



Chartered
Institute of
Housing
Scotland



Good practice compendium

Sharing the lessons learnt from Scotland's
Housing Awards 2021

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Welcome

After a year like no other, the contribution that housing makes to our communities has never been clearer.

Over the last 12 months, landlords across all tenures have been providing key services and putting in place exceptional measures to ensure tenants get the support they need. Whether it is ongoing welfare calls, helping vulnerable people access the benefits they are entitled to or providing accommodation and support for people to safely self-isolate, our profession can be proud of its role during the pandemic.

Our sector is diverse and from landlords in our rural communities to city centre letting agencies there are different policies, programmes and initiatives from which others can learn. The challenge, however, is making this experience, this insight and this practice accessible for those looking for guidance

So this Good Practice Compendium is here to help.

It includes evidence from landlords and housing organisations about their roles over the last 12 months, how they adapted to the pandemic and, despite all the challenges, what has helped enhance housing practice and tenant satisfaction across Scotland. It identifies key lessons, providing concrete pointers- be it tenant engagement and communication, excellence in customer service or what it takes to be an outstanding housing professional. We hope that it will be a source of inspiration and a useful tool for practitioners across Scotland.



Callum Chomczuk

National director,
CIH Scotland

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In order to keep the authenticity of these projects, and to convey the passion felt by those involved we have not altered any of the text submitted to us as part of these entries.

COMMUNICATIONS IN A CRISIS

This award recognises landlords whose communication with their tenants and residents has been outstanding over the past year, keeping them fully informed and supported or helping them to stay in touch with their friends and family during the pandemic through initiatives such as digital inclusion.

Better comms team and digital champions

Berwickshire Housing Association



Statement of support

Berwickshire Housing Association continually recognises the importance of engaging with its customers and communicating in a meaningful way. It was clear following the first lockdown that our communications strategy would be heavily reliant on our digital platforms, predominately on social media to ensure a broad reach was achievable by being aimed at our customers, the local community and stakeholders ensuring everyone was kept informed. During this time and following on from this, BHA's Facebook page has become a community anchor to access and communicate services available to the local community.

Communicating had never been more important or challenging, the need to be creative and informative with our key messages. A detailed engagement plan provided the platform to effectively plan and schedule key messages, in particular around; tackling loneliness during isolation (activities of ways of keeping in touch digitally), acts of kindness (highlighting individuals within the local community on acts of kindness), #Did You Know (help with managing money, rent and support related contact numbers). Our overall strategy

was to ensure communications were simple, clear and easy to understand. This was achieved by using simple eye catching artwork and short video clips.

One of our biggest social media successes during lockdown was the images being received from children painting rainbows, to support the NHS. Some of these images later featured in our Summer Update. Other social media success include the recruitment of potential BeFriend volunteers from Ellesmere Port, Cleethorpes, and Norwich.

We had 37 applications from potential volunteers in 24 hours when we started recruiting, in November, and immediately had to suspend everything! Not all of those people will go on to become volunteers; I'm hoping that 7 of them will come through training and start volunteering.

During the lockdown period there were significant increases in the reach of our social media posts. In the month of April, total Facebook posts reached over 60,000 with engagement levels of over 6,000 people. These are compared to figures from January with a reach of 23,000 and overall engagement of 2,750 people.

BHA'S digital support to its customers continued with a successful application to The Supporting Communities Fund which was part of the Scottish Government's investment package to provide financial support targeted through community anchor organisations. Working in partnership with others in the community and with public services, in co-ordinating a local response to the pandemic.

BHA co-ordinated the funding to support digital inclusion, including a 'lending library' of digital devices, an expanded community initiatives programme and increased access to specialised mental health support and working alongside our dedicated local community partners to support as

many people as possible during these challenging times.

During the introduction of lockdown measures it was quickly recognised that isolation and loneliness was affecting many people, accelerating BHA's goal to increase access to digital communication and support people in how to use digital devices. BHA 'Digital Champions' extended their work with community partners to help others, including BHA tenants to communicate with family and friends as they felt disconnected during the difficult and challenging times.

The BHA BeFriend service which offers one to one companionship and group activities to older people within the local community increased their

communication by moving to a phone- based befriending activity to help those who were suffering with loneliness and isolation. This service in itself saw the demand nearly doubling during the outbreak.

One of the service users was featured on ITV Border News highlighting the challenges she had faced during lockdown by not being able to see her family. The weekly support and communication she received became a life-line during the pandemic.

In addition BHA made 9,812 tenancy support calls from March to early December providing financial and well being support.

Outcomes and achievements

The Let's Get Digital lending library developed by BHA and operated in partnership with a range of local organisations; BAVS, Splash, Border Care Voice, Chirnside Hall and SBC Local Area Coordination team. The pilot project aims to reduce digital exclusion by loaning android tablets with unlimited data and our 'digital champions' support people to use these devices. Results show that users have become more connected to families, friends, online groups and support including employability and recovery services. BHA are passionate about digital inclusion and believe everyone should have the opportunity to get online.

Whilst the stock of 50 android (Samsung and Lenovo) tablets will not meet expected demand, it is hoped the pilot will help demonstrate the value of increased digital connection across our communities.

One lender has been delighted by what a tablet can be used for and has downloaded an app to read books and has been keeping up to date with the news headlines. Another lender has hardly watched TV since getting the device and has been using zoom to connect with family and friends.

A route through a pandemic

Wheatley Group



Statement of support

As the full impact of COVID-19 hit in early 2020, the role of the communications team at Wheatley Group was – and continues to be – more important than ever.

The Group needed to protect the well-being of customers, employees and contractors as well as protecting the reputation of the organisation.

The communications team, working closely with colleagues from across Wheatley, was at the very heart of it.

We planned and implemented a targeted multi-media communications strategy which produced outstanding results, including 228 positive mentions in the press and reaching 480,000 people on social media.

Government and NHS coronavirus advice changed rapidly which meant our quarterly tenant magazines would be outdated quickly. We focused heavily on our websites and social media channels to keep our messaging up to date.

Our websites needed to be a trusted source of information, sharing service updates and Government/ NHS advice. Our social channels would tell the human stories and would direct customers to our subsidiary websites, allowing us to reach people in our communities quickly and on platforms they were comfortable using.

We set out to create engaging content which would be shared widely by people in our communities and so grow our reach.

To ensure no-one was left behind, we would supplement the online content with newsletters and pitch new stories to the local media.

Our objectives:

- keep 210,000 customers informed about our services and how we could support them;
- our communications must be clear, consistent and honest;
- our tone of voice must be measured and authoritative;

- our communications must be aligned to the latest guidance from Scottish Government and NHS.

We combined corporate messaging with street-level posts, highlighting the support we were offering customers in their own community.

While the majority of customers are online, many older tenants prefer their news in print. We supplemented our digital content with newsletters which were posted to every home.

To achieve this we:

- created a template of one-page newsletters, tailored to each subsidiary, produced in-house;
- created information posters which local teams could print;
- created dedicated coronavirus sections on our websites;
- asked staff to tell us their stories which would be shared in the press, websites and on social media;
- asked customers on social media to share their experiences of how we've helped them;
- generated media coverage for our support services, highlighting milestones and partnership working.

Our case study photographs were taken by frontline staff using iPhones.

We used the public relations industry Paid, Earned, Shared and Owned (PESO) model to maximise our reach.

Our earned content focused on a media campaign, generating and placing stories about the support provided to customers, local authorities and to Scottish Government. Press releases included:

- making 100,000 welfare calls to people in need;
- handing over 442 homes to local authorities to provide temporary accommodation for homeless people;
- delivering 28,000 food parcels.

We shared staff and customers stories on 14 Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram pages, generating 'likes' and positive comments, attracting thousands of new fans and offering another way for customers to request support.

Our owned content was made up of:

- posters created in-house and printed internally for use in foyers;
- coronavirus sections on our websites with links to Scottish Government and NHS;
- website content regularly updated with the latest on services;
- service updates on digital screens in our multi-storey blocks;

- an inspirational staff video, created in-house, showing how they had supported customers and encouraging them to share their stories.

Our paid content saw:

- a suite of newsletters, created in-house, which we posted to tenants. Customers of GHA, DGHP, Dunedin Canmore, Cube, WLHP and Loretto received four newsletters. We produced 24 newsletters.

Outcomes and achievements

Our communications and content strategy was an overwhelming success.

Highlights included:

- securing 228 mentions in the national, regional and housing press between March-December;
- more than doubling our Facebook reach (February reach: 200,934; November reach: 482,139);
- 24 bespoke newsletters;
- an increase in website traffic – with 'Here for you in difficult times' among the most popular stories over the year (July: 3770 page views). The coronavirus section was the fourth most viewed on GHA's website in March;
- adding 10,136 social media followers (February: 31,418; November 41,554);
- almost trebling social media enquiries (February: 100; August: 296).

But there's no better outcome than a happy customer. Tenant Bernard baked a fruit cake to say thanks to Cube staff. He said: "They are doing a great job under difficult circumstances. They are keeping us safe by keeping the block clean and they also give us help and advice."

Website and social media content was part of the normal roles of the communications team and was supported by the in-house design team.

Images were taken by frontline staff or volunteers, with stories written and sourced internally. Social media posts were organic.

#ImInAwe

Blackwood Homes and Care



Statement of support

Blackwood exists to help people with disabilities live their life to the full. Our social purpose is to help people live as independently as possible using design and technology to improve choice and control for our customers.

As a housing and care provider across Scotland we have a long history of innovation. Our idea was to create a technology-based platform for our services which would be personalised for people with complex physical disabilities, keeping them in charge of their life.

With our software partner, and some Scottish Government funding, we designed CleverCogs™ which operates via an intuitive home hub. Tailored to each person's housing and care needs, it incorporates features such as video alarm calls, personal interests such as music, sports, and entertainment. It enables real-time video communication with family and friends, and gathers data which helps us, the care provider, to focus on outcomes important to individuals.

CleverCogs™ has huge potential to change lives and motivates us to reconsider how we deliver services. We began to reinvent all our services, so that they are highly accessible but also efficient and modern. We have recently achieved the milestone of all our care at home and housing support customers being provided with a tablet device that has access to the CleverCogs™ platform, internet access and tailored training and support from our Digital Coaches.

Tenants in our developments have used their CleverCogs™ to communicate face-to-face with families and friends, develop digital skills and even participate in our AGM. Care plans, live rota updates and calls for help can now also be accessed at the touch of a button. External support from national and local government is also helping us realise our ambitious plans to rollout CleverCogs™ to all our customers across Scotland.

We have received external recognition from Kevin Stewart MSP, Scottish Minister for Local Government and Housing. He was very impressed with what Blackwood is doing stating:

"Blackwood is rightly recognised as a leader of innovation. CleverCogs is a glimpse of the future in the present and the Scottish Government is pleased to be supporting CleverCogs and funding the evaluation of the pilot."

CleverCogs™ has shown that anyone, regardless of age or disability is able to use and benefit from technology. It has transformed the way in which customers communicate with each other, their families and staff members. The secret is that it starts from what the customer wants and we learn, adapt, and build the system from there.

Outcomes and achievements

When the pandemic began, our customer communication strategy combined the incredible expertise of our Housing Officers with our expertise in digital inclusion, and our CleverCogs™ system. Our aim was personal communication with 1,500 tenants across Scotland to understand their needs. Our three goals were to give practical advice, combat loneliness, and keep tenants connected.

We fast tracked our existing programme with 400 vulnerable customers receiving tablets, connectivity and CleverCogs™, supported by digital coaching. Use of 'Family & Friends' where tenants keep in touch via video calls increased by 800% and meant those shielding could participate in family events. Our Digital Coaches delivered over 600 hours of training virtually since April to support people.

Housing Officers identified who needed a tablet, explained core housing services, and helped to access financial advice. We also set up virtual GP appointments using Near Me.

Our social media campaign #ImInAwe showcased our pride in the remarkable work of our teams and our sector. The Housing Minister gave us a boost, and we featured in the Glasgow Times and Inside Housing. It was supported by SFHA and had regular website and Facebook updates.

We surveyed all our tenants and 86% of respondents welcomed our team approach.

EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

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Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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This award recognises housing teams who go above and beyond to deliver truly outstanding customer service.

River Clyde Homes' Community Caretakers: caring for buildings, building communities

River Clyde Homes



Statement of support

At River Clyde Homes 'Customers' are at the heart of everything we do. That's why when we reviewed our caretaking service in 2018, we carried out an extensive consultation exercise with customers on the future of the service. In all there were 16 consultation events across Inverclyde. Presentations were given on the range, quality and cost of service enhancements and helped gauge customers' willingness to pay any additional costs.

Customers told us that the service was good, but they wanted to move away from a floating system to a model which meant caretakers were dedicated to each block. They also told us that we needed to consider the needs of an aging population within our multi-storeys and that they would like them in the blocks longer.

With 13 multi-storeys most of which had elderly customers who turned out in high numbers and took to social media to tell us their opinions, we knew we had a big opportunity to make a difference.

In April 2019 we launched our Community Caretaking Service which enhanced the service offer for multi-storeys customers by increasing their presence through a dedicated caretaker per block. This new model allowed us to increase the frequency of H&S checks in each block and increase frequency of cleaning in each block.

Over and above this it allowed our new Community Caretakers to assist our area housing teams by offering low level tenancy management and support and help with the profiling of customers for Health & Safety purposes. The Community Caretakers also had an active role to play with tenant engagement, supporting the various Registered Tenant Organisations and carrying out light handyperson tasks.

This proactive approach has helped us meet the changing needs and expectations of our multi-storey customers. To get the possible service all our Community Caretakers have embarked upon or completed the CIH Level 2 in Housing Studies to help underpin their existing knowledge.

The model River Clyde Homes created has stood us in good stead since the start of the COVID-19 lockdown in late March 20. From the outset there was agreement with Inverclyde Council that the Community Caretakers should be classed as frontline staff and since then they have worked tirelessly to keep their buildings to the highest standard of cleanliness. In addition to this they provided regular reassurance calls for our most vulnerable residents. There are many stories of them going the extra mile to keep people safe by liaising not only paid care and support but also the voluntary circles of support within each building to make sure people received help when they needed it.

The ability of this type of caretaking plus role to manage so effectively during the lockdown has been reassuring not only for our customers but also for the River Clyde Homes Group.

On one occasion a Community Caretaker identified a problem by spotting that a washing hadn't been taken in at the normal time. He quickly followed this up and made a timely intervention

It is testament to their dedication that they not only provided the existing service but stepped up their cleaning activities and provided many of the duties

of a good neighbour, during the most challenging of times.

Their ongoing commitment has been noticed by many and has led to some very positive comments on social media. This team demonstrate excellence in everything they do for our most vulnerable customers and are committed to achieving our core values whilst improving the lives of customers.

Outcomes and achievements

As a team River Clyde Homes' Community Caretakers have shown outstanding customer service during the most challenging and uncertain of times. Facebook comments include:

- See Frank always working away all the time
- Must mention George at Thistle Court a lifeline to us all, nothing too much trouble and always has a cheery smile, another unsung Hero
- We have a great caretaker as well John McKay at Rowan Court '
- Well I must say us residents at Whinhill Court have the most amazing caretaker Ann Boyd. She goes over above and beyond to help each and every one of us in any way we need Especially while we were in lockdown. Couldn't have got through it without her a very special inspirational lady
- Could not wish for a better caretaker Ann Boyd is always there to support and help us all at Whinhill Court
- Got to say the same for our caretaker Lorraine Laughlin Rankin Court. Nothing too much trouble for this lady. During lockdown. Went out of her way to help all her tenants. Great to have someone you can rely on especially people who are on their own

Wheatley Group environmental team

Wheatley Group



Statement of support

At Wheatley Group, we want our communities to be places people are proud to live in. Key to realising this ambition is our ability to deliver excellent flexible environmental services that are rooted within our communities.

Our Neighbourhood Environmental Teams consistently deliver excellent services and outstanding living environments within our neighbourhoods.

Our 700 strong workforce are employed across the central belt of Scotland and carry out the following tasks:

- Providing a 24-hour concierge service within our high-rise blocks
- Stair cleaning
- Maintaining open spaces
- Void clear outs and valet services
- Handyperson service
- Arborist service
- Responding to Fire, Floods & Emergency incidents

This year brought significant challenges – but one constant was our teams' commitment to creating positive outcomes for customers.

There are a number of key areas where we made outstanding contribution to our customers' living environments.

Wheatley Group massively expanded its Eat well emergency food parcel service during the pandemic. Our environmental teams were at the forefront of that lifeline service, delivering more than 28,000 emergency food packages to vulnerable customers across Scotland.

As the demand for food packages grew, our teams created mini food distribution hubs in three of our high-rise blocks to ensure food packages would reach those who needed them even more quickly.

In May 2020 Christine Hepburn panicked when her son Arron collapsed and stopped breathing at her home. After phoning an ambulance she buzzed the Concierge for help. Concierge, David Murray, rushed to her flat, put Arron in the recovery position and kept him awake until Paramedics arrived. After a week in hospital Arron was fit enough to return home. Christine told the media at the time "I would just like to say thank you to David, He helped save Arron's life".

Concierge Robert Gibb was collecting food, toiletries and more for vulnerable customers in Glasgow. As well as donations from a local Poundland and excess stock from local charities, Robert has been going on his days off to buy household essentials to provide the lifeline support. Items including fruit and veg, milk and bread, tins of food, shampoo, are on display in the foyers of GHA high rises where customers could pick up what they needed.

Through donations from Tesco staff were able to source Easter Eggs and over a holiday weekend came in on their own time to distribute those eggs to all the local children.

The versatility our teams displayed during these challenging times meant staff adapted to new job roles to assist our customers. Staff made daily welfare calls to customers offering support, signposting them to support services available, assisting with shopping tasks as well as just checking in on customers to see if they needed any help. This became part of our workforce's daily routine, and something that was hugely appreciated by customers who were feeling isolated during the pandemic.

Our Changing Lives programme and Modern Apprenticeship programmes, specifically for Wheatley customers, allow customers to make a difference to the communities they live in. .

We developed a partnership with Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) to help us provide outstanding living environments for customers.

KSB has been active in Scotland for over 40 years. It's award schemes are nationally recognised indicators of best practice.

The partnership has seen us design and create an audit methodology for assessing and reporting on the quality of our communities.

As we reintroduced our services in alignment with Government guidance and adopted safe working practices, we were able to quickly maintain open spaces in our neighbourhoods and deep clean common areas to ensure we once again achieved those high KSB standards.

Outcomes and achievements

Many of our neighbourhoods have achieved a five-star accreditation from KSB, with a number of other communities working towards this rating.

More than 250 Wheatley customers have been through our Changing Lives programme, with 71 obtaining permanent employment within the Group.

Wheatley's environmental teams delivered vital services throughout the pandemic; responded to different demands and have been a constant source of

support for our customers when they needed us most. Every day we receive calls, emails and thank-you cards from customers or their families to let us know they appreciate the effort of our teams.

Our teams removed an average of 100 tonnes of waste from backcourts, gardens and streets each week in our communities while the local authority service was suspended.

Linstone Estate team

Linstone Housing



Statement of support

Since the start of lockdown in March 2020, the Linstone estates team have shown amazing resilience and commitment to the tenants and residents of Renfrewshire. When most other staff were able to safely work from home the estates team were on the frontline, at the height of Covid, ensuring our tenants and residents were receiving the best possible service. They were very quickly mobilised, following risk assessments, to ensure they could continue to offer vital estates management services such as close cleaning, waste management, uplifts, fire safety checks

and general services to tenants. Not only did the team manage to maintain existing services, they went above and beyond by enhancing services, specifically in relation to cleaning. They implemented a more comprehensive sanitising regime in our sheltered housing complexes, specifically in the common areas ensuring handrails, doors and common touch points were kept clean ensuring maximum safety for our most vulnerable tenants. We received excellent feedback from tenants and residents saying the team had done "a marvellous job" and letters telling us how hard they had been working to keep everyone safe. One family even drew a Thank you poster and posted it on their window.

On top of the core work the team undertook there were also some examples of the team going above and beyond to help our customers. We had an incident at one of our blocks where close cleaning was being carried out and an elderly resident could be heard behind her door. They lived alone and had fallen, and were clearly in distress. Jamie from the team calmed her down got her to pass her key through letter box and called a relative and waited until the relative arrived. This shows the real life line that the team offered during the height of the lockdown when so many people were isolated.

Outcomes and achievements

Linstone estates team continue to work tirelessly for our tenants, despite lockdowns, restrictions and without concern for their own safety. Many of the team volunteered in the early days of the pandemic to ensure we could offer a service to tenants. They also assisted their colleagues by delivering vital IT equipment to enable home working and were, and continue to be, an invaluable resource to the whole

association during lockdown. We have received amazing feedback from our tenants who appreciate the commitment of the team to their health and wellbeing. Through their work there has been an amazing amount of goodwill generated resulting in improved relations between the association and our customers.

EXCELLENCE IN HOUSING INNOVATION

sfha

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We are housing Scotland

This award is aimed at programmes or projects which can clearly demonstrate how they have developed an innovative approach which has made a real difference to the lives of tenants or customers.

Amazon meets Annan: a cutting edge repairs service for rural housing stock

Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership



Statement of support

When DGHP decided to bring its repairs service in house at the start of the year, it saw an opportunity to think big for its 10,000 customers and deliver a cutting edge service that makes the most of new technology. The “Amazon” style service uses technology that delivers real time information on resources to ensure an efficient, cost effective repairs service that gets it right first time for customers.

Launched against the challenges of a global pandemic, DGHP’s new service is doing something truly revolutionary for its customers across 2,480 square miles of South-West Scotland. It combines the skills of the team with new technology to deliver an outstanding repairs service.

The rural geography of DGHP’s homes presents specific challenges in getting repairs right first time – from travel time to ensuring that operatives have the right equipment for the job.

DGHP developed a new dynamic scheduling system which gives information on the team resources at any given moment. It means D GHP can offer appointments that best suit the customer while dovetailing with what resources are available on that day.

The system goes hand in hand with a new supply chain, which uses handheld technology to monitor van stocks so materials can be automatically ordered and replenished on the go. A new kerbside collection means no more waiting in depots for materials. In short, every operative has what they need for the job at the right time.

At the same time, DGHP brought 93 colleagues from their contractors in-house, carried out training and inductions online.

