



The Added Social Value of Social Landlords: A Case Study Report November 2016 edition

Collated by Alice Belotti

This is a sample collection of best practice examples of 'Housing Plus' services, i.e. community investment activities offered by social landlords to their tenants and sometimes the wider community, which go above and beyond their 'core' landlord function.

These case studies were cited by participants who attended the Housing Plus Academy launch event in November 2015, the first policy think tank of the Housing Plus Academy in January 2016, and the Thinking Ahead Group which was held in May 2016. Some of these activities are still ongoing, while others have been discontinued or are threatened by budget cuts.

This is far from being an exhaustive list. We know there are hundreds of other commendable community investment services provided by social landlords throughout the country, which have not been captured in this report.

The majority of the case studies listed in this report have been checked for factual accuracy and approved by the organisations that provided the information. However, we have not been able to check all the case studies, and we are aware that some information may need updating or amending, so please feedback to us with any additional information or any corrections contacting Alice Belotti on a.belotti@lse.ac.uk. We take full responsibility for any omissions, mistakes or misunderstanding.

Finally, if there is a Housing Plus service your organisation is offering to your community that you are particularly proud of and want to showcase to the wider public, please do send over the information, so that we can include it in the working paper. We particularly encourage you to send evidence on value for money.

LSE, November 2016

About the Housing Plus Academy

The Housing Plus Academy is a partnership between 16 leading social housing providers, the National Housing Federation, the Chartered Institute of Housing and the National Communities Resource Centre at Trafford Hall; and is supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the London School of Economics. It has been developed to promote knowledge exchange and participative learning among frontline staff and tenants of social landlords. The Academy tackles burning problems affecting both housing associations and local authority landlords today, particularly welfare reform, financial pressure, energy saving, work and skills, community enterprise, and resilience.

The Housing Plus Academy at Trafford Hall arose from a knowledge exchange programme run by LSE Housing and Communities between 2012 and 2015. Over 150 social landlords and around 500 practitioners, policy makers, community representatives, industry experts, and social housing tenants participated in residential think tanks at Trafford Hall and breakfast briefings at the London School of Economics to swap know-how between social housing staff at all levels, specialists, researchers and government, to help social landlords respond positively to austerity.

Acknowledgments

We want to thank in particular the participants who attended and contributed to the Think Tanks. We would also like to thank all the people who have fed back on the cases studies so far.

For more information about the Housing Plus Academy visit <http://www.traffordhall.com/housing-plus-academy/> or contact Philippa Meehan at p.meehan@traffordhall.com

The Housing Plus Academy aims to reflect the diversity of social housing, its staff, tenants and customers. We particularly welcome representatives from ethnic minority backgrounds, those with disabilities, all ages and particularly younger working age tenants. We encourage Tenant Management Organisations, Community-Based Housing Associations, Community Land Trusts, tenant co-operatives and smaller housing associations to join.

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1. Debt and Welfare Advice

Circle Housing Money

Social landlord	Circle Housing Group
Where	Leeds
Housing stock	66,000
Status	Ongoing
Project summary In November 2014 Circle Housing Group teamed up with Leeds City Credit Union to launch Circle Housing Money. The project is meant to incentivize customers and employees to access better, more flexible and more affordable financial products than the ones offered by high street banks and payday lenders. The aim is to help people improve their budgeting skills and keep them away from serious debt problems Through Circle Housing Money people can sign up for membership with the Credit Union, and access a wide array of services including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current account with pre-paid and direct debit card;• Regular savings plans to help with short-term and long-term saving;• Cheap personal loans of up to £15,000;• Flexible banking options to make budgeting easier. There are several benefits to accessing affordable finance. The personalised saving plans help budget for Christmas or other unplanned emergencies, so that people do not have to use their bank overdraft or other expensive borrowing products. Staying on top of the bills and not falling into rent arrears is made easier thanks to the opportunity to set up a separate bill paying account. The possibility of accessing affordable loans keeps customers away from 'loan sharks' and payday lenders charging extortionate interest rates. Members receive dividends at the end of the financial year as stakeholders of the co-operative.	
Outcomes and value for money The project has been very successful amongst Circle staff and customers, with high take-up rates. Within 6 months of its launch, Circle Housing Money had managed to sign up 537 (22%) Group employees, and over 200 customers to the credit union. Starting from April 2015, Circle has been running a comprehensive group-wide customer campaign which aims at getting the membership of the credit union up to 2,000 by March 2016.	

Housing, debt and welfare benefit advice – Shepherds Bush

Social landlord	Shepherds Bush Housing Group
Where	London
Housing stock	5,000
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project Summary</p> <p>London-based Shepherds Bush Housing Group (SBHG) provides free, impartial and confidential housing, debt and welfare advice to its residents through Staying First, a charity and social enterprise which is a subsidiary part of SBHG. Staying First also accept referrals for residents from three other neighbouring housing associations, namely Women’s Pioneer Housing, Catalyst Housing and Thames Valley Housing Association.</p> <p>A team of debt and welfare advisers help people struggling with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit problems - such as missing entitlements, sanctions, court proceedings etc.; • Debt and money issues; • Rent arrears. <p>They help them prioritise debts, liaise with creditors, budget their money better, access benefits and sort out their finances.</p> <p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>In the financial year 2014/15 alone, a total of 1,290 people received tailored support and financial advice. According to the CAN Invest model for measuring social value, the project’s return on investment equated to £5.10 for every £1 spent. The following direct or indirect outcomes were estimated, for a total monetary value of £1,187,401 against £233,684 spent on the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tangible financial outcomes for residents, such as increased benefit entitlements and reduction in debts; • Social outcomes for clients such as increased wellbeing, better health and improved family relationships; • Economic outcomes for the government in terms of sustainability of tenancy and stability of finances, resulting in reduced reliance on services - estimated at £339,616. <p>The project also resulted in £147,000 worth of additional rental income for the Shepherds Bush Housing Group, thanks to a reduction in rent arrears.</p>	

Money Matters – Friendship Care and Housing

Social landlord	Friendship Care and Housing – part of Longhurst Housing Group
Where	Midlands
Housing stock	4,600
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project Summary</p> <p>In 2013 Friendship Care and Housing Trust set up an in-house, free, confidential and impartial money and debt advice service called Money Matters. Two full-time money advisors offer tailored financial advice and support to residents using AdvicePro, a web-based case management system developed by AdviceUK, a support network for advice centres that Money Matters is registered with.</p> <p>The two money advisors employed by the project help clients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claim the benefits they are entitled to; • Deal with benefit issues; • Move to a smaller or bigger home - depending on their circumstances; • Access food banks, furniture recycling projects, or credit unions; • Open a bank account; • Budget and manage their finances; • Deal with creditors, tribunals and other external agencies. 	
<p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>In 2014/15 alone, Money Matters supported more than 300 customers, bringing them tangible financial outcomes worth a total of £459,000 (an average of £1,500 per customer). The cost of delivering the service was £87,000, which if deducted from the economic gains achieved leaves an operating return of investment of £372,000.</p> <p>Financial gains for tenants enable more sustainable tenancies by reducing arrears, and in turn translate into more rental income for the housing association and considerable savings made on arrears recovery actions.</p>	

