

**GWSF**

Glasgow and West of Scotland  
Forum of Housing Associations



# Minding the gap:

A snapshot of Community Controlled  
Housing Associations' 'role creep' activities

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# Introduction

## 1 Background

- 1.1 Throughout the last 40 years Community Controlled Housing Associations (CCHAs) in the west of Scotland have provided affordable homes, and contributed to the overall regeneration of their communities. Our 63 members provide affordable housing for over 85,000 households (about 160,000 people) and factor properties for around another 20,000 households.
- 1.2 In the beginning it was all about the houses; building new ones or rejuvenating existing tenements or other older stock. Over time CCHAs' role has extended beyond the bricks and mortar. With local people leading this has seen CCHAs get involved in myriad wider role activities as they have sought to enhance physical improvements with social and economic regeneration benefits in their communities. Over the past few years this has become increasingly challenging.
- 1.3 As the membership and lobbying body for CCHAs, a vital strand of GWSF'S work is focused on highlighting both our members' strong performance as landlords and their crucial wider role activities as community anchors. These key messages are always at the forefront of our engagement with politicians and colleagues in other sectors, and feature at our regeneration and annual conferences.
- 1.4 We also continue to reiterate them in publications like our annual 'Scottish Social Housing Charter Reports', 'More Than Bricks & Mortar' and 'CCHAs: Still Transforming Local Communities'.
- 1.5 Whilst this publication carries on that tradition by showcasing some excellent case-studies which illustrate the range and reach of our members work, it also seeks to raise the issue of 'role creep' and the challenges this presents for CCHAs.
- 1.6 Over the past few years a number of factors, including the ongoing austerity era, welfare reform, and shrinking local authority budgets have coalesced to create a 'perfect storm.' This had led to the current operating environment where many CCHAs have become increasingly involved in a range of activities, services and partnerships which do not fit neatly into either their landlord or community anchor role. Essentially, this has meant that CCHAs are left 'minding the gap' when public services withdraw.
- 1.7 These are often practical, 'hands-on' services which make a real improvement to communities, and are delivered 'close to home' at a local level. Although this role creep presents concomitant challenges for our members, their prevailing concern is the welfare of their tenants and wider communities and an oft-repeated mantra is 'If we don't do it – who will?'

## 2 The national policy context

- 2.1 There have been some really positive Scottish Government policy developments over the last few years which the CCHA sector has welcomed. These include: opportunities for CCHAs to develop their community anchor role via the Community Empowerment Act; restored subsidy rates for new build developments; CCHAs' involvement in Health and Social Care Partnerships; and more recently the Public Service Reform and Local Governance review agendas.
- 2.2 At the same time, however, CCHAs' wider role activities have widened even further as public sector budgets have reduced. In addition, these are now often carried out alongside the aforementioned role creep responsibilities.
- 2.3 Crucially, the geography of deprivation in Glasgow and the west of Scotland matches the communities where our members are based, and CCHAs are important intermediaries between local people and public and voluntary sector agencies. In the current context of austerity they play a vital role, in both mitigating the worst impacts of poverty<sup>1</sup>, and in picking up the slack when services can no longer be provided by public sector agencies.
- 2.4 We believe that overall the Scottish Government is generally supportive of CCHAs. However, the relationship between central and local government and the particular impact of austerity on local authority budgets has real implications on the ground. Increasingly, this challenging local landscape means CCHAs feel that they are left to mind that gap.

1. We know that our members' are doing an enormous amount of work in relation to money advice/welfare reform mitigation and we will feature this in a dedicated, future publication.

## 3 The local context

- 3.1 As the examples in this report show, it is inevitably at the local level that role creep has really manifested itself. CCHAs have taken on more and more responsibility for services which used to be provided by local authorities or other agencies.
- 3.2 And it is at the local level that honest discussions need to be had and new solutions found. These discussions must mean local authorities, other partners and CCHAs getting around the table and thrashing out the key issues and a proactive approach being adopted with regard to who is going to provide what services.
- 3.3 In some cases this might mean CCHAs being paid to deliver services and entering into Service Level Agreements, most obviously with local authorities.

## 4 The CCHA sector itself

- 4.1 The CCHA sector has always been a broad church and includes a diverse range of associations of various sizes but who share a common 'community based/community controlled' ethos. Just as every community is unique, with its own particular strengths and specific challenges, so too is each CCHA. Every association operates in its own local environment and has prioritised its own activities.
- 4.2 However, the majority of our members have now, to varying degrees, experienced role creep. And attitudes towards it within the CCHA movement are also diverse.
- 4.3 At one end of the spectrum some associations have embraced the challenges associated with role creep and have the appetite to take on more. These associations are up for being 'super-anchors' but stress the need for successful partnership working with local authorities and others moving forward. In the middle are associations who feel that they have no alternative to role creep but have no real appetite for taking it any further.
- 4.4 At the other end are CCHAs who have real concerns about the increased burden that role creep places on their committees, on their associations' budgets, and ultimately on tenants who are asking 'where will it end?'
- 4.5 There is clearly a conversation required within the CCHA sector about all of the issues outlined here, alongside a discussion around the tensions between keeping rents affordable and delivering more services beyond those of the traditional landlord role.
- 4.6 On top of filling in for services no longer provided by public agencies, there are several additional pressures on housing association rents, such as the need to meet new standards of energy efficiency and fire safety and the costs and risks of making new build provision. There is a greater focus now on tackling homelessness and promoting tenancy sustainment (including avoiding/minimising evictions), and on top of the cost of meeting normal regulatory requirements, GDPR and – before too long – Freedom of Information must be complied with.
- 4.7 And all this at a time when rent levels, and rent increases, are increasingly being challenged locally; and the Scottish Housing Regulator frequently repeats its assertion that rents must be kept affordable. Arguably more is heard from SHR on that point than on providing services that tenants and residents say they want to see.

