enjoyed hearing music as you walk down the street, the smell of jerk chicken on a Friday, the urban parks, and how people from different backgrounds and cultures come together and enjoy the lively local atmosphere.

"This area has a great history, where all kinds of immigrants arrive and build new communities."

Around the same time, the initial consultation findings fed into a project to make number 53 Lower Ashley Road more welcoming. An uplifting work by Peace of Art collective, headed up by Manazzar Siddique and Safina Khan, has transformed the whole corner of the building (see bottom image).



Read our 2021-22 Annual Report

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Cost of living

PAGE 5

Are you struggling to make ends meet or manage debt? FREE help is here

- The Housing Team is your first call
- A FREE course could help you to budget
- We put you in touch with organisations who can help

Look out for progress on our promises to residents



Merry Hill wins housing award



Our development of 50 homes in Lockleaze was recognised as best in community-led housing at the 2022 Insider South West Residential Property Awards.

Merry Hill was also praised for its low carbon construction and its support for resident self-finishing – see page 11.

Latest

One repairs service for Brighter Places



When we became Brighter Places, we promised an improved repairs service for all residents.

We've listened carefully to resident views and have appointed Alliance Homes Repairs Service (HRS) to do all repairs and gas servicing. HRS has a good track record working with us and is committed to improve the service further.

Alliance HRS operatives will arrive in Alliance Homes vans (see below) and wear a grey uniform displaying the Alliance logo. They always carry ID.

Report a repair

- On our website brighterplaces.co.uk/report-a-repair
 - Call us in office hours and for out-of-hours emergencies
- New residents and former United Communities residents: 0117 942 4600
Former Solon residents: 0117 942 4071



Warmer homes



We have applied for government funds to improve the energy performance of our existing homes, starting in 2023.

We will insulate to reduce energy use and ventilate to resolve damp issues and improve air quality, as set out in our five-year corporate strategy.

We will write to you if your home is eligible for works.



Win for carbon neutral homes

Brighter Places is part of a winning partnership that will deliver one of Bristol's projects in the Climate Smart Cities Challenge.

The 'Thriving Places' proposal will develop affordable, energy-efficient, carbon neutral homes using modern methods of construction (MMC) with international funding.

Sally Gilbert, Development Director, said: "As a Bristol-based housing association focused on delivering much-needed social housing for the city we are delighted to be a partner in the Thriving Places project."



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Wild and wonderful

Vibrant work from young artists like Ivor, above, helped inspire these stunning hallways at Fedden Buildings.



PAGE 6

Face to face like the old days

Mr Thomas (left) shares views with our engagement officer Danielle in July.

More inside...

4 Career boost
With the right support you could earn and achieve more

7 Equality in sharp focus
Our Summer of Listening asked for your views on diversity and inclusion

8 FAQs
We answer questions you asked us when we visited you at home

Careers and income

It's never too late for a career boost

Future Bright is changing lives for the better

"More people should know about it!" said Nicola, who has improved her family's finances thanks to support from the Bristol Future Bright team.

A freelance graphic designer, Nicola found herself stuck in a contract that paid little. But she lacked the confidence to negotiate a better deal for herself. "I wasn't really making progress, just treading water. I didn't really know how to improve my situation," she said. Then she joined Future Bright.

With a career coach, Nicola was supported to take courses and workshops to improve her skills and help her negotiate better paid work.

"I feel much more optimistic about my career," she said. "This has had a very positive effect on my family's financial situation. I have also learnt to value my work."

Future Bright offers one-to-one free career coaching to residents in Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire who are aged 18 and over, in paid work (including zero hours and self-employed) and receiving eligible benefits or tax credits – or if you are earning less than £9.90 an hour.

Call **0117 942 4600** to talk to one of our Future Bright coaches, email futurebright@brighterplaces.co.uk or visit brighterplaces.co.uk/jobs-and-training

FUTURE BRIGHT Support Advice Skills

Meet the team

A place to grow

Our apprentice Ben Chidgey talks about the experience of joining Brighter Places and what the future holds.

What's your role and how is it going?