2. Sustainable tenancies

Your Home, Your Future – Caldemoreaccord

Social landlord	Caldmoreaccord – part of the Accord Group
Where	Walsall
Housing stock	7,200
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>The project 'Your Home, Your Future – Starting Your Tenancy The Right Way' is a pre-tenancy service launched in May 2014 by Caldemoreaccord. The programme was developed in response to the results of an investigation into the high volume of empty properties in the housing association's stock, which revealed that 56% of tenants giving up their properties were single households with an average length of tenancy of just two years. It was concluded that these tenants were 'surrendering' their homes without notice, and were not fully aware of their rights and responsibilities despite the application and sign-up process that was in place.</p> <p>Your Home, Your Future is targeted to all new perspective tenants in Walsall, particularly those who have never rented a home on their own before. Its main aims are to reduce the number of voids, ensure that tenants look after their properties and give the correct notice to leave, help reduce anti-social behaviour, make sure people can sustain their tenancy without falling into arrears with their rent and bills, and improve their financial confidence and overall wellbeing.</p> <p>A series of interactive workshops are run as part of the programme, focussed on budgeting, debt and saving money. They are open to perspective tenants and run monthly for three hours at Caldemoreaccord's office. People who have signed up to the programme and attended a workshop get priority on the waiting list.</p> <p>A dedicated Tenancy Support Worker helps tenants for the first three months of their tenancy to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand their tenant rights and responsibilities; • Manage their finances; • Work out their benefit entitlements; • Set direct debit payments to pay bills; • Get low cost furniture from local recycle furniture shops; • Become aware of the principles of healthy eating and cooking on a budget; • Access service that can help them on money matters. <p>Tenants can be referred to Caldemoreaccord's money advisors or jobs and skills services if they need further support.</p> <p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>A total of 18 workshops have been run as of March 2015, attended by a total of 160 perspective tenants. Of those, Caldemoreaccord housed 73 and a further seven were housed by other local landlords.</p> <p>For Caldemoreaccord, overall tenancy terminations have been reduced by 10% in 2014/15 and a further 10% in 2015/16. The rent arrears for the properties that these tenants signed up to equated to just 0.4% of the annual rent debit. More importantly, the project has resulted in some positive outcomes for tenants. 22 applicants were referred to Caldemoreaccord's in-house employment services to follow up on their aspirations to work, while 10 applicants, who were identified as not having bank accounts, were referred to the in-house money advice service.</p>	

House2Home – Friendship Care and Housing

Social landlord	Friendship Care and Housing – part of Longhurst Housing Group
Where	Midlands and East of England
Housing stock	18,500
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>The House2Home pilot programme was launched in July 2014 by Friendship Care and Housing, in partnership with Birmingham City Council. The programme was designed by the council to address the pressing problem of high numbers of failing tenancies in the city, which had worsened since welfare reform had taken place. It aims to help new tenants understand how to successfully manage a tenancy, teach them the skills they need to live independently, and improve their confidence</p> <p>The House2Home programme is based in a refurbished two bedroom empty property owned by Friendship Care and Housing. A few local companies offered discounted building and decorating services, while a phone company agreed to provide internet services free of charge for 12 months.</p> <p>This so-called ‘home school’ operates two days a week and is open to all social tenants living in the East Quadrant of Birmingham. The service is available to them within the first year of their tenancy. Three other local housing associations (Ashram, Moseley and District, and Midland Heart), as well as Birmingham City Council, can also refer their tenants to the project. Three members of staff and one resident volunteer are there to offer tailored support and one-to-one practical training. Tenants are provided with an all-round service that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcases how to furnish and run their homes on a budget, in recognition of the fact that the high upfront costs of furnishing a new home sometimes put people into debt with payday lenders; • Offers basic DIY training, and a decorating pack; • Provides energy saving advice, and information on how to get good deals on utility bills to help them reduce energy costs; • Offers initial budgeting advice, and signpost people to relevant local services if they need further advice; • Briefs tenants on tenant responsibilities; • Helps tenants in getting online. 	
<p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>The project is the first of its kind in Birmingham, and has proved very successful so far. 27 tenants have visited the House2Home during the first 6 months of the pilot. Thanks to the energy saving advice they received, tenants were reportedly able to save over £200 per year on utility bills.</p> <p>The delivering agencies are still monitoring whether the project can achieve its aim of enabling sustainable tenancies, but early indicators seem to be positive. Birmingham City Council is now looking at setting up a House2Home project in each of the four quadrants of the city, whilst Friendship Care and Housing intends to open a second ‘home school’ on another deprived estate in Birmingham.</p>	

3. Jobs and skills

Furnish – Shepherds Bush

Social landlord	Shepherds Bush Housing Association
Where	London
Housing stock	5000
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary:</p> <p>Furnish is a furniture reuse social enterprise run by Staying First, a charity and subsidiary of the Shepherds Bush Housing Group (SBHG), in partnership with the London Re-use Network. They collect donations of second-hand furniture and white goods, refurbish it and make it available for purchase to local residents, businesses and organisations.</p> <p>Staying First was brought into SBHG in 2000, when they had a yearly turnover of only £70,000 and were not financially sound. Hammersmith and Fulham council wanted the furniture recycling charity to keep providing its services to the community, so they approached SBHG asking them to rescue it. At the time they had one member of staff and a few bits of furniture.</p> <p>Furnish is now a successful and thriving social enterprise, with a turnover of £2.5 million in 2014-15, and about 30 staff and volunteers. Furnish is London’s largest furniture reuse centre with a 37,000 square foot warehouse, where they sell commercial items (the West London Re-use Centre), and two shops in Shepherds Bush and Ruislip where they sell domestic items. They provide low-cost second-hand items but also sell premium items, including a wide range of vintage pieces, to raise funds.</p> <p>The aims of the charity are four-fold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide low-cost furniture to local residents; • Enable sustainable tenancies by offering good quality furniture at discounted price to social housing tenants. SBHG tenants, people on benefits and council tenants are given a discount (25% and 10% respectively on items over £25). This is to make it easier for tenants to pay their rent. Furnish also offer furniture packages at low cost to young people leaving supported housing, so they can properly furnish and equip their homes; • Reduce landfill waste and greenhouse gas emissions; • Provide volunteering opportunities to tenants and residents of the wider community, including people involved in community service or the probation system, helping them build their skills and gain new experience 	
<p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>Up until 2012 Furnish provided furniture and household items to 3,900 low-income families. Its social value, using the SROI social return on investment model, has been estimated at £1.20 value for every £1 spent. They have saved around 80 tonnes annually in furniture from landfill, which is equivalent to 200 households’ worth of furniture.</p>	

Housing and Worklessness project – RBKC

Social landlord	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Where	London
Housing stock	10,000
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea’s Housing and Worklessness project was set up in 2012 in response to the impacts of welfare reform on people on low incomes. The council acknowledged that more and more tenants would be likely to fall into arrears as a result of direct payments of the Housing Benefit element of Universal Credit. A survey also highlighted that residents were generally unaware of what was offered in terms of employability support by landlords, and across the borough. The council therefore decided to take a leading role in the coordination of worklessness service provision in the borough, after background research identified duplications but also gaps in service provision.</p> <p>The main aims of the project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a Pathways to Work Charter, a compact agreement with housing providers and the TMO to get them to commit to some basic standards of support for their residents, and to raise awareness amongst their residents of the employability support available across the borough; • To increase awareness of the support and opportunities available locally to help residents into work and training; • To coordinate the support available to residents and inform the work of housing associations in the borough, including the Tenant Management Organisation; • To signpost and refer tenants to local gateway agencies, offering advice and support to unemployed people looking to get back into work; • To help housing providers develop and implement targeted engagement strategies, utilising data from the council’s Revenues and Benefit team. <p>Since 2014 the Housing and Worklessness Project has launched two IT hubs offering free internet access to local residents from six computers, where they have the opportunity to print documents. People are also offered one to one support to improve their IT skills, and to search and apply for job opportunities online.</p> <p>The project also run roadshows focussed on employment, training and young people. Two webpages, a ‘housing and employment page’ and a ‘training, skills and jobs’ page, have been created to make it easier for residents and practitioners to access information about employability support in the borough.</p>	
<p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>Since the launch of the Pathways to Work Charter in October 2012, 15 of the biggest housing providers in the borough have signed up to it, with two housing associations being supporters of the Charter.</p> <p>Between October 2012 and June 2016, The Housing and Worklessness Project has connected with over 2,500 people, helping them to access employability support. It has directly supported over 500 residents referred by their landlord or through word of mouth, of which 123 have secured work or apprenticeships, and 24 have volunteered or undertaken work experience with the project. The first IT Hub launched in June 2014 engaged 225 users to improve their IT skills, with 50 gaining a recognised level 2 qualification in the first year of the project.</p>	

