



Chartered  
Institute of  
Housing  
Scotland

# SCOTLAND HOUSING AWARDS 2023

## Good Practice Compendium

Sharing the lessons learnt from the  
Scotland Housing Awards 2023

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# Welcome

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Welcome everyone to the 2023 Scotland Housing Awards. The awards tonight and the publication of this compendium celebrate the great work that housing professionals are providing across Scotland.

We all know the issues we face with inflation and interest rates at levels not seen since the 2008 financial crisis; tenants are facing higher costs, with a consequent rise in debt and homelessness rates and rising mortgage rates are brining real distress to existing homeowners faced with remortgaging. The cost of living crisis is now just factored into everyday life.

But the breadth of challenges we face as a profession is exactly why these awards matter so much. It gives us a chance to celebrate each other, to learn from each other and to develop new ways of working that were previously unimaginable. When faced with a problem you and your teams are continually innovating and

developing new ways of working, everyone of this year's entries tells us this much. That is why the Awards, and the Good Practice Compendium, has become the must have record of the sector's achievement.

I am particularly pleased that tonight we are recognising the work and achievement of Marion Gibbs with an award in her name for equality in housing. Marion passed last year and many of you at tonight's awards knew her much better than I did but what I did know is that her commitment and passion for improving access to housing and ending homelessness was unmatched. I hope tonight's award in her name is a fitting recognition for the impact she had in the housing sector in Scotland.

Good luck the candidates shortlisted in that category and indeed all the categories. You are all worthy winners.



**Callum Chomczuk**

National director  
CIH Scotland

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# EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

Sponsored by:



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.

## Fyne Energy Gift Aid

**Lead organisation: Fyne Homes Housing Association**

**Partner organisation: Fyne Energy**



### Statement of support

In 2022 Fyne Homes received their share of the first-year profits from their subsidiary Fyne Energy, which had established 3 wind turbines to generate revenue for the local community of Argyll and Bute. The profits of the turbines are split evenly between the Glenbarr Community, Fyne Futures and Fyne Homes Housing Association.

The first-year profit for each of the beneficiaries was 130k, and Fyne Homes original plan was to utilise those funds for capital works, investing in property upgrades. However, established board member and Chair of Fyne Energy Tony Harrison, felt strongly that the cost-of-living crisis should be a key consideration in the allocation of these funds, specifically looking at assisting with the impact of energy costs given the source of funding. The Fyne Homes Management Committee and senior team were extremely keen to support the suggestion that the funds for this first year should assist with tenant hardship, and in a way that directly helped each individual household.

After much discussion Fyne Homes Management Committee agreed to a proposal in principle and asked staff to explore the possibility of distributing the funds to tenants directly. The staff were tasked with establishing the legal and regulatory position, creating a suitable formula to make payments as fair as possible; and to give Committee a range of options on how tenants could receive these funds.

A working group was set up with key members from all departments, including Welfare, Energy and Tenant Participation specialists. They then explored the options for consideration by Committee.

The first steps involved establishing what was permissible in terms of regulation, legalities, and covenants. Auditors, solicitors, lenders, and the Scottish Housing Regulator were consulted in respect to this.

Next staff looked at the method of distribution and how they could ensure the award was proportionate and fair, given the varying household compositions, incomes, and heating types. After looking at several options the mechanism recommended to Committee was payment by property size, as the funds were primarily to support energy costs and impact on the cost of living.

Staff also researched the various mediums by which the funds could be distributed. It was critical that mechanism for receiving the funds was easy and accessible for tenants. Fyne Homes has c1600 households across remote rural mainland and two island communities. The Argyll and Bute aging population demographic, and the remoteness of some of the properties means not every household has easy access to the range of services other communities may have. Five different options were presented to Committee with a recommendation that the Allpay Post Office Pay-Out service was used, as even the smaller remote communities had access to a Post Office in nearby villages or stores.

Although a relatively small organisation, Fyne Homes structure and staffing levels lends itself well to a customer centric approach, which means continual engagement with customers creating a good understanding of their needs. Fyne Homes had been undertaking regular welfare calls with their more vulnerable tenants since the beginning of covid. These had continued as both the tenants and staff gained from these regular and personal interactions. There are also dedicated welfare and energy officers proactively contacting tenants, in addition to their

tenant participation programme which also has a full-time member of staff. These engagements coupled with their regular survey feedback routes and day to day interactions with housing and technical officers were telling Fyne Homes clearly that tenants were experiencing increased hardship, which was exacerbated by the winter period.

All tenants received a letter in mid-December 2022, with the amount they were being awarded and instructions on how to access it.

## Outcomes and achievements

The decision to share the funds directly with tenants was not only extremely well received by the tenants themselves, but also by staff. The calls flooded in, mostly to thank Fyne Homes, but also to confirm that the letter was genuine. Many of the staff reported emotional and heart-warming interactions with their tenants. One staff member told how their tenant video called them to show them their full freezer for the Christmas period as they had been able to buy food, which they had not had the money for. Other tenants reported topping up their gas and electric and the relief that this would alleviate some of the worry over

the festive season when they would be home more using their utilities.

1590 tenants benefitted from the funds over 118k was allocated directly to tenants.

This whole organisation approach saw the teams pull together to identify, discuss, and work through all the considerations, pitfalls, and barriers.

As a result of the success of the project Fyne Homes Committee have also approved the use of a smaller fund for 2023 which will be used for emergency welfare issues.

# Wheatley's Approach to Fire Safety and Prevention

## Wheatley Group



## Statement of support

Wheatley Group is Scotland's leading housing, care, and property-management organisation. As the largest and most diverse landlord in Scotland, we recognise the crucially important role we have in ensuring our customers are safe in their homes.

We know across the UK hundreds of preventable fire deaths and injuries occur every year in places where people should feel safe - their homes. We recognise the important role we have in ensuring our homes are constructed, managed and maintained in a way which maximises fire safety for our customers.

Wheatley Group's Fire Safety Team set a goal to

reduce the number of accidental dwelling fires in Wheatley Group properties by 10% over a five-year period (2021-2026). Over the last year, the Group's accidental dwelling fires have reduced significantly by 28%. This was a result of the outstanding work carried out by our Fire Safety Team through conducting person-centred risk assessments/home fire safety intervention visits and by holding engagement sessions in our communities.

In order to reduce accidental dwelling fires across the Group, customer engagement was paramount. The Fire Safety Team, with the help of Housing colleagues and through partnership working with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, identified vulnerable customers and those at risk of fire due to physical, cognitive or mental impairments as well as lifestyle factors.

The case study below highlights the importance of working together with our partners:

The Group installed a misting system in one of our customers properties who had been identified as being vulnerable and at risk of fire by our Fire Safety Officers, following a person-centred risk assessment, due to her poor mobility, heavy smoking in bed, and excessive alcohol consumption.

After the misting system was installed, the customer had a small fire in her bedroom due to dropped smoking materials. The misting system activated and



extinguished the fire. The customer survived the fire and there was minimal damage to the property. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service stated the situation could have been devastating if this system and other fire prevention measures had not been in place.

Vulnerable customers were identified by Housing Officers through customer conversations or through previous call outs or visits conducted by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. This information was then passed onto the Fire Safety Team to engage with the customer and arrange a visit to the customer's home.

A Fire Safety Officer from Wheatley's Fire Safety Team would visit the customer and would engage with them by asking fire-related questions to gain an understanding of the customer's lifestyle and habits. An inspection of the property would also be carried out to assist with identifying suitable fire prevention control measures.

The Fire Safety Officer would provide the customer with fire safety advice and would determine if further control measures were required to reduce the risk of fire.

The Fire Safety Team have a range of products that can be issued to our customers free of charge to help reduce accidental dwelling fires and make the customer safer in their home. Examples of our products include air fryers, fire retardant bedding, ashtrays, smoking aprons, fire retardant mats, metal bins, kitchen timers, specialised detection, stove guards and misting systems. Relevant repairs (such as repairs to self-closing devices on flat doors and repairs to internal doors) are also identified by the Fire Safety Officer to reduce the likelihood of a fire spreading.

The Fire Safety Team also held approximately 30 engagement events in 2022 with our customers in our communities to promote fire safety and provide advice to our customers.

## Outcomes and achievements

Between January and December 2022, the Fire Team carried out 552 person-centred risk assessments / intervention visits to Wheatley Group customers. As a result of these visits:

480 customers received pioneering products

209 stove guards were installed

140 customers received an upgraded fire detection system to an LD1 system

31 customers received specialised detection, which includes flashing beacons and vibrating pads

Over 300 fire safety repairs have been carried out in our customer's homes.

In partnership with the Scottish Fire and Rescue

Service, we were able to obtain information on the number of accidental dwelling fires in Group properties. The success of the project was measured by using the number of accidental dwelling fires between January and December in 2021 (186) and comparing this to the number of accidental dwelling fires in 2022 (134).

Reducing accidental dwelling fires in our properties has benefited both our customers and their neighbours. Public services, including the SFRS and NHS will also have benefited from this, as the SFRS will have received fewer call outs to Wheatley Group properties and the NHS will have seen a reduction in admissions from Wheatley Group customers in relation to injuries caused by accidental dwelling fires.



# Wheatley Group's Customer Voice Programme

## Wheatley Group



### Statement of support

Wheatley Group is Scotland's leading housing, care, and property-management organisation. Providing exceptional customer experience is at the heart of everything we do. Our ambition is to support customers to reach their full potential and our approach is to shift the balance of control, empowering customers to make choices about the services that matter most to them.

The current financial climate has led to difficulties for many of our customers. It has never been more important for us to understand what the priorities and needs of our communities are. At Wheatley, we want our customers to understand their opinions matter, and they have influence over our service design and delivery.

Our Customer Voices programme is our new approach to engagement. It was designed to be inclusive and accessible. It allows people to be involved at a time and place to suit them.

We want to ensure our customer voices are representative of our communities. Our equality, diversity, and inclusion data shows we have a wide range of diverse voices, allowing us to cater better for everyone. We are breaking down barriers for the demographic groups that would not typically be involved in customer engagement, who can often be considered as hard to reach groups or easy to ignore.

We have harnessed the benefit of our digital landscape, with our approach being increasingly digital and online broadening our reach and providing customers with ease of access, at a time and in a way that suits them. In a world where we are also becoming more socially digital, we want to ensure we are not disconnecting from our communities.

Our dedicated team of Stronger Voices Officers (SVOs) play a critical role. We have a team of 18 local officers working alongside our Housing Teams in our communities. Our SVOs begin interacting with customers at the start of their tenancy journey and continue to build relationships, skills and confidence of customers who choose to be involved in our programme.

The programme offers flexibility allowing as much or as little participation and involvement as a customer would like. It also allows customers to specifically focus on the areas in which they have an interest.

We recognise many of our customers have complex needs, which can often be a barrier to becoming involved. Early involvement and offering support to these customers enables them to participate and have their voice heard. For example, English for Speakers of Other Languages classes, IT classes - providing customers with devices, reminiscence art classes and working in partnership with other community groups to facilitate successful engagement events.

We have designed the programme around four key pillars. It is in recognition of each customer as an individual, who will want different levels of engagement depending on their circumstances at the time.

The pillars are:

**We listen, you are heard** - This is a light touch to engagement. Customers are able to share their views on what matters to them through online engagement and surveys. We are also learning from complaints, responding to customers ideas and feedback collected by our SVOs in our communities.

**We consult and co-create** - We are facilitating opportunities for customers to be involved in determining overall strategic direction of our service design and delivery. This is through panels, focus groups, consultation and customer conferences.

**We give power to you, you decide** - We are giving customers the opportunity to make decisions about their home and environment.

**We support you, your voice is strong** - We are ensuring customers are properly equipped to do things for themselves. Those who might not be ready for formal engagement, encouraging them to reach their full potential.

## Outcomes and achievements

Our Customer Voice programme is embedded in Wheatley Group's five-year strategy. It's helping us achieve our aims and objectives: listening to our wider communities and engaging customers to shape our services.

Some examples of our achievements so far include:

2200 active participating customers across Group.

£6.5m has been committed to customer led investment in our communities over five years.

1215 events and activities have taken place.

Launch of an online learning platform for customers, providing training on topics like employability skills.

Customers have been involved in shaping several of our core business policies including:

Allocations.

Homelessness.

Developing our assets.

Sustainability.

Equalities, Diversity and inclusion.

Customers who are interested in the environment have been trained as 'Keep Scotland Beautiful' assessors and are inspecting properties across the Group.

Through feedback and learning from complaints, we have introduced a Repairs Specialist Team and a system to 'book, track and rate' our repairs service.

Customers have influenced the size and type of homes built as part of new-build programmes.

One customer said:

'I'm glad you all are here and actually care about where I live and how you want to help in the things we are trying to do'.

# EXCELLENCE IN HOUSING INNOVATION

This award is aimed at programmes or projects that can demonstrate how they have developed an innovative approach which has made a real difference in the lives of tenants or customers. This could be any new product, service, or technology - demonstrating innovation is the key.

## Book it, Track it, Rate it

### Wheatley Group



### Statement of support

Wheatley is Scotland's leading housing, care and property management group, made up of four social landlords, a property-management company and a care organisation.

The group offers an award-winning range of services aimed at 'Making Homes and Lives Better' for over 210,000 customers across 19 local authority areas in Scotland.

Repairs is one of the most important services delivered by Wheatley, and the Group is continually engaging with customers to make sure the repairs service reflects their priorities and to learn from them how it can be improved.

A series of events, meetings and focus groups were held with customers earlier this year, during which they told us improving communication around repairs was one of their top priorities.

This led to the development of our new 'Book It, Track It, Rate It' app.

The app, which has the Descartes Customer Engagement Platform at its core, engages customers and provides regular communication around repairs appointments through to completion and final feedback.

It also represents an important step in Wheatley's aim of developing a sector-leading customer experience in delivering services.

As customers of Amazon, for example, are used to being able to track deliveries right up to their front door, we wanted Wheatley customers to enjoy a similar experience for repairs appointments.

An initial pilot period included asking customers what messaging they wanted to be included, as well as feedback on the repairs appointment.

### 'Book It'

'Book It, Track It, Rate It' was launched in Glasgow in April 2023, extended to Wheatley Homes East in June, with Wheatley Homes South due go live by the end of August 2023.

Customers receive confirmation via a text message as soon as they book a repair. A reminder text is sent the evening before the repair is due, and the customer is also asked to get in touch to reschedule if the appointment is no longer suitable.

On the day of the appointment itself, the customer is sent a series of reminders in advance.

### 'Track It'

When the tradesperson is on their way to the customer's home, the app sends a notification with a link to a map which allows the customer to live track the tradesperson's journey.

This allows customers to prepare for the tradesperson's arrival and, for instance, can help if a customer has mobility issues and may need more time to answer the door.

#### 'Rate it'

As soon as the appointment is completed, the customer is sent a link to a short satisfaction questionnaire asking them to rate the service on a scale of one to five. The customer is also asked if they want a call back to discuss any aspect of the work.

This automated survey allows customers to provide instant feedback on the service.

This feedback, which is representative and accurate, allows Wheatley to identify any potential issues and resolve them quickly. It also provides useful learning

which will help inform future improvements to the repairs service.

As well as putting the customer experience at the heart of services, this instant feedback reflects the importance to Wheatley of customers giving us their views.

'Book It, Track It, Rate It' also delivers operational benefits to help improve efficiency by reducing the number of 'no access' visits and improving appointment planning, as well as cutting down follow-up 'Estimated Time of Arrival' (ETA) calls to our customer contact centre.

This, in turn, helps us reduce wasted journeys, cutting our carbon emissions and helping Wheatley deliver a more sustainable service.

### Outcomes and achievements

Feedback on 'Book It, Track It, Rate It' so far has been positive so far.

Since the 'Rate it' element was introduced in Glasgow on 30 May, we have received over 3,600 customer ratings with an average score of 4.5 out of 5, which is the equivalent of 90%.

The response rate has been rising, from 17.6% in June to 19.6% in July.

It went live in Wheatley Homes East on 1st June and, since then, we have received 427 customer ratings with an average score of 4.16 out of 5, the equivalent of 83%. This is based on a response rate of 14.9%.

Call backs to customer have also generally been positive. Indeed, many customers have used the call back to compliment the new service as well as the tradesperson who carried out the work.

The project is in the early stages of roll-out, so we haven't yet been able to collect enough information on the impact on 'no access' levels or ETA calls to our customer contact centre.

We will collect this data over an extended period to make sure we improve customer satisfaction with the repairs service as well as helping us maximise operational efficiencies.



# WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

We wanted to hear from organisations who have developed, delivered or driven progress through working in partnership with organisations in or outside of housing.

## Housing First in Aberdeenshire

**Lead organisation: Aberdeenshire Council**

**Partner organisations: The Scottish Prison Service, Police Scotland, Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Justice & Substance Misuse Services**



### Statement of support

Aberdeenshire Council decided to have a housing first scheme 6 years ago to meet the needs of clients with multiple and complex needs and were one of the first areas in the world that operated in a rural area. In 6 years the team has grown from a pilot with one worker to being fully embedded within the Housing Service with 12 employees. They were the only rural area included within the pathfinders and lead the Rural Housing First group on behalf of the Scottish Government and have shared experiences at national and international events. The team ensure lessons learned are shared with other authorities across the country to ensure the success of housing first nationally.

Working in partnership with agencies and services both at a strategic and operational level is key to the development and ongoing success of Housing First in Aberdeenshire. Each bring their own expertise but with the client at the centre and focus on achieving the best outcomes for them. This includes police, Scottish Prison Service, social workers in criminal justice, substance misuse and mental health and other housing colleagues including RSL partners. It also includes local health practitioners, the DWP and third sector organisations including Turning Point.

Clients, housing first workers and partners have relationships that ensure relevant information is shared and work together to address issues. At a strategic level partners meet up 6 monthly to review activity and look at ways to increase partnership working and maximise resources. This led to an application to the Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership to increase the service who awarded significant funding to increase the number of clients that can be supported by the Housing First team.

The team of 12 workers can now support a maximum of 100 live clients who have complex needs that require a multi-agency partnership approach which makes it one of the largest housing first schemes in the country.

KM has been supported via Housing First for 4 years. He had 96 convictions and prison sentences since 2015. The longest he was in the community in the past 7 years is 7 weeks. Housing First held a meeting with all services in advance of an upcoming release from prison. Working with the prison outreach team at HMP Grampian it was agreed to fund a rehab placement direct from prison. 6 months later KM remains in rehab and Housing First has continued to work with the prison service, substance misuse colleagues and staff at the rehab placement and have a housing solution identified.

He said:

"I am grateful that outreach started when it did because I think I'd be dead or in prison for a long time. They have helped me when everyone thought I was a lost cause"

SPS staff recognised the impact of this

"this has been the best example of partnership working and I can't thank staff enough for going above what was required. This example is being taken to the Scottish Government prison short life working group and we will be highlighting the close working between prison and community partners. Us behind those big walls in the prison don't often get to see any success so to be involved in this type of work has been good and we thank you for that"



Housing First also participate in Operation protector organised by Police Scotland. Together with police and other partners they go out 4 times per year to visit people who may benefit from support. These

individuals may be involved in crime due to substance misuse and many are exploited by serious crime groups and others in the community.

### Outcomes and achievements

- 87% tenancy sustainment rate addressing the wider issues caused by homelessness.
- 70% reduction in prison admissions for those supported by Housing First leading to significant savings to the Criminal Justice system.
- The economic and social cost of crime 2016-17 gave rough indications of the cost of each crime incident for example Housebreaking £6065. Police data showed a reduction of 44% who had received police charges.
- Substance misuse services showed a reduction in clients open under Multi Agency risk strategy procedures and 21% reduction in risk behaviours.

- A reduction in missed health appointments and A&E Admissions Although the project does not reverse chronic illnesses improved attendance and general support around wellbeing, healthy eating, etc can have a positive long-term effect on the health of housing first clients.

Our police colleagues state "Our close relationship with the Housing First team in Aberdeenshire enables us to work together to support those in service and put in place timely interventions when one partner becomes aware of a change in circumstances. We have been able to share information regarding substance vulnerabilities, highlight potential exploitation of clients and reduce community tensions with the result that people are able to safely sustain their tenancies"

# Homeless Change Programme

**Lead organisation: Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership**

**Partner organisations: River Clyde Homes, Oaktree Housing Association, Larkfield Housing Association, Cloch Housing Association and Your Voice Community Recover Hub**



## Statement of support

Inverclyde Housing Options and Advice Homelessness Service has recently introduced a Rapid Rehousing Support Team (RRST) as part of the Inverclyde Homelessness Change Programme in October 2022. The RRST are an in-house support team of eight workers, who provide intensive support to clients when required, while delivering a programme of change that is improving service delivery and seeing significant impact. The team of support workers work towards the principles of Housing First, working with some of our most disadvantaged and vulnerable service users, to help them break the cycle of homelessness and ultimately secure a permanent tenancy.

The RRST are based in the emergency accommodation within the Inverclyde Centre, and work intensively with clients to provide support in a range of areas, all of which aim to promote tenancy sustainment and health and wellbeing. Key support areas include tenancy management skills, budgeting, advocacy, access to other services, food preparation and cooking skills, making healthy choices, and accessing community assets.

Support is tailored to an individual's needs it is person centred and ongoing for as long as required. The success of the Team is directly attributed to the central role they play in linking with partner agencies both internal to the H&SCP, local RSL's and external third sector and voluntary agencies.

The RRST is the central cog that ensures residents of emergency and temporary accommodation are engaging with alcohol and drug rehabilitation services

and mental health services and some of the external agencies include Moving On, Financial Fitness, Rig Arts, Smile for Life (dentist advice), The Outside Clinic (Opticians) Teen Challenge, Inverclyde Faith in Through Care, The Wise Group Relational Mentoring Services (fuel poverty) and Man On, a mental health service in Inverclyde which focuses on the mental wellbeing of vulnerable males.

Your Voice is an agency that aligns closely with the RRST. Your Voice (Inverclyde Community Care Forum) is an independent voluntary organisation, who work with local statutory, voluntary, and private providers, as well as national organisations to ensure the view of local people who receive services/ supports and the people of Inverclyde are considered when developing and planning services. Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership have partnered with Your Voice for the ongoing homelessness service redesign, and they are a key stakeholder in gathering the voice of lived experience to shape the decision-making process.

The organisation also aids in distribution of key information relating to the ongoing redesign, helping to raise local awareness, and ensuring service users are up to date on the important changes happening within the service. It is understood and appreciated how valuable the input from both previous and current service users will be as we move forward, and therefore the engagement and vital feedback gathered from these forums is key in improving service delivery.

The RRST play a vital role in delivering the objectives of Inverclyde's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) in partnership with local Registered Social Landlords (RSL's). The joint commitment with RSLs contributes to achieving better outcomes for residents and facilitates better tenancy sustainment.

Reducing long-term homelessness is a key outcome of the homeless service redesign and partnership working with local RSLs has directly contributed to this. Improved communication between the HSCP and RSL's has directly reduced long-term homelessness following a joint focus on supporting individuals who had been in temporary accommodation for more than a year.

The Homeless Change Lead has played a pivotal role in negotiating terms with RSL's and steering a positive direction of progress however the RRST is the central cog to a whole system approach which has greatly improved integration of services and ultimately better outcomes for residents.

## Outcomes and achievements

The dedication and care provided by the team has resulted in reduction of 18% in time spent in temporary accommodation from 138 days in March 2022 to 113 days in March 23. The number of days spent in the Inverclyde centre continues to reduce and is, as at 30 June 2023 down to 48 days a reduction of 53% in quarter one.

A continued management focus on long-term homelessness has resulted in a 21% reduction in cases open for more than one year during 2022/23 and this highlights the valuable contribution the central role of the RRS in providing an intensity of.

The Team focusses on building trusting relationships which provide solid foundations to achieving

tenancy sustainment and the prevention of repeat homelessness.

Your Voice explain "Since the new team have started there has also been a lot of improvements within the service, they are there for the residents to talk to and support them"

River Clyde Homes, Oaktree Housing Association, Cloch Housing Association and Larkfield Housing Association have welcomed the introduction of intensive support "we are delighted with the improved communication with the HSCP since the introduction of the Change Programme and we are proud to work in partnership"

# Supporting women's needs at Honeygreen, Dundee

**Lead organisation: Dundee City Council**

**Partner organisation: Dundee Women's Aid**



## Statement of support

Recognising the particular needs of women, including their reasons for homelessness and experiences of being homeless, Dundee City Council worked in partnership with Dundee Women's Aid to establish a gender specific response for single women requiring temporary accommodation and support at its Honeygreen Road Supervised Accommodation Unit.

Honeygreen had been used by the Council's Housing Options team to provide temporary supervised accommodation to individuals and couples who had applied as homeless. The accommodation consists of 11 self-contained furnished, 1-bedroom temporary accommodation flats. Staff monitor the unit 24 hours a day, with offsite housing support if required by the tenants.

From 1st April 2023, Honeygreen is now female only, and the Council is working with gender workers from Dundee Women's Aid who deliver support 7 days a week including evenings and weekends. This is also

linked in with the women's hub in Dundee which provides multi agency support to those impacted by substance use, violence, homelessness, mental health, isolation and trauma through daily drop ins, support groups and activities which will include organisations such as Brooksbank Advice Centre, Hillcrest Futures and the Womens Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre.

The women's support needs will be assessed within 7 days of being booked in. Risk assessments will be carried out and reviewed on each individual case.

Office space has been reorganised to welcome Dundee Womens Aid, with new desks to allow the workers space to complete support plans and update their notes, along with storage so they had onsite access to essential items the women needed.

Private space to offer 1-1 support is an issue. At present the women are supported in their flats but the partners have applied for funding to build a garden room onsite and hope to have a positive result soon. The garden room will create the correct environment and allow for 1-1 support sessions, group activities and a quiet space for the women to spend time.

Additional Wi-Fi facilities have been installed to allow the team to access online services, update case notes and support plans, and this will be extended to the women's flats.

It was essential to get all staff from both partners on board to make the project work. Staff were advised at the earliest opportunity of the proposed changes, to allow them time to process the changes and raise any concerns.

Finding alternative accommodation for existing male tenants was a challenge, given the demands on housing. A phased approach was taken - as male

residents were offered permanent housing and moved on, any new residents would be female and the support team from DWA would work on an outreach basis until all the male residents had moved out. This was actioned over a 4 month period.

Women's Aid are delighted to partner with Dundee City Council in establishing the provision at Honeygreen. They have seen this as a gap in service provision for many years, as some women with complex needs struggle to maintain refuge accommodation as they need more intensely supervised, safe accommodation to become more settled and ready to address the issues they have. A

woman-only space is vital for women recovering from domestic abuse and the associated trauma.

Here are comments from the women themselves, showing some amazing outcomes so early into this new service:

"I have three words for you, respect, thanks and appreciation. For listening to me when I needed it and helping me get a drying screen, supporting me to clean and sitting with me outside when I'm feeling depressed."

"I'm glad that there are workers here. It's a positive and I'm grateful to be listened too".

## Outcomes and achievements

In the first 3 months of opening, these statistics evidence the complex cases the team are working with:

- 100% have significant mental health issues
- 78% are actively using substances
- 95% have mental health issues and substance use
- 75% have current or past involvement with criminal justice services
- 32% have significant physical health issues
- 27% of women are subject to Adult Support & Protection.
- 36% of women have been discussed at MARAC

Many of the women struggle to engage meaningfully with services and staff have an assertive outreach approach where they never give up on residents and provide a service with 'stickability'. A group of women supported by staff regularly attend a community café where they have a free lunch and meet others in the community, something they would never had done without support.

We provided information of a 2 hour/week associate recruitment position to one of our women and

supported her technically with applying for the position. She struggles with alcoholism and has an extensive history of traumatic life experiences. She received an invitation to the next part of the interview process within 24 hours. She was tearful in relaying that she was "so proud of herself" for managing to do it. We were also so proud of her when she was offered the job.

Being in the accommodation allowed the opportunity to engage a young lady who was not engaging with services at the time. We eventually managed to offer lunch and a listening ear then managed to arrange a triage midwifery appointment to have her pregnancy confirmed. This allowed services to link with her again regarding her unborn baby and children in kinship care but also made her aware of our support at Honeygreen and being a service she could reach out to.

A service user struggles with extreme anxiety so finds it difficult answering calls and attending appointments. With intensive support in place, she managed to leave her

flat and sit through a 1-and-a-half-hour appointment accompanied by her keyworker.



# Barrack Street Ukrainian Support

**South Lanarkshire Council**

**Partner organisation: Salvation Army**



## Statement of support

The invasion of Ukraine brought over 1,000 individuals and families to South Lanarkshire as part of the wider visa programme for those seeking refuge and it was quickly acknowledged that a range of accommodation options would be required to meet their needs.

The main priority was to find accommodation which would meet the requirements of single people and provide them with facilities and opportunity to take care of their own needs, to have a re-established sense of normality and personal autonomy. This included having the ability to cook for themselves, paying their own rent and earning an income.

The option identified by the council was former student accommodation in Barrack Street, Hamilton, with a relationship already forged with the private owners through their involvement in previous projects during the Covid-19 pandemic. The property has a town centre location, with easy access to excellent public services and transport links. It is also an ideal location for employment opportunities with a number of retail and leisure premises nearby.

The council worked collaboratively at speed with the Scottish Government, the owners of the property and the Salvation Army to successfully refurbish the building and provide supported accommodation for 150 refugees. Managed by the council and funded by the Scottish Government, with support services provided jointly by the council and the Salvation Army, the new accommodation offered a longer term alternative to the emergency hotel accommodation initially provided.

Potential new residents were offered the opportunity to visit the accommodation in advance of choosing to live there, with the council's dedicated Refugee

Resettlement Team supporting them to make their decision and be clear on their responsibilities and services provided. This also provided the Team with the opportunity to meet potential residents before they transferred from another local authority area and to discuss any issues or concerns relating to the move.

The strong partnership approach led by the council applies trauma informed practices when providing support, with significant safeguarding work undertaken by the Refugee Resettlement Team before people move in to ensure community cohesion and to maximise positive engagement with residents from the outset.

Barrack Street is fully furnished, with fridges and cupboards filled with food and welcome packs in every room to ensure that the accommodation is as welcoming for new residents as possible.

Residents have decorated their rooms and worked in the garden area making the outside and inside space their own - taking pride in their flats and wider community. This is supported by the officers from the council and Salvation Army, who have accessed funding for tools and equipment and arranged health and wellbeing classes.

Regular events and meetings are held to provide residents with the opportunity to feedback on the services provided, with opportunities to also communicate through online social groups. There is an open-door policy for residents who wish to speak to the support officers and a computer room and quiet space is also available. Residents are very much a key part of discussions on the ongoing monitoring and review of services.

The teams also work with a range of other partners to link residents to appropriate support services including employability, income maximisation, health and wellbeing, community engagement, English for Speakers of Other Languages, further education and other services required.

A Barrack Street resident stated, 'The staff are nice and help us enormously, even with food and looking at houses. Local information is easily available which helped us get settled. It was far better than I expected when I first heard about it staying aboard the ship in Glasgow, especially how caring the people have been towards the Ukrainians staying here.'



## Outcomes and achievements

Barrack Street's success is contingent upon residents being content and happily settled but who are also making active plans to move on.

The innovative partnership approach led by South Lanarkshire Council in conjunction with the building's private sector owners, Salvation Army and the Scottish Government has ensured residents can rebuild their resilience, whilst improving their health and wellbeing, language skills and employment opportunities.

The project has made a positive impact on the lives of the residents, helping them to forge new friendships and form support networks with other Ukrainians who are working together to optimise their life prospects in

the face of adversity.

The project has highlighted the opportunities available to residents who move to this type of accommodation, with word of mouth between current and potential residents helping ensure that all 150 rooms remain occupied and a waiting list in place.

Testimonials for the project have been received from many Barrack Street residents, one of whom commented, 'Barrack Street is my sanctuary and I can start living again. Having the ability to be able to talk and receive support from the Council and Salvation Army whenever I need comfort of being with other people is very much appreciated.'

# Partnership-based Citywide Youth Housing Survey and Report

**Lead organisation: North East Tenants, Residents and Landlords Together (NETRALT)**

**Partner organisations: Aberdeen City Youth Council, Scottish Youth Parliament, Aberdeen Foyer**



## Statement of support

North East Tenants, Residents and Landlords Together (NETRALT) is a recognised group at the forefront of tenant participation in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray. This collective of tenants, residents and staff from 5 housing associations and 3 local authorities provides a platform to share good practice, offer best value and encourage and support their members. NETRALT strives to be innovative and imaginative through exploring ideas, actioning and collaborating with its diverse members and wider community partnerships.

Like all Scottish landlords, NETRALT wants to engage with young people to increase involvement in the housing sector. To address this, NETRALT created an innovative city-wide project to facilitate youth engagement through the first Aberdeen Youth Housing Report, exploring young people's knowledge and aspirations.

The project went beyond youth involvement to co-production. Young people designed and published the survey, validated responses, collated data and drafted a report to ensure that captured views were authentic. There were 595 valid responses forming the basis of a report to be used by social landlords and local authorities in the North East.

In addition to enhancing their housing knowledge, the young people were able to practice other skills and responsibilities. They showed dedication to a project they saw as a valuable use of their limited time, evidenced by their time management skills as they juggled education, work, social lives and family time to get the survey to a standard they were happy with, as well as ensuring everyone in the team was satisfied with the questions, wording, layout and design of the survey and report.

The key to NETRALT engaging with this community of young people was trust. The meetings were kept to a minimum and were all held online in the evening, as requested by the youths. NETRALT members respected the time and effort of the young people and was there to provide support as needed on this youth-led project.

The report launch was held at a partner's venue, The Foyer. The group felt that a face-to-face launch was important in terms of impact and engagement. The young people presented to a diverse audience of their peers, housing staff, community partners and senior council officers. Feedback from the event highlighted the youths' achievements and emphasised the importance of partnership working being key to empowering young people with worthwhile opportunities to engage with housing.

NETRALT frequently engages with community organisations, building a network to share with and learn from. This provided the foundation for

collaboration on this project. NETRALT's partners were able to promote the involvement to their service users. The citywide youth project had a partnership approach with collaboration from:

Aberdeen City Youth Council - the official voice of young people in Aberdeen. It works with many bodies in the city to improve representation of young people in the Aberdeen. It is made up of young people, aged between 14-25 years, from different areas and interest groups in Aberdeen. Youth Councillors are committed to involving and consulting young people and believe young people should have a voice at local, citywide, national and international levels.

Scottish Youth Parliament - a national platform for young people to discuss the issues that are important to them, and campaign for changes in Scotland.

Aberdeen Foyer - a charity supporting young people who are homeless or at risk, supporting young unemployed people to learn new skills, engage through education and learning opportunities and support positive mental health and well-being.

Aberdeen City Council Youth Development Officers and Support Officers

Aberdeen City Council Tenant Participation Officer

Castlehill Housing Association Tenant Participation Officer

Grampian Housing Association Tenant Participation Officer

Langstane Housing Association Tenant Participation Officer

## Outcomes and achievements

595 valid survey responses from young people

Young people made informed choices on the best questions to ask, designed the online survey, collated the response data and wrote the survey report.

Young people held a well-attended launch event and presented to an audience of their peers and stakeholders including chief executives and chief officers

Involved young people now have an interest in social housing and tenant participation

Young people had the opportunity to gain valuable life experiences and build confidence

Acted as a CV builder for young people

Developed a strong working relationship between NETRALT and young people

Enabled NETRALT to develop the Youth Housing Network, a platform to support landlords to engage with young people

The data will be used in Aberdeen's Local Housing Strategy as well as a link to becoming a Child-Friendly City. It will inform services and the resources that young people are reliant on. Housing has a direct impact on young people, and they must have a say in what happens. It is vital that they feel their voice is being listened to, and the project was a step forward in ensuring this happens.

# Youth services for Maryhill

**Lead organisation: Maryhill Housing**

**Partner organisation: YoMo (Young Movers)**



## Statement of support

Since 2020, Maryhill Housing Association (MHA) and YoMo (Young Movers) have been working together to roll out youth services in the local area. This partnership arose after two residents' associations identified the need for youth diversionary activities for local young people and wanted to create opportunities for them.

Maryhill Housing worked alongside the Glenavon Residents Association to secure £7,200 from Big Lottery to commission YoMo to deliver activities for young people. Starting with outdoor activities and homework clubs, the work with YoMo has continued to go from strength to strength; due to the success of that initial project, it was funded for a further three years through Glasgow City Council's Communities Fund. YoMo have delivered after-school clubs four days a week, providing healthy snacks, educational activities, and countless community events such as gala days, Halloween parties and pantomimes. They've also taken children on trips during school holidays, providing meals daily throughout and have set up a bike club to teach young people to cycle safely and how to repair bikes.

During the pandemic, Maryhill Housing and YoMo adapted quickly and delivered weekly craft packs and ran online sessions over Zoom while also organising walk-and-talk groups so that young people struggling with the restrictions could meet their peers safely outdoors.

The partnership has also set up Maryhill Voice - a youth panel that designed and established processes to disperse funds to local projects - as well as securing

a lease for bigger premises to provide services for the entire community, employability support and a food pantry. They have also worked with local young people to develop a community garden.

The project has been so successful that it is now at the stage where it is able to provide opportunities not only for young people, but for their families and the wider community. Recently, this has included art for wellbeing, sewing and crochet classes, food and fuel vouchers and warm rooms on Saturdays during the winter months.