## 5 Future issues

- 5.1 At the moment, there are three types of 'models' under which CCHAs carry out role creep activities and these involve diverse resource arrangements and operating environments.
- 5.2 Some associations are 'going it alone' and absorbing all of the costs associated with the delivery of these services. Others have come to an arrangement with their local authority which involves 'in-kind' support for them providing the service (e.g. one association that has taken over bulk-uplift and grass-cutting has come to an arrangement with the council whereby it can dispose of all green waste and bulk items free of charge).
- 5.3 One initiative, involving the large-scale acquisition and rehabilitation of traditional tenements, illustrates a fully resourced model of comprehensive partnership working between the CCHA, the local authority, and the Scottish Government. Whilst this may be unique in its scale, we know that other CCHAs are working in partnership with their local council to go beyond their normal landlord role and tackle poor private housing locally.
- 5.4 We believe there is potential for a fourth model. This fourth category would involve a complete transfer of resources to CCHAs at a local level to enable them to step in when public services are in danger of disappearing.
- 5.5 Three things are needed to make this happen –
  - Firstly, we need to have an honest debate about how far CCHAs can stretch their resources and continue this role-creep momentum, whilst still keeping rents affordable.
  - Secondly, greater recognition from the Scottish Government and reinforcement of the role of CCHAs as key community anchors would also be welcome. In the context of its Public Service Reform and Local Governance review the Scottish Government could look to endorse the idea of a 'community anchor plus' or 'super-anchor' with real control over resources, and with decision making powers that currently lie with local authorities. Community Planning Partnerships (where they are working effectively) and Participatory Budgeting might provide two routes for taking this idea forward.
  - Thirdly, a further debate is needed over how such services should be funded. We owe this to tenants who will otherwise continue to pay for the services twice – through both their rent and council tax.

## 6 The scope of the publication

- 6.1 The case studies included here demonstrate the types of role creep initiatives which our members are involved in. However, it is important to note that the featured case studies only provide a 'snapshot' and that similar activities are replicated throughout our membership.
- 6.2 The case studies encompass a variety of services. Several relate to local environmental services. Others are focused on services which support older people or other vulnerable tenants, and on improvements to private housing. Crucially, the common thread which runs through them all is that these CCHA services have replaced elements of local authority services which have diminished or disappeared as a result of budget restraints.

# Section 1: Improving the local environment

## Case-study 1: Govan HOME Team – Govan Housing Association



Govan HOME Team is a Community Interest Company (CIC) and the new wholly owned subsidiary of Govan Housing Association. Govan HOME Team was always a vital part of the Association's Operations Department responsible for elements of its planned and cyclical maintenance programmes as well as repairs, void turnarounds, estate management and landscaping.

In May 2016 a robust Options Appraisal process established that there was almost universal support for an expanded Govan HOME Team amongst staff members in the Association. Despite requiring substantial work to broaden the existing service provision, the potential benefits to the association were deemed to be extensive and would result in it being well-placed to secure financial savings as well as being able to offer employability and regeneration opportunities for the wider local community.

Transferring the HOME Team to a subsidiary has also created several further benefits including the ability to:

- Provide a wider range of services to tenants and other residents which will assist the Association to achieve optimised results in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter.
- Increase satisfaction levels amongst service users.
- Control the delivery of our reactive and planned repairs service.
- Generate profit or surpluses, which can be applied for the purposes of the group.
- Create tax efficiencies.
- Create community employability benefits for a number of local residents.

The Management Committee and staff team of the association appreciate fully that the environment that RSLs are operating in is as challenging as it has ever been. Our Committee and staff team share the view that

developing group structures can assist with: generating income to take on a wider role in the community; and to deriving efficiencies as a fundamental way of responding to some of the challenges that RSLs are experiencing.

We are hopeful that the Community Interest Model being utilised for the Govan HOME Team will present a multitude of opportunities and provide the Group with a foundation to explore and tackle some diverse, localised issues that affect our tenants and the wider community on a day-to-day basis.

We are also hopeful that our new Group structure will enable us to further instil ourselves as a strong, trusted, community anchor organisation and partner locally.

We are confident that our links to local schools, including representation on our governing body by Andy Masterson (Former Deputy Head Teacher, Govan High School), will provide a vital opportunity for the subsidiary to deliver employment and apprenticeships to local young people as it establishes itself in the local community.

As we look back on the first year of operation, the HOME Team has now successfully completed Phase 1 and 2 of our kitchen and bathroom replacement programme. This has seen some 150 homes improved across our stock. In addition to this, the HOME Team are now carrying out a comprehensive landscaping and estates programme to improve the local area and complement the statutory services provided by Glasgow City Council.

We are also beginning to see improvements in our void turnaround days and in our approach to reactive and emergency repairs.

Community benefit lies at the heart of the Govan HOME Team. Over the first year, the HOME Team has worked with the Association and a number of local partners to deliver a further Operation Modulus programme. Back in 2015-16, Govan Housing Association worked with Community Safety Glasgow to develop the Operation Modulus programme. This programme targeted local

## Case-study 1: Govan HOME Team – Govan Housing Association

young people who had been offending or taking part in anti-social behaviour across the local area.

The initial programme resulted in 6 young people taking part in a 6 week voluntary placement with the Association, followed by a 9 week placement through Community Safety Glasgow's Choice Works programme and finally a 12 month placement with the association through support from Community Jobs Scotland. To date 6 of the original 7 people involved in the initial programme are now in full time employment with the Govan HOME Team as Labourer/Estate Caretakers.

Due to the success of the programmes, Community Safety Glasgow approached the Association to look at carrying out a similar project over 2017-18. They highlighted a further 7 young people that they felt could benefit from the programme.

Through support from the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations we were able to provide 6 jobs for these young people within the Govan HOME Team and they

will work with the HOME Team for a period of 12 months to gain valuable experience which will hopefully provide them with a solid foundation for moving forward in their career.

The impact of projects such as these is difficult to quantify for the young people, their families and for the wider community. Govan was a hot spot for anti-social behaviour in recent years but has seen some of the steepest falls in reports of anti-social behaviour across the city over the last 18 months.

We are hopeful that projects such as Operation Modulus and the creation of the Govan HOME Team subsidiary, working with local employment initiatives, can help to further this.

