



Chartered  
Institute of  
Housing

# **NORTHERN AWARDS 2023**

## **Good Practice Compendium**

Sharing the lessons learnt from the  
Northern Awards 2023

Headline sponsor:



# Welcome

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Welcome to the Chartered Institute of Housing's 2023 Northern Awards Good Practice Compendium.

Our extensive annual compendium of good practice highlights some of the fantastic projects that have been happening across the North of England.

Throughout the whole of the UK, the housing sector is facing unprecedented challenges. From uncertainty in government funding; new regulations; the pressing need for more homes; the equally pressing need to maintain and improve existing homes while modernising procedures and services to meet the expectations and needs of tenants and residents. And that's without mentioning external pressures such as the climbing cost of living crisis and the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Part of our role as the professional body for housing is to bring together examples of exceptional practice in compendiums like this to encourage development and positive change. We want to spark your creativity and passion, giving you the opportunity to learn from others and develop new ways of working that were previously unimaginable.



**Gavin Smart CIHCM**  
Chief executive

When I read through these compendiums, I'm always astounded by the dedication and commitment of our entries - and this year is no different. This publication features some great examples of exceptional work, showing how a positive commitment for change can make a big difference to people's lives.

As housing professionals, we must remember that the work we do every day has an important impact on the individuals and communities we serve, as shown in this library of good practice, which I hope will inspire you.

I would like to thank our headline sponsor, Aico and all our category sponsors. Without their support we wouldn't have been able to share this great content with you. I would also like to say a big thank you to our judging panel made up of tenants, residents, and housing experts, who spent time reading each application we received.

# Judges

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## Special thanks to our judges

CIH would like to thank our judging panel for the Northern Awards:



**Laura Martin**  
Head of development, Equans and CIH North East regional group member



**Helen Reddington**  
CIH North West regional group member and director of home ownership at Riverside Group



**Mushtaq Khan**  
Chief executive, Housing Diversity Network



**Paul Cartwright**  
Head of national accounts, Aico



**Wendy Gooley**  
Chair of Magenta Communities Committee



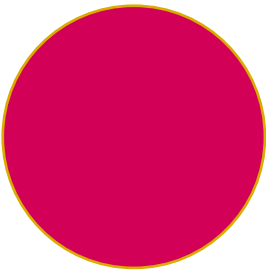
**Steve Mackenzie**  
Tenant representative, Northern Housing Consortium Tenants Climate Jury



**Gurmeet Virdi**  
CIH Yorkshire & Humber regional group member



**Brian Robson**  
Executive director (policy & public affairs), Northern Housing Consortium



**Barrington Billings**  
Chair of Manningham Housing Association



**Andy Walsh**  
Incommunities tenant



**Michael Lisle**  
Chair of the Resident Committee, Karbon Homes



**Rachael Williamson**  
Head of policy and external affairs, Chartered Institute of Housing



**Jill Haley**  
Vice president, Chartered Institute of Housing

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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.*

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# BEST HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

This award recognises developments that provide desirable and sustainable places to live, improving people's lives within the community.

The well-designed development will demonstrate creative approaches and excellence from concept to delivery.

## Valiant close

**Sunderland City Council**



### Statement of support

In 2020, Sunderland City Council set out its intention to embark on an ambitious programme to help meet the housing needs of residents now and in the future. Its Housing Delivery and Investment Plan (HDIP) paved the way for a radical new approach to housing in the city, that would meet the future needs of residents.

Working with Adult Social Care to respond to the requirements of people now and in the future, the council is delivering on its promise to build and acquire homes that are fit for purpose and kitted out to with the latest technology to assist people with high needs. Assistive technology to support residents to live independently is a central pillar of the initiative, enhancing the life chances of Sunderland people.

Valiant Close is a key part of Sunderland City Council's HDIP. It is a new community of specially-adapted bungalows that have been designed specifically for people with physical disabilities, and also includes a new £1.4m disability resource centre to help residents enjoy a better quality of life and have access to support. Over the past 12 months, work has been undertaken to complete this exemplar scheme, which provides 17 accessible homes, that are centred around a support centre run by a local charity.

For tenants in Valiant Close who have physical disabilities and wider specialist support needs, 16 of the 17 bungalows built are Category 3 compliant with Building Regulations Part M4(3). This means they are fully wheelchair-user homes, each fully equipped with assistive technology and 5G provision which enable residents to live independently for longer, with support to raise their quality of life. They feature everything from smart doorbells to remote controlled lights, ensuring residents can take care of themselves, with assistive tech in place as an enabler.

And the city's drive to carbon neutrality will also be supported by sustainable dwellings. The homes built under the HDIP are designed with the environment in mind. And it's not just about the in-built features of the home, but about enabling residents to reduce their carbon footprint when they move in. That's why HDIP homes feature smart devices that help people who live there to reduce energy consumption, not only keeping bills down - something that is key for the vulnerable residents who live at Valiant Close - but helping save the planet in the process.

As well as housing, the HDIP has also delivered a new disability day centre, the Valiant Centre, at Valiant Close - providing the charity Northeast Disabilities Resource Centre with a brand-new purpose-built premises to provide additional support to vulnerable residents. The bungalows that surround the centre are occupied by people with physical disabilities and special needs, ensuring they have ease of access to resources that will help them. This supportive, enabling community is changing the lives of people who live there, and with the second phase of allocations set to get underway, more residents will benefit from being part of this unique new residential area over the coming months.

## Outcomes and achievements

17 new homes will transform the lives of the residents. All homes will be occupied by people with disabilities and mobility issues, ensuring the greatest impact possible, supporting vulnerable adults in Sunderland.

The development of a new space for NDRC supports scores of people living with disabilities like cerebral palsy every single week, ensuring Sunderland's vulnerable residents can access an inclusive, supportive environment, where they are empowered to realise their potential.

For vulnerable people like John Starkey, who lives with cerebral palsy, and is a resident at Valiant Close, the difference is life-changing.

He said: "It's absolutely amazing, the new centre and the fact I have a home so close to it. My new house is beautiful and is manageable for me, with the issues I have with my legs. My last home had stairs and three bedrooms and - even though I am someone who never gives up - it was becoming difficult to live there on my own."

And that's the true measure of impact; that people who would have been unable to live on their own can enjoy independence, with support wrapped around them, providing a level of empowerment and control that would be unimaginable anywhere else.

# Beechwood

## Beyond Housing



### Statement of support

Beechwood new build development is a scheme of 36 two- and three-bedroom bungalows in Middlesbrough which provides much needed single storey homes. The development of these homes has been supported by Homes England so they can be made available for affordable rent. The Council's local plan shows a clearly demonstrated need for elderly and single storey accommodation. Existing residential properties in the locality are predominately two storey family homes, leaving very little availability for those requiring level access. There is also a lack of single storey level access family homes.

The total scheme cost is circa £4.8m.

The site is located in a largely residential setting in Middlesbrough. There are many amenities nearby with shops, restaurants, hotels, leisure facilities and the area's main hospital, all within half a mile of the site. The scheme is also close to one of the town's main roads which passes through the town, providing excellent transport links by car and bus, whilst rail links are on hand to all parts of the region and the country as a whole.

The scheme started on site in March 2021 and was constructed by developer Mandale Homes, with completion taking place in June 2022.

This scheme provides excellent homes for those in need of bungalows and a family living environment, which has, until now, not been available on the residential estate these homes are integrated with or across Middlesbrough as a whole. Single storey family accommodation is in short supply. This is partly attributable to the relatively high cost of building bungalows, but also to the difficulty in acquiring suitable available land. Due to the orientation of existing homes and the long narrow site, the construction of bungalows allowed the designer to maximise the number of homes to be included, making the scheme more financially viable.

The linear site had the benefit of having a residential housing site to the north boundary of the site, informal greenspace to the south, and suitable available access to the east. This provided some constraints on the design, but also allowed the density of the site to be maximised, with housing in keeping with the existing estate and existing neighbours. The nearby greenspace was also utilised to give the site an open, spacious feel.

The design uses the existing homes and allowed a logical continuation between old and new. The plots looking out of the open space provide not only active frontage, but also facilitates natural surveillance of the open space, enhancing the security of the area for both new and existing homes. The design ethos was to ensure the properties gave a clean, uncomplicated feel, complementing the existing residential areas, whilst also being a stand-alone development in its own right.

This development has taken a small, but relatively long and narrow site at the edge of an estate, previously designated for housing but too small and with too



many constraints to attract large developers. Mandale Homes took the initiative, considered the land opportunity and contacted Beyond Housing to see if we wanted to work with them on this development. Beyond Housing saw the potential and, after doing research on the housing need in the area, agreed that this was a fantastic opportunity to build bungalows in a fantastic location.

The topography of the site and the overlooking distances toward nearby existing homes made the design a challenge, but meant that the scheme lent itself to the development of bungalows. Bungalows are often sought after, but difficult to deliver due mainly to affordability. The site has been maximised to deliver as many homes as possible, using and extending existing highway infrastructure, providing car parking and secure private garden spaces, level access to all the homes, and utilising the borrowed landscape of the surrounding open space to make the scheme feel open and spacious.

Designing and building on a constrained site clearly brings about many challenges. Working through these with Mandale Homes produced some innovative solutions, especially concerning highways and drainage. Working as a team, bringing in specialist help when necessary, and meeting with local authority engineers and highways teams allowed these issues to be discussed and resolved with affordable, robust solutions that were agreeable to all parties. Planning approval was received and building work commenced in March 2021. During construction the scheme met challenges, especially with labour and material shortages, but again the team worked together to determine the right solutions and make the right decisions for the project. The relationship has taken a partnering approach, with the development being at the heart of decision making. If there has been anything learned from working on this development, it is how good communication, a partnership approach and making decisions based on the best outcomes for the scheme and all relevant parties has brought about an exceptional quality product that everyone can be proud of.

## Outcomes and achievements

The scheme has provided 36 bungalows - 21 two bedroom and 15 three-bedroom, all available for affordable rent and built using traditional construction methods.

Constructing affordable housing isn't just about the bricks and mortar, it's about providing much needed homes that are great quality but are still affordable. This development has done just that. The lives of two customers in particular have been transformed.

This couple had purchased their own home, but after struggling with mortgage payments, took a mortgage rescue option to enable them to pay rent and stay in their home. This seemed like the best option at the time, but throughout their tenancy the couple were subjected to rent increases, resulting in them paying almost double the amount of some neighbours. They were ignored by their landlord and were soon experiencing more financial stress and anxiety but were now paying a rising rent instead of owning their home.

In 2013, the couple's worries took on an unexpected dimension after the husband was diagnosed with cancer and had to embark on a lengthy period of treatment. The eventual outcome was good, but in 2018 he received a further blow with a second medical diagnosis, this time with heart failure.

With health issues escalating, and with growing concerns about the condition of their home, the couple took legal advice to seek a solution to their rapidly worsening situation. They made the difficult decision to leave their family home of 30 years to seek somewhere new and more affordable. They had seen the Beechwood development site and contacted Beyond Housing to apply for a tenancy and, after completing the application procedure, were accepted for one of the new bungalows.

The couple recently moved into their new home, are delighted with the bungalow, and have expressed their happiness for the security they now feel. The construction team are equally delighted that their hard work completing this development has transformed the lives of this couple.

# Cherry Tree House and Hillside apartment blocks

**Lead organisation: Leeds Jewish Housing Association**

**Partner organisation: Homes England**



## Statement of support

In the summer of 2022, Leeds Jewish Housing Association (LJHA) completed the largest affordable homes project in its history, delivered in partnership with Homes England.

Founded in 1953, LJHA is an established Jewish-led, community-based Registered Social Housing Provider.