I am a Human Resources and Organisational Development Administrator in a great team, learning lots that I can also transfer to my non-working life, such as organisation and co-operation with my peers.

How does this help your career plans?

Starting at a growing company gives me many opportunities to explore new roles. The training has really helped me to learn at my own speed.

How are you finding Brighter Places?

It's a great organisation to be a part of – very welcoming and supportive for its employees. Everyone makes a great effort to provide the best service possible and support our customers.

What's the best thing about the role?

The consistent hours and the ability to learn and grow under some very experienced HR professionals.

Ben works four days a week with day release for studies. He is paid the National Living Wage and has access to our great corporate benefits.

Are you our next apprentice?



In January we will be looking for an apprentice to join our award-winning development team, delivering new homes for people who need them. The apprentice will work towards a Level 3 qualification. This will be fully funded and combined with practical experience in the housing industry. To find out more email: HR@brighterplaces.co.uk

Job opportunities

We recruit for various roles and advertise them on our website at: brighterplaces.co.uk/careers

Do you earn the Living Wage?

The Living Wage has increased to £10.90 and all Living Wage Employers must pay this new rate by May 2023.

If you are not yet paid this amount, FREE personal career coaching is available to you via Future Bright. Get in touch to find out more. See contact details (left).

Welcome to the new Chair of the Board

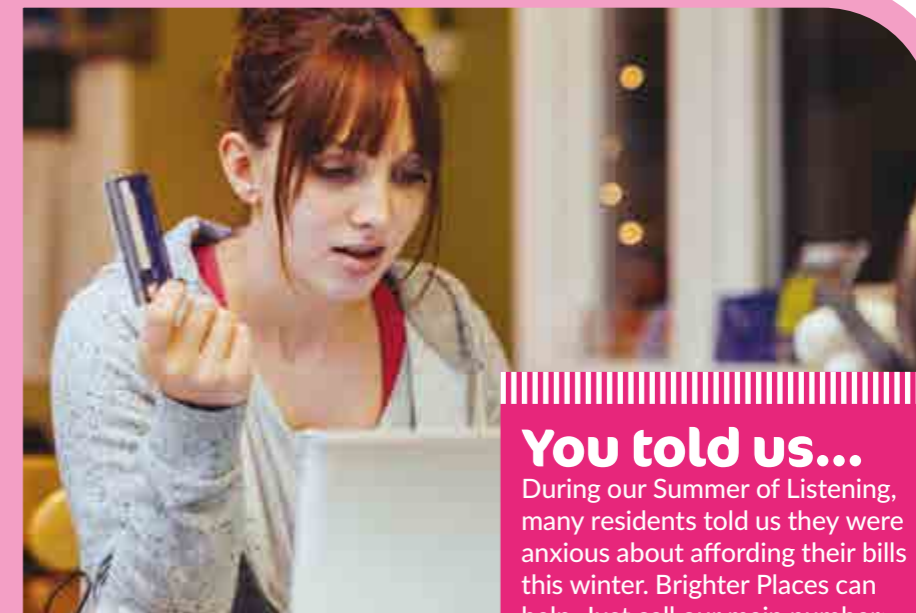
In October we were sad to say goodbye to outgoing Chair James Taylor but excited to welcome **Harry Partington** (right) to the role. Find out more about Harry and our other Board members on our website: brighterplaces.co.uk/our-team



Resident support

Cost of living crisis

Not sure where to turn? Our experienced staff and partners offer immediate support and signposting to advice.



You told us...

During our Summer of Listening, many residents told us they were anxious about affording their bills this winter. Brighter Places can help. Just call our main number:

0117 942 4600 or email: info@brighterplaces.co.uk



We are here to help

The Housing Team

If you are struggling, get in touch. **The Housing Team** will listen and signpost you to support. They support new tenants and will act if you are suffering anti-social behaviour.

Support with income

Our specialist **Income Officers** make sure you are getting the money you are entitled to. They can signpost you to advice on debt or if you are struggling to pay rent or meet loan payments.

