



Greater Manchester
Housing Providers



Living Well in Greater Manchester

Capturing the Social Value of GMHP
April 2025

Introduction - Alison Dean

GMHP is a unique partnership of housing providers working together to make a positive difference to people and communities across Greater Manchester. This document highlights in a very practical way the great work our members are doing, sharing examples of how we are working at a local level to make a difference to the lives of our customers and the neighbourhoods we work in. Its purpose is to promote this work amongst ourselves, our partners and our supply chains.

GMHP is engaging on all three GM Housing First Priorities - Supply, Standards and Support. Through our work on the Support priority, we are making a huge contribution to the Live Well and Ageing In Place Pathfinders. We also work in partnership with other key stakeholders across the city region to encourage us all to work differently to achieve better outcomes for our customers and communities. Why is this work important?

- For residents it's about tackling inequality, for example in health outcomes, promoting a greater sense of belonging and being part of a thriving neighbourhood, with greater community cohesion
- For GMHP members – it's about effective partnerships that lead to better outcomes, financial efficiency by preventing failure in the system, tenancy suatainment and more engaged customers
- For the GM City Region – it's about more joined up and effective public services, and greater outcomes from GM Devolution

By learning about all of the fantastic examples of this work across our communities, I hope we are all inspired to raise our bar and do even more!

Thank you for reading,
Alison



Alison Dean

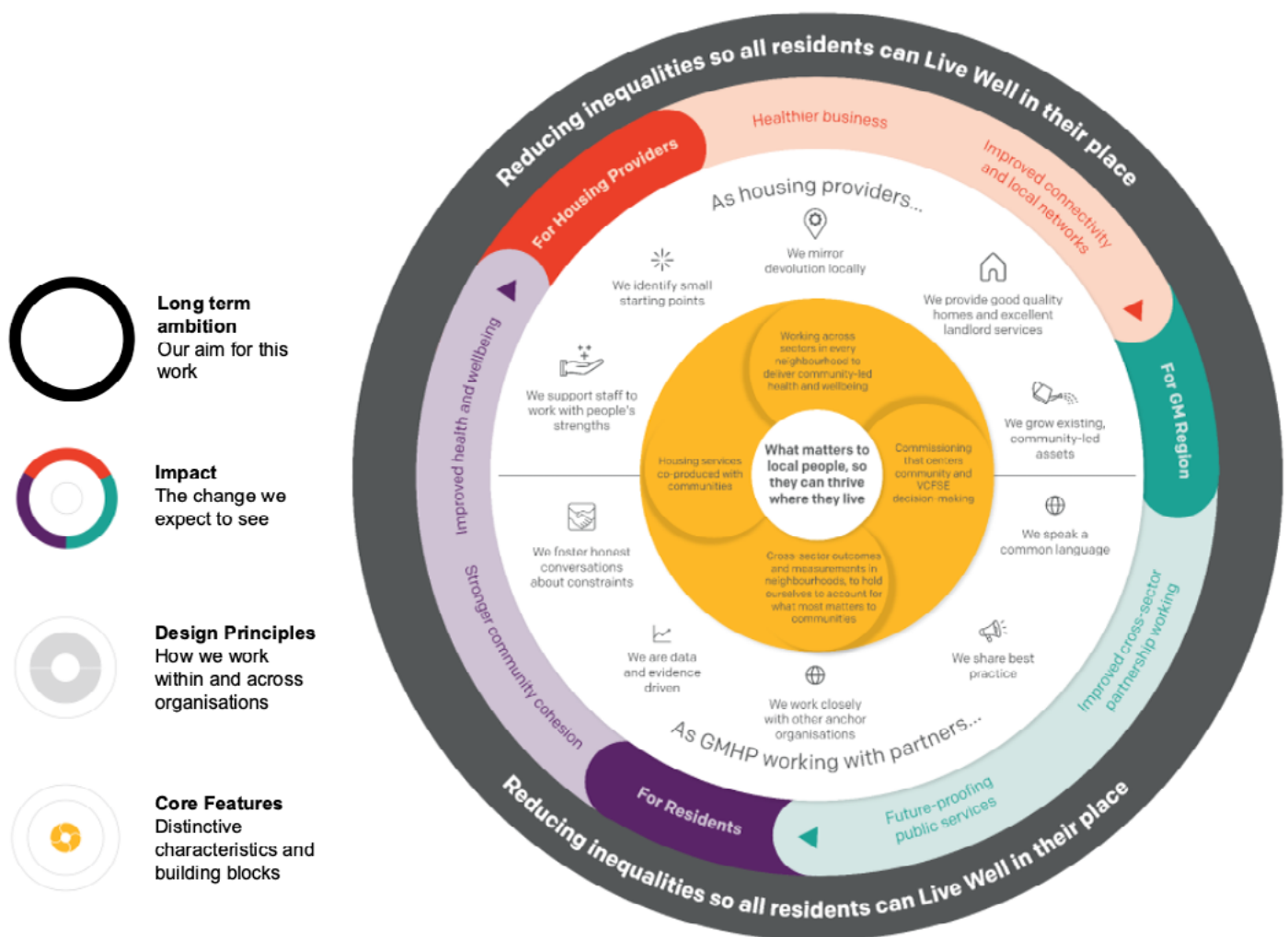
*CEO of Great Places Housing Group &
GMHP Theme Lead – Social Value*

GMHP has been working with partners to develop a vision for growing consistent, community-led support in neighbourhoods. Growing community-led support has positive, far-reaching impacts for residents, Housing Providers and the GM Region. In order to define and develop GMHP's contribution to Live Well, GMHP hosted two interactive workshops bringing together Housing Provider partners as well as the Live Well and the Ageing in Place Pathfinder teams at GMCA. The workshops brought together the current community-led practice anchored by Housing Providers and developed a case for growing these ways of working.