We believe that the work of the Association alongside a wide array of local partners can help to make Govan a home of choice for many people, for many years to come.



## Case-study 1: Govan HOME Team – Govan Housing Association

Paramount to the success of the Govan HOME Team was the need to attract suitably skilled and experienced governing body members to take forward this new venture. We have found attracting new members to be a simple process with a number of people excited about the opportunity to get involved. To date the following members make up the governing body of the Govan HOME Team C.I.C:

- **Fiona McTaggart** - Chief Executive, Govan Housing Association.
- **Gary Maguire MBE** - Management Committee Member, Govan Housing Association (Chairperson).
- **Colin Quigley** - Management Committee Member, Govan Housing Association.
- **Councillor John Kane** - Local Councillor, Glasgow City Council.
- **Audrey Simpson** - CEO, Ardenglen Housing Association
- **Andy Masterson** - Former Deputy Head Teacher, Govan High School.



# Case-study 2: Acquisition and Improvement Programme – Govanhill Housing Association with Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Government



## Introduction & Background

Govanhill Housing Association was established in 1974 to tackle poor housing conditions in the predominantly pre-1919 Victorian tenement stock that epitomises the area. Its current core tenement stock was largely established and improved by the early 2000s when the Housing Action Area for Improvement programme came to an end. However, in recent years, there have been major changes and

concerns centred on the remaining tenement blocks in the south west of the area due to the rapid growth of private landlordism at the lower end of the market at the expense of owner occupation. As well as a major influx of migrant workers from eastern European EU accession states, increases in population density, and deterioration of both the building fabric and environmental conditions.

## Pilot Programme and Beyond

The Association was concerned that the twin issues of poor housing conditions and social problems had returned, and led a Public Petition and campaign to address this. In early 2015, Glasgow City Council [GCC] and the Scottish Government [SG] agreed to fund a pilot programme with grant support of £7.8m over two years, up to March 2017. The programme was focused on the acquisition of up to 80 properties which alongside repairs and improvements aimed to bring the properties up to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard within the two year period.

The programme formed part of a wider inter-agency approach conceived to tackle a wide range of social and environmental issues in a holistic way and was targeted on four South West Govanhill tenement blocks comprising 76 closes which displayed the worst concentration of issues. Strategic objectives were much broader than addressing property conditions. They included addressing overcrowding, achieving greater tenure balance, the development of factoring services, and providing welfare, educational, minority language and community support. Funding for staff was secured, and a team with a wide range of skills was recruited by the Association to develop the programme.

With robust marketing, the programme achieved 88 acquisitions at the end of year 1, just exceeding the targets for the overall pilot. The following year saw a



Before



After

further 96 acquisitions, giving a total of 184 properties, with an overall expenditure of over £13m. Improvements are being achieved via three approaches: improving voids where limited upgrading is required; carrying out internal works through an initial major repairs contract of 87

## Case-study 2: Acquisition and Improvement Programme – Govanhill Housing Association

properties; and by the development of Comprehensive Major Repairs Projects [CMRs] covering both common and internal works.

Housing activities involved the decanting of sitting tenants from dangerous or problematic properties, transferring tenants to improved homes, and rehousing overcrowded households where possible. Very recently the greater availability of improved properties has allowed the Association to house new tenants from its waiting list.

The Association's Slovakian and Romanian speaking Community Support Officers provide translation and support for rent, legal, identity, financial and welfare issues. A particular focus is on supporting new tenants to establish contracts for gas and electricity. The team assists with the integration of incoming families, providing

education and support. All of this activity serves to help residents sustain their tenancies.

The support staff also liaise with other agencies including pest control, refuse and bulk waste, and anti-social behaviour. Enhanced Enforcement Area status designated over the 4 target blocks by GCC following consent by the SG has resulted in the de-registering of a number of rogue private landlords.

The overall success of the pilot programme resulted in the SG and GCC approval for a four year programme over a wider Enhanced Enforcement Area, currently at the end of year 1, and with total funding of £32.8m. The focus has been on developing the major repairs and CMR programmes, and embarking on common repairs projects. This includes one whole street of eight closes requiring re-roofing along with other common works.

### Achievements & Barriers

#### The programme has had a number of successes.

- The number of property acquisitions has had an impact on tenure and management, with 25% of the worst four blocks coming into social ownership.
- Environmental education, especially of waste management, has improved the lives of residents.
- Community support is helping residents from different backgrounds get along.
- Former private tenants living in very poor conditions have been rehoused. These tenants are now benefitting from security of tenure and access to repairs when required, in contrast to their previous precarious private sector tenure.
- All of this is helping to stabilise the area by reducing turnover.
- The major repairs programme is providing warm quality homes for social rent.
- Factoring management is improving common maintenance.

- Working in partnership with GCC is helping with common repairs, bulk uplift and pest control issues. At the end of the first year of the four year programme, the Association is starting to see a tipping point where sufficient property acquisitions are leading to closes coming under the Association's factoring control, and therefore long term management.

#### Barriers to progress also remain.

- New EU migrants take up private tenancies and need advice and information on services and local knowledge.
- Landlords and Letting Agents fail to manage or support their tenants, leading to impacts on other residents.
- Landlords and owners can be obstructive, seeing factoring as an option rather than an obligation.
- Private factors underperform – sometimes due to large arrears.
- Commercial owners are unwilling disproportionately to pay for factoring or repairs.



- Negative equity inhibits sales. Low rents and high costs discourage landlord investment.

## Case-study 2: Acquisition and Improvement Programme – Govanhill Housing Association

### What Next?

There are still significant challenges and risks for the Association in delivering this programme of works over the next 3 years - risks associated with property acquisitions, scope of works and adequacy of funding for both internal repairs and required external common repairs involving both private owners and landlords.

Wider structural issues remain. New legislation covering private landlords and letting agencies has been introduced, but it is too early to ascertain its impact. Criminal landlords and agents appear to continue their activities. Factoring may require legislation to become mandatory to secure the future of housing stock in common ownership.