Health and wellbeing

Our **Tenancy Sustainment Team** can help you access support to stop smoking or reduce alcohol, for mental health and for wellbeing. They also support you to register with a GP or dentist. **Contact the Housing Team.**

New resident support

If you are moving in or ending your tenancy our **Lettings Officer** signposts to support and help with viewings and will explain rights and responsibilities.

Tenancy support fund

Residents may be able to apply to our hardship fund in an emergency or short-term difficulty, such as urgently needing food when the food bank cannot assist. If we cannot offer direct support, we always point you to appropriate organisations. Contact the Housing Team or email: seniortenancyimpact@brighterplaces.co.uk or go to: brighterplaces.co.uk/tenancy-support

Better ways to manage your cash

FREE course

Learn to budget and take control of your finances. It doesn't matter if you are in debt, on benefits or well off.

The CAP Money Course teaches budgeting and a cash-based system that works. Sign up any time at: ebe.org.uk/capmoneycourse The next Horfield course starts on Wednesday 23 November 7-9pm at Ebenezer Church, 286 Filton Avenue, Horfield BS7 0BA.

Finding the best deals

helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk is a government website advising on energy, childcare and transport costs. It lists high street discounts on food, clothes, shoes and other essentials.

Your view comes first

This summer Brighter Places visited residents from Swindon to Southville to gather feedback and share information. In September we then held a special event at our offices to celebrate with residents. We spoke to more than 300 of you and gathered comments and suggestions on what matters to you most. Read our findings and enjoy the photos!



Kym Britton (left) and Fatoumatta Darboe.



Marie Luigi (left) and Mr Brierly.

Who took part?

300 residents spoke to us on the doorstep (and 50 replied by post)

150 residents signed up to MyPlace (and 50 asked for help)

148 residents came to our grand finale event at Eden House

80 repairs reported and these are now being arranged

30 colleagues in our team took part, meeting residents and joining in the fun!

"You are good at sending emails about how to get involved."

What you told us

Cost of living

YOU SAID...

- 49% of residents had concerns about paying household fuel bills
- 34% of residents had concerns about buying food, clothes and household essentials
- 26% had concerns about their ability to pay your rent

WE DID...

We're sharing more information about support from our teams and from other organisations (page 5).

We're also inviting residents to online sessions to share ideas and help us provide the right support. Email us on the address below.

How inclusive is Brighter Places?

We received many viewpoints and suggestions around this question. Every comment is helping to shape our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) approach.

Our policy and actions will be set out in the new year for all residents to consider.

"Be more aware of people's circumstances. If they're asking for support, there's a reason."



"You are clearly trying to include residents to improve service."

Online services

YOU SAID...

- 18% of residents are already using our **MyPlace** online portal (right)
- 67% had not heard of MyPlace
- 14% of residents would like support to register and use MyPlace
- 54% would be more likely to give feedback if they could do so online

WE DID...

We are promoting **MyPlace** at every opportunity and contacting residents who have asked for support.

Find out how to sign up (see right) and get started on our website.

To get in touch, email:

engagement@brighterplaces.co.uk

Call: **0117 942 4600**

Join other residents and get involved in a way that suits you:
brighterplaces.co.uk/connected-voices



How to open your MyPlace account



- Access your rent statement
- Pay your rent
- Update contact details
- Report anti-social behaviour

Visit: brighterplaces.co.uk and click on the LOGIN button on the top right of the screen. Watch the video that explains how to register to get started. Get in touch if you feel you need some support.



We're still all ears...

Want to give us some feedback? Get in touch in the usual way. See our contact details on the back page.



Resident questions

How do I...? Just ask the team!

Meet our Customer Services colleagues, who have all the answers to your queries! Call, email or use the form on our website.

brighterplaces.co.uk/contact
Call 0117 942 4600



Q: How do I stop mould and condensation? A: Don't wait. Ventilate!