In October, YoMo also held the Maryhill Awards - an event celebrating certifications in STEM, community clean-ups and participatory budgeting training. Several local young people received Hi5 Awards, Dynamic Youth Awards and Saltire Awards for their efforts.

Through the Maryhill Voice youth panel, £19,000 of funding has been dispersed to local projects through the participatory budgeting process. This is for projects in both Maryhill and Ruchill, and it is hoped that young people will truly benefit from this work across both areas.

Recently, YoMo has been busy delivering two summer programmes at Glenavon Road, as well as outdoor play sessions at the Locks and Valley. On average, 33 children have been attending the sessions, with 40 heading off to Heads of Ayr Farm Park for a fun packed day out. Each child attending gets a free meal each day and the kids have also had the opportunity to participate in activities such as arts and crafts, growing their own food, outdoor games and trips to museums.

As well as delivering a summer programme, YoMo staff have been busy working with contractors, preparing to open a brand-new community space at 127 Glenavon Road which will be called 'The Base'. Activities for young people (as well as parents) will take place here, and if this wasn't enough, there will also be a community pantry.

Partnership working between Maryhill Housing, YoMo and Glenavon Residents Association, as well as several third sector organisations, has been at the core of delivering these activities and opportunities in the local area. Additionally, the funding secured from both Glasgow City Council and Big Lottery was vital in making the project a reality.



## Outcomes and achievements

Since its inception in early 2020, the partnership between Maryhill Housing and YoMo has gone from strength to strength; starting out as a youth homework club, it quickly adapted to providing vital online and outdoor sessions during the pandemic. It has been so successful that it has grown considerably to provide activities and opportunities that benefit local young people through after school clubs and the establishment of a youth panel, but also their families and the wider community through arts and crafts for mental wellbeing, employability support and food/fuel vouchers.

In working in partnership with YoMo, Maryhill Housing has been able reach tenants and residents that might not necessarily engage with it as a housing association

or its services. The partnership has enabled MHA to work with people normally deemed as 'hard to reach' and has built levels of trust and rapport.

Key achievements:

Over £600k of grant funding secured to create a new community space and deliver six years of youth activities.

Creation of a community pantry.

£19,000 of funding allocated through Maryhill Voice Youth panel.

Average of 33 children attending holiday programme.

Range of wellbeing activities delivered for families and the community.

## The Outreach Worker Project

**Lead organisation: Places for People Scotland**

**Partner organisations: Police Scotland Edinburgh Division, NHS Lothian, Edinburgh Alcohol and Drugs Partnership**



### Statement of support

Places for People Scotland (PFPS) are a registered Social Housing Provider who are committed to creating and supporting thriving communities. We support neighbourhoods to reach their full potential, with over 9,000 homes and services to almost 10,500 Customers across Scotland.

We are progressive and inclusive, committed to creating happy and sustainable Communities for all. We pride ourselves on listening to our Customers through a combination of methods and use their feedback and insight to tailor our service to the individual needs and challenges facing each Community.

According to the National Records of Scotland, people in the most deprived areas of Scotland are 15 times more likely to die from drugs compared to those in affluent areas. Also, despite drug-related deaths decreasing in Scotland, 83 people have died from drugs in Edinburgh so far in 2023, with 39% involving social housing tenants. As part of our commitment to

creating thriving communities, we've partnered with eight organisations from housing, health, public sector and charity to tackle drug misuse across Northeast and Southeast Edinburgh, where we have almost 2,000 homes.

Jointly funded by our Places for People's Community Investment Fund and the Edinburgh Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (EADP), the partnership, which is in its third year, set out to reduce crime in our Communities and improve the health of our Customers by supporting people who are at risk of drug or alcohol related dependencies in sustaining their tenancies, reducing anti-social behaviour and substance abuse in the area and supporting the wider Community.

This collaborative approach drives consistency across the city's services and allows for proactive identification and support to those most in need to reduce the need on public services. It is an integrated collaboration of stakeholders including Police Scotland (Edinburgh Division), NHS Lothian, the Edinburgh Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (EADP), City of Edinburgh Council Health and Social Care Partnership and Turning Point Scotland and Change, Grow, Live.

The partnership was born from identifying that Customers with drug-related problems don't fully engage with services; nor is there enough resource on the part of service providers. Without engagement, it was established that severe health issues could arise, and some people could struggle to sustain tenancies. To solve the issue, PFPS and EDAP teamed up to fund outreach workers in areas where agencies have identified major causes for concern; ensure the outreach worker was known and had easy access to the aforementioned agencies to gain access to support when needed to help Customers.

To start with a dedicated assertive outreach worker was working across Northeast Edinburgh, supporting

Places for People Scotland Customers who were at risk of drug-related harm. Following its success, the funding has been increased to expand the model to Southeast Edinburgh.

This boots-on-the-ground approach, with the backing of all stakeholders, means that, for all referrals, the outreach officer works with the Customer closely to get the right support in place for them. They can also advocate on their behalf at weekly all agency forums, sharing information on the referrals and possible risks, and developing tailored action plans for outreach. Thus, speeding up the support that people need.

A poignant story speaks volumes, whether that's supporting someone facing extremely difficult challenges and giving them a reliable way to communicate or supporting people who won't engage with the local authorities for fear of the impacts it could have on their tenancies, partnership working is key. We cannot meet the challenges by working in silo and the partnership is invaluable not only to those who need the service but the partners themselves.

## Outcomes and achievements

In addition to supporting 45 individuals with their drug use, we have seen a positive impact on the Community. Since its inception, we have seen a 50% reduction in the number of complaints about anti-social behaviour linked to drug use.

The assertive outreach worker has also provided training to our Housing Officers and front-line Colleagues improving the support we can offer across the Community. Finally, with the delivery of Naloxone training - a vital life-saving drug used to temporarily reverse the effects of opioid and save the life of someone at risk of drug-related death - our colleagues can support more customers in a desperate time of need.

Quote from Michelle Pandit , "The role provides that almost immediate response to a referral for that particular support service and is essential in attempting to support our clients through addiction and to ultimately reduce the number of drug deaths particularly across RSL housing."

Quote from Dale Duffy, "Working in partnership with substance misuse agencies on this has helped to sustain tenancies through support and not forced my hand to use tenancy enforcement and attempt to evict these vulnerable people. I am empowered to not enforce while these tenants are engaged with this new role."



# EXCELLENCE IN DEVELOPMENT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Despite the disruption caused by the pandemic, Scotland's housing sector has continued working hard to deliver much needed affordable housing. This award is aimed at developers who have built new residential developments in any recognised affordable tenure.

## Bertha Park phase 2

**Kingdom Housing Association**



### Statement of support

Located on farmland to the outskirts of the city of Perth, this exciting phase of development forms part of a wider master plan designed to facilitate the growth of a thriving new community.

The first of its kind north of the border, Berth Park is a new-build village offering homes across all tenures, with an impressive 25% earmarked for affordable housing. In addition, the masterplan also includes the construction of schools, retail outlets, medical and sports facilities, all of which will add to the attractiveness of this new community. Having successfully provided a quantum of affordable units across various existing phases, this particular phase of development sought to provide a further 7 high quality homes for social rent, designed to meet the particular needs of pre-identified customers. Incorporating a blend of house types, this phase includes four 2 bedroom cottage flats, two 2 bedroom amenity bungalows, and one 5 bedroom wheelchair accessible bungalow. Commencing in March 2022, these units were handed over in two phases; one in

June 2023 and another in August 2023.

Integral to our success, this project epitomised the value brought by partnered and collaborative working arrangements. From the initial briefing, design development process and construction phase, the expertise of various stakeholders collectively allowed for the development of an exciting and impactful project. In particular, great consultation took place between Kingdom Housing Association, Bertha Park Limited and Perth & Kinross Council's Health and Social Care Partnership. With the local authority responsible for 100% of the nominations, constant dialogue between the three parties was essential in order to create a development which could truly serve the complex needs of our new customers.

Resultantly each home is equipped with a host of adaptations, all of which allow the customers to live as independently as possible. Impressively, the 5 bedroom wheelchair accessible bungalow has been designed to cater for the varying needs of numerous members of a single family. Examples of those adaptations include; a partially adapted wheelchair kitchen, mechanically operated bedrooms doors operated via sensors or remote controls, plus en-suite wet rooms allowing for independent bathing. Within the amenity bungalows the needs of the customers have been catered for via enhanced sound proofing, flush sockets, flush faced internal doors, double hinged swing pass doors, spot lighting within the kitchen and dimmable lighting to all rooms. In addition, this phase also provides for the needs of full time careers with a 2 bedroom cottage flat allocated to house support services, all whilst remaining tenure blind. This was critical in ensuring the needs of our customers are adequately met, providing a safe and secure environment for all.

Benefitting from a host of renewable technologies, each new home is equipped with air source heat pumps, mechanical extract ventilation, electric vehicle charge points, plus high performing windows and external doors, water butts and energy saving light bulbs. In addition to the environmental impacts of reduced energy loadings, the incorporation of these features into our new homes will also reduce both energy consumption and costs for our customers.

These new homes are also Housing for Varying Needs compliant which ensures flexibility in relation

to the ever changing needs of our customers, and also comply with Secured by Design Gold Standard and Building Regulations Enhanced Sustainability Standards. Not only catering for the housing needs of our customers, Bertha Park offers an inclusive living environment with access to an array of local amenities making it an excellent addition to our stock. As the village develops further, we are confident the community will continue to cater for the ever changing needs of our customers.

## Outcomes and achievements

- Achieved Secured by Design Gold Accreditation
- Designed through collaborative partnership working involving a range of partners, including Kingdom Housing Association, Bertha Park Limited and Perth and Kinross Council. Demonstrated the effectiveness of partnered working at strategic and local levels.
- Delivered a variety of community benefits including the creations of jobs and apprenticeships, whilst also contributing to sustained apprenticeships.
- Built to enhanced sustainability standards, in compliance with Building Regulations Silver Aspects 1-8 Sustainability Levels.
- Helping address the local housing need through the provision of particular needs housing, comprising a mix of both amenity and wheelchair homes.
- Provision of electric vehicle charging points to each and every property, thus offering greater choice to our customers.
- Adoption of a tenure blind approach, resulting in aesthetically pleasing properties which liken neighbouring PRS and private housing.
- Part of a wider master plan which facilitates the creation of an exciting new village offering housing options for all.

## Primrose Place, Alloa

**Lead organisation: Kingdom Housing Association**

**Partner organisation: Clackmannanshire Council**



### Statement of support

The re-development of a former vacant co-op site in the centre of Alloa for 60 intergenerational, and dementia-design informed flats.

Kingdom Housing Association & Clackmannanshire Council

The site lies at the heart of the town centre and had lain vacant and derelict, negatively affecting the amenity, image and perception of the town centre,

conservation area and the adjacent Category A listed Speirs Centre.

The Council acquired the site with an existing, acceptable, but unremarkable planning permission in place. The Council had an ambition to create a high quality town centre living environment for people of all ages and an exemplar for independent living. Its RSL partner, Kingdom Housing Association shared that ambition, and took forward the development of the site.

This marked a new chapter in the evolution of Alloa town centre; once again making it a living place, particularly for older people. Services such as shops, post office, public transport, Council offices and library are easily accessible, however, perceptions around safety and the quality of the town centre environment for living needed to be addressed.

Both the development design, and the related streetscape projects needed to come together to achieve this. The Council and Kingdom engaged with Architecture & Design Scotland (ADS) on the project. As a result, a multi-agency design review process was undertaken involving the architects, various Council Services, Kingdom HA, Health and Social Care Partnership, local business and third sector,

Historic Environment Scotland and dementia design academics from the university of Stirling. This process transformed the scheme beyond recognition, creating inclusive flats and safe and attractive communal outdoor spaces and immediate public realm, all informed by dementia design principles.

The design review process was backed up by public consultation about the wider town centre using the Place Standard tool, gaining around 300 responses. This gave further insight into key issues for the development and wider actions around the town centre. The Primrose Street development and these wider town centre projects are known collectively as "Living Alloa".

The development will have a hugely positive impact on the surrounding area and is providing a housing solution to maximise the time the local ageing community can remain within their own homes, supported by further improvements around the town centre. The new homes provide residents with energy efficient homes which will meet Housing for Varying Needs, achieve Secured by Design Gold and Kingdoms design standards.

The design review process transformed early iterations of the scheme to create a development that meets and exceeds aspirations in terms of town centre living. Key changes to the development that emerged from

the process included: pulling the building much closer to the A-listed Speirs Centre, recreating a "street" in Primrose Place; forming an entrance plaza with high quality hard and soft landscaping, public art and seating which also acts as a setting for the town's Registry office, opposite; creating a perimeter block around the site's three street frontages, and thereby allowing all apartments to be dual aspect; creating light, bright and generous communal internal and covered external spaces within the building for pausing or social interaction as well as mobility scooter recharging; creating a bespoke enclosed communal garden with a variety of paths, open and enclosed areas, seating and raised planting beds. This means the development complies with Dementia Services Development Centre guidelines and it achieve the highest level of dementia friendly accreditation.

A partnership approach to the funding of the project was achieved, with funding provided through;

- Scottish Government; investment subsidy at £4,895,928
- Private Finance; raised by Kingdom Housing association at £3,092,725
- Addition Grant Subsidy; provided by Clackmannanshire Council at £990,000

## Outcomes and achievements

The physical transformation to the area is significant, with this previously vacant and derelict site now occupied by a high quality building that enhances it's surroundings

Footfall around the area is markedly higher, streets and alleyways that were often avoided, particularly after dark, now seen as safe and pleasant spaces to pass through.

Providing adaptable, affordable and attractive smaller properties has helped meet the long term housing needs of many older and physically disabled people. The built-in adaptability and dementia friendly elements will cut down on costs of retro-fitting to

existing stock, which is often a less than an ideal solution, and the town centre location allows residents to access shops and other amenities within a short distance of their home.

Ongoing work is taking place with the Council, Kingdom Housing Association and Stirling University to build on lived experiences of residents to enhance and improve future similar housing projects and further develop the Clackmannanshire Council's sustainable aging policy.

The development is changing the image and perception of Alloa town centre as a place to live, visit and do business in.



# Sunnyside

## Hillcrest Homes



### Statement of support

Hillcrest's Sunnyside development in Montrose is an excellent example of an affordable development in a stunning location with links to the surrounding areas, filled with sustainable features. Phase one was delivered in Spring 2023, with a second phase underway. The development has included saving listed buildings and some of the history and heritage of the former hospital. Not only is this development bringing new life to the former hospital, these new

properties helped deliver much needed additional rented accommodation in the Angus area.

The former Sunnyside Hospital officially closed in late 2011, leaving a massive hole in the community. Buildings went into decay, vandalism started and the site became neglected and derelict. Sunnyside Estates Ltd purchased the former hospital buildings and estate from NHS Tayside in 2016 and moved forward to producing a masterplan for the entire estate, which includes two phases of affordable homes at the site.

Hillcrest has ensured that the water tower and new build homes have been built to modern and up to date Building Standards, providing families with a modern, energy efficient place to call home within the beautiful grounds of the estate. Hillside, Montrose is ideally located for commuting to Montrose, Arbroath, Dundee and Aberdeen. It is served by public transport, and is in an ideal location for cycle use. Cycle racks have also been provided at the former water tower.

A communal area that has been included in the development has really taken shape into a courtyard shared by all. Tenants have developed a seating area, drying area and garden and it promotes a real sense of belonging in the development.

### Outcomes and achievements

To date Hillcrest has completed 35 social rented properties and phase two will deliver another 70. The local economy has been given a boost with new families moving in and creating a new community on what was a derelict site. The project has also provided an important boost for the local areas, securing local jobs and the local supply chain in Montrose and Angus, including trades apprentices, supporting the local Dundee & Angus Shared Apprentice Scheme. Sunnyside has a huge historical significance to the local area, and Hillcrest is delighted that the hospital building will be preserved for future generations as part of the wider development plans.

The water tower is a real example of sustainability on this project. It ticks every box of the reduce, re-use and recycle ethos. The water tower was neglected and in a real state of disrepair, which has now been re-purposed into nine homes, four of which are wheelchair homes. The existing structure has been re-used, with some of the internal walls retained and designed into the new layouts. Areas of new stonework have been applied using re-claimed stone from either duntakings at the water tower or duntakings from other hospital buildings on site. Original unusual shaped windows have been re-purposed as smoke vent windows in the common stairwell serving two flats.



# New Housing at Tannahill, Ferguslie Park, Paisley

Renfrewshire Council



## Statement of support

In 2016 Renfrewshire Council began consulting with residents in the Tannahill area of Ferguslie Park on a comprehensive housing regeneration involving 252 properties. This continued until 2018 with various options presented, culminating in the Council approving plans to demolish all properties and build 101 new ones on the adjacent site of a recently-demolished school.

This was a challenging and complex project requiring the re-housing of existing tenants and the acquisition of 29 privately-owned properties. It addressed negative perceptions about the area, one of the most deprived in Scotland, transforming it from a low-demand area into one sought-after by housing applicants.

The Regeneration Team took the local community with it at every stage, with early consultation events establishing a clear direction, creating a Tannahill Liaison Group and Tannahill Newsletters and with staff being site-based to facilitate 'drop in' opportunities for residents. Later, mailing updates and providing information online during the pandemic demonstrated the ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Residents were made to feel part of the process from design to completion. The newbuild contractor and the Regeneration Team facilitated 'tenant choices,' enabling tenants to select kitchen units, worktops, handles and flooring for their kitchens and bathrooms. Due to the pandemic this was done on a resident-by-resident basis with communication at people's homes, at the site office or via mail or email. Residents were provided with confirmation of their moving dates along with a property schedules - these outlined the

key features of their homes together with a floorplan and artist's impression. Finally, two weeks in advance of handover, residents viewed their new homes, at which time they could bring family and friends as well as arrange for carpets and blinds to be put in immediately after occupation.

Residents were allocated the homes most suitable for their needs, not just in terms of physical requirements and household composition but also in terms of location, local resources and support networks, to help build and maintain existing community connections. Most residents have the same neighbours as they had before moving.

By maintaining dialogue with residents and encouraging input at every stage of the process, a positive and inclusive approach was maintained.

The site layout provides connectivity to the local community with direct access to schools, shopping and buses as well a sense of space including a large central recreational space. This has designed out the 'oppressive' feeling experienced on Tannahill Road as a result of the narrow roads and the high density of the existing properties.

252 low-demand homes have been replaced with 101 new modern, energy efficient ones. A strong sense of community has been maintained. Local feedback has already demonstrated a change in perception of the Ferguslie Park area with an increase in interest in the new homes.

All bungalows and ground floor flats are designed to be accessible to all and all homes can later be adapted to meet their residents' changing needs, for example if a shower-room or lift is required.

The housing is designed to be flexible, meet the needs of a range of client groups and provide accommodation for families throughout their lifetimes. All lower flats and bungalows have been constructed with walk-in showers and low surface temperature radiators. The four-bedroom homes have downstairs bedrooms with a knock-through panel to the adjacent walk-in shower. All homes have smoke alarms in all bedrooms and USB charging points in the living rooms. Importantly, all homes include dining kitchens which can also be utilised by children for homework or by adults for home-working. This was a key priority for residents, as their old homes in Tannahill had very small kitchen spaces.

## Outcomes and achievements

This regeneration has delivered so much more than new housing for Ferguslie Park. The replacement of high-density cottage flats with a more spacious housing mix has removed an oppressive feel whilst delivering modern, attractive and sustainable homes which also meet Secure by Design 'Gold' standards.

Pride in the community has been restored, with residents being proactive in - for example - carrying out regular litter picks, contradicting previous perceptions of this then-deprived and low demand area. The number of applicants for Council housing who have expressed an interest in the area has increased by 84% and the Council also expects to see

an increase in tenant sustainability in the area.

The housing-led regeneration is the first part of a wider regeneration project called 'The Making of Ferguslie Park'. The next SIMD reports will be published in 2024 and 2028 and it is expected that this area will show marked improvement in the 2028 update. The pro-active approach of Tannahill Liaison Group, comprising local residents and the community council, has been a big driver of the successful regeneration of Tannahill and the residents now have a platform to build from in terms of income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing.

# Carmunnock Road

**Lead organisation: Craigdale Housing Association**

**Partner organisation: AS Homes**



## Statement of support

Castlemilk is an area of multiple deprivation with a growing younger population. The former church site is in an area of the community that had fallen vacant and derelict and is an exemplar of the sustainable use of land to create affordable, high quality homes to support housing need in a community that needs it most.

The project replaces a derelict church, to offer affordable high quality 1 and 2 bedroom homes for tenants with green spaces to enhance the opportunity to enjoy and participate in the environment. The development is accessible to local amenities by foot, cycle and public transport. In addition to the waste and recycling storage on site, Craigdale also installed additional bulk refuse stores which have made a tremendous difference in keeping the site tidy and free from rubbish.

The lower part of the site has been used to create an inclusive natural play area overlooked by an attractive amphitheatre. The benefits of providing open spaces where people can meet, socialise and generally spend time are well documented. Craigdale knew that many parents in the area wanted smaller, safe and overlooked play facilities. By providing a

space where people want to spend time in, the social fabric of the development, and the surrounding area, becomes stronger. There are cycle paths around the development and to encourage residents to cycle, secure bike storage has been included on the site.

AS Homes worked with Craigdale Housing Association to understand the specific housing needs of the local community. The verticality and steeply sloping roof reflects the former church which occupied the site. The design complements the existing streetscape but adds something new and attractive to enhance the area creating a real 'feel good' factor to help instil pride in their homes for new tenants. In particular, the northern elevations provide an impressive landmark for those travelling south out of Glasgow in addition to glorious views over the city to the north and the Campsie Hills beyond.

This sustainable approach supports a healthier and sustainable lifestyle for residents. Exemplar standards of energy efficiency with multiple windows to give natural light and solar gain eliminate fuel poverty here. AS Homes' engagement with and contributions to the local community include a £570 donation to the Castlemilk pantry, various engagement with local schools and a defibrillator located permanently in the locality.

AS Homes showed an exemplar approach to keeping the community informed of progress and minimising inconvenience. They created a traffic management plan to manage deliveries and access to the site. The site cabins were double stacked to create a noise barrier and save space on the roadside. The site restrictions meant the team had to cope with lack of external space for site offices and deliveries. The project was also delivered in the aftermath Covid and Brexit. There was a lack of materials and supply chains were demanding.

In terms of the choices around the units size, Craigdale knew that there were a number of households from its waiting list who needed to downsize from other

Craigdale units, and those who, as a result of mobility issues, needed ground floor or more specialist wheelchair accommodation. Craigdale successfully let 21 units to existing tenants who were underoccupying larger properties in order to better meet their needs. This freed up much needed larger family

accommodation to ensure that the best use was made of not only the new units, but also much of Craigdales existing stock too. A fantastic example of a community based housing association that knows its tenants and maximises the impact it makes on peoples quality of life.

## Outcomes and achievements

The project has provided 36 homes in a part of Glasgow that is in dire need of new affordable homes. The properties are designed to Housing for Varying Needs Standards and include 3 wheelchair accessible flats.

The homes are designed to Gold Standard for heating and hot water costs. Using a Fabric First approach, heating and hot water costs will be amongst the lowest in the country.

Architecturally, the development replaced a derelict church with a striking façade, with a 3-steeple theme reflecting the previous use of the site.

All the resident's report their homes are amazing and that their bills are now so much lower. A tenant who now has wheelchair accommodation now reports her life has changed immeasurably as she is now in suitable accommodation she is no longer a prisoner in her own home.

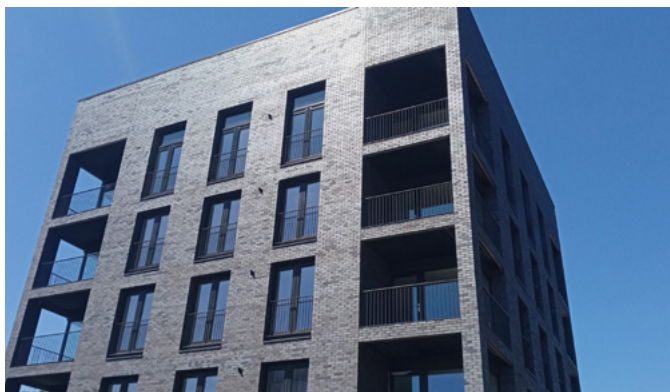
The site operatives of AS Homes, made a sizable donation to the Castlemilk Pantry. AS Homes are an exemplar contractor with their interaction with the local community and local schools. The site defibrillator was left in a permanent location in the community.

36 households now have new properties as well as a further 21 from the properties freed up in the area.

# Locks View

**Lead organisation: Maryhill Housing**

**Partner organisation: Cruden**



## Statement of support

Locks View is a mixed tenure development of exceptional design quality which has created a sustainable community in an area of former derelict land.

Designed by Elder& Canon Architects and CPD Engineers and developed by Cruden, Locks View is part of the Maryhill Transformational Regeneration Area (TRA), one of eight in the Glasgow area. The aim of the TRA is to transform areas formerly dominated by lower-quality housing into new, sustainable, mixed-tenure communities.

The TRAs were established by a partnership of GHA (Wheatley Group), the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council. They have a unique delivery model whereby capital receipts are pooled across the

TRA programme to enable and unlock sustainable development elsewhere in the programme.

The area now occupied by the Locks View development was previously poor quality tenement housing with a reputation for violence and anti-social behaviour. The housing was demolished over twenty years ago and the site has laid derelict since then.

A masterplan for the Maryhill TRA was developed over ten years ago following extensive consultation and over 300 new mixed tenure homes have been delivered to date. The Locks View development completes the 'Butney' area of the TRA and occupies a prominent corner position on a key entrance to Maryhill from Kelvindale. Delivery of the regeneration is overseen by a local delivery group comprising local residents, officers and elected members.

All units in the New Supply Shared Equity block were sold off plan, and properties in the mid-market block were three times oversubscribed without any external marketing - demonstrating the attractiveness of the design and location. One tenant moving into the new social rent housing, said: "You have no idea how much difference moving into this new property will make to me and my daughter. I can't want to feel warm in the winter and enjoy my balcony in the summer sunshine whilst my daughter has her own space and a place for homework."

The development comprises three six storey blocks, all served with lift access and equipped with solar panels, space for a home office, and most properties have a private balcony.



The design aims to create an environment with an identity rooted in its place. It clearly defines public and private space and embodies best practice in the creation of a sustainable environment balancing built form with biodiversity and landscape, in a design which recognises the historic and existing nature of the site, the need for urban repair and the potential for an imaginative response to the context.

The development places emphasis on the design of the landscape and the spaces between the individual buildings, working with the steeply sloping topography of the site to good effect to create high-quality open spaces and a public realm that is safe, accessible and designed for use by the residents.

The buildings are given an appropriate significance for this unique site by their scale, proportion and

materiality and by a strong control of generous repeating full-height windows and a celebration of corners with deeply recessed private balconies. The design of the individual buildings, maximising corner aspect and their rotated placement around the sloping corner site with its elevated position means that all flats make the most of the spectacular views to the immediate setting of the historic Maryhill Locks and out to the city landscape beyond.

The development has delivered significantly to the community, with £83k of benefits delivered to date. This has included nine apprenticeship and work experience placements, foodbank support to almost 1000 households, and books and Christmas vouchers for local schools.

## Outcomes and achievements

Development of 62 units of new housing - 26 units for social rent, 18 for mid-market rent and 18 for New Supply Shared Equity.

High-quality, aspirational design providing private outdoor space to most properties and a high-quality living environment.

Regeneration of a key site at the entrance to Maryhill which has laid derelict for over twenty years.

Unique partnership delivery model through the Glasgow City Council/Wheatley Homes/Scottish Government Transformational Regeneration Area programme, with progress overseen by a Local Delivery Group comprised of local residents, officers and elected representatives.

£83k of community benefits.



# EXCELLENCE IN TENANT SCRUTINY

Sponsored by:



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

This award is aimed at landlords and their tenants who can show excellence in working collaboratively to carry out a piece of scrutiny work, or to embed scrutiny within the culture of the organisation in ways which have led to positive change, improved service outcomes for tenants and/or enhanced the lives of tenants and communities in some way.

## Your Voice Group

**Lead organisation: Your Voice Group**

**Partner organisations: Argyll Community Housing Association**



### Statement of support

In planning for the Scottish Social Housing Charter, Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) and our tenants identified the need to develop a group which would undertake scrutiny activities of ACHA services. A number of volunteers came forward to join the group and training sessions were provided. The Your Voice Group (YVG) was established on 15th August 2015.

The YVG are an independent group who are supported by the Tenant Information Service. ACHA's Community Development Officer acts as a link between the YVG and the Association. There are currently 6 members who live across the Argyll and Bute area which varies from very urban, to very rural, to island communities. ACHA have homes across an area of 691,000 hectares including 11 islands. The YVG face the challenge of meeting regularly as a group due to the wide geographical area and reliance on ferry transport. Frequent meetings are held online where the group carry out scrutiny activities and share ideas.

The YVG use a range of information when deciding on subjects to be scrutinised. The group use performance information as a starting point for in depth service scrutiny alongside feedback from service users. Priority areas are determined using a range of information including Annual Return on the Charter reports, performance reports, satisfaction surveys, compliments and complaints data. A work plan is then developed to focus activities and identify tasks which range from desktop reviews, comparing ACHA's performance to peers, testing systems, study visits, gathering tenant and staff opinions, mystery shopping and tenant led inspections. Conclusions are then drawn up based on the hard evidence and reports are prepared for ACHA's Board of Management detailing their findings and includes recommendations for service improvements. ACHA respond to this by agreeing which measures can be implemented and, where they can't be, explain fully why not. We regularly have joint discussions to monitor actions by the Association as a result of the YVG recommendations and measure the impact on our tenants. Some of the recommendations and impacts are shown below:

**Recommendation 1:** Develop a system which allows ACHA to accurately assess how long calls are waiting before answered.

**Impact:** New Call Management System allows staff to monitor the volume of calls which diverts quickly to available staff to improve the customer experience.

**Recommendation 2:** Make better use of close noticeboards to include an Estate Management checklist which details the actions being taken in each close.

**Impact:** Notice Boards are in every close where an ACHA property is present to ensure customers are kept fully up to date.

Recommendation 3: Provide a 'point of contact' during and after planned maintenance works and identifying households that might require extra support.

Impact: Resident Liaison Officers were introduced to improve customer service, identify tenants who require extra support and improve relationships between tenants and owners.

Recommendation 4: Extend close cleaning to cover all closes that are in sole ACHA ownership.

Impact: All new build properties now have close cleaning services. Work ongoing to identify where

ACHA could introduce this further for all customers.

Recommendation 5: ACHA to think creatively about the community benefits they require from a contractor as part of the procurement process, working with local communities to gather their thoughts and views. It should be clear at the outset who would be responsible for ongoing maintenance of any projects delivered.

Action: ACHA are developing a Community Benefits Policy with community consultation events on specific projects.

## Outcomes and achievements

6 scrutiny exercises have been completed to date with 81 out of 87 recommendations being approved by ACHA's Board of Management. The scrutiny projects undertaken are 'Voids' (2016), 'Repairs' (2017), 'Estates' (2018) and 'Planned Maintenance Communications' (2019). Two scrutiny projects were delayed due to the impact of COVID-19 and were submitted to ACHA's Board of Management in 2023. These projects are 'Delivering New Homes' and 'ACHA's Lettable Standard'. The YVG are now scrutinising ACHA's Tenant Participation Policy.

As a result of tenant scrutiny work there is an

increased self-awareness within ACHA at all levels. The YVG challenge staff by questioning the way services operate and provide hard evidence to the Governing Body on where improvements can be made. This compels staff to objectively evaluate service standards and provides a valuable reality check in relation to the quality of services provided to tenants.

The YVG recognise the challenges of delivering housing services across such diverse communities within Argyll and Bute. Their skills, knowledge and dedication have transformed ACHA's culture and overall housing services delivered to our tenants.

# South Lanarkshire Customer Scrutiny Group Gas Servicing Scrutiny Exercise

## South Lanarkshire Council



### Statement of support

The Customer Scrutiny Group (CSG) was established in 2016 and works collaboratively with the council, supported by the independent South Lanarkshire Tenant Development Support Project (The Project), to undertake scrutiny activities to enhance the development and delivery of Housing Services.

The CSG comprises around 15 members and works with the council to agree an annual scrutiny programme, taking into account a range of key performance information. Ensuring that the annual

scrutiny programme focusses on the most significant areas is a priority for customer representatives' members of the CSG. After reviewing performance information, the CSG identified 'Gas Servicing and Tenant Safety' as a service area to be progressed for scrutiny during 2022/23.

Working in partnership with the council and supported by The Project, the CSG progressed the Gas Servicing and Tenant Safety scrutiny activity between October 2022 and April 2023, during which a detailed review of this vital service was carried out.

This exercise required the CSG to carry out a range of work including; developing an understanding of the regulatory and legislative framework in relation to gas servicing; reviewing the council's gas servicing processes, undertaking a review of key related documentation, including letters issued to tenants, and information published on the council's website, and reviewing benchmarking performance with peer local authorities.

A key aspect of the approach taken was to engage with customers who has experience of the gas servicing process and this was facilitated through telephone surveys which gauged the experience and views of other tenants. Engagement also took place

with Housing and Technical Resources staff involved in the process, through a number of interactive sessions, which provided the opportunity for open discussion to take place, with a staff member commenting 'It was really interesting to see things from the customer's perspective and hear their thoughts and expectations of the service.' Combined, these greatly assisted everyone involved to better understand the processes and challenges from a strategic and operational perspective.

A concluding session was held in April 2023, facilitated by the Project, where a full evaluation of the activity took place which informed the development of the report on the scrutiny activity. A CSG representative highlighted the positive joint working approach and said 'The CSG would like to thank all staff who assisted our members in this scrutiny exercise. We hope our recommendations will help to deliver improvements in the gas servicing process and benefit both the council and its customers.'

At a meeting held in early August 2023, the CSG presented and discussed their findings and recommendations with Housing and Technical Resources' Resource Management Team (RMT). Key recommendations included: -

- Strive to achieve 100% compliance within the gas servicing programme

- Review correspondence issued to tenants as part of the gas servicing process
- Review the range of information available to tenants, to ensure understanding of their responsibilities in allowing access for gas servicing
- Review and improve operational processes to maximise opportunities for effective service delivery
- Review administration and resource costs in relation to forced entry

The RMT acknowledged the commitment shown by the CSG to deliver such a comprehensive scrutiny review and report on the gas servicing and tenant safety activity. The recommendations provided have formed a project plan which will help considerable food for thought as to how services could be improved and resources optimised, going forward.

Stephen Gibson, Executive Director of Housing and Technical Resources commented 'I fully appreciate the Group's commitment and the attention to detail demonstrated throughout this exercise. Customer scrutiny is important to the council and is a vital aspect in ensuring the further development and delivery of services'.

## Outcomes and achievements

The CSG has worked tirelessly with the council to review the approach to service delivery with the explicit aim of improving services to customers.

Over the years the group has developed their skills, knowledge and experience of carrying out scrutiny activities. The recent gas servicing activity was described by group members as being 'our best one yet'. This demonstrates a positive experience for members and satisfaction in their role in the review of this important service area. It is clear that with each scrutiny activity the CSG grows in confidence and their understanding of their important role.

The commitment and attention to detail demonstrated by the group throughout the scrutiny activity, as well as the support provided by council staff, has resulted in a number of valuable recommendations for service improvement which informed the development of a project plan.

Work has already commenced to take forward certain actions, with the RMT fully committed to supporting the delivery of agreed actions which will help ensure improvements in the delivery of the service to the benefit of both the council and customers. Progress in relation to the project plan will be monitored by and reported to the CSG over the coming months.



# EXCELLENCE IN THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR



This award is open to all organisations operating in the private rented sector in Scotland. It is aimed at letting agents or landlords who strive to excel in the areas of customer service and innovation.

## PKC Lets and Ukraine Landlord Offer

Perth & Kinross Council



### Statement of support

All local authorities in Scotland are supporting Ukrainian displaced people. What makes this project innovative is that we have taken the initiative and developed an offer for private landlords, using the funding available, that has delivered instant results.

Engaging with the private rented sector can be challenging for local authorities who are also responsible for the regulation and registration of private landlords. The current legislative landscape also makes engagement at the current time difficult, with various restrictions having been placed on landlords through recent Cost of Living legislation. Landlords have also experienced increases in regulation in recent years. Whilst this has created challenges Perth & Kinross Council have also recognised opportunities created and has actively sought to support landlords to manage and understand these changes.

Through its PKC Lets initiative, Perth & Kinross Council was the first Local authority to register as a Letting Agent and introduced chargeable management services for Private landlords in 2010.

This project built on established relationships but is unique in the level of incentive offered, and the scale on which it is being delivered. The landlord offer is based on a combination of financial incentives, rent guarantees and free support with property and tenancy set-up. The financial aspects are funded using the Ukraine funding streams from the UK & Scottish Governments and the service elements are already provided on a routine basis by the Private Sector Team.

The project delivers a unique level of engagement with private landlords and adds a new level of collaborative working with local letting agents in order to secure the widest range of suitable housing. This has required officers involved to actively engage with letting agents, to explain the background to the project, the range of supports available, how this can interact with their own business needs and encourage letting agents that engagement with the local authority will have positive benefits to them. Many are suspicious of the local authority's motivation, especially when we also offer chargeable services for landlords, but creating honest and open relationships with the staff has allowed us to overcome most barriers.