This can have an impact on the longer term management and maintenance of the Association's acquired stock in SW Govanhill. The Association, in partnership with GCC, continues to lobby the Scottish Government on the need for new legislative and policy solutions.

Despite the lack of a coordinated and comprehensive approach similar to the Housing Action Area legislation of the past, the Association is however starting to see some stability as a result of the activities of all partners and is hopeful of seeing a sustainable long term future for the SW Govanhill neighbourhood.

## Case-study 3: Estate Caretaking Service - Hawthorn Housing Co-operative

Hawthorn Housing Co-operative has had an Estate Caretaking Service (ECS) for over 10 years. The team spend the vast majority of their time maintaining the Co-op's land, cleaning closes, and maintaining backcourts.

However, over the last few years the ECS has gradually extended its work and now the team also carry out litter picking on some of the Glasgow City Council owned derelict land adjacent to the Co-op's land. ECS activity has broadened due to the reduction in council provided environmental services, a situation which is in turn due to shrinking GCC budgets.

The Co-operative took the decision to expand the role of its ECS to compensate for this reduction in public services since it affects the overall appearance of the area for all residents in the community. The ECS also litter pick the public pavements and roads around the estate as well as tidying up following GCC's cleansing department's uplift of bulk and domestic waste. The ECS team spend approximately four hours a week on these extra tasks.

The Co-operative considers this additional ECS activity extremely valuable since it continues to maintain and improve the quality of the local environment for its tenants and other residents.



# Case-study 4: Estates Management Team/ Community Based Employment Training – Linstone Housing Association



LINSTONE  
HOUSING

Linstone started an Estates Management Team in 2012. The Estates Team now provides a range of direct services for Linstone and for the benefit of our tenants and other residents. We have a core staff of six, with a co-ordinator, supervisor and four estates operatives. Alongside general estates maintenance the team provides a stair cleaning service for our flatted properties as well as arranging to clear out empty houses and collecting any bulk uplifts from tenants. The Estates Team also provides a garden maintenance service over the summer for tenants unable to maintain their own gardens.

Over the past 5 years we have employed a small number of trainees on temporary work experience placements through SCVO utilising their Community Jobs Fund. The placements help us to provide an enhanced service to our tenants and factored owners, while reducing the cost of delivering these services. The programme supports those in our local community with criminal convictions return to employment, while providing the opportunity for Linstone to identify potential future employees; two of the SCVO trainees to date have been taken on as full time-employees

Building on our experience of placement positions with SCVO, during 2017 a programme was devised that allowed the stable and supportive working environment of the Housing Association to offer a nurturing transitional work place for those within the local community in need of support gaining permanent work. The first 16 participants, some of which are Linstone tenants, began their six months of work and training experience in January 2018. The 16 participants were selected from a supportive recruitment day with presentations and interviews allowing the participants to meet Linstone's work experience partners and gain valuable interview experience.

The second group of 16 participants started employment with us on 3rd April this year. The programme will complete at the end of September 2018.

The participants are undertaking a combined work experience and training programme. Three days each week the employees engage in paid, mentored work experience, earning the Scottish Living Wage. During

the rest of the week vocational accreditations and employability support are being delivered in partnership with West

College Scotland, from their Paisley Campus. Personal development & life skills training, is delivered by Glasgow Homelessness Network through their 'Keys to Learn' programme. Learning about financial responsibility is being achieved through a bespoke workshop 'Learn to Earn', delivered by Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau. Nine of the work experience placements are within Linstone's Estates Management team. The other work experience opportunities are being provided by a range of local employers and Linstone partners including; The Bell Group, ISS Facility Services Landscaping, Young Enterprise Scotland, Paisley Housing Association and a number of other small and medium size enterprises that work closely with Linstone.

Employment of the participants is being undertaken by Linstone on behalf of Renfrewshire Council, as part of their Invest in Renfrewshire Employability Service. The initiative is financed by both Invest in Renfrewshire and the European Structural & Investment Youth Employment Initiative.

We believe that community controlled housing associations are ideally placed to take forward this type of delivery model.

The CBET programme benefits the wider community whilst, at the same time, providing employment opportunities for local young people.



## Case-study 4: Estates Management Team/Community Based Employment Training – Linstone Housing Association

Some of Linstone's tenants and residents have commented on how much they have appreciated the extra assistance that Linstone's expanded Estates Management team has been able to provide locally;

**“We are currently replacing windows in some of our tenants’ properties. Following installation of the new windows, tenants Mr and Mrs Dempsey asked if their windowsills could be cleaned, this was not within the installers contract. Because of our increased resources within the Estates Team, two of the CBET operatives were able to attend. At the same visit the Estates Team were also able to carry out a cosmetic decorating job in Mr and Mrs Dempsey’s kitchen. Without the new staff, this job would have been left to Mr and Mrs Dempsey to carry out themselves. This made a big difference and, Mr and Mrs Dempsey were delighted.”**

James McNulty, Estates Team Supervisor Linstone

**“My husband was taken into hospital and was not fit to do anything and I had broken my arm. Our son lives down south and after our new windows were fitted we couldn’t refit any of the blinds and curtains. As soon as we asked for help the two young men from Linstone came round and fitted them all, they were very nice, very helpful, I don’t know what we would have done if they hadn’t been able to come.”**

Mrs Reilly, Linstone Tenant

**“We were having some rewiring work done, it’s just me and my son in the house and at 72 I wasn’t fit to help him move big heavy furniture. The boys came from Linstone and did a brilliant job, very obliging, I wasn’t expecting so much help, the whole house was organised, it was great they could do this for us.”**

Mrs McKay, Linstone Tenant

# Case study 5: Land and Environmental Services Bin Replacement Programme – Linthouse Housing Association/Glasgow City Council

## Background

In July 2017 Linthouse Housing Association (LHA) entered into discussions with the Glasgow City Council's Land and Environmental Services (LES) Transformation Team to explore the following:

- potential for moving the existing refuse collection day from Friday to mid-week;
- for appropriate LES staff to regularly attend Linthouse HA Resident Panel meetings; potential partnership/collaborative working to increase recycling, improve local environments and improve the efficiency of service provision;
- and potential for becoming early adopters for additional funding opportunities for improvements to bin storage and back court infrastructure.