Cut down moisture (steam) and keep a good air flow through your home by opening windows and trickle vents when you are washing or cooking. Also:

- Keep your home warm to stop condensation on cold surfaces
- Run the cold water into the bath before the hot to make less steam
- Dry clothes outside when possible
- Dry clothes on a rack not a radiator
- Leave a gap between your furniture and any outside wall so air circulates
- Do not over-fill your wardrobes, cupboards and drawers
- Don't put your mattress on the floor

Soap, scrub, rinse and dry Wash mould with non-ammonia soap or detergent and hot water. Scrub stubborn stains.

Then wipe away all mould and detergent with a damp cloth. Disinfect and dry the area thoroughly with a fan heater. Contact us if the mould persists.

Q: How do I get new keys? I've lost mine. A: Pay for new, unless they're stolen from you

- Stolen keys are replaced free of charge but you must report the theft and get a crime reference number from the police
- All lost keys, including for communal areas and fobs, have to be replaced by us and there is a charge for this

- Replacing the lock on your front door might be cheaper with your own locksmith – leave a spare key with a trusted friend or neighbour

Q: How do I swap my home for another? A: HomeSwapper's here with steps very clear

You can exchange with another social housing tenant if both landlords give permission and you satisfy all the legal requirements.

You will need written permission from us. You use the HomeSwapper website. To get started, read the home swap FAQs on our website at: brighterplaces.co.uk/swap-your-home

Q: How do I change who is on my tenancy? A: Drop us a line and we'll check if it's fine

Contact us to ask about a change and we'll be in touch to confirm whether this is possible and to help.

You can call or email us as usual or send us a message using your MyPlace account (see page 7 for more info).

Q: How do I report anti-social behaviour? A: Talk to us – we'll be beside you all the way

If there is an ongoing incident where someone's safety is at risk, call the police on 999. Non-emergencies can be reported to the police on 101.

If you are experiencing behaviour that causes alarm, harassment or distress to you or another member of your household then you can let us know quickly and easily at any time of day or night using MyPlace or our online form at: brighterplaces.co.uk/contact

Struggling with noise?

Everyone should be able to enjoy their home in peace, so if you're experiencing noise nuisance, download the **Noise App** to your smartphone.

This will allow you to record noise, track it automatically over time and send the information to us to investigate. Go to: thenoiseapp.com

Stay fire safe

brighterplaces.co.uk/fire-safety



- Test fire alarm(s) weekly
- Use the kitchen safely
- Avoid smoking or do so responsibly
- Keep matches away from children
- Don't run appliances overnight
- Don't leave mirrors near windows
- Don't overload sockets or use non-branded chargers

Remember: never try to tackle a fire in your home yourself. Instead, get you and your family to safety and call 999.

Annual report 2021-22

Welcome to our first annual report as Brighter Places. This is a snapshot of our performance and progress in relation to our ambitious programme of investment in homes, communities and residents.

Summary

Our first year of operation as Brighter Places

We have made progress to deliver on our customer promises but we recognise that there are still a number of challenges we need to overcome. We have increased engagement with residents and provided investment in homes, communities and new developments.

Improved service and resident involvement

We've put residents at the heart of decision-making, expanded colleague teams and created local work opportunities as well as conducting a full-scale review and relaunch of repairs and services.

Response to rising costs and skills shortages

While we had to accept a longer delivery time for new homes because of Covid, our targets were unchanged. We remained on track overall.

Our five-year plan

At the end of our first year, we presented our corporate strategy 2022-27, building on merger promises for:

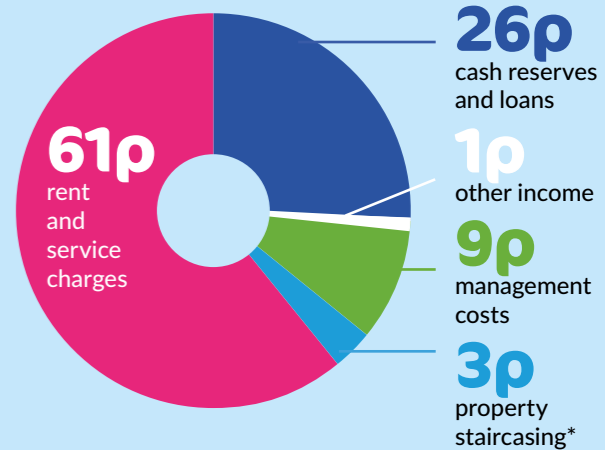
- Repairs improvement
- Diversity in our teams
- Low-carbon growth
- 1,000 new homes for Bristol

