



OLIVER HARLING

TRAINEE SURVEYOR AT IRWELL VALLEY HOUSING ASSOCIATION



I LOVE WORKING IN HOUSING BECAUSE ...

Growing up in social housing I know the impact housing providers have on communities. As a sector we do far more than providing a roof over customers' heads and that is why I love working in housing.

Home is such a significant part of your life, it's where it all happens. And we have the privilege of playing a part in that. For me it's about making a difference, whether it's helping vulnerable people to live independently, enabling people to buy their first home, or our bread and butter – providing affordable homes to people in need – we make a difference.

I love visiting customers' homes and meeting our wonderfully diverse customers. Every customer is different, so is every home and every repair. Consequently, every day is different and challenging - testing my abilities as a trainee building surveyor and helping me to learn and improve.

MY PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT IN HOUSING IS ...

One of my proudest moments is actually the first major job I completed. A customer needed a through the floor lift due to his disability, he could not get up the stairs and the property wasn't suitable for a stair lift. Normally the process to install these lifts takes up to 12 months with negotiations with the local council. I felt this customer needed immediate help and waiting a year to be able to get upstairs was unacceptable. So, I presented a business case to get a lift fitted immediately by us without the disabled facilities grant. After overcoming lots of issues, the works started. It wasn't the easy option but it was the right thing to do.

This project gave me a huge sense of achievement, it made me feel proud, confident and genuinely happy that I made the difference to that customer. It was such a challenging project from start to finish and we had to really think on our feet to find the best solution. Still to this day it is one of the hardest projects I have completed, I think it really shows the potential I had from my early days in housing.