*(GWSF is aware that several members are also involved in similar partnership activities with the LES Transformation Team in Glasgow)*

## Why we got involved

- From late 2016 LHA received an increasing number of complaints about infestations of mice and rats. As part of the basic service, LES provided a kerbside refuse collection for general waste, but a lot of residents were not taking their bins out to be emptied. In addition, we estimated around 250 wheelie bins were without lids giving rats easy access to discarded food waste. By mid-January (to the increasing distress of residents) rats were accessing several homes internally. Association staff, LES, Glasgow City Council Environmental and Protection Services and our own pest contractor were working together to try to deal with the infestations.
- In June 2017 we instructed and paid for our landscape maintenance contractors to pull out all wheelie bins on a weekly basis from the backcourt of the tenements in the Linthouse area. This meant bins had to be pulled out on a Friday afternoon and returned on a Monday morning. Understandably we received a number of serious complaints.
- In November 2017 after much negotiation, we were successful in agreeing a change in the general waste collection day to a Monday afternoon. This meant the landscape contractors could pull bins out a Monday morning and return them by a Tuesday morning improving the efficiency of the overall waste collection service and reducing complaints about waste bins lying on the street. We coincided this change with a campaign to encourage residents to be more responsible about the disposal of waste and to increase recycling in the area.
- Special mention must go to our Residents Panel which has been hugely supportive of our campaign to improve the environment and to work more closely with GCC. The Residents Panel contacted the local councillor directly and it is really passionate about making the wider environment in Govan attractive for the benefit of everyone in the community.

# Case study 5: Land and Environmental Services Bin Replacement Programme – Linthouse Housing Association/Glasgow City Council

## How long the programme has been running for

- In addition to the bin pull out our estate caretakers dispose of large quantities of bulk items discarded by tenants. This arrangement has been ongoing for a number of years to supplement the existing basic service provided by LES to ensure the environment is maintained to a high standard.
- Involvement in the Bin Replacement Programmes began in late 2016.



## The issue of role creep

- There are benefits to LHA working in partnership with LES for key improvements to waste disposal and recycling. LHA view this as an opportunity to improve the service provided to tenants and to help re-educate/change behaviour in relation to recycling, waste disposal and keeping the community clean and tidy. LES offer funding opportunities for improvements to bin storage and back court infrastructure – whilst LHA caretakers have taken an increased involvement in street cleansing.
- In terms of ‘role creep’ – the association has been doing more because of a reduction in the service provided by the council coupled with the changing behaviour of tenants and attitudes to waste disposal.
- Partnership working and the provision of additional resources is now the only option we feel is available to provide an efficient waste disposal service in the area.
- Fundamentally, it is about everyone working together to maintain and improve the local environment.

## Do the benefits offset the costs of providing the service?

- Yes. The ongoing deterioration of the area and the distress being caused to residents caused by the infestation of vermin required partnership working with not just LES, but a range of GCC services, which offset the cost for additional resources.
- Overall, our key aims are: for an increase in pride in the area for the community; and an improvement in the relationship we have with our residents.
- The hope is for an ongoing high profile campaign between LES and LHA to promote a change in behaviours so that residents take more ownership for refuse disposal and recycling.

# Case-study 6:

## Neighbourhood Team Service – Maryhill Housing Association



We were considering a review of our Concierge service which covered 3 high-rise and 12 mini multi blocks within our area of Maryhill. Traditionally, they provided a cleaning service, a security service, and a tenant assist service to over 700 tenants.

At this time, Glasgow City Council was cutting back on services following another Council Tax freeze. As residents don't always separate the Housing Association from the Council we were receiving a lot of complaints about the environment.

Items from fly-tipping or resident carelessness were lying for longer periods than they previously had, streets weren't being swept as regularly and open space grass wasn't being cut as often. All of this resulted in our areas becoming unattractive and an 'eyesore' according to tenant feed-back. Housing Officers were also spending a lot of time contacting GCC requesting that they carry out these tasks which had previously been conducted automatically. However, despite having a good working relationship with local GCC operatives – they just didn't have the resources to cover everything.

All of this also had a negative impact on our lettings as the environment was off-putting to applicants who were being offered property within our area.

As a key-stakeholder within Maryhill we sought to rectify some of these problems. We considered whether this could be part of a service we provided in-house and embarked on a trial service utilising staff from within our current concierge team.

We recognised that grounds maintenance would require additional training and specialist equipment which we did not have. However, removal of bulk, fly-tipping, de-littering were service areas we already provided within our multi-storey blocks and were therefore areas which we could make an immediate impact on.

The Association met with Glasgow City Council and discussed our concerns over the service and our proposal to help rectify some of these problems by providing an estate service. GCC were very supportive and agreed that use of the facilities at Dawsholm Refuse & Recycling Centre would be free of charge.

Two staff were allocated on a Monday-Friday 8-4 basis and carried out a variety of tasks which we would normally have requested from Glasgow City Council. We hired a van rather than purchase one during the trial period and bought other small items such as brushes, shovels, hoes, etc.

Initially the service was driven on a reactive basis dealing with issues raised by customers or from housing officers who had carried out an estate inspection. We also identified several 'hot spot' areas for fly-tipping and programmed these into a scheduled run. The more impact we made on our area the fewer complaints were being raised. The more proactive the Estate Team were the less time our Housing Officers had to spend chasing GCC.

Training on grounds maintenance was provided by Glasgow City Council at a cost and equipment was purchased to start providing some grass cutting, hedge cutting and de-weeding to some of our areas. Although it was not possible to cover all of GCC's open space areas this had a positive impact on areas of concern and we received good customer feedback.

On review of the estates trial, we introduced Estate Caretaker posts within the new structure of our Neighbourhood Team. Having saved staffing costs from the reduction of our nightshift service we were able to introduce these posts at no extra cost. Feedback from the team involved in the trial suggested that the work could be better serviced if on a similar work pattern as

## Case-study 6: Neighbourhood Team Service – Maryhill Housing Association

the current staff which operated over 7 days. It was also suggested that the hire van we had was unsuitable for the jobs we were carrying out.

