



**Chartered  
Institute of  
Housing**

## **Our first ever Big Conversation event in Manchester**

Geraldine Howley, Interim chair and chief executive, Incommunities; shares her blog on our first Big Conversation which was held at Manchester in March 2016.

I'd chosen to shine a light on young people as my CIH presidential theme for 2015-16 and the Big Conversation was the centrepiece for expressing and engaging the talents of housing's new and upcoming professionals.

Working in partnership with CIH staff and The GEM programme we produced a ground-breaking event which turned out to be one of the most memorable days in my presidential year, if not my career.

This was one of the first CIH events especially tailored for younger people and it helped sow the seeds of our offer to under 30's and the CIH Futures board. The Big Conversation has repeatedly showed delegates who've come to Manchester, Leeds and Brighton the real benefits of CIH membership, from networking and mentoring opportunities through to achieving qualifications designed to support each member's career development.

No dusty and dark hotel corridors and meeting rooms for us! Instead we invite you to airy, vibrant spaces filled with animated conversations as housing professionals network and engage with each other and speakers to inspire you with a rich and varied experience. We deliberately aim to make The Big Conversation financially and geographically accessible. As someone who started their housing career as a temporary receptionist I know how important these opportunities for career development, progression and growth are.

As we address the challenges of an ageing workforce, a massive shortage of homes and the housing inequalities currently faced by society, we need to ensure our talented up and coming professionals are given the chance to tackle these issues with new and fresh thinking. This landmark event will put you in touch with other new and talented professionals in the housing sector and ensure you grasp your importance to housing's future.

Join us on 5 February 2019 for the largest networking event for young professionals in the housing sector.