It is committed to providing and maintaining sustainable community housing, focusing predominantly on the needs of the local Jewish community.

LJHA has more than 500 properties in its portfolio and provides a mixture of homes for single people, families, older people and shared ownership.

The scheme – at Queenshill Avenue, Moortown – comprises 85 new properties, including 51 sheltered housing apartments for those aged 55 and over, and 34 general needs apartments.

The sheltered apartments were physically connected to 130 existing properties in three other buildings to form a sheltered village of 181 apartments for older people with secure access to the Ziff Community Centre which provides a range of culturally sensitive services, activities and food.

The new homes are in heart of the community, low rent, modern, energy efficient, warm and secure.

LJHA had been considering expansion and development options in 2007 when a Queenshill Estate Development Framework was designed and consulted upon with tenants. Unfortunately, the global financial crash left the association unable to proceed, but the ambition remained.

In 2017, the leadership team and Board devised an updated plan to build a new sheltered scheme on the former site of six family properties.

The following year, the Leo Baeck Housing Association gave LJHA a significant charitable donation as seed funding for the development of a Jewish sheltered housing scheme.

LJHA developed a masterplan, engaged architects and, with assistance from Yorkshire Housing, talked to Homes England which supported the vision. The plans were announced in March 2019.

Of primary importance to the Board and staff was the wellbeing of 22 tenants whose properties would have to be demolished to make way for the new buildings and other amenities on the site, including car parking space and gardens. Consultations began immediately and LJHA worked to ensure the tenants had confidence that their every need would be catered for.

Leaving no stone unturned, the architects accompanied staff on road trips to other new build housing schemes to help reach final decisions on exactly what was required aesthetically and how it would work, especially in relation to older persons' provision.

An interior designer was also engaged with the task of delivering a building with internal qualities every bit as impressive as the magnificent exterior.

A mortgage was agreed with CAF Bank in January 2020 and planning permission was granted.

Homes England released grant funding of £6.8 million in March 2020 and LJHA was in a happy and exciting place.

A worldwide pandemic was not on the risk register. However, LJHA and the Leeds Jewish community are nothing if not resilient. The association's staff spoke to all tenants on a one-to-one basis within seven days of the initial lockdown and provided unbroken support throughout the entire period of Covid restrictions.

By March 2020, the association had agreed a price with the developer, ENGIE (now EQUANS), together with start and finish dates, but had not signed a contract. Thankfully, a calm, professional and collective approach delivered the results all parties sought and the contract was signed without fuss.

Construction soon got underway with everyone on-site following the latest government guidance on safe working at all times. Demolition was understandably disruptive but, thanks to personalised and regular communications with LJHA residents, the process was completed relatively smoothly.

A number of tenant groups helped the association's staff with a range of choices including fixtures and fittings, bathrooms and kitchens.

## Outcomes and achievements

The scheme was officially opened on 15 July 2022 by Kate Henderson, NHF CEO, and Councillor Robert Gettings, Lord Mayor of Leeds.

Kate said: "What's so wonderful about this is it's about people - your home, your neighbourhood, your place - this community of everyone together. Massive congratulations to all of you, particularly the team at Leeds Jewish Housing Association for creating homes that reflect what the community wants and for being at the heart of the community. Regeneration is never the easy option, but it's a brilliant thing you've done for this community and with this community."

Cllr Gettings said: "Housing in the city is really needed. The facilities are absolutely fantastic."

What LJHA tenants said:

"I worried for years how I was going to manage in my house and what would happen to me in my later years, I don't have family and now I feel like I'm going to be absolutely fine living here and all those worries have gone."

"I never thought I'd live anywhere as beautiful as here I can't stop crying."

"Honestly, you don't realise what you have achieved here. It is just magic. You have changed my life, what this has created is magical."

## Standish infill development

**Lead organisation: Wigan Council**

**Partner organisation: Rosslee Construction**



### Statement of support

The project was developed to respond to a locally identified housing need for homes for older residents in the Neighbourhood Plan for the village of Standish, in Wigan Borough. The team worked with local councillors and the Neighbourhood Forum, Standish Voice, to identify development sites where the need could be met. The Standish area has been subject to large scale new build development by major housebuilders, with land commanding a premium and little availability of small sites for affordable housing development, suitable for older households. Demand for social and affordable rent homes was high and availability of small bungalows and flats severely limited.

Two council owned infill sites at Longridge Avenue and Almond Brook Road, Standish were identified and plans developed for construction of twelve one bedroom cottage flats. Consultation on the proposals was held in February 2019 where there was local support for the development and use of underutilised land to meet housing needs. Following planning approval, construction began in December 2020,

with an SME builder, Rosslee Construction, appointed to undertake the project with completion of the properties in July 2022. Over the construction period the project experienced challenging logistics due to developing small sites, the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic and wider pressures in the construction labour, services and materials market.

The contractor, Rosslee Construction, commented "This is the largest scheme we have carried out for Wigan Council, and although challenging at times, there lessons were learnt. We are delighted this residential development has proved popular with the community, as the apartments were let within days. We engaged with the local residents with our quarterly newsletters, keeping them abreast of the sites development, including photos, and any works which would affect them. We also achieved and worked to the Considerate Constructors compliance for the site."

The homes have been designed to a high standard and are of a similar scale to the surrounding residential developments. The scheme has brought two small overgrown and underutilised sites back into use, improving the local environment for residents. On the site at Longridge Avenue, the layout has provided improved access to the rear of existing homes adjoining the site and to an electricity substation located on the site.

The homes have been part funded from Section 106 contributions received from the large scale housing development of predominantly large family homes for market sale that has taken place in the local area. This means that a need that was not met by these developments has now been served.

In designing the homes, the team has considered the needs of older residents, with all homes being designed to accessible standards. Two of the ground floor flats have been designed to be fully wheelchair accessible. In line with Wigan Council's climate

change priorities and Greater Manchester Combined Authority's net zero housing target, the homes have also been designed to high environmental standards. Low carbon air source heat pumps are installed for heating, along with innovative skirting heating emitters in each room and electric vehicle charging points are provided to all homes.

All homes are available as affordable rent tenure and residents moved into the homes shortly afterwards. Many of the new residents had been living in unsuitable accommodation in the local area and their new home has greatly benefited their health and wellbeing.

## Outcomes and achievements

Although a small scale development, the Standish infill development demonstrates the local benefits of bringing small underutilised sites into use.

Responding to local housing need - the project has delivered 12 one bedroom apartments to meet the needs of older residents. These were much needed in an area of high housing demand where there are few affordable options suited to older residents.

Fuel poverty/ cost of living - By highly insulating the fabric of the homes and installing energy efficient air source heat pumps residents heating costs will be lower than average.

Health and wellbeing - The homes were allocated to applicants on Wigan Council's housing register

in need of this type of accommodation. Now living in more suitable accommodation, their health and wellbeing is improving.

Social Value - Employment and training of a local young person as a labourer on the sites. A range of local sub-contractors and suppliers were chosen, including the supplier of the innovative skirting heating emitters, who are based in Wigan borough.

Climate change priorities - We have designed the homes to be low energy use.

Improved local environment/ street scene - the homes have been designed to fit onto tight sites and integrate into the surrounding residential area well.

# Hamminkeln place

**Lead organisation: Livin Housing Limited**



## Statement of support

Hamminkeln Place, Sedgefield was borne from a disused brownfield garage site. It is now a beautiful place where people are proud to live. The wealth of community/tenant/demand insight we hold informed the types and numbers of homes.

Sedgefield village is a desirable location where many families aspire to live. The growth of quality, costly executive homes far outweigh the availability of much needed affordable homes.

Hamminkeln Place helps to redress the balance and was specifically designed to meet demand by providing 71 quality homes for affordable rent, designed for families unable to afford a home they love in a place they love.

Rents are affordable, set at 80% of the weekly market rent and range from £106 (£133 market rent) for a two-bedroom house up to £143 (£178 market rent) for a four-bedroom house.

Sense of pride, belonging and cohesion

Hamminkeln is in the heart of a well-established sustainable community with a village centre, local heritage, thriving state-of-the art industrial estate, high-performing schools, and good public transport links. To live in such an aspirational community is a dream come true for our tenants. Hamminkeln is a great community within a great community. The residents living there are proud of their home, proud of their estate and feel a sense of belonging to the wider community - the bedrocks of a sustainable thriving place.

Once a disused industrial eyesore, Hamminkeln was designed to enhance the environment and locality through:

- Integrating historical hedging into new landscaping providing a complimentary green setting, enhancing biodiversity.
- Providing shrub and hedge planting forming front gardens in keeping with the character of existing homes within the village.
- Locating public open space to provide a focus on arrival and a great first impression.

- Enabling access to community facilities and groups via maintaining established pedestrian routes, encouraging healthy communities, and offering walking/cycle routes.
- Ensuring the dwellings' facing materials and roofscapes are in keeping with the neighbourhood creating well understood and well-defined streets, using quality materials with a contemporary twist (such as herringbone brickwork) to ensure the homes blend seamless with their surroundings.

#### Innovation in design and construction

Most importantly, this new affordable housing development needed to complement and fit seamlessly into an established, affluent community, with pre-existing beautiful homes and natural environments.

The scheme was developed through extensive engagement with the local community, town, and county councils; with the design evolving through a collaborative process. We listened and acted and as a result made significant changes to incorporate additional soft landscaping and tree screening to create a beautiful place.

A site-wide, fabric-first approach which exceeded current building regulations ensures the properties within the development are more energy efficient, cheaper to run with a reduced carbon footprint.

Large windows ensure the homes benefit from generous amounts of natural daylight, while also ensuring that external public spaces are overlooked to provide a feeling of safety.

A high-quality design was achieved by selecting quality materials with a contemporary twist, including herringbone brickwork and flush casement windows and doors. Hardwick Homes incorporated these design features within the build and budget by using local labour and directly sourced materials.

In collaboration with a local charity, an accessible footpath and a raised planting bed was provided, enabling residents with mobility problems to take part in gardening classes.

A local artist was commissioned to design and install public art highlighting the connection between Sedgefield and its twin town Hamminkeln in Germany. This raised awareness of a longstanding heritage that had been in place for more than 40 years and the two towns' emblems are incorporated within the work, instilling a sense of pride in the local community.

## Outcomes and achievements

Total Scheme Cost £11.8m

Homes England Grant Funding £2.77m

Hamminkeln rebalances affordable housing supply in a sought-after area, creating a sense of place through exceptional, high quality, building and environmental design and creating a desirable sustainable place to live and play for future generations.

Delivered on time and budget, 71 families now live in homes they love in a place they are proud to call home.

#### Customer Testimonials:

"We feel so secure since moving here, it's our forever home, our neighbours are lovely, and my son now has

the best possible environment to grow up in. It has everything we need and more. We love the French doors that open onto the garden where my son plays. It's so warm and cosy. I've not had to put the heating on yet."

"I'm so happy, it's made a real difference to my life moving closer to my workplace and childrens' schools.

With over 90 applications per property, we know we got this right. Working with partners Hardwick Homes we are using Hamminkeln as a blueprint as we strive to reach our target to grow the development programme to meet the sustainable, long-term demand for affordable homes in our core areas.

# WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

This award commends collaboration between organisations or groups that achieve the best possible outcomes.

We are looking for organisations that have worked collaboratively to improve service delivery across geographical boundaries, sectors or client groups to benefit the people who use their services. The winning organisations will have evidenced good practice in setting up and managing the partnership, including establishing new ways of working.

## Progress lifeline emergency home response – urgent community response tool

**Lead organisation: Progress Lifeline**

**Partner organisation: Urgent Care Team Lancaster**



### Statement of support

Progress Lifeline is the Technology Enabled Care arm of Progress Housing Association, based in Lancashire.