Positive Change - GGHT

Social landlord	Golden Gates Housing Trust
Where	North West
Housing stock	8,600
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>The Positive Change programme was launched by the Golden Gates Housing Trust (GGHT) in 2012 in response to the Government's changes to the welfare system, and in recognition of the higher than average level of unemployment amongst GGHT's residents. The programme's aim is to encourage and support tenants into employment, training and volunteering.</p> <p>A dedicated Employment Team has been put in place to deliver a range of employment support initiatives, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Job Clubs offering one-to-one employability support to residents; • Job fairs to raise awareness of local opportunities, to get residents to speak directly to employers and apply for live vacancies; • Job boot camps, offering sector based sessions and masterclasses in interview skills and online job search; • Pre-employment courses funded through the European Social Fund; • In-house apprenticeships and traineeships; • Work placements and volunteering opportunities within GGHT and local businesses. <p>A free recruitment and wage subsidy scheme for local SMEs and voluntary sector organisations has also been put in place to incentivise local employment. The scheme, jointly run by GGHT in partnership with Warrington Borough Council, allows local organisations to pay long-term unemployed residents referred by the Positive Change programme the minimum wage instead of the apprenticeship wage, at no cost to them.</p> <p>The Positive Change programme also includes ad hoc projects to target NEETs – young people not in education, employment and training, vulnerable families and vulnerable women.</p> <p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>A total of £1.45 million has been invested in the project. More than 1,000 residents have signed up since 2012, and the project have supported 281 into employment during 2014/15 alone, bringing the total since the Programme's launch to 526 and far exceeding the original target of 450. 222 people have participated in pre-employment training courses, while 2,124 participants have benefitted from 1:1 and group Information advice and guidance sessions.</p> <p>Using the HACT Social Value calculator, GGHT has estimated the return on investment of the Positive Change programme at £4,780,400, which is around £4 for each £1 spent.</p> <p>The Employment Team delivering the project received the Best Tenant Employment/Training Programme Award at the Housing Excellence Awards 2015.</p>	

Ready2Work – Affinity Sutton

Social landlord	Affinity Sutton
Where	Across the UK
Housing stock	57,000
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>The Ready2Work apprenticeship scheme was first implemented by Affinity Sutton in 2011. It aims to deliver apprenticeship opportunities for Affinity Sutton tenants. Working closely with the National Apprenticeship Service and local training providers, the scheme liaises with employers from a wide range of sectors, and help customers secure interview opportunities, also offering them intensive in-work support. Helping tenants to gain and sustain employment is seen by Affinity Sutton as a way to mitigate the impacts of welfare reform on its tenants and therefore secure its business viability thanks to a reduction in rent arrears.</p> <p>The services offered by the Ready2Work team are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-to-one support from Employment Support Officers providing information, support and advice, including helping people update their CVs and updating them on potential job vacancies; • Access to GuideLine, a dedicated employment, training and financial guidance telephone support service; • Free in-house training and e-learning courses; • Return-to-work courses, which are meant to help people retrain and change career prospects; • Re:train grants allowing tenants to get training from other local providers; • Grants to pay for training or to secure work; • Specialist help to start a business and £1,000 business start-up grant; • Continued support for six months after finding a job. 	
<p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>The Ready2Work scheme won the Work Inclusion Award 2013 for helping 2,994 of its tenants improve their employability skills, achieving an estimated reduction in rent arrears of around £16,000, and saving around £30,000 through the employment of 60 apprentices.</p> <p>In 2014/15 alone, the ‘Ready2work’ employment team supported 904 unemployed residents into work, placed 105 new apprentices and created 270 work placements.</p> <p>Over the last three years, the Ready2Work apprenticeship scheme have supported over 300 customers to gain level two, three and four NVQ qualifications, thanks to which they have been able to secure permanent work.</p> <p>The scheme has just secured over £13m of ESF funding on behalf of a consortium of 16 HA’s to deliver ‘Love London Working’, a 3 year programme to support 20,000 Londoners into work and training.</p>	

Yes Project – Northwards Housing

Social landlord	Northwards Housing Association
Where	North West
Housing stock	13,000
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>Yes (Your Employment Service) Manchester is a Community Interest Company (CIC) providing money advice, career services, and volunteering, training and employment opportunities to residents in north Manchester.</p> <p>Yes was set up in August 2013 and is funded by Northwards Housing together with Manchester City Council. It provides service users with several employment support services from its three operating bases, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free internet access; • Help with CV writing, browsing the internet and practising interviews; • Career direction and advice; • Links with local employers; • Training opportunities; • Volunteering opportunities; • Money advice offered by Manchester Credit Union, Mind Your Money and Northwards' Money Advisors. <p>The service is delivered by a team of three employability support workers and several volunteers. The Yes team also signposts people to relevant services offered by their partner organisations to make sure they get the help they need, and have links with all relevant local organisations (such as food banks, job clubs, colleges etc.).</p> <p>People looking for work can register on the Yes website and browse for job vacancies, as well as volunteering and training opportunities; while employers can publicise their vacancies for free, and use the Yes office as a venue to carry out interviews.</p> <p>Yes also offers business start-up advice to people interested in setting up their own business or social enterprise. They help them access small start-up business loans available through the Community Development Finance Association and HACT, but also through the Manchester Credit Union. Yes also gives start-up businesses the opportunity to rent low-cost business pods in one of its operating bases.</p> <p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>Since 2013 Yes have helped 240 people into jobs, volunteering or training. In the financial year 2014-15 alone, Yes has welcomed 17,365 visitors, helped 65 people into full time work, and got 16 people into training or volunteering. The total social value of Yes activities has been calculated by a team of external consultants at £3,093,230 for the financial year using the HACT Social Value calculator, which means that for every £1 spent Yes has delivered £19.70 worth of social value in the community. A number of local employers are now relying on Yes to help them recruit their workforce as they get support throughout the whole recruitment process.</p>	

Routes2Work Programme

Social landlord	Circle
Where	UK wide
Housing stock	65,000
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>The Routes2Work training programme was set up by Circle Housing Merton Priory in 2012 to help local people into work, offering them free training courses, and tailored support to access employment and apprenticeships opportunities on successful completion of the training. The programme includes a series of courses on construction skills, customer service, and the popular 'start your own business' course. In 2014 the programme ran a pre-construction course over nine weeks, building on the partnership with contractors Keepmoat and United House, offering industry relevant training in health and safety alongside work experience in repairs and maintenance. Participants were given the opportunity to take the CSCS Test and to secure apprenticeship jobs with these contractors.</p> <p>In 2015 Circle Housing commissioned MyWorkSearch, an online job search tool, to streamline residents' job search activities. Circle also partnered with South Thames College to give residents free access to Customer Service courses.</p> <p>In 2016 Routes2Work will incorporate Love London Working (LLW), an ESF project led by Affinity Sutton that is an unprecedented partnership of 16 major Social Housing Providers. LLW seeks to recruit 21,000 London residents and place them closer to the labour market. A flexible support programme delivered at scale will be tailored to individual needs and address often multiple disadvantages. The aim is that 6,300 participants will progress into employment over the three-year duration of the project.</p> <p>Support will include Job Clubs, including one for people with disabilities and/or long-term health conditions, short courses in Customer Service, DIY/Multiskills, preparation for the CSCS Card, Start Your Own Business and English & Maths. All participants will receive ongoing advice and guidance and will work with a job broker on successful completion of their training, who will support their job search and broker job opportunities on their behalf.</p>	
<p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>Since 2012 Routes2Work has helped over 450 local people into employment and apprenticeships, and supported the creation of 115 small businesses/social enterprises.</p>	