Our full financial report and five-year plan are available on our website at: brighterplaces.co.uk/publications



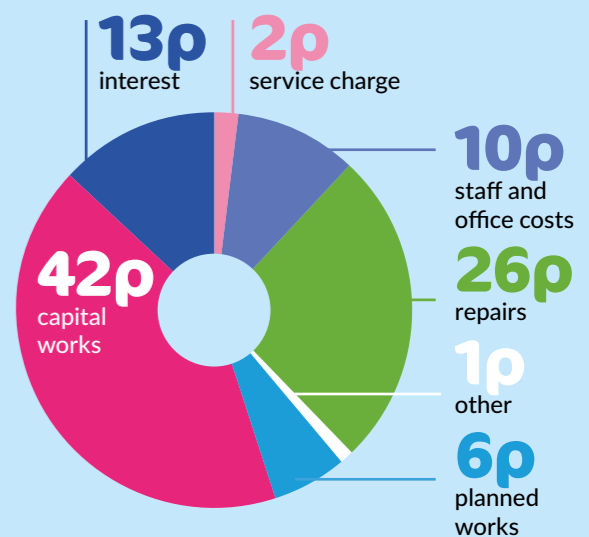
Our business

Where we get our money from (per £1)



*Shared ownership extra shares purchased by residents.

For every £1 we spend



Operating surplus £4.1m
Rent arrears 5.1%

Brighter Places keeps top grade status

In July, after an in-depth inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), we were given the highest ratings for governance and financial performance. These top RSH rankings, known as G1 and V1, come just 15 months after Brighter Places was established.

We are extremely proud of this achievement and recognise the immense hard work and commitment of our teams behind the regulator's findings.

Homes

Existing homes

3,300

homes managed

76

new lettings in 2021-22

New homes

£11.3

million invested

19 completed

273 started on site

Investment in existing homes

£1.4

million investment in improvement

Kitchens and bathrooms

£636,000

Boilers

£435,000

Doors and windows

£264,000

Roofs

£100,000

Painting/external works

£46,000



Large survey of properties

We have invested

£300K

and visited

2,000 homes

to assess their condition and inform our future planned maintenance programme. This is set out in our five-year corporate strategy.



Communities

Merry Hill self-finish project is model for community housing

This project included an extraordinary team of residents who were fully hands-on finishing their homes. Recognised in regional housing awards, Merry Hill shows what can be achieved when communities are supported to create local developments.

See page 2 for more details of award.



Nature-inspired murals for Fedden hallways

This colourful and uplifting mural created for Fedden Buildings is the result of one of two community area pilots begun in early 2022, one of our customer promises. Creative workshops with residents helped to inspire these designs for the entrance lobbies at Fedden Buildings, Gainsborough Square.

Artist Sophie Higgins-Wheeler led the workshops and painted the works.



Residents

8,000

residents

420

residents supported

by our Tenancy Sustainment Team



£30,000

in support secured for residents

(e.g. white goods, furnishings, energy, assistance and rent payments)

50

households trained in self-finishing for Merry Hill (see right)



110

people offered career support by Future Bright to find employment



18

evictions prevented



Resident satisfaction (STAR survey, March 2022)

Neighbourhood **78%** of people satisfied with their neighbourhood

Value for money **75%** of residents satisfied with rent value for money

Quality of home **64%** satisfied with the quality of their home

Repairs **47%** satisfaction with repairs (see page 3)

Resident engagement

8 residents recruited to the Engagement panel

4 resident engagement events fed into the development of our Customer Care Standards

2 communal areas pilot projects (see panel right on Fedden Buildings)

Overall **57%** residents satisfied

Repairs

improvement is on track

Improved customer satisfaction and satisfaction with repairs have been a strong focus throughout 2021-22.

We have refined and confirmed a new repairs service to cover all residents and created a new customer service team to support residents.

See page 3.