The two-day event enabled participants to outline the vision for GMHP's extended contribution to Live Well and highlighted co-designed approaches for achieving this ambition. As part of future development of this work, GMHP will continue to explore and define how this work integrates with their wider strategic priorities and connects with other parts of the system.

GMHP's Live Well Vision

The vision articulates GMHP's ambition to grow our contribution to the Live Well agenda. It highlights distinctive core features, design principles and outcomes.





Core Features

Housing services co-produced with communities

Working across sectors in every neighbourhood to deliver community-led health and wellbeing






Cross-sector outcomes and measurements in neighbourhoods, to hold ourselves to account for what most matters to communities

Commissioning that centers community and VCFSE decision-making








Design principles

As Housing Providers:

-  We provide good quality homes and excellent landlord services as a core foundation, and we are well regulated.
-  We grow community participation that mirrors devolution at a local level, sharing power and resources.
-  We support community-led practice to flourish, adding value to what already exists.
-  We identify small, tangible starting points for growing community-led practice.
-  We support our staff at all levels to work with people's strengths, offering holistic support for residents.

As GMHP working with partners across the wider GM system:

-  We speak a common language that reflects the priorities of our residents.
-  We work closely with other anchor organisations, to work collectively for our residents.
-  We share best practice on growing community-led practice, timely and early.
-  We foster honest conversations across agencies about constraints, competing demands and budgets.
-  We are data and evidence driven, to direct resource and support to those most in need.

GMHP: Financial Inclusion

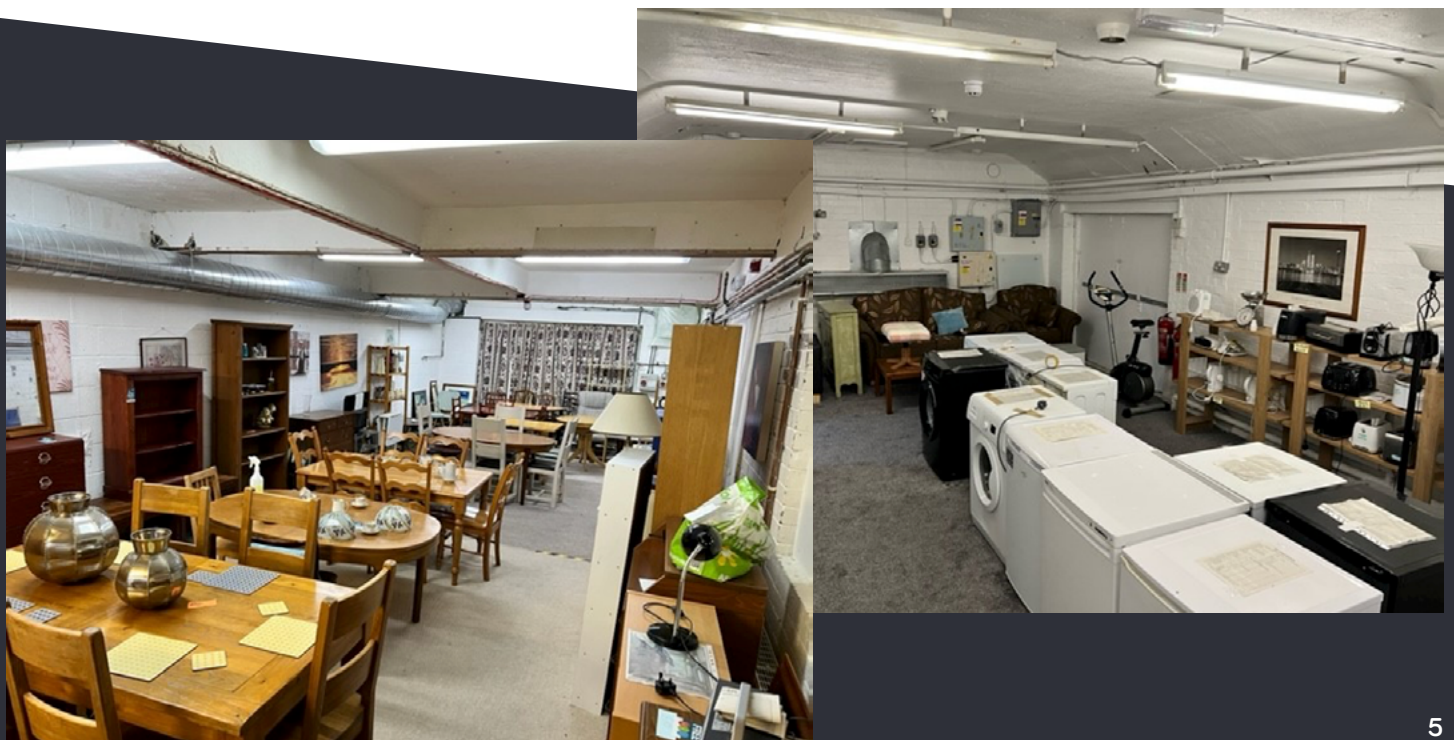
One of the founding reasons for GMHP coming together as a partnership was to find joint ways to address poverty within communities. As community anchor organisations, housing providers are in a unique position to have a significant impact in addressing financial inclusion. We work collaboratively within GMHP, the GMCA and partners across the GM region to deliver the Anti-Poverty Pledge that aims to alleviate poverty, tackle the inequalities and other root causes of poverty in our neighbourhoods.