City Deal 'Working Together'

Social landlord	Key partner organisations: WHG/ Caldmore Accord/ Wolverhampton Homes* / Heantun / BCHG / Sandwell MBC* / Dudley MBC* / Trident – Those marked * are the main partners
Where	Black Country Wards: Darlaston South / Bilston East / St Thomas's / Princes End
Housing stock	8,342 (total in all named areas)
Status	Ongoing (June 2014 – March 2019)
<p>Project summary</p> <p>The Working Together project is a £2.8 million, five-year pilot, part of the wider Black Country City Deal. The project was launched in June 2014, with the aim of increasing the employability and life chances of those living in specified wards within the Black Country.</p> <p>The project is meant to deliver tangible results for employers, employees and social landlords, but also to deliver on wider growth, Welfare to Work and the Government's deficit reduction agenda. The project targets are to move 900 people into jobs by March 2019; provide a £1.1 million reduction in the welfare benefit bill; and to increase people's wages by £19 million collectively, with a proportional increase in Income Tax paid.</p> <p>Working Together is targeted to 2,800 unemployed and economically inactive social housing tenants and private tenants (since April 2016). The project is led by a team employed by the Accord Group alongside four other key lead delivery partners.</p> <p>The programme delivers a holistic "Journey to Work" programme to in the community. The delivery partners carry out detailed initial assessment of need and formulate an individually tailored action plan to help customers get closer to the labour market and to find employment opportunities. In addition, the Working Together team works alongside specialist providers to offer advice around budgeting, motivation, confidence, self-esteem, and health and wellbeing.</p> <p>An internet café was set up as part of the project in one of the four pilot areas, offering local unemployed people the opportunity to get online, learn new IT skills and browse job vacancies. This was delivered alongside Talent Match provision and primarily focussed on the 25+ age group to increase their digital inclusion.</p> <p>The Working Together programme also entails a strong element of outreach work with the aim of engaging the hardest to reach using a Community Champion model. The project uses a lot of fun and community events to initially engage with people and this has been key to working with people who do not traditionally access services. Some of the events have included; themed events, community fun days, self-employment and employer events, children's summer activities, Christmas pantomimes, Bat walks / Environmental days, pamper and health and well-being days, and many more.</p>	
<p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>In the first year (up to the end of May 2016) the project has provided support to over 900 people and moved over 70 people into work. Many of these have sustained their jobs. The project has delivered nearly 2000 soft outcomes including nearly 100 qualifications, over 500 additional skills including digital inclusion and increased confidence and optimism. An Interim Evaluation report is due to be published in November 2016.</p>	

Learn for free

Social landlord	Plymouth Community Homes
Where	Plymouth
Housing stock	14,500
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) runs Learn for Free, a free training programme to help its residents achieve their life goals. The project was set up in recognition of the fact that shrinking DWP and Job Centre resources had left a gap in service provision, particularly affecting vulnerable social housing tenants. The project aims to support people to achieve their aspirations, whether is getting back into work, taking up volunteering opportunities, taking proactive steps to get on their chosen career path, joining a social club or giving back to their community. The project takes a holistic approach, with a strong emphasis on improving health and wellbeing and combating social isolation while improving people's life chances.</p> <p>Learn for Free offers a variety of activities, courses, qualifications and career pathway programmes, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment skills: CV writing, cover letter writing, interview techniques and work experience placements • Qualifications in Food Hygiene, Emergency First Aid, Leisure and Tourism, CSCS card, Paediatric First Aid, Mental Health First Aid, Hair Dressing and Apprenticeships • Career Pathways in Childcare, Administration, Construction and Hospitality • Digital inclusion: computer club, community IT drop-in sessions and basic computer skills training • Social and community inclusion: craft club, gardening club, healthy cooking, personal health awareness, motivation and confidence, stress management, skin care on a budget, committee skills e.g. minute taking, health and safety risk assessments • Life skills: budgeting, sewing, DIY at home etc. <p>Residents have helped to design the activities on offer, making them more relevant and timely, and the delivery of the project has been embraced by the whole organisation.</p> <p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>The number of new residents attending training has dramatically risen over the last few months. Targeting courses using customer profile information has proved successful, reducing the amount of resources needed (e.g. postage) while increasing numbers.</p> <p>The outputs in the financial year 2015/16 are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 371 number of people attended an activity/course • 210 number of qualifications and certificates were achieved by residents • 448 number of hours training delivered • 28.8% increase in resident confidence (reported for September) • 26.8% increase in resident knowledge (reported for September) • 17.5% increase in resident social inclusion (reported for September) • 22.6% increase in resident well-being (reported for September) <p>One of the unpredicted outcomes is that the programme has not just supported individuals, but it has inspired tenants to support their communities through replicating their learning and forming their own well-being groups.</p>	

Preston Vocational Centre

Housing Association	Community Gateway Association
Where	Preston
Housing stock	6,000
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>The Preston Vocational Centre is a vocation training charity whose principal objective is to advance the education of children, young people and adults, especially those living within the Preston area, equipping them with suitable skills and qualifications so as to allow them to progress to apprenticeships, employment or further education.</p> <p>The Centre became a subsidiary of the Community Gateway Association in August 2013. Since then, the CGA have implemented improved governance and management arrangements and invested in the staff to transform the Centre into a leading vocational training provider in Lancashire.</p> <p>The Centre provides free vocational training and employment support for youngsters from the age of 14 and unemployed adults. The services on offer are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taster courses for Year 9 pupils in brickwork, bench joinery, plastering, carpentry, painting and decorating; • Level 1 Certificate in Construction aimed at 14-16 year olds over two years; • Post 16 provision enabling learners who are Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEETs) to develop basic skills in General Construction and Building Maintenance; • CSCS card courses; • Summer DIY and carpentry courses; • Training programmes for learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), often with behavioural or medical needs, with a need for specialist training provision at higher teacher to pupil ratios. <p>The training offered by the Centre is hands-on and is very different from a classroom-based educational environment. One to one mentoring and coaching is also offered to people who are going through challenging life circumstances and need tailored support, including young offenders, learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, teenagers who have been excluded from mainstream school, and veterans and early leavers from the armed forces.</p> <p>Furthermore, PVC provides ad-hoc training to Community Gateway Association operatives, including CSCS re-training and skills assessment.</p> <p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>The reputation of the Preston Vocational Centre has grown through the work that they are doing with partner schools in Preston and the surrounding districts as their preferred provider of Specialist Vocational Training.</p> <p>During 2015/16 PVC delivered vocational training to 296 people, of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 171 students from 19 high schools, with 52 achieving an accredited qualification and 11 students gaining a non-accredited certification; • 125 beneficiaries attended the centres from various grant funded projects, of which 16 have so far achieved an accredited qualification <p>NB: A majority of PVC learners are on long term programmes and will complete their qualification's during 2016/17.</p>	