To provide a full estates service we recruited two teams consisting of 2 Estate Caretakers and 2 Apprentice Caretakers. While we had initial equipment, we also purchased a tipper van and we increased and improved our equipment supply.

As part of our continual pursuit for improvement, we felt there were gaps in our service delivery whenever there were staff shortages from annual leave or sickness as this resulted in reducing the team numbers. We are now trying a Monday – Friday service provision. This is proving beneficial and allows the team to engage with housing officers on a regular basis.

We have found this exercise very positive in terms of both customer feedback and the appearance of our community. The varied improvements and service provision assisted us in winning our first Keep Scotland Beautiful Award in 2017 for Improved Local Environment Quality.

On the success of our grounds maintenance provision, we are expanding other areas of our service and we are currently looking at a business model to bring other services, such as close cleaning, in house.



# Case-study 7: Bulk Uplift Service - Paisley Housing Association



## Background

PHA provides a bulk uplift service for its tenants and factored owners which is delivered either through our in house Estates Team or a contractor.

With a varied stock profile which has a large percentage of tenement flats, the Association faced increasing problems of poorly maintained backcourts, gardens and open spaces.

In Renfrewshire, the Council only uplift free for Council tenants. Historically PHA used the Council's service reporting uplifts for its tenants and the cost was an overhead which was taken into account in its rents. The service however was not in PHA's control and the problem of bulk items not being collected

led to more serious environmental issues resulting in expensive full backcourt clear ups being required.

With these problems impacting on letting and sustainment and affecting both tenants and owners in mixed tenure closes a solution was sought

PHA's solution was to take control of the service we provided to our tenants, initially adding it to our landscape maintenance contract. This however was too expensive so a more cost effective solution was sought.

## How we solved our problem

We identified Oskar as being a potential solution. Oskar is a part of the Kibble Works group of social enterprises which provides opportunities for young people facing barriers to employment. At the outset Oskar uplifted all of our bulk items and wherever possible recycled them. Partnering with them to deliver this service resulted in PHA being able to -

- Provide our tenants and factored owners with a more responsive service
- Provide our tenants with attractive neighbourhoods
- Make a positive contribution towards reducing waste through recycling
- Support Kibble in providing employment, education and training for young people.

We consulted with our tenants and with their support we moved to having a bulk uplift service charge which was based on the actual cost of the service. The cost of the service was spread across all of PHA's stock and was the

same irrespective of property type. In 2012 the bulk uplift service charge was £2.50 per month. This allowed tenants to have an unlimited number of uplifts during the year with Oskar uplifting their reported bulk items within a 5 working day period.

Factored owners could also request bulk uplifts and these were charged in full to the owner. Staff would also report bulk uplifts and in mixed tenure closes if the bulk uplift had not been reported, it was considered to be common and the owners were charged their share of the cost.

The results were an immediate improvement to our properties and neighbourhoods. As expected the highest numbers of uplifts were from tenement flats and the least from individual properties.

The charges applied by Oskar were banded which allowed reports of more than one uplift required within a back court to be grouped which saved money. The overall cost for delivering the service was still substantial but it was a more responsive service and tenants were satisfied and our areas improved.

### The challenges moving forward

Key challenges included -

- Trying to control the number of uplifts which were increasing as tenants phoned regularly to dispose of one or two bulky items
- Trying to contain cost
- Providing value for money

PHA's solution to this was to further rationalise uplifts and to look at alternative ways of delivering the service. As we were considering the introduction of an Estates team we worked out that it would be cost effective for the Team to uplift bulk items when they are undertaking other tasks, such as bin assistance and to carry out the uplifts for our own door properties as they offered easy access.

This approach has worked and although the cost for the Estates Team is similar to the contractor cost for uplift, with rationalisation there are fewer uplifts and therefore savings have been made. Oskar continue to do the majority of uplifts but the combined approach has meant that we have been able to limit the service charge increase since 2012 from £2.50 per month to £3.50 per month this year.

Tenant satisfaction has also increased and we were pleased to report in our last ARC submission for 16/17 that 94.9% of tenants are satisfied with the maintenance of the neighbourhood they live in.



# Case-study 8: Improving Safety and Security in Calton - Action against Drug Dealing - Thenue Housing Association



Thenue Housing Association has been working with a number of agencies (Police Scotland, Glasgow City Council and Community Safety Glasgow) over the last year to tackle drug dealing and drug misuse in Calton in Glasgow. It was clear that the community of Calton was experiencing probably the worst problems in the city with drug dealing exacerbated by people with addictions coming from all over the city to the area to obtain drugs. The local environment was also littered with drug paraphernalia which represented a real health and safety risk to the local community. The situation had become intolerable and urgent action was needed to tackle the problem.

The first step in addressing this issue was recognizing that a successful outcome would only be possible with a partnership between all relevant local agencies and the local community.

An Action Group was set up with representatives from Thenue (as the local housing association), Police Scotland, Community Safety Glasgow, various Council Services including environmental health, cleansing and the criminal justice/addictions team from social work attending. Due to the confidential nature of what was discussed (e.g. police action against individuals) it was not possible to include local community members in this group. However, local community groups were kept informed of progress and outcomes and were invited to walkabouts with all services to inspect problem sites which represented a risk to the local community.

The Action Group has made significant process in the last year with one key community representative noting that there was a "vast improvement" in relation to drugs issues. We have gone from some sites within Calton requiring significant needle uplifts every couple of weeks to no needles present at all.

Thenue also obtained funding for a community gardener who worked with local volunteers to tidy up gardens and local spaces which was a big factor in demonstrating that there was a real commitment to improving the local environment.