To develop our partnership work on financial inclusion, GMHP co-fund the Financial Inclusion Officer role to work across the GM region and link into the GMCA Live Well agenda. This role has included creating closer links with DWP and UC, working closely with credit unions to explore suitable products for tenants and mapping financial inclusion activity across all housing providers. **Below are some case studies that demonstrate how this financial inclusion work is benefitting customers across Greater Manchester.**

Stockport Homes: Furniture Offer

The Furniture Recycling Project collects and recycles good quality furniture and electrical white goods to donate to households who may lack the basic items that turn their house into a home. The project helps alleviate financial hardship, diverting low-income households away from high-cost credit and furniture poverty by supporting Stockport's poorest households. As well as donating up to three main items the project offers the option to purchase additional items including white goods at a reduced cost.

The Stockport Homes Furniture Offer began in 2001 initially furnishing just 3 tenancies. By 2017 the Furniture Recycling Team was introduced, increasing capacity and targeting 1227 tenancies by March 2025. They prioritised those most in need, such as customers leaving temporary accommodation and domestic violence cases. During year 2023/24 the project collected furniture from 348 donor households and 178 void properties. The team supported 321 households in need including 294 white goods, 134 sofas, 178 wardrobes and drawers. This resulted in a total of 42.1 tonnes diverted away from landfill.



Rochdale Boroughwide Housing: Ageing benefits offer (Pension Credit and Attendance Allowance)

RBH run a targeted campaign to support those eligible for benefits who may not be receiving them. Adopting a targeted approach based on information shared by GMCA on defined geographical areas, they contact eligible people/households starting with those in rent arrears to offer support in resolving these issues. The project has a dedicated member of staff providing case work on Pension Credit and Attendance Allowance applications. There are 5 specialist advisors within the team who are able to provide bespoke specialist advice rather than generic benefits based information.

Trafford L&Q: Energy Advice Officers

The Trafford L&Q Energy Advice Service was initiated following a number of cases of customers facing significant issues around energy bills. The initial concern was about older properties where there could be issues about insulation and older heating systems, but it became apparent that there were also challenges caused by new heating systems in modern properties.

'A particular case that stood out was of a customer in a new-build home that had electricity bills of £142 per month yet the home was always cold, after a lot of work we eventually realised that the heating system was effectively set to heat the boiler 24/7 but not the home. Once this was sorted the heating bills went down to £38 per month and the home was warm. My thinking became what if we had an expert doing this, how much more quickly could we identify and resolve such issues?' Ben Thomas, Customer Support Manager.

L&Q began to use Energy Advisors who had experience in delivering energy advice to begin working with customers (L&Q had initially wondered if a qualification was necessary but actual expert experience in delivering energy advice proved to be far more valuable) to see how they could improve the home's energy efficiency and reduce bills by offering the following:

- Advise customers with higher energy bills on energy saving measures, checking customer insulation and that boiler and heating systems settings are giving the maximum benefit and efficiency to the customer.
- Resolving and negotiating issues with energy suppliers.
- Resolving issues with meters and getting customers reconnected.
- Looking at other ways for customers to save money with energy-saving items.
- Creation of Energy Guide leaflets to support all customers.

The first energy advisor started in April 2022, with demand for the service so high a second was soon recruited. The initiative has developed, and advisors engage with in-depth case work, negotiating with suppliers and resolving long-standing issues and complaints. The level of expertise enables a holistic service, able to challenge issues and escalating to Ofgem when needed.

Case Study

'A basic referral for just an electric blanket turned out to be a much larger issue. The energy advisor investigated the tenant's underestimated bills, and the supplier applied a back dated credit. The advisor applied for an energy trust fund to reduce the debt, she reset the electric heaters to reduce electric costs and got a good will gesture refund from the supplier for all the hassle for the resident. Overall, the energy advisor helped a resident for whom there was a language barrier when contacting the supplier to reduce their electric debt by £2,487 plus the additional £175 goodwill cheque she received.'

GMHP: Employment and Skills Group

The GMHP Employment and Skills Group work to create employment, training and skills opportunities to support customers and communities across the region. The partnership achieved significant outcomes for 2024 which include:

Supported **1,560**
residents into a new job

Supported **6,529**
residents towards work

Supported **522** into
volunteering opportunities

The GMHP Skills and Employment Group will continue to focus on the following 3 priorities for 2025:

- Young people will leave the education system with the knowledge, skills, and attributes they need to succeed
- Working-age adults who are out of work or who have low levels of skills will have access to the support they need to enter and sustain employment and their tenancy
- All adults have the chance to up-skill and progress in their careers

Athena: the ability to be employed

Established in 2013, **Athena** was created by a number of GMHP partners to remove barriers to employment for customers and the wider community in which they operate. Since then, many things have changed, including how employability services are delivered.

For some, employability is mainly perceived as supporting with CVs and interview techniques. However, we recognise that employability is more and more about health and wellbeing. Athena projects deliver a range of interventions that equip participants with the knowledge and skills to help manage physical and mental health challenges that give them the ability to be employed.