How it works:

DGHP use Servitor software, including a dedicated Dynamic Resource Scheduling module. When a customer calls DGHP’s Customer Service Centre, the CSC advisor can see all the available non-emergency repairs appointments and books a slot to suit the customer. Nearer the time of the appointment the system decides which operative is best suited to carry out the work, based on his or her skill set and current location. This minimises unnecessary long journeys and therefore reduces response times. If the repair is an emergency, the schedulers will manually intervene to ensure that it is made safe.

The service has also entered a new partnership with materials supplier Saint-Gobain, which has set up a dedicated hub in Dumfries to service DGHP. Each operative has an imprest van stock. If he or she can carry out a repair using items from that stock, this information is communicated automatically via a

hand-held device to the Saint-Gobain hub. It then despatches a delivery vehicle up to twice a week or as required to carry out roadside replenishment. The operative does not have to visit the hub, a branch or a depot – using GPS tracking, the Saint-Gobain delivery driver will find the operative.

If a repair cannot be carried out using van stock, the operative orders the components required from the hub, checks their lead-in times and then arranges a new appointment with the customer and the

schedulers. The components can then be delivered direct to the customer's home on the day that they are required.

Voids are scoped by Housing Officers and coded by the Trades Supervisors. Saint-Gobain delivery drivers have pass keys, and the materials are delivered straight into the voids – even if there are no DGHP operatives present – in time for work to be carried out.

Outcomes and achievements

Between March 2020 and November 2020 DGHP safely delivered 8,000 repairs to customers' homes, with pandemic restrictions in place, at an average timescale of less than 2 hours in a rural context.

Last year, DGHP completed emergency repairs in an average of 2.27 hours, which has fallen to 1.76 in the last reporting period, while non-emergency repairs are now completed in 4.86 days on average, down from 8.44 days last year.

DGHP have already saved 9% on materials compared to the previous supply chain thanks to the smart ordering system.

A voids backlog of over 150 homes was cleared by 23 October 2020 and the average turnaround time

for voids received since 17 August 2020 is below 22 calendar days – against the previous year's figure of more than 29.

DGHP's 'right first time' figures were at 83.47% last year. This year, they sit at 96.14% against a target of 92%.

And customers are delighted with their new service. One customer from Dalbeattie told us: "The plumber arrived within half an hour and I was delighted to have the problem sorted so quickly".

DGHP has solved the problem of delivering high-quality repairs across large distances in ambitious timescales.

South Lanarkshire's virtually excellent approach

South Lanarkshire Council



Statement of support

South Lanarkshire Council established its new, highly innovative, Virtual Contact Centre (VCC) as a direct consequence of COVID-19 restrictions to ensure the continued delivery of quality housing services to its 24,500 tenants and other customers.

As we entered lockdown, the council concentrated on providing essential front line services with a temporary suspension of non-essential services. This included suspending calls to housing phone lines except emergency homelessness and repairs service. All other housing enquiries were managed via email or the council website.

Due to continued restrictions on the number staff able to access offices for essential tasks, a limited telephone service was launched on 6 April to deal with urgent housing and rent enquiries, diverting calls to a small team working from home with mobile devices. This development improved the ability of vulnerable groups and those with no digital access to access services.

Working with tenant's representatives we understood the need to further develop these arrangements as current restrictions were likely to be in place for a considerable time.

It was in this context and to better support tenants, ensuring continuity of service access for all customers, that the VCC was developed and set up on 10 August 2020. This has allowed a greater level of flexibility and resilience during the pandemic, particularly when dealing with changing restrictions.

From the outset the council worked closely with tenant representatives to support the development and implementation of the VCC, which is designed around staff taking calls at home with full system access via laptops and soft phones. Where required, calls can be passed to Housing Officers working from home, or transferred to other services as needed. A full training plan was delivered virtually to VCC staff with regular communication with Trade Union representatives who are supportive of the new model.

Call structures have been revised and streamlined and calls can be monitored and managed in terms of volumes and waiting times.

The new system is providing an enhanced service to customers through reduced call wait times, higher levels of first-time call resolution and incorporating good practice.

Prior to this new innovative approach, housing phone calls were directed from a single contact number to 12 back office teams within 4 locality offices. Generic housing staff would handle phone enquiries as part of their role, along with other tasks. This system provided limited statistical analysis in relation to call management.

The new call handling approach allows call statistics to be produced weekly for review. The VCC is currently averaging 1200 calls per week.

To monitor the effectiveness of the VCC a performance reporting and evaluation framework was established. This included a staff survey to determine opinions on the previous system along with follow up surveys to determine views on the new system, highlighting service improvements or suggestions for the future. A staff issues log has been set up to identify issues which has helped local issues to be resolved quickly.

A VCC staff member validated this saying:

"The VCC has been introduced with very few issues. I like the continuity of approach"

A programme of customer scrutiny was established to support the evaluation with the South Lanarkshire Customer Scrutiny Group (CSG) carrying out a mystery shopper exercise throughout November to:

- independently review and assess the VCC
- identify areas of good practice, and
- recommend improvements, if required.

The CSG produced a report which found 100% of the CSG reported the process of dealing with the VCC as being 'streamlined and easier to follow'.

The council continues to monitor and develop the VCC using data and insight to improve housing service delivery.

Outcomes and achievements

A scrutiny exercise, carried out by the CSG endorsed the VCC as providing a simplified and streamlined process for customers accessing housing services.

The key findings noted the CSG had an extremely successful and positive experience when contacting the VCC, reporting staff were helpful and polite, they were treated with respect and enquiries were dealt with quickly and efficiently.

"The new format is very straightforward and easy to follow and understand. The member of staff was very helpful."

The report highlighted the new system was easier to navigate with the number of options and information well balanced and "just right", resulting in an increased

number of housing enquiries being addressed first time by the right person.

The results of our customer survey reflected these findings, 97% of customers stated staff were friendly and polite and 90% agreed information provided was easily understood.

The council is proud of its new, innovative approach ensuring all customers can access housing services through its VCC and will continue to monitor and develop this service, to ensure its effectiveness.

It is clear a development borne of restrictions entailed by the pandemic will provide a sound basis for service provision and development well into the future.

Taking tenant engagement to the next level

Lead organisation: Elderpark Housing Association

Partner organisations: Target Applications



Statement of support

ELDERPARK Housing led the way in 2020 with a new tenant engagement/survey approach which has proved a huge success in understanding the needs of tenants. It has also played a pivotal role during the early stages of the pandemic allowing the organisation to engage with tenants, identify those in need and those who required support and respond immediately.

The Association has been working with Glasgow-based Target Applications Ltd - creators of trail-blazing "CX-Feedback" software which until Elderpark began working with the business had struggled to 'gain a platform' in the Scottish sector to demonstrate the capabilities of their product.

Since linking-up with Elderpark the business has seen a 300% increase in the number of housing association clients now using the product with RSLs recognising that Elderpark's support for the tool provided a level of comfort and credibility that it actually did what it says it would do.

The application provides a range of information suitable for housing associations to help them gain

a greater understanding of customer requirements via new software which takes the form of a survey/engagement tool. While gathering survey feedback is common, the tool provides an immediacy of response with the majority of service users providing a reply within 72 hours of receiving a text message. In addition the response rate of around 20-30% on average is significantly higher than other engagement methods used.

While this on its own is extremely positive and meets a need to engage and gather feedback from tenants the tool has in-built artificial intelligence which processes each response in seconds and immediately flags any comment which might require urgent action enabling a quick response.

The software works by sending surveys to tenants by text or email which they then complete online so that it provides an up to date snapshot of tenant opinion via dashboards and reports. For less digitally-connected tenants the application also allows Elderpark to easily manage telephone and postal surveys to maximise inclusion amongst all tenants and report the results in one place.

Elderpark has so far used this method of enhanced tenant engagement to:

- Seek their opinions on cycling provision following the Association being successful in obtaining a grant from Cycling Scotland
- Ascertain views on rent increase proposals
- Ask questions of tenants during the COVID-19 crisis helping to identify ones who are vulnerable and need the Association's support in areas like urgent food provision, welfare benefits support and dealing with social isolation
- Identify the local needs in terms of regeneration and community support

- Determine the activities desired by the local community for renovating an 'A' listed 19th Century Library into a Community and Learning Hub
- Undertake all manner of short, sharp surveys in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter in areas like repairs, tenant satisfaction etc

From Ekderpark's perspective it was something which offered excellent value for money and provided the opportunity to engage with our tenants quickly on a range of topics through text and other formats if necessary. It allows for more accurate views on

satisfaction and tenant opinion as it reaches a wider audience than traditional methods and allows us to respond to people's needs immediately.

The very nature of innovation should consider a product which an association was one of the first to adopt and then by virtue of demonstrating its success and capabilities gathers a range of new participants. Elderpark has been the catalyst for a significant increased uptake in the customer engagement tool during 2020/21 which demonstrates the success of this innovative partnership.

Outcomes and achievements

- Using this method of tenant engagement has proven to be both faster and of lower cost ensuring value for money with early and precise understanding of our tenants' views.
- Achieved response rates of over 25% for each of the engagement/ consultation exercises with feedback received within a week of a survey being sent out and then customer generated reports and analysis provided on all key areas.
- High levels of responses have been achieved allowing Elderpark to be confident in the representativeness of any surveys/ engagement consultations
- Using CX-Feedback as a tenant check-up-tool at the outset of COVID-19 crisis resulted in many positive comments and strengthened the bond with tenants.
- Engaging with tenants was previously a big undertaking. By using a digital platform it can be done very quickly and on a smaller scale with immediate responses in a way not possible before. This has allowed us to be much more consultative with particular groups of tenants where specific decisions are relevant to them.
- CX-Feedback have seen a 300% increase in customers in 2020 which has allowed them to invest in new features including automatic messaging, customer sentiment and perceptions, specific engagement groups which will enhance the customer involvement further.

New energy efficient technology for windows and doors

North Lanarkshire Council



Statement of support

North Lanarkshire Council have introduced an enhanced specification of replacement windows and doors, which will take place over the next 5 years from 2020-2025, which incorporates an innovative approach as part of joint working between the Council and contractors.

After extensive market research into specifications for windows and doors which aimed to

replace end of lifespan assets, futureproof and invest in tenants' homes. The specification also includes new technological advances, easier diagnostic repairs reporting, increased tenant safety and customer satisfaction as well as meeting requirements for improving energy efficiency within tenants' homes.

Part of the specification for all the replacement windows and doors included that they must have QR codes which will provide information when scanned on the date of installation, technical specification, manufacturer, contractor name contact number including emergency out of hour contact details.

This new approach makes it easy for tenants to report repairs and allows North Lanarkshire Council to diagnose direct issue of repairs or replacement of windows efficiently and quickly as possible, with reduced requirements for Technical Officer or trades pre-inspecting or measuring work.

Our Sheltered Housing complexes will also benefit from replacement windows and doors. Included within the specification for these works were the principles of dementia friendly design. The specification includes a colour co-ordinated door and handle to individual dwellings to make them easily identifiable to tenants.

This standard will have a positive impact on the quality of life for tenants suffering from dementia within these complexes, making it easier for tenants to identify where they live.

The dementia design guide was a result of previous research within sheltered housing which resulted in a specialist dementia design guide being developed to ensure all our design choices within these complexes are dementia friendly. This service has previously won awards and continues to contribute to making the lives of our tenants better.

This contract includes the installation of triple glazed A++ rated windows and doors. It also incorporated the installation of FD60s fire doors in properties where this is required, allowing an enhanced fire and smoke protection of an additional 30 minutes time to 1 hour protection against smoke and fire in flatted accommodations.

The increased specification is designed to provide tenants with more thermally efficient properties helping them to reduce their fuel bills and help the council deliver on its aim of improving health and wellbeing by providing good quality affordable homes across all our stock and help reduce the risk of fuel poverty.

The new windows being installed within tenants' homes also benefit from acoustically sealed trickle vents which will improve sound reduction within the property. Mechanical extraction ventilation has also been incorporated as part of the specification and will assist with indoor air quality as part of a full house system or for individual rooms.

Cameron Barr, Investment Manager said "the council recently awarded a new multi-million-pound windows and door contract which includes an updated specification on the previous tender. The introduction of a new specification allows for triple glazing to be installed as standard as part of our ongoing windows upgrade programme. As well as improving the energy efficiency in people's homes the triple glazing significantly reduces ongoing noise for our tenants.

The inclusion of QR codes has also been included, which allows all the windows data to be stored in a database, including install date, size etc that can easily be accessed using handheld devices and will improve our ongoing ability to repair and replace windows quicker through the use of improved technology".

Outcomes and achievements

The windows and doors programme have only recently commenced installation works due to coronavirus restrictions. However, tenants so far have been appreciative of the service. Mrs Kelly, Wishaw said, "I'm absolutely delighted with my new windows and can really feel a big difference already. My rooms are much warmer, they have helped with noise reduction and just really improved the comfort of my home".

North Lanarkshire Council are dedicated to ensuring that tenants' needs always come first and to minimise any disruption for tenants, the installation and all associated works must be completed in one working day. This includes the removal and refitting of curtains and blinds together with cleaning of the properties post installation.

The simplified repairs reporting process for tenants and officers will work to further improve service delivery and customer feedback. It minimises staff resources as less visits are required and improves time management as the reporting process is more efficient with less scope for error.

Being dementia friendly is good practice within North Lanarkshire Council, jointly working with other services to be inclusive as possible to all our tenants and residents, to identify and meet their needs no matter of age, health or ability.

Springfield Place, St Boswells, Scottish Borders

Lead organisation: Eildon Housing Association

Partner organisation: John Gilbert Architects



Statement of support

The project is a new build terrace on a compact site, including hard and soft landscaping. Completion was in April 2020

Springfield Place comprises three high quality, bespoke affordable family houses within the Conservation Area of the attractive Scottish Borders village of St Boswells. Originally a former garage site standing empty for a number of years deteriorating over time to create a visual blight and magnet for anti-social behaviour.

The project forms the first element of Eildon's green pilot looking at innovative building technologies that would reduce the carbon footprint of our new developments, help address fuel poverty in the Borders and would be replicable across the wider future development programme. The pilot covers both the lessons learnt through the capital provision of 45 new homes and a post occupancy evaluation of the new homes to gather Eildon quantitative and

qualitative evidence which can be used to improve the design and procurement on future projects

Due to the very sensitive nature of the site it was vital that any proposal would not just address fuel poverty through innovative design but also add to the high-quality village vernacular and historical architecture

Working with market leaders in energy efficient design, John Gilbert Architects, Eildon opted to provide Passivhaus Standard homes which aims to eliminate fuel poverty due to resultant low space heating costs of the home: compared to standard houses these homes should require 90% less energy for space and water heating and subsequently have very low running costs.

To secure Passivhaus certification the building is constructed to an extremely high standard, including:

- Excellent insulation (400mm) and eliminating thermal bridging
- Outstanding airtightness: recorded value of 0.3ach, minimising heat loss and improving comfort.
- A small double-A rated Vaillant boiler, for hot water and top-up space heating via radiators.
- Triple glazed windows throughout.
- Mechanical Ventilation with up to 90% Heat Recovery (MVHR), providing a constant, healthy indoor environment.

Though not part of the weighting for allocation Eildon did advertise we would like our tenants to work with us and our agents to carry out the post occupation evaluation. All three families were very happy to sign-up to this evaluation.

John Gilbert Architects are progressing the 12-month post occupation evaluation in line with the UK's Energy Saving Trust, as well as British Standards, BSRIA and ISO standards relevant to evaluation methods. The review, which will be completed in April 2021 will cover Six specific areas:

1. Visual Inspection and infra-red thermography of the homes throughout a 12-month period.
2. In-situ wall U-value test conducted at one property.
3. Energy consumption monitoring via the energy metering device installed at each property, supported by meter readings, to obtain total gas and electricity consumed over a 12-month period. This data will be compared against the initial design calculations.
4. Indoor environmental monitoring, conducted at each property, including temperature, relative humidity and CO2.
5. Mechanical ventilation system check, conducted at each property, measuring airflow rates with an anemometer and comparing the results with the commissioning sheets and completion stage findings. Measuring air flow for mass balancing on both the supply/extract side.
6. A structured occupant survey, with surveys conducted at each property, looking at the way the occupants are using their homes and systems, evaluating usability and comfort.

Steward & Shields Building Contractors were employed Principal. The project was procured through a JCT Design and Build Contract.

The approved total cost of the scheme stood at £0.808m. Funding was secured via Eildon's private finance (£0.559m). and the Scottish Government in the form £0.248m Scottish Government Housing Association Grant.

Outcomes and achievements

The project was completed in April 2019 and all three homes immediately let. The project successfully transformed a longstanding eyesore in Conservation Area of St Boswells providing modern, high quality affordable housing, positively contributing to the local conservation area with a design that considers the local context complimenting the historic villagescape.

The high level of energy efficiency and sustainability principles integral to the Passivhaus standard making space and water heating more efficient, limiting carbon emissions and reducing tenant's energy bills. The project provides high quality, sustainable affordable homes, the calculated SAP is 86 and the Environmental Impact (CO2) Rating is 90.

The completed project within the conservation area project embraces Scottish Borders Council PPG

on Place Making and Design whilst enhancing the character and nature of its sensitive setting, meeting:

- Housing for Varying Needs
- Greener Homes Standard (Silver Aspects 1&2)
- Passivhaus certified
- Secured by Design Gold
- Silver Active Standard

All three homes have been immediately let to families who are being very pro-active in working with Eildon and our agents which add to the quality and accuracy of the post occupation evaluation study scheduled for completion in April 2021.

Technology enabled care for homeless clients in Stirling

Lead organisation: Stirling Council

Partner organisation: HomeLINK and Wheatley Care



Statement of support

Stirling Council Housing Services with the smart home technology partner HomeLINK and care provider Wheatley Care wanted to address the challenge of reducing the time people spend in temporary accommodation and the number of failed homeless tenancies with smart home technology. Three objectives were identified:

1. Enhancing communication between residents and their support network
2. Providing key workers and residents with information and insights on the property and wellbeing
3. Providing support and advice when people need it; taking account of limited resources

HomeLINK is a leading 'Internet of Things' platform that is part of Aico. HomeLINK in conjunction with Stirling Council deployed smart technology to fifteen properties that are used for temporary accommodation and ran in-depth engagement and workshop with key workers and repairs colleagues with the help of Stirling Council and Loretto Care. These include:

An internet enabled tablet that has a bespoke software set-up including; HomeLINK's Resident Application which provides information on the health of a property directly to the resident along with advice on how to address issues before they impact health and well-being; A bespoke help page with useful contact information for council services, local support groups and out of hours support; Various communication services including video calling with pre-configured key worker contact information, e-mail and SMS; number of support applications to help residents manage their day-to-day lives; Sensors deployed within the property which monitors things like: dampness/condensation, energy usage and air quality/temperature; Video-enabled doorbell, viewed on the tablet and accessible for the resident and key worker.

This project has led to better access to digital services for residents in a time when these services have been a lifeline for many. It has also led to Stirling Council Housing Services understanding how they can incorporate new insights and remote alerts into their processes and procedures to deliver better, more efficient and targeted repairs, investment and support.

Resident 1: "Finally I can access the internet to do online banking and shopping; it really is a lifeline especially during lockdown"

Resident 2: "I love that I can access support lines easy and can see what is going on in my home"

Key support worker: "Seeing some more detailed information on the property really has helped inform our regular visits with residents. Understanding if they are in a cold home, suffering from mould risks or poor indoor air quality, and if they are in fuel poverty helps us to target resources and other support to meet their needs."

Team Leader Reactive Repairs (Kerray Dawson): "We've seen some interesting insights on these properties with several high risk indications of condensation, damp and mould; this has really got us thinking how we help the resident manage their environment better, or understand if it is something inherent with the building"

Alison Vass of Loretto Care: "These are some of the most vulnerable tenants and it is critical we ensure they are supported into permanent tenancies. Better communications and access to digital services is one way we can help people support themselves more."

Luke Loveridge, CEO, HomeLINK: "This has been a very well run project and highly innovative. We've tested new ways to engaged with residents, integrated new technologies into our platform such as the new 'Blink' door cameras to help people who might be a risk of domestic abuse or stalking, alongside our core devices and insights including fire/ CO alarm safety alerts, mould risks, cold homes, thermal efficiency, fuel poverty and abandoned property indicators."

Outcomes and achievements

Six properties had risk indicators of condensation, damp and mould; Four of which were 'high'. Two properties also had high consistent levels of CO2. Both of these have effects on maintenance and wellbeing. These insights are helping inform the repairs service respond to these risks and also facilitated conversation between the residents and key workers on what residents can do to manage this.

Three properties were identified as having low thermal efficiency, which for this group of vulnerable people could push them into fuel poverty. This information has helped the maintenance team consider how to prioritise its energy efficiency programme

Eight residents have engaged with the new interface, with five being heavy users of the service. Seven residents were not engaged with the new interface which has helped us understand where to focus more engagement.

There has been great feedback from some residents on how accessing digital services has helped them connect with services and their wider support networks during a difficult time for many people. The pilot will now inform our decision-making on the most appropriate way to extend future use of Technology Enabled Care for homeless households in Stirling.

EXCELLENCE IN CHAMPIONING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Sponsored by:



This award recognises organisations who are leading on promoting equality and diversity in their businesses.

Provision for Gypsy / Traveller Communities

East Ayrshire Council



Statement of support

East Ayrshire Council made the decision to review local provision of services to Gypsy/Traveller communities. This review made it clear that the Council could be doing more to support the Gypsy/Traveller families both residing in and passing through the local authority area and steps were immediately taken to address this.

A Gypsy/Traveller Integration and Engagement Officer was appointed in 2019 and has excelled in improving the provision of services to Gypsy/Travellers over the last 12 months. The officer is working to foster change both locally and nationally and has worked alongside COSLA and the Scottish Government to contribute to the development of the Improving the Lives of Gypsy/Travellers 2019 – 2021 Action Plan and the Coronavirus (Covid 19) Framework to Support Gypsy/Travellers.

December 2019 saw the establishment of a Local Gypsy/Traveller Steering Group. The purpose and role of the Group is to bring together internal EAC Departments and community planning partners to develop a systematic approach to enhance services for Gypsy Travellers. Representatives from a variety of

Council departments and external agencies attended the meeting. This meeting allowed the opportunity to share the remit of the Gypsy/Traveller Integration and Engagement officer with other services and for other services to nominate a key contact within their service in order to ensure a joined up, partnership approach in the development of services to Gypsy/Travellers.