Volunteering Into Employment Programme

Social landlord	Genesis
Where	London and the East of England
Housing stock	33,000
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>Since 2014 Genesis Connect has been running the 'Volunteer into Employment Programme' for residents looking to gain relevant skills, experience and confidence to move into work.</p> <p>Genesis residents who are willing to become volunteers attend volunteer information sessions, which are delivered to meet the needs of customers. Sessions are also delivered in a conversational style for customers with support needs, with input from care and support staff.</p> <p>Once enrolled, volunteers are placed in a suitable position, receiving coaching and advice from Genesis' employment team. There is also a mentoring programme available for volunteers who require additional support.</p> <p>Volunteers are placed in teams across the whole of Genesis including support work, neighbourhood assistants, befriending, community outreach, literacy support, events teams, community journalism, DIY support, finance assistants, facilities management assistants, gardening, project support, administration, customer service assistance and many more. When a vacancy arises at Genesis, these volunteers are able to apply for it along with other candidates.</p>	
<p>Outcome and value for money</p> <p>The Volunteer into Employment initiative has proved to be a real success and volunteering has proved to be a very effective way of getting people back into employment.</p> <p>From April 2015 to March 2016 the 'Volunteer into Employment Programme' has achieved the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 79 people into employment • 75 people volunteering • 92% of participants were Genesis residents • 10,698 volunteering hours <p>Since April 2016 the programme has achieved the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41 people into employment • 55 people undertaking volunteering <p>In 2016 the Genesis Volunteer Programme achieved the Investing in Volunteers (iV) Quality Standard after an intensive audit by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). The Standard recognises the excellent work that Genesis undertakes with volunteers and Genesis is one of a small number of housing associations that have achieved the quality standard.</p>	

4. Energy saving

Helena's Retrofit Projects

Social landlord	Helena Partnership
Where	North West
Housing stock	14,000
Status	Ongoing
Project summary <p>Helena Partnerships has long and extensive experience in retrofitting its homes and energy saving measures, dating back to the 1990s. Over the last six years in particular, Helena Partnership has retrofitted around 900 properties accessing funding from a variety of sources, including the European Regional Development Fund. The biggest project has been the retrofit of 733 properties on the Four Acre estate.</p> <p>The retrofit schemes have targeted some of Helena's particularly poorly performing properties, doing external wall insulation with brick slips alongside several other energy saving measures such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New loft insulation;• Positive input ventilation;• Solar thermal (where shading was an issue);• Passive flue gas heat recovery;• External LED's;• Sound insulation to party walls (an issue via resident consultation);• Suds paving and water butts provided. <p>A key feature of the retrofit schemes has been the installation of mechanical ventilation systems in addition to external wall insulation, to eradicate condensation problems. They have also installed Solar Photovoltaic Panels on the roof of 562 homes in order to generate electricity to feed the properties, with any surplus energy fed back to the national grid. Behaviour change workshops were also run to try and ensure that the behaviours of the customers matched the investment works, giving them tips on how to maximise energy saving in their daily life. The retrofit schemes made use of local companies, relied on the local supply chain and employed local labour to contribute to the local economy.</p>	
Outcome and value for money <p>Helena Partnership has been carefully evaluating the impacts for tenants and the organisation of their retrofit scheme, and believe there is a strong business case for energy retrofit. The energy retrofitted properties have massively reduced their carbon footprint, saving around 123,000 tonnes of carbon per year. The thermal performance of the properties has improved by 50%, reducing the CO² production of a typical house type from 3451kg per annum to 1607kg per annum, improving the SAP rating of the individual dwellings from 66 to 83 (Band B).</p> <p>Energy bills have dropped by 30-40% for residents living in the retrofitted properties. The schemes have also had major effect on people's health and wellbeing, with anecdotal evidence of breathing issues getting less severe. As properties have been given a much needed face lift and areas have become more desirable, voids have dropped from 14% to 4%. Properties advertised as being energy efficient are easier to let and this translates into less void costs for the organisation. As for the properties within the schemes that have had Solar Photovoltaic Panels fitted, it has been estimated that the net gain per property on annual basis is £798.</p>	

FairerPower – Cheshire East Council

Social landlord	Cheshire East Council – NB: Cheshire East Council is a transfer local authority so they do not own any housing stock anymore. However, they have been included in this report because of the exceptional character of the initiative they have put in place, which we think deserves to be showcased
Where	North West
Housing stock	None
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>Launched in March 2015, Fairerpower is a non-profit making company set up and owned by Cheshire East Council, in partnership with award-winning energy company Ovo. It was set up to help local residents reduce their energy bills by offering them cheaper prices and fairer deals than those offered by the 'big six' energy suppliers. This is the first time since the privatisation of energy supply in 1948 in which a public body sells power.</p> <p>The Fairerpower partnership is effectively a partnering agreement for supply and management services. OVO Energy supplies the energy and all back office functions such as metering, billing and collection, while Cheshire East sets the tariff and promotes the scheme.</p> <p>The opportunity to switch to Fairerpower is open to all 170,000 households in the borough, but the scheme has recently been extended to residents living in Chester West and Chester. New customers can introduce their friends and family and both parties are rewarded with a free £20 Amazon gift voucher.</p> <p>Fairerpower is now in discussions with a number of RSL's and local authorities who wish to give their residents the opportunity to access a consistently low energy tariff with excellent customer service.</p>	
<p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>More than 6,500 people have signed up to buy their gas and electricity through Fairerpower since its launch in March 2015. Cheshire East residents who have switched to Fairerpower are saving an average of £245 on their annual fixed-tariff bills. Fairerpower has saved households more than £1.6m in just 10 months as of January 2016.</p>	

Home Energy Action Team (HEAT) – Southern

Social landlord	Southern Housing Group
Where	South East
Housing stock	28,000
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>The Home Energy Action Team (HEAT) was established in 2014 within the Southern Housing Group to deliver personalised and face-to-face home energy advice to its residents. The HEAT team is centrally funded by Southern and not reliant on external funding.</p> <p>The small team of energy advisors helps residents reduce their heating bills and alleviate fuel poverty. HEAT can offer assistance and advice to help people implement energy saving improvements to save both money and energy around the home. For instance, HEAT advisors provide guidance on how to use heating systems more efficiently, switching energy tariffs and suppliers to save money, reducing water bills and how to apply for the Warm Home Discount, as well as installing free energy saving devices.</p> <p>Alongside personalised home energy advice visits, HEAT runs home energy advice surgeries, and is particularly targeted to provide energy debt advice and support for the most vulnerable households, including parents with young children, ethnic minorities and older householders.</p> <p>The intention for 2015/16 is to recruit and train resident volunteers to become qualified energy advisors.</p>	
<p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>Since 2014, the Home Energy Advice Teams have carried out over 1,000 energy advice visits, helping customers save over £250,000 in total, with an average saving of £250 per household.</p> <p>The work of the HEAT's team has been so successful that Southern Housing has been approached by two local housing associations to provide energy advice to their residents.</p>	

Trias Mores Energetica (TRIME)

Social landlord	Circle
Where	UK, France, Spain, the Netherlands and Belgium
Housing stock	66,000
Status	Ongoing (2014-2017)
<p>Project summary</p> <p>Trias Mores Energetica (TRIME) is a community-led energy saving initiative helping social housing residents to reduce their energy use. It is based on volunteer Energy Ambassadors supporting other residents to save energy and money and live a healthier lifestyle.</p> <p>It is a European-funded energy-saving project which will be running in five countries (UK, France, Spain, the Netherlands and Belgium) for 3 years, between 2014 and 2017. Seven 'pilot sites' have been identified to trial the project, which aims to achieve behavioural change amongst social housing tenants. Circle is the UK partner in this venture.</p> <p>The aim of the project is to engage with residents to empower and motivate them to save energy by actively changing their consumption and purchasing behaviour. Behaviour change amongst residents will be achieved by means of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing 60 trained Energy Ambassadors who will encourage the residents to save energy by changing their energy consumption behaviour, providing them with energy saving tips and showing them how to use inexpensive gadgets (such as stand-by savers, shower timers, draught excluder tape and energy saving light bulbs) to save energy on a daily basis. • TRIME also aims to achieve a change in the purchasing behaviour of social housing companies by encouraging them to invest in sustainable energy. As TRIME partner, Circle has committed to invest in the retrofit of 1,000 housing units. 	
<p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>Since April 2015, Circle have been recruiting Energy Ambassadors and training them to provide advice to their customers. The project is still ongoing and therefore there is no evaluation data available yet, but it is estimated that the change in household consumption and purchasing behaviour will result in average of 9% reduction in energy consumption per household.</p> <p>The rationale behind this initiative is that by helping residents save money, they are enabled to pay their rent on time.</p>	