Over the past two years, Athena has delivered two UK Shared Prosperity Fund projects: **Multiply** and **Support to Succeed**. The following case study demonstrates how Athena projects work alongside front line services to have a bigger impact on tenants.

‘Everyday support for all, in every neighbourhood’. This is the GM Live Well strapline. Athena partners can play a key role in delivering on this strategy as place shaping organisations trusted by their customers.

Support to Succeed

Support to Succeed helps economically inactive people to build strategies that help them move forward. Over the 12 months of delivery on Support to Succeed, Athena has:

- Engaged with over 1,000 participants (461 referred from housing providers)
- Delivered 1,500 interventions
- Supported 902 people have learnt life skills
- Helped 566 people gained basic skills
- Provided help to 858 people finding employment

Case Study 1

Following a referral from Wythenshawe Community Housing Group, Neha joined Support to Succeed in May 2024.

Following moving to England from India with her husband due to his new job, Neha was unable to work through being a full-time mum to 2 young children. Neha found herself isolated from her local community and experiencing anxiety as a result of loneliness and a lack of purpose. This was leading to feelings of depression.

Neha is an educated and talented person with qualifications but didn't know how to overcome her lack of confidence to be able to realise her potential in the local community.

Following discussions with her keyworker, Neha realised that the best way to achieve engagement in her local community, and to provide a potential future source of income, was by focusing on her already long-established interest in meditation and mindfulness which she practised whilst in India.

Neha broke down the barriers which she was experiencing by engaging with the help of her keyworker and other members of the STS team to contact a local community centre and identify how she could host meditation sessions for members of the community.

With the help of keyworkers Neha drafted a code of conduct along with a safeguarding policy, purchased the required public liability insurance and held meetings with local stakeholders to enable her sessions to go ahead.

Neha is now hosting weekly sessions in her local community centre and is focused on developing her experience and confidence in order to forge a self-employed career as a meditation and mindfulness teacher.

Case Study 2

Jerome heard about the Support to Succeed programme from his Employment and Skills Mentor at One Manchester in March 2024.

Prior to joining Support to Succeed, Jerome had no paid employment history, however he had attempted two work placements. Unfortunately, Jerome felt unable to continue with these placements as the busy environments and team dynamics impacted on his anxiety.

Jerome received support from 42nd Street, to improve his wellbeing and look at ways of managing his levels of anxiety.

Through supportive sessions with his keyworker, Jerome was able to identify types of jobs that appealed to him and that he would like to explore further, helping him to raise his motivation and aspiration levels and feel more confident about securing work in the future.

In April, Jerome, with help from his keyworker, secured a 9 month paid work placement for 18-24 year olds to gain valuable training and work experience.

Jerome continued to work with his keyworker to apply for new roles, and secured a full time position as Community Connector with One Manchester.

Jerome is now six weeks into his new role, and is enjoying being surrounded by a supportive and positive team, engaging with customers and learning more about the different communities and organisations that exist within Manchester. Jerome's confidence has grown significantly, and he is constantly striving to push himself out of his comfort zone.

Multiply

Multiply aims to develop maths skills through showcasing how maths is used in everyday life. Athena members successfully delivered a range of non-accredited learning.

Over two years:

- 390 people have engaged
- 714 courses have been delivered

Stella was a tenant of First Choice Homes, who had struggled to secure long-term, financially stable employment opportunities that worked around her childcare commitments. Her long-term goal was to enrol onto a nursing-related course at college to better her career prospects, however, she does not hold the minimum requirements of maths and English. Stella wanted to take steps to gain confidence in working with numbers and to give her the motivation to progress onto further learning. She also wanted to develop confidence in working in a team. Doing a few Multiply courses at First Choice Homes enabled Stella to come out of her comfort zone and speak to people she would have not necessarily have spoken to before.

She has now progressed onto doing a one year course in functional skills English and maths at Oldham Lifelong Learning.

Here is what Stella had to say about the Multiply courses she attended:

"Hi Nadia,

I just wanted to say a big thank you for doing the Multiply course with me for Cost of Living and Budgeting. I learnt a lot and appreciate your time with me.

I have taken the budgeting template to use at home with my partner. The course has helped me visualise my incoming and outgoing. I really appreciate the knowledge I have gained from the course."

Multiply course delivered in Urdu and Punjabi.

This video was captured by the comms team at GMCA and shared across their various social media platforms. [See here.](#)

Jigsaw Homes: Alice's Story - Skills Exchange costume design course Sep/Oct 2024



Photo: Alice taken at First Aid Course, 22nd October 2024 at 4c Community Centre, Ashton.

Alice has limited capability for work due to epilepsy and sciatica but is able to do courses that work towards employment, such as this costume design course. She was referred to the Skills Exchange programme by her Jobcentre Work Coach.

Alice said: 'The Skills Exchange costume design course was great for me and gave me greater confidence in my sewing. I am a crafter, but I wanted to learn more. It also gave me the opportunity to get out of the house to socialise. I was also keen to show my motivation and determination to get back on track and this was a great opportunity to try something new and add to my CV.'

'I already have some sewing projects on the go. I am very tall, so being able to make my own clothes is a real bonus. I've had people on the course ask me to help them learn more about sewing and I'm keen to follow up on that!'