Our latest partnership initiative is allowing our Emergency Home Responders to have access to the Urgent Community Response (UCR) team in Lancaster.

If a customer has fallen in their home and are uninjured, but are unable to get up, we will dispatch one of our responders who will use specialist lifting equipment to assist them. However, often when one of our responders arrives, the customer seems unwell or has a minor injury, then we would normally have to call for an ambulance.

This initiative means that our responders have been trained by the local UCR team to use basic clinical observation equipment, including thermometers, blood pressure monitors and Oximeters for blood oxygen levels.

If a responder has non-emergency concerns about someone they respond to, they can call the UCR team and provide the observation readings, and the UCR will do a clinical assessment over the phone. The UCR will advise the responder on whether it is safer to lift the patient or make them comfortable on the floor. They can then make direct referrals into local health teams such as district nurses, rapid response team or Occupational Therapists for further support.

Before the pilot, our responders' only option would be to escalate to North West Ambulance Service, which may have resulted in a long wait for a non-urgent ambulance, and then a long wait in hospital for further services to be involved, ensuring the right care was put in place.

The intervention of Progress Lifeline responders will result in better outcomes for the ambulance service, and patient well-being, long-term. Following a visit, the responders can make referrals to local falls prevention services, reducing the likelihood of future falls. The UCR teams can make referrals to local health teams reducing hospital admissions.

Due to the current focus on falls from NHS England and MPs, it is likely we will be rolling this out across Lancashire soon.

Joanne Bushell, Head of Progress Lifeline Operations, said, "We are proud to be working with the Urgent Community Response teams in Lancaster, NWAS and NHS partners as part of this innovative initiative. We have an ageing population and there is an increasing demand for help with uninjured falls. It is clinically recognised the importance of lifting people up off the floor as quickly as possible, and this does not always have to be a paramedic crew. We have a highly

trained team who specialise in responding to people who have fallen at home. It makes sense to let us do this and leave the paramedics to focus on emergency callouts.”

The pilot began in September 2022, and we assisted with:

- 24 callouts in the Morecambe and Lancaster area, 20 of which were falls-related

- We completed 15 successful lifts, 4 no longer required a lift and one was referred to NWS
- We received 11 out of UCR hours call-outs and a further 6 UCR referrals
- Saved the NHS ambulance call-out costs for the referred uninjured falls, as well as further savings in non-conveyance to A&E and ongoing treatment or hospital stays.

## Outcomes and achievements

More efficient & effective care.

Mr WC:

Progress Lifeline’s Alarm Response Centre (ARC) received an activation from the service user’s pendant. He had fallen but was triaged by our operator as having no injuries. Our Responder was dispatched and arrived within 30 minutes. He was assessed for injury, then lifted and transferred to his walking frame.

As it was his 3rd fall in two days, our Responder rang the UCR team who advised us to take clinical observations, they then assessed the results and deployed Rapid Response (RR). The RR took bloods and referred the service user to a local Occupational Therapist who arranged same day delivery of raised toilet seat, wheeled Zimmer frame and chair raisers.

Mrs MH:

Progress Lifeline’s ARC received a referral from NWS, and the Clinical Assessment Team, who advised that the patient was suitable for lifting. Progress Lifeline’s responder arrived within 12 minutes and called the UCR team who advised us to take clinical observations and we identified that the lady was still unsteady on her feet. The UCR team deployed rapid response for a suspected water infection and antibiotics were given immediately.

These examples both avoided the need for an ambulance and hospital admission.

# Healthier wealthier Wakefield families

**Lead organisation: WDH**

**Partner organisation: Public Health, Wakefield Council**



## Statement of support

The Healthier Wealthier Wakefield Families service is a cross sector partnership between WDH and Public Health bridging the gap between housing and health through targeted support for parents and families with young children. The service is open to social housing tenants, privately renting residents, homeowners and those who are homeless or in temporary accommodation providing a single referral pathway and platform for supporting the financial health of families throughout the Wakefield district. The service

removes barriers to maintaining a healthy household, addresses housing issues and supports families to maximise their income giving parents and children the best opportunity to thrive within their homes and communities.

Through collaborative working, this initiative has brought together the housing and financial support expertise of WDH alongside the health and wellbeing focus of Public Health as part an innovative approach to address the wider determinants of health by tackling poverty through early intervention. The Healthier Wealthier Families service commenced February 2020 and has successfully established a network of new referral pathways with NHS health visiting teams, Midwifery Services, Livewell and Family Hubs.

A unique selling point of the service is that support is provided to parents and families within the family home. This provides the appropriate setting to discuss sensitive financial issues face to face, whilst also helping to identify any wider issues within the household whereby support is required. Assistance is also provided over the phone, via digital channels and in local community venues based on the needs of the family.

A primary key performance indicator is to start the

support process within 5 days of receipt of the referral. This helps to ensure the benefits of early intervention are realised before financial difficulties escalate. Since inception 100% of referrals have met this target.

A fundamental element of the project has been to share best practice amongst health visiting teams and partner agencies of how to spot the signs of financial hardship whilst improving awareness and understanding of the service. This helps partners to identify issues at the earliest opportunity and access timely support for vulnerable families. To date, 89 best practice sessions have been delivered helping to improve referral pathways with local services.

The service has received 1289 referrals across all tenure types and unlocked over £660k of outcomes to improve the financial position of the families supported. The service has helped to remove the burden of housing arrears and debts to the value of £33k, removing the threat of enforcement and providing household stability for parents and their children. Support is evaluated from the start to the end of the process to help understand the impact on

customer wellbeing. To date, 99% of families reported a significant reduction in stress and anxiety, 100% reported improved financial confidence and 91% with improved self-confidence following interventions from the service.

To promote continual improvement, monthly partnership meetings are delivered between WDH and Public Health to enable ongoing collaboration and the sharing of key priorities. Case studies from each month form part of these discussions alongside a full review of performance to ensure the project is meeting the needs of service users across the district. The effective partnerships formed between WDH, Public Health and Wakefield Council have been integral to the success of this initiative alongside a collective desire to support vulnerable families out of poverty.

From an initial 18-month pilot and £69,370 of funding, the service has since been extended until 2024 having exceeded all targets set by Public Health. Discussions are already ongoing around funding the service longer term due to the success and impact it has made in supporting families most in need.

## Outcomes and achievements

The Healthier Wealthier Wakefield Families Service has delivered fantastic outcomes for families across Wakefield since February 2020:

- Received 1,289 referrals into the service (49% above target)
- Provided 10,270 instances of support
- Helped families access £546k of unclaimed benefits
- Supported families to obtain over £90k of grant funding for white goods, beds, children's clothing, energy bills and emergency food
- Reduced household debt by £22k
- Reduced rent arrears by £10K
- Made 418 referrals to other services, supporting wider positive outcomes including access to employment advice

- Delivered 89 training sessions reaching 765 professional colleagues in wider services
- Attended 92 community events, promoting the service and supporting families
- Delivered £12.48 of social value for every £1 invested in the project.
- Customer satisfaction 9.6/10

Feedback received from families and our partners:

"You supported me when I was in a bad place and helped me sort my finances so I could move somewhere that was better for my family. Thank you."

Single parent, Wakefield

"The fact the service has achieved over £600k of outcomes for families across Wakefield is incredible. The partnership has been very successful and we are looking forward to working together over the next part of the contract." Public Health Partnership Commissioning Manager



# Housing options and adult social care

## Sunderland City Council



### Statement of support

Sunderland City Council's Housing Delivery and Investment Plan (HDIP) is paving the way for a radical new approach to housing in the city, that will meet the future needs of the city. With ambitious goals for acquiring and developing properties for affordable rent, the council aims to meet the needs of vulnerable residents, including older people and those living with disabilities. Assistive technology to support residents to live independently is a central pillar of the initiative, enhancing the life chances of Sunderland people. And returning disused properties into attractive family homes is a key aim.

Working with the Adult Social Care and Housing Options teams to respond to the needs of people now and in the future, the council's Housing Development team is delivering on its promise to build and acquire homes that are fit for purpose and kitted out with the latest technology to assist people with high needs.

Forty years since the last council houses were built in Sunderland, new homes for vulnerable residents and growing families are now occupied. With assistive technology at their heart, digitally enabled homes are changing the lives of people across the city, providing new - and previously unrealised - life chances for elderly and disabled residents. The specification of these homes has been fine-tuned in partnership, who manage allocations too, to ensure the right residents move into the right homes, and that the right homes are built to meet the authority's needs in the future.

And more homes that will support older residents are

being developed. With 50% more adults aged 65+ expected to be living with dementia in 2040 and a 3% population growth, with people 65+ growing by 31% over the same period, the need for more homes that will support older people is clear.

Recently, the Housing Development team focused its plans on delivering more bungalows and supported accommodation to ensure that it will have the homes needed as demand for such properties increases. There is a constant dialogue that means that future needs are anticipated, something that is vital to deliver the housing stock that the city will need to support its residents in the years ahead.

This partnership working is also key in deciding how assistive technology is fitted to the new homes, making sure it's in line with the individual requirements, meaning that a blended model of care and support can be implemented. Homes are allocated and specified to suit the people who will be living there - key in maximising the benefits to residents and the authority.

One resident who has benefited from this collaborative approach is Robert Cooper, 73, who relocated to a new bungalow, after a long-term condition made life in his two-storey home difficult to manage.

"It was becoming a real strain getting up and down the stairs in my old house," explains Rob, who lives alone.

"I was speechless when I came and saw this place. It's perfect. It would hard to find one thing to complain about. The team at the council who helped me with this were absolutely brilliant. They made sure I knew where everything was when I moved in and helped me feel really settled."

The Housing Development and Housing Options teams have also worked together to deliver specific supported accommodation for people at risk of homelessness or escaping domestic violence. It has created a Next Steps Accommodation Programme, which will deliver six one-bed homes as Move On supported accommodation to help people at risk of homelessness as well as the Sanctuary Dispersed Accommodation Project, that has delivered three properties for use as accommodation for those surviving domestic abuse.

## Outcomes and achievements

Much has already been achieved:

- 35 new homes completed over the last 12 months
- 393 homes (of all kinds) either acquired, built, in design or under construction
- 79 supported accommodation properties secured
- 70% of bungalows target complete, under construction or set to be secured.

These are significant achievements for teams that have barely come together face to face, due to the prevailing challenge of the pandemic.

Revised plans mean the team is now focused on delivery of bungalows and supported

accommodation, in line with the future requirements of the city, fed in by the council's Adult Social Care team.

This collaboration and development that is based on insight - means that returns have already been rapid. It is estimated that each occupied bungalow represents an £11,000 per week saving in support costs, equating to a £2.2m benefit to adult social care budgets.

Between April and October 2022, the team prevented 298 households from becoming homeless and relieved 612 households from homelessness, meaning joined up working is helping some of the city's most vulnerable residents.

# Chorley Place

**Lead organisation: Irwell Valley Homes**

**Partner organisation: Bolton at Home**



## Statement of support

In 2016, development had stalled on 1.2 acres of brownfield land close to Bolton town centre. But when Irwell Valley Homes and Bolton at Home came together to share the risk of the £11m project, it once again became viable.

With Watson Homes as the shared contractor, and £2.6m from Homes England, the result has been the transformation of a derelict area into 118 new affordable homes in a sought-after location, which helped to kick-start the regeneration of Bolton town centre.

Bolton Council Leader, Cllr Martyn Cox, said: "The council's masterplan for Bolton Town Centre continues to deliver by converting empty brownfield sites into quality homes for local people. I am especially pleased about the positive environmental impact this development is having."