Future plans for the project include expansion to meet the needs of other vulnerable groups to open up the private rented sector as a realistic, long term, affordable housing option. The current project has created an opportunity to explore the level of incentive required to engage with private rented sector.



Many of the incentives can be provided through guarantees rather than any direct cost, reducing the cost of delivery and allowing an increased number of households to be supported through the schemes. The intention will be to expand the vulnerable groups that the initiative can support to remove barrier to private rentals and increase the housing options available to vulnerable households whilst mitigating potential risks to landlords.

The multi-agency nature of the team, all co-located and with shared responsibility and understanding is another example of how valuable partnership working is. Traditionally social workers would work in partnership with housing teams, however in order

to deliver this project social workers are based and integrated with the housing team in order to work pro-actively to support families before they reach crisis point. The social workers have reported that this allows for a greater level of early intervention, reduction in cases escalating and better understanding across colleagues. This shared responsibility also promotes positive working relationships and shared learning.

The project delivers on the council's wider objectives of providing more affordable homes, providing a range of housing options, delivering more homes for people with varying needs, and providing quality homes with affordable warmth.

## Outcomes and achievements

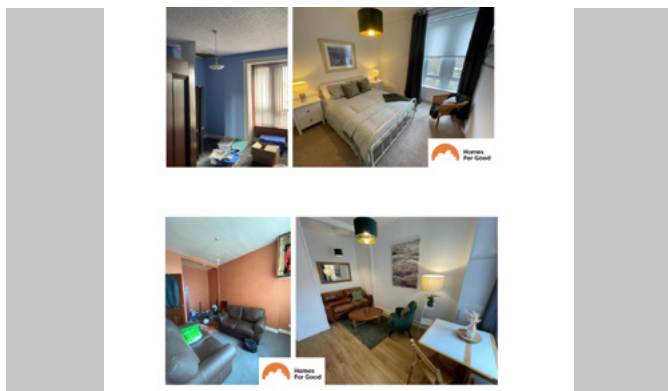
Between September 2022 and March 2023, 55 private sector properties were acquired for Ukrainian displaced people. Tenancy sustainment levels are around 95% with only 3 of the tenancies having ended when the Ukrainian families relocated to other areas to be reunited with extended family members. The landlord offer, along with enhanced financial and other support for hosts, has minimised the impact of Ukrainian resettlement on local homelessness services. We have only received one homelessness presentation from a Ukrainian displaced person and have not need to use any of our standard temporary accommodation properties.

Perth & Kinross Council has provided services to private landlords since 2010. Despite our longstanding engagement with the sector, the Ukraine landlord offer has generated relationships with new landlords we hadn't previously engaged with. The incentives available have also resulted in long-term empty properties being brought back into use.

In order to balance the impact of the Ukrainian Landlord offer with the needs of other customers it has been agreed that no more than 60% of available private-sector properties will be made available to the scheme, with the remainder being available to other clients including local homeless people.

# A Day in the Life of a Letting Agency

## Homes for Good Scotland CIC



### Statement of support

Home is the foundation of all of our lives, and we recognize the importance of a safe and secure home, and our responsibilities for the properties we manage. Our values underpin everything we do, and our day-to-day behaviours, as a team and as individuals, reflect these. They are:

How you feel is important to us.

We offer real quality and our standards are high

We know our stuff

We always do the right thing

We don't give up at the first hurdle

Homes for Good is Scotland's first social enterprise letting agency, now forming part of a dynamic social business group. Established in 2013, with offices in Bridgeton, we manage and own over 570 properties within the Greater Glasgow area.

Our focus is on leading by example in the private rented sector, creating safe happy homes for tenants and sounds investments for landlords. Working across Glasgow and beyond, our relationships and customer care standards with tenants and landlords alike set us apart from the rest of the industry. We specialize in working with tenants with social housing needs, and offer additional services such as energy efficiency advice, financial health, interior design, and employability guidance. We work with third-sector partners to maximize our charity and social enterprise supply chain, ensuring that our profits are reinvested in changing people's lives.

Danielle, our Property Repairs and Maintenance Manager works daily on maintenance requests and ensures the speedy delivery of repairs by acknowledging them and assigning them to a contractor as soon as we receive them. She daily

monitors the tasks at any given day and chases up contractors to complete works withing stipulated timelines. Since January 2023 we have dealt with over 1100 repairs across all trade areas including leading on communal building repairs.

Our Lettings Administrator, Joanne is manages all sorts of customer queries daily. She handles over 80 calls and 30 voicemails on an average day, along with the property enquiry inbox from tenants interested in our available properties, which can receive up to 400 enquiries per day. She makes sure none of them are left for the next business day.

#### Tenant Feedback -

"Personally I've found reporting repairs simple, straightforward forward, and dealt with professionally and promptly. The team I've had dealings with are always very approachable and helpful."

"I have rented a flat from these guys and I have never been happier, the help I have been given is amazing, not just with the flat but other things to, you can talk to these people and they give great support, all you have to do is call and they are there for you with advice or just to have someone to talk to, they are a great company and I would definitely recommend them to anyone"

#### Landlord Feedback-

"Having been a landlord for 15 years and have had 6 different letting agents , to date Home for Good are by far the best. When things go wrong or mistakes are made they put it right without any fuss. I have in the past and will recommend Homes for Good in the future to anyone who asks for a recommendation for a letting agent"

## Outcomes and achievements

HFG was created as the first letting agency in Scotland to be run as a social enterprise. Today, HFG manages over 570 properties, working with around 130 landlords as well as having its own portfolio of 330 homes for people on lower incomes. A day in the Life

of a Letting Agent provides insight into reality within the private rented sector, and shows the care and attention which goes into ensuring people are treated well and are able to access quality homes they can afford.

# EXCELLENCE IN REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABILITY



Sponsored by: **KINGDOM**  
Group

This award acknowledges the critical importance of a range of bodies, organisations and local groups in revitalising communities and neighbourhoods. It also recognises that physical improvements go hand-in-hand with social and economic developments to make a real difference in people's lives.

## Primrose Place, Alloa

**Lead organisation: Kingdom Housing Association**

**Partner organisation: Clackmannanshire Council**



### Statement of support

The re-development of a former vacant co-op site in the centre of Alloa for 60 intergenerational, and dementia-design informed flats.

Kingdom Housing Association & Clackmannanshire Council

The site lies at the heart of the town centre and had lain vacant and derelict, negatively affecting the amenity, image and perception of the town centre, conservation area and the adjacent Category A listed Speirs Centre.

The Council acquired the site with an existing, acceptable, but unremarkable planning permission in place. The Council had an ambition to create a high quality town centre living environment for people of

all ages and an exemplar for independent living. Its RSL partner, Kingdom Housing Association shared that ambition, and took forward the development of the site.

This marked a new chapter in the evolution of Alloa town centre; once again making it a living place, particularly for older people. Services such as shops, post office, public transport, Council offices and library are easily accessible, however, perceptions around safety and the quality of the town centre environment for living needed to be addressed.

Both the development design, and the related streetscape projects needed to come together to achieve this. The Council and Kingdom engaged with Architecture & Design Scotland (ADS) on the project. As a result, a multi-agency design review process was undertaken involving the architects, various Council Services, Kingdom HA, Health and Social Care Partnership, local business and third sector, Historic Environment Scotland and dementia design academics from the university of Stirling. This process transformed the scheme beyond recognition, creating inclusive flats and safe and attractive communal outdoor spaces and immediate public realm, all informed by dementia design principles.

The design review process was backed up by public consultation about the wider town centre using the Place Standard tool, gaining around 300 responses. This gave further insight into key issues for the development and wider actions around the town centre. The Primrose Street development and these

wider town centre projects are known collectively as "Living Alloa".

The development will have a hugely positive impact on the surrounding area and is providing a housing solution to maximise the time the local ageing community can remain within their own homes, supported by further improvements around the town centre. The new homes provide residents with energy efficient homes which will meet Housing for Varying Needs, achieve Secured by Design Gold and Kingdoms design standards.

The design review process transformed early iterations of the scheme to create a development meets and exceeds aspirations in terms of town centre living. Key changes to the development that emerged from the process included: pulling the building much closer to the A-listed Speirs Centre, recreating a "street" in Primrose Place; forming an entrance plaza with high quality hard and soft landscaping, public art and seating which also acts as a setting for the town's Registry office, opposite; creating a perimeter block

around the site's three street frontages, and thereby allowing all apartments to be dual aspect; creating light, bright and generous communal internal and covered external spaces within the building for pausing or social interaction as well as mobility scooter recharging; creating a bespoke enclosed communal garden with a variety of paths, open and enclosed areas, seating and raised planting beds. This means the development complies with Dementia Services Development Centre guidelines and it achieve the highest level of dementia friendly accreditation.

A partnership approach to the funding of the project was achieved, with funding provided through;

- Scottish Government; investment subsidy at £4,895,928
- Private Finance; raised by Kingdom Housing association at £3,092,725
- Addition Grant Subsidy; provided by Clackmannanshire Council at £990,000

## Outcomes and achievements

The physical transformation to the area is significant, with this previously vacant and derelict site now occupied by a high quality building that enhances it's surroundings

Footfall around the area is markedly higher, streets and alleyways that were often avoided, particularly after dark, now seen as safe and pleasant spaces to pass through.

Providing adaptable, affordable and attractive smaller properties has helped meet the long term housing needs of many older and physically disabled people. The built-in adaptability and dementia friendly elements will cut down on costs of retro-fitting to

existing stock, which is often a less than an ideal solution, and the town centre location allows residents to access shops and other amenities within a short distance of their home.

Ongoing work is taking place with the Council, Kingdom Housing Association and Stirling University to build on lived experiences of residents to enhance and improve future similar housing projects and further develop the Clackmannanshire Council's sustainable aging policy.

The development is changing the image and perception of Alloa town centre as a place to live, visit and do business in.



# North Sighthill Regeneration, Edinburgh

**Lead organisation: City of Edinburgh Council**

**Partner organisation: Anderson Bell Christie Architects**

## Statement of support



The Sighthill regeneration area was previously occupied by high rise flats. It sits beside Sighthill Park and is bounded to the south and east by busy traffic routes at Calder and Broomhouse Roads.

## Improving the quality and mix of homes

The wider Sighthill comprises Council houses constructed in the inter and post war years. Existing homes are not energy efficient, are difficult to access for people with disabilities and are mainly for social rent. Our new development provides 184 new homes with a range of size, types and tenures across the site to create a fully balanced and inclusive community. These comprise:

- A tenure blind approach with a mix of homes for rent and for sale
- Accessible homes -10% of the affordable housing complies with Housing for Varying Needs requirements for Ambulant Disabled People and 10% with requirements for wheelchair users. These dwellings are indistinguishable from mainstream housing
- Energy efficient homes
- 35% of housing is for families with children

## A sense of place

Fronting onto Calder Road, a series of four storey flats signal the entrance into the new housing area. Their scale reflects the urban character of the site and responds to the height of the adjacent Napier University Campus.

This outer perimeter 'wall' protects lower rise houses towards the centre of the site. Here, important corners are emphasised using three storey end terrace townhouses, which frame two storey terrace housing.

At publicly accessible areas elevations include design

features for visual interest, such as balconies, enlarged or linked openings and brick patterns. This hierarchy, together with a shared suite of materials and details, provides a cohesive placemaking strategy.

The architectural design and landscape planting strategy focusses movement through a series of public spaces, culminating in an attractive pedestrianised green space in the centre of the site. This strategy supports wayfinding and orientation and encourages walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

## Contributing to broader local regeneration

The new development addresses the previous lack of good quality, legible routes to and within the area by providing attractive, safe pedestrian routes to the park and the adjacent Napier University campus.

The Sighthill regeneration area can be considered as a 20 Minute Neighbourhood as a number of facilities are within walking distance of the site. These include a health centre, shops, a school, the local park, churches, community facilities and a local library in the wider area. Napier University's Sighthill Campus is located directly beside the development.

Community engagement has included work with local schools, support for a community growing initiative and appointing a social enterprise to provide cleaning services to the site.

## Shows evidence of partnership working

City of Edinburgh Council have worked in partnership with:-

- Broadway Malyan - the initial masterplan
- Anderson Bell Christie -Design Guides and management of the design process for the development
- Engie -construction of new homes, greenspaces and public realm, community engagement

The project has won a RICS Social Impact Award for its collaborative and community - focussed approach. Judges said 'it is rewarding to see the positive difference good quality built environment can make to people's day to day lives'

## Commitment to sustainability.

New homes are energy efficient, reducing fuel poverty. They are located near to local facilities which are accessible on foot or by cycle, and are beside a major bus route - thus reducing car dependence and encouraging active travel

Attractive greenspaces encourage positive sociability and wellbeing - helping to build a resilient, sociable community.

## Outcomes and achievements

- A design process based on a masterplan and design guide - resulting in a neighbourhood with a 'sense of place' - a coherent and consistent character with attractive streets and greenspaces
- An improved tenure mix - a tenure blind development with a mix of homes for rent and for sale which improves housing choices across the Sighthill area as a whole. 35% of housing is for families with children
- Providing accessible homes - 10% of the affordable housing complies with Housing for Varying Needs requirements for Older and Ambulant Disabled People and 10% with the HfVN requirements for wheelchair users. These dwellings have been designed to be as indistinguishable as possible from mainstream housing
- Energy efficient homes - reducing fuel poverty, minimising carbon emissions
- A safe and pedestrian friendly neighbourhood - the architectural design and landscape planting strategy supports wayfinding and orientation and encourages walking, cycling and the use of public transport to access local retail, community and educational facilities.

# HOUSING ORGANISATION OF THE YEAR

Sponsored by: **sfha**  
Scottish Federation of  
Housing Associations  
We are housing Scotland

This award recognises the social landlord or letting agency that has delivered a truly excellent service for their tenants over the past year.

## Link Group at 60 - Sustainable Homes, Sustainable Communities, Sustainable Business

### Link Group



### Statement of support

2022/23 marked the 60th anniversary of Link working in communities across Scotland. Link was established by people who made it their mission to provide high quality accommodation and services to tenants and to address poverty and inequality.

Simply providing housing is not enough to enable many people to sustain their tenancies and live well in their communities. In 2022/23, we launched Link's first 'Communities Strategy' which was endorsed by the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing, and Local Government, who commented:

'Housing Associations have a valuable role in supporting all people in their communities to live well locally. By placing the needs of their communities at the heart of everything they do I welcome this strategy and its ambition for all Link's communities.'

We have continued to broaden out our portfolio of homes. In the year we completed the development of 1,040 new properties of which 974 were for social rent. This in turn made us the largest developing housing

association in the UK in the year. Separately we have been investing heavily in Edinburgh in support of the City of Edinburgh Council's private sector leasing scheme, where we buy and renovate home for letting under the Council's homelessness duties - we now have more than 200 properties providing this critical service.

We believe it is important to hold ourselves to external scrutiny and we were the first RSL in Scotland to obtain the 'Sustainable Housing Label' certification from Ritterwald, a pan-European specialist housing consultancy. In March 2023, we received our third annual review and were delighted to be re-accredited and to achieve 'Frontrunner' status in the Environment and Social categories, and 'Ambassador' status for Governance.

Link plays a lead role in helping to design the future of the sector. Our Group CEO sits on the Scottish Government 'Task & Finish Group' which led the sector response to 'The Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Act 2022' and is also on the Scottish Government's task force on 'Green Heat Finance' as well as the committee looking into technical changes for EESSH2.

These groups help to shape how the sector responds to critical pressure points in the future including how homes across Scotland are de-carbonised. In addition, Link works closely with HACT to develop the Social Value reporting structures for the sector which will begin to clearly articulate the impact housing associations have daily in communities across the UK.

We recognise an understanding of the impacts of trauma on people and communities is essential in meeting our ambition to respond to customer needs and better support sustainable communities.



Trauma training not only helps improve our customer experience by equipping staff with the knowledge and skills to best respond to trauma, but it also helps to create a trauma-informed culture across the group which promotes staff wellbeing, improves our services, and ultimately supports wider recovery for staff and communities alike. In 2022/23, we commenced training for all our frontline teams (housing colleagues / repairs and maintenance tradesmen / gas and electrical servicing operatives) in trauma informed practice. This innovative approach to professional

development is at the heart of our approach to investment in our people across Link.

Our Training and Employability Academy is run by the Link Group's health and wellbeing charity, LinkLiving. Our Academy has been assessed as "High Confidence" by the Scottish Qualifications Authority for the last three years. This is the highest level of assessment and only 17% of centres have achieved this, demonstrating that LinkLiving provide trauma informed learning opportunities designed to meet the needs of all our workforce.

## Outcomes and achievements

Link have supported tenants through the cost-of-living crisis and have worked in partnership with a number of agencies to help tenants.

- 420 staff trained through LinkLiving's Skills Academy ensuring all Link's frontline housing, property services and support staff are trauma informed.
- Our LinkGiving Trust distributed over £107,000 of crisis funding to 900 household assisting those most in need of help.
- Link have heavily invested in our tenancy support teams and coordinated the distribution of £120,000 to help with heating bills with £100 payments distributed to 1200 tenants.
- The monetary gain for Link tenants in 2022/23 totals £1,77M, which is money that would not have otherwise be gained without the involvement of Link Advice Services staff.
- Link are very proud of our tenancy sustainment rate of 97.64% in 2023, which clearly demonstrates our commitment to supporting tenants to continue to live in their homes.
- Link secured £275k from the Scottish Government Fuel Insecurity fund in October 2022. Staff worked tirelessly to distribute this fund to tenants. The money went towards educational literature, fuel costs and debt, winter warmer/energy efficient goods.
- Link are proud to mark Link's 60th anniversary as the largest supplier of new build social rented homes in the UK.

# Tenants and Elderpark Achieve Magnificent (TEAMS)

## Elderpark Housing Association



### Statement of support

Elderpark Housing has remained focused on the values of community-based housing and its principles which can have a transformational effect on people's lives. We believe it's not enough to just deliver good housing - building sustainable communities which can

thrive is essential to our vision of creating 'a vibrant neighbourhood where everyone can prosper'.

We are committed to valuing our tenants and residents by having an outstanding organisational culture and this year we were the first RSL in Scotland to use the US based culture tool "CultureTalk" in keeping with our strong commitment to innovation. This helped evidence our organisational culture and how it links with our organisational objectives, aligns with our core values and delivers successful outcomes. It identified a universally agreed culture which focused on innovation, caring and emotional connection which embodies a successful organisation.

Elderpark supports our people to become involved in national bodies which deliver meaningful change in housing policy at a national level. We currently have an employee and board member who sit on the CIH Scotland Board, realising the important influence CIH Scotland has on policy and people development. Elderpark regularly participates in discussions across



the sector to ensure we are at the forefront of debate impacting on housing policy.

Elderpark is a strong performing organisation with satisfaction levels across all indicators being among one of the highest in Scotland. Demonstrating our commitment to delivering customer service excellence which can only be achieved through listening to tenant feedback.

A Community Regeneration Officer role was created 2022 to further strengthen our engagement with the community, having already delivered a number of innovative projects through partnership working which has truly supported our communities, particularly young people through working with local schools.

For example, the "Junior Community Voice" initiative engages with local primary schools to assess what they want from their community given that a young person's perception of community cohesion differs greatly from the older generation.

The area we serve in Govan has a high deprivation scoring and the challenges of the cost of living crisis are immense and we have sought to mitigate this in the following ways:

- Provided Christmas food assistance in partnership with Elderpark technology supplier CX Feedback supporting in excess of 600 people
- Community participation in the development and design of attractive, eye catching murals on buildings

- Supported a range of projects including the Govan Christmas Panto, local sports centre Park Villa Christmas Fair, Aberlour Christmas Gift Appeal, Govan Music Festival and Govan Community Project
- Delivered an energy advice project across Govan providing support to over 2000 tenants and generating financial gains of over £250k.
- Supported by a lottery grant of £27,000, we have successfully delivered a range of activities aimed at our customers that provide a warm safe space with activity and hot food

Since April 2023 we have continued to develop new projects in partnership with tenants including:

- A "Winter Warmer Together" project with 6 partners delivering activities and food support
- We are developing a sustainable travel project with bike lending and events across Govan.
- "Back Courts bike funding" - we have carried out a customer engagement exercise inviting comment and feedback from residents in the identified back courts.

We are fully committed to succession planning and professional development. In October 2022 we appointed a qualified HR specialist to support delivery of our objective of 'supporting our people to reach their full potential'. We achieve this aim by offering education and development opportunities to all within Elderpark with many achieving accredited qualifications which in turn supports delivery of excellent customer service and places our people in the best position for career advancement.

## Outcomes and achievements

\*Soaring energy bills and the cost of living crisis, there have been "financial gains" of over £250K for our community through an Energy Advice Project

\*The murals which now form part of the "Govan mural trail" make Govan a destination of cultural interest.

\*The schools initiative is a truly innovative project as we ensure young people have a voice and influence on future activities

\*Highlights in relation to developing our people include several employees gaining CIH qualifications which have supported them into promoted posts, the achievement of a Housing Studies Diploma by our Housing Officer, participation in innovative

emerging leaders course to high potential colleagues, supporting work placements from various settings and the appointment of a Graduate Finance Officer. All of this recognises an ongoing commitment to supporting people both within the organisation and the sector.

What makes an outstanding organisation is not the bricks and mortar, the money in the bank or the policies and procedures. Having engaged, passionate, skilled and ambitious people who share the same goal does. The innovative culture audit identified a synergy across the organisation which cannot easily be replicated and this commitment to Elderpark and our tenants and residents is what makes us special.

# EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

This award recognises organisations that are leading the way in driving professionalism, learning and development while delivering a great service for tenants. We wanted to hear from organisations who are fantastic to work for and drive good outcomes for their staff as part of the day job.

## Homeless Change Programme

**Lead organisation: Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership**

**Partner organisation: Inverclyde Council**



### Statement of support

A two-year change programme in Inverclyde started in 2022/23 to deliver a radical redesign of the homelessness service. The personal and professional development of staff was identified by the Homeless Change Lead as an area of focus. The Change Lead holds the CIH Postgraduate Diploma in Housing and understood that by embedding a framework for learning and development significant impact could be made on delivering the change programme agenda.

The staffing structure introduced three Well-being Co-ordinators directly line managing the core teams within the service. All three successfully completed the CIH Level 5 Diploma in Housing. The knowledge and experience they have gained carries the professional standards consistently by improving the leadership and management function they provide to their teams across the delivery of intensive wrap around support, the assessment of statutory homelessness, and the provision of good quality temporary accommodation.

This inclusion of these qualifications in their own personal toolkit provides the service with the

necessary strategic skills and knowledge to face the current challenges in housing by delivering excellence in leadership, management, and ethics.

Two Graduate Interns who have progressed to promoted positions as Project Assistants (RRTP) are continually increasing skills by undertaking research on behalf of the service, briefing teams on their attendance at forums and webinars. Their knowledge and experience continues to grow, and now hold responsibility for monitoring the performance of the service in delivering the objectives of the Inverclyde RRTP.

A new Rapid Rehousing Support Team was introduced to the service in November 2022. A comprehensive training and development plan has allowed the team to work to their function of personalised and intensive support to clients in the following areas:

- Food hygiene courses to provide safe hot meals within the Inverclyde centre.
- Housing First training.
- Training on minimising financial harm - encouraging clients to be more financially responsible and aware of exploitation.
- Dementia awareness training.
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills training.
- Naloxone administration.

All staff have had training on managing their own wellbeing and trauma enhanced practice is being rolled out across the entire service.

Stronger collaboration with key partners has been an ongoing objective, with joint training delivered in collaboration with the local RSL's such as peer-to-peer sessions on housing management information systems and Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) training provided by Criminal Justice Social Work.

Housing partners are involved in six operational subgroups governing the change programme, with information sharing and communication ongoing, continuously developing each other's understanding of the services provided and where we can be of assistance to one another.

Internally there has been a drive to encourage professional self-development with a new initiative, the Widen Our World (WOW) awards.

Staff across the three teams are permitted to use one hour per week for self-directed learning. This includes internet searches on relevant homelessness topics. Staff are encouraged to follow charitable and academic social media on homelessness both nationally and internationally and to submit an article of interest each month.

There is an incentive of a monthly award ceremony where medals and prizes are presented to staff who share inspirational stories from the sector, new information on homelessness and examples of good practice. This has become a great opportunity to share the wealth of information in the sector with staff, and challenge staff to look outside of Inverclyde and take charge of their own learning and development. A healthy competition has grown and an enthusiasm for improving performance.

Learning has become second nature to the team and provided a positive direction of progress for the change programme and to achieving the key priority objectives of Inverclyde RRTP.

## Outcomes and achievements

Food hygiene courses have allowed staff to confidently mentor residents in essential cooking and hygiene skills. Teaching individuals how to prepare simple, cost-effective meals using kitchen facilities from a decommissioned room within the hostel. These basic skills will be essential for tenancy sustainment in terms of budget management and long-term health and wellbeing.

Housing First training and the new in-house support team has allowed the service to upscale this pathway, with clients being supported through the principles of housing first increasing by over 500% since the Rapid Rehousing Support Teams initiation in November 2022. This approach improves the outcomes of

clients with intensive wrap around support while they navigate the difficulties of tenancy management, equipping them with the skills to do so independently.

Over 50 clients are currently being supported, with staff utilising the training they have received, and the research gathered through WOW awards staff say:-

"There is a lot of positivity from the staff about the WOW awards. It creates a lovely buzz"

'I love it I love it I love the competition'.

'Makes you look in to reading stuff'.

'I love how the subject I picked has been put on the agenda for the redesign subgroups'.

# Springfield Cross Passive House Project

## West of Scotland Housing Association



### Statement of support

In the design and construction of Scotland's largest Passivhaus- certified development, Springfield Cross – also a first undertaking of Passivhaus standard for West of Scotland Housing Association– the Association worked to develop their knowledge base in

collaboration with partners, contractor and recognised experts. Recognising the need to engage both staff and tenants in the adoption of this new standard and associated technologies, WSHA devised an inclusive training programme for both groups to enable them to grow their knowledge and help them make the most of living in a Passivhaus standard building.

Recognising new technology is best learned in-person, an exemplar flat was provided as a training suite for staff to ensure all were well-instructed on how to assist tenants after they had moved in. This flat included a working example of the Mechanical Heat Ventilation Recovery System (MVHR) that the Springfield Cross flats would adopt—a central component of the Passivhaus standard. The MVHR system recycles heat generated in everyday use of the property and uses this to warm the incoming fresh air to the tenants' desired temperature to provide constant, filtered air, improving the indoor air quality and eliminating the need for a heating system. WSHA also invited other



RSLs and Local Authorities to view the exemplar flat, using this as an opportunity to share learning and discuss further the benefits and potential difficulties for users.

As the primary users of the system, it was important that tenants received comprehensive training and instruction to ensure the Passivhaus block reached its full potential. WSHA provided a proactive and inclusive programme, ensuring no tenant was left without the knowledge or confidence to work the MVHR system and benefit from the enhanced thermal properties.

An 'Introduction to Passivhaus' leaflet was created and issued to all prospective tenants to explain the differences between the new standard and a more traditionally designed home. This addressed any knowledge gaps, proactively answered questions and helped ensure tenant "buy-in" before sign-up.

Early in-person viewings were arranged with tenants to demonstrate the different systems that would be used within their homes, the operation of Passivhaus technologies and explain more broadly the benefits of Passivhaus. Alongside the instruction leaflets and personal support provided by staff, further one-to-one training and demonstrations were provided to tenants after they moved in, ensuring every one felt competent with understanding and using the controls.

WSHA installed environmental sensors to monitor the temperature, humidity and air quality of properties. Through a portal, these were accessible to tenants which allowed them to more fully understand and control their interior environment. Training on usage of the sensors was provided to staff and an engagement bus visited Springfield Cross for tenants to learn more about how to operate the tenants' app, how the sensors work, what could cause an alert to trigger and more general advice on how to improve their indoor environment.

Keen to track residents' understanding and satisfaction levels, WSHA carried out both pre-occupation and post-occupancy surveys, completed by more than two thirds of tenants. The Association also carried out an additional survey of tenant behaviors and lifestyles, gathering data around how residents operated and controlled their heating, ventilation, and heat recovery technologies to identify any areas where WSHA could give better advice to improve tenants' overall experience and comfort. This data informed the good practice guides that were issued to all tenants.

Taking learning out into the wider sector, a 'Passivhaus Lesson Learned' document was created in collaboration with the Design Team, Contractor and tenants to contribute to the culture and practices of the industry and encourage a "right first time" approach in implementing Passivhaus standards.

## Outcomes and achievements

- Improved understanding of the level of attention to detail needed to achieve Passivhaus standard by workers in supply chain
- Better air tightness results achieved through improved tenant engagement with and knowledge of the system, particularly the Mechanical Heat Ventilation system.
- Improved quality and detailing from Passivhaus Certifier on-site inspections.
- Developed best practice guides to improve residents' experience of living in a passive house. Encouraged positive engagement with and increased knowledge of the system.
- Adoption of the Passivhaus standard has helped address issues of fuel poverty, at a time when the need seems most urgent. Tenants' utility bills have reduced significantly - averaging around £50 per month when energy prices were at their highest.
- High levels of tenant engagement and feedback has improved WSHA's understanding of tenants' needs and expectations. This will influence home design going forward.
- WSHA will continue to monitor and survey homes over the forthcoming year. Continual communication with residents is vital to continually improve the Association's service delivery, tenants' experience of their homes and being part of WSHA, and provide learning and development opportunities for all our staff.



# Kingdom Academy

## Kingdom Housing Association



### Statement of support

The skills, knowledge and abilities of our people are fundamental to our ongoing success at Kingdom. In 2020, we designed and launched our in-house Kingdom Academy which brings together all our learning development activities and aligns them with the different stages of our people's time with us.

The Kingdom Academy has 4 sections, which are outlined below:

Within the 'My Induction' section our new recruits can find everything they need to learn about Kingdom, their role and how we operate. It also has all a new colleague needs for a promotion or transfer to a different department.

It encompasses a buddy program, induction information, and a variety of e-learning modules covering topics such as workplace diversity and social media awareness. This promotes transparent and fair conduct in order to work collaboratively with stakeholders to achieve better outcomes. Additional resources include a library of 'A day in the life of' and a full organisation chart showing every colleague in the organisation and what role they do.

In 'My Development', we offer job shadowing, mentoring, coaching, and classroom training through to our formal training programmes. Formal training programmes include Graduate apprenticeships, modern apprenticeships, inhouse graduate programme, trainee programme, our early career offering and our Management Development Programme. We also offer a variety of masterclasses throughout the year, catering to diverse business needs and enhancing skills.

Within 'My Future' we explain our talent management and succession planning processes; how we engage and motivate our colleagues through learning & development; our Training needs analysis (TNA)

process identifies skills gaps and supports colleagues develop towards new roles in the future and practical help to seek new roles.

Finally, within 'Living our Values', colleagues can access support on Health & Wellbeing, information about our CARES Values and how they align with our objectives. This includes our CARES checks which ensures that every member of staff is truly living our values and taking them into consideration when decision making. This section explains our Performance Management Process and how colleagues can nominate exceptional peers through the Employee Recognition Scheme. There is also a review section included which helps to make sure the Academy is fit for purpose and reflective of our people's wants and needs.

The Kingdom Academy demonstrates the emphasis we place on our people's learning & development, and how passionate we are about supporting them to develop their career. Continuous learning is key to providing the best service and supporting our stakeholders therefore enhancing the tenant experience.

In recognising gender-specific career challenges, we've initiated the Women at Work Group to support female colleagues in building confidence, personal branding and providing them with a platform to discuss relevant workplace issues in a safe environment.

Our Strategic Workforce Planning process allows us to plan the supply and demand of our future resource requirements, identify potential skill gaps and develop proactive solutions to ensure organisational resilience.

To maximise the return on our investment we empower our colleagues to become in-house trainers by running train the trainer events, fostering the sharing of knowledge within the organisation.

We offer additional development across all levels of the organisation through the Workforce Development Fund where the topics are primarily requested by employees.

To amplify our career and development offerings, we have designed a brochure detailing all of the courses, programmes and learning opportunities. The brochure serves as a reference for potential candidates and existing colleagues aspiring to progress in their roles.

In 2021, we partnered with Napier University and became placement hosts. This partnership allows students to engage in a year-long practical experience, enriching their academic knowledge through exposure to seasoned professionals.

## Outcomes and achievements

Kingdom has and will continue to reap many benefits from our learning and development offering through internal promotions, graduates joining our organisation, bringing new and innovative skills and ideas to forming our Young Person's Forum so we can really understand what young people expect and look for in the workplace as they are our future. By doing this Kingdom will move from strength to strength through its people.

Some recent successes for Kingdom was two members of staff winning awards which are directly linked to our L&D offering:

Apprentice of the year is our Health & Safety Advisor who recently completed our Change of Career Trainee Programme

Young achiever in housing is our Tenant Participation Officer who recently completed our Graduate Training Programme

Testimonial from Fern Barclay - Health and Safety Advisor

"My traineeship gave me the unique opportunity to change to a completely new career and gain new qualifications to develop me as a Health and Safety professional. Having the support from Kingdom to complete my studies whilst working full time has been great, as well as other courses that have been made available which have developed me personally as well as professionally."

## Learning at Wheatley Group

### Wheatley Group



### Statement of support

Wheatley Group is Scotland's leading housing, care, and property- management organisation.

Successful learning and development experiences are key to shaping professional, high-performing staff at Wheatley. We recognise the value of attracting new talent and investing in staff through learning, allowing them to develop a lifelong career with us.

Routes into the organisation range from social mobility programmes to the Ignite Graduate and Modern Apprentice programmes. We recognise not everyone has the same start in life, so we also offer employability and bursary programmes that support customers and people from disadvantaged backgrounds, with many gaining employment within our organisation.

To establish strong talent pools, we have created career pathways that show a clear progression route from Housing Apprentices to Locality Housing Director. Similarly, there are career pathways for our Trades Apprentices into Trades Operatives, as well as Environmental apprentices and Changing Lives Officers, who can move into environmental roles from Apprentice to Service Managers.

We are committed to investing in our staff through job-specific learning opportunities and personal development plans. The learning and development team is at the heart of engaging with customers, schools, colleges and universities across Scotland to spotlight the excellent housing career opportunities offered by our Ignite and Routes to Work programmes. We also provide ongoing pastoral care and support for our young talent and the mentors and coaches supporting them.

Our innovative and immersive learning programmes have been shaped and delivered using CIH professional standards and best practice. We use a fully blended approach to learning which meets the need and diversity of all learning preference.

Our lifelong learning approach drives our commitment to investing in staff development throughout their careers. We provide access to both technical and professional qualifications, expanding skills and knowledge in key areas such as customer service excellence, digital applications, and outstanding communication skills.

Our induction programmes enables staff to support our customers to live well in their homes and communities. The content and format have been collaboratively created with frontline staff and leaders. The learning is delivered in cohorts, followed by supported implementation of the learning in the community, with the learning and development team job coaches working in the field with our staff, giving real life context and enabling staff to make a positive impact on customers' lives from day one.

We bring our learning to life using a variety of approaches. This includes actor-led learning which focuses on true customer interactions. We use action learning to drive participation, collaboration, and tangible outcomes. Our classroom-based learning, digital solutions, and videos, as well as job coaches

and workplace mentors all provide a high-quality learning experience which delivers excellent results.

We also recognise the need for staff wellbeing to be nurtured and looked after. We offer a wide range of products to support this including workshops, video and e-learning that ensures staff have a focus on their own wellbeing and resilience as well as that of their customers.

Diversity and Inclusion is another key learning topic, with staff having access to our programme detailing

our approach and commitment to diversity and inclusion from day one. This is aligned to our Different Together Community of Excellence which brings staff together to celebrate our diversity and influence and evolve our highly inclusive culture.

Every aspect of learning at Wheatley Group aligns to our strategy on delivering customer service excellence. This commitment gives staff at every stage of their career a passion for delivering this for every customer in a way that meets each customer's needs.

## Outcomes and achievements

We have 68 Ignite graduates who have secured full-time roles, in frontline Housing, Finance, Assurance, Sustainability and Procurement roles.

We have 39 Apprentices working Group wide this year, in Environmental Services, Housing and Trades.

To date, 236 apprentices achieved full-time employment following their programmes in roles that included Heating Engineer, Employee Wellbeing Officer, Environmental Team Leader, and Senior Resourcing officer.

24 staff are part of our Ignite graduate programme in 2023.

We have 27 internal staff who, through the Ignite programme, have achieved CIH Housing Practice at

level 4 or above.

We have 44 staff completed or on path to degree level qualification in Housing Studies.

Our two graduates designed and hosted a GEM shack – on sustainability in housing and the environment for 60 graduates from UK-wide housing associations.

One of our graduates said: "From Joining the graduate scheme at Wheatley, I have learnt a great deal whether this has been from the training team or being at the frontline of the role. The learning experience and training provided has enabled me to carry out my role with ease, as I know I can also have contact with somebody within the training team or business."

# Housing Training Academy

## Fife Council



## Statement of support

Fife Council's Housing Service has developed its own Housing Training Academy (HTA), which provides a training facility for all housing staff. The aim of the HTA is to develop and promote professional standards by increasing the knowledge of Housing Service staff recognising that well trained and qualified staff, across the housing service, will be empowered to provide excellent customer service to tenants and residents in Fife.