The Skills Exchange costume design project was delivered by the Royal Exchange Theatre and Jigsaw Support. Over seven weeks, 10 Economically Inactive women in Tameside developed their sewing skills to mend clothes, create new looks and learn about the process of costume design for the stage. Sessions took place at Holy Trinity and Jigsaw Support's Women and their Families Centre, culminating with a visit to the Royal Exchange for a tour and to watch a theatre performance of 'Spend Spend Spend'.

In addition, Alice went onto complete Multiply, a course to build numeracy skills in daily life as well as an accredited First Aid course, both of which were delivered by Jigsaw Homes Group. Alice was also referred to our Support to Succeed programme and is receiving dedicated support to overcome barriers to employment from a Jigsaw Support keyworker.

Jigsaw Homes: Anna's Story - Skills Exchange front of house course Sep/Oct 2024



Photo: Anna, taken at Food Hygiene Course, 23rd October 2024 at Dukinfield Community Hub.

Anna used to work as a cleaner, but has not worked since August 2023, when she had an operation. She couldn't work for a while. She is now able, but is struggling to find work, partly because of the gap in her employment history.

She participated in the Skills Exchange Front of House course that was delivered by the Royal Exchange Theatre and Jigsaw Support.

Over eight weeks, 10 Economically Inactive women in Tameside developed their confidence, teamwork and understanding of customer service roles.

Anna said, 'The course was very enjoyable and useful. I sometimes used to work on the reception of my previous employer, and I would like to pursue this kind of work, so this course was very helpful.'

Anna went on to also complete an accredited Food Hygiene course delivered by Jigsaw Homes Group. She said: *'Attending the courses have opened up opportunities for me to find a new job. I learned a lot, particularly at the Food Hygiene course, as this is not something I have done before.'*

Anna has accessed a range of support from Jigsaw's Support to Succeed programme, where she received personalised 1-1 advice through an individual action plan based on her needs.

'From here, I'm going to start applying for jobs. I feel more confident to do that now and have also had help to develop my CV from my keyworker.'

'All of this support has been amazing and will help me to communicate better, and, hopefully, find a new job.'

The Guinness Partnership: award-winning women's DIY skills programme (Oldham and Salford)

The 5-day Women's DIY Skills Programme is delivered by **The Guinness Partnership** as part of one of their social investment themes focused on employment, training and education. The programme is open to women over 18, who are social housing residents and unemployed or on a low income. It offers the opportunity to develop DIY skills, build confidence, gain friendships, and inspire positive progression pathways into further training and careers within housing and construction sectors. Fittingly, the initial cohort was recruited during the week of International Women's Day in 2023.

Five cohorts have been delivered in Greater Manchester (and also in Sheffield) in 2023, 2024 and 2025. Each participant has their motivations for attending the programme but often they want to gain independence and reduce reliance on others by being able to carry out DIY tasks in their homes.

In March this year The Guinness Partnership partnered with **Great Places Housing Group** to support a cohort of 10 women to take part in the DIY course at Oldham College. In April, Guinness won in the Collaborative Working category at the EEM Building Communities Awards.

Who has been supported?

65 women have completed the course so far and each course had a 100% completion rate. Due to the success of the courses, further cohorts are due to take place in Oldham and Sheffield, as well as new locations such as Croydon.

How is the programme funded?

Guinness collaborates with organisations, such as **Great Places Housing Group** and **Salix Homes**, that share its social purpose of improving peoples' lives and funds the programme through social value. Partnering with other housing providers allows the Programme to reach more social housing residents. Contractors funded the trainer from **Frameworks Social Enterprise CIC** as well as providing PPE for participants. Partners also provided tool kits, power tools, and painting and decorating sets which the participants were able to take home upon completion of the course.

Three colleges provided facilities free of charge, including classrooms, construction materials and prayer rooms to support inclusive training. They also offered college tours to showcase progression pathways.

This led to two participants from the Salford 2023 cohort attending evening classes to gain qualifications in trades.

Smart Works Greater Manchester provided employability support and offered free interview clothing to job-ready participants; removing barriers for people on low incomes.

'Attending the celebration of the Women's DIY Course, it was so clear to see how the course had had an enormously positive and profound impact on these women – giving them not only practical skills, but the confidence, belief, and hope for their future pathways. We love our partnership with Guinness and look forward to continue this work going forward.'

Cara Mahon, Engagement and Outreach Manager, Smart Works Greater Manchester

Impact and Recognition

The DIY Skills programme benefits female social housing residents by offering practical DIY skills and employability support led by collaborative partner social value support. These collaborations change lives through building confidence, improving well-being, developing practical DIY skills, and supporting career progression. With further cohorts planned, these collaborations will continue to achieve positive outcomes for unemployed and underemployed women.

The programme provides practical training in DIY skills plus taster sessions in construction and trades such as bricklaying, joinery, tiling, painting, and decorating. The women who take part are given tailored careers advice and support. They attend talks led by inspirational women who offer insights into working in housing, construction, marketing, sales, HR, plumbing and joinery. The women are also offered free professional photos to enhance their employability prospects.

'This is a great opportunity to learn new skills and I am thrilled to be able to share my experience with others, who one day may wish to take up maintenance work as a career.'

Hollie Heil, a multi-skilled technician and guest speaker from The Guinness Partnership on Salford programmes

Prior to joining, 38 per cent of participants were unemployed and looking for work. Participants said they felt isolated, struggled with anxiety, had low confidence, and lacked skills.