5. Elderly People

New Earswick Less Loneliness Initiative (NELLI) - JRHT

Social landlord	Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust
Where	York
Housing stock	2,500
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>The New Earswick Less Loneliness Initiative (NELLI) was set up in 2014 following a three-year Joseph Rowntree Foundation action research project into loneliness in various communities in Yorkshire, which highlighted the extent of social isolation in the region and its dire consequences on people's wellbeing. This research involved training up a group of local people to identify the issues surrounding loneliness in their neighbourhoods by means of participatory research methods and look at potential activities to address loneliness. Turning the research findings into action, the volunteers are now taking all the ideas from the research and making them a reality.</p> <p>The project, which benefitted from start-up support and funding by JRHT, is now standing on its own feet as an independent organisation running initiatives to help combat loneliness and foster the development of a local informal support network. NELLI's operating base is a community hall in the garden town of New Earswick, on the outskirts of York, from where the for-profit organisation runs the Cafe' NELLI, where people can meet and socialise over a cup of tea or a meal. NELLI is run by volunteers who run under 5 drop-in sessions and a luncheon club once a month.</p> <p>NELLI has run hands on craft and hobby fairs in the community hall around Easter 2013 and 2014. These were aimed at introducing local people to what is going on in their community and letting them try out new hobbies and join community groups. They have gone on to run fun days for families, Christmas events and regular group outings.</p> <p>One of the founders of NELLI launched a community cinema project, called NELLI Vision, which has now changed its name into 'Film at the Folk Hall' and is separate from NELLI although it is still based at the community hall and has the same ethos of using cinema to combat social isolation and build community spirit.</p>	
<p>Outcomes and Value for money</p> <p>Since its establishment in 2014, the NELLI cafe has provided a valuable meeting place and hotspot for social initiatives in New Earswick. It celebrated its first birthday in 2015 with over 200 people and representatives from local groups attending the celebration. The NELLI cafe is visited weekly by over 20 people.</p> <p>In 2015 JRHT used HACT's Wellbeing Valuation approach to calculate the impact of belonging to this social group on an individual's wellbeing. This equated to a Social Value of £24,870 combined across all regular attendees.</p> <p>The community cinema 'Film at the Folk Hall' has monthly film screenings with averaging audiences of about 100 per screening. It also has a membership scheme which currently has 47 members.</p>	

6. Youth

Learning LAB – Caldemoreaccord

Social landlord	Caldmoreaccord – part of the Accord Group
Where	Walsall
Housing stock	7,200
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>The Learning LAB is a new, fully-equipped, Wi-Fi enabled centre which was set up by Caldemoreaccord in 2013 to support predominantly, although not exclusively, young people aged 16-25 and single parents looking for work in Walsall, where the number of people claiming Jobseekers Allowance stands at more than 10,000. The project was funded through a £2,000 start-up grant from the Job Centre Plus. The LAB hosts free Job Clubs twice a week to help unemployed people referred from the local Job Centre Plus to search and apply for jobs.</p> <p>As well as applying for work, job seekers who are tenants of Caldemoreaccords can access the in-house Jobs and Skills Service, getting specialist support and guidance from three Jobs and Skills coaches, who could be either Time for Real volunteers or people on work placements referred by the local Job Centre Plus. The coaches provide targeted advice and personalised support through the development of an individual action plan, to help customers reach their goals and career aspirations. They also offer hands-on practical support around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing CVs and covering letters; • Preparing for interviews and refining interview techniques; • Filling out application forms; • Improving job search techniques; • Finding training, apprenticeships, volunteering or adult education opportunities to help them pursue their career aspirations. <p>The Learning LAB is also an official UK Online Centre, where people can learn to use a computer, set up an email account, enjoy social media and search for a job online for free. UK Online relies on volunteer “Digital Engagement” champions helping people to improve their digital skills.</p> <p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>89 Jobs Clubs were held in 2015-16. A total of 561 Jobs Club visits were recorded, and 88 individuals regularly attended the Job Clubs. Based on the HACT Wellbeing Valuation approach, the uplift in wellbeing to individuals for regularly attending the local group (minus deadweight) is a total of £66,832, generating a budget to social value ratio of £1:£13.07.</p> <p>During 2015-16 the project’s Jobs and Skills Coaches have worked with 98 customers, helping 16 of them gain full-time employment, 11 part-time employment, one an apprenticeship, and 17 into vocational training. The results of the HACT Wellbeing Valuation approach reveals that for every £1 invested in the service, £4.13 of social impact (in relation to improved wellbeing for individuals) has been created. This is additional to the financial gain for individuals who move into employment and monetary savings to the State in relation to reduced Employment and Support Allowance payments and increased National Insurance receipts.</p> <p>So far, the Digital Engagement Time for Real champions have delivered over 2133 hours of computer or internet skills in 2016 alone. They have so far consistently exceeded the target of registering three new learners every month.</p>	

PM Training – Aspire Group

Social landlord	Aspire Group
Where	North West
Housing stock	8,500
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>PM Training is a well-established training provider and award winning social enterprise founded in 1982, and is part of the Aspire Group. It provides work-related training opportunities to 14-19 year olds in Staffordshire through apprenticeships, traineeships, vocational training and work experience.</p> <p>PM Training’s services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-16 Vocational Education, running foundation learning programmes to equip young people over 14 with vocational skills; • Preparing People for Work, working with young people who have left school to help them with work placements, training, apprenticeships, and the development of social, personal and employability skills; • Apprenticeship placements across more than 1,200 companies in a wide range of service areas and sectors such as business administration, customer service, IT, construction, horticulture, glazing, engineering, manufacturing, warehouse and distribution. <p>Surpluses are re-invested into the local community and further training support through the group’s charity, the Realise Foundation.</p> <p>PM Training works with local companies helping them improve their productivity and staff retention. It also provides home improvement, environmental services and sculptural art to public and private sector organisations through Homeworks and Artworks.</p> <p>Outcomes and Value for money</p> <p>Since it was established in 1982, PM Training have supported over 25,000 individuals and worked with more than 1,200 companies to help young people into employment.</p> <p>Each year over 250 apprenticeships are created for 16-18 year olds, making PM Training the largest provider of apprenticeships for people aged 16-18 in Staffordshire.</p> <p>The Social Value Return on Investment has been calculated at £4.80 for every £1 invested.</p> <p>PM Training has been nominated Top 100 Apprenticeships Employer 2015 and is an Ofsted Grade 2 Rated training provider.</p>	

Whiz Youth Project

Housing Association	Arawak Walton
Where	Manchester
Housing stock	1,000
Status	Ongoing – however, due to the recent rent cut announcements, Arawak Walton may not be able to continue its support to the project in the future.

Project summary

Arawak Walton is partnering with the Youth Opportunities Association in Whalley Range, Children in Need and Manchester City Council to deliver the Whiz Youth Project. The Whiz Youth Project is a physical space for young people to have fun, meet new friends, take part in sport/leisure activities, and get information and advice.