The HTA delivers and supports a range of continuous professional development opportunities to our teams.

Activity over the last twelve months includes, but is not limited to:

1. Delivery of SVQ in Housing Level 2, 3 & 4. The HTA has a team of experienced tutors and Internal Verifiers delivering Levels 2, 3 & 4.
2. Leadership Programme. This is a two-year programme for aspiring or newly appointed leaders/managers. The programme provides a blend of mentoring and further qualifications, including Postgraduate Diploma/Masters in Housing Studies and leadership/management courses.
3. Corporate Partnership with Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH). This partnership provides access to learning resources, memberships for students and staff, joint research and partnership working ventures. The HTA is also in the process of applying to become an accredited CIH delivery centre.
4. Modern Apprentice & Housing Trainee Programme. Working alongside the Employability Service, the HTA are developing, supporting, and investing in our young workforce to become the next generation of qualified housing professionals. There are currently 4 MAs and 4 Trainees working across the Service.



5. **Housing Law Advice Qualifications.** To support the implementation of a new frontline operating model and prevention of homelessness approach the HTA is working in partnership with Shelter Scotland to deliver Housing Law Advice Introduction, Casework and Refresher courses to our teams so they can provide the best possible housing advice to tenants and prospective tenants tailored to their individual circumstances.
6. **Embedding professional standards through other development opportunities,** including other formal qualifications such as SVQ Level 3 & 4 in Health and Social Care to allow our employees to meet SSSC registration requirements. As well as trauma informed approaches, mentally healthy workplaces, etc.

The impact of the HTA supporting continuous professional development to our teams allows us to deliver excellent outcomes for our tenants and allows us as an organisation to embed CIH professional standards in our everyday working practices.

A recent example of this is an officer who prevented a homeless presentation. A private tenant had been

issued with a notice to leave from their landlord as they could not afford a proposed rent increase. Using knowledge gained on the HLA Refresher qualification, the officer was able to explain to both the tenant and landlord that the increase breached the Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Act temporary rent cap. Unaware of this, the landlord proposed a new rent increase which did not breach the cap and was affordable for the tenant. This resulted in the tenant remaining the property.

Our MAs and Trainees have been involved in a range of projects to support their learning and development, including housing advice quality assurance audits, development of empty homes website, delivery of temporary accommodation and frontline housing services. When asked why they chose an apprenticeship with Fife Council, an MA told us "I saw FC as a good employer, and was excited about the skills, knowledge and opportunity for hands on experience in the housing sector".

When asked about a key moment in their apprenticeship, an MA recently told us "The moment that sticks in my mind as the most memorable has to be the first sign up I did from start to finish".

## Outcomes and achievements

Over the past year the HTA has also supported the following number of students complete the below listed qualifications:

- 108 Housing Law Advice PDAs
- 3 Post Graduate Diploma in Housing Studies
- 6 PGD year 1
- 16 Housing SVQ 2 (including x4 Modern Apprentices)
- 17 Housing SVQ 3 (including x4 Housing Trainees)
- 17 Housing SVQ 4
- 1 Health & Social Care SVQ 3 (SSSC)
- 2 Health & Social Care SVQ 4 (SSSC)
- 1 ILM 3
- 1 ILM 4

Feedback from some Trainees and Apprentices has included:

"I would recommend the traineeship programme as it sets you up with many job options at the end and allows you to build relationships across the sector and gain valuable skills and qualifications."

"As an MA, I have been supported through on the job training as well as being given the opportunity to complete professional qualifications".

Feedback on the Housing Law Advice qualifications is that 100% of learners have had the opportunity to put their learning into practice and feel more confident when providing information and advice on housing issues. Students stated:

"I have a greater grasp on legislation and issues."

"Really helpful to be able to discuss others' interpretations and have discussions."



# Proud to be Professional

**Lead organisation: Link Group**

**Partner organisations: Link Housing**



## Statement of support

Link recognise that our people are one of our most valuable assets. We are a people business and people are fundamental to our ability to help those who need us most (Link’s Belonging with Us Strategy).

Investment in our people is pivotal to our success.

Link supports continuous, reflective learning and performance management using ClearReview®.

This is a digital solution integrating CPD, reflective learning, self-assessment and learning plans across Link.

Link embraced the introduction of the CIH Professional Standards in 2021.

We recognise their value in:

- supporting the delivery of excellent services to our customers
- measuring improved outcomes (customers and staff)
- giving staff ownership of professional development

There have been significant changes in our operating environment and the challenges our customers face in the current economic climate- our Housing Officers are in our tenant’s lives and homes.

Link Housing have committed to creating a professionally qualified workforce and are fully funding CIH housing qualifications and memberships for all staff.

Link delivered a Lunch and Learn session on professional standards as part of our Excellent Tenancy Toolkit.

Staff are encouraged to complete the self-assessment and use this to feed into their Continuous Professional Development.

Link’s RESPECT values are aligned with the 7 CIH standards:

integrity; inclusive: ethical; knowledgeable; skilled; leadership; advocate.

Respect

Empathy

Social Impact

Participation

Equity

Challenge

Transparency

In Link our staff are “trusted to do the right thing”.

The CIH Standards state-

“a housing professional has a clear understanding of their values and acts in accordance with them - they will do the right thing, for the right reasons, based on the best evidence and without partiality”.

Embedding the Standards in our day-to-day work

Link have integrated the professional standards alongside our existing Competency Management Framework (CMF) as part of ClearReview®.

Staff and their managers agree, record, reflect and discuss their objectives within the online system using both the CMF and the Standards.

Link staff have Performance and Personal Development Objectives set by, and with, them, in line with Business Plans. Mandatory learning is supported through our Learning Hub.

Monthly check-ins take place and actions, outcomes and notes are recorded against each objective. Learning Hub is reviewed at each Check In ensuring that all learning and certifications are up to date.

These meetings identify learning through a variety of sources ie complaints/lessons learned, direct customer interactions etc. New learning/training is also a feature and Learning Hub creates staff reports and training records.

The Professional Standards can be linked to each objective and are selected from a drop-down menu- for ease of access.

Feedback is an integral part of the ClearReview® system and is directly linked to each professional standard.

The table below shows staff attainment of a CIH qualification

Qualification	No. of Staff
CIH Level 2	13
CIH Level 3	34
CIH Level 4	18
Other Qualification	16
Total Qualifications	81
Number of Housing Staff	127
Percentage with a Qualification	64%

Our tenancy sustainment approach is reflected in our performance with 97.64% of tenancies sustained for year ending 31 March 2023. Our abandonment levels are also very low considering our stock number and geographical spread.

Our staff step into people's homes and their lives every day - advocating for tenants, acting with integrity and having the knowledge to help them with whatever challenges they face and reflecting their individual needs is part of our day-to-day work.

## Outcomes and achievements

### Staff Testimonials

Jayne Butler - Housing Officer, Link Housing

Completing CIH level 3 and 4 qualifications supported my career development- I am passionate about making a difference as a Housing Officer.

My CIH studies have given me vast amounts of knowledge which I have shared with colleagues and embedded in my day-to-day work.

The CIH Professional standards align with Link's own values and I am proud to be part of Link's professional workforce in delivering person centred housing services to our customers.

Lewis Kennedy- Graduate Trainee, Commercial Services C-urb 6

Completing a Postgraduate Diploma in Housing Studies has been invaluable to me. Giving me a knowledge foundation to support my career at Link.

This course has encouraged me to become a reflective practitioner and I have improved my practices and become more aligned with CIH professional standards.

Kira Meldrum, Private Sector Leasing Officer, Commercial Services C-urb 6

Completing my housing qualification has vastly expanded my understanding of the housing sector.

With little prior knowledge of housing, the course has taught me how to be the best housing professional I can be through the CIH professional standards which encourage self-reflection and act as a guide to increasing the integrity of our services.

# Learning, Educating, Attaining, Recruiting and Nurturing (LEARN)

## Elderpark Housing Association



### Statement of support

As an organisation Elderpark can demonstrate its commitment to the core values of being adaptable, caring, fair, open and reliable in everything it does.

One of Elderpark Housing's key objectives is to 'support our people achieve their full potential' and in doing so demonstrate a strong commitment to being an employer of choice.

The Association promotes professionalism, learning and development together with inclusion as a key driver which underpins all that it does.

Attracting and retaining highly-skilled individuals who support the continuous delivery of excellence in customer service is at the heart of what the organisation sets out to achieve through the wide variety of work carried out within the communities we serve.

In recent years, a number of employees have completed CIH professional qualifications showing commitment to CIH professional standards. This adds to the many employees who are already CIH members, meaning Elderpark has Members at all levels - Student, Practitioner, Chartered right through to Fellow.

The Chief Executive has previously served as Vice Chair on the CIH Scotland Board and the Governance and Compliance Manager is a current member of the CIH Scotland Board. This high level of commitment and engagement throughout the organisation to CIH professional standards allows employees to demonstrate high levels of knowledge and professionalism when delivering services to customers.

As an employer of choice, Elderpark Housing also offer career pathways for employees through Modern Apprenticeships and PATH. The Association is also a 'Living Wage Employer' which fits well with its commitment as a community-based housing association to social justice and the values that define the movement.

Over the last year, 2 Elderpark employees who started in the organisation as Modern Apprentices have undertaken CIH professional qualifications and have now achieved promoted posts within Maintenance Services and Housing Management.

The most recent employee joining through PATH has now taken up a customer service role and is currently undertaking a CIH level 4 certificate to support aspirations of career advancement.

The ethos of this pathway is to ensure where opportunities to advance a career become available our employees will be well placed and qualified to take the next steps. Elderpark currently has a Graduate Finance Officer where funding was accessed to support their further studies in the form of an accountancy qualification, further evidencing commitment to ensuring staff delivering housing and front-line services are highly-qualified. A number of employees have undertaken CIPFA Governance and Emerging Leaders courses over the course of the last year too.

Elderpark's Chief Executive Officer lectures on the CIH Level 4 Diploma together with supporting the University of Stirling with its Housing Studies Diploma course by acting as an external validator. Both the CEO

and Governance and Compliance Manager deliver a wide training of training courses on behalf of SHARE to support knowledge and skills development for both employees and Board members throughout the sector.

The Community Regeneration Officer has also recently been appointed to the SHARE Board to further support this commitment to learning and development.

A number of our employees also sit on Boards with other RSLs which further supports the commitment to ensuring Elderpark people can truly reach their full potential through gaining knowledge and experience that can in turn be transferred back to their individual role.

Elderpark does not limit its commitment to learning and development to employees and Management Committee members. It also carries out activities with local schools to discuss housing as a career choice and through projects such as "Developing the Young Work Force" in partnership with Glasgow Chamber of Commerce. The project supports employer engagement, recruitment and diversity in the workforce.

## Outcomes and achievements

As a consequence of having highly-skilled employees who are committed to the CIH professional standards, Elderpark Housing is able to provide excellent outcomes across the organisation which have a lasting a positive impact on our customers with some examples set out below:

- SHR publishing good practice around Assurance processes within Elderpark Housing which demonstrates to customers it is fully compliant with the Regulatory Framework which has, at its heart, excellent outcomes for customers
- Frontline employees gaining confidence through learning and development who are empowered to make educated decisions to support strategic objectives
- Through a cast-iron commitment in this area, the Association has created a culture of continuous professional development whereby members of the Elderpark team feel valued and can achieve significant workplace advancement and achievements.

# A Great Place to Work

## Osprey Housing



### Statement of support

Osprey Housing are committed to learning and development, one of our four strategic ambitions is to be 'A Great Place to Work'. We support all our people to fulfil their potential - we have an obligation to enable our staff to achieve the best in their careers that they can and to support our Board members in any way we can. This is a conscious decision on Osprey's part to nurture and facilitate the continuous development of all our people.

By managing talent strategically, we intend to continue to build a high performance workplace, develop into a learning organisation, add value to our reputation, contribute to diversity management and achieve our strategic objective. Professionalism is a priority for our organisation, we embrace this in our core values and how we operate. We have developed a skills framework to guide our staff on their personal development journey including 100% financial support for CIH qualifications. During 2022 our Team have undertaken an Insights Discovery profile, a psychometric exercise which brings insight into personal strengths and weaknesses. We have encompassed this into our annual appraisal process by including behaviour led objectives to support our people. We include a section on future aspiration and supporting staff to be the best they can be to deliver the best service possible to tenants. We continue to have organisation wide sessions delivering the Insights model with a focus on our vision: 'Making a Difference Everyday'.

During 2023 we have also developed an all staff training programme entitled 'Fit Like' focussing on mental health - supporting our teams with their own mental health, removing the stigma and also collectively supporting our tenants. The human factor is vital to how we run our organisation. This includes eight of our team volunteering to be qualified Mental Health first Aiders.

### Case Study - Board Apprenticeship Scheme

Osprey have introduced an innovative Board Apprenticeship scheme - recognising the need to give younger people or less experienced individuals an opportunity to expand their experience and skills whilst increasing diversity of thought amongst Board level decisions. This scheme is the first of its kind in the sector and also in our local business area - Osprey are very proud to have set the trend for this as it invests in leaders of the future.

We received an amazing response both in terms of application numbers, but more importantly, in terms of candidate quality. There are a lot of great people out there who would jump at the chance of becoming a board member. Our two new board apprentices both matched our culture and vision - to make a difference every day. Their approach to sustainability and social impact fits well with Osprey's own ethos.

Lauren Allan is an Assistant Technical Co-ordinator graduating from Robert Gordon University in 2020 with a BSc in Architectural Technology. Her quote 'This was an amazing opportunity - I couldn't pass up the chance to understand the workings of a board at such an early stage in my career. Since joining Osprey all that I've have learned has been invaluable and I look forward to continuing to learn and grow throughout the rest of my apprenticeship.'

Niamh Johnston graduated from Aberdeen University with an LLB in 2020, followed by a Diploma in Professional Legal Practice in 2021 and very recently qualified as Solicitor. Her quote "I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to undertake the board apprenticeship at Osprey and to learn as much as possible. It is great to have this opportunity within an organisation whose values align so closely with my own.'



## Outcomes and achievements

Osprey Housing are committed to investing in their people and aspire to be a 'great place to work' - for both staff and board members. This year Osprey have been innovative in introducing a Board Apprenticeship scheme - recognising the need to give younger people or less experienced individuals who are ambitious an opportunity to expand their experience and skills to build strong Boards of the future and increasing diversity of thought amongst Board level decisions. This scheme is the first of its kind in the sector and also in our local business circles and we are very proud to have set the trend for this as it invests in our leaders of the future.

We received an amazing response both in terms of application numbers, but more importantly, in terms of candidate quality. There are a lot of great inexperienced people out there keen for the chance to become a board member. Our two new board apprentices both matched our culture and vision - to make a difference every day. They have the right balance of skills and ambition and their approach to sustainability and social impact fits well with Osprey's own ethos.

# EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The right to an adequate standard of housing is inextricably linked to the right to the highest attainable standard of health. The right to health is a shared and inclusive right and good quality, sustainable housing is key to fulfilling this for individuals, families and communities.

## Cost of Living Crisis Working Group

### River Clyde Homes



### Statement of support

River Clyde Homes identified the cost-of-living crisis as an area of concern for their customers at the beginning of the winter period last year. Rising bills and expenses created an additional pressure on households across the country, and therefore a need for organisations to step in and support where possible. According to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020, Inverclyde is the most deprived local authority area in Scotland. The most deprived data zone, a zone made up of various postcode areas, in Scotland was named as Greenock Town Centre and East Central. RCH currently have 133 properties within this data zone. There are currently 1 in 4 children living in poverty within Inverclyde, again, highlighting the level of deprivation within the area. As of 2019, 28% of households in Inverclyde were living in fuel poverty, against a national average of 24%.

In response to the crisis, River Clyde Homes quickly launched a new working group made up of staff from across the organisation to identify the key risks and agree how we could support customers in the most practical ways possible.

The cost-of-living crisis Working Group was launched in November 2023 in time for the winter period. A key group of staff were nominated to be involved including from the following teams:

- Housing
- Financial Wellbeing
- Customer Experience
- Community Support

The group was led and chaired by the Senior Customer Services Manager, and the initial meetings of the group were used to establish the key risks. It was identified that the remit of this group covered more than just practical support for customers and that the following themes should be explored:

- Customers
  - Affording basic living essentials
  - Mental and physical health and wellbeing
- RCH Group:
  - Condition of properties/increase in repairs
  - Arrears and void properties
- Staff
  - 'Advisor fatigue'

Staff facing their own concerns

The group also identified that it would be important to map what provisions were currently available for customers to utilise throughout the area to ensure the group did not duplicate support.

During the winter period of 2022/23, the group met fortnightly via Teams to ensure maximum participation. The group started with a presentation to put into context the background of the crisis and agreed what the key themes were. This ensured that the group were

working to the same goals and would meet the needs of customers based on the experience brought by each member of the group.

There were several key achievements of this group that are noted in the following section. This included successes in obtaining funding to directly support customers and to fund new services that would provide advice, the distribution of support packs to all older customers throughout the winter period, and an increase in visits for those customers River Clyde Homes staff were most concerned about.

This group has continued throughout the summer period as we know that the cost-of-living crisis is still a major issue for our customers, with continued increases in food costs and interest rates. Preparations are now underway for winter 2023/24 which we expect to continue to be a challenging time.

River Clyde Homes aims to be 'more than just a landlord' in everything that we do, and the quick mobilisation of a working group dedicated to supporting people in a time of need is a notable example of the day they do daily for communities.

## Outcomes and achievements

The cost-of-Living Crisis Working Group has had several successes to date since it was launched in November 2022. A key focus for the group has been funding. Since November River Clyde Homes have secured the following funding to support customers through the crisis:

£80k distributed to customers in the form of fuel vouchers resulting in 800 customers receiving a gas and/or electricity voucher

£33k from The National Lottery Fund's Cost of Living Support to fund an Outreach Financial Wellbeing Officer to work within communities to providing income maximisation support

Another major success of the working group was the distribution of over 700 Winter Warmer packs to customers aged 75+ to support throughout the winter period. The packs included items such as thermal blankets, soups and coffees, thermometers etc. These packs were hand delivered to customers by front-line Housing staff which gave the staff an opportunity to 'check in' with the customers.

Finally, we identified a need to reach out to those customers who were deemed 'hardest to reach' to check if any further support was required. This process was launched in March 2023, and will continue throughout next winter.

# Heat and Eat Initiative

## Grampian Housing Association



### Statement of support

As a responsible and caring landlord, the health and wellbeing of tenants is a key objective for Grampian Housing Association (GHA).

To improve living conditions for many tenants, GHA has invested 1.7 million pounds in energy efficiency measures over the past 6 years. This has included external wall insulation, room in roof insulation, cavity insulation and solar panels - some with storage batteries. Far infrared has also been installed.

To maximise the benefits tenants are realising from their more energy efficient homes and to promote

financial inclusion GHA launched its new Heat and Eat initiative in 2023.

With soaring energy bills and the cost of living crisis severely affecting many of the Association's tenants, the funding will help households who are in, or at risk of, fuel poverty and hardship as a result of rising living costs.

Heat and Eat is being funded by our successful grant applications to the Scottish Government's Social Housing Fuel Support Fund through the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations of 166,000 pounds and The National Lottery Community Fund of 20,000 pounds. To date over 700 tenants, not eligible for financial support from any other source, have benefitted.

Energy top-up payments of 245 pounds were awarded to 636 tenants through the Fuel Support Fund to mitigate against rising energy costs. Tenants were promptly provided with pre-payment vouchers or energy cards which they could use with their supplier to pay towards their energy bills.

Due to the number of tenants who received this help stating that they were in debt (75 percent) and with 36 percent in energy debt they were offered ongoing support from GHA's Energy Advice and SMART (money advice and debt management) projects.

Through the National Lottery Community Fund, slow cookers, air fryers, heated throws, duvets and warm clothing have been supplied to tenants. Fresh food packs have also been distributed in partnership with CFINE - Community Food Initiatives in North East Scotland, a local organisation tackling poverty.

Air frying and slow cooking are healthier especially using fresh ingredients and these appliances are more energy efficient so the benefits are twofold.

A discretionary fund for items such as winter duvets, jackets, hoodies and extra food packs is set to help another 30 tenants.

Rachel Byiers, support services lead, GHA said:-

"GHA recognises the financial stress many of its tenants are experiencing and the tough choices they sometimes have to make between eating and heating and is delighted to be able to offer practical support during these difficult times.

"GHA will continue to support its tenants in any way it can in the face of fluctuating energy prices and the enduring cost-of-living crisis.

"By addressing the practical needs of tenants GHA is helping to reduce the anxiety associated with debt and fuel poverty which in turn helps to improve the health and wellbeing of tenants."

Throughout its area of operation in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray GHA ensured that eligible households were targeted and encouraged to take up the support being offered. 72 percent of tenants were in lower income households, some with arrears - not in receipt of a cost of living payment/not on qualifying benefits and 19 percent stayed in properties deemed to have high energy costs while 9 percent were families affected by the Universal Credit two child limit.

Frontline teams were briefed on the help available and the eligibility criteria and a further 129 tenants were referred by their Neighbourhood Officer, Income Recovery Officer or through GHA's tenancy sustainment projects.

A gap has been identified in the provision of flooring and an award of 24,000 pounds from the Social Housing Fuel Support Fund has recently been approved for flooring, thermal curtains and radiator foils.

To continue to support its tenants GHA has been successful in securing a further 18,000 pounds from the Social Housing Fuel Support Fund to train and upskill frontline staff. They will complete courses in energy awareness and prevention of damp and mould in housing, equipping them to support tenants during the colder winter period.

## Outcomes and achievements

This breakdown shows the staggering positive health impacts Heat and Eat has achieved for tenants:-

Reduced depression/anxiety - 82 percent

Overall improvement in health - 65 percent

Relief from being heavily burdened with debt - 67 percent

Become debt-free - 38 percent

Ability to pay for housing - 70 percent

Significantly this initiative supported tenants living at subsistence level who were not eligible for financial support from any other source. Their comments best demonstrate the project outcomes:-

"Within 15 minutes of completing the online form I received 245 pounds worth of energy vouchers. This morning I had 6.25 pounds in my bank account to last me until the end of the week, so to receive this, and

for it to actually be processed so quickly, it has been a complete godsend!"

"Electricity is the highest cost of energy for me. I had been worried as my electric bill increased by 100 percent, so this grant helped me feel more able to afford to pay my bills."

"Without help I would strongly struggle with anxiety and depression."

"I don't know if I would have been able to afford a lot of basic needs to self-actualise if not for this grant"

"It helped a lot. I could actually buy food and stuff for my kids."

"I was trying not to put heating on during the winter months because I couldn't afford it. I was feeling so cold it was making me feel ill. Food has also gone up in price so much. A lot to deal with all at once."



# Stirling Council Healthier Homes

**Lead organisation: Stirling Council**

**Partner organisation: Aico Homelink**



## Statement of support

Stirling Council has been trialling the use of environmental sensors in homes, with over 250 benefitting from this technology which allows the Housing Service, and the tenant, to monitor heat, humidity and CO2 levels in our homes.

Stirling Council's Housing Service initially piloted the use of HomeLINK to test if it could have potential for providing improved customer service. However, now the Service is committing to rolling out the use of sensor technology in an additional 500 homes each year for the next 10 years for a number of purposes:

- To address long standing or complicated maintenance issues, including condensation/dampness by being proactive and fitting sensors to be able to make informed decisions about what to do to address the problem.
- To fit sensors in harder-to-treat properties in terms of meeting the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing 2032, in order that the Service can monitor the effectiveness of improvements, for example monitoring air temperature changes and heating costs changes from switching a storage heating system to air source heat pump system.
- To help inform future capital investment decisions. For instance, the Service could use sensor data to determine households living in, or at risk of living in fuel poverty. This could inform future roll-out of solar battery storage which helps to reduce energy bills in homes.
- The tragic death of Awaab Ishak in December 2020 due to mould in his housing association tenancy serves as a reminder that all social landlords need to be responsive in dealing with issues of dampness and condensation in our homes. With an increased roll-out of sensor technology we will be able identify potentially vulnerable tenants living in cold and or damp houses and the app can also support tenants to understand what factors can cause problems such as condensation with real time data being provided via the free and easy to use app.

When considering our sustainability and fuel poverty, the data generated will help us identify the least energy-efficient homes and take action to improve the energy efficiency of these properties. We have over 75% coverage of our properties with solar panels and nearly 10% of properties now have solar battery storage.

We've seen some interesting insights with several high risk indications of condensation caused damp and mould. This has really helped us to react quickly whether it be a building issue or an outcome of a lifestyle choice. The resident app has been a great help in supplying information to tenants which helps them to manage their environment better and discern if it is actually something inherent with the building performance.

Most importantly these are improving tenant satisfaction with the housing service and being able to provide a more responsive service to maintenance and repair issues in our homes.

We have involved tenants from our engagement groups from the beginning of this process. We started trials in council housing properties with volunteers, we then rolled out to those in temporary accommodation again, making use of volunteers and then asked for Gypsy/Travellers to volunteer to enable us to install sensors to amenity blocks as part of upgrade works to the Council-owned Gypsy/Traveller Site.

Those that wanted to contribute to the development of the resident app, the tenant engagement communications, and the understanding of the use of IOT, were given a voice through engagement groups and sessions. Our partner, HomeLINK, have made changes throughout after listening to the feedback from our service users. We think the use of environmental sensors for a variety of purposes will become increasingly common as they can protect the tenant and the property in numerous ways.

## Outcomes and achievements

Two examples why we are rolling out environmental sensors:

- 1 A large household who were not English speakers raised concern about condensation in their property. The environmental sensors picked up high levels of humidity in the living room which was contributing to condensation. It also identified that the home was not being heated during winter. Housing Officer engaged support from the Refugee Resettlement Team to ensure tenant could afford to pay their energy bills and heat the home appropriately.
- 2 Young vulnerable homeless woman was visited as it was thought her sensors were broken as there was no readings. Sensors were fine, but tenant had no money, no electricity or gas in the meter and no food. We referred to food bank and income maximisation/housing support.

If the properties had no environmental sensors there would be a higher risk of:

- Longer time to resolve issues.
- Reduced tenant satisfaction.
- Risk of health to occupants.
- Potential tenancy being ended.

Alex Wallace, a Stirling Council tenant for many years who helped test the App and Sensors told us "Best thing Stirling Council have done for their tenants, the app is fantastic and the response time has been excellent.."

# HOUSING-LED APPROACHES TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS

This award celebrates projects, initiatives and organisations working to prevent or relieve homelessness in their communities.

## SCS Homes

**Simon Community Scotland**



### Statement of support

SCS Homes is a brand new and unique initiative bringing together social investment, Housing First, and an end-to-end relationship with a specialist homelessness support provider, offering people high-quality permanent homes who would otherwise remain within the homelessness system indefinitely. It adds capacity to the housing system for people experiencing homelessness but more vitally it offers the people we support a home where they can thrive

We secured funding for the project from Social and Sustainable Capital (SASC) from their Social and Sustainable Housing fund (SASH) in 2021. In providing Simon Community Scotland with £5m, including £1m from The University of Edinburgh, we're purchasing up to 30 homes in Edinburgh and have so far secured 26 homes, with our first tenants having settled into a home to call their own often for the first time in their lives.

In recognising that a tenancy is just the first step in creating a home, ongoing wrap-around support is provided to those in our SCS Homes by way of our Housing First service, commissioned by City of Edinburgh Council.

Edinburgh has an acute shortage of good quality, affordable housing. Having 150 people bid on a property is not unusual and with an average private rent of £1300pcm it can take years to secure a social housing tenancy when they become available, and often in an area that doesn't work for people. Combined with over 4000 people in temporary accommodation and over 40 people on the streets, demand outstrips supply.

Securing a house is just the beginning, without support there is a high level of tenancies being lost and people returning to homelessness. We wanted to change that, provide great homes and the support to keep people safe, secure, well and happy.

With our SCS Homes initiative we wanted to provide people with a full end to end offering.

From our Street Outreach team meeting people rough sleeping or begging on the streets of Edinburgh, to bringing them in our Support Hub, we're now in a position to then offer a choice in tenancies, in locations of peoples choosing, beautifully furnished along with support which is not time bound, to give individuals the best chance of success in establishing their homes.

This was a unique combination of a relationship focused approach and partnership to deploy social investment and evidenced based HF. The partnership between SASC and Simon Community allows us to invest in people that are furthest away from getting

and maintaining a home. The project delivers a full wrap around approach focused on maximising quality of life and potential to thrive in positive communities.

We work collaboratively with people to identify areas where they want to live, and then target the purchasing of our properties to match. Some people wished to be centrally located due to proximity of services, whilst others requested to be further out, moving away from previous influences. By listening we created an increased sense of autonomy and value, a positive point from which to begin a tenancy.

All of our SCS Homes are let only when all flooring, white goods and fixtures are in place. With other landlords often concerned about void rates and loss

of income, it isn't uncommon for people to move into tenancies without carpets, curtains or basic white goods. By moving into a bare property, people can struggle to see its value, and that of themselves, resulting in a potential downward spiral of feelings and behaviours.

We've learned that for those we support, move-in day is critical to success. Friday's are often considered to be the optimal day for moving, so that you have the whole weekend to get organised. For those we work with, with reduced service and support provision, weekends can result in increased isolation and temptation to engage in risky behaviours. So we've established a Move-In Mondays to ensure that we've all week to support people.

## Outcomes and achievements

With our Housing First service inheriting a caseload from 1st Oct 2021 of which 26% of people supported were without a tenancy; SCS Homes are now the leader provider of tenancies to those with enduring histories of homelessness and requiring support for multiple and complex needs in Edinburgh.

With 30 tenancies created via Housing First in Edinburgh since 1st Oct 2021 to 28th Feb 2023, 60% of these have been from SCS Homes.

We have supported 26 people in making a SCS Homes property their own with ongoing support provided by our Housing First service in Edinburgh.

For our SCS Homes tenants:

Over 60% are known to have previously experienced rough sleeping

Over 90% had multiple stays in temporary accommodation

Prior to their SCS Homes tenancy, each person had an average of 8 addresses known to us since we began supporting them

94% have retained their tenancy

With secure and safe accommodation, our tenants are now in a position from which they can look forward with increased hope for the future.

# Inverclyde Housing Options and Homelessness Advice Service

## Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership

Partner organisation: Inverclyde Council



### Statement of support

The housing market in Inverclyde faces similar challenges to other local authorities. However the complete transfer of all council housing stock to local housing associations in 2007 means social lets in

the area are facilitated through Section 5 referrals to Registered Social Landlords.

Inverclyde also has several other local challenges. Lack of opportunity, outward migration and extreme poverty has marred a landscape of magnificent natural beauty for many decades.

A symptom of these socio-economic disadvantages is a negative cycle of homelessness in a small but complex population, many of whom have found themselves in some form of emergency or temporary accommodation for several years.

In 2022/23 the Homelessness Change Team in Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership have redesigned the Homelessness Service and undertaken a re-launch as a Housing Options and Homelessness Advice Service.

A major focus of the re-design was to reduce long-term homelessness. Negotiation with RSL partners has facilitated inclusion of long-term homelessness as a criterion for Housing First support.



Each household has been allocated a RRSW and an intensity of support tailored to their needs. This has provided assurance to RSL partners and facilitated offers of permanent tenancies to individuals previously deemed not tenancy ready.

This gave assurance to RSL partner; River Clyde Homes, Oaktree Housing Association, Cloch Housing Association and Larkfield Housing Association who agreed a commitment to focus on a formal process for re-housing each household with a Section 5 referral open for over one year to reduce long-term homelessness in Inverclyde which was particularly high for the relatively low caseload.

The team continue to deliver a programme of change that is making significant impact in the area. The support provided has allowed vital improvements in communication between RSL partners providing assurance and confidence that the often-complex needs of the individuals concerned were being met to enable greater possibility of tenancy sustainment and reduce repeat homelessness.

Although Inverclyde receives lower levels of funding than other authorities from the Scottish Government to improve outcomes for individuals in crisis, it has been encouraging to see professional relationships improve across the stock transfer partnership.

Despite financial challenges the Change Team has the support and commitment of elected members

to deliver a programme agenda which sees positive impact being made to the lives of a very marginalised and vulnerable group of households who often feel hopeless and defeated.

By keeping fidelity to the principals of Housing First and aiming to achieve objectives of the Inverclyde Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan the statistical evidence of success rates are now providing assurance to elected members that the investment has been prudent and is improving the lives of some of the most disadvantaged individuals in Scotland.

The dedication of an informed Assessment and Support Team responsible for the Section 5 referral process have vigorously pursued each individual case to ensure permanent solutions for households who it was previously assumed were not tenancy ready.

Long-term homelessness in Inverclyde was not due to a lack of social housing, it was directly related to the reputation of the individuals who often were caught in negative cycles of repeat homelessness, addiction and offending making suitable and sustainable offers difficult to achieve.

By recognising case duration as a criterion in addition to the three main categories for housing support relationships have improved between the HSCP and RSL partners but ultimately improved the lives of those with what seemed like insurmountable disadvantage and facilitated tenancy sustainment skills.

## Outcomes and achievements

The biggest single achievement is a 58% reduction in long-term homelessness from 19 cases in December 2022 to 8 cases in June 2023.

This would not have been possible without the commitment from our RSL partners who have facilitated the conversion of 21 temporary occupancy agreements to Scottish Secure Tenancies including a number of long-term cases.

Recognition also has to be given to the determination of a focussed Assessment and Support Team providing a care management approach to ensuring the RRST focus on delivering appropriate intensity of housing support to ensure the sustainment of tenancies.

A further significant outcome is a 27% reduction in repeat homelessness in 2022/23 aligning Inverclyde with national averages of around 6% occurrence.

Every individual has accepted the necessity for a change in culture that delivers outcomes for people and have ensured Inverclyde HSCP has changed the perceived weaknesses of stock transfer to a position of strength by delivering rapid rehousing support in-house and completely separate to the landlord function.

One individual commented "the service saw something in me that I didn't see in myself. I would do it all over again. It helped me find myself, gave safety, security, advice".

# Housing Need Youth Homeless Services

**Lead organisation: West Lothian Council**

**Partner organisation: Action for Children, Rock Trust**



## Statement of support

In Scotland young people are the most disproportionately overrepresented group within the homeless community. West Lothian experiences one of the highest rates of youth homelessness in Scotland with over 35 percentage of all homeless applications being from young people and also has one of the largest gaps between the supply and demand of affordable social housing. Waiting for social housing cannot be the sole response. It required an innovative and collaborative approach to tackle the issues and a radical shift in council culture led by Homeless Services, to bring services together, break down silos and create a shared vision to transform how prevention and homeless services are delivered to young people.

The Homeless Strategy Team have been instrumental in the drive for change and innovation, supporting a corporate working group to bring together partners and designing new approaches and streamline targeted, joined up interventions to prevent and better respond to youth homelessness. Furthermore, helping design new and innovative approaches to homeless services through research and listening to young people

The group have successfully designed and implemented new interventions and closed the gap between existing service provisions to increase the portfolio of youth prevention approaches. Resulting in significant improvements in outcomes, leading to reductions in youth homelessness and improved sustainability.

A new range of projects have been developed to respond and prevent youth homelessness including:

- Young Persons Emergency Prevention Service (YEP)
  - o A new unique service designed through international and national research to support young people at risk of homelessness, to prevent homelessness where this is safe and sustain positive outcomes. This service is delivered

through different supports including; conflict resolution, mediation, housing options, housing support, financial support, employment support, practical or emotional support. Working in partnership with our Youth Housing Options Service, Education Service and Third Sector partners.

- Youth Housing Options Service
  - o Another new service approach built on service design principles and service user's feedback to better respond to the needs of homeless young people. This service works jointly alongside our YEP service providing a person-centred trauma informed approach to youth homelessness and acting as a single point of contact for the young person to navigate a range of council services to seek the quickest and most sustainable housing outcomes.
- SVQ Housing Programme
  - o A new SVQ programme designed by Homeless Services and the Skill Centre rolled out across 12 secondary schools reaching 1000s of pupils to raise awareness of the risks and realities of homelessness and managing a tenancy.
- Upstream Early Intervention Model
  - o A first of its kind innovative model jointly commissioned by Homeless Services, Education and Rock Trust delivering an upstream early intervention model in two secondary schools. This new intervention integrates and delivers early intervention services through systems and service delivery development and reform. What makes it unique is the method of identifying young people at risk. It begins with the Student Needs Survey, an evidence-based assessment tool considering both young people's risks and assets. Results are compared with knowledge and observations of students from other sources, including teachers and councillors, then the young people are connected with supports to reduce these risks, strengthen families, and to keep young people in place.

Key feedback from young people includes:

"I am very grateful for the service and support [...] this has helped me move back to my mums."

"The staff were always on hand and offered me good advice to make me think and make the right decisions."

"If it wasn't for this service I feel it would have impacted my mental health and I don't think I would have been able to deal with this."

## Outcomes and achievements

The group have been successful in a whole host of areas with the development of new interventions, joining up of services. But at the heart of this and most importantly has been a common and shared vision developed between all partners. Silo working between services has been broken down, with partners working alongside each other at a strategic and operational level from the PYHWG to education, housing and third sector services.

Young people's voices have been placed at the heart of our service design of the development of the Youth Housing Options and YEP service helping to shape the design of the specification for each service.