Gypsy/Traveller families both residing in and passing through East Ayrshire, are being consulted as part of a local accommodation needs assessment and actively influencing current and future service provision.

The Councils approach to roadside encampments in the past has lacked focus. The visitation of encampments was conducted by existing members of Council staff resulting in a lack of consistency in approach. In order to rectify this, the Gypsy/Traveller Integration and Engagement Officer now provides a single point of contact for families at encampments. Furthermore, a desktop exercise was undertaken to look at best in class examples of managing roadside encampments. Drawing on the results of this, East Ayrshire Council then developed a Negotiated Stopping approach of managing encampments that supports Gypsy/Traveller families' rights to a nomadic lifestyle whilst also considering the expectations of the Council and the settled community. Procedures detailing how this approach would be conducted in East Ayrshire were drawn up and a paper was then taken to Cabinet members, who unanimously agreed to trial this approach.

The Gypsy/Traveller Officer has also acted as a mediator between local Gypsy/Travellers applying for planning permission for a family run site and the Planning department within the Council resulting in a more humane, person centred approach to the Planning process.

At the very beginning of the Covid 19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown period, East Ayrshire Council mobilised services to ensure that Gypsy/Traveller families at roadside encampments were supported. Regular visits were carried out, a needs assessment conducted and basic provisions such as the delivery of water and the provision of waste uplift were put in place. In instances of severe hardship the Council agreed to provide a care package containing items

such as food and hand sanitiser. Realising that families on roadside encampments may need to self-isolate, an area of Council land was identified and held for this purpose. Since the outbreak, a total of 10 encampments have been visited and supported and East Ayrshire Council will continue to ensure that families at roadside encampments are supported and provided with a comprehensive level of provision.

Outcomes and achievements

The establishment of a multi-agency working group to improve service provision to Gypsy/Travellers.

The development of an awareness raising E Learning module which over 500 staff have undertaken. This provides staff with a greater understanding of the issues faced by Gypsy/Travellers and instils a greater degree of empathy within staff when supporting local Gypsy/Traveller families.

An online celebration in honour of Gypsy Roma Traveller Awareness month (June 2020). Through the Council's website and social media platforms information, videos and photos were uploaded on a daily basis. Analysis show a reach of 59,700 people through Facebook and 95,700 through Twitter. The Kilmarnock Viaduct was also illuminated with yellow

light which signifies 'yellow on the broom.' This signifies Scots Gypsy/Travellers knowing that it is the time of year to travel.

Local Gypsy/Traveller families are now shaping the future of services through their involvement in the local consultation exercise.

Positive feedback from roadside encampments regarding the new engagement approach to managing encampments resulting in a better relationship between the Council and Gypsy/Travellers.

Through Negotiated Stopping families no longer face the stress of an immediate eviction and are provided with a better opportunity to engage with local services such as Health and Education.

Positive action traineeships

Lead organisation: PATH (Scotland)



Statement of support

PATH (Scotland) was established in 1998 with charitable objectives to address the absence of BME communities in employment in housing and related sectors. using the positive action provisions of the Equality Act (2010)

We place unemployed and under-employed people from a BME and Refugee background into traineeships in the housing sector. We work with placement organisations throughout the year and provide six weekly support and supervision to trainees. The placement organisation pays the trainee a training allowance which is tied to the Scottish Living Wage. We jointly pay for a related qualification and provide support and supervision throughout the period of the placement. 90% of our trainees gain employment in the housing sector post placement. We work closely with registered social landlords in local communities to build resilient communities and ensure that the work of the sector is as diverse as the population

and communities it serves. Our work has also had a major impact on the communities that housing organisations serve who see themselves reflected in the workplace and on boards. We are increasing the diversity of people who work in mainstream housing, many of whom speak a number of languages who can communicate directly to people who need not only housing advice and support but access to local housing too.

In addition we run mentoring, coaching and leadership programmes across all sectors and provide 1-1 support for people from BME/Refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds with a range of complex support needs.

We also provide advice and support to a range of organisations on equalities eg. we assisted the Centre for Inclusive Living (formerly the Disabled Persons Housing Network) to replicate the PATH scheme for disability and worked with SCVO on their equality internships as well as working with SFHA, SHARE and other housing bodies on a Modern Apprenticeship Expansion Plan for the Housing Sector. We recently launched the plan at the SFHA Conference

We see employment inequality as a major contributor to the continuing barriers faced by BME communities in Scotland and our work addresses this inequality.

We are the only BME led organisations running positive action traineeships under the positive action provisions of Equality legislation.

Outcomes and achievements

The Path Scotland programme has been described as an, 'exemplar of good practice' by Communities Scotland in their report on 'good practice in positive action (2003) and again by the CIH - in their report on, 'the experience of BME staff in Housing' who stated that the PATH Scheme the following, "The most important route into housing had been by way of a PATH traineeship, demonstrating the continuing importance of the PATH Scotland scheme" (see Sim, D, 2014).

The work of PATH Scotland has also been recognised at national level, too, as an exemplar of good practice in respect of positive action and race equality.

For example, the Parliamentary Equal Opportunities Committee, 2016, recommended that the Scottish

Government works with the EHRC to:

"promote the use of positive action measures such as PATH (Scotland)".

This Committee also urges the Scottish Government to "work with the public sector to realign their policies and direct their resources at tackling under-representation of ethnic minorities, primarily by developing best practice, including developing projects such as PATH (Scotland)".

Our 20 year anniversary report, A Life Changing Experience - the impact of PATH (Scotland) York Consulting (2018) reported that stakeholders experience of the PATH Trainee Scheme and PATH itself had been, 'overwhelmingly positive.'

Recognising and responding to hate crime

Wheatley Group



Statement of support

Equality and Diversity are at the heart of our core values around building sustainable communities that have a real sense of belonging and connection for each customer. Wheatley believe every individual should be respected, valued and included; and our organisational policies, procedures, and services have been designed to reflect this.

One area we recently strengthened was in relation to Hate Crime – something we treat with a zero tolerance approach, and deal with in a robust and responsive manner.

In November 2019 we launched our Group Hate Crime Policy, designed to support our customers' priority of feeling secure within their homes, and our Group strategy of ensuring our customers live in peaceful and safe communities. This was supported by the development of a tailored training programme for staff, to ensure they were skilled, experienced and knowledgeable in the concept of Hate Crime, and the manifestation of this in different behaviours, acts and attitudes.

To ensure our training was of the highest possible calibre, we established a Strategic Partnership with Police Scotland National Equality and Diversity Unit, to design and also co-deliver the training to our staff. This training covers all aspects of recognising and responding to Hate Crime, with a real focus on Third Party Reporting. The strategic partnership between Wheatley Group and the National Equality and Diversity Unit at Police Scotland has been of huge benefit to our customers, and our partners are also hugely passionate around the benefits, stating:

"Police Scotland are delighted to work in partnership with Wheatley Housing in delivering hate crime training to frontline staff. Increasing the awareness of hate crime in communities and supporting people to report it is hugely beneficial not only in identifying and tackling hate crime but building community trust and confidence".

The Policy and training package also fit into our ongoing commitment towards supporting the Scottish Government, COSLA and Scottish Refugee Council New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, where we have developed an Action Plan cutting across all areas of operation within our business – from tackling Hate Crime, to allocations, property development, and also including our Wheatley Foundation activity. The 4-year action plan (covering 2018-2022) has the clear purpose of ensuring that all New Scots customers are provided with the necessary access to support and tailored services that best meet their needs and aspirations. This includes the provision of a translation facility on documentation and systems, access to a welcome pack for new refugees, and our participation in the development of the formal family reunion process.

Wheatley have always had an enduring history of working with refugees, and unreservedly participated in the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme; designed to bring those at risk within Syria to the UK, ensuring they are provided with the appropriate support to help rebuild their lives.

Wheatley have also committed funding alongside a range of organisations, including Police Scotland, Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, and North Glasgow Homes, to work alongside non-profit organisation Heartstone, to develop a Hate Crime Education programme in schools within the North of Glasgow. The purpose of the project is to engage with young people aged 9-25 across 2 distinct programmes; to challenge Hate Crime in terms of what this constitutes, how it manifests itself, and also their response to it. The programme for the older age group also encompasses employability skills, at the same time as exploring Hate Crime from a range of angles.

Our Group Domestic Abuse Policy, bespoke staff training programme and our associated activity all have a real equality and diversity approach built in, as we're aware of the particular challenges faced by victims from Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

Outcomes and achievements

The Hate Crime Training was launched to great acclamation, with staff feedback including expressions such as 'engaging', 'interesting' and 'informative', alongside statements such as "[the trainers] knowledge and experience of Hate Crime was invaluable". To date 329 frontline staff have been trained, however the sessions had to cease as a result of staff moving to home working as a result of the pandemic. Work has commenced to redevelop the training and move this to a virtual online delivery method, expected to be completed and operational within the next few months.

We have utilised the Red, Amber, Green status reporting for our New Scots Action Plan, and at this time we are reporting excellent progress; more

specifically, that from the 38 actions contained within our plan, 35 are either complete or currently in progress.

In terms of our support with the Syrian Vulnerable Person Relocation Scheme, over the course of the programme, we have accommodated 46 households from the 164 welcomed to Glasgow.

Regarding our Heartstone Customer Hate Crime Education Programme, this is in the initial phase at present, where we are heavily involved in the planning and development of the project with other key strategic partners involved.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

This award celebrates partnership and collaboration across the housing spectrum.

Queens Cross Housing Association emergency food support

Lead organisation: Queens Cross Housing Association

Partner organisations: Glasgow City Council, Scottish Government, Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum, Community Central Halls, Flourish House, Woodlands Community Development Trust, Bike for Good, Community Central Halls



Statement of support

Title: Queens Cross Covid 19 Response: Feeding our Community During the Pandemic

Queens Cross Housing Association's response to the Coronavirus pandemic highlights the importance of effective partnership working, in order to deliver excellent services and meet the needs of communities.

Before COVID-19, Queens Cross HA was actively working on issues such as food poverty, tackling social isolation and promoting digital inclusion. COVID-19 made the impact of these issues on our communities, and the challenge of dealing with them, even greater than before.

Partnership working was intrinsic to our emergency response to supporting the wellbeing of people in our communities. Building on our pre-existing connections, we collaborated with public and voluntary organisations to organise a resilient food and grocery delivery service, which at its peak supplied over 800 meals per week across the Association's area of operation. The organisations we collaborated with were Glasgow City Council, Scottish Government, Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum, Community Central Halls, Flourish House, Woodlands Community Development Trust and Bike for Good. GWSF assisted the Scottish Government to coordinate the allocation of central government funding at a local level.

The speed of events meant we had to work quickly to find solutions with our partners, at a time of tremendous uncertainty. Our planned Easter holiday programme for children, funded by Glasgow City Council, became a home delivered meals programme. A model of 5 meals per person, per household, formed the blueprint for our approach which continues at present. This provides people with the food they need whilst minimising the number of deliveries staff and community volunteers have to make.

QCHA then assumed a lead role in 2 separate food delivery partnerships. Firstly we worked with Flourish House, a local mental health charity who run our Community Café in one of our neighbourhoods. Funding from the Scottish Government allowed us to continue with a programme of meals provision to families in need, once our Easter programme funds were exhausted. This funding meant that the Café did not have to furlough their staff, and that families on low income, and households affected by COVID-19 were able to access food. Two of our staff volunteered

for Flourish House to assist with deliveries and we also provided use of our mini bus and PPE to keep people safe.

“Without this partnership project, we would have had to furlough our café staff” John Linn, CEO Flourish House.

We are now supporting the Café to become a Community Pantry, which will continue to tackle food poverty following a sustainable business model.

Our second food delivery partnership involved working with Community Central Halls and Woodlands Development Trust. Both these organisations have

catering standard cooking facilities and they also employ chefs as part of their work. Our role in this partnership was to assist with coordination of all partners, develop an online referral system for staff to use and provide call handling support for people calling up needing support to access food. We coordinate the food orders twice weekly and we also accessed funding to keep this service running until End of March 2021. Combined these food delivery partnerships were providing around 800 meals per week, supporting 50 - 60 households each, helping over 450 people with food support.

Outcomes and achievements

Our response was a triumph of partnership working, with each partner playing to its strengths and specialisms. Two food delivery partnerships helped spread the workload, and provided a level of resilience should any one partner be impacted by Covid 19.

Key achievements include: 800 meals per week delivered between April and September 2020; up to 60 households each week supported; 210 households and 445 supported in total with meals; 281 Grocery deliveries carried out; and 52 households with children received arts activity packs to do at home during the Summer and October holidays.

These projects also delivered positive social and economic outcomes. In particular: we supported

continued local employment in community organisations, safeguarding staff from furlough and, helping sustain these organisations until restrictions ease. Another outcome is we are now supporting the Community Café to become a Community Pantry, a more sustainable solution to providing access to quality produce at a low cost and more dignified than using a food bank. It also safeguards jobs in the Community Café, which has lost its usual trade due to the pandemic.

Social regeneration activities continued online during lockdown, which provided people with essential social contact and meaningful activities that support their wellbeing.

Graduate trainee programme

Lead organisation: Kingdom Housing Association

Partner organisation: University of Stirling



Statement of support

Kingdom launched its graduate trainee programme in 2019. The programme was designed to provide a career path for recent undergraduates, and to develop future leaders for the housing association. The three year programme involves a series of work placements across all areas of the business in addition to completing external work placements in order to provide as broad a range of perspectives as possible. The programme is underpinned by postgraduate study at the University of Stirling. From the outset we wanted this to be an inspirational programme. Kingdom has worked closely with the university to develop a relationship that has helped to add value to the training programme and additionally to provide tangible benefit to both organisations and wider stakeholders. In January 2020 we held a joint study event. Senior managers from Kingdom provided presentations for postgraduate students at the university, and with a university team providing background to some of the latest studies in designing accommodation for people with dementia. In March 2020, with the onset of the pandemic, we had concerns over the ability to retain all elements of the training programme due to the loss of face to face interaction. However, with the university we developed a model for independent learning placements that could be conducted purely on-line. Kingdom supported our two trainees to work on a project for the university, researching the impacts of

COVID-19 on the housing sector. Students worked, with supervision from the university on independent research projects. The learning and development potential from the placement is beyond what we had previously been planning for our trainees. The trainees benefited significantly from the experience. But both organisations did too. The university gained resources and public backing with the research work. And at Kingdom, we saw both of our trainees bring their new knowledge and experience back to their day jobs, and put it to good use working with tenants. Both trainees have since been involved in work presenting their findings to colleagues and tenants to help support decision making. And significantly, the work of one of our trainees on researching digital communications has been put to direct use in designing and implementing programmes to enhance our customer's access to digital services in the latter part of the year, supported by funding obtained through the Connecting Scotland programme. The model that was devised to support the initial two work placements has provided a template for providing further flexible, high quality work placements and learning experiences. Kingdom's two trainees have moved on to new placements with CIH Scotland now and will be picking up new external work placements in April 2021 using a similar template. And the collaboration doesn't end there. Kingdom has committed to providing internship placements for university students commencing in 2021 and the developing relationship is likely to see further joint working in looking at dementia friendly design in the coming years. At all key stages of the relationship development, both parties have been keen to consider new possibilities, take a fresh look at what could be mutually beneficial, and committed to providing and developing a programme to nurture and sustain professional excellence. The products of collaboration have provided tangible benefits to both organisations and we are keen to promote these benefits as they contribute directly to wider housing sector efforts, led by the CIH, to develop and promote professionalism within the sector. The exciting thing at the end of a year of challenge, is that we're already seeing developmental progress for both trainees, but also tangible benefits for both organisations and for tenants, which is ultimately what the venture is intended to achieve.

Outcomes and achievements

The collaborative partnership has delivered: - Enhanced collaborative working relationship, with both organisations providing input and support to provide mutual benefit - New model template developed for providing high quality work/study placements to compliment academic study. The model is now being developed and promoted further to support new work placements both for Kingdom trainee work placements and for university student internships - The collaborative approach and trust between the organisations enabled innovative new ways of working to be explored and agreed in order to maintain the training development programme during the pandemic. IN fact what has

been delivered this year as result of adaptation and improvement, probably exceeds expectations of the project when we launched last year - Housing Association support provided to support university students through training inputs and provision of internship opportunities - Trainee learning from their university placement has provided direct tangible benefits to Kingdom's tenants; Notably, digital support programmes for tenants have been developed that incorporate some of the research placement learning. - The model directly contributes to wider activity lead by the CIH to develop professionalism within the housing sector.

Scottish Borders Community Food Hub

Lead organisation: Eildon Housing Association

Partner organisation: Cyrenians



Statement of support

In April 2020 we feared the Covid pandemic would load additional financial pressure on both our tenants and the wider Borders communities, and that this in turn would lead to increases in the use of locally based Food Banks. To address this concern, with support from Scottish Borders Council, we got together the homelessness charity Cyrenians (who act as the FareShare franchise for Central and South East Scotland) to collectively coordinate the distribution of much needed food supplies to local foodbanks and community groups.

Cyrenians are an organisation which was founded by a group of students in 1968 to improve the lives of those experiencing homelessness, this initial objective has developed into a mission to support people excluded from family, home, work, and community. As part of this Cyrenians act and receive funding from the Scottish Government, as a Franchise of FareShare which redistributes surplus goods from the food industry to those who need a helping hand.

Using an empty space at our Sheltered Accommodation in Galashiels, we initially set up a distribution foodhub, to support the excellent work

already being undertaken by local organisations, such as food banks and resilience groups who were feeling the strain in the current climate. From the start of the pandemic and working with SBC, we received or collected deliveries of food and other goods from Cyrenians and stored them for onward Distribution. Making contact with up to 15 local organisations, through a combination of localised deliveries and self-collection, we ensured that the various foodbanks and community groups had sufficient supplies to satisfy the need of service users.

In the early days, a small number of staff who were furloughed, due to the pandemic, volunteered to assist with this new project. They were assisted by staff members as part of whose duties were reassigned and coordinated by our Corporate Services Manager who acted as the link between ourselves, the Cyrenians and the local foodbanks and community groups.

Such was the success of the venture that since May this year, along with the fantastic support of SBC, things have progressed well, with Eildon employees making over 80 trips to the Cyrenians' FareShare depot in Leith, Edinburgh and distributing more than 130 varieties of food, clothing and toiletries, including over 8,000 feminine sanitary products, 6,000 tubes of toothpaste and 13,000 tins of macaroni cheese.

As we expect the need of this service to continue, we see that partnership working with Cyrenians will become a feature of what we do and as such we are in the process of establishing a permanent base at our Headquarters and have appointed a full time co-ordinator to take over the duties from our Corporate Services Manager and staff continue to volunteer through our Eildon Makes a Difference community benefits scheme.

As some of our most rural communities often struggle to access donations, the foodhub has provided a terrific resource from which items can be sorted and delivered to where they are most needed. We realise this is just the tip of the iceberg but it is heartening to

know we are all playing a key part in helping to get much needed support out to households across the Borders

At a time of extreme need, we feel that working with our partners in the Cyrenians, SBC and local foodbanks and community groups, we have been able to establish a close working relationship in a short

period of time and produce outcomes which have benefitted many families in our area. With this synergy of purpose identified, we see this as being embedded in what we do for as long as that need exists and realistically, longer than the pandemic which initiated the original partnership itself.

Outcomes and achievements

At the outset of our partnership with Cyrenians, SBC, foodbanks and local community groups, our collective aim was to try and prevent tenants and other members of the local community suffering significant food hardships.

Since May this year, along our partners, Eildon employees have made over 80 trips to the Cyrenians' FareShare depot in Leith, Edinburgh and distributed more than 130 varieties of food, clothing and toiletries, including over 8,000 feminine sanitary products, 6,000 tubes of toothpaste and 13,000 tins of macaroni cheese.

The Eildon Food Hub van has covered more than 6,500 miles, delivering much needed items from as far as Eyemouth to Peebles, and 13 other communities in between.

While these are raw figures, the outcomes are immeasurable in that many hundreds of families have benefitted from the assistance.

In order to gauge the success of the scheme we asked participating groups to complete a short questionnaire, the feedback was unanimously positive and as an example we received this comment

"The Eildon FoodHub service has been invaluable to us primarily being able to access food for our community during the lockdown - the only reason we had to alter our way of doing things was due to distance and our inability to pick up from you on a regular basis"

Emergency first stop accommodation, Barrack Street, Hamilton

Lead organisation: South Lanarkshire Council, Housing and Technical Resources

Partner organisations: University of West of Scotland, The Salvation Army, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue and partners in Health and Social Care



Statement of support

South Lanarkshire Council has a long standing track record of working in partnership to tackle homelessness. With the implementation of its Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan which included innovative partner contribution statements the ethos of drawing

on the experience from housing, health and the third sector has become embedded in the culture of homelessness services.

However the scale of the homelessness challenges facing local authorities from the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic meant that new approaches would be required to ensure that the council's commitment to provide good quality temporary accommodation was maintained.

The innovative approach which we have put in place using the fundamental strength of the partnerships commitment to avoiding the use of bed and breakfast as an emergency response to homelessness.

The Council acted fast to address the identified need and in April, the Property Services Manager negotiated with the University of the West of Scotland to lease a former student accommodation building in Barrack Street, Hamilton as a temporary solution to providing safety and security for homeless households during the pandemic. The lay-out and location of this facility was assessed as being ideal to meet these short term housing needs.

The University were very accommodating and agreed an initial lease to provide Emergency First Stop Accommodation on favourable terms which promises significant financial savings to South Lanarkshire Council, supporting adherence to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order.

It was clear that the success of the approach required the skills and experience of key partners and the Salvation Army quickly confirmed their willingness to work with the council to establish this essential service.

Barrack Street provides 54 units of accommodation for up to 60 individuals. From 15 June 2020 the project has been operating at full capacity providing emergency accommodation and support for 271 individuals through joint working between housing, Community Resources, Police Scotland, Fire and Rescue, local businesses, health and third sector organisations.

The Salvation Army provide 24/7 support ensuring quality and consistency which is reflected in the positive feedback from residents who have spent, on average, 32 days in Barrack Street before moving on to more settled accommodation.

One service user reported that the project has made "a big impact on my life as a whole, I felt safe coming here, the project has given me a lot of support and I feel confident in myself".

A recent recruit at the Salvation Army stated that being part of a service right at its infancy has been very rewarding, battling the stigma that accompanies homelessness and respecting everyone's dignity is paramount.