Complaints

161

complaints received, mostly relating to repairs

148 (92%)

complaints resolved at Stage 1

Anti-social behaviour

33

cases of ASB per 1,000 properties



The future

Our plans for 2023

Existing homes

£2.1m investment in improvements and regular maintenance, **£500k** pilot decarbonisation programme

Customer satisfaction

70% overall customer satisfaction and improved repairs offering for all customers

Resident support

£50,000 support fund through cost of living crisis (see page 5)

New homes

450 sites for homes identified

175 new homes completed

165 homes already on site

EDI

New Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy with residents and colleagues (see page 7)

Colleagues

Best companies accreditation as an employer, **17** colleagues in Brighter Places University

Overall **70%** customer satisfaction

Colleagues

19

new colleagues recruited

73%

overall satisfaction with Brighter Places as an employer

Brighter Places University

We provide access to funded training specific to colleague jobs. Our colleague Sara gained her masters degree in business management and our colleague Rob recently completed a fire manager certificate.



Report a repair

On our website

brighterplaces.co.uk/report-a-repair

By phone

During office hours and for
out-of-hours emergencies

New residents and former United Communities residents

0117 942 4600

Former Solon residents

0117 924 4071

Pay your rent

On our website

brighterplaces.co.uk/pay-your-rent

By phone

On our payment line (24 hours)

0117 942 4600

Please let us know if you would like this document in another format such as large print, easy read, braille or audio CD. A digital copy is on our website.

Translations

If English is not your first language and you need a translation, we can get one for you.

ALBANIAN

Nëse anglishtja nuk është gjuha juaj amtare dhe keni nevojë për një përkthim, ne mund t'ua sigurojmë atë.

BENGALI

ইংরেজী আপনার মাতৃভাষা না হলে এবং আপনার কোন অনুবাদের প্রয়োজন হলে আমরা তা প্রদান করতে সক্ষম।

CHINESE

如果英文不是您的第一語言，而您需要翻譯的話，我們可以為您安排。

GUJARATI

જો તમારી પહેલી ભાષા અંગ્રેજી ન હોય અને તમને ભાષાંતરની જરૂર હોય તો અમે તમને તે આપી શકીએ છીએ.

HINDI

यदि अंग्रेज़ी आप की पहली भाषा नहीं है और आप को अनुवाद की आवश्यकता है तो यह हम आपको प्रदान कर सकते हैं।

KURDISH

Heke inglîzî zimanê we yê yekem nîne û pêwîstiya we bi wergêr heye, em dikarin yekî ji we re bibînin.

POLISH

Jeżeli język angielski nie jest Twoim językiem ojczystym i wymagasz tłumaczenia, możemy to zapewnić.

PORTUGUESE

Se o Inglês não é a sua língua materna e precisa de uma tradução, nós podemos obtê-la.

PUNJABI

ਜੇਕਰ ਇੰਗਲਿਸ਼ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਅਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਬਾਰੀਏ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

SOMALI

Haddii Ingiriisku aanu ahayn afkaaga kowaad oo aad u baahan tahay turjumaad, annagaa kuu samayn karra.

URDU

اگر انگریزی آپ کی پہلی زبان نہیں ہے اور آپ کو ترجمہ کی ضرورت ہے تو ہم آپ کے لئے فراہم کر سکتے ہیں۔

VIETNAMESE

Nếu qui vì không thạo Anh văn và cần bản dịch, chúng tôi sẽ giúp qui vì một bản.



brighterplaces.co.uk

Contact us



By phone

0117 942 4600

Monday 8.30am – 5pm

Tuesday 8.30am – 5pm

Wednesday 10.30am – 4pm

Thursday 8.30am – 5pm

Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm



By email

info@brighterplaces.co.uk



Office address

Eden House

Eastgate Office Park

Bristol BS5 6XX



[wearebrighterplaces](https://www.facebook.com/wearebrighterplaces)



[brighterplaces_](https://twitter.com/brighterplaces_)



[wearebrighterplaces](https://www.linkedin.com/company/wearebrighterplaces)

All information is correct at time of publication.