Over the last year we have achieved:

- reductions in youth homelessness (11percentage);
- reductions in the young people accessing temporary accommodation (-16percentage)
- increased sustainability (100percentage)
- over 60 young people accessed YEP
- 50percentage YEP cases supported to avoid homelessness
- Delivered SVQ on tenancy sustainment developed across 12 secondary schools
- Visits across 9 out of 12 secondary schools to raise awareness/improve referrals of homelessness
- improved access to existing third sector service (Nightstop/Housing First)
- implementation of new live & work scheme
- improved support assessments and outcomes for young people
- improved customer satisfaction
- improved partnership working (third sector/ education/social policy/homeless services).

## Normalisation Programme

### Fife Council



### Statement of support

The Project was created following a Sheriff Court Judgement which meant that 636 statutory temporary tenancies were legally secure tenancies leaving the local authority with no temporary accommodation and at risk of significantly breaching statutory duty.

The Project Team came together within the Housing Access Team to prepare a 12 month people led plan to 'normalise' tenancies and rebuild temporary accommodation. This was developed in partnership between a number of teams within the Council and RSLs with stock in the Area, overseen by a Heads of Service Task Group with links to the strategic RRTP Programme Board to transform homelessness services. The Programme also influenced the Fife Housing Register Management Executive and encouraged the Partnership to change their terms of reference to take a broader focus across housing access and increase

contributions to the prevention and resolution of homelessness. The Partnership are responsible for the management of over 40,000 properties as well as a range of other statutory and non-statutory activity.

The project was based in a time where the Council had just implemented a completely new frontline housing options structure and in the process of making significant changes to temporary accommodation services in response to a range of legal changes. The Council had also recently disbanded a PSP arrangement with voluntary sector services and re-commissioning over £8m of housing support and homelessness services. This was in addition to the well documented pressures on housing supply, housing access and housing system challenges the have been highlighted in the SHR Thematic Study and the SOLACE, CoSLA and ALACHO Pressures Report.

The small team worked directly with housing customers, service partners and advocacy agencies to help housing / homelessness customers to remain in their homes with help where needed - arranging physical and other forms of support where required. This meant no further transition for vulnerable households and help to build settled, sustainable tenancies in communities they had settled into.

Where current placements within temporary accommodation were not suitable, a case management approach was taken to arrange moves to more suitable tenancies with help. All moves were co-ordinated to ensure that needs were fully met with any support requirement met through a co-ordinated approach between various organisations and services.



The Programme was so successful that it has been discussed with the Housing Minister and senior Scottish Government officials with a view to rolling out the best practice and lessons learned at a national

level. Reports were also provided to Housing Options Hubs and the Temporary Accommodation Task and Finish Group to inform the recommendations to the Homeless Prevention Strategy Group.

## Outcomes and achievements

Between May 2022 and June 2023 the Team adopted a people led approach to:

Enable over 400 temporary tenancies to be flipped to permanent tenancies allowing homelessness customers to remain in their homes with practical support and no further transition

Arrange moves for over 200 customers where the temporary tenancy was not suitable due to size, health or other needs in an environment of extremely constrained housing supply and welfare support

Managed 18 formal appeals to ensure full customer satisfaction

Work with housing management teams within the Council and RSL partners to identify replacement

temporary accommodation and bring these into use at pace

Manage a very limited number of appeals and advocacy responses to find practical solutions for customers. There were no legal challenges.

Develop legacy processes and arrangement to provide a platform for future Rapid Rehousing activity with plans to upscale tenancy flipping as rapid rehousing by default for all homeless customers

Installed a new temporary accommodation management team and housing management systems to comply with legal requirements

Provide input at national level to inform rapid rehousing arrangements across the country

# Naumann Initiative

## Kingdom Housing Association



### Statement of support

This submission focuses on our innovative and effective approach to ending homelessness. In the last 5 years, approx 30,000 households in Scotland were assessed as being homeless EVERY year. Researchers estimated unemployment rates among people experiencing homelessness is c75%. We wanted to do something to address the needs of the homeless people in Fife, so we created the Naumann Initiative, to simultaneously give a homeless person a job, a tenancy, and additional support.

As a landlord, employer and employability project, we have the components to achieve this. We created 6 roles with Kingdom, with all candidates secure in their new tenancies. Mark McCormack was one of them. He became homeless after a family breakdown which was severely impacting his mental health before being recruited through our Naumann project. Mark

said ' At the lowest point in my life I was introduced to the Naumann Initiative. I have gained valuable insight into how important housing is and been afforded the position to give something back. I have a lovely home within a great community, supportive colleagues and a safe place for my daughters to stay. I now feel part of a family again'.

We were limited by how many roles we could fill through Naumann so commenced phase two - Working Out of Homelessness, a bigger project to deliver more and make a greater impact to local people's lives. Phase 2 involves

Liaising with employers creating job opportunities and committing to employing a homeless person

Identifying homeless people and 'matching' them to vacancies

Homeless eligible participants are provided with tenancies through Kingdom, and support through our tenancy sustainment services.

Additionally, we:-

Support those unsuccessful in their application for any position via the Naumann Initiative with direct support from a dedicated Employability Officer

Provide a wider employability service to those unemployed and registered homeless.

We recognise all forms of homelessness, including hidden homelessness - ensuring we engage with individuals not registered homeless as well as those who are. Our program addresses specific barriers



faced by individuals experiencing homelessness and unemployment - including debt, health, certification. We have inspiring success stories including a client supported into a job at Babcock, he was experiencing repeat homelessness and now holds a good position within the company, and a secure tenancy with Kingdom which he loves.

We address topics such as tenancy sustainment, things to consider when moving into a new property, and practical assistance with utility bills, grants, and household essentials.

One of the first external employers who became involved was Champion Homes. Their Managing Director said 'We are delighted to partner with Kingdom in their groundbreaking initiative to allow individuals to rebuild their lives and futures. Opportunities are vital for everyone in everyday life and we wish the Naumann Initiative every success' Further testimonials are available from other accredited employers including Baynes, Kingdom

Support and Care and Tivoli.

In the summer of 2020, Leicester based PA Housing replicated the Kingdom model and became the first employer outside of Scotland to implement the initiative through recruitment campaigns for two positions. Much like Kingdom, PA Housing found the recruitment process so successful they recruited four people, all of whom continue to enjoy success at the organisation.

Discussions are happening with other Housing providers to see if this initiative can be replicated further. A presentation was delivered to 50 housing professionals across different areas of Scotland where interest has been generated, and a workshop was delivered at the SFHA Annual Housing Conference 2023.

Not only does this initiative transform lives of individuals who gain employment and a home, it also helps remove some associated stigma of homelessness within our community.

## Outcomes and achievements

Phase two significantly increased the number of homeless people we are able to provide a home to, whilst supporting more into employment.

In 2021, 104 homeless individuals have been supported through the initiative, 51 of those have undertaken accredited training and 40 of them have been supported into employment. 32 out of the 40 in work secured permanent housing as a result of the initiative. 12 external organisations have created vacancies through this initiative and have been awarded "Naumann Accredited" employer status.

Our dedicated Employability Officer said 'People find themselves homeless for a whole host of reasons,

often through no fault of their own. Homelessness and unemployment often go hand in hand and being able to work with partner employers to tackle both is incredible'

We also now have strong relationships with the Housing First providers in Fife as

Since January 2022, 198 homeless individuals have been supported through the initiative, 125 of those have undertaken accredited training and / or health and wellbeing activities to date and 88 of them have been supported into employment.

# EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNICATIONS

Sponsored by: **resource**  
Sustainable Creativity

This award recognises outstanding communication with their tenants and residents and where communication has played a core part of the service received and has demonstrably improved housing outcomes. Nominations for this award could be for a single project or refer to your general organisational approach to communication.

## Homeless Change Programme

**Lead organisation: Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership**

**Partner organisation: Inverclyde Council**



### Statement of support

A Homeless Change Programme, implemented in October of 2022 has enabled the establishment of a dedicated working group to foster open and transparent communication amongst stakeholders.

This includes awareness raising of key objectives for a service redesign and to deliver the of embedding continuous communication and integrated relationships with partners.

The group focuses on the communication and engagement strategies for six main areas: residents, staff, housing providers, stakeholders, the governing programme board, and corporate communications with delegate representation from each area.

The dedicated action plan requires individual responsibility relating to a variety of media; a quarterly newsletter; social and traditional news platforms. Actions also provide objectives for incorporating the voice of lived experience including ongoing liaison with Homeless facilitates communication with housing providers on specific issues such as the delivery of joint housing options advice in tandem with existing statutory homelessness duties.

Two surveys were actioned in 2022/23. The first was to monitor staff morale and the second focussed on satisfaction levels of residents staying within temporary accommodation. This has allowed implementation of baseline statistics on wellbeing and performance.

In response to staff feedback, a 'you said, we did' action plan was created and communicated to staff providing a compass for the management team to plan responses on key issues. Follow up surveys will be completed on a six-monthly basis.

The residents' survey provided vital feedback on the quality of accommodation provided and has facilitated a step change in the provision of information available during a homelessness journey in Inverclyde.

For instance, the 'What's On' notice board allows for daily communication with residents, detailing the available supports in the community and support staff available.

Both stakeholder and resident communications strategies facilitated an increase in the number of supports accessible to residents within the Inverclyde Centre. Groups providing drop-in support at the

centre include moving on, teen challenge, your voice and the communal areas in the centre allow the provision of services such as benefit advice, free haircuts, and a local optician.

Support staff, build trust with residents and regularly communicate via text, phone calls, face to face and WhatsApp to ensure wellbeing and promote the use of the community assets.

There have been definite improved relationships with housing providers as result of the representation through working groups and a stronger commitment to homelessness issues with improved communication with the service during the allocation process and beyond.

In June 2023, the service piloted a dedicated PRS Forum to extend communication and positive relationships to private landlords in the area with the intention this will be held every 6 months. The forum was attended by 12 local private landlords and representatives of the Housing Strategy Team and was successful at raising awareness of the service and how private landlords can assist in accommodating those in urgent housing need.

Through this forum we have been able to exchange contact information with several interested parties with the wish to continue working with the service and/or to sit within the change programme subgroups.

Across our six working groups we have invited guests from charitable and 3rd party organisations to raise awareness of services and build relationships i.e., Housing Options Scotland and Compassionate Inverclyde.

A visit from the councils designated Refugee Team led to a further information session with the homeless assessment team to provide the background around the current refugee status and prepare the service for when mounting pressures begin to impact on homelessness.

A key objective of the Communication and Engagement group is to provide an open and transparent environment to remove the stigma surrounding homelessness and create an integrated approach to service delivery.

## Outcomes and achievements

In July 2023 Scottish Housing News published an article on the Inverclyde homelessness redesign programme and the Change Lead has been invited to speak at the SHN Homelessness Forum, contributing to the objectives for improving communications and awareness raising.

The media launch has widened awareness of the re-designed Housing Options and Homelessness Advice Service and has resulted in an increase in requests for advice, allowing early intervention and strengthening the service's ability to prevent the crisis of homelessness.

Stakeholder and resident communication strategies have ensured residents have remained engaged with supports, preventing repeat homelessness and avoiding crisis.

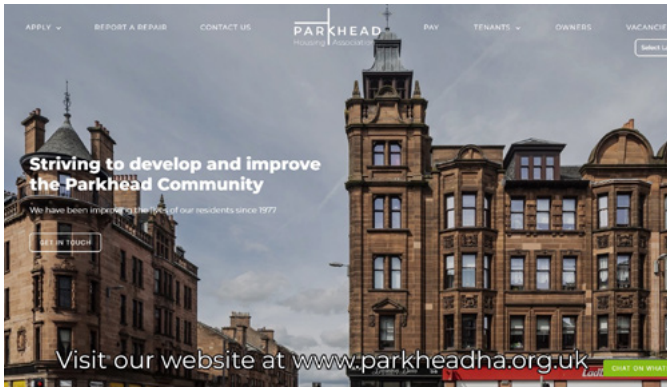
The approach promotes connecting residents with external groups, resulting in 11 of the most complex and habitual homeless clients reaching 12+ months tenancy sustainment through Housing First.

Improved communication resulting in improved relationships with RSLs have largely benefitted clients, providing reassurance that the most complex individuals will receive the appropriate support when settled, resulting in a 56% reduction in the number of long-term homeless households from 19 at Q3 2022/23 to 8 in Q1 2023/24.

Improvement can also be seen within local letting activities. River Clyde Homes allocation to homeless households in 2020/21 was 9% and has risen to 17% in 2022/23.

# Parkhead Housing Association rebrand and website redesign

## Parkhead Housing Association



### Statement of support

Parkhead Housing Association has totally upgraded its communications with their customers.

Following the pandemic and the effects of the lockdown period, Parkhead Housing Association identified that it had to improve its presence and availability in the digital space to ensure that customers can continue to access vital support and services at times that are convenient to them.

As such in 2022 Parkhead Housing Association embarked on a year long project to completely revamp our approach to communications.

The project had 3 main aims -

- 1) Revitalising the Association's branding to greater reflect a modern, progressive organisation rooted in the local community.
- 2) Revamping our website to improve the customer experience.
- 3) Revolutionise our approach to communications and customer engagement with digital at the heart of our approach.

Firstly, the rebrand element of the project took place, to give the Housing Association the inspiration and design elements that would drive the look of the website.

Working in partnership with Inspire Digital we delivered a fresh, innovative web experience for our customers.

Gaining voluntary input from across the staff team utilising a public vote from our customers, we launched our new logo on 17th October 2022.

Drawing inspiration from the local community, the iconic '5 ways' intersection at Parkhead Cross becomes the 'K' of Parkhead within the branding. This clear link to the rich history and heritage of Parkhead was a vital part of this project.

The updated website has provided residents with an improved user experience with a host of typical transactions now available online including online application forms, rent payments and repair reporting.

Since the website's introduction in October 2022, the Association has seen on average over 1300 visits a month to the website and has received over 200 Housing Applications via the website and the popularity of this feature is growing daily.

Recognising the business critical nature of the project additional staffing resources were dedicated to its delivery and roll out.

Introducing a live messaging function powered by Whatsapp provided customers with greater control over their Housing journey, allowing them to interact with staff in a much more informal and accessible way including a simple way of holding conversations with tenants and applicants where English is not their first language.

PHA has also extended the direct messaging approach to tenant communication to include the live chat function available via Google My Business and Facebook Messenger. Customers are able to reach out to Housing Association staff with a wide variety of enquiries.

A PHA resident said 'I much prefer to use the WhatsApp live chat. I always tend to have my phone handy so its much quicker and easier to report any issues I might have'

Complimenting this new approach PHA continues to utilise more traditional means of communicating and engaging with tenants. In 2022 a monthly CEO drop in was established where residents can access our Chief Executive directly and in person over a tea or coffee to discuss any issues they may have.

Delivering a fantastic series of customer events ranging from the Association's Summer Gala Day where a visit from Paw Patrol was the highlight to an 80s themed Quiz Night PHA utilised its revamped communications approach to advertise and report on the events.



## Outcomes and achievements

- Establishment of a cross sectional staff working group to provide a strong representation of staff across the organisation.
- Customer consultation around our branding exercise to gain the views of our local residents.
- Launch of new PHA branding & website including introduction of leading functionality such as repair reporting, application forms and live chat.
- Establishment of a monthly CEO drop in service, allowing local residents to meet with the Chief Executive to discuss a wide range of Housing related issues.
- Introduction of Communications Strategy & Customer Service Standards documents with prescriptive guidelines in relation to the approach, style and targets associated with communications and customer engagement.
- Increase in contact options for customers including social media DMs and WhatsApp Live Chat
- Additionally, going live with a new Housing Manager software Homemaster in October 2023 which includes a tenant portal where customers will be able to take greater control of their housing journey.

### Social media followers / Interactions -

- Facebook - 1350 Followers, 14,285 Facebook reach, 1,143 page likes, 3,478 profile visits
- Twitter - 1987 Followers, 8,100 tweet impressions, 3.2% average engagement rate
- Instagram - 85 Followers

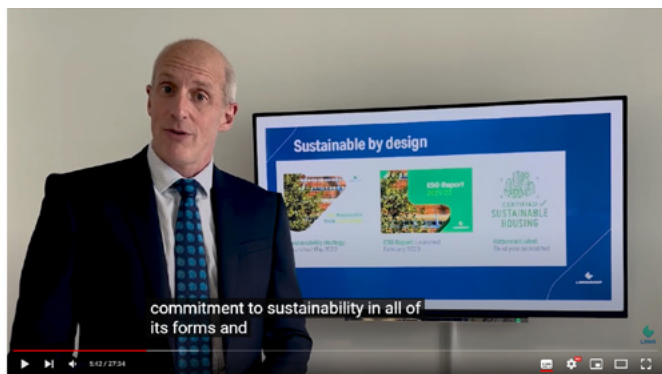
(Stats from last 90 days)

The average response time direct messaging -

- Google - 32 minutes
- Facebook - 46 minutes
- Whatsapp - 21 minutes

# Transformative communication to engage tenants, communities and staff

## Link Group



Link Group Business Plan 2023-2026

## Statement of support

Transformative communication: How the Link Group communications team enlightened tenants, strengthened communities and empowered staff

2022/23 was Link's 60th year and also marked a key milestone for Link's communications team. A new communications strategy was launched to empower staff and tenants, tackle housing issues, engage more meaningfully, foster community spirit, and improve internal and external culture ensuring all voices are heard.

Focussing on key issues to draw Link and its six partners (Link, Horizon, Larkfield and West Highland Housing Associations alongside C~urb and LinkLiving) behind a shared communications vision, the strategy featured four campaigns:

- Supporting customers with rising costs: promoting the range of services and support.
- More than a house: positive repairs messaging alongside community initiatives and the difference these make to lives.
- Creating sustainable communities: new build programme, highlighting sustainability.
- A career with Link makes a BIG difference: recruitment focussed on social impact and promoting staff positivity across all business functions.

To meet these ambitions, talent was diversified by welcoming an internal communications officer, external communications officer and administration officer, to work alongside the existing communications coordinator.

Throughout the year, the team created over 100 films and animations, offering more than visual appeal; they became instruments of knowledge and engagement both externally and internally. Tenants found guidance on issues such as damp and mould, to clarify misconceptions and offer tangible solutions to everyday housing concerns.

The 130 positive news stories generated were not just information but a mechanism of transparency. Link became a key industry contact for media outlets, offering expert opinion through podcasts, complementing the messages created to simplify the intricacies of rent increases and planned maintenance

schedules required to flex with market demands. With the strategic use of social media platforms, resulting in a 10% growth of their Facebook audience and a remarkable reach of 3.8 million, these narratives found a vast and engaged audience.

Witnessing a 56% surge in views, Link's intranet, Linkipedia, engaged Link's 900 staff with key updates and fostered a sense of unity, understanding, and purpose. Staff were connected to the senior team and wider business through monthly CEO videos – including Our Year in Review and Business Plan films. Challenging issues such as job evaluations were handled with care and personality through video and animation, all offering ample opportunity for feedback. Alongside this, a Staff Spotlight video campaign was launched to showcase internal talent and share best practice ensuring diverse voices were represented.

The real-world implications of these digital feats were most felt during initiatives such as the Bathgate summer fun day. This wasn't just an event; it was a community coming together, underpinned by the strength of effective communication. 400 tenants, community members, and representatives of the

housing association shared smiles and stories, marking a day of true community bonding. Furthermore, surveys found 93.11% of Link and partner customers felt the organisation was good at keeping them informed.

The emergence of Link's developing public affairs approach has led to extensive collaborations with MSPs and the SFHA, including the Housing Minister visiting our Abbey Quarter development in Paisley, a Horizon Housing Association tenant being featured in the launch of the SFHA's campaign, and Michael Matheson MSP visiting LinkLiving to learn more about an initiative supporting young people through sport which is being run in partnership with Falkirk FC's Falkirk Foundation. All of which underscored the team's commitment to holistic communication and engagement.

Despite just entering its second year of operation, the revamped Link communications team has fostered an atmosphere of collaboration and clarity. The emphasis on directly addressing concerns with open and honest communications has tangibly enhanced the lives of tenants and staff.

## Outcomes and achievements

The Link Group communications team's achievements showcase the transformative power of holistic communication:

- **Visual education:** Through 100 films and animations, tenants were equipped with actionable insights on housing challenges. Professionals shared best practice through staff spotlights.
- **Transparency in news:** With 130 positive news stories gained, Link's work across communities was visible externally.
- **Digital outreach:** Social media expertise, marked by 10% Facebook growth and a reach of 3.8 million, ensured a broad spectrum of individuals were engaged.
- **Internal engagement:** Linkipedia bolstered staff engagement, and kept them updated on key messages, reflecting a 56% growth in engagement. Full Circle newsletter launched to connect seven diverse Boards and share group success stories and important updates.

- **Community connection:** Events like the Bathgate summer fun day mirrored the tangible community-building power of effective communication.
- **Collaborative commitment:** Renewed engagements with MSPs and the SFHA highlighted the team's dedication to an all-encompassing communication strategy. Successes include Michael Matheson MSP's visit to LinkLiving to learn more about Sporting Chance and Housing Minister Paul McLennan's visit to our development at Abbey Quarter in Paisley.

Passionately committed to making a difference, the Link Group communications team has showcased how multifaceted communication can empower staff, serve tenants, and galvanise communities.

# Communicating our cost-of-living campaign

## Wheatley Group



### Statement of support

As Scotland's largest social housing provider, Wheatley Group is uniquely placed to support families hardest hit by the cost-of-living crisis.

Our 210,000 customers live in 19 local authority areas, with 70% within the bottom 20% of the most deprived data zones in Scotland (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation).

With rising energy and food prices, high interest rates and a welfare benefit system not supporting the most vulnerable, it was the perfect storm.

Wheatley's Executive Team tasked the communications and marketing team with:

- creating a cost-of-living crisis campaign;
- promoting the range of wraparound support services we have for tenants in need;
- signposting customers to additional support with external agencies;
- and supporting our frontline to ensure they had the tools they need.

More than ever, the communications and marketing team was needed to help people who had nowhere else to turn.

We created our 'Here for You' cost-of-living crisis campaign, delivering two high-profile launches to maximise publicity: one in Glasgow with the First Minister and another in Dumfries and Galloway with council leaders.

We created a multi-media campaign focusing on the support Wheatley can offer:

- localised press releases promoting Here for You, telling stories through tenants who have been supported by our fuel advice and welfare benefit advice services and how others should get in touch;
- Here for You graphics and videos for our 15 social media channels and six customer-facing websites;

- videos – shot, produced and edited in-house – with Wheatley's Chief Executive visiting support services. These were shared with our 2800 members of staff and board members.

We interviewed tenants and staff to promote our welfare benefit service, creating a news story on helping 7386 customers access £13m in benefits.

We promoted this, in the media and on social, urging customers to get in touch.

To ensure no-one was left behind, we used social and traditional media to promote surgeries for tenants to meet housing officers and get help.

Our furniture recycling service were short of beds to upcycle and give to tenants in need. We used social media to call for donations and our organic posts reached 288,322 people, with the service overwhelmed with donations.

We posted 6006 updates on social, seen by 4,892,287 people – up by 1.7 million on the year before. We now have 54,480 followers, an increase of almost 7000.

In-house analysis of the largest social housing providers in Scotland and England found Wheatley had the largest social media following.

We received over 10,300 customer messages on social and over 1,231,591 website visitors.

However, we know not every customer is online.

We created new hyper-local 'patch' quarterly newsletters, containing key information and sections for housing officers to create localised content.

Our internal communications was a hit with staff.

We created:

- 1472 new content pages;
- 390 news stories;
- and 96 blogs.

There were 285,458 page views across our intranet, 795,087 across general content areas and 20,548 on blogs.

Our expert in-house digital communications officers created 42 videos, which were produced, shot and edited in-house.

Our team continued to build relationships with key stakeholders, including several high-profile Ministerial visits.

Then Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government Shona Robison MSP met with customers benefitting from a new-build development in Clydebank and saw how the heating system used cuts carbon emissions while helping tackle fuel poverty.

Former Minister for Higher Education and Further Education, Youth Employment and Training, Jamie Hepburn MSP, visited the Wheatley Foundation and met people who have benefited from the 3000 job and training opportunities.

We welcomed Patrick Harvie MSP to the home of a tenant who was benefiting from a new money-saving energy system.

## Outcomes and achievements

Our numbers and testimonials tell their own story.

Through press, social media and website articles, Wheatley's cost-of-living campaign launched alone were seen by almost 300,000 people.

Newsletters will be delivered to all 93,000 Wheatley households four times a year, highlighting the range of support available and how to get in touch.

Social media followers are at 54,000, an increase of 6700 over 12 months. We posted 6006 social updates throughout the year and 4,892,287 people saw our updates.

Monthly visits to our websites rose from 96,732 in June 2022 to 270,444 in June 2023.

In our annual staff survey, the following was amongst the feedback received about our internal communications:

"I recognise the hard work and dedication it takes to keep it up and running constantly with new and exciting content that will keep us engaged - well done!"

"I find the comms really interesting and engaging and enjoy watching Steven's vlog each week. It's great to see he is so connected with what's happening in local communities and is supportive of the work that teams are doing."

"It can't be faulted - it's good that you're always looking at ways of improving things."



# NET ZERO IN HOUSING

Sponsored by:



The housing sector, like many others, is faced with the challenge of cutting carbon emissions to achieve the Scottish Governments' net-zero targets by 2032.

This award celebrates organisations that can demonstrate they have overcome some of the significant challenges in cutting carbon emissions. Applicants could consider new developments, retrofit projects or any other initiatives that have helped reduce carbon emissions.

## ACHA Whole House Retrofit Project

**Lead organisation: Argyll Community Housing Association**

**Partner organisation: Procast Group**



### Statement of support

We are committed to all their residents and areas, particularly smaller, more remote, fragile communities attain both housing, energy efficiency and economic growth. ACHA housing stock is spread over a vast area on the mainland and the islands including Islay, Tiree, Luig which have historically proven to be very problematic in the delivery of projects.

The investment over the past year to retrofit their housing stock has been circa £7.5 million which has already had a massive impact, not only on the condition of the houses and living conditions but also the reduction in energy bills with residents reporting a 40-50% deduction to heating costs despite the rising energy costs. This money has been invested in over 400 houses over the past year with 80% of those being classed as Hard-to-Treat.

Upon being appointed as the contractor to deliver the vast BEIS SHDF (now DESNEZ) and HEEPS schemes for Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) we got to see firsthand their dedication to their residents to provide quality, affordable and sustainable homes making their areas desirable to live and work for a lifetime.

When appointed by Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA), our client required an experienced principal contractor to deliver energy efficiency measures in over 300 homes within the area. Works included full retrofit upgrade in line with PAS2035:2030-2019 and Microgeneration Certification Scheme standards and comprised of:

- External wall insulation
- Cavity Wall Insulation
- Internal Wall insulation
- New triple glazed doors and windows
- Mechanical ventilation
- loft and underfloor insulation
- Solar PV
- Battery storage and air source heat pump installations.

Located across various locations in Argyll, including Tighnabruaich, Dunoon, Tarbert, Helensburgh, Campbeltown and on the islands of Islay and Tiree, a strategic approach to programme management was taken with works carried out in phases to meet key project milestones.

In line with PAS2035 standards, our skilled team conducted full risk assessment and pre - installation building inspection on each property. We assessed both the building and client specific requirements to develop methodology that coincides with the individual house and wider programme of works.

Meeting all the combined project agreed KPI benchmarks, allocated properties were completed within the project timescales and funding expedited within the 2022-2023 financial year ending 1st April with further properties in the current financial year.

The wide geographical spread of the properties presented challenges in terms of putting the correct teams in place and ensuring delivery of material to their location and on time, particularly during the toughest winter months when temperatures and conditions dropped to an all-time low, however, working together with ACHA, our inhouse retrofit team, site teams and subcontractors we were able to deliver on time adhering to tight deadlines for delivery through Trustmark and hit all funding expectations.

The project forms part of ACHA's long-term journey to net zero and climate change with the residents being at the forefront of everything. retrofit project and is similar to project we have previously delivered in Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and North Lanarkshire where we have proactively been leading the way in building a team to assist the social housing sector tackling their plight in combating fuel poverty and head to a net zero future.

The project in itself is very unique in the wide variety of construction types and age of properties, varying from over 100 year old stone construction to 40 year old cavity construction. We have collectively and collaboratively learned how to overcome numerous obstacles with thermal bridging and cold spots due to the way in which properties have been converted to flats and

have several external staircases, confined boundary walls etc or a row of terraces houses comprising one, two and three stories within that row.

## Outcomes and achievements

The project itself has been extremely valuable to be a part of and to use as a model for all future projects. With ACHA taking on our suggestions and working together collaboratively funding was maximised per property to ensure the most vulnerable and lowest SAP scoring properties were taken from E,F,G EPC ratings to high B and A ratings - improving the living conditions, quality of life for the residents and hugely combating fuel poverty for the residents whilst having ACHA's net zero ethos at the forefront. By linking measures together like the solar PV and battery storage along with the External Wall Insulation these properties will ease pressure on the national grid and allow generation and maximum user utilisation of clean energy.

A big achievement on the project has been a pilot scheme to retrofit swedish timber properties with an innovative structural system and cedar lined finish which has allowed the wooden effect finish and maintain the aesthetic look that the residents are used to. On this pilot we also utilised became an approved installer for the Metrolite Lightweight Roofing Tiles which are a first of a kind in the Solar Install world. These solar photovoltaic panels are in the form of EQube tiles are have the appearance of normal roof tiling - again giving a phenomenal finish to the properties.

# Zero Emission Heating Project: Mackenzie Gardens, Turriff, Aberdeenshire

**Lead organisation: Grampian Housing Association**

**Partner organisation: M-4**



## Statement of support

Grampian Housing Association (GHA) has always been an early adopter of technology and implementing energy efficiency measures to help benefit its tenants and meet carbon reduction targets. From air source heat pumps supported by solar panels, to more recently far infrared film its ambition has always been to reduce the impact on the environment while reducing fuel poverty among tenants. This commitment is stated within GHA's Carbon Reduction Strategy where it has committed to being Net Zero by 2035.

GHA is passionate about responding to the net zero challenge and this is demonstrated in its ongoing zero emission heating project at MacKenzie Gardens, Turriff in rural Aberdeenshire.

GHA identified 20 properties with gas boilers which were coming to the end of their lives, and, in consultation with tenants in the area, decided to install an air source heat pump network. It is supported by 25 kilowatts solar panels and battery storage to reduce the cost of electricity further for tenants and reduce the reliance on the grid and the carbon within that electricity. Identified as being the most efficient way of delivering renewably powered heating, the overall goal was to provide tenants with cheaper heating options which had a positive impact on the environment.

To partially fund this instrumental project in the development and futureproofing of these homes, GHA demonstrated the project's viability and long-term goals. An application was submitted to the Social Housing Net Zero Heat Fund and grant funding of 306,534 pounds was secured with additional funding provided by GHA.

This new heating system will revolutionise how GHA's tenants heat their homes. Working to drive forward the net zero agenda in heating homes, the project saw three air source heat pumps installed beside the properties, which were further supplemented by the installation of a solar array. These fossil fuel free heating solutions provides energy for 20 homes within GHA's housing stock, both reducing energy bills and providing a planet positive outcome.

This new heating system utilises zero emission technology to provide energy to the properties, and responds to the net zero challenge in Scotland, by supporting social housing tenants to heat their homes in a way that is sustainable for the future. The new system will now last into the future, with minimal repairs and maintenance required. GHA predicts that its life span will be 20 years, allowing tenants of the buildings to access affordable heating and hot water for their properties for years to come, whilst lowering their carbon footprint.

This innovative project aims to demonstrate the benefits of combining large-scale solar installations alongside zero-emission heating technologies, to provide a sustainable energy source for both social and other types of housing.

To monitor the outcomes of the change from gas to renewable heating, GHA installed environmental sensors within the properties in December 2022, allowing comfort levels of heating within each property to be monitored. Initially monitoring these through the winter, GHA will continue to check these levels for the following two years, to allow a comparison to be drawn between the heating provided before and after. GHA anticipates that this will demonstrate that the installation of zero emissions heating systems coupled with energy efficiency measures can provide savings for its social housing tenants.

In addition to this internal monitoring, GHA will also consult tenants about their experience of the new system, and will share the results of these surveys with the Scottish Government, SFHA and its wider tenant base. It is GHA's hope that this positive experience for its tenants will allow it to support and inform other tenants of the positive changes that can come about from the air source heat pump and solar PV installations as GHA works to transition away from fossil fuels.

## Outcomes and achievements

GHA is predicting savings of around 80 to 145 pounds per annum per property which will save £83,375 over 25 years.

Carbon reductions of 47,872.12 kilograms per year (62 percent) are predicted to meet climate change challenges along with a 66 percent reduction in grid electricity consumption from 367,457 kWh to 123,324 kWh, placing less constraint on the electrical network infrastructure.

Tenants have a good understanding of the issues around climate change and the need to remove fossil fuels as 80 percent had heard of Net Zero and the need to Decarbonise. GHA values the opinions of its tenants and knows it is important to take them on this journey of transition away from fossil fuels. Equally it is important to demonstrate to other tenants that these new systems work well, so as to continue this decarbonisation journey as an organisation.

Tenant consultations so far have demonstrated positive outcomes, with tenants' heating bills already beginning to reduce, and their homes warmer than before.

GHA has undergone a large programme of survey work with new EPCs helping to identify how it will move to meet EESSH2. The data from these EPCs is also helping to identify potential further large projects where GHA can decarbonise heating to meet its Net Zero aspirations.

It is our goal that using this project as a case study will encourage other social landlords to prioritise their investment programmes into net zero targets and EESSH2 compliance, bringing about positive benefits for their tenants.



# THE MARION GIBBS AWARD FOR EQUALITY IN HOUSING

Sponsored by:

**Homeless Network Scotland**  
we are all in



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot



For over 30 years Marion Gibbs was at the very centre of Scotland's housing sector, focusing on those in the most housing need, affected by homelessness, and those in overcrowded, unsuitable, unsafe or temporary accommodation. This award commemorates Marion's sense of equality and fairness and an outstanding life's work advocating for progress.

This award celebrates projects, initiatives and organisations working to promote equality, diversity and inclusion and address housing disadvantages, including those supporting people with specific protected characteristics or redressing specific inequality.

## Equality in Housing Podcast

**Lead organisation: Housing Options Scotland**

**Partner organisation: UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence**



### Statement of support

Equality in Housing is a podcast, co-produced by Pedro Cameron, Head of Engagement at Housing Options Scotland, and Dr Gareth Young, Knowledge Exchange and Impact Fellow at the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (CaCHE).

The podcast seeks to address all aspects of disadvantage in the Scottish Housing Sector and beyond. This includes all protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and also some other disadvantaged groups not covered by that but

who face individual challenges. It looks at how those accessing housing can be affected, but also the impact on the workforce.

The podcast shines a light on examples of best practice, gaps in evidence and the links between lived experience, frontline workers, the third sector and research, data and academia. It aims to make issues around EDI, and the solutions to these, accessible to those working in the housing, third, and academic sectors

Prior to meeting, Pedro and Gareth were both exploring equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in housing independently of each other, but struggling to build momentum. They had found there to be a nervousness in their respective sectors around talking about how people were affected by EDI concerns and 'getting it wrong'.

They both knew that more work needed to be done to start having meaningful and accessible conversations around housing and EDI that would lead to action.

It was recognised that there were examples of great work being done to ensure that practices were inclusive, and that barriers to access safe accommodation were being tackled by the work of individual organisations, and it was clear that there were stories that needed to be told.

It was decided that the best way to utilise their respective and collective platforms was to share the stories of those people with first hand experience through their day-to-day work or lived experiences.

Over the course of the first 14 episodes (at time of writing 11 have been released, with 3 more recorded) the aims and objectives of the work have been clear: that we share stories from across the housing, third and academic sectors, giving voices to people who might not usually engage with either of our organisations in this way. We want to hear and share exactly what people are experiencing, either first hand from their own housing experiences, or from the perspective of a practitioner.

Between Pedro and Gareth, the podcast draws together perspectives from: the frontline where people from disadvantaged groups are supported find

suitable housing; and housing research and policy. The podcast asks what the 'real time' challenges are, what individuals and organisations are doing to make a more just housing system for people and what role researchers can play in helping to support good work through the generation of accessible data and evidence.

Guests have included Rohini Sharma Joshi OBE and Charlie McMillan, CEO of SCLD, and it has covered topics around LGBTQ+ issues, older people, ethnic minorities, trauma and veterans. Future episodes include guests from Scottish Refugee Council, CRER and Who Cares? Scotland.

The podcast is scheduled to have its first live event in November, hosting a live recording to an audience of up to 300 at SCVO's The Gathering.

## Outcomes and achievements

Equality in Housing has released 10 episodes, with a further 4 recorded, with over 300 listeners so far. The podcast has been invited to record a live episode at SCVO's The Gathering. Guests have reported that their appearances on the podcast have meant new connections and increased awareness of the issues discussed in the podcast, and listeners have fed back how educational and enlightening it has been for them.

"Taking part in the podcast was great for me - it has opened up a whole host of new connections and possibilities with partners within the housing sector and also other sectors. It has also given me

an opportunity to reflect on our work to date, share this learning with others and evaluate our progress critically." Anthony Morrow, Sanctuary Scotland.