South Lanarkshire Council recognises that it could not achieve these results in isolation and as well as working in partnership to provide much needed accommodation and vital support the project has worked together with the local community.

One local business has provided three service users with full-time employment following a joint recruitment process and trial periods.

The Whitehill Community Support Group have been working to promote community involvement and inclusion by providing food and aiding Christmas appeals to ensure service users feel connected and experience the warmth of people at the festive season.

A local music business has recently expressed an interest in working in partnership to build community spirit and has offered to provide free music classes for the resident service users.

This positive response from the community has inspired service users to give something back and have undertaken litter picks in the local area. They have stated that they want to feel part of the community and reduce the stigma that sometimes homelessness brings.

Outcomes and achievements

The dedication of all partners involved with this project demonstrates an innovation that not only maintains fidelity to commitments set out in the South Lanarkshire R RTP but also recognises a need to protect progress achieved in a crisis and ensure it is maintained in the longer term.

The need to reduce bureaucracy and work together to ensure the safety and security of some of society's most vulnerable households is everyone's responsibility and through the significant efforts from multiple agencies South Lanarkshire Council has achieved significant results in reacting to need in the context of the Covid19 pandemic.

Working together has ensured the delivery of hot meals for residents throughout the pandemic, Police

Scotland have been exemplary in settling the project within the community, health services have responded to additional needs and the Salvation Army very quickly agreed contract terms and project set up, a direct result of an existing long standing positive partnership.

This has been an innovative response to difficult times but the legacy will be that this type of approach will become embedded in the culture of homelessness services in South Lanarkshire and provide a strong foundation for what can be achieved when we all work together.

Hillcrest and Abertay Emergency COVID-19 funding

Lead organisation: Hillcrest Homes

Partner organisation: Abertay Housing Association



Statement of support

Hillcrest Homes and Abertay Housing Association jointly secured £175k of grant funding which was used to provide a vital lifeline for the Dundee community, funding a wide range of valuable support for those struggling as a result of COVID-19.

The money, which was provided by the Supporting Communities Fund, was distributed in partnership to support a number of areas in the community which have faced various struggles as a result of COVID-19 such as isolation, financial difficulty and those living with physical and mental disabilities.

The joint funding administered across the city supported over 17,000 individuals and households in total. With the national lockdown bringing challenges such as lost or reduced income, as well as spikes in poor mental health, suicide and domestic abuse, this funding sought to make important inroads into easing some of these issues within the local community.

Hillcrest Homes' Energy Advice Team (HEAT) gave 1000 struggling Dundee households a welcome boost, providing emergency top ups for their energy meters during the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the 1000 households, only 200 were Hillcrest Homes tenants, with the rest being a mixture of other housing association and private rent tenants, as well as homeowners. With COVID-19 causing struggles for many families, including reduced income due to Furlough, redundancy and spending more time in

the house resulting in greatly increased energy bills, the top-ups proved valuable. Referrals for top-ups were received from a range of support organisations. The top-up vouchers were generated via Fuel Bank – a partnership between Npower and Trussell Trust, through which HEAT applied for the voucher for each struggling household.

£25k of the funding has been earmarked for isolation and wellbeing supported 1,156 people with well-being boxes, clothing, activity packs, telephone support, online activities, and virtual devices to help reduce loneliness. A further £20k for recovery and outreach services was distributed to 11 organisations working with those with alcohol and substance issues, as well as young people's services and women's rape and abuse centres. The final portion of the money administered by Hillcrest saw £20k earmarked for supporting early release prisoners with recovery support and home starter packs.

The £75k administered by Abertay was distributed to 24 organisations in the city including £50k funding for foodbanks. £10k funding was each distributed to organisations working with those suffering from poor mental health and those experiencing domestic abuse, with the nationwide lockdown seeing both of these issues skyrocket. Finally £5k was provided to fund starter packs for people moving into a new home.

Consulting with Abertay, each organisation identified their own strengths and support networks which enabled the partnership to ensure throughout the various avenues available, all aspects of the community were covered. As this was an unprecedented time for everyone involved, both organisations had to quickly adapt and change the ways in which they provided support and collaborated together to create new and innovative ideas to deliver the best possible service.

This partnership between Hillcrest Homes and Abertay Housing Association has been vital in improving the well-being of the community. Without this partnership, some of the people that have greatly benefited from a result of the funding may have gone unnoticed.

Outcomes and achievements

The table below shows a breakdown of the total number of people that benefited from the £175k funding and the areas it was assigned to:

Intervention	Individuals Supported
Food	13,767
Fuel	1000
Household items	256
Digital Hardware	211
Digital Connectivity (data or broadband)	55
Digital training/support	30
Wellbeing calls	1,539
Mental Health Support	144
Welfare Rights	1
Volunteers	6

A survey was conducted on people receiving support and the feedback shows they were very satisfied with the provisions during the COVID-19 pandemic:

"Without the help of the Larder I have no idea how I would have been able to feed my family and I am extremely grateful for the kindness shown to my family over such a stressful period in my life. I will never forget everyone's kindness."

"What a lovely surprise to receive Afternoon tea on a sunny afternoon in June. I facetimed my daughter immediately to tell her of my surprise. During the COVID-19 pandemic I felt very isolated as my family all live out of town. I only had the support of the Warden at my complex so to receive the delivery of meals meant a great day to me and helped me out tremendously."

Tenancy agreement video - EAF/EAC

Lead organisation: East Ayrshire Federation of Tenants and Residents

Partner organisation: East Ayrshire Council



Statement of support

East Ayrshire Federation of Tenants & Residents (EAF) whose overall aim is to promote the rights of tenants and residents throughout East Ayrshire in the maintenance and improvement of housing conditions, local amenities, and the overall environment, along with promoting a thriving community spirit throughout the neighbourhoods that they work with. They are supported by the Tenants Information Service and funded and registered by East Ayrshire Council.

EAF works with the Council's Housing Service on a daily basis as a "critical friend" playing a strategic and vital role in enhancing participation, engagement and scrutiny within and of housing and community services.

The joint Council and Federation work ensures that tenant involvement in performance monitoring and service evaluation is embedded within the Housing Service's strategic performance monitoring framework.

In the spirit of our integrated collaborative working practices and operating a co-production approach, it was agreed in early 2020 that the Council's Customer Liaison Team and the Federation should produce a tenant agreement video. The main aim of this work was to deliver clear and accurate information and provide a new easy to access tool for new and existing council tenants to ensure a better understanding of the tenancy agreement. Due to the restrictions placed on gathering together, much of the work was done remotely and co-ordinated via e-mail and telephone.

First, the Federation members worked with the Council's Customer liaison officer to create a story board setting out the key messages that the film

would need to get across, and to identify appropriate locations throughout East Ayrshire where filming and voice recording could take place safely, and in accordance with the restrictions in place at the time.

Once the filming was complete, group members were fully involved in the editing process and had to frequently make amendments to the voice over recordings, making new ones as required, in order to arrive at a final product that was approved by all involved.

This excellent work culminated in the development of a very useful resource for Council officers, elected members and tenants alike. The video, which helps tenants understand the terms of their Tenancy Agreement and to ensure they are happy and safe in their home was launched by East Ayrshire Council, in partnership with East Ayrshire Federation as part of Scottish Housing Day.

Presented by local tenant, Lynn, the video outlines the tenants' responsibilities and is just one example of how East Ayrshire tenants have collaborated with the Council to develop new ideas that have informed and included tenants and residents in East Ayrshire.

Councillor Elena Whitham Cabinet spokesperson with responsibility for housing and communities commented: "We work closely with the East Ayrshire Federation of Tenants and Residents to achieve this and we are exceptionally fortunate to have this talented and committed group working with us, helping to transform the lives of our residents and regenerating our communities. This video is a fabulous information resource and I would encourage all of our tenants - and any prospective tenant - to watch it."

Bruce Cuthbertson, Chairperson of East Ayrshire Federation commented:

"We are delighted to be part of the journey of providing better services for the tenants and residents of East Ayrshire. There is no better feeling than to sit around a table and be treated as an equal partner, to speak honestly and openly and get the same in return, better still when our ideas and suggestions are adopted fully. The collaboration achieved in the production of the tenancy agreement video is a testament to that relationship and that tenants and residents voices make a difference"

Outcomes and achievements

Since the video has been launched it has been viewed in excess of 300 times and is proving to be a valuable resource for staff during tenancy sign ups. Staff consider:

- It provides clear and concise information
- Ensures that tenants with reading issues know and understand the agreement
- It provides a resource that can be viewed over again and combats issues of paperwork being misplaced in tenants' homes
- Makes the tenancy agreement "more real for tenants"
- Assures staff that tenants know and understand the contents of the agreement, tenant and Council roles and responsibilities

Tenants comment that:

- it's easier to understand
- helps us to have a visual reference

The video is now part of East Ayrshire councils sign process and is highlighted to current tenants as a source of relatable and succinct advice and information that enhances the relationship between Tenants and East Ayrshire Council.

EXCELLENCE IN PROFESSIONALISM

This award recognises employers who have invested in the skills, education and professionalism of their people and staff.

Culture change programme

Kingdom Housing Association



Statement of support

Much has changed over the last four decades since Kingdom Housing Association was formed. The organisation today is almost unrecognisable in terms of size, scope and impact. But one thing has remained constant, Kingdom's commitment to providing the best service to customers, clients and partners and to the highest professional standards. Professionalism starts with people and Kingdom's Culture Change programme launched in 2017 has been key to raising standards across the organisation. One of the pillars of the programme was the introduction of the CARES values. Kingdom is passionate about their CARES values - Customer, Accountable, Respect, Efficient and Supportive - and strive to ensure those values inform every decision they make and every action they take. It's a simple framework that delivers significant results. We saw a 30% increase in our staff engagement scores from 2017 to 2020. And our customer satisfaction survey in March 2020 showed 90% satisfaction; the highest ever recorded by the organisation and better than the Scottish National Average for 2019/20. The introduction of the CARES values in tandem with a focus on Learning and

Development has allowed Kingdom's staff to adapt to the changing sector environment and to pursue their own personal and professional development. In 2017 all line managers at Kingdom completed ILM Level 3 management training and in 2018 undertook Performance Management training so they could better support and develop their teams and drive performance at regular monthly one-to-one meetings. There has been a significant investment in professional qualifications at Kingdom too, with many staff undertaking Chartered Institute of Housing level 3 studies. Notably, the cohort of staff completing this qualification aren't just from the Housing team with colleagues from Finance, Development and Kingdom's employability project. Other professional qualifications completed include certification from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, the Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals, and the Association of Accounting Technicians. And we are supporting 3 staff to complete undergraduate degrees on the Graduate Apprenticeship programme through Heriot Watt University. Reflecting this investment in staff, Kingdom transitioned from Basic Investors in People Accreditation to being awarded Gold in just two years. Kingdom also gained Gold Investor in Young People status within two years and is now focused on achieving Platinum. Kingdom is also planning for the future with an emphasis on the professional development of young people, having launched its Trainee Programme in 2016. The programme has introduced trainees in a wide range of departments including finance, HR, development, asset management, housing management and organisational support services. Including apprentices, 16 young people have started with Kingdom as trainees, all of whom have moved on to permanent employment, either with Kingdom or with another organisation. In addition, one of those trainees won the CIH Apprentice of The Year in 2017. In

2019 Kingdom introduced the Graduate Trainee Programme, feeding into a collaboration arrangement with Stirling University. The Culture Change programme and goal of professional excellence also extends beyond Kingdom's offices and touches the people in the communities where Kingdom operates. Kingdom Works, Kingdom's Employability project, continues to support people from all over Fife into employment and training opportunities with advice, information and guidance, with demand currently running at almost double pre-coronavirus levels. They

also provide bespoke training academies tailored to particular areas of work such as construction and hospitality. Kingdom also delivers community benefits through its ambitious development programme working with partners, stakeholders and the wider community enhancing employability opportunities and promoting life chances in local areas. This is achieved through the creation of work placements, apprenticeships, regular employment and community support to schools, food banks and anti-poverty initiatives.

Outcomes and achievements

The culture change programme saw staff engagement increase by 30% between November 2017 and May 2020. - Improved overall Customer satisfaction scores achieved - 90% satisfaction recorded in March 2020, a 5% increase from the previous year. - Achieving Gold Investors in People level in August 2020. - Achieving Gold Investors in Young People in 2019. - Achieving Healthy Working Lives Silver status, and awaiting confirmation of Gold. - Achieving Equalities Pathfinder accreditation. - Kingdom is a Scottish Living Wage Employer. - Accredited as a carer positive employer and as a dementia friendly organisation - Developing an in-house Payroll function with the team receiving

Highly - Commended at the Chartered Institute of Payroll Professional Awards 1 year after being formed. - Focusing on developing tenant participation with Kingdom winning multiple awards at the Tenant Information Service Excellence Awards and TPAS Scotland Good Practice Awards. - Recent collaborative working and good practice examples include: - Joint Building Performance Evaluation Study between Kingdom and Gannochy Trust being carried out by Glasgow School of Art (MEARU) - Architecture & Design Scotland case study produced to share lessons learned from Regeneration work at Fraser Avenue.

EXCELLENCE IN DEVELOPMENT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

This award is aimed at developers who have built new residential developments in any recognised affordable tenure.

Edmonstone, Edinburgh

Hillcrest Homes



Statement of support

It's rare that a housing association or developer has the opportunity to create a development with as much history, identity and innovation as the one completed at Edmonstone, Edinburgh. A 300 year old historical walled garden wall doesn't just serve as a backdrop for 47 new affordable homes with a mixture of housing types - the properties are innovatively built into the ancient structure. This fusion of history with modern energy-efficient affordable housing has created a development unlike anything else. The historical wall forms the rear façade of the properties, as they emerge into the interior of the walled garden.

To minimise interference with the wall, a small, sealed air-gap exists between the homes and the historic structure. The lower floor windows to the rear bridge this air-gap by use of a deep reveal. This means that the wall will be preserved for years to come, even beyond the lifespan of the homes. Due to the varying thickness of the historic wall, there was no continuous width of cavity between it and the timber kit, which made alignment challenging and took additional time to work around.

Special care was given to the properties and built environment to emphasise the rural locale and enhance the living environment for tenants. Properties are encompassed by farmland style wood and wire fencing to enhance the sense of rural openness. Weatherboard panelling is incorporated to elevated aspects of the rear facade to protect against the elements and give a rustic aesthetic, complimented by interior and exterior wood panelled doors. Tenants enjoy patio doors on the ground floor and Juliet balconies on the upper floor that open directly onto the impressive view.

Set within a peaceful rural backdrop with unrivalled views over Edinburgh, the Forth Estuary and the hills of Fife, the development is enveloped by wildlife-rich mature woodland, offering the serenity of an idyllic countryside setting while still only a short commute from Edinburgh city centre.

All properties feature energy-efficiency built in as standard, including solar panelling, gas central heating and boilers with gas savers and smart meters. The homes are also fitted with high performance insulation, cladding, windows and doors that exceed building standards - all designed to hugely minimise heat loss.

With Hillcrest Homes and Hillcrest Enterprises working closely alongside Hart-Crudén to develop the homes and engage with the community, the partnership resulted in a number of successful initiatives such as engaging with local schools to encourage careers within the construction industry, and utilising local apprentices and local supply chains to give as much back to the local community as possible.

Tenants have heaped praise on the ideal location and the unique heritage and identity that this injection of history into the homes provides. Tenant Dennis Williamson, said: "My home is in a great location. The area has a lovely and quiet rural feel, while the bypass

is close by giving great travel links, and Edinburgh city centre is also only ten minutes away.

The historical identity and innovative design immediately caught Scottish Housing Minister Kevin Stewart MSP's attention when he visited in January 2020, saying: "I am impressed by the way these 47 affordable homes for social and mid-market rent have

been integrated into the walled garden that was once part of Edmonstone House. These unique homes will transform the lives of their tenants by giving them a sense of identity and belonging, and contribute to a vibrant community with strong links to its history."

Outcomes and achievements

- The new homes have already scooped Police Scotland's Secured by Design Gold Award - a national police initiative that encourages developers to create housing projects with security in mind to help prevent anti-social activity and break-ins.
- The corral layout of the development encourages a thriving community spirit and a strong sense of belonging. Children can play within full view of their homes, while the design encourages neighbourly interactions. The design of the properties also offers tenants privacy, where they can relax and thrive within their own space.
- Recycling stations have been designed sensitively into the development without disrupting the aesthetic by elevating the central landscaped amenity green at either end to concealing the recesses for the recycling bins in a design approach reminiscent of the ha-ha walls which previously featured throughout Edmonstone Estate.
- The development also encourages greener modes of transport, with 100% bicycle storage capacity, including an enclosed, secure, specially designed bike shed with room for around 20 bikes.

Nethan Street and Hills Trust Development

Elderpark Housing



Statement of support

In what is Elderpark's first development of new homes for some time, the Association has successfully blended the old with the new. This large development of flats and houses is complemented by the sympathetic restoration of an iconic 19TH century landmark former school in the heart of Govan - now restored to become new offices for Elderpark Housing.

The Nethan Street development consists of 82 new homes and public realm space creating a new neighbourhood which complements Elderpark Housing's existing properties in the centre of Govan.

The restored former Hills Trust School - which for over a century educated local youngsters - adds a historical

perspective to the development.

The new homes costing £13.5 million comprise of a variety of dwelling sizes to address the specific needs of the area and are made up of terraced homes and an impressive curved building overlooking Govan Cross.

The housing mix incorporates bespoke wheelchair accommodation and elderly amenity flat types. It also incorporates smaller properties to accommodate existing tenants looking to downsize and allowed the re-allocation of larger family to address the needs in the wider area.

The prominent site location called for a bespoke solution with the curved building tracking the site boundary and adjacent to a prominent Govan road. This unique configuration creates a feature in the local area and already has received significant positive comment for its aesthetic appearance.

To afford all properties with dedicated private external space an added feature of sunrooms to all flatted properties has been integrated to compliment the terraced house gardens and communal amenity spaces. These 'sun-rooms' capture solar gain that can be distributed within the dwelling as well as acting as an acoustic buffer

The principles of designing for the streetscape has been considered within the design to strengthen the existing pedestrian and cycle routes in the local area.

This has allowed the successful integration of our new community and its accessibility, promoting 'car free' high quality public realm spaces for the residents and local community to enjoy.

The new homes have been constructed using the very latest technology made available from developer the CCG Group which included using an innovative, closed panel timber frame system manufactured offsite at CCG's bespoke premises.

This semi-automated production process not only ensures guaranteed quality and consistency in manufacture, but also delivers enhanced levels of thermal performance which reduces energy demand and makes savings to the occupier. This is promoted further by the application of solar PV to the roof of each dwelling (with a landlord supply for the flatted block) to further encourage energy savings.

The same developer undertook the restoration of the former school. As part of the "community benefits" arrangement, CCG created six full-time jobs, four trade apprenticeships, including a local resident from within Elderpark - and twelve work placements. A sum of £10,000 was also donated to Elderpark Housing to be distributed to locally-based projects and charities.

Key to the preservation was retaining many scholastic features of this Category B blonde sandstone building dating from 1875.

The original bell tower in this two-storey Italianate-style structure has been preserved as have the original stairs trodden by generations of local schoolchildren. Even cast-iron radiators have been kept.

Undoubtedly, with this development Elderpark has not only provided much-needed new homes but provided a unique historical bonus in preserving the built heritage of Govan.

Outcomes and achievements

82 homes built entirely for social rent on derelict land enhancing the visual aesthetic of the area for those visiting Govan Town Centre.

Sun Spaces/Balconies - All flats have high quality glazed balconies which can be opened in the summer and closed in the winter allowing all year round use.

Solar Panels - PV panels have been installed on the roofs of all properties, harnessing the sun's energy to reduce tenants' running costs. It is also environmentally friendly ultimately reducing the local carbon footprint.

WI-FI - Providing fully managed communal WI-FI network to all tenants at a very low cost.

Wheelchair Housing - This has been provided within the terraced houses and in the flats. Many of the flats have also been provided for ambulant disabled and wheelchair users.

Communal Garden - Whilst all houses have their own front and back gardens and flats have their balconies, a communal garden area where tenants can sit and meet their neighbours or hang out their washing has also been provided.

New Office - As part of the overall project significant gains achieved through one contractor for the new housing and restoration of the 'B' listed former school - ensuring value for money.

Bertha Park, Perth

Kingdom Housing Association



Statement of support

The Bertha Park development is a new sustainable and vibrant village in the North West of Perth which focuses on the importance of place making and integration with its surroundings and the wider community. The masterplan includes new homes for private sale and affordable housing, Primary and Secondary Schools delivered by Perth & Kinross Council, Medical Centre, sports facilities, retail and commercial units, junction improvements and the new Tay Cross Link Road. The wider community area surrounds the Bertha Park loch, ancient woodlands and the River Almond.

The developer is Bertha Park Ltd, which is a joint venture company formed by Springfield Properties and the land owner. Kingdom Housing Association, working in partnership with Bertha Park Ltd and Perth & Kinross Council plans to deliver more than 700 affordable homes in this new village which will contribute towards Perth & Kinross Council's planning requirement for the provision of affordable housing.

This submission relates to Phase 1 & 2 (112 social rented homes) completed in December 2019 and December 2020 respectively at a total cost of £15.4m.

The masterplan integrates the new housing with extensive areas of green and open space, including existing woodland, the area around Bertha Loch and new footpath connections. A new central park has also been created, complete with a play area for children and a large SuDS pond which forms the centrepiece of the new development and enhances the overall biodiversity and ecology of the area.

All of the properties have been designed to meet Building Regulations Silver Sustainability, Housing

for Varying Needs and Secured by Design Gold Standards. The specification for the new high quality low carbon homes includes high performance windows and external doors, mechanical extract ventilation, water butts for rainwater reuse, air source heat pumps in the houses and cottage flats and photovoltaic panels on the common access flats. The orientation of the buildings has been considered to maximise solar gain for tenants to help reduce their heating demands.

The housing mix comprises 2, 3 and 4 bed general and particular needs houses, cottages and flats to meet a range of identified housing needs in the area. These affordable homes have been built on a similar timescale to the private housing which creates a socially balanced and sustainable community from the outset.

Plans are being progressed to start on site with the next phase by March 2021 to provide 28 Mid Market Rent (MMR) and 8 Social Rented particular needs homes, which have been designed in consultation with PKC Health and Social Care Partnership.