On completing the programme, some participants have started to volunteer, moved on to further education and training, or obtained CSCS cards. One participant is studying for a qualification in Mental Health Awareness, aiming to gain work in the social housing sector, specifically supporting single mothers. The lasting impact of this programme is to see unemployment potentially reduced and inspire more women to work in construction and housing. Through this programme, Guinness wants participants to feel valued, motivated to pursue personal and professional development, and confident to carry out DIY tasks.

The programme was recognised at the Communities and People in Housing Awards last year, receiving the Social Value Impact Award. In 2025 the programme won the Collaborative Working Award at EEM's Building Communities Awards.

Feedback

- 100 per cent of the participants rated the course excellent or good.
- The level of confidence in DIY amongst the cohorts rose from 2.1 to 4.1 (out of 5).
- Knowledge about careers and training interests rose from 2 to 4 (out of 5).

'I joined the course after leaving a career I have worked in for 15 years looking to start a new career. The DIY course offers this opportunity and it has been very helpful in learning about apprenticeships in the construction industry, as well as basic DIY skills I can use at home. The staff on the course have been very helpful and knowledgeable, and I am glad I attended.'

Krissy, participant on Salford 2023 programme

'I am a single mum with multiple health conditions, neurodivergent, and left school with no qualifications. My daughter is also autistic. For a long time, I had been stuck between my health and managing my home life due to how I can be laid up in bed due to my conditions, but this course built my confidence and showed me I can do something in my own time. I am now looking forward to more courses and possibly getting into work. I would recommend this course to anyone; it has changed my life.'

Dawn, participant on Salford 2024 cohort



Great Places Housing Group: Early Help drop-in hubs

Early intervention and poverty prevention for families, children and adults.

Great Places began the Early Help drop-in sessions at Primrose Bank and Crossley Centre Community Centres in Oldham in 2024 with the aim to provide support to families and adults within the community. The initial offer was to provide one engagement worker and one volunteer to support with issues such as:

- Financial hardship, debt/benefit advice
- Housing support
- Access to crisis funding e.g. household support fund, foodbanks
- Referral routes into further support when needed – e.g. Early Help, Social Prescribing

Since starting the hubs Great Places has supported over 50 households with form filling, contacting other services, making referrals into specialist services (such as mental health support, addiction support), and general advice and guidance.

The drop-ins are supported by staff from **Job Centre Plus** who provide support and guidance in relation to work issues and finding employment; they are also often joined by **Action Together** who discuss additional needs such as volunteering. The project has also been approached by **TOG Mind** who hope to attend the hubs to assist with any mental health support - all these additional services strengthen the offer and provide a one stop shop for people to get the support they need.

Contact Rosie.Longden@greatplaces.org.uk for more information.



Great Places Housing Group: CHAI (Greater Together Foundation Resilience Fund)

With more households affected by the rising cost of living, in 2022 Great Places launched the Greater Together Foundation Resilience Fund, to support Community Groups in delivering services to help customers and their community to achieve financial stability. One strand of the fund was to support access to services and activities that support people's physical and mental health. Support has been provided to the Women's CHAI Project CIC in delivering their Chai, Wellbeing and Cost of Living Project.

Women's CHAI Project

The Women's CHAI Project cares about its members and the community, helping and inspiring them to make a difference. The aim of the project is to empower and develop women to function at maximum levels as people, females, mothers, sisters and friends. It also raises awareness of women's wellbeing and ensures mothers are better equipped to make a difference to their children, themselves, family and the community.

The project ran several focus groups within CHAI to identify: Women's Mental Health, Women's Physical Health, Family Wellbeing and the Impact of the Cost Of Living Crisis. As a result of the focus groups a 6 session training program was compiled with a training manual and PowerPoints to support training the women. A female consultant worked together with teams and using the results of the focus groups Great Places put together a training manual, which the women could use during the sessions and then refer to as and when they needed. The project covered the 5 ways to wellbeing model, social prescribing to local services and Cost of Living Crisis Support.



Shazia Khan - 'The wellbeing project was brilliant, I learnt how to use the 5 ways to wellbeing to improve mine and my family's health. I learnt mindfulness art and am doing these at home with my children. I loved the Community Day, I met so many lovely women. I have made lots of new friends in a safe space.'

Abrat Begum - 'The Wellbeing Project has really helped I am able to manage the cost of living, we were struggling a lot and it affected my mental health. I loved the fitness sessions and I feel more energetic, my mood has improved, my anxiety is less and I now regularly keep up with my and my children's wellbeing.'

Irwell Valley Homes: reaching more people in need thanks to community partnerships



A domestic violence charity and a community interest company championing public involvement in health and social care are widening their net further into two areas of Greater Manchester thanks to partnerships with housing association **Irwell Valley Homes**.

Endeavour, a charity for women affected by domestic violence and their pets, has opened a new community hub in Great Lever, Bolton – using an Irwell Valley Homes property in the heart of one of their neighbourhoods. Meanwhile, **Bury Healthwatch** – the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in the town – have a new accessible town centre base inside a former commercial unit belonging to the social landlord.

Each new venture has helped to fulfil Irwell Valley Homes' wish to repurpose the buildings for the benefit of the community and to make a difference in the neighbourhoods where their customers live. In the first four months of the new Endeavour partnership, they have attracted more than 100 new referrals into the charity, with more than 500 people using the space in various ways.