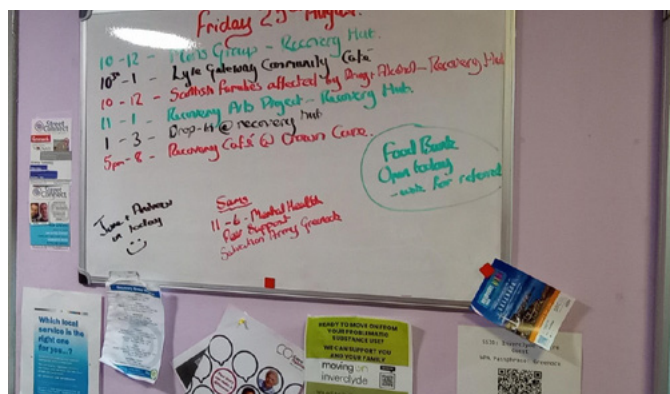
"What an inspiring listen" Listener testimonial

"It clearly set out what we do and don't know: we know that gender identity and sexuality may shape someone's experience of homelessness, and intersecting forms of marginalisation also have an impact; however, gaps in official data have real implications for policy and practice. When I've spoken about monitoring around this topic in training sessions, I've shared this podcast as a resource." Alexandra Duffy, Training Lead, Stonewall Housing.

# Inverclyde Rapid Rehousing Support Team

**Lead organisation: Inverclyde Housing Options and Homelessness Advice Service**

**Partner organisation: Inverclyde Council**



## Statement of support

Greenock Town Centre and East Central where the Inverclyde Centre, the homeless hostel operated by Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership is situated, is in the most deprived data zone in Scotland

for income, employment, health, education, housing, and crime.

Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership recognises the severe disadvantage being experienced by households and individuals using Inverclyde Homelessness Services. These profound effects of disadvantage make assessment for homelessness under the Statutory Duty, along with support needs even more important if we are to make the lives of people experiencing socio economic and other disadvantages measurably better.

Targeted implementation of homelessness policies and directing test of change funding has created the conditions for the Homeless Service, managed by Inverclyde HSCP to develop more collaborative working between the RSL's, Primary Care, Alcohol and Drug Recovery Service. Community Mental Health Services, Justice, the third sector and wider universal community supports to support equality within the cohort of people caught up in this concentration of multiple deprivation, socio-economical disadvantages, inequalities and cycle of repeat homelessness.

Putting more of a focus on prioritising prevention, provision of essential tenancy items and providing a foundation of tenancy skills to prevent repetition of crises, resulting in the homeless cycle.

Eight Rapid Rehousing Support Workers (RRSW), managed by a Wellbeing Co-ordinator are in post for two years to demonstrate the test of change to improve outcomes for the people of Inverclyde who find themselves in housing crisis.

Integration of services with a range of partners and joint working to find workable solutions have been crucial in achieving better outcomes for individuals.

Monitoring and measuring outcomes are helping to demonstrate the effectiveness of the change programme and the narrowing of inequalities of outcome experienced by people living in socio economic disadvantage.

The RRSW's are delivering radical change to deliver outcomes that improve opportunity for the following deprivation indicators:

- Income - close links with the HSCP Advice First Vulnerable Group's Benefits Advice Workers enables early identification of income gaps and potential areas for maximisation. There is assistance to open a bank account available and a weekly benefit advice surgery held within the Inverclyde Centre
- Employment - active partnership working with local employability services is undertaken by each RRSW and if employment is not yet appropriate advice on further education, training and adult literacy is available.
- Health - outreach work in the Inverclyde Centre is also provided by The Outside Clinic who provide

eye tests and free glasses for residents and Smile for Life undertake a six weekly rotation to provide dental advice and assistance to register with an NHS dental practice. Free toothpaste and toothbrushes are also provided.

- Education - the RRSW's are linked in with a new Community Learning and Development service called Multiply which aims to provide residents with increased skills and confidence in numeracy, bills, and budgeting. Food preparation and cooking skills are developed in the small teaching kitchen in the Centre and food hygiene courses are also offered to residents who would like to develop these skills.
- Housing - each resident with a support need is provided with a RRSW who becomes a central cog in the journey to securing settled accommodation and beyond settling in, they provide assurance both to the individual and to the landlord, whether that is a local Registered Social Landlord or a Private Landlord. This enables improved likelihood of tenancy sustainment and aims to prevent the risk of repeat homelessness.
- Crime - the team promote the positive use of time and ensure residents are fully aware of community assets which meet the strengths goals and aspirations of everyone.

## Outcomes and achievements

Evidence is clear that the introduction of this team improves performance however it is the contextual data that underlines better outcomes and addressing inequity for those experiencing extreme poverty. Repeat homelessness has reduced by 21% however the team is actively engaged because it is simply the right thing to do.

Mr A had been asked to leave his previous accommodation. He was known to local mental health services and regularly turned to alcohol. His RRSW assisted him with budgeting and attending GP appointments to improve his mental and physical

wellbeing and involved him in local community support groups which he said he would not attend on his own due to struggles with anxiety.

He signed for a Scottish Secure Tenancy with a local housing association and was assisted to access a starter pack provided by a local charity and the Social Welfare Fund. He is happy in a secure tenancy and continues to engage with support. He provided a perspective on his life through homelessness :

"The service saw something in me that I didn't see in myself. I would do it all over again. It helped me find myself, gave safety, security, advice".

# Supporting individuals with no recourse to public funds in the community

**Lead organisation: Maryhill Housing**

**Partner organisations: Fair Way Scotland**



## Statement of support

This partnership project between Maryhill Housing and Fair Way Scotland aims to support those most disadvantaged in the UK housing market – people with no recourse to public funds who would otherwise be sleeping rough.

The project builds on the successful shared accommodation model developed by Queens Cross Housing Association and Fair Way Scotland to house adults who have no means to access any other form of housing.

Maryhill Housing is the first housing association in Scotland to provide self-contained accommodation in the community.

Under the community flats model, Maryhill Housing will be leasing up to ten properties in the community to Fair Way Scotland. Fair Way will provide the support to these individuals – most of whom will be asylum seekers without an active claim. Fair Way Scotland have been supporting these households to re-enter

the asylum system and move back into housing provided by the Home Office. This allows other households without recourse to public funds to move into the community flat, helping a greater number of people to avoid destitution.

This is the latest project under the Association's commitment to supporting New Scots to settle in to Glasgow and is an example of Maryhill Housing living its value of Embracing People's Differences. The Association has a long-term relationship with accommodation providers under the Home Office Compass Contract, providing 80 properties. Maryhill Housing has partnered with Glasgow City Council's refugee team to provide housing to communities fleeing conflict abroad. Syrians refugees were welcomed in 2015 – 2017, Afghans in 2021 and Ukrainians in 2022. Of the 28 Syrian households moving into Maryhill Housing properties between 2015 and 2017, 27 still remain in their homes today. One resident said "I cannot emphasise enough how much difference it made to me moving to a strange place to be surrounded by others from my community who were experiencing the same things that I was. I don't think I could have coped without it."

Maryhill Housing has partnered with Young Movers (YoMo) to deliver a wide-ranging integration programme in the area where most of these new communities live. This started with digital inclusion support, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) lessons and children's activities, and has since expanded to providing wellbeing support and employability skills for the whole community.

One of the long-standing residents in the area said "our new residents have made such a positive impact on our community. We used to find needles in the play area, now families are meeting up every day for a picnic".

## Outcomes and achievements

Approval secured for a project of up to 10 properties leased to Fair Way Scotland to house individuals without recourse to public funds.

3 properties leased to date, all of which are being used to house previous asylum seekers without an active claim.

27 of 28 Syrian households moving to Maryhill Housing properties remain in their homes today.

Over £600k in grant funding secured to tackle multiple deprivation and support integration through the Association's partnership with Young Movers.



# APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR

This award recognises the contribution of apprentices across the length and breadth of the housing sector in different areas and specialisms. The winner of this award will have demonstrated their commitment to personal development with achievement and attainment in learning.

## Amber Winton

Hillcrest Homes



### Statement of support

As the organisation's Administrative Trainee, Amber is responsible for customer services related activities, welcoming visitors to the building, incoming and outgoing mail, setting up events and liaising with a large number of teams to offer administrative assistance.

As Amber explains herself, it is not just a stereotypical customer service job. "Even the thought of a stereotypical 'customer service' job scared me. I hated the idea of speaking to people I'd never met, having to tell people and tenants about this company I didn't even know myself. I gave it a thought and I ended up going through with the interview process. I am so glad I did now considering the amazing position I am in. It turns out it was nothing like what I thought."

Being part of such a large and diverse organisation means that Amber gets to use a range of skills in areas like admin, customer service, networking, call handling and lots more but also has the opportunity to work across different teams. She is mainly based with reception but has already had the chance to work with development and is now regularly with the finance team who are so impressed by her that they have offered her a position until the completion of her apprenticeship.

Amber is a well-known face at Hillcrest's HQ and is always one of the first to volunteer for any additional projects or initiatives. She was happy to be filmed as part of apprenticeship week to encourage others to take up the opportunity and is an active member of Hillcrest's Young Person's Group.

Amber's passion about making a positive impact is most evident when she goes above and beyond the requirements of her role to help others. Since starting at Hillcrest, she has independently set up three donation stations in Hillcrest offices for the Dundee Food Bank. She takes monthly trips to deliver all of the donations and is always coming up with other ways to help. At Christmas last year Amber, and two of the other apprentices, set up a giving Christmas tree. She encouraged staff to donate money to have a bauble with their name on the tree and as a result raised £400. For someone who first hated the thought of speaking to people she had never met, Amber's confidence has grown enormously - she not only communicates with a large group of people internally but is already building relationships with external companies.

## Outcomes and achievements

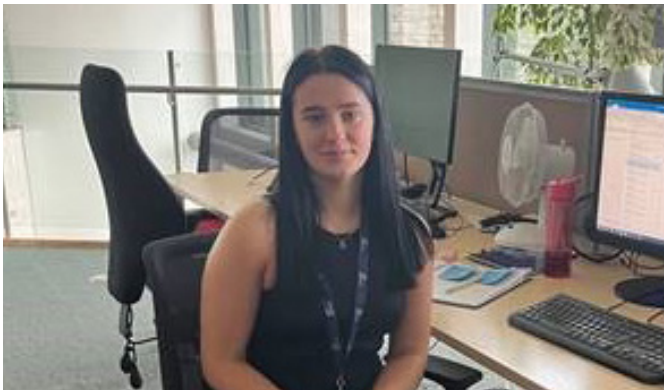
"I was quiet in school, often excluded from my small group of friends because of how shy I was. I would sit at the back of class and just listen. I would sometimes have panic attacks, making myself sick, and cry the whole bus journey to school then leave before lunch without telling anyone. When I said school isn't for everyone, some people are better in another environment, I would get funny looks and comments like "you need education", "nobody likes school", "if you leave school, you are never going to get a good job". I can happily say I proved everyone wrong.

"Now 8 months into my apprenticeship, I am starting to see the hard work paying off with opportunities I have been given. This job has helped me mature, I still have my playful, bubbly personality which will never change but I have went from a shy, worried, immature teenager to an independent, ambitious and strong woman and I couldn't be any more proud of myself. This job has brought out the best version of me and that mostly comes down to the lovely and welcoming staff that's made me feel so at home from day one."

(Amber's reflection on her apprenticeship so far)

# Tianah Scott

## Hillcrest Homes



### Statement of support

Tianah was employed, at 16 years of age, as a Business Admin Trainee within the HR team where she is responsible for a number of administrative tasks. These range from carrying out PVG checks, processing probation and return to work forms to updating staff records in relation to working patterns and supporting interviews with the necessary paperwork. Tianah is responsible for categorising HR's shared email inbox to ensure that everything is categorised appropriately, supporting the wider team to manage their workload.

Tianah came directly from school to Hillcrest so has gained a great number of skills over a short period of

time. Everyone comments on how professional Tianah is and how eager and quick to learn she is.

Tianah originally started working with the HR Team, however Payroll required support and she was keen to help and showed such willingness to learn that she now works for both teams. Every month, in addition to her HR responsibilities, she processes expenses for the whole organisation which involves understanding complex legislation in relation to mileage, tax and national insurance. She demonstrated her understanding so well that recently she was asked to prepare and deliver a presentation explaining the process to both HR and Payroll Teams. The presentation was so well received that it will now be used for any new members of staff starting in that area.

Tianah is always willing to attend career events with Hillcrest's Apprenticeship Officer as she is keen to share her experience with other young people and encourage them to embark on an apprenticeship. She is extremely confident speaking not only to school pupils but their parents as well.

Tianah is a strong voice on Hillcrest's young person's group, always willing to share her opinions and ideas. The group regularly meet with staff of all levels and Tianah always presents herself in a confident but professional manner.

## Outcomes and achievements

Tianah's line manager in the HR team commented that "Every day I see her flourishing and grow as she learns more. She is always keen and eager to learn and has been a great asset to the team. She is a pleasure to be around and is always smiling which is something that is well received within the team. She possesses a great work ethic for someone of this age - long may this continue."

The Payroll team leader added "During her presentation she not only demonstrated that she has the technical knowledge but her presenting skills and confidence displayed was excellent."

Tianah commented "The thing I like about my apprenticeship is that I get to learn lots of new skills each day and it prepares me for developing into an HR Professional.

Hillcrest has broadened my skills as I have been given the opportunity to work within payroll Team processing the expenses for all companies.

It has made a big difference to me as I have learnt so much in such little time, I came out of school straight into the work place. The work place is a better atmosphere to be in and everyone is willing to help you and celebrate your achievements."

# Jodie Garrett

## Kingdom Housing Association



### Statement of support

Jodie joined Kingdom Housing Association in July 2021. Prior to this, Jodie successfully completed her degree in Chemical Engineering and was awarded the IChemE prize for the highest grade on her dissertation. Jodie was able to do this during the period of lockdown despite limited face to face supervisor meetings. Jodie's degree made her comfortable and confident in numerical problems, report writing and using various software packages. These skills drew her to consider pursuing a career in finance so she began an online bookkeeping course which she enjoyed and found she had an aptitude for. From the beginning of her traineeship, Jodie very quickly picked up the requirements of the role, has made a significant contribution to the team's work and has become an invaluable member of our Finance Team.

Jodie has demonstrated a strong commitment to not only exceed the requirements of her traineeship but also to integrate the requirements to study and complete her qualifications. Jodie is dedicated and determined to deliver her work on time and to the best of her ability.

Now in the final year of her traineeship, Jodie is exceeding the learning objectives set out in her trainee development plan. Jodie is very knowledgeable and accurate in her work which is a key

requirement in finance. As an example of her progress, Jodie has also provided training to new members of the finance team on our purchase to pay system. Jodie is eager to progress, she uses her initiative in addressing issues and exercises good judgement. When the finance team has been short staffed periodically due to unexpected absences, on every occasion Jodie has stepped up to help with day to day workload. Jodie also puts forward ideas on improving processes including the successful implementation of our new housing management system within finance. Jodie also has an active role in the procurement of our new finance software and will be a key member in the implementation of the system.

Jodie has also contributed to the broader organisational objectives including our Health and Wellbeing (H&WB) initiative. Jodie is a H&WB Champion, actively participating in monthly meetings to drive forward our H&WB initiatives for our employees across Kingdom. Jodie has taken ownership for a number of campaigns covering physical, mental and financial wellbeing requiring dedicated research and innovative creative ideas to share information and resources. Jodie was recognised by the group for the work she did organising the World Cup Sweep which raised 160 pounds for Andy's Man Club and was a great success. Other campaigns that Jodie has lead on include Organ Donation Week

Jodie is also a member of our Young Person's Forum, the forum is an important group within Kingdom, giving our young people a voice and helping us to understand what young people want to see in the workplace. The group shares opinions on how they would like to shape the organisation going forward including their views on our policies and procedures, our processes and their own career expectations.

Jodie has quickly established herself as a core member of the team and has fully embraced our values. Jodie is well respected and makes a valuable contribution to Kingdom.

### Outcomes and achievements

Jodie passed her Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) foundation level exam with distinction and is making excellent progress in her Level 3 Diploma. We have received excellent feedback on Jodie's progress and performance not only from those involved in her qualification training but from colleagues across the business.

Jodie was part of the project team for the implementation of our new housing management system within finance. Jodie was responsible for testing the process for importing rent income into

tenants accounts. Jodie successfully completed this task despite challenging project deadlines and making sure she completed her daily tasks.

Jodie is a very valued Health and Wellbeing Champion and a key member of our Young Person's Forum. Jodie has volunteered to join both groups and demonstrates a real willingness to be involved with wider activities across the Group. Jodie uses her own initiative and innovation to drive forward campaigns following diligent research and a dedication to produce work of a high standard.



# Louis Kennedy and Kira Meldrum

C-urb Property Management, part of Link Group



## Statement of support

Louis Kennedy and Kira Meldrum became Graduate Trainees for C-urb Property Management, part of Link Group in July 2022.

This award entry reflects their teamwork to deliver great results since day 1, in little over a year.

Their initial job showed just how creative and innovative Kira and Louis could be. Their role was to review social media for the Scotland-wide Open Market Shared Equity scheme and the Private Sector Leasing scheme in Edinburgh. Very quickly they researched and evidenced the customer profiles, the existing approach and approach of other organisations and presented their findings in a presentation to management and staff which was confidently delivered. Their changes created a more person-centred approach to social media marketing content, increasing web hits and ultimately enabling more people than before to access affordable homes, through both Shared Equity and Private Sector Leasing.

Their second project was to help organise funding to improve the energy efficiency of properties let to homeless households through the Private Sector Leasing scheme. The properties are managed by C-urb PSL on the City of Edinburgh Council's behalf. Their work, in partnership with Home Energy Scotland and Warmworks, involved liaising with tenants, landlords, housing officers and contractors and so far, has helped alleviate fuel poverty for 6 households who have benefited from property improvements which will also reduce carbon emissions.

Their third project was to manage a patch of around 1000 factored properties, which entailed a significant amount of on the job learning about the legal framework and consultation procedures, ideal for putting some of their Postgraduate Housing qualification into use. They managed the role with great success, and this ultimately gave Louis and Kira the confidence to apply for officer level roles in the business. The factoring team they dealt with development handover issues, complex defects, elected members, residents, housing colleagues, contractors and gained great feedback on their work.

All of this is in addition to Kira's stint in C-urb Lettings, managing private tenancies and supporting new development handovers; and Louis's stint in New Supply Shared Equity sales, supporting all aspects of sales and marketing for new homes in Oban - in addition to shadowing staff in repairs and housing management.

They have always been forthcoming with ideas from their Housing Studies course and helped initiate and run the new Practice Exchange Network for graduates and former graduates across Link Group.

Some of the words used to describe Kira are "she is never shy to take on any challenge. The effect of her positivity and calmness has been great.... The team's morale was greatly improved by her" and those used to describe Louis include "His attitude is infectious.... coupled with an aptitude to turn his hand to anything and quickly get to grips with a problem means Louis is an outstanding addition to the team".

The pair successfully completed the first year of their postgraduate in Housing Studies at the University of Stirling and are embarking on their second year having already secured permanent roles - Kira as a Housing Officer for C-urb PSL and Louis as a Property Management Officer in the Factoring service. Undoubtedly Louis and Kira are making the most of their CIH membership including the Professional Standards reflections shared with colleagues and are a credit to the housing sector. Having demonstrated leadership skills through previous voluntary work and coaching they are now putting them into practice in their housing career. They would be very worthy joint winners of the CIH Apprentice of the Year 2023.



## Outcomes and achievements

6 Private Sector Leasing tenants so far have had property improvements thanks to Kira and Louis's partnership working with Home Energy Scotland, Warmworks, Private Landlords, tenants and housing officers. This has reduced their fuel bills and cut carbon emissions, contributing to C-urb and Link Group's mission to be a leader in creating sustainable communities.

By creating more personal, image centric digital content, more homeless people accessed a home - organic reach of over 4000 people on a single social media post helped contribute to 86 extra properties joining the Private Sector Leasing portfolio in the year.

Open Market Shared Equity mailing list subscribers

rose 39.1% compared to March 2022 and 100 more applicants heard about the scheme through social media, widening access to affordable home ownership Scotland wide.

They completed year one of their Postgraduate Housing Diploma and shared the impact of CIH Professional Standards learning with their teams

Kira and Louis successfully adapted to 4 different team placements, supported by a former graduate trainee throughout their journey. They proved resilient in withstanding difficult situations arising from challenging customer interactions, achieving positive outcomes and transparent factoring services. Overall their innovation and teamwork was outstanding.

# Pamela Gibson

## Maryhill Housing



### Statement of support

Pamela joined Maryhill Housing as a development trainee in February 2023. Pamela is also part of the GEM Programme, facilitated by SFHA, which brings together a cohort of graduate trainees from across the sector to participate in UK-wide learning and development.

Pamela is one of three trainees in the North West Partners joint development team with neighbouring Queens Cross Housing Association.

At the point of joining Maryhill Housing, Pamela was already completing a degree in construction management - demonstrating her commitment to learning and development.

Since arriving at the Association, Pamela has consistently impressed the staff team with her initiative, drive and enthusiasm.

Pamela has been leading the Association's acquisitions programme since April, and by August has already committed the full £1m budget allocation. She has developed new processes and procedures to ensure key risks are mitigated, e.g., ensuring all compliance checks are completed prior to property purchase. Pamela's natural commercial acumen has shone

through as she has negotiated with vendors, agents and valuers. The team at Maryhill Housing has been particularly impressed with how Pamela lives our values - and the extra steps she has taken to ensure tenants in acquisition properties are supported throughout the process.

Pamela identified an opportunity to make the Association's grant go further whilst delivering wider regeneration by purchasing properties for mid-market rent. Pamela has led this project from inception to completion - developing a business case, working with the Finance Team to develop a viability appraisal model, the Housing Team to develop a lettings process and the Property Team to develop a void standard. Pamela has also led negotiations with Glasgow City Council to ensure Maryhill Housing would receive grant support for this project - clearly demonstrating how it would deliver on both organisations' aligned strategic priorities.

Pamela has also been leading two innovative development schemes to convert a former school caretaker's property and a former shop unit to residential accommodation. She has led discussions with the design team and planners to ensure the viability of these schemes.

Pamela put herself forward to get involved in bigger regeneration exercises. She has built up great links with third sector partners and has fed into event planning and survey design to inform master planning.

She has also volunteered to undertake additional training since joining Maryhill Housing and has already completed training in procurement, contract management, snagging and the HARP grant system.

Pamela has grown in confidence throughout her time with the Association and has been suggesting improvements to its quality assurance processes - applying best practice from the private sector.

Pamela's ambition is to be a development manager for multi-use projects incorporating leisure. The team at Maryhill Housing believe that she's a development director in the making.

### Outcomes and achievements

Completing the GEM Programme.

Completing a degree in construction management.

Leading the Association's acquisitions programme and delivering this year's spend by the end of August.

Identifying the opportunity for purchasing homes for

mid-market rent, developing a business case, putting processes in place and negotiating with other teams and third parties to make it happen.

Completing additional training in a range of areas.

Securing positive planning feedback in pre-application discussions to facilitate two developments.

# EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

Sponsored by: **ALACHO**  
ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY CHIEF HOUSING OFFICERS

This award is for an individual, and its purpose is to recognise excellent leadership in the sector. It aims to demonstrate the quality of leaders that we have in housing, and to show the rest of the world how brilliant housing people are.

## Neale Bisset

### PMC Property Management & Lettings



#### Statement of support

Neale has worked up through the ranks of PMC, from a Property Assistant, to become the Chairman and Owner in under 10 years. He took over responsibility of PMC during the height of the Covid 19 outbreak, closely followed by the death of the company Chairman. Despite these huge challenges, Neale consolidated the company, improved its working practices and standards, as well as managing to grow its factoring portfolio by 25%, leasing portfolio by 100% and increase profit margins. He was able to look after the staff, and support them through a difficult period, whilst also dealing with the passing of a friend and mentor. He has also helped push the green initiative within PMC, with all company cars now changed to plug in hybrid. A carbon assessment has also been carried out, with PMC now a carbon neutral company, with fully electric vehicles on order.

On top of this, Neale also made great strides within the Scottish property industry as a whole. In 2019, he joined the Scottish Working Group of the IRPM and the PMAS Council.

As part of the Scottish Working Group, he played a role in creating the new Scottish Factoring Diploma, which was a major leap forward for property factoring qualifications in Scotland.

Following on from joining the council of PMAS, Neale was appointed Vice President in 2021. In his role as vice president of PMAS, he was integral and the driving force behind the creation of the new PMAS Excellence Awards. Not only being heavily involved through his role on the council and as Vice President, but leading the way as the head of the Education and Training Group. He also oversaw the successful return of the PMAS annual conference, and is participating in the Scottish Government working group on Tenement Maintenance. In March 2023 he became the President of the PMAS.

In 2021 Neale became a Fellow of the IRPM, acknowledging his experience within the industry, but also his significant contribution to the industry as a whole.

During the uncertainty of the initial Covid outbreak and lockdown, with staff furloughed, Neale single handedly ran all the operational side of PMC for a period of months. This took quite a toll on him, due to the substantial workload, but it demonstrates the strong character he has and how he goes above and beyond for his staff and the company. On top of this, he also volunteered with the Trestle Trust throughout the pandemic.

Neale has added tremendous value to PMC, growing considerably over the last 2 years. Through training and staff support, he has also increased staff retention levels, staff wellbeing, professionalism and knowledge. During 2021/22, a number of people struggled with mental health issues or financial issues following the

pandemic. Neale provided unconditional support to these staff, providing mental health counselling for those in need, at no expense to the staff. Financial support was also given, through interest free loans, to clear debt and give some much-needed breathing space to some.

Neale should win this award as he has been an inspirational leader of PMC, seeing a significant period of growth. He leads by example, inspires

his employees and goes above and beyond for his staff and the company. Providing free mental health counselling and financial support is just one way he has proven this. He has also been an important figure to help drive the industry forward as whole and to help raise standards.

In 2023, Neale won a number of prestigious awards including Young Director of the Year.

## Outcomes and achievements

Neale won the IOD Scotland, Young Director of the Year award 2023 as well as being a finalist in Family Business Director of the Year and Director of the Year for Aberdeen and Grampian.

Neale also won the Outstanding Contribution to the Industry Award at the PMAS Excellence Awards 2023.

# Angela Currie

## Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association



### Statement of support

Angela Currie, appointed CEO for Hanover in January 2021, immediately commenced creating a collaborative approach to leadership across Hanover. Empowering the reformed Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and establishing both Senior and Operational Management Teams was priority, to build a wider management structure with a clear focus on collaboration, communication and decision making at every level.

Angela then led the creation of a new vision for Hanover which puts employees and customers at the heart of the organisation, its strategy and all its activities. A number of workshops with customers and employees ensured Hanover had a clear set of priorities and acknowledged where improvements were needed. Angela worked closely with the Board to develop a new Corporate Strategy, and then engaged in a series of launch roadshows across the country, to ensure our customers and employees felt listened to and understood the new goals.

Following approval of the new strategy, a Strategic Planning Framework was introduced to support the creation of key sub strategies and plans. Angela is

passionate about ensuring all strands of Hanover's plans align with each other and with wider objectives.

Angela's simple and effective approach has led to the creation of two key strategies (Happy Customer and Asset Management, both 2023) both clearly with a golden thread to our Corporate Strategy and Business Plan 2022-2027. With Angela's support the leadership team have confidently adopted this new approach and are using it effectively to create the People and Engagement Strategy as the final strategic plan.

Strategies need an effective delivery mechanism in order to be achieved. Angela created a structure setting out key strategic projects and progress reporting. The first approach developed in 2021 has now become a well-established 'Delivery Plan' framework used by the Board, Executive Team and Senior Management Team and allows Hanover to have clear annual projects to deliver its strategic goals.

Acutely aware that the organisational culture, post pandemic in particular, needed a substantial review, Angela empowered all employees to help define new values that would reflect the organisation now and in the future. The values were defined through a series of employee workshops. The results of this wide-ranging consultation were pretty unanimous, and Hanover settled on: Show Respect, Be Accountable, Support Collaboration and Promote Inclusion. In little over a year, those values have become the lynchpin of all that Hanover do and are already well embedded in people's working lives.

Communication is always a challenge for effective leadership and particularly in Hanover given the diverse operating model and wide geographical spread. Angela was highly aware of the traditional model of broadcasting information out from the corporate centre not being effective, with little true employee engagement and consultation.



Hanover has now introduced a new internal communication framework that fully keeps employees up to date with progress and developments in a number of ways, including regular briefings from the Board, a monthly staff bulletin "Inside Hanover", a separate monthly performance bulletin "On Target". Most importantly, a high level of employee engagement and consultation is now really helping Hanover to bring people on board and listen to them as they move forward. All employees are given various

opportunities to participate in projects, working groups and many other activities. Angela used the innovative concept of the Employee Engagement Ladder and earlier this year undertook a number of roadshows across the country to emphasise the importance placed on meaningful employee engagement. Results of good engagement can be seen in the outcome of Hanover's pay review, which relied heavily on the feedback from different teams to shape the final pay offer.

## Outcomes and achievements

With Angela's leadership, Hanover has changed significantly over the last 2.5 years and is continuing to do so. Key outcomes and achievements so far include:

- A new Corporate Strategy spanning five years and a new set of values and behaviours framework to facilitate cultural change as evidenced in Hanover's IIP re-accreditation. Hanover has been nominated for a national IIP award, recognising the step change seen in the last 2 years.
- The disciplined approach now adopted to strategic planning and documents (Ohmae 3C model, 1982) has been embraced by the leadership team, employees and customers.

- A Good Governance Framework which is evident at every single level all the way to the Board room. Thinking and reporting at Board level are now much more strategic and clearly demonstrate the link to strategic objectives. Strategy planning days focus on the next stages as set out in the route map. Angela's leadership and vision has now given Hanover a clear direction of travel, a robust system of delivering its goals and invaluable additional insights obtained from meaningful employee and customer engagement.
- Hanover's recent IIP report quoted one employee: "I've seen such a change, things are so much better than two to three years ago."

# Lorna Wilson

## Barrhead Housing Association



### Statement of support

Lorna Wilson: Innovative. Collaborative. Empowering.

Since becoming Barrhead Housing's CEO in 2020, Lorna has transformed its culture through positive and inspirational leadership.

Lorna recognised it was time to adapt to meet the challenges of delivering housing services in an increasingly digital world, and led her team through a cultural change, empowering them to deliver more for customers through innovation, collaboration and trust.

### Innovative

Lorna puts customers at the heart of everything. In practice, this means listening to what customers need and designing services to meet those needs.

- She sought customers' views using surveys as she designed post-Covid office opening hours around their needs and expectations.
- The new factoring service was designed following feedback from owner occupiers, with Lorna recognising all customers as equally important.
- Lorna established a tenant engagement panel as she places the highest importance on listening to customers. She demonstrates this by attending all events personally and embracing opportunities to speak with individuals and follow up on their feedback.
- She wants customers to know who she is and to view the whole team as friendly and approachable. She sets the tone using regular social media videos to communicate with customers.
- Lorna understands it is critical to really know individual customers and support them in their homes. She made this possible by championing mobile working and embedding customer visits within performance indicators.

## Collaborative

Lorna recognises that the sum of the parts can achieve greater results than the whole. She has worked tirelessly to get Barrhead Housing around the table with key partners, driving collaborative projects to meet shared goals. Lorna is well-liked and respected in the sector and with community organisations for her down to earth, friendly, and open style.

She has driven projects with partners including the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, the University of Edinburgh, East Renfrewshire Council, East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership and the Federation of Local Housing Associations in Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire (FLAIR). Those projects have been broad ranging, giving Barrhead Housing, a small, community-based housing association, a big role to play in numerous projects including:

- Mapping Data Landscapes in Housing
- Technology-Enabled Care in Housing
- Strategic community and housing planning with the local authority, and
- Assisting care leavers accessing suitable housing services.

Even in unprecedented economic times and in East Renfrewshire, where there is a shortage of potential development sites, Lorna builds links with numerous partners to drive ahead with new developments and address the lack of affordable housing.

## Empowering

For many at Barrhead Housing, Lorna has been a 'one in a million' leader because of the way she empowers and trusts individuals. While it's essential that modern business leaders empower their people to be productive in an age of increasing automation, Lorna empowers her team with genuine trust and inspires people to give their all. She values each team member for their individual expertise and contribution and uses this in decision-making.

One team member said, "Lorna tells me openly when she thinks I'm doing a great job. I feel so valued, and this encourages me to do more, take more risks, and be more of a leader myself."

Lorna demonstrates courage every day, seems never afraid to try new approaches, and works hard to instil this thinking in her team - a challenging feat which involves some of the team having to 'unlearn' many things they've learned since joining the workforce. She instils in the team her willingness to take risks, creates a safe space for the team to follow suit and embraces mistakes for the role they play in delivering better services for customers.

## Outcomes and achievements

Lorna creates a positive, healthy work culture where people feel great about coming into work. Some tangible achievements include:

### Developing People

- Implementing a new People Strategy
- Deploying a leadership development programme
- Achieving exceptional employee engagement survey results (2023: 88%)
- Creating development opportunities, with five recent vacancies resulting in internal promotions
- Supporting staff in professional development including GEM, ILM, CIH, Masters in Housing and On Track.

### Wellbeing

- Introducing volunteering days and individual wellbeing budget
- Creating opportunities for teams to come together in person, formally or informally, and celebrate success (e.g. our recent 1000 homes celebration event and monthly team meetings).

- Promoting physical health by providing fruit and standing desks in the office, and encouraging walking or outdoor meetings,
- Creating quiet space in the office for employees to take time out.

### Service Delivery

- Embedding a funded community investment team to tackle poverty and inequality as a core business activity,
- Supporting the new Assets team to accelerate the investment programme following some years of under-investment.
- Supporting initiatives to address employability by making available four roles for local, long term unemployed candidates.
- Engaging the whole team early in recent new strategy development, creating a safe environment to share ideas.

# Yvonne Baulk

North Ayrshire Council



## Statement of support

A respected outcome focussed leader in Scotland's housing sector, Yvonne Baulk has committed herself to public service for more than 35 years. For the last decade she has been responsible for leading, improving and developing award winning services as Head of Housing and Protective Services at North Ayrshire Council.

Yvonne's leadership skills, financial background and housing expertise have been instrumental in shaping and developing national policy, with her vision, perspective and intelligence gaining her respect and recognition by her peers and wider sector leaders. This has resulted in her appointment as Vice Chair of ALACHO, and her role in shaping the national housing response to the Ukraine crisis.

Yvonne's commitment to delivering services of the highest quality which not only meet people's needs but transform lives, has gained her the respect and trust of successive administrations, enabling the successful development and implementation of the ambitious strategic outcomes and targets detailed within consecutive North Ayrshire LHS and SHIP plans.

An early adopter, Yvonne is committed to the identification and dissemination of best practice, with a constant focus on equity and the best outcomes for tenants and the wider community. Her drive to improve the lives of older tenants resulted in a pioneering development of two sustainable demonstrator homes, with improved thermal performance, delivering affordable warmth and reducing carbon emissions. Developed in partnership with stakeholders, these homes explored how technology can improve independence, enabling people to remain at home for longer. Using emerging technology, one unit was developed as a dementia friendly home. Learning from these programmes informed future new build developments and an ambitious sheltered refurbishment programme.

Yvonne's leadership of a multi-agency Task Force facilitates a strategic integrated response to the prevention and alleviation of homelessness which has resulted in sector leading services. The North Ayrshire Housing Advice model has shaped service delivery across the country.

Her leadership inspired an entire service to work together during the pandemic to protect and serve the most vulnerable tenants. Using managers individual skills to plan and communicate, she encouraged teams to step out of their daily roles to do what was needed; from food preparation and delivery, through to daily calls with vulnerable tenants to minimise isolation and ensure access to services. It is her integrity, commitment and her willingness to roll her sleeves up and get involved which makes her an excellent leader.

Committed to 'growing our own' Yvonne reshaped services to develop a Housing Leadership Academy, ensuring that every officer, irrespective of grade, has access to the necessary training and support to unlock their potential in order to meet their career aspirations, whilst ensuring effective succession planning. The academy works with local secondary schools to offer training and apprenticeship opportunities, informing career paths for school leavers.

Under Yvonne's leadership, tenant and service user involvement has been transformed. A range of innovative engagement mechanisms have been embedded to ensure that the tenant voice shapes, informs and evaluates the entire housing service delivery.

With a focus on enhanced performance, financial management, and information governance, Yvonne restructured services to create a Governance Team. Independent from other services, the team ensures accountability, providing a layer of protection for the service.

Yvonne has a unique ability to develop strong cohesive teams, motivating and empowering managers and officers from across services to work together to create and deliver high performing services. This is why her senior managers have nominated her for this prestigious award. Under Yvonne's leadership Housing Services has transformed from individual service leads with conflicting priorities, into an integrated, empowered team with a single focus; to deliver the best outcomes for tenants, service users and staff.

## Outcomes and achievements

Under Yvonne's leadership North Ayrshire housing service has recently achieved:

- TPAS Gold accreditation - re-awarded in 2022 for the approach to Tenant Participation.
- Tenant Information Service 2022 'Gold Reaccreditation' for 'Putting our customers at the heart of our service delivery'.
- Secure by Design gold accreditation for 71 new affordable social rented homes at Harbourside Irvine
- First Scottish council (Housing Service) to receive IIP Platinum in 2016, with reaccreditation in 2019.

### Housing Supply

- The North Ayrshire SHIP, led by Yvonne has delivered 831 sustainable, energy efficient new homes.