Community benefits have been delivered by the Developer as part of their contractual requirements which include training placements and the creation of new jobs and apprenticeships. Due to current working restrictions our work with the new Bertha Park School has been classroom based however site visits will be arranged once circumstances allow.

The project has been driven by the vision to create an exemplar mixed use, mixed tenure project to meet the growing population and housing needs in the area. The success of the project is a reflection of strong partnership working with a range of stakeholders placed at the core of the decision making process.

Quotes:

Tenant "One of the best built houses I have seen for a long time".

Tenant "Plenty of storage, room sizes are large. Thank you".

Charlie Simpson (Apprentice) "I have very much enjoyed the opportunity to work on the Springfield Properties Bertha Park development in conjunction with Kingdom Housing Association, which is allowing me to develop the skills I need to drive my career forward".

Outcomes and achievements

112 affordable properties completed to date.

28 MMR properties and 8 particular needs properties are due to start on site prior to the end of March 2021.

Developed to high sustainability and environmental standards.

A unique multi use, mixed tenure project, demonstrating proactive and positive collaborative working.

Building Regulations' Silver Standard achieved.

Air Source Heat Pumps installed in the houses and cottage flats.

Gas Central Heating and Photovoltaic Panels installed in the Common Access Flats.

Sprinklers installed in the Common Access Flats

Energy Rating - An Energy Rating of B (81-91)

Secured by Design - Gold Standard

Bertha Park High School which was completed in 2019 is one of just seventeen worldwide that has been included on the Microsoft Flagship School list. The secondary school provides a modern learning environment for pupils and also helps to build a sense of community in a new settlement.

Community Benefits achieved over Phases 1 & 2; 11 New Apprenticeships, 6 Existing Apprenticeships, 11 Work Placements, 20 Jobs Created.

Other Community Benefits; Viewlands and St Madoes Primary Schools Primary School Presentations and hamper donations to aid fundraising; Viewlands Primary, Four Seasons Nursery and St Madoes Primary; School Presentations and Health & Safety Talks - Bertha Park High School

South Avenue, Blairhall

Kingdom Housing Association



Statement of support

The South Avenue, Blairhall development is located in a desirable rural settlement on the edge of Blairhall; a former mining village serviced by good public transport links. The site is bounded by an established tree belt, residential properties, open agricultural land and benefits from views towards the Forth, Stirling and the Ochils.

Community engagement took place from the outset through a number of public consultation events to agree design principles for the development including enhanced boundary treatments, inclusion of sustainability features and a people focused street design.

Completed in December 2020 at a total cost of £12.07m this high quality low carbon development of 84 new homes for social rent has made a substantial

physical change to the area and is an attractive addition to the village. Density and design has been considered to allow easy integration into the existing surroundings, enhance the character of the neighbouring properties and act as continuation of the village settlement.

The housing mix comprises a mix of detached, semi detached and terraced general needs and particular needs homes ranging in size from 2- 4 bedrooms. The variation in house type and size has helped meet a range of identified housing needs in the area and will address the changing needs and lifestyles of the tenants. Allowing people to live independently and remain in their homes will help sustain the local community.

The new homes comply with Housing for Varying Needs, Secured by Design Gold and Building Regulations Silver Sustainability standards and include solar photovoltaics, enhanced insulation, gas savers, water saving features and decentralised mechanical extraction ventilation (dMEV). The design maximises solar gain and aims to address affordability issues by encouraging tenants to reduce their energy consumption and lower their fuel costs. A SuDS basin to deal with surface water has been provided off site to maximise the number of much needed affordable homes on the development site.

The layout achieves a sense of place by incorporating the principles of "Designing Streets" including shared surfaces and a road layout designed to slow traffic down to encourage walking, cycling and outdoor playing whilst linking into the surrounding network of

existing streets to improve connectivity to the village including the village park and community facilities.

A woodland path and pockets of communal greenspace have been incorporated into the layout to allow the new homes to seamlessly blend within the existing landscape. Active frontages ensure that public open space and footpaths are overlooked. The vehicular access route into the development has been located in an area to have least effect on the existing tree belt.

The design has created a safe, comfortable and enjoyable place to live with a modern colour palette and materials that are robust and easy to maintain. The adoption of existing patterns has helped create

a sense of place and the new artwork provides an attractive focal point within the development.

The scope of the project is more than the physical change however, the provision of this new affordable housing has helped breathe new life into the village. It is helping to improve and support the provision of local shopping and community facilities in the village as well as helping sustain the local school where roll numbers have been reducing in recent years.

Community engagement and partnership working has played a key role in the successful delivery of this much needed high quality housing project which will help sustain the village for many years to come.

Outcomes and achievements

Community engagement from the outset.

Training and employment opportunities provided: 3 work placements, 5 apprenticeships and the creation of 25 new jobs.

High resident satisfaction. One tenant moving from temporary accommodation said she was "absolutely overjoyed" with her home. Another tenant explained that her son had health issues before they moved due to poor housing conditions, she said "He was often ill - very pale and had a low mood" however since moving into their new home she said "he's like a completely new little boy. He's lots more life in him, is loving his new school, room and garden. He's made friends in the street and his overall health has improved."

Engagement with the Community Council and Fife Council enabled the provision of a new village recycling point.

School artwork taken forward with the pupils' ideas of local mining heritage and trees and birds (highlighting a brighter greener future on the foundations of a strong mining community) incorporated into the design.

The development is named after a local man and former professional footballer Charlie Fleming; his family are to be involved in the naming/opening ceremony once covid restrictions are lifted.

Installation of Kingdom's first public electric vehicle charging points.

Fraser Avenue, Inverkeithing Phase 1

Kingdom Housing Association



Statement of support

Built in 1956 the Fraser Avenue estate comprised 236 common access flats and was ranked in the top 15% of the most deprived areas of Scotland. The unpopular flats were in poor condition with no defined public space and tenants suffered from severe condensation issues and high fuel bills. A stigma took hold against the estate resulting in a distinct lack of civic pride and sense of community.

Fife Council took the decision to demolish their existing flats and transfer the land to Kingdom who was selected as the developing partner for the project to build, own and manage the new housing.

The Fraser Avenue Regeneration project will provide c.189 new energy efficient affordable homes on a phased basis. This submission relates to Phase 1 (53 social rented homes) completed in March 2019 at a cost of £7.9m.

Extensive community engagement took place from the outset through a series of workshops and consultation events to establish key design principles to help create a new sense of place and ownership ; these included a pedestrian and cycling focused public realm, more sustainable building materials and a people focused terraced street design. The masterplan addresses community feedback through a placemaking framework.

A cross-organisational team approach was adopted to deliver the project objectives; this was overseen by the Project Implementation Board (PIB) which included representatives of Kingdom, Fife Council and Local Elected Members.

Driven by the housing needs of tenants wishing to remain in the estate, the mix comprises general and particular needs (amenity and wheelchair) homes ranging in size from 2-6 bedrooms. Tenants were involved in the design and given the opportunity to choose their ground floor layout along with internal/external fixtures.

The new homes comply with Housing for Varying Needs, Secured by Design Gold, Building Regulations Silver Sustainability Standards and include renewables and a breathing wall system to improve indoor air quality and reduce fuel bills. Tenant "I love my new home it's made our lives so much easier. It's homely, cosy and the kitchen is more spacious than in our previous home which means we can enjoy family meals together".

With increasing air-tightness levels, the links between poor ventilation and ill-health are being increasingly acknowledged. Kingdom has commissioned Glasgow School of Art (MEARU) to complete a 2 year building performance evaluation to establish the effectiveness of the breathable wall system and the as-built performance against design predictions. Results of the study will inform future design and be shared within the sector.

Designed in collaboration with the local school and community, a pocket park has been provided to give a more intimate space to play beyond the main 'village green' planned in phase 2 of the redevelopment. Inverkeithing Primary "We're delighted to be working with Kingdom, this is not only a great learning opportunity for our children as they discover about construction but our partnership helps our community spirit grow allowing our children to take pride in their community

The project has transformed an area that was stigmatised with poor-quality housing into a vibrant community with high quality low carbon affordable homes; providing community direction and engagement. The project has removed barriers to build a strong sense of place, meet local needs and deliver high sustainability and enhanced environmental standards.

Community involvement has been at the heart of the project and the success of Fraser Avenue is testament to the hard work and professionalism of everyone involved and their ability to identify effective ways to address challenges faced.

Outcomes and achievements

Community direction and engagement from the outset.

Dedicated webpage/social media platforms.

100% resident satisfaction, Tenant "We're really happy in our new home. It's made such a difference to our lives. We really like the design of the overall development."

Community led street renaming.

School initiative including site visits, logo competition and selection of play equipment.

Relocation and provision of shops into a prominent area within the wider community.

2 Year Building Performance Study underway.

Construction academies to enhance employability opportunities and promote life chances; 13 placements; 10 new jobs and 6 apprenticeships provided. Construction candidate "The academy was a great opportunity to move into construction, it was great being part of the team building my new home."

Architecture & Design Scotland case study produced to share lessons learned.

Housing to 2040 stakeholder engagement sessions held to discuss the new housing and its impact on the lives of individuals/community.

Community memory book published and held in the Local Library.

Tenancy sustainment projects with external agencies to offer tenants financial advice and support.

Tenant open day to view new homes prior to allocation.

Tenant choice.

Demonstrates mainstream capabilities and is an example of good practice which can be adopted by others.

High Street, Selkirk

Eildon Housing Association



Statement of support

The High Street development comprises 10 high quality, bespoke affordable apartments in a prominent town centre location. Originally a former Co-op building standing empty since 2003, deteriorating over time to create a visual blight and magnet for anti-social behaviour.

The compact nature of the site and physical nature of the building restricted any viable remodelling. The existing building was not listed but was in a prominent position in the Selkirk Conservation Area adjacent to the historically notable Victoria Hall building. The semi-derelict building had negatively impacted an otherwise picturesque town centre for over a decade.

Transforming this central town-centre site into affordable apartments presented significant challenges. The previous owners had struggled to find a viable proposal for retaining the semi-derelict building and there was no interest when the site was marketed for development. The repair and restoration of the building for housing was deemed to be unviable with the building being added to the Buildings at Risk Register in 2009. It was clear, when Eildon acquired the site, that the existing building would be required to be demolished, including large areas by hand. The building adjoined other residential properties and was situated next to a busy town-centre road so effective planning was crucial prior to the demolition works.

Detailed discussions with Planning and Heritage officers took place as the project developed which helped to inform the layout, scale, mass and materials of the proposed building. The design takes into careful consideration the local context and historic townscape and responds sympathetically to the palette of materials within the Conservation Area

We understand that space and water heating costs have a direct impact on the affordability of the homes provided. Section 7 of the Scottish Standards Silver Standard Aspect relating to carbon dioxide emissions, energy requirements for space heating, and water use efficiency has been met on this development, with all homes benefiting from:

- Photovoltaics
- AAA efficient Worcester, gas-fired combi boilers.
- Airtightness maximised through taping and sealing to retain heat and reduce energy bills.
- Low-flush WCs and low-flow rate taps and showers reduces water consumption.

Marshall Construction Ltd were employed Principal Contractor with Patience & Highmore commissioned as the designer. The project was procured through a JCT Design and Build Contract.

The approved total cost of the scheme stood at £1.362m, including a contract cost of £1.235m.

Funding was secured via Eildon's private finance and the Scottish Government in the form of a donation from Allia, in lieu of the traditional Scottish Government Housing Association Grant; working with the LA secured an additional £60k of grant from the

Scottish Government, via the Allia donation, to reflect the sensitive nature and challenges of the site. The total grant received via the Allia donation was £773k. Eildon's final private finance input was £587k.

The small site and challenges associated with limited accessibility required extensive planning to overcome which makes the final building so impressive. The result was the provision of a striking addition to the local townscape whilst respecting the town's historical architecture. The High Street development has been delivered using high quality materials and design to generate ten much needed affordable homes whilst removing a problem building from the centre of the rural town of Selkirk in the Scottish Borders. The homes benefit from a town centre location within walking distance of local amenities and public transport.

Outcomes and achievements

The project was completed in June 2019 and all ten homes immediately let. The project successfully transformed a longstanding eyesore in Selkirk's town centre into modern, high quality affordable housing, positively contributing to the local conservation area with a design that considers the local context complimenting the historic townscape.

Energy efficiency and sustainability principles have been incorporated into the design making space and water heating more efficient, limiting carbon emissions and reducing tenant's energy bills. The project provides high quality, sustainable affordable homes.

Ian Aikman, Chief Planning & Housing Officer at Scottish Borders Council quoted:

"The scheme at High Street, Selkirk is an excellent example of a high quality and sensitive redevelopment of a prominent site within the town's conservation area, removing the blight caused by the existing derelict buildings and providing 10 much needed apartments for affordable rent. The building has been delivered because of pro-active and collaborative working between Eildon and planning and housing officers at the Council. The development has been well received locally and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the conservation area. As a result, we have featured the scheme as a good practice case study in this year's Planning Performance Framework"

Houdston-reid Lea

South Ayrshire Council



Statement of support

South Ayrshire Council (SAC) has had a static Travelling Persons Site included in its housing stock since 1987. The Houdston Travelling Person's Site in Girvan consisted of a total of 8 pitches which were large enough to hold 2 caravans, towing vehicles and also included a brick built amenity unit which contained a kitchen, bathroom and storage room. The site was well established and many of the residents had lived there for many years.

Unfortunately in 2015, due to the impacts of Storm Frank, the site suffered significant flood damage and became uninhabitable. The site was surrounded by the Water of Girvan on 3 sides and defence mechanisms could not cope with the unprecedented rising water levels and the site was flooded catastrophically. Most families lost their caravans and the majority of their personal belongings. A temporary site had to be identified and all residents relocated to a new temporary site which allowed them to remain in Girvan.

In early January 2016, an assessment of the Houdston Travellers Site revealed that it was still at high risk of further flooding and residents would be unable to return. Further assessment revealed that the cost of reinstatement and flood protection would cost between £850k and £1million and any future insurance policy would incur a substantial premium, due to the continual high flood risk at this location. This meant that a solution needed to be identified to permanently relocate the Travelling Persons Site.

The travelling community have a specific way of life and taking their cultural beliefs and wishes into account was, from SAC's point of view, the backbone to the finalised proposal of a new build project. The design aim was to create modern, accessible homes located within a discrete landscaped environment with efficient, safe, secure, serviced layouts for the travellers. Through extensive consultation with the travelling community the unique set of needs were identified and informed the creation of semi-detached 'lodges', each with a separate kitchen and bathroom (service) area separated from the living and sleeping accommodation by a covered corridor called a 'breezeway'. Measures such as constructing the accommodation with steel sheeting roofs and cedar cladding were taken in order to transpose their current living conditions into a new permanent housing solution.

Once all investigations into a new permanent site were concluded, Permitted Development was allowed on the site for the proposed development of 8 semi-detached units. Permitted development was sought through our existing planning protocol agreement. As it stands the site has permitted development for a permanent housing site for the travelling community. This in due course can be altered (after relevant application) to residential, allowing SAC to provide affordable housing for general needs and that it is not in perpetuity to be used for travelling persons. All units have been built to the relevant standards of new build development and as a result SAC was able to access government subsidy for this project.

Further steps were taken to progress such as; Leadership Panel Approval, Planning Consent, Scottish Government Support for the provision of subsidy leading onto the appointment of a contractor which were McTaggart Construction. McTaggart Construction played a key part in the communication with the travelling community ensuring they were fully aware of the disruption to their lives while the construction of the new site took place. A really good relationship was built between the contractor and the families which helped immensely in this process. Construction of the new permanent Travelling Person's site, Houdston-Reid Lea started in January 2019 and was fully completed in August 2019.

Outcomes and achievements

The circumstances which led to the Council's static Travelling Person's site becoming uninhabitable and subsequently no longer fit for purpose were unforeseen. However it allowed the Council the opportunity to improve the quality of housing provided to the minority group which our settled travellers represent. Furthermore, it provides them with the security of tenancy by having a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) agreement and also allows them to access affordable home content insurance premiums, both of which they were previously unable to secure.

By completing a new build project specifically for the settled travelling community within South Ayrshire we achieved the following outcomes:

- Meeting Equalities objectives
- Providing high quality affordable housing
- Increased housing supply within South Ayrshire
- First Council new build project within Girvan
- Increased housing stock built to modern building standards, meeting housing for varying needs standards with a Bronze active sustainability rating, and achieving 'Band B' Energy Efficiency rating.
- Increased communications and developed relationships with the travelling community within South Ayrshire
- Increased satisfaction levels from the residents within the new build development

BEST FRONTLINE HOUSING STORY

Sponsored by:



The award celebrates success stories in our sector over the past year.

Ypeople

Team nominated: Sophie Bouchayer, Katie Biggs, Olufemi Fasoro, Iain McIntyre, Kevin Murray, Jenna Saperia, Kirsty Duncan, Donald Oliver

Partner organisation: Sacro



Statement of support

Commissioned through Edinburgh City Council, YourHome is a partnership between Ypeople and Sacro providing support to find, set up and maintain suitable homes.

During lockdown, as support workers we noted that many of those we work with were suffering from increased loneliness and isolation due to lack of digital access. To understand the extent of this issue, we completed an audit on the digital access of 119 of those who we were working with in June; this identified that 18% had no smart phone and a further 11% had no internet access. Yet, 65% of those we work with said they would like to improve their digital access. When asked why, there were many personal reasons, but several common factors: to learn new skills, talk to their family more, gain access to employment and help their children more in school.

And in response, the Digital for All project was born. Alongside managing full case loads, visiting food

banks and shared houses to provide crisis support and working at the Spring Gardens Rapid Access Accommodation for the on street homeless, a group of support workers came together to help resolve this problem.

Based upon the responses of audit, as a group we gave ourselves three aims and split into corresponding teams:

TECH - ensure all the people who work with at Your Home who want it receive technology by which they can access the internet and can communicate with individuals outside of their household

CONNECTION - obtain wifi in the home for all the people who work with Your Home who want it

SKILLS - promote learning of digital skills amongst those who work with Your Home who want to in order that they have the confidence to access the digital world

Over the last six months an extraordinary amount of work has been done to help achieve these goals and a huge difference has been made to those we work with.

Through grant applications, 45 households now have devices by which they can access the internet who previously did not have any and 8 households now have internet connections at home.

In addition to this, we have successfully applied for National Lottery Awards for All and Ypeople grant funding, Digital for All has therefore secured funding of £12,847.50. This will pay for 90 phones with SIM cards covering a month of data, calls and texts, and an additional 68 SIMs covering a month of data, calls and texts. The SIM card will only be funded for 1 month, this to discourage dependence on the grant funding and encourage independent budgeting skills.

Finally, the skills team have created an online portal of how-to-guides, videos and courses to teach those we

work with new skills and to show them how to access key services. These include how to order an online food shop, how to access your universal credit account and how to use social media. We have started working with People Know How to provide open sessions on specific skills and matching up those we work with to specialist volunteers for digital coaching.

All of this work has been done either outside of work or squeezed between existing case loads, it is not a requirement of the job and everyone has volunteered their time to respond to an issue the community

identified. At every stage, we have returned to our audit and had conversations with those we work with to direct where the project goes next and where we need to dedicate our time.

Outcomes and achievements

We are in the middle of receiving feedback from those who have already received devices - 45% say they have been able to attend support meetings which they would otherwise have been unable to do so since receiving the device. Furthermore, 81% of those who have given feedback say the device has improved their quality of life.

We thought we would include some direct feedback from those we work with:

"I am so extremely pleased with the device and cannot believe it is mine to keep!"

"I wanted to thank everyone involved for allowing me to have my own laptop, it has meant so much. Especially that I got it during my resit exams and assignments, and I would not have been able to complete them without this laptop and support (also when I needed a replacement and I got one delivered the next day). Thank you very much!"

"It is a great gift and I feel like Christmas came early this year. Thank you so much for that. That's the best gift I received in ages."

"Really appreciate it. It is helping me a lot and I'm learning lots of things little by little."

Craigdale Housing Association

Team nominated: Craigdale Housing Association staff team



Statement of support

Craigdale prides itself on the relationship it has with tenants, and like many RSLs in Scotland, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on areas such as Castlemilk, given that it is one of the most deprived areas of Scotland as demonstrated in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

At the early stages of lockdown Craigdale staff asked their tenants what they need by conducting telephone calls to their tenants. Craigdale has a mixed community with a high percentage of working families and elderly people who were struggling to cope,

particularly through the early stages of lockdown. Staff offered a range of assistance and support, linking with various local agencies, and in some cases even just being able to talk to tenants who were lonely or isolated. An overwhelming issue emerged that tenants were in urgent need of financial assistance with essential food shopping due to the pandemic. Crisis situations were being managed through a network of support within Castlemilk, however it was clear that there was an urgent need to support people, beyond crisis interventions.

Craigdale staff jointly agreed that whilst they had helped many individual's they wanted to do more to help support all their tenants. A decision was then made to develop a project called "Craigdale Cares".

Craigdale staff decided to make funding applications to the National Lottery, the Scottish Government and Cash for Kids, with a core theme aimed at addressing food poverty in Castlemilk. The funding applications were all successful allowing Craigdale staff to issue shopping vouchers for each tenant, who could then use the voucher to buy essential food items and ease the financial burden that tenants were facing.

Over £25,000 was gratefully received from funders, however at that point Craigdale staff really excelled and demonstrated that "Craigdale Cares". Staff worked with the Craigdale Tenants Panel to agree the best way

to get vouchers to tenants, in a safe manner following strict COVID-19 protocols. It was jointly agreed that tenants would call at the Craigdale office, within allocated time slots, to collect and sign for vouchers, with social distancing measures introduced to keep everyone safe. This was not easy to co-ordinate for 372 tenants, however Craigdale staff also distributed vouchers by visiting tenants who were housebound to ensure that no-one missed out. Staff really did epitomise a caring approach and during visits to the office and tenants' homes, a special connection was made between staff and tenants.

This was initially seen as a one-off project however "Craigdale Cares" continues with other events, including a Christmas themed initiative where surprise gifts, funded by Craigdale, are distributed to tenants. Staff at Craigdale also decided this year to donate secret Santa gifts normally shared between staff to the Castlemilk Youth Centre to address hygiene poverty for young people under the "Craigdale Cares" banner.

Craigdale Cares is also now a key feature of a new wider action strategy due to be approved by the Craigdale Board in early 2021.