# Case-study 8: Improving Safety and Security in Calton - Action against Drug Dealing - Thenue Housing Association

We believe this partnership project to improve safety/security in the community of Calton has been successful as a result of four main factors:

## 1. Commitment from Police and Financial Support from Housing Association

The local Inspector at Police Scotland, was fully committed to tackling drug dealing and associated anti-social behaviour in Calton, and made this his priority. Thenue have worked very closely with the Inspector and his team and there have been numerous operations by the Police that have resulted in charges and convictions. Thenue also recently gave Police Scotland some financial assistance to help deploy greater police resources in particularly problematic locations in Calton.

## 2. Partnership Working

All local agencies worked in partnership to tackle drug dealing and drug misuse and are now sharing information on dealers and drug users. This is something that has never happened before.

## 3. Community Involvement

The third key factor is that a new local residents group made drug misuse, their number one priority. This was a vital factor which led to the success of the initiative; since the drug problem in Calton was never going to be tackled without the help of the local community.

## 4. Public Reassurance & Increased Reporting of Activity

Both the Police and Association have also worked very hard together in partnership to engage and communicate with local residents. Over one hundred and seventy visits were made by the local police team to Thenue residents' homes. The officers listened to residents concerns and provided detailed contact information. This allowed the officers to spend time updating residents on the on-going police activity in the area and to reassure and encourage more reporting of anti-social behaviour and drug offences.

This is believed to be one key factor that has contributed to an increase in reporting and community information from local Calton residents in recent weeks and months. In addition Thenue set up a KIN (Key Individual Network Group) of tenants who shared information confidentially about illegal drug activity. This increased reporting has assisted in recent successes against drug dealers and has allowed officers to be deployed in locations causing the most concern. Residents now know that these reports to Thenue and the Police are making a difference and they can see the action that has been taken as a result of their reports.

The Joint Action Group and the KIN Group will continue with all partners committed to ensuring there is no complacency and it is hoped that the improvements made to date are sustained in the long term.

# Section 2: Supporting vulnerable people

## Case-study 9: Improving tenants' quality of life - Elderpark Housing Association



Elderpark HA seeks to deploy a range of resources to those tenants who are elderly, frail or who have a disability so that they can make the most of their home and enjoy their local amenities and surroundings. This range of services ties in with our mission statement which includes our ambition to improve tenants' quality of life and provide a safe environment. The Association sees its role as providing services beyond housing that have the added advantage of enhancing community amenities and building individuals' capacity. We do this by paying directly for services, applying for grants, utilising community benefit clauses and working in partnership with other agencies. Some examples include:

### The Helpline

The Association pays for a Helpline service which provides practical support for people aged 65 and over, and disabled people, who require assistance with tasks in their home. The service is delivered by a team of qualified operatives to meet the varying needs of people who get in touch. The Helpline has a budget of £5,000 per annum.

The range of services include: grass cutting; providing safe keys boxes; cleaning internal windows; decoration; electrical and plumbing work; moving furniture; and building flat pack furniture. These services can be crucial in enabling frail people to remain independent and live at home for longer.

### Uplifting and Disposing of Bulk Refuse

Similar to many housing associations, Elderpark now pays a contractor to uplift all bulk items on a weekly basis and deposit them at the local cleansing depot. In return, the council has agreed to waive weighbridge charges and



trusts the Association not to deposit building refuse. This costs the Association £34,000 per annum.

The purpose of this activity is to ensure that back courts are kept tidy and well presented. Tenants are encouraged to leave items in the back court the night before they are due to be uplifted. Previously, the service provided by the Council involved leaving items on the kerbside for collection and often resulted in bulk items strewn across the streetscape, causing a hazard for residents and making the area look unkempt.

### The Use of Community Benefit Clauses and Tenancy Sustainment

The Association includes community benefit clauses as part of our procurement strategy. This is irrespective of the value of the contract. For example, as part of our annual cyclical painting contract, the winning contractor agrees to decorate four properties per year for older or vulnerable tenants. Similarly the winning close cleaning tender agrees to clean four vulnerable tenants properties.

The Association supplements these community benefit contracts with a tenancy sustainment budget, which can cover expenditure on decoration allowances, starter packs, one off cleans, house clearance, support to hoarders, and miscellaneous issues such as sourcing and delivering furniture.

## A success story!

This case study is an example of how Elderpark with support from partners helped tenant John (not his real name) to turn his life around. John was at risk of homelessness and also battling with alcohol addiction. In a remarkable transformation John is now a community activist focused on improving residents' health and culinary skills.

John had alcohol problems and poor mental health including insomnia much of which stemmed from his life in the army. His physical health was deteriorating through a series of heart attacks. This downward spiral in his health coincided with a deterioration in his housing conditions. Rubbish had built up to such an extent that only room he could access was the living room, where he slept on the sofa. There was no electricity or gas supply in the property and therefore no means of cooking or washing. The candle-lit flat was clearly also a fire hazard.

Despite all his health and social problems John was keen to play an active part in his community. He started to volunteer in a community fruit and veg shop, originally set up by Elderpark HA and now run by the community, supported financially by the Big Lottery. Through support from other volunteers the Association became aware of the extent of John's extreme housing conditions and when they managed

to get access to carry out the annual gas service. The Association arranged for all the rubbish to be bagged and cleared and through its community benefit clauses arranged for a close cleaning contractor to clean the flat. The Association then worked in partnership with SSAFA (the armed forces charity), who with assistance from the Scottish Welfare Fund furnished the flat and made links with John's GP. Referrals were also made to Addaction to provide support for alcohol misuse.

John continues to volunteer in the food hub, linked to the community shop and garden. He now has his mind set on a vocational cause to deliver food and cookery workshops in the community and is enrolled in a course run by the Cyrenians. He also works with Bridging the Gap teaching people how to make bread.

John says:

"Without the assistance and understanding from Elderpark I would be out in the street. I was too embarrassed to let anyone into the house. Now, I don't get anxious, I have a clean bed to sleep in, a chair to sit in and a lovely new bathroom to shower in; I can cook on my new cooker. My physical and mental health has turned around; I no longer feel the need to drown myself in drink.