- Her vision to design affordable, accessible homes in which people want to live has resulted in the demolition of five blocks of high-rise flats, making way for beautiful homes which will transform the Riverside area of Irvine.

### Humanitarian Support

Yvonne's innovation and vision has shaped both the Ukrainian Scottish Welcome Offer and the funding mechanisms to support accommodation provision across Scotland.

Presenting the need and mechanisms to coordinate finance from across different strategic funding streams, Yvonne's tenacity has levered in Scottish Government funding to increase housing supply. In North Ayrshire this has supported the resettlement of 296 people across 110 units of social housing fleeing the conflict.

# Susan Aktemel

## Homes for Good Scotland CIC



### Statement of support

Susan Aktemel has been a social business pioneer since 1994, when she created Impact Arts to disrupt Arts & Regeneration in Scotland. Starting in 1994, before social enterprise was a recognized business model, she grew Impact Arts till 2012, from sole trader to a national Charity, delivering creative activities annually with over 5000 people of all ages. This created 56 full-time jobs and supported over 80 creative freelancers. In 2012 she turned her focus to housing and the challenges in the private rented sector, creating Homes for Good. Starting again from scratch, she has grown this business over the last decade into a leading housing organization, which has influenced and changed the experience of people living in the PRS across the UK.

HFG is Scotland's first social enterprise letting agency, created at a time when the letting industry needed to improve. HFG provides long-term housing options for people with limited choice within the private rented sector. HFG currently manages around

573 homes, supporting over 770 tenants, the majority on low incomes, and employs 22 full-time staff.

Leading a social business through COVID was the biggest challenge any leader faced, it was no different for Susan. She navigated 2020-2022 leading the team and HFG tenants with energy, unswerving focus, and ability to respond to constantly changing circumstances. Alongside providing stability and direction to keep going, she led a £3.6m investment transaction with Big Issue Invest, securing further investment for growth. In 2021 she rebranded HFG, and embedded a values-focused approach into everything HFG does, leading the team consistently into a more informal, kind, but no less professional way of doing business. She has led through constant change, including the "Great Resignation" - which created ongoing uncertainty, and settling back into normal working life after 2 years of upheaval.

At the same time, she resumed the growth trajectory which was paused during the pandemic: The HFG portfolio under management has grown from 490 in December 2021 to a projected 600 in December 23. This includes 64 homes bought and renovated within 2022 with further £4.1m investment from Social and Sustainable Capital. This enabled HFG to start 2023 on a strong financial footing, with group turnover to March 23 at approximately £2.5m, and net assets of £3.5m.

This has been achieved within a turbulent Scottish Private Rented Sector. Government Legislation, soaring rental demand, rising rents, landlords leaving the market, has created constant change and pressure for the team, along with uncertainty and worry for tenants.

Susan has provided calm, focused leadership throughout, alternating between extremely focused



operational support for the HFG team and influencing at industry and government level on a number of Scottish and UK working groups, to ensure the Private Rented Sector remains a viable source of housing for people who need it. Susan introduced new areas of innovation - an Empty Homes Programme, working with Shelter to transform disused properties, establishing a unique "Tenant Talents" Programme, and embedding an interior design approach "Love Home" into HFG renovation programs and tenancy support.

She enabled the team to respond rapidly to the Ukrainian Crisis, creating a portfolio of 12 homes for

Ukrainian families with intensive tenancy and social support. She has also led the replication of the HFG lettings model in London and the South of Scotland.

Earlier this year, Homes For Good won Gold in the World Habitat Awards, organized in partnership with UN-Habitat. This award along with the other achievements consolidate the impact-driven leadership that Susan has demonstrated over the years. This is why she deserves to win this year's, Excellence in Leadership award.

## Outcomes and achievements

Susan Aktemel created HFG in 2013 to improve standards within the Scottish PRS. Today, HFG provides homes for over 770 people, has raised over £20m in social investment for high quality homes for people on low incomes and has created 22 full time posts.

As well as her work at HFG, Susan provides mentoring and guidance for people and organisations working in the PRS across the UK. Furthermore she volunteers in Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Cambridge and Strathclyde Universities.

## Neil Watts

Aberdeenshire Council

**Aberdeenshire**  
COUNCIL



### Statement of support

Neil has transformed what was once a "back-office job" into a vital role that actively engages with tenants. This innovative approach has broken barriers, enabling data analysts to interact directly with the tenant base and contribute to enhancing customer satisfaction and overall housing service quality. Neil's strategic approach to championing tenant participation practices has positively impacted the delivery of housing services. By actively engaging with tenants

and incorporating their feedback, Neil ensures that housing policies and services align with the actual needs and preferences of the community. This results in a more tenant-centric approach to service delivery, leading to greater satisfaction and improved overall housing service quality.

Through Neil's efforts to empower tenants and include them in decision-making processes, satisfaction levels have improved. By making complex data and financial information easily understandable and encouraging open communication, Neil has fostered a culture where tenants feel heard and valued. This has led to higher satisfaction levels as tenants recognize their influence on housing policies and services, leading to a more positive tenant experience.

Neil's work has resulted in lasting benefits for tenants, residents, and communities. By actively involving them in decision-making processes, AC can implement policies and services that address the specific needs of a community. This inclusivity leads to improved housing services, greater satisfaction, and a sense of ownership and belonging among tenants and residents.

## Outcomes and achievements

Neil has truly gone above and beyond in championing tenant participation practices AC. As the Business Planning and Improvement Manager, Neil has demonstrated a strong commitment to empowering tenants, residents, and communities to influence housing policies, services, and standards. He has actively sought to engage with tenants and colleagues alike, ensuring that information is presented in an easily understandable manner and that queries are promptly resolved.

One of Neil's key strengths lies in his ability to work collaboratively at all levels, from elected members to housing management, and tenants. This inclusivity and openness has allowed Neil to bridge the gap between data analysis, financial modelling, and tenant engagement, creating a customer-facing role where tenants' voices are heard and valued.

Neil has assisted with various multi-team projects, such as the Annual Report to Tenants, where he has gone the extra mile to ensure complex information is accessible and easy to comprehend. He has provided detailed information on finance and business planning to Member-Tenant-Officer working groups, ensuring that tenants are well-informed and can actively participate in decisions regarding rent strategy and are part of the political and decision making process.

Furthermore, Neil's proactive approach has led him to join the tenant participation team in community engagement days. His aim was to present information relating to business planning to as wide a tenant base as possible, allowing for greater transparency and involvement in the decision-making process.

Tenant Quote: We really appreciate all that Neil has done in explaining finance in the HRA Monitoring group. Nothing is ever a bother for him to look into if we ask questions or ask for information. He makes the information easy to understand.

Staff quote: Neil has always been an extremely helpful colleague. We have collaborated on various projects, such as the Annual Report to Tenants, to ensure information is as easy to understand as possible. He is always willing to give time and resource, yet is equally able to effectively manage expectations of colleagues and tenants.

Overall, Neil's work has been characterized by his willingness to help, ability to present complex information effectively to a wide range of audiences, and his commitment to fostering tenant participation. He has proven to be a true advocate for tenant involvement, and his efforts have positively influenced the organisation's approach to tenant engagement and data-driven decision-making.

# HOUSING TEAM OF THE YEAR

This award recognises teams who have delivered an outstanding contribution to their organisation and for the housing sector. The award is designed to recognise the achievement of something special, as part of developing new services, dealing with difficult situations or delivering the best services.

## Community Investment Team

### Barrhead Housing Association



#### Statement of support

Barrhead Housing Association (BHA) are committed to being "At the heart of our community - Investing in your future" and this ethos has been at the centre of everything that we have delivered as part of our Community Investment activities. At the forefront of everything has been our commitment to ensure that our activities are community led and also that we adopt a collaborative approach to working with community partners and help support the creation and long term sustainability of community led organisations, which target issues that we know are of local concern.

As a community anchor organisation, we have four key pillars of the work we do: homes, community, people and partnership. As well as providing high quality, affordable homes, we recognise the importance of people and community in creating great places to live. We have pro-actively co-ordinated with key partners and local stakeholders, taking a strategic partnership approach to community investment - delivering services, overcoming challenges, and providing support that responds to the needs of our community.

This approach ensures that we minimise duplication of services and maximise assets in our communities- specifically the financial and volunteering resources available, and also allows us to deliver a variety of

much-needed activities and support to our tenants and communities. We embedded our approach to Community Investment in 2020, when BHA were the FIRST housing association in Scotland to sign The Board Charter Committed to Community Investment. In December 2021 we published our new Community Investment Strategy 2021-2025 this strategy cements our commitment to work in partnership to support, strengthen and empower communities

In April 2022 we created a Community Investment team which has been delivering projects that contribute to the Community Investment Strategy priorities:

1. Tackle Inequality and Poverty Support,
2. Reduce Social Isolation and Exclusion,
3. Digital Engagement and Inclusion
4. Support Community Hubs and Community Led Activity,
5. Maximise Community Benefits Create Employment and Training Opportunities
6. Enhancing Health and Wellbeing of Communities

The team, which consists of a Community Investment Manager, Community Investment Officer, Tenancy Readiness Officer and Welfare Advice Officer, has been able to gain and utilise funding from various sources such as The National Lottery Community Fund, Scottish Government, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, and East Renfrewshire Council. Using this funding the team has delivered a variety of support to our Customers and Communities which have tackled a range of issues we know are important to our tenants and local community. Our activities have reduced poverty and inequality, alleviated the financial stress of the Cost of Living crisis, promoted social interaction and reduced isolation/loneliness, promoted improved health and wellbeing in our communities, and expanded on employability skills and opportunities for local people.

It is excellent value for money as in the last year the team has successfully obtained £501,469 of external funding to implement a number of much needed projects, the core team salary costs for the year were £134,828, which means for every £1 invested in the team, they have secured £3.71 back. What this means to our customers, is the cost to them is £2.65 per home, per week, but the return is £9.84 per home, per week.

All of our Community Investment activity is People-led, strengths-based and connected, meaning that we actively identify opportunities for people to become involved through project or service design, development and delivery, we build on the strengths of people and communities, and we utilise existing networks as well as establish new connections and partnerships.

## Outcomes and achievements

April 2022 – March 2023 Achievements:

- Through the Brighter Futures Project, the team has tackled poverty and inequality for local families with a co-ordinated partner and community volunteer approach, engaging with 1200 people.
- 139 people have taken part in Cooking, Exercise and Arts and Craft Workshops.
- £16,000 has been awarded to various Community projects in Barrhead, through a BHA Community Fund 2022 Voting Event, with over 380 community members voting on the projects they wished to see funded.
- Through ERC's Young Persons Guarantee project 22 young people have completed an intense employability course and we have created 2 internal paid 6-month work placements, one of which has become an extended 12 month role.
- 82 people accessed a warm welcoming space in the Auchenback Resource Centre.
- The team received 227 Welfare Advice Referrals and recovered £310,711.52
- We created a Tenant Support Fund with £30,425 distributed to 164 customers to help with the Cost of Living crisis and £5,200 of payments to 26 customers to help with Fuel Debt
- £30,000 has been distributed to customers to 37 customers to have Carpets installed in their homes through a local business
- £10,450 of Food Vouchers and Kitchen Equipment has been purchased and distributed to Customers in need of food and kitchen equipment.
- 17 Referrals Back 2 School Bank ER to provide new warm clothes, school uniforms, and supplies have been completed.
- A £15 Christmas Present for over 300 young customers 15 and under has been bought and distributed and we held a Christmas party for 80 Young Customers.
- We have delivered a Tenancy Sustainment course to 250 Young People from local High Schools.
- By investing £101,076 in external funding to create some of these projects we generated £1,047,292 Social Value, which is a return of 1: 10.39

# Inverclyde Housing Options and Homelessness Advice Service

## Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership



### Statement of support

In 2022 the Inverclyde Homelessness Change Programme launched. A Change Lead was appointed

to develop and deliver a programme, governed by a Programme Board with six sub-groups delivering the key objectives in modernising the homeless service. Key personnel: within the service, partners and service user engagement is key to delivering on short, medium and longer term aspirations.

The Inverclyde Homelessness Service originally comprised an Assessment and Support Team, Accommodation Team, 2 Resettlement Support Officers and business support staff. Two Team Leaders managed the service based in the Inverclyde Centre, a homeless hostel in Inverclyde. At capacity it housed up to 34 individuals, with shared accommodation and use of B&B regularly used as short- and medium-term solutions to manage homelessness. The use of temporary housing within the community supplied by RSLs was much reduced.



Although Homelessness in Inverclyde is not a huge problem in terms of numbers, with 292 reported cases during 2022/23, the Scottish Index for Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020 determines Greenock town centre as Scotland's most deprived area and Inverclyde as the area with the largest local share of deprived areas, with 45% of data zones among the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland.

Unmet support needs are significantly high and complex for individuals open to services across homelessness, alcohol and drug recovery services, mental health and/or criminal justice. Alongside Inverclyde being a stock transfer authority, long term homelessness is a very real problem for those who have historical issues and unable to be housed by the local registered social landlords.

The original Inverclyde RRTP was aspirational in its vision. However only a fraction of funding was available to deliver the plan. Additional money came from a range of funding streams across the HSCP, including ADP to deliver on key strategic objectives and make an impact in and on the lives of individuals. Three Wellbeing Co-ordinators have been appointed to provide additional day to day management and lead three distinct operational teams within the service

- Housing Options and Homeless Advice. Utilising data to prioritise service activity, the nine Assessment and Support Officers and Resettlement Support Workers can provide targeted prevention advice and support. The Wellbeing Co-ordinator (Assessment) and Team Leader can target those with low or no support

needs to be rehoused quickly. Resettlement Support Workers provide immediate support to ensure individuals have all they need prior to and in the early stages of the tenancy.

- Rapid Rehousing Support Team. A new team of 8 Rapid Rehousing Support Workers under test of change. Working on collaboration with RSLs to agree a tenancy for those who are long term homeless with complex needs, provided support needs are met from the team. The Wellbeing Co-ordinator (Support) works closely with individuals to agree how support will be delivered to help with life skills such as meal planning, preparation, budgeting and cooking as well as being a good neighbour.
- Accommodation Team. An existing team of 9 officers and assistants who are freed up from the extensive support role previously required, they focus on turning over temporary accommodation both in the hostel and community to ensure that where there is a defined need, suitable temporary accommodation is readily available. Reducing void times and costs enables funding to be used more effectively. The Wellbeing Co-ordinator (Accommodation) can utilise systems and data to prioritise operational activities.

The Change Lead has shaped the future service model, the management and leadership of the service and has understood the crucial role the staff team, service users and key partners play in delivering a re-designed service, who have all risen to the challenge of delivering change.

## Outcomes and achievements

Implementation of the Change Programme has demonstrated significant benefits to people using the service, with several key highlights identified:

- Growth of the Housing First model with a total of 41 individuals currently being supported - 17 in Housing First tenancies and 3 with offers pending,
- 21 temporary furnished flats flipped to permanent accommodation,
- a 10% decrease in the number of homeless applications,
- The number of people presenting as homeless on leaving an institution i.e., prison, hospital etc. reduced by 30%,
- a 27% reduction in repeat homelessness,
- A 5% increase in social housing lets to homeless households

- A 21% reduction in long-term homelessness with a management focus on cases open for more than 12 months, all of whom were referred to the Rapid Rehousing Support Team,
- A 36% reduction in the use of Unsuitable Accommodation with zero instances of using hotels and B&B facilities over the past year.
- Void turnover days reduced from 59 in 2021/22 to 18 in 2022/23

The most important determination of success is better outcomes for our residents, they say:-

" Thank you for giving me the opportunity to put my life right "

" I will never forget you and will stay in touch forever "

# Wheatley Homes South Team

## Wheatley Group



### Statement of support

Wheatley Group is Scotland's leading housing, care and property-management organisation and one of the UK's best-accredited organisations. It comprises four Registered Social Landlords, including Wheatley Homes South, which operates in Dumfries and Galloway.

December 2022 saw some of the worst floods to hit Dumfries and Galloway in over a decade. Large parts of the region were covered in stormwater, resulting in several villages on the outskirts of the town being left isolated and emergency services struggling to gain access to help those stranded within their properties.

The village of Kirkton was severely impacted by weather-related flooding, the worst the region has experienced. This resulted in the small community being completely isolated until water levels started to recede. There was a devastating impact of this flooding on eight bungalow properties located on Barrasgate, with flooding of over five foot.

Wheatley Homes South customers were amongst those hit hardest by this, resulting in:

3399 out-of-hours and emergency priority one repairs jobs being raised between 1-31 December 2022;

and 1400 of these jobs were raised over a five-day period between 12 and 16 December 2022;

Staff across Housing, Repairs, Neighbourhood Environmental Teams (NETs) and Customer First Centre (CFC) stepped up and supported our customers like never before.

2849 hours of repairs resource hours were directed to dealing with the initial emergency response by our repairs operatives;

Housing Officers provided an additional 150 hours support out-of-hours to ensure our customers' needs were met;

NETs provided 123.5 hours out-of-hours support allocated to our winter response through December;

and the CFC dealt with unprecedented demand via telephone calls and emails from our customers, including almost 6000 calls handled during the peak week of impact, 12 - 16 December.

Staff worked long shifts to ensure our customers were supported. They ensured everyone was safe and well and had the appropriate tools and materials to carry out work to support our customers.

The NETs provided support to our housing and repairs teams by delivering temporary heaters, providing energy top ups and clearing homes of flood water. One NETs colleague said: "We just did what we had to do to ensure customers were safe in the immediate emergency situation".

The initial emergency response was followed by a recovery phase during January and February 2023 and saw Wheatley Homes South being recognised as a key member of the Dumfries and Galloway Resilience Group.

Our staff visited almost 2000 customers who had been impacted by heating breakdowns, frozen pipes or subsequent burst pipes across of region and followed up contact with customers displaced from their homes.

Around 50 Wheatley Homes South customers were displaced from their homes and accommodated in decant accommodation, hotels/B&Bs, with family and friends or, where specialist type accommodation was required, in temporary accommodation.

Customers from the worst affected properties were prioritised for decant accommodation. Where properties required minimal works to rectify the issues, repairs colleagues worked closely with housing staff to identify properties and prioritise the work to support our customers to return home as quickly and effectively as possible.

Our housing teams also worked closely with our customers to identify any support needs and utilised our wraparound support services to assist. They provided emotional and practical support to customers, including clothing, food and emergency items to support customers through the initial days of being displaced from their homes.

We worked closely with Scottish Power and Scottish Water to facilitate initial investigations and 'make safe' procedures. We also arranged for carers to attend at decant/emergency accommodation to ensure customers ongoing support needs were addressed.

## Outcomes and achievements

Our staff worked around the clock to minimise the impact on our customers. Many gave up annual leave and committed to additional hours to ensure support was in place for customers.

As one family said: "I just wanted to thank the housing officers and staff that came off their new year holidays to support the residents of Barrasgate who all lost everything they owned. Everyone was terribly upset, and they were so compassionate and helpful. The destruction from the water was unbelievable and not easy for staff to see people's belongings floating in water."

Housing staff carried out almost 2000 visits throughout January and February, ensuring all repairs

were completed and customers were safe, warm and secure in their homes.

Our Customer First Centre dealt with almost 6000 calls between 12 and 18 December, acting as a first point of contact while offering practical support and directing calls quickly and effectively and repairs colleagues worked tirelessly to complete works in our customers' homes without delay.

Wheatley Group's Executive Team spent time with the staff who supported our customers through this period and heard how our staff were able to exceed customer expectations at a time of such challenging demands.

# Wheatley Group's Customer First Centre Team

## Wheatley Group



## Statement of support

Wheatley Group is Scotland's leading housing, care, and property-management organisation and one of the UK's best-accredited organisations. It comprises four Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), a care organisation and a commercial organisation. In addition to these, the Group also has a joint venture with City Building (Glasgow).

The Group owns or manages over 93,700 homes and deliver award-winning services to over 210,000 people across Scotland, including approximately 7500 care customers. Wheatley employs almost 3000 people directly and a further 2000 as joint owners of one of Scotland's largest repairs and maintenance companies, City Building (Glasgow). Group subsidiaries are united by a common commitment to excellence in all they do and a joint mission in 'Making Homes and Lives Better' for the people we work for and the communities in which they live.

Our 'more than bricks and mortar' approach means we provide a range of responsive internal 'wraparound' services to help our customers lead better lives 24/7.

Our team of Advisors are not only trained on internal services but have also undergone suicide prevention training as we see a rise in calls related to customer

wellbeing. Staff are then able to support customers and refer them to appropriate agencies at the point of crisis.

In 2021, Wheatley Group created a new operating model. The new model saw a fundamental change to our approach with the creation of a CFC. The CFC was created to be the primary route for customers to contact us. Through the CFC, we offer a variety of channels including telephone, webchat, email and webforms. Telephony remains the most significant channel for customer contact. The CFC was designed to ensure that our locality staff such as Housing Officers, are even more visible and active in the communities they serve. In establishing the CFC, it was envisioned that over 90% of customer queries could be resolved by CFC staff.

There CFC serves customers across the group:

- Wheatley Homes Glasgow
- Loretto
- Wheatley Homes East
- Wheatley Homes South
- Lowther
- Wheatley Care

In creating the CFC in December 2021, Wheatley Group has doubled the resources available to service our customers to 200 FTE. In the first year there has been c1,000,000 calls from and to customers.

In addition to increasing Customer Service Advisors, two specialist teams were also created to be available to our Advisors and customers alike, helping to support more complex interactions that relate to complex tenancy issues, owner/factoring issues. The creation of these teams was to ensure we provided outstanding customer service, with the knowledge to resolve 90% of contacts during the customers first contact.



The Team have proven to be crucial for their customers, whether that be supporting with simple enquiries and transactions, to providing support to customers with more complex needs.

As the first point of contact, the CFC is critical in delivering high customer satisfaction. This year they introduced My Voice, a customer satisfaction and sentiment tool which sought immediate real-time feedback from customers contacting the CFC. Asked to rate aspects of the service, they have maintained results of over four out of five since launch, with an

improving trend as we expand the use of the My Voice approach.

Our customers said the following about the CFC:

'I spoke to a girl named Jodie who was very helpful, and very patient. She talked me through my query explaining everything to me. I was very happy with service.'

'Well, every time a call Wheatley group to get repairs done, there always so pleasant caring and very helpful, sometimes you get a wee chat which is nice, so a think the service is fabulous'

## Outcomes and achievements

My Voice Feedback:

Launched in January 2023, our My Voice customer feedback averaged 4.2 out of 5, rising from 4 in January to 4.3 in March.

Call Volume:

Through 2022/23, our CFC handled over 804,000 inbound calls. Our new approach allowed us to answer 76% of these within 30 seconds.

We also achieved an excellent 58-second average call waiting time across the year which helps us to ensure a low call abandonment rate of under 5%.

We also ensured staff were empowered to take the time required to resolve the enquiry, achieving 89% First Contact Resolution.

When including cases passed to our Specialist Teams, over 92% of contacts were resolved within the wider CFC model.

Impact on Housing Officer Role:

By being able to answer customer enquiries, Housing Staff visit numbers increased from 8,313 in April 2022 to 14,743 in March 2023 - with over 105,000 visits carried out across the year.

Wheatley Homes Glasgow Deputy Director Charli Griffin said: 'The new CFC model has made a significant contribution to answering customer enquiries and allowing our Housing Officers to spend more time with our customers in their homes and communities.'

# Housing Access Team

Fife Council

Partnership organisations: Fife Housing Register Partners, Third Sector



## Statement of support

The Project was created following a Sheriff Court Judgement which meant that 636 statutory temporary tenancies were legally secure tenancies leaving the local authority with no temporary accommodation and at risk of significantly breaching statutory duty.

The Project Team came together within the Housing

Access Team to prepare a 12 month people led plan to 'normalise' tenancies and rebuild temporary accommodation. This was developed in partnership between a number of teams within the Council and RSLs with stock in the Area, overseen by a Heads of Service Task Group with links to the strategic RRTP Programme Board to transform homelessness services. The Programme also influenced the Fife Housing Register Management Executive and encouraged the Partnership to change their terms of reference to take a broader focus across housing access and increase contributions to the prevention and resolution of homelessness. The Partnership are responsible for the management of over 40,000 properties as well as a range of other statutory and non-statutory activity.

The project was based in a time where the Council had just implemented a completely new frontline housing options structure and in the process of making significant changes to temporary accommodation services in response to a range of legal changes. The Council had also recently disbanded a PSP arrangement with voluntary sector services and re-commissioning over £8m of housing support and homelessness services. This was in addition to the well



documented pressures on housing supply, housing access and housing system challenges the have been highlighted in the SHR Thematic Study and the SOLACE, CoSLA and ALACHO Pressures Report.

The small team worked directly with housing customers, service partners and advocacy agencies to help housing / homelessness customers to remain in their homes with help where needed - arranging physical and other forms of support where required. This meant no further transition for vulnerable households and help to build settled, sustainable tenancies in communities they had settled into.

Where current placements within temporary accommodation were not suitable, a case

management approach was taken to arrange moves to more suitable tenancies with help. All moves were co-ordinated to ensure that needs were fully met with any support requirement met through a co-ordinated approach between various organisations and services.

The Programme was so successful that it has been discussed with the Housing Minister and senior Scottish Government officials with a view to rolling out the best practice and lessons learned at a national level. Reports were also provided to Housing Options Hubs and the Temporary Accommodation Task and Finish Group to inform the recommendations to the Homeless Prevention Strategy Group.

## Outcomes and achievements

Between May 2022 and June 2023 the Team adopted a people led approach to:

Enable over 400 temporary tenancies to be flipped to permanent tenancies allowing homelessness customers to remain in their homes with practical support and no further transition

Arrange moves for over 200 customers where the temporary tenancy was not suitable due to size, health or other needs in an environment of extremely constrained housing supply and welfare support

Managed 18 formal appeals to ensure full customer satisfaction

Work with housing management teams within the Council and RSL partners to identify replacement temporary accommodation and bring these into use at pace

Manage a very limited number of appeals and advocacy responses to find practical solutions for customers. There were no legal challenges.

Develop legacy processes and arrangement to provide a platform for future Rapid Rehousing activity with plans to upscale tenancy flipping as rapid rehousing by default for all homeless customers

Installed a new temporary accommodation management team and housing management systems to comply with legal requirements

Provide input at national level to inform rapid rehousing arrangements across the country.

# YOUNG ACHIEVER IN HOUSING

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

## Becky Clarke

Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association



### Statement of support

Becky joined Hanover in 2014 as Administrative Assistant and quickly became a highly valued member of the Asset Management team. Becky's role covers a wide variety of tasks, her primary goal being to deliver the adaptations programme and assist colleagues and customers with new build and remodelling functions.

In 2022, Hanover implemented an Adaptations Improvement Plan (AIP) aimed at improving time taken to complete medical adaptations for customers.

The AIP consisted of 18 action points covering wide-ranging remits including communication, data recording, finance, contractor performance and culture. Becky led on 16 of these points and

- implemented procedural changes to the internal monitoring and processing of adaptation referrals to minimise delays in getting those arranged;
- created template letters to keep customers updated on the progress of their adaptations;
- made adaptations data easily accessible to all Hanover staff so that enquiries could be addressed at first contact;
- negotiated a reduction in the number of days available for Contractors to complete adaptations works; and

- Recognised that the same few contractors were being used for lengthy jobs delaying other adaptations. She therefore arranged procurement of additional contractors to focus purely on adaptations works.

A 'people person' with outstanding communication skills, Becky engaged with various stakeholders throughout the improvement process and skilfully altered her approach to effectively suit the needs of contractors, colleagues, occupational therapists and customers. With this approach, Becky successfully obtained whole-hearted 'buy-in' from all in working towards a common goal.

Whilst working hard to improve the time taken to complete adaptations from a statistical standpoint, Becky's approach was very much focussed on the person and the benefits to individuals. Adaptations, however minor, make an important contribution to supporting older people and people with physical impairments to live safely, comfortably and independently at home. This is no better demonstrated by feedback from this customer in February 2023: -

"Hi Becky, I would just like to thank you for your support throughout the work. It's nice to feel that there are people that take so much pride in their work and make you feel like you're the only person she is taking care of. You kept in touch from beginning to end to make sure the work ran smoothly and when there was a problem with the floor, you had it sorted straight away. 10 out of 10 right across the board. If there were more people in the world that took so much pride, it might be better place. Thank you for the care you gave us and the quickness it was done."

Hanover has three Strategic Goals, one of which is 'Happy Customers', which encompasses the quality of their homes, the service they receive and how we engage with them. The feedback for Becky is a shining example of how easy it is to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction by showing a pleasant demeanour and expressing empathy. It also

demonstrates the difference Becky makes to the lives of individuals and acts as an inspiration to colleagues to meet and maintain the same level of customer service.

Clare Dodd, Head of Asset Management, commented: "Becky picked up the tasks and ran with them - no questions asked. She met the aims of the AIP and built

a great rapport with our contractors and tenants along the way."

Becky's significant contributions to the success of the AIP has shown her to be solution focussed with a real commitment to continuous improvement for Hanover and its customers. This brought her to the attention of the Executive Leadership Team who immediately thought of Becky for this prestigious award.

## Outcomes and achievements

Becky has -

- been central in reducing average completion time for medical adaptations by a staggering 66.6% from 117 days in 2021/22 to 39 days in 2022/23 (Hanover Staff Magazine "ON TARGET", June 2023) against a target of 90 days and peer group benchmark of 77 days;
- developed an information leaflet to assist customers in requesting adaptations works ("Adapting your home", 2023);
- provided the Executive Leadership Team with ongoing reassurance that the adaptations process is being managed in a professional and conscientious manner driven by excellence for customers and continuous improvement for Hanover while ensuring targets are achieved;
- Contributed to the review of the Adaptations Policy and development of standard work specifications to ensure all recommendations from occupational therapists are carried out.
- worked closely and consulted proactively with all stakeholders to remove delays and incorporate people's views and experiences in the process;
- Improved communication with customers through leaflets, template acknowledgement letters and personal phone calls;
- improved record keeping so that information is clear, relevant, accessible to colleagues and enables easy extraction of statistical information
- successfully stepped up to take on additional enhanced responsibilities to achieve the objectives of the AIM and support the wider work of the Asset Management team.

## Kath Menzies

### Fife Housing Group



### Statement of support

I began working with Kath around 5 years ago when she joined Link HA as a member of my team and I knew then she was to be a powerhouse in the sector. She embodied the values of CIH and on a daily basis worked passionately to improve processes in the workplace and her own continued improvement. I was impressed at her maturity, empathy and understanding for someone so young.

We both moved to new roles in 2021, she becoming a Housing Manager with Fife Housing Group. Since

then she has made huge endeavours to develop every aspect of her knowledge and experience - and all to give her the best possible opportunity to improve people's lives and the continued improvement of the sector and its performance. More than anything; she keeps in perspective, the importance of a person-centred approach to both tenancy management, and people management.

Kath is continually driven to be the best professional she can be and meets the criteria for being an inspiration to colleagues.

Currently, Kath leads a team of 12 in east Scotland in her full-time substantive post. In addition, and at age 28, she is employed as a Lecturer at Dundee and Angus College; and has a huge capacity to really impart passion and impact the current and future housing work-force of Scotland.

In her non-remunerated posts, she is a Board Member at Paragon Housing Association. This provides her with exposure for strategic learning but also allows her to really contribute to future housing provision in the community she lives in.

During the pandemic, Kath volunteered as an online Benefits Advisor of a Universal Credit support group,

seeing the impact of continued lockdown for her working tenant's income, she saw the strain on the support services available and sought to assist.

She has sat on the Prevention Commission; looking to create a legal duty to prevent homelessness in

Scotland; and is a former Change Lead member at Homeless Network Scotland. She is also a current Member Champion for the Chartered Institute of Housing.

## Outcomes and achievements

In her spare time, to better understand the asset and property element of the Housing Sector, she self-funding a HNC in Construction Management, which was two evenings a week for two years.

She was awarded an 'A' for this, this summer, straight off the back of her self-funded HNC in Management and Leadership.

In her early careers, Kath was so interested in the overlap between criminal and civil ASB cases that she became a Special Constable and volunteered for her local police force for 3 years.

This year, Kath - while working, teaching and studying, lead her team in the successful completion and handover of 49 new-build properties in Kirkcaldy, in Fife. The seamless handover of any new-development

is not without its obstacles, but Kath managed this with a team of colleagues who feel valued and supported by their young manager.

Kath, together with a colleague, has recently given the leading presentation for their Group colleague conference. To lead with influence, integrity and conviction is a lifelong adventure and Kath's journey has just begun.

'Not everything that can be measured counts and not everything that counts can be measured' - and while Kath celebrate her successes in terms of career milestones - her biggest achievement, is that she can and does make people's lives better - whether that's colleagues or customers, the capacity to change lives in this sector, is not lost on her.

# Shannon McDonagh

## Wheatley Homes Glasgow



### Statement of support

From a young age Shannon was destined for a career in housing.

She knew she belonged working in a profession where she could help others.

Following the separation of her parents, Shannon, her mum and sister moved to a housing association tenancy. Shannon has often spoken about the vital role her mum's housing officer had in supporting them, helping improve their lives, and how this inspired her ambition to work in housing.

Aged 15, Shannon, sadly, lost her dad who died following struggles with alcoholism. Despite the difficulties and heartache Shannon faced at such a young age, she did not let this hold her back, and, if anything, was even more determined to pursue her

career in housing.

Shannon embarked upon her housing career, joining Wheatley Group's apprenticeship programme, supporting various teams, building her network with her infectious enthusiasm.

Early in her apprenticeship, Shannon joined the newly-formed Wheatley Foundation - Wheatley's charitable trust helping disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals living in Wheatley communities.

Lynne Mitchell, Director of Wheatley Foundation, recalls the impact Shannon made as part of this team:

"Shannon was a great asset to the small team as they created and developed processes and programmes that are still key to the Foundation in 2023. Shannon was keen to learn and be involved in how the Foundation would support customers and always with a beaming smile on her face".

Completing her Business Administration qualification early, and with a real desire for continuous learning, Shannon undertook her CIH qualification. Soon she joined Wheatley's busy Customer First Centre where her passion, enthusiasm, and commitment quickly made her an invaluable member of the team and secured her a permanent position.

During this time Wheatley introduced Web Self Service - an online service empowering customers to access services and solutions online. Embracing and excited by this change, Shannon became a 'Web Self Service Champion', promoting and demonstrating the service to customers and colleagues.



An exceptional ambassador for Wheatley and the profession, Shannon is also a valued colleague. A real team player, Shannon always offers to help colleagues with tasks outwith her own workload.

Colleagues describe Shannon as “driven, motivated and never scared to take on a challenge” as well as “super bubbly, positive and always there for everyone”.

With her positive attitude it was not long before Shannon secured her current role as housing officer, where she has been working as part of a wider team in one of Scotland's largest regeneration projects.

Shannon is one of two housing officers leading on a rehousing strategy, overseeing the rehousing of 600 tenants as part of the £73 million regeneration project.

Shannon has sensitively supported tenants through every step of their rehousing journey, from giving sound advice and guidance, establishing their personal housing needs, identifying a new property matching these individual needs, to supporting the transition to their new property.

Working on this high-profile project, Shannon has shown true dedication, whilst demonstrating key interpersonal skills, often going above and beyond ensuring the customer journey is as seamless as possible: from helping customers pack, facilitating removals, ensuring everyone is settled in their new home to even putting up shelves!

Feedback from tenants supported by Shannon have been emotive, and testament to Shannon's compassion and commitment in delivering excellent customer service:

“My new property is exactly what I was looking for. I can't thank you enough for your help and patience”

“You are amazing...thank you so much for finding my dream home...you have literally changed my life.”

“Thank you for helping me find this beautiful home. I really appreciate the support you have given me and my son”.

## Outcomes and achievements

Shannon has: raised her profile as an enthusiastic, passionate housing professional, building her network and excellent reputation;

contributed to the development of Wheatley Foundation processes and programmes, which are still key to this day;

championed change and empowered customers to engage and self-serve with Wheatley online during the launch of our Web Self Service;

taken an integral role in Wheatley's largest regeneration programme, supporting the rehousing strategy of 600 tenants;

supported the creation, growth and development of a tenant focus group, the key engagement vehicle in regeneration plans;

been committed to learning and self-improvement; and shown an encouraging example of career progression and commitment to housing as a profession.

With rehousing almost complete, Shannon continues to play an important role in the regeneration project, engaging with local residents, schools and stakeholders ensuring customers are at the heart of the plans.

In everything she does, Shannon strives for the very best outcomes for customers and colleagues.

What is unique about Shannon is the way she appreciates her wider network, taking time to ensure any successes or compliments are shared with all the other people and teams that are involved. She truly exemplifies what it is to be a housing professional.

# Daniel Cairns

South Lanarkshire Council



## Statement of support

Daniel has been a Housing Assistant within the Homeless Access and Assessment Service (HAAS) since August 2021. During this time, he has demonstrated creativity and innovation to finding solutions for households presenting to the local authority as homeless. An example of this was assisting with the development and implementation of a new Out of Hours Service by process mapping handover procedures and working with the project team to ensure a smooth transition to an external provider.