The National Lottery Community Fund, Scotland Director, Neil Ritch: said:

"I would like to congratulate Craigdale Housing Association on their award, theirs is an important project which will help people get through the current crisis and a great example of how our grant holders are stepping up to support their communities."

In summary, Craigdale staff overcame challenges caused by the pandemic and showed that Housing Associations and their staff can act quickly on what matters most within communities. Craigdale's ethos is about caring for tenants, listening, and advocating on tenant's behalf. The Craigdale Cares project clearly demonstrates excellence as a frontline housing story in 2020.

Outcomes and achievements

Each tenant at Craigdale benefitted from the Craigdale Cares project with funding ranging from £25 per tenant to over £250 for families with children. A total of over £25,000 was distributed direct to Craigdale tenants alleviating poverty at the height of the lockdown period.

It is difficult to properly assess the impact for individual's however from comments made by tenants, when they collected their vouchers tenants appreciated the help offered by Craigdale.

Tenants David Cameron and Yvonne McAndrew collected their vouchers from staff in June this year.

Yvonne said, *"I think this was a great idea and I know a lot of tenants really appreciated the help given and the support from Craigdale".*

David said, *"The voucher was very helpful and really helped me out. Craigdale are fantastic at doing things like this and everyone in the area is talking about this "*

Craigdale commissioned a tenant satisfaction survey in July 2020 and asked specific questions relating to support provided during the pandemic. 94% of tenants surveyed confirmed that they did not feel that Craigdale could have done any more to support them during the pandemic. A legacy for everyone is that Craigdale Cares.

South Ayrshire Council

Team nominated: Muirhead Tenants & Residents Association



Statement of support

March 2020 saw Muirhead Tenants & Residents Association (MTRA) leading the way in showing members of the community that by coming together they would ensure the community survived the global COVID-19 pandemic. The group very quickly established a Community Support Scheme which continues to grow and community spirit has thrived.

The MTRA is a small tenants and residents association with approximately 8 members who have worked closely with their local community and with an attitude of "for the people, by the people". This is evident through the growth of the Community Support Scheme. The MTRA has continually secured funding and donations from various local and national organisations as well as working with local businesses and volunteers to ensure they can cater to the varying needs of their local community.

Although the local authority, the government and various charities across the country were assisting the nation throughout the pandemic the MTRA stepped into action to ensure everything that could possibly be done to help protect and assist all members of their community was considered. Discretion has remained a key principle of the MTRA to ensure that everyone is able to access support and assistance. Individuals could seek support confidentially via contacting members of the MTRA or by accessing the MTRA social media.

At the start of the pandemic the MTRA quickly established an emergency food parcel scheme including essential items such as toiletries, nappies and cleaning products. As time progressed and demand grew the MTRA took the decision to

introduce food vouchers due to the food parcels not allowing choice of food/essential items individuals liked/needed and didn't incorporate dietary requirements. The MTRA were extremely inclusive of who could access the scheme, there was no criteria such as only those individuals in receipt of Universal Credit recipients being able to receive assistance as the MTRA acknowledged people in employment may still be struggling as well.

Individuals within the community were grateful and appreciative to receive assistance that it led to a 'pay it forward' approach of them wishing to help others as they know how the experience of receiving help from the MTRA benefited them and wanted others to benefit in a similar way. Since the introduction of the food parcels and food vouchers the MTRA started to receive donations which has allowed them to establish a clothing bank and furniture recycling scheme. Both these projects have been so successful that the MTRA have secured two lock-ups from South Ayrshire Council in order to allow for the items to be stored securely prior to being distributed, in line with government guidelines.

The MTRA firmly believed that during the unprecedented time that the pandemic has inflicted on many families that no child should be disadvantaged and therefore they started their Birthday Bank. They secured funding for toy vouchers and were donated toys meaning they could implement a system for individuals to safely receive what they required, with only the child's birth certificate required as proof for eligibility.

As restrictions have continued due to COVID-19 the MTRA wanted to ensure that Christmas 2020 was still full of festive cheer for the community. They have worked very closely with volunteers to ensure that the children within the community got the opportunity to receive a gift via the Mr & Mrs Christmas project, this entailed local residents and businesses donating funding, toys and selection boxes. Children were then able to visit the Mr & Mrs Christmas 'toyshop' in order to receive their gift. Furthermore, the MTRA will be working with a local café to deliver Christmas dinner to members of the community.

Outcomes and achievements

The MTRA have helped keep community spirit alive in Muirhead during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have shown that in time of need, one message or conversation can lead to individuals receiving help that they may not have known was available or had the courage to ask for. The MTRA have worked tirelessly to ensure that various initiatives have been able to be established, in line with government guidelines, to keep community spirit alive and reassure anyone living within the area that help is available when they need it.

The feedback from members of the local community voices how the hard work of the MTRA has had

a positive impact on not only individuals but the community as a whole:

- "Great job you all do for this community"
- "There was no judgement and they are really understanding, a massive weight has been lifted from me and I'm truly grateful for everything"
- "This is an amazing help to so many people and it is appreciated in the local area. Well done to all who make this possible."

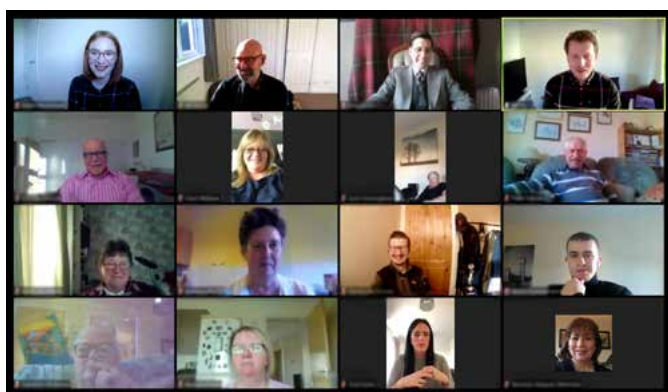


HOUSING TEAM OF THE YEAR

This award is for a team who have delivered an outstanding contribution to their organisation and for the housing sector.

Housing team

Kingdom Housing Association



Statement of support

2020 has been a year of challenge like no other. And yet, it has also proven to be a year of opportunity. In particular to build on the already great work that is delivered in supporting tenants and communities. As the impacts of the pandemic began to be felt, a conscious decision was made that the correct approach would be to embrace any opportunities to continue on our development path, proactively navigate the challenges of the pandemic and deliver enhanced outcomes for our tenants. The results have been significant and highly rewarding. And achieved all whilst having continued to work from home since late March.

The team has fully embraced the opportunities presented to develop and promote the benefits of digital services. Through positive promotion, the team has now registered around 80% of all our tenants with a My Kingdom account - our online service portal. And has driven a 15% increase in active use of the portal across the year. The team has developed the use of direct messaging services through Facebook. And in September, launched our first Live Chat service through our website. The service is highly popular with

customers, averaging around 500 'chats' per month

Digital options have underpinned the enhancement of our tenant participation options this year. Through the year we have delivered a range of virtual customer events including two customer conferences, regular workshops to consult on policy and procedural changes, and a series of roadshows designed to provide focused engagement for specific housing schemes. We have seen the digital engagement options prove to be very popular, supporting the busiest annual programme of customer engagement that we have delivered to date and an increased number of tenants directly participating, including a doubling in the number of tenants on our Scrutiny Panel.

In driving and delivering increased digital service options, the team has also delivered key measures to address digital inclusion. The team has received training to become Digital Champions to support them to assist vulnerable tenants to overcome digital exclusion. We successfully secured funding through the Connecting Scotland programme for over 200 laptops and iPads to be distributed to vulnerable households. The team is providing 1 to 1 support to those tenants to assist them to get online.

The team has secured and administered £90,000 in grants from the Supporting Communities fund. In addition to internal funds made available this has enabled the team to facilitate crisis financial support to over 900 tenants. With support assisting to provide food, clothing, baby care products and cover emergency heating costs.

In November, the team was successful in securing £170,000 funding from the Homeless Prevention fund to set up a brand new highly innovative 3 year housing advocacy project, that will provide employment for two homeless housing applicants, and provide support

for potentially hundreds of vulnerable tenants across the life of the project. The team is about to commence recruitment and the project will fully launch in 2021.

In addition, the team have provided a lifeline to tenants throughout the pandemic including providing 1 to 1 welfare calls to reduce the impacts of social isolation, and have administered an internal scheme to provide small gifts such as flowers, chocolates etc to provide cheer where tenants have been identified as being in particular need.

Throughout the year the team has positively and proactively managed the challenges posed by the pandemic, and has demonstrated compassion, care and a comprehensive commitment to providing high quality customer service. They have supported the enhancement of services provided by Kingdom and enhanced the lives of many of our tenants at a critical time.

Outcomes and achievements

This Year the Housing Team has:

- Achieved a 15% increase in tenants actively using online accounts
- Increased the number of online account holders to around 80% of all our tenants
- Developed the use of direct messaging tools to support service delivery
- Launched a successful Live Chat service - providing an additional service access option
- Delivered two interactive customer conferences using zoom. Events included wellbeing workshops
- Delivered a programme of "virtual" housing scheme roadshows
- Successfully accessed over a quarter of a million pounds in external grants to support to tenants through Supporting Communities Fund, Homeless Prevention fund and Connecting Scotland programme
- Delivered Connecting Scotland including providing 1:1 support to assist vulnerable tenants to get online
- Administered over £100,000 of grants to provide direct crisis support to over 900 tenants
- Provided enhanced support to vulnerable tenants during the pandemic through weekly welfare calls
- Continued to deliver all routine services
- Has continued to engage in professional development, with 16% of the team completing formal housing qualifications this year
- Has demonstrated outstanding levels of commitment to customer service
- Has delivered positive service and support outcomes to hundreds of tenants

Tenancy support team

Homes for Good CIC Scotland



Statement of support

What makes Homes for Good unique is their person centred in-house Tenancy Support Team. This approach enables HFG to provide the best possible service by building positive relationships between tenants and their housing provider. Our key values of integrity, kindness, quality, fairness and expertise are communicated via a direct contact with an allocated TSO by phone, texts and frequent visits.

The start of pandemic prohibited direct contact with tenants and this created barrier in addressing our tenants' needs. Survey conducted on the 505 households revealed that 71% have lost contact with their usual support network, while 85% expressed negative impact on wellbeing and income.

The aspects of social isolation, reduced income and personal anxiety were highlighted since March 2020. With that in mind, we had to act promptly and adapt to new means of communication that can facilitate comfort for the growing needs by providing targeted tenancy support.

We jointly planned and facilitated tenant activities online, over the phone and in social distance visits, all of which were aimed to deliver a direct positive impact by: Reducing levels of anxiety, depression and trauma caused by social Isolation and COVID-19

- Reducing inability to undertake normal activities to maintain physical and mental well-being
- Supplying access to adequate food
- Digital inclusion/ literacy to access remote services
- Reduce family friction and relationship risk, including violence and coercive behaviour, due to children being at home requiring constant stimulation

- Importance of the community spirit and the feeling of belonging.

In March, we launched our Community Facebook page that was open for our tenants and team to keep in touch, expand their social circle, share their stories and concerns, make friends, expand on talents and keep well.

Every member of the team joined together to make this work for the tenants by setting up online workshops, creating Facebook accounts for tenants that had never used it before, teaching tenants how to use and navigate through social media and Zoom. We delivered 40 tablets and paid for 6 months of data so people can stay connected.

For our most vulnerable tenants, we joined efforts to keep in the daily contact over the phone and assure they remained healthy and safe in their homes.

Our online program was launched with the afternoon teas 3 times a week engaging over 120 people, enabling them to have active conversations, meet new people and tackle social isolation. We have also delivered 130 physical afternoon teas to our tenant's door steps across the West of Scotland.

Other activities include a weekly Film Club, enabled individuals to exercise and share their talents with others; Our befriending project provides a weekly chat with people that are most affected by social enabling them to reflect, unload worries and prevent negative thought patterns, rumination and feeling of helplessness.

Our community competitions have encouraged people to invest time and share their own views and perception of things they love and appreciate in life like their home, films, paintings, pets and other talents. These activity and competitions with prizes have proved to be a welcome positive distraction from the uncertainties of the pandemic.

Our Interior Designers have also managed to continue our Love home project throughout the pandemic. This enables individuals to explore their creative talents supported by our in house team. Twelve people took part in one to one sessions creating new paintings, crafting their homes and interiors.

The flexibility and enthusiasm of HFG's Tenancy Support Team to adopt new roles and step up together in the face of a crisis, putting the tenant and community wellbeing before their personal lives is what makes us unique and outstanding.

Outcomes and achievements

To further highlight the positive impact please see the following testimonials.

Cher in July- *"When I think of all the things HFG staff have done for us over the years, I get emotional. But these last few pandemic months have shown us just how dedicated you all are. I can't thank you all enough."*

Anna in August - *"Thank you so much for the pack! I shared half with my neighbor I was so happy, because I didn't have time to sleep between night shift, and school so I didn't have to cook, I was just relaxing for an hour and taking my own time with my favourite tv show very rare to get that luxury!"*

We improved the quality of life for 163 households directly affected by covid, as well as other 236 tenants that are highly vulnerable prior to pandemic.

Today, Facebook community has 116 active members and it is continuing to bring people together through

a activities and tailored workshops that have improved mental health by active reflection, positive planning for the future, goal settings and by providing a sense of belonging in a group setting.

Love Home activity generated a great sense of self achievement and purpose by adding the feeling of ownership to their home. Since lock down forced people to spend much more time in the same environment, the opportunity to change and uplift living environment added a different dimension to daily life and improved the feeling of wellbeing and self-care.

Over the last 10 months, we sadly lost 6 tenants due to natural causes, however, we are content that their quality of life and comfort during the last months was much improved due to the direct daily impact of our TS Team who worked together to deliver food, medicine, transport, company and treats to their doors.

Gillian Whitehead and Anne Hanlon

North Lanarkshire Council



Statement of support

North Lanarkshire Council Housing Service manages 34 retirement complexes providing housing for around 1000 older residents. The North Lanarkshire Plan and Ambition states

- We aim to Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities
- Encourage the health and wellbeing of people through a range of social, cultural and leisure activities

This plans commits the council to contributing positively to the health and wellbeing of all residents, especially this special group and these objectives help shape service delivery in the older people's housing.

In March 2020 Lockdown immediately removed all social opportunity from these vulnerable residents and meant their precious lunch clubs had to stop.

With Staffing numbers depleted in Retirement Housing due to Shielding and illness, it could have jeopardised the residents' treasured daily wellbeing call which, for some, is their lifeline, often their only contact with another person. Action was required quickly, to continue to deliver the service these residents relied on and needed. Given families could not visit, it was more important than ever that staff were there for the residents.

A central management team co-ordinated the response in conjunction with Locality Housing Managers providing housing staff who willingly volunteered to cover the complexes to ensure these critical front line services continued. Through this co-operation and joint working, the team managed to maintain a staffing presence in every complex every day and residents continued to receive their wellbeing checks as usual.

The team also co-ordinated supply and delivery of PPE to the complexes for use by the staff who were maintaining service delivery. This helped staff to continue delivering services while reducing the risk of any COVID19 transmission within the complexes which reassured the residents that the council was keeping them safe. PPE delivery was completed with the help of Locality Response Officers.

Within a short space of time and working in conjunction with colleagues in Infrastructure the team co-ordinated the supply and delivery of a hot lunch a couple of times a week to Retirement housing residents who requested one. These meals were made in our local schools, delivered to complexes by

colleagues in Transport and distributed by housing staff. This ensured they received a free hot nutritional meal to compensate for losing their Lunch Clubs. Over the period of Lockdown until shielding ended, in excess of 17,000 hot meals were delivered.

To ease the loneliness and social isolation of lockdown, help keep residents occupied, and promote positive mental health, Retirement Officers had to think outside the box to provide risk free activities which residents could take part in from the comfort of their own homes. These included

- Quizzes
- Supplying Activity packs with help from Social Work colleagues
- Competitions: e.g.
- Guess the number of buttons in a jar
- Armchair Bingo using the intercom to 'call the numbers'

- Providing wordsearch and reading materials
- Socially distant entertainment with an entertainer performing in a garden area
- Planting colourful flower displays to improve the view from the windows

Residents benefitted greatly from these activities especially when they couldn't see their families and friends.

This Team clearly made an outstanding contribution to the Council, the residents and the sector during very difficult circumstances. Their commitment to keeping services going in complexes was all the more important as it involved several services across the council who wouldn't normally work together. However with everyone involved having a 'can do' attitude, all these different strands within the council ensured the impact of the Pandemic was minimised as much as possible for residents and undoubtedly improved outcomes for our tenants and communities.

Outcomes and achievements

The Council's provision of regular hot meals to Retirement Housing residents who wanted them undoubtedly minimised the potential impact of the Pandemic on their physical health and wellbeing. Given these residents are among the most vulnerable to serious consequences of COVID-19, it was critical to keep them as healthy as possible. This effort involving several council services could not have been achieved without the dedication of the Housing Team.

Some comments from our residents:

"Who is giving us these meals - NLC- well that's just brilliant thank them so much"

"Thanks for my meal you and all your workers are doing great work"

"Nice to see you its lovely getting a wee meal delivered"

The inventiveness shown by the retirement officers to develop activities undoubtedly kept residents spirits up.

Destitution Asylum Seekers Services

Scottish Refugee Council



Statement of support

Some people are more exposed to a range of trauma and harm as a result of the circumstances they were born into. Some of the most harrowing experiences are lived by people from parts of the world where they are no longer safe and who ask from Scotland a place of safety, peace of mind and an opportunity to get a sense of normality back in their lives.

For the last five years, the Destitute Asylum Seeker Service (DASS), a partnership between Scottish Refugee Council, Refugee Survival Trust and Strathclyde Law Clinic, has been supporting people who face destitution while seeking refugee protection in the UK.

Our team helps people understand their rights and entitlements and help them cope through very difficult circumstances. This includes supporting people with complex applications for emergency support and submitting fresh asylum applications with the help of solicitors or our partners at the law clinic.

We refer people to specialist services for health, welfare and psychological support as well as to foodbanks, hot food places and community support groups. We also hold social groups and activities which gives our clients an opportunity to interact and socialise.

As well as supporting individuals in need we also work with statutory and voluntary partners to agree on the best approaches to combatting and alleviating destitution.

The last 10 months have been particularly difficult for people going through the UK asylum system.

The pandemic has increased people's isolation and capacity to engage with lifeline services. Our team had to be particularly proactive in reaching out to people who are most marginalised in our society to ensure they can learn about their rights to access accommodation and how to exercise them. This was to ensure individuals' health as well as supporting the wider public health protection effort.

The team is not new to support people in crisis, last year, they excelled in supporting people facing potential illegal evictions for SERCO (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rzeDcTCp44>), this year they saved lives by enabling people to access accommodation and next year they will continue to protect people by challenging Home Office's decision to evict their clients as relaxation of restrictions are put in place. The Home Office is already threatening to evict people while the public health risk is not over, the DASS team will work on individual cases and continue to gather key evidence to support our policy work to aim for long term and structural changes.

Using evidence and the learning from the DASS team, Scottish Refugee Council was able to inform and influence the development of The Everyone Home Collective Route-Map 2 Scotland's Ambition to End Destitution and Protect Human Rights (<https://www.everyonehome.scot/pdf/route-map-2.pdf>). Now the DASS team is directly involved in supporting its implementation to:

1. Develop a human rights-based pathway to safe accommodation and support for people who are destitute with no recourse to public funds (NRPF).
2. Identify innovative funding and delivery models for testing and implementing the pathways across Scotland.
3. Continue to call on the UK Government for the policy changes needed to ensure that there are no gaps in the legal framework for people seeking asylum and settled status in Scotland.

Outcomes and achievements

The Destitute Asylum Seeker Service provides holistic support to people who are destitute while seeking asylum in the UK. People find themselves in limbo, are not allowed to work, are denied public funds, are in distress about their future and often have complex needs.

When the pandemic started, many were sofa surfing and could not “stay home to save lives”. The team at Scottish Refugee Council proactively contacted people, advised they could apply for asylum support on public health grounds and completed applications for 105 people who all accessed safe accommodation. 23% of them were then able to lodge further

submission to the Home Office and “reopened” their asylum claim. In three months, the team dealt with 68% of their yearly caseload.

This is the result of a tremendous team effort to proactively engage with people who are most excluded and know little about their rights. Without the team, those people would have been at great risk.

The work of the team was used as evidence to inform potential significant changes with the Scotland's Ambition to End Destitution and Protect Human Rights which informed the Ending homelessness together: updated action plan and made tackling refugee destitution a national priority.

Housing Services, Building Services and Business Support teams

Fife Council



Statement of support

COVID-19 brought the construction industry to a halt overnight and paralysed all housing allocations instantly sending most staff to work from home. Fife's interim allocations approach brought together a range of teams from Housing, Building Services and Support Services with a common purpose of preventing homelessness. In adverse and challenging circumstances, the multi-functional team was brought together from across the partnership services with a single focus of preventing a homelessness crisis.

Drawing on a range of skills, abilities and expertise, staff from across the services pulled together to prioritise empty properties to extend temporary accommodation and make the best use of all available properties. Initially it was thought that over 200 properties would have to be ‘mothballed’ during the pandemic creating bottlenecks in temporary accommodation and significant financial impacts for the Housing Revenue Account and Homelessness Services. The co-ordination team tracked over 550 empty properties, directing repairs and specialist works in accordance with changing Public Health

guidance to bring every property back into use during the initial pandemic and easing period. By rapidly adapting to digital technology, a network of communications was quickly established, meeting on a daily and more regular basis to monitor progress and ensure priorities were met. The team procured properties from RSL partners, the private sector and commissioned a range of non-conventional forms of accommodation to grow temporary accommodation resources by 50% within 3 months, ensuring no vulnerable household was left without a suitable housing option. Additional Woman's Aid Refuges were commissioned rapidly as part of a co-ordinated approach to meet the needs of vulnerable people. The team helped people move out of hospital and moved other priority needs groups making the best use of every home available. The team overcame a range of challenges with a ‘must do’ attitude to help 417 households move on from vulnerable and temporary housing circumstances into permanent homes. The team progressed legacy allocations, delivered housing options advice and quickly re-developed processes to respond to the public health environment. Challenges were overcome by early adoption of innovative approaches, adopting virtual viewings, contactless sign ups and altering customer contact to limit transactional activity while providing excellent customer service. Repairs, technical and specialist services operatives often reported their purpose was to prevent homelessness establishing a culture shift in managing empty properties. This technical shift was accompanied by an investment of over £500k in practical assistance, furnishings and other supports to enable vulnerable households to move into new homes with a focus on promoting tenancy sustainment. Specialist staff kept in regular contact with suppliers and contractors to ensure that every possible support was provided and there was a

continuous supply chain of carpet, furnishings, white goods etc. was maintained for customers.