Joint working between Registered Providers is uncommon because of the extra complexities it can bring both legally and operationally. The successful delivery of this partnership required strong relationships and a coherent appetite to deliver in a strategic area for both organisations - from Board level

to on-site delivery and beyond into the joint scheme management arrangements.

The two organisations found new and innovative ways of working together which improved service delivery and quality by:

- Driving efficiencies in the building process.

One contractor working to a central specification saved both time and money. As not-for-profit housing associations, these savings were invested back into future development plans to help address housing need in other areas of Bolton and Greater Manchester.

- Responding swiftly to challenges.

Regular meetings at site level ensured the joint team were able to respond quickly to the challenges of the Covid pandemic and the implications it had on the supply and labour chains, as well as working regulations.

- Sharing skills and experience.

Experienced Project Managers from both organisations worked together to create a centralised works specification for the management of the scheme going forward - for example in areas like grounds maintenance and cleaning. This helped to achieve supply chain efficiencies and a consistent service to all residents.

Best practice evidenced by the partnership which has improved the wellbeing of the Bolton community included:

- Offering mixed tenures.

The partnership of two providers meant the development could offer four types of tenure, all of which have been let/sold - highlighting the local need.

- Helping people towards a home of their own.

The Rent to Buy and Shared Ownership homes targeted the economically active, offering them the first step on to the property ladder.

- Improving safety.

The apartment buildings were fitted with sprinkler systems as standard, embracing the commitment of Bolton at Home to do this across all of their new builds.

- Supporting the council's Climate Change strategy.

Through its location close to the town centre to promote low car usage and an active lifestyle; a flood attenuation system which reduces flood risk by capturing rainwater and releasing it slowly; a fabric first approach to construction to drive energy efficiency; and homes fitted with air source heat pumps and

mechanical ventilation heat recovery systems to reduce their carbon footprint.

- Realising local people's aspirations for a home of their own and meeting local affordable housing need.

Social housing tenant Toni, who previously lived in a privately rented flat which she couldn't afford to heat, said: "The bills are brilliant compared to my last home and it's really affordable to live here."

Lynn, who lives in the over 55s scheme in a ground floor apartment which meets her needs, said: "I'm better off by £100 a month due to lower energy bills and I love the location near the town centre. There's a great community - the neighbours all look out for each other."

## Outcomes and achievements

The partnership has:

- Re-ignited a stalled development.
- Kick-started wider town centre regeneration.
- Delivered 118 new homes offered at four different tenures including affordable rent (36 apartments), independent living for those aged 50 and over (25 apartments) rent to buy (40 apartments) and shared ownership (17 houses). This supports the creation of a sustainable community whilst meeting urgent housing need. Designed with modern urban living in mind, each home is constructed to the latest energy efficiency standards and has generously sized bedrooms, stylish kitchens and off-road parking.
- Improved access to Bolton town centre through improvements to local pathways and communal

space - opening up local amenities for residents and boosting trade for local businesses and leisure providers.

- Enhanced the environment by boosting biodiversity; improving access to green spaces which also promote healthy living; reducing flood risk and embracing low carbon technologies.
- Paved the way for another partnership development between Irwell Valley Homes and Bolton at Home. The registered providers are now working together on part of the multi-million-pound regeneration of the former Horwich loco works at Rivington Chase, through Lane End developments. Irwell Valley Homes will deliver 63 homes for £10.1m while Bolton at Home are building 53 for £8.2m

# Uplifting our local PRS - spotlight on Leigh neighbours

**Lead organisation: Wigan Council**



**Partner organisation: Leigh Neighbours Project**

## Statement of support

Since late-2020 the Council has taken an innovative, targeted approach to improving both the quality of Private Rented Sector (PRS) accommodation and the experiences of private tenants living in the community of Leigh West, an approach delivered in collaboration with our local partners the Leigh Neighbours Project - a resident-led, community development charity.

This specific community - of around 1,800 residential properties and 3,500 residents - was chosen due to a recent, sharp rise in the volume of PRS properties, with associated concerns in relation to the standard of such accommodation and its poor management, by perceived absentee landlords. This changing tenure profile was seen to exasperate existing community cohesion issues and antisocial behaviour. Through early conversations with Leigh Neighbours and time spent in the community, we identified the need for a tailored plan (alongside the Council's usual support to private landlords and tenants) to address the particular concerns of local residents, whilst tackling disengagement and the declining physical environment.

Over the past two years we have:

- Established a detailed knowledge base. We have utilised Council Tax data to map out all PRS properties, ensuring we have the current, full picture in respect of tenure make-up with all landlords identified. An in-depth household survey was also promoted and carried out in partnership with Leigh Neighbours, as we engaged with both private renters and homeowners to understand their experiences, and perception, in relation to the PRS.

- Employed a new, dedicated resource to work with the community. Following the Council's successful bid to Fair Housing Futures' Test and Learn Grant, a Tenant Champion was appointed to act as the voice and advocate for local PRS tenants, engaging with landlords in respect of issues and working with both tenants and landlords to increase knowledge and awareness surrounding their rights and responsibilities.

Regular drop-in sessions, door knocking, estate walkabouts and 'Clean-up days' have ensured that the Tenant Champion has become a visible, trusted presence in the community. The post-holder has been successful in building up relationships with tenants and connecting them to vital services, whilst working with a range of internal and external partners to improve the wellbeing of local residents: to include Housing Standards/Enforcement, Community Resilience (ASB) teams, Service Delivery Footprint Managers, local Councillors, charity partners and local resident groups. The partnership with Leigh Neighbours has underpinned the role, with jointly-hosted community events and shared engagement strategies.

- Advanced our influence and intervention in respect of the local PRS. We have established a real presence as a responsible managing agent and uplifted property condition through the Council's Ethical Lettings Agency (ELA) model. The ELA serves to take properties from private landlords and investors onto long-term leases, with the Council assuming all management and maintenance duties for the lease term; local tenants have the benefit of affordable rents (set in line with LHA rates) and a high standard of accommodation. Although the ELA scheme is operational throughout the Borough, targeted efforts and incentives have ensured a significant take-up within the Leigh Neighbours community. Some landlords have even benefited from improvement grants to bring properties up to the required lettable standard ahead of acceptance onto the leasing scheme.
- Worked in partnership to bring forward Community Led Housing. We are now advancing our partnership with the Leigh Neighbours Project further through the ELA lease model. Acting upon their commitment to improve housing conditions for local residents, Leigh Neighbours have used charity funds to purchase and renovate two - previously vacant and sub-standard - properties in the project area, to then lease to the Council on a 5-year term. The properties will be utilised for local families in housing need.

## Outcomes and achievements

Through the role of Tenant Champion, we have enhanced the community offer and opportunities for residents. A total of 483 hours were spent engaging with residents, from litter picks to drop-in sessions and home visits. We were able to reach out to 1,076 local residents, from light-touch engagement such as leaflets and surveys to community events and outreach work.

PRS tenants grew in confidence and resilience, feeling empowered to report issues to their landlords through the advocacy of the Tenant Champion; whereas initially there was little engagement and trust, by Year 2 our Champion was actively supporting 28 tenancies, facilitating the resolution of 20 tenancy and repair-related issues.

Our interventions have also seen significant improvements in the physical environment, through the uplifting of property and management standards. We have brought 8 properties in the project area onto the ELA, a range of incentives helping to encourage investment in the area. 4 properties have benefitted from refurbishment grants to ensure they were brought to a good lettable standard, whilst we also supported landlords with meeting the costs of essential safety checks. Tenants meanwhile were helped to make their new rented property a home, through support with furnishings, white goods and decoration.

# BEN CLAY AWARD FOR NEW IDEAS, APPROACHES AND INNOVATION

Ben Clay was a much-loved and highly regarded member of our housing family, who we sadly lost in March 2022. Those who loved, knew, and worked with Ben are still coming to terms with the loss of one of our brightest shining stars but are delighted to be able to recognise his contribution through this award in his memory.

This award recognises the housing associations, local authorities, and other housing providers that are pushing the envelope in terms of developing new ways to deliver housing services or projects and initiatives that can demonstrate innovative uses of technology or projects that have increased the adoption of technology, reducing digital inequality or exclusion.

## Housing delivery and investment plan

### Sunderland City Council



#### Statement of support

Sunderland City Council's Housing Delivery and Investment Plan (HDIP) is paving the way for a radical new approach to housing in the city, meeting the future needs of the city. With ambitious goals for acquiring and developing properties for affordable rent, the council aims to meet the needs of vulnerable residents, including older people and those living with disabilities. Assistive technology supports residents to live independently, enhancing the life chances of Sunderland people. And returning disused properties into attractive family homes is a key aim.

Over the last year, the plan has become a reality.

Forty years since the last council houses were built in Sunderland, new homes for vulnerable residents and growing families are now occupied. With assistive technology at their heart, digitally enabled homes are changing the lives of people across the city, providing new - and previously unrealised - life chances for elderly and disabled residents. With 50% more adults aged 65+ expected to be living with dementia in 2040 and a 3% population growth, with people 65+ growing by 31% over the same period, the need for more homes that will support older people is clear.

The £59m HDIP aims to achieve the following goals:

- 210 empty properties will be brought back into use over the next five years
- 193 new build bungalows will be delivered across the city
- 171 new homes - providing supported accommodation - built, converted or refurbished by 2025.

The HDIP is driving ahead, complementing the work of private housebuilders and social housing providers already operating in the city and ensuring the council is meeting the needs of its residents.

One key facet of the HDIP that makes this a standout project is the use of technology to enrich the lives of residents. Assistive Technology has been fitted

in many of the council's new homes, which means that a blended model of care and support can be implemented, ensuring everyone is enabled to lead the most independent life possible.

The council is focused on the needs of tenants and how the design of its new homes should work for them to live as comfortably and independently as possible.

For tenants in the council's Valiant Close who have physical disabilities and wider specialist support needs, 16 of the 17 bungalows built are Category 3 compliant with Building Regulations Part M4(3). This means they're fully wheelchair-user homes, each fully equipped with assistive technology and 5G provision which enable residents to live independently for longer, with support to raise their quality of life. They feature everything from smart doorbells to remote controlled lights, ensuring residents have assistive tech in place as an enabler.

And the city's drive to carbon neutrality will also be supported by sustainable dwellings. The homes are designed with the environment in mind. It's not just about the in-built features of the home, but about enabling residents to reduce their carbon footprint when they move in. That's why homes feature smart devices that help residents to reduce energy consumption, not only keeping bills down but helping save the planet in the process.

As well as housing, the HDIP has also delivered a new disability day centre, Valiant Centre, at Valiant Close - providing the charity Northeast Disabilities Resource Centre with a brand-new purpose-built premises to provide additional support to vulnerable residents. The bungalows that surround the centre are occupied by people with physical disabilities and special needs, ensuring they have ease of access to resources to help them. They are also Category 3 compliant, with 5G provision - again ensuring that those who live there enjoy a home that is custom built to meet their needs.

## Outcomes and achievements

Over the last 12 months:

- 35 new homes completed over the last 12 months
- 393 homes (of all kinds) either acquired, built, in design or under construction
- 79 supported accommodation properties secured
- 70% of bungalows target complete, under construction or set to be secured

The council has spent or committed £23m of the £59m allocated for this project. The returns have been rapid - each occupied bungalow represents a c.£11,000/ week saving in support costs, equating to a £2.2m benefit to adult social care budgets.

Over £1.6m capital Homes England funding has been secured over the last 12 months, which has accelerated development across the city, bringing the total amount secured to date to £5.451m.

But beyond the metrics, it is the impact on lives that has been most significant.

John Starkey, 65 lives with cerebral palsy and is a resident at Valiant Close.