Daniel is the handover point within the local authority since this function has gone external and during the initial period of transition, was instrumental in developing ideas and solutions to not only improve service user journeys but also to improve relationships across both teams and the logistical challenges of handing over such a service. This included developing templates to improve communication. Furthermore, Daniel is always mindful of the importance of continuing to develop and improve services in the pursuit of excellence. He does this by identifying areas where we could be more efficient or where he thinks there is a way something can be done to improve service user journey or relationships with our partners. An example of this is in improving service

user experience and costs to the council in relation to use of taxis to ensure service users arrive safely at their accommodation. Daniel is an inspiration to colleagues and our service users. He is always kind, helpful and willing to go the extra mile and is an exceptional colleague to have within the team.

Daniel exceeds expectations and the requirements of his role on a daily basis and has often used his initiative to take the lead in finding housing solutions in complex cases or in difficult situations, particularly after office hours when he goes above and beyond to help our service users to ensure their needs are met with as little inconvenience and anxiety as possible.

Daniel has excellent communication, recording and monitoring skills and has developed and implemented a number of pilot initiatives such as the Bed and Breakfast daily monitoring and Out of Hours daily updates which have resulted in improved communication, better service delivery and the ability to understand our service user needs, as well as monitoring of trends and acting on the evidence now available.

Above all, Daniel is an extremely pleasant, hardworking and friendly young person who goes out of his way to help colleagues and service users. A colleague from another team recently said 'Daniel is always very helpful and assists with any enquiry, he will use his initiative to solve problems and always finds a solution. Nothing is too much trouble for Daniel, he recently went above and beyond to assist a wheelchair user find accommodation in an emergency, involving him staying on late until arrangements were in place.

Daniel is very friendly and approachable, and team members always have positive things to say about him and how he supports them with finding accommodation for our cases, even in these challenging times with an increase in homelessness. He is proactive with moving cases on from Bed and Breakfast to more suitable accommodation which supports the local offices'.

## Outcomes and achievements

Over the past two years Daniel has contributed to the successful development and implementation of the central Homeless Access and Assessment Service. He has achieved an excellent knowledge and understanding of homelessness services, developed positive relationships with both area teams and housing support providers and assisted countless households to have a positive experience when contacting the service by ensuring they receive the best advice and information as well as access to crisis accommodation.

Over the past two years Daniel has developed his skill set and self-belief to become a fantastic mentor

to newer members of staff and takes a lead role in training them and helping to develop their skills and confidence in the role. In addition to this, Daniel has excellent IT skills and has been instrumental in developing systems that are more efficient and effective for monitoring and recording information to enable improved reporting. He is a real asset to the team.

Daniel is extremely well thought of throughout the service and has demonstrated his 'can do' positive approach to challenging and complex tasks. He always looks for a solution and is keen to take on new tasks and learn new functions.

# Adam Brown

C~urb Property Management, part of Link Group



## Statement of support

Adam Brown began his career as a Graduate Trainee in Link in 2017 after getting a taste for the lettings industry as an inventory clerk and gaining leadership skills teaching English in China. Since then, Adam has made a big impact in the housing world. C~urb Property Management, part of Link Group, is lucky to have Adam in the business.

His first role involved finding solutions across the lettings and finance teams to comply with the Letting Agent Code of Practice. Not only did he use his initiative to create an action plan, he worked collaboratively to implement a raft of new procedures on time, alongside his Letwell qualification in Letting Agency Management via the CIH and Landlord Accreditation Scotland.

Adam's second role was in Sales & Marketing, supporting the shared equity team to reach out to those in need of an affordable home across the country.

Having then successfully gained a role as a Property Management Officer in the Lettings team, Adam's innovative approach to problem solving came to the fore during the pandemic. He helped create a digital group sign up and video with useful information for tenants, to make socially distanced private tenancy

sign ups possible. This ensured tenant information was accessible to all, for large scale new-build development handovers, throughout the pandemic.

Adam's flexibility in the face of unforeseen issues is a real strength. For example he volunteered to cover a Private Sector Leasing Housing Officer role at short notice, ensuring services continued for vulnerable homeless people at a time of need.

In October 2022 Adam stepped into his first line management role, taking on maternity cover for the Housing Sales & Marketing Officer. Adam was well placed to be the mentor and line manager for two new Graduate Trainees who have continued to thrive under his leadership. During this time Adam completed Management training and was a source of inspiration not only to his team but also the wider management team who benefited from his taking the initiative to present his 'practical takeaways' for management to share his learning. On top of this, Adam recently became a dad, and has almost doubled the office consumption of coffee!

Adam contributes to the Scottish Government's affordable housing supply targets across the whole of Scotland by marketing the LIFT Open Market Shared Equity scheme. More people than originally expected have benefited from funding this year, thanks to Adam's innovation and leadership of the trainees supporting him. He quickly settled in ensuring the wealth of experience imparted before he took up the maternity cover was put to full use. Households in Dunbeg, Oban have also benefited from Adam's approach to partnership working with local letting agency and West Highland Housing Association to handle New Supply Shared equity sales and marketing.

Reaching out to more Private Sector Leasing landlords in Edinburgh has helped Adam alleviate homelessness by gaining extra properties for people in immediate need, via the private rented sector. Last year 86 more homes were added thanks to Adam and the team's innovative ideas on digital and print marketing.

## Outcomes and achievements

In just over 6 years, the impact of Adam's work includes:

Raising awareness of affordable home ownership across Scotland for the LIFT Open Market Shared Equity scheme. Delivered by Link Shared Equity on behalf of the Scottish Government, it contributes to affordable housing supply targets. Adam's evidence based approach to evaluating impact and setting marketing strategy led to web hits rising 474% following the January to March 2023 multi channel marketing campaign and people benefiting than originally anticipated. Empowering graduate trainees to transform social media and branch out to Instagram was part of this success.

Delivering services to private tenants through C~urb Lettings, a subsidiary of Link Group, leading on compliance with the Letting Agent Code of Practice.

Alleviating homelessness through the Private Sector Leasing scheme in Edinburgh, - covering a housing officer role and now in marketing to expand the supply of homes for those in need. An extra 86 homes were added last year.

Adam's impact on tenants, other service users and staff has been outstanding. Always open to feedback and keen to develop his skills, he's described a "an inspiration" to graduate trainees, colleagues and management in C~urb Property Management and Link Shared Equity.

# Grant McManus

## Kingdom Group



### Statement of support

Grant McManus is an exceptional person. He excelled through a three year graduate training programme with Kingdom that he recently completed and has developed a burgeoning professional reputation. During the programme he received training and development within Kingdom and quickly became a highly valued member of the team, leaving an indelible positive impression on his colleagues.

On successful completion of his traineeship Grant secured a permanent position as a Senior Project Officer in our Capital Investment Team.

Grant has played a key role in helping deliver our ambitious new build affordable housing programme. Transitioning from a Graduate Trainee to a Senior Project Officer seamlessly. Part of this personal development has seen him emerge as a leader, both as a project manager and a line manager.

"Grant is great to work with and is an excellent communicator as my line manager. He always supports me and encourages my growth and listens to my ideas and solutions. He takes the time to discuss any matters with me and has a natural strength in applying feedback. He is a valued contributor in our team and has an admirable work ethic which sets a huge example for me."

"One of Grant's key strengths is that he always embraces opportunities to learn new skills and to work on innovative projects - no matter how daunting. The knowledge he has gained through this has proved to be a huge asset to our team. I have always found Grant to be a very friendly, kind and supportive team member, he is always willing to step up and provide support to others whenever needed."

Grant has an aptitude for customer engagement and develops positive relationships that are keenly valued by customers, contractors and consultants that he works with.

"Grant demonstrated from as far back as his graduate position that he had complete dedication to serve the Association and progress his career in development to the highest standard.

Over the last few years it has been a pleasure to witness Grant growing in confidence and gaining experience to allow progression into the Senior role he demonstrates today.

I hope Grant appreciates personally that through hard work he is very well respected in his current role and is certainly an asset to the organisation."

Dougie Herd, Joint Managing Director, Campion Homes

Grant has stepped beyond his primary project management role, he contributed to the development and roll out of Scotland's Housing Network's Value for Money tool which is used nationwide. Played an active role in the University of Stirling's Digital Inclusion work that will help shape the future of the housing sector. He has also presented at a number of conferences on subjects including young people in housing, Kingdom's Graduate trainee scheme and most recently at the SHARE Inspiring Leadership Conference.

"I first met Grant as part of the Investors in Young People assessment for Kingdom. Grant stood out as a modest, yet confident and committed Young Man, who took part passionately and modestly in discussions without any prompting, sharing his views on how best to attract, develop and retain young graduates within the Sector.

I was really inspired to hear about his graduate projects and his involvement in developing a value for money tool which is now being used within the wider sector. It was from this discussion that I was keen to involve Grant to support me at my speaking slot at the SHARE inspiring leadership conference.

Despite some initial nerves which never showed, Grant delivered a fantastic presentation with passion and impact and enabled the audience within the sector to hear the impact that Young People can make when they are empowered to make a difference. Grant is a great asset to Kingdom and to the sector."

Nicola Dillon, Consultant



## Outcomes and achievements

- Completed PGDip Housing Studies
- Completed a three year Graduate Training programme with Kingdom Housing Association
- As a result of his outstanding track record Grant secured a permanent contract with KHA in our Capital Investment Team
- Delivered 60 flats at Kingdom Housing Associations first dementia friendly development
- Project lead on KHA's Passive House Standard project at Gaudry delivering 30 complex and highly efficient Homes
- Supported and contributed to Scottish Housing Networks implementation of their Value for Money Tool
- Grant is playing a key role in delivering against KHA's Net Zero Strategy. Delivering a project of 84 Homes with a District Heating System. One of the largest of its kind in the region
- Delivered sessions and presentations internally and externally on the traineeship programme, Kingdom's new build programme and at a leadership conference.
- During his trainee programme Grant completed work placements with third party organisations on projects that have influence across the sector including with
- University of Stirling on digital inclusion, and with Scotland's Housing Network on developing a value for money assessment toolkit to allow better comparison across the sector

# LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

This award is for an individual who has consistently gone the extra mile during their career in housing and made a lasting impact on the sector.

## Alan Russell

### Hillcrest Homes



### Statement of support

After 27 years as a board member for Hillcrest Homes and five years as their chairpersons, Alan stepped down this year. He leaves a lasting legacy through his voluntary role as well as his 40 year employment with Fife Council.

It began in 1982 when he joined Kirkcaldy District Council as a trainee Housing Manager. Shortly after, he enrolled in a post-graduate diploma in Housing, and became a member of the Institute of Housing. By 1983 he'd been promoted to Area Housing Officer, responsible for a patch of 2,000 homes.

In 1985, Alan completed his diploma and was promoted to Senior Housing Officer at Dundee District Council, where he created a unique housing solution for young people. In 1987, he was promoted to run the Homeless Persons Unit. Under Alan's auspices, an approach to supporting the homeless was developed across the wider city. He also pushed to further understand homelessness and how best to support those affected through research with Heriot Watt University.

Through the 90's, as Group Manager at North East Fife DC, Alan sought to address fuel poverty, securing special funding for innovative energy-efficiency measures through a successful bid to the Scottish

Office. This pioneering project supported the most vulnerable in the community, with analysis undertaken by the British Research Establishment endorsing his approach. In 1994, Alan promoted the National Home Energy Rating system to fairly allocate resources and prioritise energy-efficiency work. He also set up the first "Heat Lease" scheme in Scotland - an innovative initiative where modern heating systems were installed under a lease agreement, freeing up capital for other housing investment. As Chair of Hillcrest, he actively supported Hillcrest's energy advice team, which secured special funding for emergency top-ups for vulnerable people at risk of falling off-supply. This significant project was recognised by a CIH Excellence in Innovation award in 2018.

Alan wrote the first Quality Manual (BS5750) for social housing management, leading to the formation of a working group focusing on staff training to deliver efficiency and smarter working. Throughout his career, Alan has championed organisational quality and efficiency, and this later saw him spearhead Hillcrest's business transformation project to futureproof and deliver a more streamlined service, including specialist personal development training for all line managers.

Creating harmonious communities was also a key ambition for Alan, who was appointed Chair of the multi-agency Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Task Group at Fife Council. He led on introducing a more effective response for those affected including the Night Time Noise Team, community mediation, family intervention services and more. Alan then integrated the group's ASB activities into a wider community approach after being appointed as Chair of Fife's Safer Neighbourhoods Task Group, working closely with Fife Constabulary to develop an analytical approach to ASB, and helping established the Safer Neighbourhoods Centre to bring together all agencies and teams in one place.

As Hillcrest Chair, Alan presided over securing a substantial increase in development funding resulting

in Hillcrest's biggest ever house-building programme, which saw the organisation ranked 3rd in the UK for new affordable homes delivered.

Many firsts for Hillcrest have happened under Alan's leadership. Hillcrest's first ever permanent charity shop was opened in Dundee with funds from sales going towards Hillcrest Futures support services. Hillcrest's first digital app and newsletters followed closely

behind. Hillcrest's first super-low carbon housing development is also currently underway. Alan's tenure covered the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the cost of living crisis and the announcement of the rent freeze - all completely unexpected events. He has led the organisation through these unsettling times and supported Hillcrest to remain as one of the leading organisations in the sector.

## Outcomes and achievements

- Initiated use of scatter flats (in place of hostels) as temporary homeless accommodation (1987).
- Organised a multi-agency conference to mark the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (1987)
- Appointed homelessness adviser to Dundee YMCA (1993).
- Elected Fellow of the CloH 1993
- Appointed Chair of the Gypsy Traveller Working Group in Fife (1998). Spearheaded a move to include Travellers' representatives on the group and coordinated with Save the Children to ensure Travellers' children had full access to support, education and health.
- Played a leading role nationally promoting carbon monoxide poisoning safety measures (1999-2000).
- Appointed to the Fife Drugs Forum in 1999, becoming vice-chair in 2008.
- Appointed as Hillcrest board member (1999).
- Initiated and developed Fife's private landlord licensing scheme following the introduction of new legislation.
- Set up Fife's award-winning Empty Homes Team.
- Set up Better Homes Exhibition in 2011 in Glenrothes (still operating to this day). Shows tenants what improvements are planned for their homes, such as new boilers, windows etc.
- As chair of FIRST Ltd, promoted the use of residential rehabilitation (2016)
- Listed as one of only three Scottish entries in the 2017 "Who's Who in Local Authority Housing Development".
- Elected Chairperson of Hillcrest (2017).

## Craig Stirrat

### Grampian Housing Association



#### Statement of support

Craig Stirrat (Craig) is Chief Executive of the Grampian Group comprising Grampian Housing Association and its two subsidiaries, Lets Choose Leasing and TLC Housing Maintenance. As a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) he is a role model for upholding the CIH professional standards. In the late 1990s he established the CIH course at Aberdeen College where he was a part-time lecturer.

Craig's housing career has spanned 40 years. He started as a student intern with Fountainbridge Housing Association prior to a trainee housing manager post with Kirkcaldy District Council. He held various housing management, strategic planning and asset management positions with Aberdeen City Council (ACC), finally as Head of Housing and Adult Care Service. Subsequently he was Director of the Built Housing Environment and Director of Housing at Fife Housing Group before joining Grampian Housing Association in 2014 as Director of Business Development. He was promoted to his current role as Grampian Group CEO in 2022.

Craig is passionate and committed to driving positive change in the sector. He was instrumental in developing the scale of the homeless service in Aberdeen by setting up a young people's homeless service and leaving care/next step housing project. He also supported the establishment of Aberdeen Foyer (a charitable organisation addressing youth homelessness/unemployment).

With an impressive history of firsts, Craig instigated the need for major regeneration of deck access flats

in Lower Buckhaven, Fife. While at ACC he introduced the anti-social behaviour helpline, call-out and mediation services; introduced home energy ratings in the private house sales sector before it became law; led on the first combined heat and power network for multi-story flats; contributed to the improved image of council housing with rebranding as Good Apple Homes; led on the integration housing and health services improving collaboration with NHS Grampian around improved delayed discharges prior to Health & Social Care Partnerships being established; improved collaboration between developers and planning on delivery of section 75 planning gain to increase the supply of affordable housing. His first project at GHA was to re-establish its development programme increasing the stock from 3,300 to 3,800 and still increasing. He led Fife Housing Association to achieve EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) status.

Craig has become an ambassador for housing in Scotland. He served for over 10 years on the CIH Scotland Board culminating in becoming Chair of the Branch in 2009. He has also served on the UK HouseMark Board and the Scottish Advisory Board as well as on the Board of the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations.

He is an active member on LinkedIn advocating for housing and commenting on major issues affecting

housing, most recently about promoting the benefits of housing qualifications which has gained the interest of Scotland's new Housing Minister.

Craig continues to actively engage in the promotion of social housing by actively engaging in national housing events as a guest speaker at CIH, SFHA and other events on key issues. He also participates in many forums including the Scottish Government cross party working groups on architecture and more recently on housing.

He regularly contributes to SFHA and CIH campaigns. This has included GHA signing up to the "Make a Stand" pledge, created to encourage housing organisations to make a commitment to support people experiencing domestic abuse, and GHA becoming a member of WISH (Women In Social Housing).

In terms of driving change, Craig has refocused GHA to a back to basics social landlord, by leading colleagues to put tenants at the heart of service delivery through The Grampian Deal, a new customer experience initiative. This has involved reorganising the operating model, creating new job roles while establishing professionalism and improved conditions, including commitment to an academy of life-long learning.

## Outcomes and achievements

Craig's impressive history of firsts demonstrates that he has gone the extra mile during his career in housing. These comments from external stakeholders including the SFHA, CIH and HouseMark as part of 360 degree feedback further demonstrates that he has made a lasting impact on the sector and is ambassador for housing in Scotland:-

"Craig is a well-respected peer in the sector locally and further afield. He has a good manner and proactively engages with other organisations on a variety of aspects."

"Craig always combines local knowledge and interest with national issues so GHA is seen as a "go to" organisation for sector comment, involvement, representation and dialogue."

"Craig certainly champions GHA in a positive way and is always an advocate. His enthusiasm for the housing sector is always evident."

"Craig ensures that GHA's voice is heard but he also contributes to the sector voice which is important."

"Craig is participative, involved, visible and contributes well and often to the sector with professional insight."

"Craig's experience and sector knowledge is an asset to wider groups beyond GHA."

"Craig has a clear commitment to the sector and profession and goes out of his way to build relationships with others working across Scotland."



# Annette Finnan

South Lanarkshire Council



## Statement of support

After graduating from Glasgow University with a Masters in Geography, Annette began her career in housing when she joined Falkirk District Council in 1986. In 1988, she took up the post of Senior Housing Officer with Hamilton District Council.

Since local government re-organisation in 1996, Annette has held a variety of housing management roles at South Lanarkshire Council, delivering front line services to tenants and other customers.

Annette took up the post of Head of Housing Services in 2010, responsible for leading the strategic and operational delivery of housing services including housing, homelessness, community safety and development.

A founding member of Women In Scottish Housing, Annette has supported the vision of bringing together professional women, generating opportunity for everyone through shared experiences and an understanding of the value and power of networking.

Annette's passion for housing and the positive role housing makes to people underpinned her drive to ensuring staff were supported and empowered to carry out their roles to the highest standards and provide the best possible services to customers.

Annette encouraged and supported staff members to aspire beyond their roles and progress in their career. Sharon Egan, current Head of Housing Services commented, 'Annette championed the Resource Learning and Development Board, promoting and ensuring that there were opportunities for staff members at all levels to develop, whether through inhouse training, job experience or by obtaining professional qualifications.'

Annette co-chaired and served on the board of the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing

Officers for a number of years and played a key role in developing the profile of the Association. Working along with other members, she has influenced and shaped the development of policies, programmes and legislation to achieve shared objectives of local authority housing providers in Scotland. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, Annette actively led and promoted the sharing of good practice across local authorities.

Improving life chances of those in housing need have been at the heart of Annette's drive and commitment to reduce inequalities and promoting best practice in all areas of housing and homelessness.

During her career in housing, Annette's commitment to getting the best for customers has been uncompromising and is reflected at both a strategic and operational level.

Establishing and maintaining effective strong working relationships with partners and customers was also a key focus for Annette during her career. She fully recognised the value of effective partnership working arrangements. In particular, Annette valued the commitment shown by customers who gave their time to work with the council to help develop and improve services and ultimately improve life for those living in communities.

This is evident in the customer participation framework established and supported by Annette, which ensures that customers have a range of opportunities to influence the development and delivery of housing services. The approach Annette established to annual rent setting and service scrutiny are two examples of recognised good practice.

Jean Ramage, customer representative said 'Over the years I have known Annette she has inspired and encouraged tenants and other customers to become involved in customer participation. Annette actively supported customer groups to strengthen relationships with the council by working together to develop housing policies and services.'

Annette has also strongly supported local charities working in communities, with links to housing and homelessness. Over the years Annette has taken the opportunity to raise awareness of these organisations and the work they do and actively encouraged staff to fund raise and strengthen local links and partnership working.

Whilst Annette recently stepped down from her role, she has indeed left a lasting legacy that she can be immensely proud of.

## Outcomes and achievements

Through her work with Women in Scottish Housing, Annette has created a lasting legacy that women in the Scottish housing sector can be proud of and has promoted and encouraged female talent to remain in the sector while challenging gender inequality.

Annette's blend of personal and professional drive and commitment is testament to the range of high-performing, high-quality housing services that she led while Head of Housing Services and that continue to be delivered to local communities across South Lanarkshire.

This can be seen in many service areas, including; rent levels that continue to remain among the lowest across Scottish local authorities, a forward-thinking

approach to early intervention and prevention of homelessness and to ensuring homeless applicants access high quality services, supporting customer groups, in particular minority and ethnic communities, including Gypsy/Traveller residents to work closely with the council to influence and develop site masterplans.

The most recent customer satisfaction survey carried out in the final months before Annette retired from housing, identified that 91.9% of customers surveyed were satisfied with the overall level of housing service – an impressive achievement which reflects the commitment and strong leadership of Annette, who strived to deliver high quality services, even better.

# Margaret Waddell

## Grampian Housing Association



### Statement of support

Margaret Waddell (Margaret) was Business Improvement Manager with Grampian Housing Association (GHA) prior to her retirement in May 2023. With almost 38 years' service she was GHA's longest serving employee. Margaret joined GHA in 1985 as a graduate in the role of clerical assistant but showed considerable potential and subsequently held positions of Housing Officer, Housing Manager and Director of Housing, returning after maternity leave to a new roles of New Initiatives/Business Development Manager, latterly Business Improvement Lead. She is a Gold Medal winner of the Chartered Institute of Housing and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing.

In the early 1990s Margaret was instrumental in securing two large scale voluntary stock transfers for GHA. She realised that partnership working was the key to their success and enthusiastically pursued arrangements which also resulted in the legal formation of housing cooperatives. Margaret's command of the subject and her ability to answer difficult questions from genuinely worried and concerned tenants won her a great deal of respect among both tenants and housing professionals alike in

the North East of Scotland.

Margaret also became heavily involved in the formation of Aberdeen Foyer (a local charitable organisation addressing youth homeless/unemployment) by establishing Grampian as its housing partner.

Margaret's priority was always to provide services which really met the needs of tenants, particularly those who are facing difficult issues and challenges. She was committed to fairness and equity for all and had a real understanding of the impact of inequality and disadvantage on people's lives. She had a particular interest in financial inclusion, recognising that financial resilience and access to financial services were key to peoples' wellbeing and security.

The proof of Margaret's exceptional contribution is the number of successful projects she has been involved in developing and implementing for the benefit of tenants and communities. Margaret has made a difference by having the vision to generate ideas as the commitment and focus to see them through to completion.

Examples include:-

SMART (money advice project), a partnership of Registered Social Landlords for which Margaret was successful in securing funding from The Big Lottery for ten years. The project continues to help GHA tenants manage their money, provides debt counselling and advice about Welfare Benefit entitlement and budgeting. SMART proved particularly successful as over 7 years the project's Income Adviser achieved an outstanding financial gain of over £2.5 million in additional welfare benefits for clients. SMART has had the added benefit of reducing rent arrears.

ASSIST (housing support project), which in its fifteen year history has helped over 1,500 of the most vulnerable tenants (many with mental health issues)

of Grampian Housing Association to sustain their tenancies and live independently. ASSIST continues to have a huge impact on improving the lives of the people it supports.

Another highly successful example was Cash in Your Pocket where Margaret liaised with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) in identifying individuals who could potentially have unclaimed Benefit entitlements. This involved the secondment and management of staff from DWP as well as the recruitment and training of staff to administer the programme.

Margaret worked with Pathways, employability project to open up training and work opportunities for tenants as well as Grampian Women's Aid, securing office accommodation.

In addition she worked on jointly funded projects with CFINE (Community Food Initiatives in North East Scotland) bringing wider role funding, support to tenants and latterly a money advice service to its Foodbank.

In her role as Business Development Manager, Margaret was instrumental in setting-up Grampian's wholly owned subsidiary, TLC Housing Maintenance in 2017 which has had the effect of improving tenant satisfaction with their new bathroom and kitchen installations.

Margaret achieved the ILM Level 5 coaching qualification and most recently was the coach for GHA's prototype Neighbourhood Team, introducing a new operating model within the Association as well as setting up a new Business Improvement Team.

## Outcomes and achievements

Margaret's career was defined by a commitment to improving lives, tackling poverty and reducing inequality with a focus on financial inclusion which has improved the lives of many in the North East of Scotland.

The tenancy sustainment projects she established and which are referenced in this submission are now embedded in the support services offered by GHA to its tenants to help them sustain their tenancies.

"All of the initiatives in which Margaret partnered with CFINE have been concerned with disadvantaged, vulnerable, low income individuals, families and communities. As well as commitment and vision, Margaret consistently brought compassion and energy, consistently going 'above and beyond'. Margaret is very much deserving of recognition for this long, distinguished career always underpinned by her commitment to tackling poverty and promoting inclusion."

Dave Simmers

Former CEO, Community Food Initiatives North East

"Fundamentally, Margaret was always focused and passionate on doing the best for tenants, always mindful of the challenges that people less fortunate than others, face in life.

"This passion was at the fore when Margaret played a leading role over many years in the housing sector and third sector in developing, managing and/or supporting projects that helped people to manage their finances. She was highly respected for her work and excelled at partnership working."

Matthew Reid, former Business Development Manager, Langstane Housing Association.

# Michael Scott

## Osprey Housing



### Statement of support

Mike has been a Board member of Osprey Housing since 2006, leading the organisation as Chair since 2019.

He led the organisation through two transfer of engagements in the midst of the Covid pandemic bringing Osprey Housing Moray and Aberdeen Soroptimist Housing Society into Osprey Housing to formally become one organisation whilst motivating the team to sustain high performance and tenant satisfaction levels in challenging circumstances. This was a significant milestone for Osprey which strengthened our organisational future. In a pragmatic and forward thinking style Mike has contributed significantly to the positive changes for Osprey - all with continual improvement, sustainable growth and our culture being at the fore of his priorities.

He had a successful and impactful career in housing previous to his retirement - Mike spent almost 30 years in Local Government in Inverness, Angus and Aberdeen, nearly 25 as a Chief Officer, in various departments including Planning, Housing and Health & Social Care and at time of retirement was the Corporate Director of Community Services for Aberdeen City Council. Mike has since been involved in various voluntary Board positions including;

- Scarf
- Aberdeen Heat and Power (two social enterprise committed to tackling fuel poverty and energy efficiency)
- the Disabled Persons Housing Service (Aberdeen)
- NHS Grampian Board

He is currently on the Panel First-tier Tribunal for Scotland. He remains a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing and a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and continues to enjoy the support of a wide network of associates.

Whilst studying at Aberdeen University he sat on both the Committee for Union Management and the Student Representative Council during his attendance there - an early start to volunteering and being involved in shaping the way organisations improve. He further studied at Heriott Watt achieving a MSc in Town Planning of which his early career was developed - shaping the local communities in the North East of Scotland.

Mikes personal attributes make him an asset to not only our organisation but also the wider social and housing sectors with consistent passion for improving our communities. He has tirelessly given his time to the housing sector and to organisations that support wellbeing and our communities for the benefit of tenants and service users.

Robert Hepburn - former colleague at ACC/fellow Osprey Board member - Quote - 'Mike Scott is open and honest with a light touch management style with a creative organisational ability that allows all involved from staff to tenants and other interested parties to be involved and have their say. This resulted in excellent performance for Aberdeen City Council during his leadership and Osprey Housing at present with staff delivering services extremely well.'

Stacy Angus, Osprey CEO - Quote - 'Mike is an exceptional leader in an approachable and assured manner - this gives our leadership team and Board a high level of trust knowing that he leads with absolute integrity and transparency. In addition, the encouragement and support he has given me during my transition into role of CEO with his naturally mentoring approach has been invaluable to me. He is a fantastic role model - leading by example and our values.

Les Allan - Osprey Housing Vice Chair - Quote - Mike is a great leader. His knowledge of housing, built over many years and his ability to motivate board members and the leadership team combine to make sure everyone in our organisation give of their best. He promotes a very positive culture and a continuing search for excellence.



## Outcomes and achievements

Michael (Mike) Scott is the current Chairperson of Osprey Housing – his personal attributes make him an asset to not only our organisation but also the wider social and housing sectors with consistent passion for improving our communities in a variety of roles – always putting tenants first and a passion for sustainability. He is a legend in the sector in the north of Scotland.

Mike spent almost 30 years in Local Government in Inverness, Angus and Aberdeen, nearly 25 as a Chief Officer, in various departments including Planning, Housing and Health & Social Care. At the time of retirement was the Corporate Director of Community Services for Aberdeen City Council. Mike has since been involved in various voluntary Board positions including;

- Scarf Board
- Aberdeen Heat and Power Board (two social enterprises committed to tackling fuel poverty and energy efficiency)
- the Disabled Persons Housing Service (Aberdeen)
- NHS Grampian Board

He is currently on the Panel First-tier Tribunal for Scotland and Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing and a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

He has tirelessly given his time to the housing sector and to organisations that support wellbeing and our communities for the benefit of tenants and service users.

# SCOTLAND'S HOUSING FESTIVAL



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Housing  
Scotland

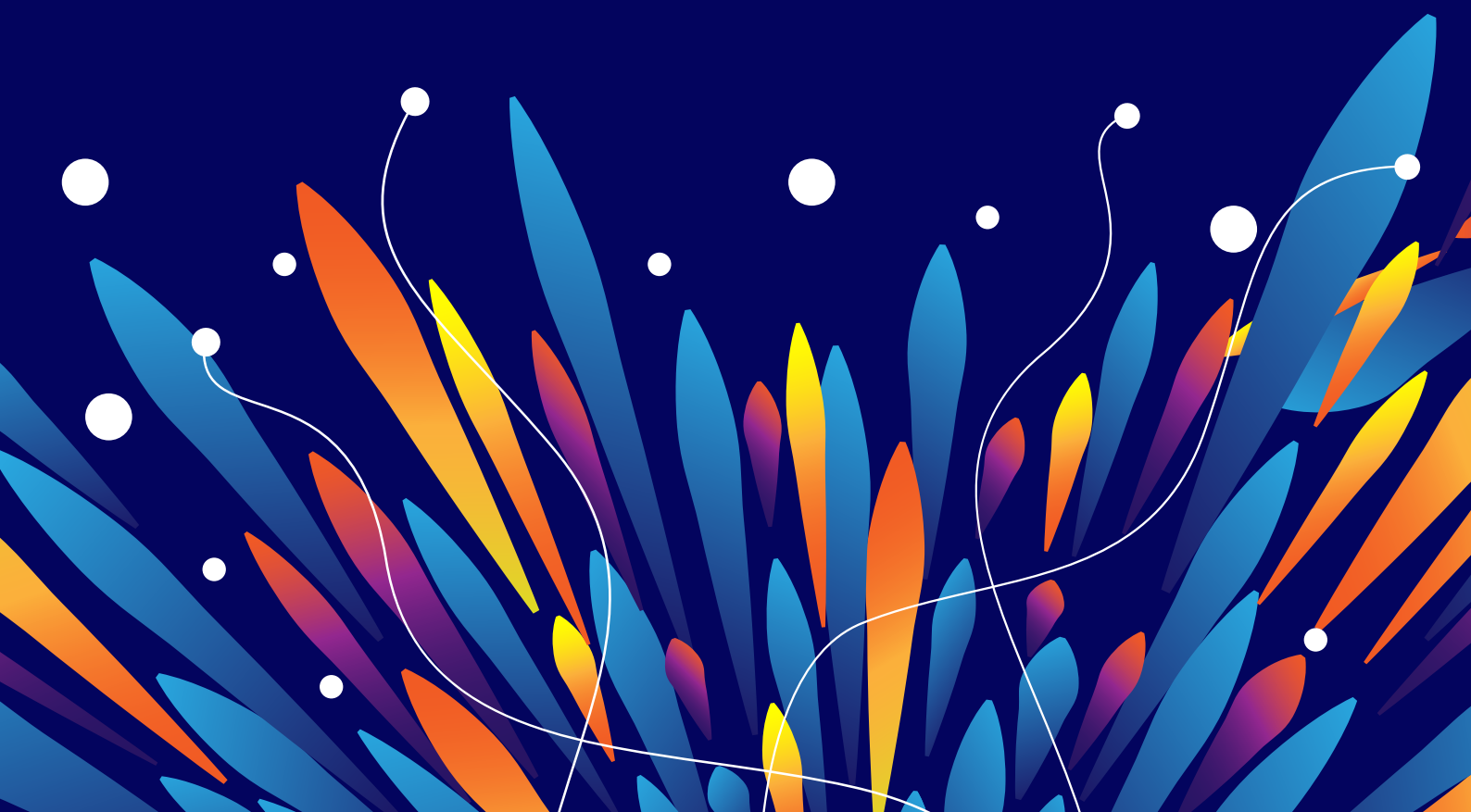
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# SCOTLAND HOUSING AWARDS 2023

## WINNERS

### Excellence in customer service

**Winner Project Title:** Wheatley Group's Customer Voice Programme

**Winner Organisation:** Wheatley Group

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Housing Co-op

Our tenants are paramount in everything we do

### Excellence in housing innovation

**Winner project title:** Book it, Track it, Rate it

**Winner organisation:** Wheatley Group

### Working in partnership

**Winner project title:** The Outreach Worker Project

**Winner organisation:** Places for People Scotland

**Partners:** Police Scotland Edinburgh Division, NHS Lothian and the Edinburgh Alcohol and Drugs Partnership

### Excellence in development for affordable housing

**Winner project title:** Primrose Place, Alloa

**Winner organisation:** Kingdom Housing Association

**Partners:** Clackmannanshire Council

### Excellence in tenant scrutiny

**Winner project title:** Your Voice Group

**Winner organisation:** Your Voice Group

**Partners:** Argyll Community Housing Association

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<p><b>Excellence in the private rented sector</b></p> <p><b>Winner project title:</b> PKC Lets &amp; Ukraine Landlord Offer</p> <p><b>Winner organisation:</b> Perth &amp; Kinross Council</p>	<p>Sponsored by:</p> 
<p><b>Excellence in regeneration and sustainability</b></p> <p><b>Winner project title:</b> North Sighthill Regeneration, Edinburgh</p> <p><b>Winner organisation:</b> City of Edinburgh Council</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> Anderson Bell Christie Architects</p>	<p>Sponsored by:</p> 
<p><b>Housing organisation of the year</b></p> <p><b>Winner project title:</b> Link Group at 60 - Sustainable Homes, Sustainable Communities, Sustainable Business</p> <p><b>Winner organisation:</b> Link Group</p>	<p>Sponsored by:</p> 
<p><b>Excellence in learning and development</b></p> <p><b>Winner project title:</b> Learning, Educating, Attaining, Recruiting and Nurturing (LEARN)</p> <p><b>Winner organisation:</b> Elderpark Housing Association</p>	
<p><b>Excellence in health and wellbeing</b></p> <p><b>Winner project title:</b> Heat and Eat Initiative</p> <p><b>Winner organisation:</b> Grampian Housing Association</p>	
<p><b>Housing-led approaches to ending homelessness</b></p> <p><b>Winner project title:</b> Naumann Initiative</p> <p><b>Winner organisation:</b> Kingdom Housing Association</p>	
<p><b>Excellence in communications</b></p> <p><b>Winner project title:</b> Transformative Communication to Engage Tenants, Communities and Staff</p> <p><b>Winner organisation:</b> Link Group</p>	<p>Sponsored by:</p> 
<p><b>Net zero in housing</b></p> <p><b>Winner project title:</b> ACHA Whole House Retrofit Project</p> <p><b>Winner organisation:</b> Argyll Community Housing Association</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> Procast Group</p>	<p>Sponsored by:</p> 
<p><b>Marion Gibbs award for equality in housing</b></p> <p><b>Winner project title:</b> Equality in Housing Podcast</p> <p><b>Winner organisation:</b> Housing Options Scotland</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence</p>	<p>Sponsored by:</p> 



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## Apprentice of the year

**Winner:** Amber Winton

**Winner organisation:** Hillcrest Homes

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## Excellence in leadership

**Winner:** Yvonne Baulk

**Winner organisation:** North Ayrshire Council

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## Housing team of the Year

**Winner project title:** Housing Access Team

**Winner organisation:** Fife Council

**Partners:** Fife Housing Register Partners, Third Sector

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## Young achiever in housing

**Winner:** Becky Clarke

**Winner organisation:** Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association

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## Lifetime achievement

**Winner:** Craig Stirrat

**Winner organisation:** Grampian Housing Association

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Congratulations to all our winners  
and thank you to our sponsors for  
supporting the event

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