The approach demonstrated the partnership commitment to improving outcomes for priority needs groups. This has created a new and enhanced culture moving into recovery and renewal with a focus on Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan priorities and service redesign. While the pandemic will have lasting impacts on the housing market, the team minimised the impact and protected the interests of vulnerable individuals

and households. The team success was epitomised within a clear purpose delivered by the focussed and dedicated efforts of staff willing to go a number of extra miles to support each other and vulnerable people across Fife.

Outcomes and achievements

Processes were reviewed in consultation with staff to develop faster, innovative and more efficient service responses which have been incorporated into recovery and renewal plans.

Where properties were required as a priority, improved communication meant that properties were available for customers and to prevent homelessness

Soft integration and collaborative working established the basis for new ways of working bringing together the management of all homes within a single process with the potential to generate better outcomes

Common purpose improved staff morale and culture shift to improve outcomes for homeless and potentially homeless households across the Council, RSL partners and the private sector

Improved use of temporary accommodation and supported transitions for vulnerable households and ongoing evaluation suggests that tenancies are likely to be sustainable in the longer term.

Swift action, responses and co-ordination has provided innovation and a strong platform to take forward Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan priorities with a renewed baseline.

Sharon Egan and Billy Graham

South Lanarkshire Council



Statement of support

During the initial phase of the pandemic many council's and housing associations, suspended allocations and mutual exchanges owing to the many challenges facing landlords. From the very start of the COVID-19 pandemic, South Lanarkshire Council recognised however the importance of effectively allocating properties to those most in housing need.

This approach was founded on the understanding of the vital role which the provision of suitable housing would play during the pandemic. This understanding underpinned the commitment of ensuring continued access to housing for homeless households and

other priority groups such as people with an urgent medical need or those being discharged from prison or hospital.

To achieve this the council's Housing and Property Services worked together and navigated a very difficult landscape. They assumed a strategic and operational responsibility and understood the priorities and the specific actions that both services were responsible for with the shared objective to continue allocating houses while working safely.

The restrictions on movement, social distancing measures and reduced workforce numbers presented challenges for the council in getting void properties allocated in a safe manner.

Tradespersons within Property Services understood the need to get houses back into circulation and ready for occupancy but understandable were concerned about the risk faced by COVID-19 with them working in void properties. Through discussions with tradespersons involved and workers unions safe systems of work were agreed and implemented taking account of the risks faced by staff and what was reasonably practicable to minimise these. These safe systems of work included the level of PPE in terms of masks and plastic overalls and social distancing measures.

Safe Systems of Work were also agreed for housing staff for accompanied viewings vitally supporting, safeguarding and protecting staff and tenants.

The team established clear and effective channels for communication agreeing single points of contact within each service. Weekly meetings took place to address issues and agree solutions as well as communications and discussion as and when required.

Communicating and taking decisions about what voids properties could be turned around timeously resulted in effective prioritisation of void properties both to meet housing need and in keeping lets continuing.

The team also recognised the challenges for people moving home during the pandemic and worked with partners including the Furniture Service to support tenants to move and to furnish their home.

The provision of safe suitable accommodation to those in particular facing homelessness has been a key priority both as an immediate response to COVID-19 and in the recovery period following.

Throughout Housing and Property Services also worked closely with RSL partners in South Lanarkshire to allocate houses safely to those in need.

The work South Lanarkshire Council carried out to allocate houses during the early stages of the pandemic has been recognised by the Scottish Government. Minister for Local Government, Housing & Planning, Kevin Stewart MSP and Community Wellbeing Spokesperson, Councillor Elena Whitham said:-

"We have heard of positive examples including that of South Lanarkshire Council, who were able to continue letting through the early stages of the pandemic, which we know was a challenge for most social landlords."

There has also been interest across Scotland on what South Lanarkshire has been doing and the council has shared good practice and safe systems of work with other social landlords.

Sharon Egan, Area Housing Manager said:-

"The pandemic brought changes to service delivery and halted services, however within Housing Services, we recognised the need to continue with lets to urgent homeless households and hospital discharge individuals. We continued to allocate properties throughout the pandemic and enhanced our service to support the most vulnerable at this challenging time."

Outcomes and achievements

The shared objective to continue allocating houses while working safely has brought with it huge challenges that the Team have tackled with commitment and innovation. This has meant some outstanding outcomes but more importantly we have:-

- Provided safe and suitable accommodation to those in most housing need from the point of the national lockdown in March.
- From April until the end of November 2020 we allocated 842 void properties with 522 of these to homeless applicants or those with an urgent medical need.
- Introduced and shared Safe Systems of Work to ensure homes continue to be made available in a safe way which limits the spread of infection for tenants and staff.
- Effectively prioritised void properties to meet needs and reflecting restrictions.
- Supported and assisted tenants to help them move home and to settle in to their new home.
- Ensure that those facing homelessness are accommodated and supported.
- Effectively liaised and communicated between Housing and Property Services to discuss and progress any identified issues.
- Worked to find practical solutions to issues with a strong team commitment and shared understanding of the priorities.

Capital Investment Team

Kingdom Housing Association



Statement of support

2020 has been the busiest and most successful years yet for Kingdom HA's Capital Investment (CI) team. To help the Scottish Government meet its affordable homes target the team has significantly increased its programme capacity in recent years. To put into context the team's unit start and completion outcomes at the end of March 2020 compared to March 2016 has increased by 153% and 122% respectively.

The delivery of new homes has not only enabled individuals and families to access suitable high quality new homes but has helped sustain communities and the local economy by generating over £66m of housing investment this year; £6.9m of this investment was new funding secured through the Allia Donation. To help put this achievement into context this results in a 5 fold increase since 2016. The Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Supply Programme outturn report for 2019/20 confirms that Kingdom is the 3rd highest RSL grant recipient for the period.

Programme delivery has been particularly challenging this year due to Covid restrictions, increasing build costs, land supply and skills shortages. The CI team recognises that what they do cannot be done in isolation and continue to manage these challenges through close collaborative working with other organisational colleagues, contractors, lenders, Scottish Government, local authorities, communities and other stakeholders. Examples of collaborative working include arrangements put in place to support contractors and their supply chains during the lockdown period by ensuring speedy payments and the production of pre and post covid programme reporting for the Scottish Government to establish the impact of the pandemic on the new housing supply programme.

The team's resilience and ability to find workable solutions to issues as a result of the pandemic is to be admired and is demonstrated by the continued progression of affordable housing projects and defects service even when construction sites were closed, external partners were furloughed and the Registers of Scotland was unable to progress digital applications. The team's passion is driven by the growing need for affordable housing and the pandemic has highlighted more than ever the difference that good quality homes can make to people's lives.

The quality and added value provided through the CI service is recognised externally and is supported by the awarding bodies who have shortlisted some of the team's projects throughout the year, with Kingdom's largest regeneration project winning the Scottish Home 2020 Affordable Housing Development of the Year Award.

Kingdom homes are built to high sustainability standards however, not to rest on their laurels, the team have continued to embrace sustainability and innovation in a range of other ways. During the year the team have installed Kingdom's first public electric vehicle charging points, taken forward low carbon heating solutions given gas heating will not be permitted in new homes from 2024, are progressing modular construction on a small gap site and taking forward passivhaus design on a 30 units project for social rent. The team has also continued to drive continuous improvements in relation to tenant communication and community engagement.

The team continually looks for ways to support other housing priorities including Fife's Rapid Rehousing Strategy, bringing empty buildings back into use and to promote good practice and knowledge sharing within the sector.

The team have dealt with particularly difficult projects, throughout this exceptionally challenging year, have improved performance, delivered on objectives, increased outputs and delivered positive outcomes through providing more new homes than any previous year, along with delivering community benefits.

In conclusion, the team's hard work, passion and professionalism has ensured an outstanding contribution towards the delivery of quality affordable housing and demonstrates teamwork at its best.

Outcomes and achievements

Strong collaborative and partnership working with a range of stakeholders.

Lead developer status in Fife and Clackmannanshire.

New homes built to high environmental and performance standards.

513 new homes started and 473 completed during the financial year ending March 2020.

£66m total housing investment achieved during financial year ending March 2020.

98% overall resident satisfaction for newbuild developments.

2 Year Building Performance Study of Kingdom's Regeneration project underway with Glasgow School of Art (MEARU).

Scottish Government Housing to 2040 stakeholder engagement report published January 2020 to

highlight Kingdom's Fraser Avenue Regeneration project and its positive impact on the lives of individuals and the community.

Participating in the Scottish Government's low carbon heat study which will help inform the Scottish Government's 2024 New Build Heat Standard.

Introduction of virtual consultation events to seek pre planning views and comments from the communities where development plans are being progressed.

Community benefits incorporated into all building contracts to enhance training/employability opportunities and promote life chances; completions to March 2020 provided 41 work placements and created 116 new jobs and 33 apprenticeships and enabled 26 apprenticeships to be sustained. These outcomes exclude community benefits

Euan Hird, Gemma Shields, Craig Thompson

Hillcrest Homes



Statement of support

In modern-day Scotland, many households are still in extreme fuel poverty, with some being forced to choose between heating and eating. Research carried out by Hillcrest Energy Advice Team (HEAT) suggested as many as 52% of Scottish households of all tenancy types may be classed as in fuel poverty. HEAT work to support hundreds of households every year - however the increased challenges presented by COVID-19 in 2020 saw team go above and beyond to offer support - sometimes emergency - to a huge number of households.

Anticipating uncertain scenarios households may find themselves in during lockdown - for example, someone isolating alone with no support contacts and needing to top up their energy meter - HEAT immediately took proactive steps to distribute emergency guidance as far and wide as possible. As well as utilising their own extensive communication

channels, the team worked hard to have the information featured by as many other organisations as possible.

HEAT then pushed on to consult with the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) and Scottish Government Working Group, which resulted in improvements being made to the Supporting Communities Fund. HEAT then played a significant role advising UK parliament, the UK government cabinet and the House of Lords on COVID-19 energy impacts. HEAT was even named in the official list of expert advisers to the UK Government -the only housing association to achieve this.

The team also worked extended hours tirelessly providing additional support to households. Securing £30,000 funding, as part of wider emergency funding awarded to Hillcrest and Abertay Housing Association, the money allowed HEAT to perform emergency energy tops up for 1,000 households in Dundee at risk of falling off-supply. Of these, only 200 were Hillcrest tenants with the other 800 households a mixture of other housing association and private tenants and even homeowners. A social impact assessment was carried out for the emergency COVID-19 top-ups, highlights that the £30,000 funding and 1,000 tops ups had generated a social value of £177,960.

HEAT also successfully applied for further funding of £8,000, with £5,000 of this going to help support tenants who were struggling with energy bills or debt as a result of COVID-19, for example, furlough, loss of employment or higher energy costs. £3,000 was earmarked for purchasing energy-saving products to help struggling households trim energy costs,

including electric blankets, pressure cookers, radiator reflectors, energy saving light bulbs and more.

With saving energy and occupying housebound children particularly prominent during the lockdown, HEAT wasted no time in arranging their innovative comic puzzle book – which was designed in-house and itself a first for the housing and energy sectors – to be specially posted out to locked-down households. The book gently educates and encourages children on energy saving actions to help reduce household bills. The team also posted new comic book challenges and tasks as well as special colouring in versions of the HEAT heroes characters on Hillcrest's communications channels.

The intense efforts that the small team of only three energy advisers has put in this year as a result of COVID-19 is starkly apparent in the total financial gain

for tenants of £204,550 that they generated in only eight months from the start of April until the start of December.

Working tirelessly advising top-level government, offering valuable emergency energy support, pre-emptively distributing a huge range of essential information and more was all in addition to the already indispensable job that HEAT already do. Not only limited to Hillcrest's own tenants, HEAT's heroic accomplishments had wide-ranging positive effects throughout the wider communities we operate in, bringing hope and comfort to many who were struggling severely.

Outcomes and achievements

- £30,000 spent on 1,000 Emergency COVID-19-related top-ups to a value of £30 each - 200 Hillcrest households, 800 other local households.
- £177,960 social impact value from the 1,000 emergency top-ups
- HEAT added to UK Government expert adviser list – advised top-level government on energy impacts
- 8-month financial gain for tenants (not including support provided to non-tenants) of £204,550
- £11,455 core funding has been accessed by HEAT for emergency top-ups in addition to the 1,000 emergency COVID-19 related top-ups.

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

Sponsored by:

ALACHO

ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY CHIEF HOUSING OFFICERS

This award is for an individual, and its purpose is to recognise excellent leadership in the sector.

Bill Banks

Kingdom Housing Association



Statement of support

It's during the most extraordinary times that truly excellent leaders shine.

In a year like no other, Kingdom Group Chief Executive Bill Banks continues to lead the organisation in a highly visible, proactive and innovative way demonstrating to colleagues, customers and partners why he is so well respected within the sector.

Over the last four decades Kingdom Housing Association has developed more than 5000 high-quality affordable new homes to meet a wide range of needs, including social rent and mid-market rent. Kingdom also provides factoring services, maintenance from its in-house team, high quality personalised support and care and a range of customer services and tenant support.

Kingdom's growth and success is due in no small part to a loyal, dedicated and motivated team. A team that wants to deliver the best outcomes for their customers. A team that strives to be better every day.

That motivation comes from the unparalleled leadership of Bill Banks.

Overseeing an almost complete move to working from home when lockdown hit, Bill ensured every member of staff had the appropriate equipment to allow them to continue delivering excellent customer service. He was acutely aware of the impact lockdown could have both on colleagues and customers, many of whom were even more vulnerable due to coronavirus, and made sure support was readily available.

For staff, Bill made sure 'home working' didn't feel like 'alone working'. He set up a virtual coffee shop on digital platform REMO and encouraged colleagues to take time out of their day to connect with other colleagues they may not have seen in person for months. He provided a raft of Health & Wellbeing initiatives accessible to all staff, including Mindfulness sessions, Pilates, reflexology and a free counselling service. He pioneered 'Kingdom Contributes' a volunteering scheme for staff to support vulnerable people within their community and, acknowledging the economic impact the pandemic may have on staff, arranged for the provision of loans to staff should they find themselves in financial difficulty as a direct result of coronavirus.

These initiatives were extremely well received with a survey showing 91.4% of staff were satisfied with Kingdom as an employer and 90.9% of staff were satisfied with Kingdom's response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Bill makes a point of being visible; of being present. Certainly more difficult when a great deal of his colleagues are working from home, but thanks to video calling technology it's something which has continued during the pandemic. Checking in with colleagues and dropping into team meetings allows Bill to keep his finger on the pulse of the organisation.

Through a series of Chief Executive updates, coronavirus updates and posts on Kingdom's intranet

Bill continues to engage and inspire the team at Kingdom. Bill understands being the figurehead of the organisation and being visible is key to Kingdom achieving its strategic goals.

Bill also makes a point of staying connected to tenants with regular messages in addition to the content he adds to tenant newsletters. He also attends tenant gatherings, most recently virtually, and ensures he shares with customers Kingdom's vision and values.

Supporting tenants during the pandemic was a particular focus for Bill and he established a £100k coronavirus Financial Assistance Fund to support customers in financial need. Running in tandem, a separate Chief Executive Fund allowed staff to deliver

small treats such as flowers and chocolates to tenants which was well received during lockdown.

Appreciating the digital exclusion some vulnerable tenants experience, Bill also supported Kingdom's involvement with the Connecting Scotland programme, offering digital devices, connection and support to customers across Fife, Clackmannanshire and Perth & Kinross.

In a year like no other, perhaps the greatest of Bill's achievements as an outstanding leader and role model is the uninterrupted service provided to customers, clients and partners.

Making it feel like 'business as usual' is undeniably something to celebrate.

Outcomes and achievements

Bill Banks joined Kingdom in 1987 and has remained a loyal, dedicated visionary throughout his career. Though the organisation is almost unrecognisable now in terms of scope, scale and impact, Kingdom continues to thrive and meet its strategic objectives due to Bill's unwavering commitment to tenants, customers, partners and staff.

Some notable achievements include:

Leading a culture change programme which saw staff satisfaction increase ~30% in 2-3 years.

Moving from Basic IIP accreditation to Gold IIP level in 2 years.

Achieving Gold IIP in 2 years, with a target of Platinum

Achieving Healthy Working Lives Silver status

In 2020, winning the coveted Kingdom FM Local Hero Award for Best Green Initiative for Kingdom's commitment to offsetting carbon emissions and engaging with green technology.

Developing an in-house Payroll function with the team receiving Highly Commended at the Chartered Institute of Payroll Professional Awards 1 year after being formed.

A private placement funding package of £85 million.

Focusing on developing tenant participation with Kingdom winning multiple awards at the Tenant Information Service Excellence Awards and TPAS Scotland Good Practice Awards.

Creation of the award winning Naumann Initiative; breaking the vicious circle of homelessness and unemployment by simultaneously giving a homeless person a job, a home and support with any complex needs or barriers to sustaining their tenancy.

INSPIRATIONAL YOUNG HOUSING PROFESSIONAL

Sponsored by:



The award celebrates individuals who can demonstrate that they have shown passion, commitment and flair in delivering services for tenants and residents.

Eilidh Macdonald

Kingdom Housing Association



Statement of support

Eilidh joined Kingdom on our graduate trainee programme in October 2019 and very quickly settled into the organisation. Eilidh did not come from a housing background but was very keen to learn and quick to embrace new challenges and learning opportunities.

The trainee programme consists of a range of internal as well as external work placements in order to give the trainee a holistic development programme.

Eilidh embraced early placement opportunities within our customer service team and impressed her new colleagues with her willingness and maturity in engaging with tenants. After completing a further successful placement with our alternative tenures team in early 2020, Eilidh moved on to work on tenant participation projects. An area of work in which she has truly excelled during this year. Eilidh's confident but approachable nature has enabled her to build good relationships with our tenants. But it is her flair for innovation and learning that has really made her stand out. Responding to the significant challenges posed to face customer engagement posed by the pandemic

and associated restrictions, Eilidh taught herself new skills in video conferencing and has put these to great effect supporting our Tenant participation officer to deliver two tenant conferences and regular consultation events throughout the year.

In March 2020 we had real concerns about whether external work placements would be viable due to the pandemic. Eilidh was determined that if we could set something up remotely then she would be keen to embrace any opportunity. The great thing with having someone like Eilidh is that it really challenges others to see what is possible. We supported Eilidh to access a research placement with the University of Stirling, with Eilidh completing a project under the supervision of university colleagues, assessing the impacts of covid 19 on the housing sector.

Eilidh's professional and positive manner saw her rise to the challenge of the work exceptionally well. And the really inspiring thing to see, which illustrates Eilidh's overall professionalism, is that she was keen to bring some of her research outcomes back to Kingdom. Her project work was looking at digital inclusion, and Eilidh was able to make significant contributions to the way that Kingdom developed approaches towards supporting our tenants to access online services and associated skills.

As well as feeding ideas back into the organisation, Eilidh has demonstrated her personal commitment to delivering positive outcomes for tenants in terms of digital inclusion, by undertaking additional training and signing up to be a digital champion - providing 1:1 support for a number of vulnerable tenants.

Eilidh has been with Kingdom for just over a year now. And throughout that time has demonstrated that she is a caring, compassionate and committed professional. Throughout the year, Eilidh has volunteered to provide additional support to vulnerable tenants through

weekly welfare phone calls. The extra mile that Eilidh goes to make the difference to tenants is clearly noted and appreciated by her colleagues. At our staff conference in October, Eilidh won the employee recognition award for outstanding customer service, as voted for by her colleagues.

Eilidh is a joy to work with. She is respected and appreciated by tenants, is an inspiration to colleagues

around her and always looks to make a positive contribution. In a very short space of time Eilidh has already started to make a real difference at Kingdom and within the wider sector and I am convinced that she has a very bright future ahead of her in the housing sector.

Outcomes and achievements

In only a short space of time Eilidh has:

Completed an independent external research project considering impacts of covid and digital inclusion with the University of Stirling

Is now undertaking a second external placement project with CIH Scotland

Has demonstrated care and compassion providing welfare support calls to vulnerable tenants to combat isolation

Has completed two internal work placements at Kingdom including with our customer service team

Has applied learning outcomes from her research to feed in to Kingdom's approach to developing digital inclusion projects

Has become a Digital Champion and is providing support to help tenants to get on line and access online services

Has begun the first year of a Pg Dip Housing Studies at University of Stirling

Has developed new digital skills - particularly video conferencing - and has put these to outstanding use to support the continuation of Kingdom's tenant participation activities this year

Was the winner of the Outstanding Customer Service award at Kingdom's internal employee recognition awards (as voted by her colleagues) October 2020

Has been an ambassador for Kingdom at external events

Clearly demonstrated a commitment to improving outcomes for tenants, but also to collaborative working with colleagues and to personal professional development.

Hannah Dodds

Glasgow Housing Association



Statement of support

After joining Wheatley Group's Ignite Graduate Programme in September 2019, Hannah quickly secured a housing officer role, working for GHA in their Baillieston office. Hannah has always wanted to work on the frontline in her housing career. Before joining Wheatley Group, she volunteered in a homeless shelter for four years while studying for a degree in Philosophy. Hannah found the experience eye-opening and often challenging, but was not deterred from following her calling to pursue a career in housing.

Right from the outset, Hannah has demonstrated a clear appetite to work towards and to achieve excellence in her role. It is Hannah's quiet and determined dedication to customers that strikes one most. Early in the coronavirus crisis, while most housing officers were working from home, Hannah demonstrated this determination and dedication by volunteering to become a visiting housing officer.

This vital role involved Hannah carrying out home visits to customers who were extremely vulnerable and had no support from family or friends. One of the many customers Hannah supported was an elderly gentleman who was struggling to contact his brother during lockdown. He had never owned a mobile phone and preferred face to face contact. Hannah was able to persuade him to give the phone a try and submitted a request to the Wheatley Foundation's Emergency Response Fund requesting a mobile handset. Hannah set the phone up with the customer's key contacts, including his family, doctor and housing

staff. When she was unable to contact him, Hannah revisited him and discovered he had been letting his phone run out of battery, or switching it off when he wasn't making a call. Hannah showed great patience in persuading him to ensure he checked his phone battery regularly and encouraged him to keep his phone charged and switched on even when he didn't intend to use it, so he could always be reached.