He said: "It's absolutely amazing, the new centre and the fact I have a home so close to it. My new house is beautiful and is manageable for me. My last home had stairs and three bedrooms and - even though I am someone who never gives up - it was becoming difficult to live there on my own."

# MEES Project

## Wigan Council



### Statement of support

There are approximately 18,500 privately rented households across the Wigan Borough, and it is these households that are often most at risk of being poorly insulated, have inefficient heating systems and as a result can negatively affect the health of tenants, trigger fuel poverty and impact our climate through high emissions. Through a successful funding bid, the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) project was created. This was to target private rented properties with an EPC rating of E or below, and raise awareness on new rules surrounding energy efficiency in the private rented sector,

The four main areas covered by the MEES project were:

- Identification
- Engagement and Education
- Compliance and Enforcement
- Impact

**Identification:** A bespoke database was developed to record and track PRS properties and landlords, EPC status, compliance certification and landlord engagement to improve insight and intelligence on the condition of privately rented provision. This system cross referenced data from several existing council platforms such as council tax and enforcement as well external software that provided data on property age, condition, and EPC status. With this system we were able to identify properties that may not comply with the MEES regulations and target our engagement work.

**Engagement and Education:** A robust communications and engagement strategy was developed to support the MEES project. A social

media campaign started to raise awareness of work that was underway. Letters were sent out to all private landlords to formally inform them of their responsibilities under MEES. Energy events and landlord forums were also held, and merchandising was given out to encourage people to check their EPC by containing a QR code linked to the government EPC register website.

To help educate landlords on the importance of a more energy efficient property, the project introduced an innovative use of a thermal imaging drone and two handheld thermal imaging cameras, to visually demonstrate to a landlord, the areas of a property where heat loss occurs and areas requiring improvement. These were also used to investigate disrepair complaints especially on a roof, saving time and money to both the Council and the Landlord

The drone can access hard-to-reach places, making it essential and effective for future use within the team. Members of the team have received extensive training to operate the drone, which supports professional development and further heat loss projects for the Council in the future.

**Compliance and Enforcement:** The Council's Housing Standards Enforcement Policy and procedures were updated to include the MEES regulations. The Landlord Hub made compliance pro-active and easier with a reduction on staff time.

**Impact:** This pilot was highly successful and has now been embedded into our general day to day housing standards work. Officers are now easily able to show the heat loss and cold spots due to lack of proper insulation both to tenant and landlord. This has had a very positive effect and dramatically increased awareness. The drone has also been used on cases for other services, in particular a fire of a derelict property. By using the drone, we were able to negate the need for scaffold and staff to inspect the property with a saving of £30,000.

The project has successfully reduced emissions from the private rented sector, as well as vitally raising awareness on the need to prioritise energy efficiency standards on welfare and environmental issues.

Ian Irwin (Local Landlord) "It was truly amazing to see the thermal imaging picture and exactly where the heat loss was happening at my property. After seeing that I have just retrofitted it with external wall insulation. The Strategic and Private Sector Housing Team were brilliant."



## Outcomes and achievements

Wigan Council has successfully delivered all elements of the MEES project originally proposed and has surpassed all expectations:

- Directly engaged with 12,539 property owners
- 142 landlords improved the EPC rating of their property to an E or above, before property improvements the emissions associated with these properties was 688.4 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. Property improvements through the MEES project has resulted in savings of 292.1 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e. This is approximately 0.06% of the borough's emissions from the domestic sector. This may appear a small figure, however the MEES project was a modest 6-month programme, largely focused on engagement, education and communication.

- The use of the drone and thermal imaging equipment will continue to be used moving forward. As a result, in the last quarter alone this has been directly responsible for 7 EPC's being improved or put in place and 17 cases awaiting enforcement action
- Since April 2022 We have now reduced 5,278.2 Tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> through improvements made to properties.

We can assume from national studies that these improvements to the energy efficiency of people's homes will have a positive effect of their health also and reduced the risk of entering into fuel poverty due to reduced bills.

## New start - an innovative employment scheme

**Lead organisation: Karbon Homes**

**Partner organisation: Your Homes Newcastle, Bernicia, North Tyneside Council, Northumberland County Council**



### Statement of support

For the three months ending March 22, the highest unemployment rate estimate in the UK was in the North-East (5.0%). Covid-19 had sent many traditional North-East industries, that supplied high numbers of employments opportunities predominately to 25-64 year olds, into decline.

This made the opportunities for local residents to reskill into other industries essential for the region's economic recovery.

These factors were the driving force behind the development of 'Newstart', a paid work placement programme providing 5-month, 30-hour week opportunities for residents age 25+. The project is a collaboration between North of Tyne housing providers Karbon Homes, Your Homes Newcastle, Bernicia, North Tyneside Council and Northumberland County Council, with placements kept exclusively for residents living in their households.

Learning from the success of the Government's Kickstart employment scheme, Newstart acknowledged the need for a similar intervention which supported an underserved, 25+ demographic, helping eligible residents to achieve their career aspirations.

With no prior experience needed and access to ongoing advice and support from an employment advisor along the way, the programme has enabled residents to explore gateway career roles within a wide range of industries, including engineering, hospitality and construction, enhance their CVs, and build workplace confidence.

The programme is funded by the UK Government's Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) through the UK Community Renewal Fund with the North of Tyne Combined Authority as the lead authority.

### Project success

The programme, running from December 2021 to September 2022, set a target of providing 68 work placements. This target was exceeded, with 73 residents commencing a work placement across 25 local employers.

Residents were from varied demographics. 23% were categorised as 'economically inactive' and 69% were unemployed.

Although targets were outlined as a requirement, the employability support offered through the programme was about more than just numbers, but about positive outcomes.

The Newstart advisors worked diligently with employers to ensure they were offering the right roles and had the right support mechanisms for the project and participants.

One resident, 54 year-old Paul, was made redundant in 1988 and had found getting back in to employment challenging.

Paul said: "After being made redundant in the late 80's, I found it really difficult to get another job, it was just one of them where I think my face didn't fit. Just being given a chance through the Newstart programme was the biggest help ever and getting back into work has had a massive impact on me. It keeps me head sane and has brought me out of my shell."

#### Summary

Of the 73 placements, 36 residents have gone on to secure permanent roles with their placement employers. A further 13 have used the experience to secure roles with other companies.

For those who decided the career wasn't for them, support from their New Start advisor is ongoing, helping them explore other career avenues and additional training opportunities.

91% of residents have also completed or are undergoing some form of qualification and/or training. 88% with more than 1 qualification or training course and 36% with more than 2 qualifications or training courses. 76% have completed employability skills training on top of any other qualifications and/or training.

The Government CRF funding has prompted much more local agency around employability initiatives, which in turn gave project partners the scope to drive innovation and fashion an employability scheme of the future.

With Newstart the partners have uncovered a ground breaking employability model which is showing the

wider housing sector what can be achieved in the future. By moving away from projects heavily dictated by funding bodies, Newstart has shown what levelling-up can mean in reality.

Newstart is a paid work placement programme providing 5-month, 30-hour week opportunities for residents age 25+. The project is a collaboration between North of Tyne housing providers Karbon Homes, Your Homes Newcastle, North Tyneside Council and Bernicia, with placements kept exclusively for residents living in their households.

Newstart acknowledged the need for an employment initiative which supported an underserved, 25+ demographic.

The programme, which ran from December 2021 to September 2022, set a target of providing 68 work placements. This target was exceeded, with 73 residents commencing a work placement across 25 local employers.

Of the 73 placements, 36 residents have gone on to secure permanent roles with their placement employer. A further 13 have used the experience to secure roles with other companies.

For those who decided the career wasn't for them, support from their New Start employment advisor is ongoing, helping them explore other career avenues and additional training opportunities.

91% of residents have also completed or are undergoing some form of qualification and/or training. 88% with more than 1 qualification or training course and 36% with more than 2 qualifications or training courses. 76% have completed employability skills training on top of any other qualifications and/or training.

## Outcomes and achievements

Newstart is a paid work placement programme providing 5-month, 30-hour week opportunities for residents age 25+. The project is a collaboration between North of Tyne housing providers Karbon Homes, Your Homes Newcastle, North Tyneside Council and Bernicia, with placements kept exclusively for residents living in their households. Newstart acknowledged the need for an employment initiative which supported an underserved, 25+ demographic. The programme, which ran from December 2021 to September 2022, set a target of providing 68 work placements. This target was exceeded, with 73 residents commencing a work placement across 25 local employers. Of the 73 placements, 36 residents

have gone on to secure permanent roles with their placement employer. A further 13 have used the experience to secure roles with other companies. For those who decided the career wasn't for them, support from their New Start employment advisor is ongoing, helping them explore other career avenues and additional training opportunities. 91% of residents have also completed or are undergoing some form of qualification and/or training. 88% with more than 1 qualification or training course and 36% with more than 2 qualifications or training courses. 76% have completed employability skills training on top of any other qualifications and/or training.

# Tackling homelessness through partnership

**Lead organisation: WDH**

**Partner organisations: Various**



## Statement of support

WDH believes that everyone should be afforded a safe, warm home. However, it's clear this isn't the reality for many people across the country, Wakefield included.

At the time of this application, there are over 300 homeless applicants registered with WDH.

WDH has worked closely with partners across the Wakefield district to ensure that people are being supported to find a home and keep it.

Whilst the statutory duty to prevent homelessness is with the local authority, there is a gap in providing extensive, sustained, holistic wrap around support to address the wider determinants of health, including mental health support and help with finances.

Over recent years, WDH has formed excellent relationships with stakeholders, particularly local health partners.

By working closely with health, local authority and third sector partners, WDH has been able to identify and close any gaps in support, making sure that customers have an end to end support service when they need it, particularly the most vulnerable.

To ensure a truly holistic support service is available to customers, a range of health care professionals and clinicians work directly within WDH Housing teams on a secondment basis. These include Mental Health Navigators, Occupational Therapists and Health Care Support Workers. A Housing Coordinator, employed by WDH, is also placed within local mental health and acute care hospitals. The commission is designed to consider a patient's housing circumstance when they enter hospital so that they don't face any housing barriers that could stop them being safely discharged.

In 2020 / 2021 a study was carried out by the University of Sheffield NIHR School for public health research. The Wakefield Housing Support Evaluation (WhoSE) report was completed and detailed the impacts and outcomes from supporting interventions applied by the housing coordination model. It also gave a series of recommendations. One of these recommendations cited homelessness as a key issue and barrier to discharge.

As it was clear the Housing Coordinator model worked, WDH felt that applying the same theory to address this different customer need, could achieve a positive impact on customers' lives and reduce homelessness. WDH approached the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) with the proposals.

The Housing Coordinator Homeless (HCH) project also aims to reduce worklessness by getting homeless customers closer to the labour market. Other outcomes include improving their financial position and providing wellbeing and mental health support for up to 12 months. The ultimate outcome for the HCH is securing accommodation.

The HCH has allowed for innovation by proactively engaging with customers. This sits outside statutory obligations. Support can also be accessed for up to 12 months and not just 56 days.

The new approaches include sharing best practice with others across housing, health and the social care systems. The HCH meets with customers on their terms, in a place that they are comfortable. This has reduced barriers. A dedicated resource reaching out to those who are homeless, instead of waiting for them to approach and access support. The project is tailored and personalised and has been welcomed by all who have engaged so far.

The project has received interest from other partners and strategic forums and could be replicated elsewhere. The HCH concept has allowed for exploration of other workstreams that complement Wakefield's Health and Wellbeing Strategy for example a Housing Coordinator to provide perinatal support, ensuring new mothers have the right housing, wellbeing and mental health support. The same for those accessing respiratory services, asthma and COPD for example, ensuring living standards are not exacerbating conditions.

The HCH project is being embraced by all partners across the health housing and social care system.