At Whiz, a team of youth workers delivers a series of activities:

- Thai boxing and fitness training for girls aged 11-25 years
- Group discussions and gaming sessions
- Whiz tucker trials, influencing and educating young people on eating a healthier diet
- Workshops such as T-shirt vinyl printing, jewelry making etc.
- A summer programme of activities
- Trips out to cinema, bowling, museum, Blackpool etc.
- Volunteering opportunities (work on stalls, leafleting and demonstrations at our local community festivals etc.)

The project particularly allows for young women in the area, who are currently being excluded from a range of opportunities, the space to have fun and build trust and better relationships with each other. Girls also have the opportunity to seek advice, support and guidance on any personal or social issues and on education and employment issues (homework help, CV writing, job hunting, application writing). There are also group discussions covering issues such as drugs, sexual health and relationships, career options and lifestyle choices, incorporating cultural and social identity, e.g. sex/gender issues and ethnicity/social harmony.

Outcomes

The project is already in contact with almost 180 young people and continues to attract newcomers. The Thai boxing sessions in particular have attracted 30 young women since the project started, some of whom have shown great commitment.

According to the project manager, the project is resulting in a series of very important intangible outcomes for young people. For instance, the Thai boxing sessions can be empowering to young women, knowing they have skills that could help them if they were to find themselves in a situation that is potentially dangerous. Being physically active also has a huge effect on self-confidence and self-esteem, thus maintaining good mental health, helping to reduce stress, anxiety and even depression, which is becoming increasingly common among young people. The environment further enables young women to:

- Develop self-awareness and self-worth
- Meet challenges, manage change and build relationships
- Gain a sense of personal achievement and build on confidence and self-esteem, through learning about their ability to learn new things and develop competence
- Make friends and have fun
- Have a stronger sense of community

Young Gateway Action Group

Housing Association	Community Gateway Association (CGA)
Where	Preston
Housing stock	6,000
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>The Young Gateway Action Group (YGAG) was established by the Community Gateway Association for young people aged between 16 and 25, to involve them in a more strategic role within the company, and make sure they have an input in the organisation. The organisation, which celebrates its 10th birthday this year following the transfer of homes in Preston from Preston City Council in 2005, has made working with young people a key focus. They have a Youth Inclusion Strategy to provide clarity and direction to their work in this area.</p> <p>CGA are keen for young people to make positive changes in the community. Anyone living in CGA communities can be involved and YGAG constantly spread the word via social media (they have their own Facebook page) and word of mouth. Joining the group is a chance to make ones' voice heard but also an opportunity to meet new friends, learn new skills and have fun at the same time.</p> <p>The Young Gateway Action Group (YGAG) has a strategic role within the company. They consult in a variety of ways, to try and reach as many young people as possible. With this in mind they held a consultation event in May called #MAKEANOISE, using different mediums to get information, from Artists, Film and Animation, to Talkeoke. This group ensures that young people have the opportunity to become involved and have their voices heard, and addresses issues that they may face. These issues are raised by the group and then tackled, led by the group with the support of CGA. YGAG are also developing as individuals, with the aim for some of them is to progress onto the Gateway Tenants Committee (GTC), a strategic group of tenants that work to ensure good service delivery for tenants and residents.</p> <p>Projects the YGAG has been involved with are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to make your House a Home Project – gathered information on household essentials and furnishings, where to get them cheap or even freely. The information was then put onto inserts to go in CGA's Tenant handbook to assist all new starters • Arranging events and involvement of the U16 membership at CGA • Digital training with GTC, sharing their knowledge • A project to advise the Museum of Lancashire on how to improve their offer for young people and on presentations • Worked in partnership with many groups across Preston to help deliver projects. For instance the YGAG and the Preston Volunteers Police Cadets have linked up to share resources, form friendships and deliver community events. 	
<p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>The YGAG helps bridge the gap between the company and the young people living various estates. By listening to young people and acting on what they tell them, the CGA are able to deliver a better service. By getting involved in decision making, young people who are potentially CGA's future tenants are taking ownership of their estates, making them into better places to live.</p> <p>The YGAG has won the Best Youth Engagement project award at the Housing Excellence Awards held in Manchester in 2014.</p>	

7. People with complex needs

Liverpool Waves of Hope – Plus Dane

Social landlord	Plus Dane
Where	North West
Housing stock	18,700
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>Liverpool Waves of Hope is a £10m Big Lottery funded project, one of 12 projects across the country of its kind, designed to help people with multiple and complex problems (homelessness, involvement in the criminal justice system, mental health issues and alcohol and drug abuse), who have not traditionally engaged with the support services. The project has been running for the last 18 months and funding has recently been confirmed by the Big Lottery up until 2018.</p> <p>Liverpool Waves of Hopes is delivered by a partnership including Liverpool City council, Liverpool YMCA and local businesses in the community. Plus Dane is the managing agent with overall responsibility for the project, while Riverside is the main delivery partner. There is also a lot of joined up working with local health and probation services.</p> <p>The aim of the programme is to deliver a comprehensive set of interventions to people with multiple and complex needs, over and above just meeting their immediate housing and crisis needs. The project has commissioned a floor of a hostel building in the city centre which is owned by YMCA, and set up 9 one-bedroom self-contained flats to offer temporary accommodation to its service users. People who enter the programme are also offered training, education and employment opportunities, so that they can become more engaged with mainstream society and more committed members of the local community.</p> <p>The project relies on 55 paid and unpaid staff employed by either Whitechapel YMCA or Riverside. They are support workers, staff working in the accommodation setting, resettlement workers and employment advisors. Around 25 people with lived experience have been trained as peer mentors. They operate on a voluntary basis as role models, offering a very specific type of personalised support to the individuals.</p> <p>The project is open to anyone aged over 18 and living within the Liverpool city boundaries. Users can be referred by others (GP, family, social services) or they can refer themselves.</p> <p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>Over the last 18 months, Liverpool Waves of Hope have supported around 200 people. The delivery model has worked well, with the project meeting the majority of the outcomes that the Big Lottery had set out for measuring the success the project. Out of the 200 people they have supported, 77% have reported a reduction in their reliance on A&E, 54% a reduction in drug and alcohol use and 77% a reduction in number of arrests.</p> <p>The project has commissioned an academic study jointly completed by IPSOS Mori, and the University of Liverpool. Impact is measured through a longitudinal study of the life trajectories of 12 service users. The evidence from the case studies collected so far shows saving of £6,000 a month per person to the public purse because of a significant reduction in service users' reliance on A&E services and the police system.</p>	

8. Tenant Involvement

Community Champions Project – Friendship Care and Housing

Social landlord	Friendship Care and Housing – part of Longhurst Housing Group
Where	Midlands
Housing stock	4600
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>The Community Champions project was launched by Friendship Care and Housing in December 2013, following the success of Walsall Housing Group’s Community Champions project. It was decided to implement it in Beechdale, on an estate with high levels of deprivation and higher than average levels of education and employment. With a changing benefits system and focus on making work pay, they wanted to maximise education, support and training opportunities locally, that enable customers to be self-sufficient and independent.</p> <p>The project, whose second year was funded by the Big Lottery via Awards for All, was set up to encourage tenants to get involved locally. Two previously unemployed tenants were recruited to become the new Community Champions, tasked with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and delivering capacity building activities for residents; • Providing one to one support to residents; • Helping landlords to meet residents’ needs by designing better services and being more customer focussed; • Aiding residents in accessing local services; • Encouraging them to get involved in the community; • Actively engaging them in courses and activities to build their confidence and skills; • Refer residents to the in-house Employment & Training Advisor and Money Advice Service; • Organising family trips and community events. <p>The first year of the project, which was internally funded, had a focus on integrating the Community Champions into the community via soft engagement activities such as craft days and skills swap courses. In the second year of the project, the Community Champions have been offering training and employment support to residents helping them access PREP (Preparing People for Employment) courses, designed as a nine-week program combining training and accredited qualifications in Manual Handling, Emergency First Aid at Work, Food Hygiene and Health & Safety.</p> <p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>To date, the project has also been able to support the personal development of three Community Champion volunteers and three volunteers who were previously unemployed and have now progressed into further work or training.</p> <p>The outcomes of the Community Champions project up until 2015 have been quite successful. 28 learners completed the three PREP courses run between January and November 2015. The overall social impact for the 28 learners was calculated at £90,808.97 using the SROI Social Value Bank model, giving a cost to benefits ratio of £1.00: £9.08. The net benefit of all three PREP cycles was £80,809.62.</p> <p>Eight learners gained full time employment after completing the course, saving the benefit system an estimated £40,338 as they were previously on Job Seekers Allowance and Housing Benefit.</p>	