Rather than using a 'one size fits all' approach, Hannah treats each tenant as an individual and regularly provides innovative solutions to tenant's problems. She draws from a wide range of resources and partners to reach the best outcome for tenants.

Hannah is generous with her time and volunteered to be a Wheatley ambassador at graduate fairs, speaking to final year students and graduates, promoting housing as a career choice. This resulted in one-third of applicants for Wheatley's graduate programme applying due to their attendance at one of these graduate fairs.

Dr Vikki McCall, who is the senior lecturer on the Housing Studies programme at Stirling University, has recognised Hannah's great potential. She said: "Hannah has excelled in her first year in the Postgraduate Diploma in Housing Studies at the University of Stirling. Hannah has shown very good academic aptitude in a variety of subjects, receiving particularly high marks for the module on sustainable communities. Hannah is very enthusiastic, articulate and has an amazing career in housing ahead of her."

GHA's managing director, Jehan Weerasinghe, has recognised Hannah's talent and vision. Hannah was asked to work alongside the Wheatley Board to develop an ambitious new strategy for 2021-26, demonstrating the impact Hannah has had on improving the future of the organisation.

Hannah has also been an inspiration to her colleagues. Hannah has had a particular impact on her mentor, who has been inspired by her proactive attitude towards personal development. Indeed, in her short time at Wheatley, Hannah has developed a wide network of colleagues and partners to help build her skills and knowledge. Her mentor has also been inspired by Hannah's commitment to making a difference in the lives of tenants, particularly those who are vulnerable and/or homeless.

Outcomes and achievements

Hannah has delivered vital and life changing services as a visiting office for customers in Baillieston office area. This activity has ensured that prospective customers many of whom are in temporary accommodation and are desperate to secure a permanent home for themselves and their family. The prospective customers are warmly welcomed by Hannah and have viewed and are assisted by Hannah to accept their new home. In addition she has also

maintained high level of service to her personal patch of 200 customers and has excelled in her first year in the post graduate diploma in Housing Studies. This financial year Hannah has also managed to reduce the arrears debt in her patch by £9000 by developing innovative ways to reach out to all our key partners to identify financial support for her customers. d to personal professional development.

Jade Holbein

Queens Cross Housing Association



Statement of support

Jade joined QCHA in July 2011 as an Admin Assistant within Housing Services aged just 18. Jade immediately settled into her new role and became a valued member of the team with her friendly, approachable manner, keenness to learn and hard work ethic.

Her excellent organisational and communication skills were quickly recognised and she was promoted 8 months later into the role of Governance Officer/PA to the Chief Executive.

Jade worked as a Governance Officer/PA for 7 years. She put her organisational skills to good use to develop efficient administrative and online systems. Jade's greatest asset in this role was her communication skills which she used to build up a rapport with everyone that she came into contact with including Board members, tenant representatives, distressed customers, elected members, external organisations, senior management and other colleagues.

Jade skilfully managed the CEO's calls with a particular talent for resolving customer issues by listening carefully, finding a solution and taking ownership to ensure this was delivered. One of Jade's many tasks was to recruit and induct new members to our Community Involvement Groups. Jade developed an innovative publicity campaign to attract new members and took personal responsibility for ensuring that each member was supported during their time on the CIG. Jade also built up skills as an events co-ordinator through taking responsibility for the smooth running of business, Board and tenant events.

Throughout her career with Queens Cross, Jade has been self-motivated and seized every opportunity to develop her skills and experience. She made a considered decision to develop her career as a Housing Officer. As part of this plan, Jade applied for the Post-Graduate Diploma course and job shadowed housing officers in her own time. She graduated in 2019.

Jade gave a presentation to Association colleagues at a staff event about her career journey with QCHA. This helped her develop public speaking skills and colleagues have since advised that it was Jade who inspired them to undertake a study course and follow their own goals.

During the second year of her course, Jade was successful in securing a Housing Officer position. She was a great loss to the Governance team but left a legacy of great administrative systems which are much appreciated by her successor. For Shona, our CEO, it was bittersweet; whilst she encouraged and supported Jade's development - she missed her diary being managed with military precision!

Again Jade quickly fitted into the team and within weeks was delivering strong performance outcomes. Jade focused on building rapport and trust with her tenants which has helped her exceed her patch targets. Despite being one of the newest Housing Officers, Jade has become the 'go to' person for her knowledge and practical support. She has been a tower of strength during lockdown to her colleagues.

Jade's patch includes a residential support project for young people - commissioned by Social Work Services. Due to quick turnaround of clients, it can be difficult to track and process invoices timeously resulting in high arrears which was consider acceptable practice - until Jade took over. She quickly identified the problem and involved the relevant internal and Council teams to find a solution. There is now an automated invoice system resulting in minimal arrears at this facility. This system is now being implemented by other teams within QCHA and GCC.

Jade, now 27, inspires tenants to get involved, inspires colleagues to follow her lead and she supports everyone. Jade is a shining example of QCHA's values of respect, integrity and aspiration. She demonstrates this every day as she goes about her job.

Outcomes and achievements

- In 9 years Jade has developed herself in 3 challenging roles and graduated with her an honours degree in Housing studies. Aged 28 she is one of our star performers.
- Jade places our tenants at the heart of her service; she continuously strives to improve and is one of our best performing Housing Officers. She reduced the rent arrears within her patch from c£50k in May 2019 to c£22k in November 2020, without issuing a NOP or carrying out an eviction. By getting to know all her tenants, she has built up trust and provides support and assistance at an early stage.
- Jade works hard to excel using strong organisational and communication skills to deliver positive outcomes. Both tenants and colleagues think highly of her and she is well respected for what she has achieved
- Jade is creative in her approach to finding solutions – she has introduced innovative processes which have delivered efficiency savings for the organisation as well as benefitting both colleagues and customers. (eg invoice processing system, tenant recruitment package)
- Jade's self motivation, determination, drive and positive outlook is an inspiration to her colleagues who look to her for support and advice. They always get it!

Niamh Flannigan

Dunedin Canmore Housing Association



Statement of support

Niamh joined Wheatley Group in September 2019 via the Post Graduate Ignite Programme and was initially placed within Cube Housing Association, where she shadowed Housing Officers, whilst completing a robust core housing training programme. She joined the Dunedin Canmore housing team in January 2020 to continue her job shadowing and very quickly demonstrated that she was able to put her skills to the test, securing a fixed term Housing Officer post only one month later.

Niamh's enthusiasm and willingness to learn went from strength to strength when she took ownership of a patch, focusing on the needs of her customers and knowing exactly what support mechanisms were required to be put in place e.g. welfare benefits, financial difficulties and fuel poverty. A message from a customer Niamh supported, reads: "I just want to say a

big thanks for all your work and thank you for my food package and for making the time to call my family. Please have a nice Easter, be safe and thank you"

Niamh's mentor confirmed; "Niamh has shown herself to be an outstanding individual from the very first meeting I had as her mentor, I could hear her drive and passion to learn what it would be like to work in the frontline and very quickly she has shown all the attributes and skills to make not just a great housing officer but on how to make a difference of the lives of her customers and colleagues alike. I am certain, one day, Niamh will be an outstanding leader."

An example of Niamh's tenacity to support customers in need is when she was contacted by social work regarding a young woman who had been homeless for two years, sofa surfing. The young woman was heavily pregnant and it was no longer safe for her to continue doing that. As the woman would be giving birth imminently, there was a major concern that she would be giving birth whilst staying in a hostel or B&B. Therefore, it was a strong possibility the baby would be taken into temporary foster care. The potential impact this scenario would have on the young woman, her mental health, and her relationship with her baby was devastating.

Niamh recognised the urgency of the situation and tirelessly explored possible solutions, collaborating with social work colleagues and owning the responsibility in how best to support the young woman. Reaching out to her team, she sourced a temporary flat to move the customer into and provide a safe place to stay. The customer was extremely

relieved to hear the news and moved in straight away. The social worker got in touch expressing great gratitude and gave her thanks for all Niamh's help and how she would now be able to put in place support plans for the young woman and her baby at home. This customer has since moved onto a secure tenancy where multi agency support continues. A life changing turning point for this woman due to Niamh's compassion and resourceful thinking.

This experience has developed Niamh's desire to contribute to homelessness and has inspired her colleagues to join in her personal interest around the

concepts of 'Housing First' – Niamh succeeded to gauge interest from her colleagues rounding up a team strong attendance at a recent Housing First blended learning training course.

But it's not all work for Niamh, as she has devotedly taken the lead as the team Health and Wellbeing coordinator. Encouraging her peers to take part in activities such as, the 'One Ton Challenge' & 'Family hub' and keeping the team connected through hosting virtual coffee mornings.

Outcomes and achievements

At a recent CIH conference, Wheatley showcased the Ignite graduate programme around developing the next generation of leaders and succession planning in housing. Niamh admirably took to the podium, speaking at the conference on what attracted her to work in housing, her experience so far and her message for the housing sector for how to effectively engage young people when they are leaving education on starting a rewarding career path that is unknown to them. Niamh was selected to contribute due to her passion, confidence in speaking publicly and her admission that she herself didn't know about housing as a career path and now wouldn't want to work anywhere else.

Niamh has also been involved in facilitating strategy refresh workshops with Dunedin Canmore Housing Board of Directors, supporting the Managing Director and providing excellent contributions.

Niamh successfully co-ordinated signing up 42 customers into New Build homes in Edinburgh during extremely challenging circumstances this year, which also incorporated moving care customers from shared living accommodation to independent living where they will be able to receive visiting support from Wheatley Care as part of the on-going service re-provisioning programme supported by the Care Inspectorate.

Grant McPhail

Scottish Refugee Council



Statement of support

Stronger collaboration leads to preventing homelessness of refugees

Why refugees are facing Homelessness?

Glasgow has been a dispersal city for people seeking asylum since 1999, offering safety and welcome. Refugees calling Glasgow home have to enter homelessness as they transition from asylum to mainstream support. Homelessness was the main issue faced by refugees with 97% of refugee households experiencing homelessness from April 2019 to March 2020.

People must leave their Home Office accommodation 28 days after being recognised by the Home Office as a refugee. During the asylum process people live on £35 a week which means it is very difficult to build social networks and save money, and as a result 98% of refugees who accessed SRC's integration service in 2019 had to leave asylum accommodation straight into homelessness. Before the lockdown, 17% of the homeless population in Glasgow were refugee households. Most people have faced several moves while in the asylum process – into different types of accommodation, into different geographical areas, and have to begin building social networks again and again. So a key part of this transition is to find settled homes. To address these issues we have;

Stakeholder events

We have worked with Glasgow City Councils (GCC) Homelessness Services, Development and Regeneration Services and their commissioned services to ensure through their Rapid Rehousing

Transition Plan and Local Letting Communities that there is a shared understanding and vision of how refugees can be supported through house. Jim Kearns, Homelessness Services Manager at GCC;

"Homelessness Caseworkers, Support Providers (Loretto and Turning Point) and Housing Association staff are key to getting positive outcomes for refugees. We will work to ensure that an offer of housing is as rapid as possible, and look to make sure that our default is an offer of settled accommodation first."

This was done through a city wide event which took place in September 2019, where housing practitioners from across the city contributed. Building from this, Grant led three further events in February and March 20 based in local letting communities in Glasgow, with Tollcross in the East, ng homes in the North and Govan in the South. Over 100 practitioners were engaged through these events across Glasgow.

Established Innovative Partnership Working and Nominations

We work to ensure across Scotland through the New Scots Integration Strategy refugees are integrated and engaged in their communities. Expanding housing options beyond Glasgow, is one of our objectives. Since 2019, we have been working with River Clyde Homes to establish ways of working (for example with) that support newly recognised refugees to know of the wide variety of housing and communities available beyond Glasgow to make informed choices. Through our partnership we now have 3 settled tenancies with River Clyde Homes, prior to 2019 we had no formal relationship.

Meet the Landlord – Improving systems by bringing those accessing them and those providing them together

[Making choices on areas, or which landlords to approach can be difficult for many, especially refugees given the barriers.](#) Since August 2019, SRC has been bringing together newly recognised refugees and social landlords for a chat about their offer and what can be expected of process and systems. This allows landlords to chat to potential tenants, and potential tenants to get an idea of stock and what a landlord can offer. Since August 2019, 6 landlords have meet over 90 newly recognised refugee families to discuss their rights and entitlements.

Outcomes and achievements

Grant McPhail is Housing Development Officer at Scottish Refugee Council since summer 2018 and has worked in the refugee sector for 7 years

Almost all refugees become homeless after receiving status because they are asked to leave their Home Office accommodation. Grant's priority is to ensure that operational systems improve so refugees' homelessness is prevented and refugees can move on to rebuild their lives in Scotland.

In February/March 2020 and in three local areas of Glasgow, Grant brought together RSLs, Homeless Services and housing support providers to explore new solutions for refugees to be included in Glasgow RRTF and for reshaping housing demand.

Postponement of evictions from Home Office accommodation due to lock down in spring enabled Glasgow to test solutions discussed at those events. It led to more refugees moving directly to settled housing - homelessness was prevented. We hope that evidencing the positive impact this had on people will lead to long term improvements.

To reshape housing demand, Grant initiated "meet the landlord" events where Social Landlords promote their areas to refugees and learn more about refugees; their potential future tenants. Grant then negotiated partnerships with landlords in and out of Glasgow which increase sustainable housing options for refugees.

Jamie Aitchison

Berwickshire Housing Association



Statement of support

Jamie Aitchison joined Berwickshire Housing Association as a handyperson straight from school 11 years ago, and is now delighted to be one of the Association's Technical Officers, having completed his training and gaining his CIH qualification.

Jamie was 16 years old when he joined BHA as part of the Working Rite Programme which was funded by the Scottish Government through Wider Role Funding.

Working as a BHA's handyman for over 9 years, he has developed a range of skills and experience in delivering repair and maintenance projects across BHAs neighbourhoods. This has provided Jamie with a wealth of knowledge and building skills, as well as an insight into the challenges faced on a daily basis by a Repairs team. From working in people's homes and seeing the issues they face, Jamie's commitment to providing a high quality service to our customers is outstanding. He always puts the customer first, and has a sound understanding of what is important to people about their homes.

Jamie decided to learn BHAs system - not part of the Handyperson's job - so that he could monitor and improve his role in bringing void properties back to letting as efficiently as possible. He mastered the system and has developed a number of improvements which speed up the void process. During this time, he became a Trainee Technical Officer, started his CIH qualification, and he continues to bring forward improvement in specification and work processes, which ultimately improves the experience for our customers.

The covid pandemic has affected all our communities, and caused stress and anxiety, as well as difficulties in delivering repairs and maintenance services safely. Jamie has so much patience and a calm approach, talking through the problems with tenants and helping to reduce their anxieties in these very unusual times.

Jamie has continually taken part in additional wider activities beyond his day job, one of the most successful was being part of an Innovation Group. Some key successes from this were the improved process of communicating sponsorship donations for local communities to the Association; leading on the Engagement Plan being revised which then resulted in the recommendation for BHA to recruit an Engagement Officer; the role is being recruited for in January 2021.

One specific passion Jamie has is for the neighbourhoods he works in. He helped to develop community clean up events to encourage pro-active estate management across our communities. Jamie led in the 'Skip & Scrap' activity, arranging for skips to be brought to a community and working with colleagues and residents to clean up the area, and allowing tenants to clear out any unwanted items from their homes and gardens. These were fun events, and very popular, in areas where the costs of commercial waste removal is often beyond many residents

means. Promoting these events encouraged wider volunteering activities around estate management, and Jamie also worked with local established community organisations to continue to promote keeping local areas and neighbourhoods clean and tidy.

Colleagues and tenants have experienced first-hand Jamie's early morning and late evening work when

customers have needed support. He shares his maintenance experience with colleagues across the Association, and in working with contractors, which leads to positive solutions and great communication. His cheerful, pro-active approach, and his tenacity in never giving up until he has found a good solution is inspirational in someone of his age, and he is regularly complimented by other team members, as well as by our customers.

Outcomes and achievements

A newly appointed staff member within the Technical Services Team, who has worked alongside Jamie for the past 11 months provides feedback:

- Work ethic is solid - early morning and late evening work when customers have needed it; liaison with our customer and organisations such as Police Scotland when we had a customer in distress report to the Eyemouth Office after hours. He is always willing to help others, including me. He doesn't wait to be asked, he is pro-active, resolving any issues presented to him.
- Having worked in the building trade since he was 16 Jamie brings detailed practical knowledge to his new role as a Technical Officer. His thought process reflects a mature mindset. I have a lot of experience and I am learning some things from him. He has such a good discipline and is always willing to learn more.

- Throughout this year he has studied for, and achieved, his CiH qualification.
- His approach to COVID and the associated control measures whether it is protecting our customers, the contractors, his colleagues or his family and himself can only be described as exceptional.
- Good temperament and a solid cog in our team, dynamic, with a glowing career in housing ahead of him.

Anyone looking to take a career path into housing, would be inspired by Jamie's hard work and commitment to Berwickshire Housing Association's tenants and communities.

Lindsay Roches

Elderpark Housing



Statement of support

Lindsay joined our Management Committee initially as a Co-optee in 2017 having a keen interest in the housing sector and wishing to develop her career in this area. In 2018, she became a full committee member and I believe she is probably one of the youngest committee members currently within the Scottish RSL sector.

Elderpark has nominated Lindsay for a various reasons but primarily it is for her all-encompassing passion for housing as a career and as a vocation. Prior to commencing her journey into all things housing Lindsay completed a Bachelor's Degree in Social Sciences which sparked her interest in housing and social issues and she then made a conscious decision to see housing as a career and vocation which would match her values and aspirations.

As a committee member for Elderpark Housing her role involves 'leading and directing' the activities of the organisation together with her other board members. During her three years on the board, she has challenged constructively, delivered positive ideas and acted at all times within the excellent governance framework in which we operate.

When she looked to join our Management Committee, she was just starting her career in housing at the Wheatley Group as a Graduate Management Trainee where she was employed for two years. Over the last three years she has continued to develop her career initially as a Housing Strategy and Policy Officer at Inverclyde before moving to Queens Cross Housing Association in 2019 to become their Performance and Service Improvement Officer.

Lindsay has a speciality for housing policy, strategy and analysis, which has gathered through her university education and management committee participation. This knowledge and passion has been key to developing improved mechanisms for reviewing performance within her organisation.

As well as her full time job in the sector she dedicates considerable time voluntarily to improve the lives of tenants and service users both within her role as a member of our management committee.

In addition to this considerable time commitment she also volunteers for Housing Options Scotland as a Housing Buddy. Housing Options Scotland have been helping disabled people, older people and members of the Armed Forces community to find the right home in the right place for over 30 years. In this role, Lindsay helps clients one to one or in groups, get involved in research and help with events and conferences on behalf of the organisation and the role of the 'volunteer housing buddy' is crucial in supporting those with particular needs.

Our Chief Executive, Gary Dalziel said of Lindsay "Lindsay has a passion and enthusiasm for housing and in particular meeting and supporting the needs of tenants and residents. She has only been directly involved in the housing sector for under five years but throughout that time she has demonstrated that she is committed to the sector and will without doubt be a future leader in which we can have confidence in her desire to continue the values of the sector. When we think of an inspirational young housing professional to me it is someone that has immersed themselves in the sector, demonstrate a continued desire to grow and develop, go above and beyond their existing role to give something more than the average person and are someone that you look at and have nothing but positive things to say about.

I believe that Lindsay fits the bill as an Inspirational Young Housing Professional and her achievements within such a short space of time in a working, volunteering and educational capacity demonstrate all the attributes that we would look for in someone involved in the sector"

Outcomes and achievements

In terms of project outcomes this is not something that would be applicable to this award and as the nomination relates more to her wider contribution and commitment rather than one specific activity within her job role of which Elderpark is not involved this will focus on the key attributes and achievements of Lindsay:

She is one of the younger committee members within the RSL sector contributing leadership to a high performing organisation

In her substantive full time employment she focuses on performance and service improvement with a

particular interest in enhancing the services provided to tenants and customers.

She participates and attends a range of CIH and other sector events to enhance her knowledge and expertise having presented at various conferences as a 'young housing professional'

She volunteers as a 'Housing Buddy' for Housing Options Scotland to support those with particular challenges in securing appropriate accommodation.

and out of Glasgow which increase sustainable housing options for refugees.

Aileen Semple

Argyll & Bute Council



Statement of support

Aileen Semple is a young Housing Professional who has shown significant career development since she began working with Argyll & Bute Council. Aileen began her career in housing as a Housing Advice Assistant in 2014 and undertook her CIH training. She worked within the Council's Homeless Service until 2018 when she moved to work as a Housing Improvement Assistant within the Energy Efficiency team. In 2019, she was promoted to Housing Officer - Energy Efficiency, and she now runs the Energy Efficiency service in Argyll and Bute. This work is crucial in Argyll and Bute, evidence shows there is income poverty in Argyll & Bute, with lower quartile

incomes lower than in Scotland. 40% of households in Argyll & Bute are in fuel poverty, with the incidence higher in social housing, at 1 in 2. There is evidence that 12% of households in Argyll & Bute suffer from extreme fuel poverty. Covid has presented multiple challenges and Aileen has shown tenacity, strong decision making and housing practitioner knowledge to lead the Energy Efficiency service during an unprecedented time.

Covid and the subsequent construction sector lockdown meant that multiple decisions had to be made and conveyed to contractors and householders. The initial days of lockdown were a fast paced environment of changing guidance and Aileen reviewed complex guidance and implemented actions appropriately in short timescales. Communication was key during this unprecedented time and Aileen handled in well, in her first management role. She also took up the challenge of homeworking at short notice and running the Energy Efficiency service virtually.

In short, Aileen's career development to date marks her out as having the potential to be a key player in energy efficiency and the crucial benefits it can bring to householders in need in rural areas. She has the drive, housing knowledge and communication skills to continue to develop as a skilled housing practitioner.

Outcomes and achievements

Scottish Government funding for private home energy efficiency improvements is known as the Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland Area Based Scheme (HEEPS: ABS). The funding allocation for 2019-20, administered by Argyll & Bute Council, enabled investment in: external and internal wall insulation;

cavity wall insulation; loft insulation; and underfloor insulation. Aileen managed to keep the programme on target despite the complexities of the construction sector lockdown.