## Outcomes and achievements

WDH agreed to work with 227 customers over a 12 month period from 1 February 2022. Referrals the HCH are made by work coaches at the DWP, the local authorities housing needs service and WDH also supports homeless customers on its own housing register.

To date the HCH has:

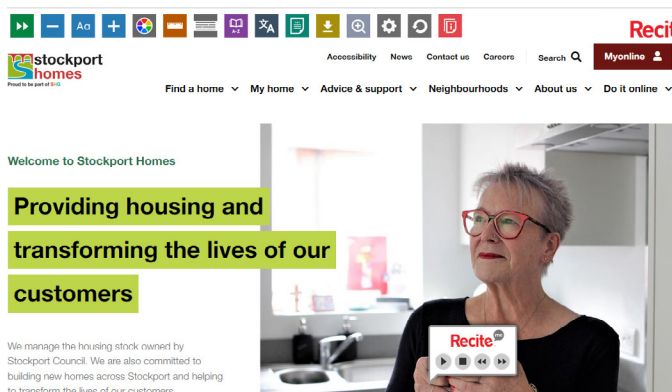
- Engaged with 109 customers.
- Secured 18 customers new accommodation.
- moved 24 customers closer to gaining accommodation. This includes ensuring the customer has appropriate ID and the correct housing priority banding.
- moved 15 customers closer to work. This includes completing work shops, writing CV's and working closely with community employment advisors.
- found 2 customer employment which is being sustained.
- improved the financial position of 28 customers. This includes unlocking grants and accessing hardship funds to clear debts as well as maximising income and accessing benefits.
- made 24 customers aware of how to live a healthier lifestyle. This includes food choices, eating on a budget and smoking cessation.
- ensured 3 social justice outcomes.
- Since 1 January 2021 to date, WDH has awarded over 1,000 priority homeless bandings and over 700 allocations to homeless customers.

# OUTSTANDING APPROACH TO COMMUNICATIONS

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.

## Marketing team at Stockport Homes Group

### Stockport Homes



### Statement of support

As well as managing over 12,000 properties on behalf of Stockport Council and private landlords Stockport Homes Group also manages Viaduct Housing, Three Sixty, SKYlight and their new marketing agency Marketing by Home.

The Marketing Team at SHG is committed to deliver outstanding communications and marketing support to all of SHG and their Marketing by Home clients. Their main project has been to grow and share their talents and marketing expertise in a unique, not for profit way.

By taking an entrepreneurial approach to communications, the Marketing Team at Stockport Homes Group (SHG) utilises digital platforms, hosts regular creative sessions, regularly reviews performance, networks with local organisations - but most importantly keeps the customer at the heart of everything they do.

The team measure their success through recognition, customer feedback and revenue targets. For example, Marketing by Home (SHG's new marketing agency)

has grown by over 75% since it opened its doors in February 2021.

The team also actively seek affordable digital solutions to aid communication projects. These include: Trello, Publer, Vueilo, SharePoint and Microsoft Teams. The use of digital platforms also contributes to the team's commitment to create a greener Borough and contribute to a carbon free GM (Greater Manchester) by going paperless and meeting virtually where possible.

The team are clearly passionate about the housing sector and supporting the local community. In fact, over the past year, they have also added social value to several of their clients and have even offered free CSR and marketing and communications support to OWLS a local domestic-abuse charity based in central Stockport.

The team also supports Manchester Athena - and the first #TalentsEverywhere podcast was launched in March 2022, and since then they have seen amazing growth on their social media platforms, website and communication within the partnership - 13,200 impressions!

The team also supported a local charity, Pure Innovations, with their new website, brand, and social media communications. Dave Wolfgang Ferrier, Director at Pure Innovations said: "One of the best things we have ever done is letting you shape and develop our marketing and profiles! Worth its weight in gold."

The Marketing Team at SHG have also recently redeveloped Stockport Homes website to improve customer experience. Prior to this project the team found that many of their customers were not completing the online forms on their website, and not reaching all of the relevant information they

needed. Through customer focus groups, strategic communication planning meetings and market research the team were able to increase the number of webforms completed in June 2022 by 75%.

By improving the Stockport Homes website, the team have increased the quality of their communications and tenant experience. The website is also accessible for difference abilities - meaning it meets the diverse needs and preferences of their tenants.

The team are also proud to be able to offer the Stockport Homes Group and their Marketing by Home client's opportunities to connect with other organisations in the local area. This innovative concept means that each organisation has the chance to

develop their service offering, communicate about key services in the area and essentially grow together.

The Marketing Team at SHG deserve to win 'Outstanding approach to communications' because they have evidenced how they can adapt communications for various businesses/organisations to help them connect with their customers and the local community.

The SHG team adapt communications for different audiences, (whether that is through email, social media, text or videos! Plus, much more!). The team are proud to support organisations who make a real difference to people and place.

## Outcomes and achievements

The redevelopment of Stockport Homes website and the creation of Marketing by Home (HOME) has been a real outstanding achievement and project for the Marketing Team at SHG. It truly is an agency like no other, offering marketing services and solutions to organisations that are not for profit, and therefore affordable and ethical.

This new division has also meant that Stockport Homes Group have been able to branch out into more commercial projects in the area, creating additional

jobs for the people of Stockport and inspire the marketing industry within Greater Manchester to focus on social impact and community-led projects.

Now in its second year of business, HOME has grown by over 75% since it opened its doors in February 2021. They have also recently been shortlisted as a Top 40 Gamechanger and successfully won awards and secured accreditations for their clients. For example, Pure Innovations won in the disability category at the UK Charity Awards.

# WDH on your street

## WDH



### Statement of support

In Summer 2022, WDH employees, management and Board members came together to deliver the association's most ambitious project in over a decade. Aiming to visit all 32,000 households in person, over the course of three months, to offer support and to reconnect, WDH launched the WDH On Your Street project.

All employees were given the opportunity to take part, visiting customers on their doorsteps to ask what matters most to them about where they live and to offer any support that they might need.

To make sure that every customer was given the same opportunity to share their views and to make sure a consistent customer experience was delivered, a mobile app was developed to prompt employees to ask specific questions, to capture tenant feedback and to make sure that any referrals for support, including emergency wellbeing support, were processed as quickly as possible.

Tenants were asked:

- What's important to you about your neighbourhood?
- Is there anything WDH can support you with over the next few months?
- Would you like us to email you our monthly tenant newsletter, WDH Online, which rounds up our latest news and guidance?
- Would you like to get involved in developing WDH services through one of our tenant groups?

The insight from these questions would:

- identify WDH's most vulnerable tenants and provide them with immediate support;
- provide an understanding of tenants' priorities, and how well WDH's services meet customer needs;

- help to inform strategic priorities to deliver services people want and need; and
- increase tenant engagement with WDH.

To deliver this ambitious project, a range of customer and employee communications channels were used.

#### Internal

As the timescale to complete the visits was challenging, it was important that employees were engaged, volunteering their support, alongside their 'day job'. Messaging focused on why it was important to visit and listen to tenants. This was delivered face to face, by video and in written communications from the Chief Executive and Executive Director of Housing.

Video and photography were key tools to share positive tenant and employee feedback, reassuring those who weren't used to meeting tenants directly.

Training videos and presentations were developed to give employees confidence and to ensure a consistent customer experience.

The WDH Employee Hub (intranet) was the primary internal campaign channel. A dedicated area was created to house all training videos and presentations, news and employee "selfies" to keep motivation high.

#### External

Customer communications included multi-channel activity, taking customer vulnerabilities, location and additional needs into consideration. The campaign featured employees to build trust and familiarity before they visited tenant homes.

Digital activity included website news and content, email newsletters, social media activity and tailored SMS messaging.

Traditional tactics included flyers notifying customers when they would be visited and a brochure for visiting team members to discuss with customers or to post as a calling card when there was no answer. This featured information on support services as well as a QR code so tenants could complete the survey in private if they preferred or they could call WDH's contact centre to complete it by phone.

Next steps include developing a report of the findings and press releases to share the information, sharing the findings and actions with tenants and ensuring those who want to be more involved with WDH are given the opportunity.

#### Customer comment

"It's showing that you're not just at the other end of the phone, you can see and talk to somebody in person and you're trying your best, and it's nice to know. I got the email, and I was expecting you, so I'm glad I was in to see you."

## Outcomes and achievements

WDH On Your Street was hugely successful and received positive feedback from tenants and employees throughout the campaign period and following the event.

All of the intended households were visited within the project timescales. This totalled 40,953 contact attempts.

Over 13,500 surveys were completed with or by customers (over 12,000 of which were completed in person).

Over 5,700 referrals were made for follow up support. This included financial support, wellbeing support, repairs or any other additional contact. 549 of these were emergency referrals which, without the WDH On Your Street visit, may have gone unreported, leaving the tenant unsupported.

Almost 2,000 tenants asked to be added to WDH's monthly email newsletter mailing list, supporting future communication with customers and taking the mailing list to over 22,500.

1,039 tenants said they wanted to be more involved with WDH, helping us to shape our services.

Over 2,000 visits to the campaign content on the WDH website.

WDH's Vision is to create confident communities. By understanding customers, what their priorities are and what really matters in their homes and their communities, WDH can continue to work towards this now and in the future.

# EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

In a rapidly changing environment, the need to deliver excellent service is more important than ever. This award recognises housing teams who go above and beyond to deliver truly outstanding customer service.

## WDH on your street

### WDH



### Statement of support

Following the difficult times customers had faced throughout the pandemic, WDH committed to support and reconnect with customers.

Employees, management and Board members came together to deliver the association's most ambitious project in over a decade. Aiming to visit all 32,000 households in person, over the course of three months. The project was known as WDH On Your Street.

It was an opportunity for all employees to visit customers 'on their street' to offer any support that they might need and to find out what matters to them about where they live.

A consistent customer experience was essential. All customers, regardless of where they live or who visited them, should be given the same information and the same opportunity to share their views.

It was also important that this came across naturally, as part of a friendly conversation rather than an 'interview'. Employees were provided with training in person, using PowerPoint presentations and using video. The training provided detailed information on the business and the support services available as

well as how to deal with more difficult situations which needed more urgent referrals. This was important to ensure that customers got the help they needed as quickly as possible.

Before employees visited, they were made aware of any particular customer needs and, where WDH was aware of ongoing relationships with customers, employees with the right skills and knowledge were asked to visit.

In order to speak to as many customers as possible, a communications approach was developed. Customer preferences, vulnerabilities and accessibility requirements were essential to the project.

Tenants received a leaflet telling them when WDH was in the area. This was followed by a SMS message a couple of days before the visit. If a customer wasn't home, a brochure was left featuring a QR code, linking to an online survey, as well as a telephone number customers could call to answer some questions over the phone.

The brochure also featured more details on the support services WDH offers and was used as a discussion point with customers by visiting employees.

Tenants were asked:

- What's important to you about your neighbourhood?
- Is there anything WDH can support you with over the next few months?
- Would you like us to email you our monthly tenant newsletter, WDH Online, which rounds up our latest news and guidance?
- Would you like to get involved in developing WDH services through one of our tenant groups?

The insight from these questions would:

- identify WDH's most vulnerable tenants and provide them with immediate support;



- provide an understanding of tenants' priorities, and how well WDH's services meet customer needs;
- help to inform strategic priorities to deliver services people want and need; and
- increase tenant engagement with WDH.

To ensure that employees saw the importance of reconnecting with tenants and were engaged with the project, volunteering their support, the project was 'fronted' by WDH Chief Executive and Executive Director of Housing.

Video and photography were key tools to share positive tenant and employee feedback, reassuring

those who weren't used to meeting tenants directly. This meant they were able to answer questions confidently and support customers consistently.