# Case-study 10: Vulnerable Residents Service - Milnbank Housing Association

## Background

In April 2016 following the withdrawal of funding for sheltered housing in Glasgow Milnbank developed its Community Engagement Team (CET) to provide a holistic support service for our vulnerable tenants. Our sheltered housing warden was redeployed within the Association and our CET was relocated to the previously sheltered common room in Culloden Street.

The key aim of the CET is to identify vulnerable tenants as part of a wider prevention and early intervention approach. This include strategies that support people to continue to live in their existing home, where practicable, rather than having to move, as their needs change.

We are trying to ensure that residents who are deemed vulnerable are able to receive appropriate services and/or support. We use local knowledge and

feedback from staff about residents considered to be in need of help. This leads to a visit by CET and, where appropriate, other agencies are contacted (e.g. local health, homelessness and housing services).

The CET consists of 4 employees, 3 Community Engagement Workers and an Income Maximisation Officer (IMO).

The aim of the IMO service is to assess and maximise a referred resident's income to ensure that they are receiving all relevant benefits, allowances, pensions etc. This service primarily focuses on MHA tenants, especially those who are experiencing financial difficulties. However, it is open to all MHA residents and, as a matter of course, an appointment or house visit is carried out for everyone who is on the vulnerable register.

## Case-studies

The case-studies included here demonstrate the range of services that we provide in terms of staff resources, volunteers, support from the wider community and, where available, other agencies. The case-studies demonstrate the desperate circumstances which some tenants find themselves in; with chaotic lifestyles, basic living conditions, health issues and severe financial constraints. In many cases all of this is compounded by lack of support from over-stretched statutory agencies.

The case-studies also highlight the costs that MHA has occurred in carrying out major repairs and improvement works, and any additional expenses in terms of paying for removals, floor covering etc. It should be noted that staff time is not included in the figures provided.

# Case-study 10: Vulnerable Residents Service - Milnbank Housing Association

## Case-study examples

### TENANT F, DUKE STREET (AUGUST 2017)

The tenant is 65 years old and has always worked until he took early retirement a few years ago. The tenant was socially excluded and his living conditions have been extremely poor for several years. There was no form of heating or hot water in the property as the tenant had the gas meter removed years ago. The tenant had slept on a 2 seater sofa for the past 12 years and had no other furniture items and bare floorboards throughout the flat. A microwave was the only method of cooking in the flat. The tenant did not engage well with people and MHA has been trying to get into the property for several years as a

full KBR needed carried out in the property. The flat failed the SHQS and home was in a poor state of disrepair.

The Community Engagement Team started engaging with the tenant in late 2016. It took time and persistence to build a rapport and gain the tenants trust. However, gradually the Community Engagement Team began to address issues addressing issues within the tenant's home and the tenant agreed to be decanted in August 2017 to allow MHA to upgrade his flat. The following photographs provide examples of the condition of the flat.



# Case-study 10: Vulnerable Residents Service - Milnbank Housing Association

## TENANT F, DUKE STREET (AUGUST 2017)

### Now

MHA provided white goods including a cooker, washing machine, fridge freezer where he can now store foods, cook and wash clothes which he didn't have before.

The tenant now has living room and bedroom furniture provided by MHA Recycle shop, this includes a bed.

In addition he has both gas and electricity pre-payment meters which he tops up on a weekly basis.

Crucially, Tenant F now engages with the Community Engagement Team on a regular basis.

He is working with MHA Income Maximisation Officer to maximise any benefits that he may be entitled to due to some health conditions.

The tenant is now living a more comfortable life and said that "I am thankful for the support MHA staff have given me and I am now happier".

The repair work, to date, for this case study = £13,000



## Case-study 10: Vulnerable Residents Service - Milnbank Housing Association

### TENANT H, BALLINDALLOCH DRIVE (SEPTEMBER 2017)

The family composition here is 3 brothers aged 55, 62 and 66 years who have resided in the area for a number of years and are known by sight within the community. Until recently, MHA had very little communication as the rent was paid and no repairs were reported. The youngest brother communicates with MHA when required. When MHA eventually gained access for the SHQS inspection, we discovered the extremely poor condition of the flat (photographs below). Two of the brothers have health issues, and one is a wheelchair user which meant that he was trapped in their first floor flat. MHA tried to get Social Work Services involved to assist the family; however, they took the view that they couldn't offer support as the family were not known to them.

In order to help the family and to carry out the improvement works to the flat, MHA decanted them to a ground floor flat. For the move, MHA Estates Team removed the rubbish from the flat and moved the family's belongings to MHA's storage unit. Subsequently, our Community Engagement Worker and the Income Maximisation Officer helped one of the brothers to sift through 108 storage boxes which eventually resulted in the family only taking 6 boxes and a few black bags of their personal belongings to the decant flat. MHA arranged and paid for a new sofa bed and floor coverings and also arranged and paid for, health transport to provide a hoist to physically move the wheelchair bound brother onto the hoist and down the stairs.

#### Now

The family are well settled into their new flat and have decided to remain there permanently. As the new flat has a veranda, the wheelchair bound brother can now get some fresh air and engage with local people.

The brothers thanked everyone at MHA for the support with their move. They are very happy and love the view from their new flat. The brothers advised they would never have managed to carry out the move if the support from MHA wasn't in place.



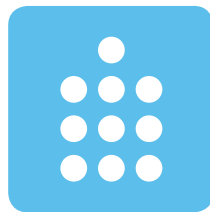
#### Work in progress



The Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations (GWSF) is the leading membership and campaigning body for local Community Controlled Housing Associations and Co-operatives (CCHAs) in the west of Scotland. The Forum represents 63 members who together own around 28% of all RSL housing in Scotland. We have 41 members in Glasgow.

## The Forum's key objectives are:

- To promote the values and achievements of the community-controlled housing movement
- To make the case for housing and regeneration policies that support its members' work
- To promote information sharing and mutual support among CCHAs
- To facilitate partnership working between CCHAs and external bodies, including local authorities and the NHS.



**GWSF**

Glasgow and West of Scotland  
Forum of Housing Associations

See more about GWSF and our work at: Website: [www.gwsf.org.uk](http://www.gwsf.org.uk)

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