This has included weekly sessions run by the **Deaf Society** and a fortnightly Citizen's Advice pop-up funded by a £10,000 grant from the Irwell Valley Foundation.

The hub is also home to Endeavour's counselling services and a craft group which has gone from strength to strength since it launched – supporting and empowering both those who attend and the volunteer who runs it. After enjoying such success with the craft group, the group leader has grown in confidence and now volunteers more widely for the hub.

'This role has been life changing for her. She had been unable to work for many years due to various issues around her mental health. She says that the Hub has enabled her to find her voice and feel valued.' **Amina, Community Hub Co-ordinator, Endeavour.**

Coffee mornings, a garden club and a creative writing workshop programme are some of the other ways the charity is reaching out and connecting further with the community through the hub, including those who might benefit from their more targeted and specialised support with domestic abuse. It is also helping Irwell Valley Homes connect with others who need support with housing issues and tenancy support.

At Bury Healthwatch, they host a varied programme of sessions and events from their new base, including weekly drop-ins where members of the public can share their feedback on health and social care experiences.

They are working with other local charities and community groups, including the **Bury Live Well Service** – with whom they hosted a menopause awareness event – and **MIND** mental health charity, who offer support sessions with clients from the premises.

The space is also a valuable source of signposting to other agencies, including emergency housing, helping with GP registration and NHS dentists, food banks and dementia support.

'The new premises have made it so much easier for me to access the support I need. The staff are really helpful.' **Bury resident.**

'The new premises are lovely and welcoming. It's a great space for meeting our clients in a safe environment.' **Community partner.**



GMHP Digital Inclusion

GMHP's group, Digital Inclusion, aims to reduce Digital Exclusion across Greater Manchester by understanding and addressing digital exclusion in order to adopt a common approach to remove the barriers that prevent people accessing online services. The GM Social Housing Digital Inclusion Pilot took place between September 2022 and 2024, one of the largest projects of its kind undertaken in the UK. The pilot sought to link up 5,000 households across five Social Housing Providers with five Internet Service Providers. By establishing a partnership between the public and private sectors it set out to explore what socially and economically viable options for social tariff and digital inclusion support may exist for social housing tenants.

Following the success of the GM Housing Digital Inclusion Pilot, GMHP's Digital Inclusion team used the lessons learnt to establish the 12 Step Programme to Develop Effective Digital Inclusion Programmes. The 12 Step Process sets out ways that organisations can accelerate their digital inclusion activities. GMHP's Digital Inclusion Chair Nick Horne and Co-Chair Sarah Woolley have presented this work at a number of national forums with further speaking events set for 2025 including the Northern Ireland Housing Conference.

The full report on the GM Housing Digital Inclusion Pilot can be found [here](#)

The Standardised Wayleave Agreement

Using the learnings from the GM Social Housing Digital Inclusion Pilot, a wayleave agreement was created to enhance fibre broadband connectivity for up to 260,000 tenants. GMHP signed the new agreement with Virgin Media O2, Nexfibre, Openreach and Hyperoptic to standardise and streamline the process of getting tenants connected to fibre broadband. The agreement is the first of its kind in the UK and allows a partnership between the GMCA, housing providers, and national broadband providers that will ensure tenants can access faster broadband without delay. The initiative is crucial in enabling residents, especially those in low-income households, to access essential digital services, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities.

The GM Wayleave Agreement represents a ground-breaking multi-agency partnership setting a new national standard for the installation and delivery of high-speed broadband connectivity. This pioneering framework serves as a blueprint for wider adoption, enabling more ISPs to join forces, reducing costs, enhancing operational efficiency, and laying the foundation for transformational improvements in social housing infrastructure and resident quality of life.

GMHP has committed to continue to work with the GMCA via the Strategic Assets Group to assess the potential for a wider roll out and development of the Wayleave Agreement outside of GM. The agreement reflects a collaborative effort to fix the digital divide, and improve the quality of life for social housing residents.

[Get Online Greater Manchester: digital inclusion pilot for social housing residents - Greater Manchester Combined Authority](#)

"A significant outcome of the pilot was the development of a standardised property wayleave and specification agreement for Greater Manchester's social housing stock that will speed up industry investment and reduce work for housing organisations. This agreement will also address challenges to delivering internet connectivity to homes and simplify access issues in relation to the practical and costly delivery to social housing homes". **GMCA Announcement September 2023**

MSV Right-Sizing into Later Living

MSV Housing has embraced the Right-Sizing initiative in collaboration with Manchester City Council, creating an innovative offer aimed at promoting aspirational later living. The initiative focuses on supporting customers aged 50+ to downsize from larger properties, freeing up much-needed family homes for those in critical housing need. This program also encourages independence in later life through access to modern, well-designed living accommodations.

Partnership Overview

In 2024, MSV Housing partnered with Manchester City Council on a Right-Sizing offer tied to our latest 55+ HAPPI scheme. The collaboration ensured seamless transitions for customers while addressing local housing challenges in the Manchester region.



Right-Sizing Outcomes

- **Apartments Available:** Of the 40 apartments in the scheme, 8 customers participated in the Right-Sizing process.
- **Support Provided:** All 8 customers benefitted from:
 - Comprehensive removals assistance.
 - 1-to-1 support to facilitate stress-free moves.
- **Financial Incentives:** Each participating customer received a £2,500 cash incentive from Manchester City Council upon completing their move.