Over 5,700 referrals were made for support, including financial support, wellbeing support, repairs etc. 549 were emergency referrals. Without the visit, may have gone unreported, leaving the tenant unsupported.

Customer comment

"WDH do a good job, they're polite, they communicate well with residents, and they do try to help you out as much as they can. Anytime I've called WDH they've come straight out to help me, and you can't ask for much more than that."

## Outcomes and achievements

WDH On Your Street was hugely successful and received positive feedback from tenants and employees throughout the campaign period and following the event.

All of the intended households were visited within the project timescales. This totalled 40,953 contact attempts.

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1,039 tenants said they wanted to be more involved with WDH, helping them to shape our services.

WDH's Vision is to create confident communities. By understanding customers, what their priorities are and what really matters in their homes and their communities, WDH can continue to work towards this now and in the future.

# Customer services team

## Stockport Homes Group



### Statement of support

In a rapidly changing environment, the need to deliver excellent customer service is more important than ever and at Stockport Homes we have adapted our services to meet the needs of our tenants.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Stockport Homes visited tenants every three years, but since the pandemic we now check in with our tenants via phone or in person - depending on their needs.

This targeted approach is more efficient and works well for our tenants. It has increased our focus on tenants who may not be managing their tenancy well, and most importantly it has increased the support we can provide.

To ensure we are meeting the needs of our customers we regularly produce a report to help us prioritise those in need. This includes key indicators which may suggest that customer may be in need of additional support. This includes customers:

- Where there has previously been poor property condition issues, a visit is made 12 months after the case has been closed to ensure the improvement has been maintained
- Tenants who have not contacted SHG for a repair within the last two years

- Tenants who have had no contact with the Housing Officer, Supported Housing Officer or ASB team in the last three years
- The gas supply has been capped

Since lockdown we have further strengthened the importance of having an 'eyes wide open approach.' Operatives undertaking repairs in customers' homes are encouraged through 'tool box talks' to report any cause for concerns through to Housing Officers for them to follow up with a home visit if operatives identify any poor property condition or signs of fuel poverty. This doesn't replace our safeguarding processes but is an important part of our front line offer where we see it that it is everyone's responsibility to identify and report any concerns that may indicate our customer may need some help and support.

The adapted approach has really helped to target visits to the right customers. Housing Officers then use the information to make customer contact to engage with customers to identify and address any support needs.

Customers have told us that they prefer the hybrid approach. Some customers found it difficult to agree home appointments, so the telephone contact has been convenient for them. It has also been possible to do the telephone contacts during a wider time range and this has reduced any health and safety issues. Some customers still prefer a home visit because, for example, they want to discuss repairs, or their local area and this request will always be met. There are numerous examples of positive customer feedback. One couple sent in a thank you card for the positive and professional support they received from their Housing Officer, they wrote: "To CIH Northern Awards Claire, we are so grateful for all your help and support." In such challenging times we are so proud to receive such positive feedback in recognition of the care and compassion our officers demonstrate to help our customers.

### Outcomes and achievements

Since April Housing Officers who are responsible for these contacts have completed 2147 tenancy contacts. Compared to before Covid this targeted approach has increased the number of visits where an issue is identified from 16% of visits to 50.1% of visits. This is beneficial for the customer and improves the effectiveness of Housing Officers time. Issues identified have included customers living alone who want more support, referrals to money advice, customers who want to move, including downsizing and customers who may benefit from the supported

housing service. Customers have appreciated the proactive support that has come from these visits.

The visits have also allowed tenancy breach issues to be identified such as property abandonment and tenancy fraud. The contacts have also supported customers who are in rent arrears or who have wanted support on cost-of-living issues such as energy costs.

The greater targeting of these visits using customer data (in-line with GDPR) has really improved this service for customers and been more efficient and effective for staff.

# EXCELLENCE IN CULTURAL CHANGE AND TRANSITIONING

This award is open to organisations that have achieved a transformation or turnaround in their culture and can demonstrate excellent results.

## Box Tree Cottage

Langley House Trust



### Statement of support

Since the 1960s Box Tree Cottage has delivered stable, supported accommodation, for adult men leaving custody or who are involved with Probation. The hostel style provision provided 24-hour support, and for men who were able to move into the community with more independence, Box Tree offered an extended service in dispersed housing within the community.

When the existing contract drew to a close Langley took the opportunity to review the needs that Box Tree met and considered whether those had changed. The opportunity arose for the hostel to become an Independent Approved Premises (IAP), commissioned by the Ministry of Justice, and for the community-based service to be retained as a separate Intensive Housing Management service.

Any significant transition brings risks and the preparation that went into this reconfiguration of the historic Box Tree Cottage service was substantial and by necessity, careful. Stakeholder consultation was thorough, and staff embarked on a consultation process as job roles were going to be very different

for the IAP. The new roles demanded an enhanced level of risk management training and greater familiarity with the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ) systems and processes for running an IAP, where public protection is the overriding principle. Langley's senior team spent time working through the implications of overseeing an MoJ service, whilst retaining the essence of what Langley brings; Langley's cultures and values are integral to its operations and underpin its success. That was not something the team was willing to lose but equally recognised the change in culture would have an impact on Box Tree as an IAP.

Langley had to consider the implications for the remaining 24 IHM beds in the community and whether these would be negatively impacted by the transformed hostel provision; would the more defined association with the Ministry of Justice discourage referrals into the continued IHM service in the community? How could Langley use its existing relationships with key strategic partners and stakeholders to maintain confidence in the IHM service that is also desperately needed within Bradford? There was a recognition of the risk in neglecting this vital service whilst putting so much energy into establishing the transitioned one as an IAP.

Langley's strengths lie in building relationships, both internally and externally; another is in our staff's commitment to prioritising the needs of its clients.

Internally local managers engaged strongly with the vision for Box Tree Cottage, which had been well defined and communicated. Despite some managers being personally impacted by role changes, the drive to support and encourage staff was evident throughout. The result was a team for both sides of the service, the new IAP and the continuing community based IHM service, which retained all but one of Box Tree Cottage's staff group. IAP staff were supported

by high quality Ministry of Justice training and learned the importance of being led by risk management plans, for example.

Externally strategic partners were assured by Langley's commitment to transition planning for all existing clients and working to ensure that anyone who would be affected by this transformation, was supported into suitable alternatives.

Effectively meeting the needs of clients will always involve a degree of adaptability and willingness to

evolve; meeting the needs of strategic partners and stakeholders is no different.

There is a confidence amongst partners that Box Tree's IHM provision is well equipped to support hard to place clients and the culture which marks Langley out as different has been retained within this service and rolled into the new IAP. Managers straddle both services, which enables the consistency of Langley's values to be shared across each of Box Tree's very different services.

## Outcomes and achievements

Reputationally since April 2022 when the new arrangements began, Box Tree Cottage has gone from strength to strength; 24 bed spaces within the community have continued to see high occupancy, usually with only one or two vacant at any time and the demand for more community based IHM beds has prompted an executive team commitment to increasing the service in 2023.

An example of feedback follows:

'As a Senior Probation Officer/MAPPA manager within Bradford Probation Service, I have had numerous people on probation who have been placed at Box Tree (Langley House Trust) as they required high risk

accommodation provision on release from prison. There have been some real successes with regard to their resettlement and risk management. They work closely with Probation and partner agencies to ensure the person is accommodated, that their individual support needs are met and crucially that they begin their reintegration into the local community with a growing sense of identity and inclusion, which is such key part of desistance from further offending.'

The success of this service's transformation lies in a clear vision, strongly articulated, involving the right people, including strategic partners, and prioritising relationships as highly as operational activity.

# EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

This award is for organisations that have revitalised the community or neighbourhood they serve. It also recognises that physical improvements go hand-in-hand with social and economic developments to make a real difference in people's lives.

## Completing the transformation (final piece of the puzzle)

Leeds City Council



### Statement of support

Leeds City Council will shortly deliver 28 new council homes on a vacant 0.6 ha brownfield site in Holbeck, South Leeds. United Living, appointed via a, YORbuild competitive tender are constructing the new homes as part of the Council Housing Growth Programme. The objectives of which is to deliver around 1,500 new social housing units over the next 5 years of high quality and design, sustainable and highly energy efficient.

The site is in the vicinity of St Matthew's Church, a Grade 2 Listed Building, currently used as a community centre, and its church yard.

The church and the adjacent Holbeck Moor Park provided a natural key focal point for the local community. Its location, adjacent to the M621 and provision of local bus routes and shops, makes this site a desirable location to live and work.

Built using a timber-frame construction process, elements of the properties have been constructed

offsite, in a factory-controlled setting, before transporting them to site for assembly. All homes are for affordable rent and include both apartments and family housing. All 28 are expected to be handed over early 2023:

- 14 x 1 bed apartments (2person)
- 10 x 2 bed houses (4person)
- 4 x 3 bed houses (5person)

Housing mix was determined by both local housing need, existing provision in the area, and in meeting future provision. Allowing for both single couples and those wishing to start, or to extend their family, the ability to find a home within the area they wish to live.

Built to enhanced M4(2) standards has allowed greater accessibility and for future adaptation according to the tenants needs, also meeting Nationally Described Space Standard. In tackling fuel poverty, several energy efficient, conservation and environmental measures have been included:

- Highly efficient space and hot water heating systems
- High levels of insulation within the structure
- A range of water saving devices
- High levels of air tightness to prevent unnecessary heat loss and drafts
- Low energy lighting
- 30% more efficient windows & doors
- Solar panels fitted on south facing apartment block

To ensure sustainability of local wildlife, several green and biodiversity measures have been included, such

as: Hedgehog Highway, Sparrow Terrace, nesting bricks, Swift Boxes, Bat Boxes, and a Wildlife Habitat to be located on site. Family homes have secure private garden areas, and apartments provide for communal green-space providing a sense of ownership within the area. S106 funding released from the development will be used to assist in upgrading the local park adjacent, to the benefit of new and existing communities.

Whilst not within the boundaries of the larger South Bank Leeds regeneration, with its high-quality design, and fantastic external features, the development supports the objectives of transforming ex-industrial inner-city areas of Leeds.

The development at Meynell Approach, successfully completes the regeneration of this area, which 10 years ago was predominately high-rise tower blocks

of high density. Complementing the PFI project adjacent to the site delivered some years before by LCC and Keepmoat, on Holbeck Moor Road. In delivering a further 28 high-quality, energy efficient housing provision on this site, communities will be strengthened further, and local businesses will be given opportunity to thrive.

LCC has worked with several partners and key stakeholders in the design and construction of the scheme. Successful partnership working was critical when in construction during the pandemic. Working closely with the Contractor, their architects William Saunders, and local housing and planning colleagues, ensured both existing and projected local housing need could be met. Homes were designed and built with future proofing, low maintenance and high energy efficiency, (low fuel running costs) in mind.

## Outcomes and achievements

Whilst the development has not yet completed, several key project outcomes and achievements have already been met, particularly in supporting local trades and business, strengthening communities, creating jobs and in supporting educational learning. Under the Construction contract, United Living ensured key Employment and Skills targets were met. 15 existing apprenticeships were safeguarded, and 4 new jobs created, two of which employed from the local area.

- Several Staff and Student Development days with local colleges - (approx. 80 students) on Modern Methods of Construction.
- Supply chain Breakfast event with sub-contractors and supply chain partners. Presentations included grants, funding and business support,

Apprenticeships, Training & Skills support, and the on-site work experience process to promote the need for our partners to provide Work Experience opportunities for people wanting to enter the industry.

- Educational engagements with the local College of Building including site visit and Careers advice to 24 students.
- Approximate spend with sub-contractors/suppliers from the Yorkshire region - 83%

United Living as the principal contractor, has positively engaged with the local community throughout the development. Including engaging Leeds Wood Recycling to collect waste wood from site, thus reducing waste and assisting a local community Social Enterprise.