9. Innovative home ownership products

Own Place - Riverside

Social landlord	Riverside
Where	Across the UK
Housing stock	70,000
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>Own Place is an original homeownership discounted product initiative which has been designed and implemented by Riverside since 2007 in low demand areas across the regions where it operates.</p> <p>The aim of the project is to increase homeownership in places where it had been historically quite low and there has historically been a number of empty hard-to-let properties which were falling into disrepair and becoming more and more costly to maintain.</p> <p>Riverside decided to test the model first to see if it would work. They started quite small by doing a few properties up to a mortgageable standard, which does not include energy efficiency measures but aims at making sure that the fabric of the building is sound and perspective buyers are not required to carry out any major works. They then sold the freehold of these properties on the open market to first time buyers at a discount of 25% of the market value.</p> <p>To prevent buy-to-let investment Riverside has introduced a clause which states that if buyers moved anytime within the first five years from purchase they would have to pay back a proportion of that 25% discount.</p>	
<p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>The Own Place initiative has been very successful so far. Riverside has sold about 350 properties to date through the Own Place initiative. The neighbourhoods where Own Place has been implemented are all in Merseyside, with the exception of 6 properties in Hull.</p> <p>It has brought many benefits to single people and individual families who would otherwise be unable to afford their own place at full market value. The initiative has also had the positive effect of assisting tenure diversification and fostering the creation of more mixed communities in areas of former deprivation, which in turn underpins the sustainability of neighbourhoods from a landlord's perspective.</p>	

10.Digital Inclusion

Get Connected Campaign – Affinity Sutton

Social landlord	Affinity Sutton
Where	Across England
Housing stock	57,000
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>The Get Connected campaign is part of Affinity Sutton’s community investment programme, delivered by its subsidiary, the Community Foundation.</p> <p>Digital inclusion was an essential part of the programme, as surveys showed that digital access amongst Affinity Sutton residents is some 10% below national averages. The Get Connected initiative was created with the aim of increasing digital inclusion amongst social housing tenants, in recognition of the benefits and considerable savings deriving from online access, and in light of the roll out of Universal Credit.</p> <p>The Get Connected campaign comprises the following initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Digital skills training to develop basic digital skills and access to affordable broadband via group training courses or one to one training sessions, delivered in the residents’ homes; · A volunteering programme for Digital Champions, residents willing to train as community digital champions to help family, friends and colleagues to get connected. Volunteers, supported by a Digital Champion Coordinator receive access to free online courses, resources and support. They also get certificates and badges to add to their CV; · Vital Digital is a telephone and online digital service providing answers and solutions to questions, low level technical support and troubleshooting, flexible digital skills training, and information about best deals for broadband and affordable tablets and laptops. <p>Affinity Sutton also offers community based organisations Digital Grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 to set up community-led projects and purchase digital equipment to help Affinity Sutton residents of all ages get connected and learn how to confidently use digital technologies and optimise their use in their everyday life.</p> <p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>More than 4000 digital interventions are delivered each year to improve residents’ digital skills and ability to access the internet. In 2015 over 100 Digital Champions were enlisted to actively help Affinity Sutton’s community ‘get connected’. 16 local community projects were supported in the first three rounds of the Digital Grant programme. Three groups supported in Round One delivered 40 local sessions to 98 individuals and have placed ASG on schedule to support 500 individuals through this project. The savings of being online and the benefits for education, employment and social connectedness are estimated at £560 per year per person. The HACT Social Value Bank attaches a value of £1,875 to individuals being online.</p> <p>The successes of Affinity Sutton’s Digital Champion initiative inspired the creation of the Digital Champions Network for Housing (DCN4H), an online platform which aims to attract, train and support Digital Champions. 20 organisations have signed up to the network so far, including 18 leading housing providers representing over two million residents. Additionally, as part of a Big Lottery funded project called One Digital, Affinity Sutton is working with delivery partner Digital Unite to specifically focus on encouraging young people (18 – 25 years old) to become Digital Champions, developing skills that will help them into work.</p>	

11.Sustainable communities

Time for Real Bank - Caldmoreaccord

Social landlord	Caldmoreaccord - part of the Accord Group
Where	Walsall
Housing stock	7,200
Status	Ongoing
<p>Project summary</p> <p>Time for Real was launched in May 2012 as Walsall's first ever time bank, serving all four wards in the south of the borough. Time for Real is run by Caldmoreaccord Housing Association and is funded through Walsall South Area Partnership, which is a local partnership bringing together local organisations such as the police, the Council, community groups, local businesses and voluntary sector organisations. The Time Bank is based at the Learning Lab [see p. 19] and much of it is co-ordinated virtually by two part-time brokers.</p> <p>Time for Real gives local people the opportunity to donate their time to help others in their community, receiving support every step of the way to trade skills with others. Unlike traditional volunteering, participants 'earn' time credits for donating their skills such as DIY, gardening and cooking, which they can then 'cash in' when they need help. For every one hour a member donates to help another member of the time bank or a community project, they earn 1 time credit which they can spend by asking for help for themselves when needed.</p> <p>Time for Real is also coordinating a clothing bank for the community to recycle unwanted clothes and allow people to buy second-hand clothes on a budget.</p> <p>Time for Real members also help to run Caldmoreaccord's Learning Lab, which deliver job clubs, computer basics and getting online courses for young people in Walsall.</p>	
<p>Outcomes and value for money</p> <p>Volunteers at Time for Real have exchanged over 18000hrs since its inception in 2012 and the pool of volunteers keeps growing. Volunteering with Time for Real is an opportunity for people willing to go back to work to improve their skills, but it is also a way for them to overcome social exclusion and improve their health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Caldmoreaccord have a real focus now to evidence and report the defined values of Time Bank UK which are, amongst others: increased confidence; coping with life skills; better health and wellbeing; making new friends; better local knowledge; a sense of value and achievement; confident about own future (optimism); sport or physical activity; hobbies and social groups; sharing skills with others; coping with life's challenges independently. They aim to measure these indicators by way of a new member feedback form, and another repeated after six months or on exit due to leaving the time bank.</p> <p>The 2015-2016 Reports shows that that the hours of time exchanged (9,279) equals to a total £66,808.80 worth of unpaid work at £7.20 per hour.</p>	

Concluding remarks

This report is the second edition of a work-in-progress sample collection of case study examples of community investment activities delivered by social landlords to their customers and the wider community. It will be regularly updated to add more case studies, as we collect them throughout the Housing Plus Academy Think Tanks.

Please feel free to email Alice Belotti on a.belotti@lse.ac.uk if you want us to include a service your organisation is delivering which you are particularly proud of and want to show case to the wider public.