Housing Impact

The Right-Sizing initiative provided customers with the opportunity to move into aspirational later living homes, enhancing their quality of life and fostering a sense of well-being. Furthermore, the program freed up larger properties to meet urgent local housing needs, resulting in:

Family Homes Delivered:

- o 3 two-bedroom homes.
- o 5 three-bedroom homes.

These homes were successfully repurposed and allocated to homeless families in partnership with Manchester City Council.

Collaboration with Housing Providers

The Right-Sizing process reflected a collaborative effort, as customers who participated came from three social housing providers within the Manchester region, showcasing how housing organisations can work together to tackle shared challenges.

Case Study: Mr M. (Written by his niece)

In November 2023, my grandmother passed away, leaving my uncle, Mr M., heartbroken. Having lived with her for 30 years following his divorce, her passing left him depressed, lonely, and isolated, especially as our family lived further away.

Their shared home—a three-bedroom parlour property—had been in our family for over 60 years, but managing it became increasingly overwhelming for him. The upkeep, bills, and daily responsibilities were a significant burden. Due to his age and mobility issues, he could no longer use the stairs and was confined to living in one room, worried about heating costs. The situation culminated in a crisis, during which he took an overdose and fell, resulting in a hospital stay.

Following several months in the hospital, a needs assessment determined that he was no longer able to care for himself or the house. He transitioned to temporary accommodation and was registered with Manchester Move to find a home that would suit his needs.

Through the help of the Right-Sizing officer, Mr M. downsized and was placed on the MSV waiting list. Today, he lives close to his family in a modern, one-bedroom flat that has transformed his life. He is no longer lonely or vulnerable and is thriving in his new environment.

Funding Officer Network Team (FONT)

The Funding Officer Network Team was established in June 2012 by Stockport Homes, Southway Housing and Trafford Housing Trust and currently has around 14 members. The group was established to build capacity of community groups to deliver wellbeing services. Funding officers adopt a bespoke “mentoring approach” to individuals and community groups which covers the aims of the project, funding opportunities and looking at longer term sustainability. Across GMHP there are examples of how funding support has been leveraged to help kick start and sustain community-led initiatives.

Great Places Funding Officers’ recent successes include working closely with a small charity called Become United. The small group began working with Great Places team in 2022 to build their capacity. The charity, based in Oldham and Rochdale, has been supported by the Great Places funding teams for 2 years within a mentoring capacity and now has £250k annual turnover projections.

Irwell Valley Homes: a helping hand through the winter months

A charitable investment fund run by **Irwell Valley Homes** for the benefit of its customers and communities created a dedicated £10,000 pot to support local groups through the winter.

The Irwell Valley Foundation, which provides grants to benefit local people living in the neighbourhoods where the social landlord has homes, recognised the need for a responsive funding pot which can work quickly to support community projects and charities offering a helping hand through the colder months.

So far, 12 food banks, community pantries and other projects supporting people and communities with the cost of living have benefitted from top-up donations to support them over winter when demand spikes.

Among them is the G-Force community café in Broomwood, Timperley, who received a £500 donation towards their £1 kids’ meals available from the cafe during the school holidays – supporting on average 35 children and young people each day.

‘It was lovely to see the young people eating together in the café. We got feedback saying how much they loved coming in and parents have said thank you too – adding how it helped in an expensive holiday time and giving the kids a safe place to go and eat.’

Paul Huxley, founder, G-Force café.

Bolton at Home: Social Value through Supply and Procurement



Bolton at Home collaborates with contractors and suppliers to deliver social value through the procurement process by incorporating social value as a scored criterion in all its procurement activities where the contract value exceeds £50,000. This criterion typically accounts for 10% to 20% of the total evaluation score, depending on the nature of the goods or services being procured. A contractor framework has been established to support the delivery of void works and day-to-day repairs. Within this framework, social value outcomes accounted for 20% of the overall scoring. Contractors were required to outline the specific social value outcomes they would deliver as part of their engagement. These contractors work closely with Bolton at Home's community teams during project delivery to assess and respond to the specific needs of local communities, in alignment with the wider community strategy.

Westhoughton with Connolly

As part of a recent procurement initiative, the contractor Connolly pledged the following social value commitments:

- Five work experience opportunities and a five-day volunteering placement to help customers re-enter the workforce.
- A £250 donation to support a local community project.

Bolton at Home's community teams actively engage with unemployed customers, connecting them to local opportunities and offering support to help them return to work. Additionally, the contractor pledged three "skip days," providing on-site skips to assist residents with loft clearances. This initiative enables the installation of loft hatches and insulation, thereby enhancing Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings and reducing energy bills for customers. The scheme is currently being delivered in partnership with the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

We hope you've enjoyed this report.

The GMHP website is being updated to reflect how our work aligns with both that of GMCA and the priorities of Supply, Live Well (support) and Standards, and the 10 districts. Alongside showcasing case studies of our work from across Greater Manchester, we are also running a campaign which will spotlight our work in each of the ten local authorities. Each month we will be sharing both Social Value and Growth related case studies which are specific to our work in that locality. Quarterly newsletters to each of the Local Strategic Housing Partnerships and key Stakeholders will also be shared, again highlighting the positive work of GMHP from a combined partnership perspective.

For website and newsletter additions, please contact Alyson Heald, Communication and Marketing theme lead in the first instance.



Greater Manchester
Housing Providers