# Sale West estate regeneration

## Irwell Valley Homes



### Statement of support

The regeneration of the Sale West estate is the biggest of its kind in the region for more than a decade.

The £50m investment plan includes delivering new 263 homes; enhancing the wider estate with a focus on green spaces and biodiversity; and driving up the quality of 1,100 existing homes.

Working with the local community to shape the proposals and realise their ambitions for their estate, the project also involves significant community investment to create opportunities and boost the economic mobility of those who live there.

“You’re as big as your environment”.

The words of apprentice Jayden who is working on the regeneration of the estate where he lives. Things could have been very different for him, having dropped out of school with no qualifications and unsure what to do with his life.

But after seeing changes afoot on the estate, he was determined to play a part in the legacy being created there. After completing a youth education programme supported by Irwell Valley Homes’ charitable investment fund, Jayden achieved the qualifications he needed to secure an apprenticeship with the groundworks contractor and has never looked back.

Jayden’s story epitomises the holistic approach being taken at Sale West, not only to drive up the quality of existing homes and meet the urgent housing need, but to enhance the local environment and create opportunities for residents.

Improving the quality and mix of homes

The regeneration has so far delivered 39 new homes for social rent in phase 1 - a mixture of two-three and four -bedroom houses and one-and two-bedroom apartments. Over the next year a further 40 affordable homes will be completed, including 10 accessible apartments with level access; wet room bathrooms and wider doorways, corridors and turning circles.

It has also driven up the quality of the existing 1,100 homes through new roofs and kitchens.

### Enhancing the environment

Estate improvements include upgrading roads, car parks and pedestrian linkages. The environmental enhancements underway include:

- Creating five new natural play areas and a nature trail.
- Delivering horticulture projects with the community allotment group and local schools.
- Installing bird boxes, swift bricks, bat boxes, bug hotels and hedgehog highways to boost biodiversity.
- Working with residents to create new street plans - improving access to quality public realm.
- Solving problems with surface water by improving the ginnels and planting more.

### Working with partners

Harnessing multiple funding streams from different regional and national partners - including Homes England, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Trafford Council - has been crucial.

With Bloomberg’s analysis of the progress of the levelling up agenda highlighting Altrincham and Sale West as an area which is ‘unchanged or falling’ since 2019 - and with the cost-of-living crisis hitting communities hard - regeneration like this has never been more important.

Engaging with local residents and the lottery-funded Big Local group ‘Our Sale West’ has also been important to mitigate the challenges of construction within an existing estate.

### Investing in the community

Highlights of community investment activity include:

- Supporting local people onto the HITZ youth education programme (which Jayden completed) to help them into work or training.
- Working with Our Sale West to deliver free school meals through the local community café; a weekly ready meal service for 30 vulnerable residents and a subsidised lunch club for older people.
- Funding weekly Citizens Advice sessions.
- Hosting students with learning disabilities for work experience placements at the café.
- Funding the start-up costs of a social supermarket hub, providing access to low-cost groceries.
- Contributing towards a new central playground.
- Funding a youth engagement project through Foundation 92.

## Outcomes and achievements

- 39 new homes for social rent and 40 due in 2023.
- 607 new roofs
- 35 new kitchens.
- 73 new street signs
- 243 improved parking bays
- 135 new trees
- 3 community horticulture projects
- 7,000 free school meals.
- £100,000 of income unlocked via Citizens Advice.
- 480 hours' work experience in the café.
- 80 regular users of the social supermarket.
- 60 youngsters attending multi-sports sessions each day during the summer holidays.

"With food costs like they are, it's so good to have on the doorstep." Ashlea, on free school meals

"For a year, my son, daughter and I were in a privately rented one-bedroomed flat. It was too small for a Christmas tree. This year, there will be decorations as we celebrate in our new place." Steve, on his new home.

"This is a very valuable placement to us. All the staff at the cafe are helpful, kind and patient." Jeannie, on work experience.

"Making the bird boxes for Sale West is great because I'm benefiting where I live." Tammy, who received a grant to start a wood carving business.

"Growing on the allotment is helpful given how much food prices have gone up." Kerry, Chair of Sale West allotment who received some DLUHC funding.

# Building homes and community cohesion in Leeds

## Leeds City Council



## Statement of support

The Tarnside and Mardale new build council house scheme will deliver 41 houses in Seacroft, East Leeds. The development is comprised of four sites, all of which were former housing sites. The previous housing had gradually fallen into poor condition and was demolished, and the subsequent areas of green space received little investment. These low value sites had no alternative means of development and Leeds City Council brought them forward for council housing, with construction commencing in May 2021.

Seacroft has long had a large supply of council housing, with the post-war local authority planning for it to be a "satellite town within the city boundary". There is a strong emphasis on physical regeneration, with many houses currently being built by private developers within the ward boundaries.

The LSOA (Lower Super Output Area) that the site is located within is ranked 211 out of 32,844 LSOAs in

the Index of Multiple Deprivation, which is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas across England. As such, the Council focuses significant resources on targeted community work in Seacroft, and this development contributes through its physical and social regeneration.

Additional investment in the Seacroft area was brought about by the commuted sums for the scheme. A total of £70,000 was allocated to carry out improvements to a local park. £53,000 was spent on supplying and installing play equipment, fencing, safer surfacing and seating at Peace Park, with the remaining £17k to be spent on improving access and safety of the site for users.

All homes are being to the Leeds Standard specification, incorporating:

- 'Fabric first' approach, meaning we will achieve high insulation levels (60% increase compared to current building regulations)
- High Performing Windows to minimise heat loss and maximise natural light
- All homes will be at least 20% more energy efficient than building regulations
- Homes built to Nationally Described Space Standards
- Water saving devices
- A 10% net gain in biodiversity.

Leeds City Council is working with Wates Construction Ltd to deliver the scheme and is delighted that Wates Family Enterprise Trust have already awarded £11,500 in grant monies to local community groups. At the



time of writing, five grants have been awarded (2x £5,000 and 3x £500) and will contribute towards valuable social causes such as food pantry initiatives, social action projects, residential weekend trips for children and the purchasing of kits and equipment for junior sports teams. The contractor has worked in partnership with council staff with strong community ties to facilitate the successful applications and bring much-needed funding to groups in Seacroft.

With assistance from the Council, Wates Construction Ltd hosted a Community Open Day in October 2022. Around 70 nearby residents and allocated tenants were invited to look around the first units that are nearly ready so they can see the design, room sizes and get a general feel for the new homes. The scheme offers different futureproof house types to meet varied resident needs. This includes adapted one bed

bungalows, and the allocated tenants who attended the Open Day were blown away by the quality and accessibility their new homes will offer.

Additionally, Wates Construction Limited have been working with schools in the local area and will be resurfacing the carpark of a primary school in the Christmas holiday period, following on from contributing skips that were used at a Community Clean-Up Day.

The new streets brought about by the development were also named by local primary schools and community groups who won a street-naming competition run by the Council, giving children the opportunity to participate and engage. The successful schools and groups will be invited to attend the final handover of completed properties.

## Outcomes and achievements

Grants- As mentioned above, a total of £11,500 awarded to local groups (2 x £5,000 and 3x £500) to contribute towards valuable social causes such as food pantry initiatives, social action projects, residential weekend trips for children and the purchasing of kits and equipment for junior sports teams.

Social value targets achieved to date - 20 site visits and workshops, 2 work experience placements, 2 new apprenticeships who have done a combined 169 weeks, 10 new jobs created.

Committed sums - As detailed above, a total of £70,000 was allocated to the Parks and Countryside department to carry out improvements to a local park. £53,000 was spent on supplying and installing play equipment, fencing, safer surfacing and seating at Peace Park, with the remaining £17k to be spent on improving access and safety of the site for users.

# SUSTAINABILITY IN HOUSING

The housing sector, like many others, is faced with the challenge of cutting carbon emissions to achieve the Governments' net-zero targets by 2050.

This award celebrates organisations demonstrating they have overcome some significant challenges in cutting carbon emissions. Applicants may consider new developments, retrofit projects, or other initiatives that have helped reduce carbon emissions.

## Sustainability

### Livv Housing Group



#### Statement of support

Livv Housing Group is four years into its net zero journey and has set itself a target for all of its homes to have an EPC rating of C or above by 2025, ahead of the Government's target date of 2035.

Its homes are predominantly in Knowsley, the second most deprived borough in the country, and has prioritised retrofitting those which are fuel-poor.

It has improved thermal efficiency through things like loft, wall or floor insulation, helping to make homes cost less to run, as well as focusing on energy-efficient boilers.

By the end of March 2023, Livv will have invested another £4 million, with funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, through the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and its own investment, in retrofitting work. This includes renewable energy opportunities for its homes along with thermal efficiency improvements.

Livv's belief is that tackling the issue through the intelligent use of data is fundamental. Working with its energy assessors, it has gathered the EPC data on every one of its homes. It now knows exactly what

energy measures are currently installed in each home and what features they need to become net zero. And, crucially, how much this will cost.

This puts Livv in a unique position amongst social housing providers and this data pool is essential to establish a clear baseline position and to help devise a robust investment plan.

It is also working with its software providers to create an automated system which contains the EPC data of each home, which updates each time a feature in the property is changed to automatically recalculate the EPC certificate SAP rating. Doing this will help to create a live, accurate programme of work needed to deliver net zero.

From 2025 Livv anticipates that it will be investing a further £120m as well as utilising partnerships to drive innovation.

It has collaborated with businesses supported by the Low Carbon Eco-Innovatory team at Liverpool John Moores University for several years now and this partnership has been crucial for the research they do, as well as partnering on innovative ideas.

One product trial that has just completed with the help of the university is an eco-window blind called the 'Flutter Shutter', developed by a small company comprising three sisters based in south Liverpool.

The blinds are designed to stop up to 70 per cent of heat escaping through windows, made from a combination of materials including 97 per cent natural wood harvested from managed forests. Following this successful trial, the product has now been given a formal energy performance rating and is expected to become more widely available on the market for other housing providers to use.

Livv is currently building a £2.2m housing scheme in Kirkby which has 15 new affordable homes, where it will be piloting three different energy-efficient systems

to explore the short-to-mid-term impacts on customers of moving to a net zero development programme.

Homes will be built to deliver to the new Part L (Conservation of fuel and power) of the Building Regulations, delivered with and without gas heating systems. The remaining homes will be built to the assumptions attached to the New Future Homes

Standards with air source heat pump heating systems.

After these homes are completed Livv will be working with LJMU on a 12-month pilot scheme that will provide a live analysis of the impact on customers and solutions required to deliver improvements to carbon reduction in the future.

## Outcomes and achievements

In 2022 Livv Housing Group was proud to win bronze in the Climate Action: Race to Net Zero category at this year's Global Good Awards for its innovative approach to net zero.

In the last 12 months it achieved a year-on-year reduction of 14% in its building energy consumption (689,606 kWh) as well as a 41% reduction in electricity carbon emissions and a 13% reduction in gas carbon emissions. Livv has now achieved a cumulative impact over three years, of a 20% energy consumption reduction and a 50% carbon emissions reduction. This is reported through its independently-assessed Streamlined Energy & Carbon Reporting.

The latest ONS data shows that at the end of March 2022, only 43 per cent of all existing homes in England are rated EPC C or above. Livv is proud to say that to date, it has achieved that on more than 75 per cent of its homes.

Last year, in those properties at greatest risk of fuel poverty, Livv replaced 937 boilers with modern A+ rated condensing boilers saving customers up to £400 a year on their bills, which will make a crucial difference this winter in particular.



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