



Annual Review

25/26



The **20% Movement** which started in **2024** is a **GMHP-led** initiative with the ambition that by **2034**, **20% of the workforce** across Greater Manchester housing providers will be made up of tenants.

To achieve this vision, the 20% Movement will focus on three key areas:

Culture and Values

Creating a shared approach to data, best practices and values across housing providers to foster an inclusive employment culture.

Raising Aspirations

Promoting a career in housing including events which will spotlight housing careers and support services, inspiring tenants to explore new opportunities.

Apprenticeships

Expanding apprenticeships to make housing careers more accessible, especially for young tenants, by offering hands-on experience and breaking down barriers.

It's about more than numbers; it's about creating a culture that values tenants' voice and experience.

Measuring our progress

It's encouraging to see that, so early in the 20% Movement's journey, we're already beginning to shift the dial.

While these early results are positive, it's important to note that some Greater Manchester Housing Provider members are still putting systems and processes in place to collect and report data in line with the Movement's requirements. As reporting becomes more consistent across the partnership, we expect the quality and completeness of the data to improve, providing an even clearer picture of our collective impact.

To support ongoing measurement and transparency, **20% Movement data from Greater Manchester housing providers is now collected twice a year.**



As of **31 March 2026**, **10 housing providers** had shared workforce data with the Movement



Together, these organisations employ **10,255 colleagues**



Of whom **1,073** are **social housing tenants**



This means that **just over 10% of employees** are also tenants, demonstrating positive progress towards our shared ambition



Alison Dean,
Outgoing Chair

When we first set out on this journey, the ambition of the 20% Movement was clear and unapologetically bold: that by 2034, one in five people working in housing would be someone who lives in social housing.

This ambition sits within a wider and urgent national context. Today, **over one million young people aged 16–24 in the UK are not in education, employment or training — around one in eight young people, and rising.** The Department for Work and Pension's latest independent report into young people and work warns that we are at risk of a "lost generation", with numbers potentially rising to one in six young people within the decade without intervention.

The report also highlights how deeply rooted the challenge has become. **Six in ten young people who are currently out of work or training have never had a job,** a significant increase over the past two decades.

At the same time, opportunities are narrowing — with **entry-level and lower-skilled roles declining sharply,** and apprenticeship pathways failing to reach those who need them most.

At its heart, the 20% Movement responds directly to this challenge. As housing providers there is no doubt that we provide good employment. We're here for the long-term, we see the value that developing people brings to our organisations; we provide career paths with purpose; we pay people fairly. These things are embedded in the values by which we run our organisations. I feel blessed that I had the opportunity to join this sector as a young person and build fantastic a career.

We can provide a leg up to these good employment opportunities for our residents and their families. Young people and others living in social homes and seeking entry roles will undoubtedly bear the brunt of this tough jobs market more than others. At the same time, we can benefit from their experience of living in social housing and within our communities. There's no doubt in my mind that employing people who understand what it's like to be on the receiving end of our services, and to live in our communities will strengthen our efforts to improve service delivery in our organisations and provide wider benefits to our sector as a whole. By opening up clearer, more accessible pathways into housing careers for residents, we'll not only diversify our workforce, we can improve understanding of what we do and actively tackle some of the structural barriers that continue to hold people back.

Looking back now, it is a source of real pride to see how far the Movement has come. What began as an idea has grown into meaningful action. Housing providers across Greater Manchester are measuring tenant representation in their organisations for the first time, reshaping recruitment practices, investing in community-based careers activity and challenging long-held assumptions about who belongs in housing roles.

We're already seeing the impact: more tenants showing interest in entering the sector, deeper engagement with communities and a renewed sense of housing as a career with purpose and possibility, particularly for those who may previously have felt excluded from it.

This Annual Review brings together case studies that capture that progress in practice. They show how commitment has translated into tangible change, from new recruitment routes and entry-level opportunities to leadership conversations that are shifting culture and mindset. There is no single blueprint here, but a shared willingness to listen, learn and act, and that collective effort is what has made the Movement possible.

As I step down as Chair, I do so with enormous confidence and optimism. I am absolutely delighted to be handing over the reins to Michelle Tomlin-Flack, whose energy, passion and leadership will build on this fantastic work and take the Movement to the next level. While my role as Chair may be coming to a close, my belief in the 20% Movement has never been stronger, and I will continue to support it as an ally and advocate in the years ahead.

The progress captured in this Review belongs to everyone who has contributed so far, and it is only the beginning.

Michelle Tomlin-Flack

Incoming Chair

As the 20% Movement continues to grow, it is inspiring to see interest extending beyond Greater Manchester and conversations beginning across other regions. While this expansion reflects the strength of the Movement's vision, the case studies within this report remind us of something even more powerful: what becomes possible when organisations move decisively from intention to action. They offer practical insight, shared learning and genuine inspiration for those ready to take the next steps towards a more representative, trusted and resilient housing sector.

Housing providers across Greater Manchester will come together again over the next 12 months to collaborate and support tenant aspirations, focusing on specific groups and geographical areas, with planning starting soon — so watch this space — this will be led by Karen Mee the Employability and Social Value Manager from Southway and a further 12 housing providers and employability partners across Greater Manchester.

Having worked in the employability sector for over 20 years, including managing and developing employability services within housing, I have seen first-hand the transformative impact that inclusive approaches can have — not only for individuals, but for organisations and communities as a whole. As I step into the role of Chair, I am genuinely excited about what the 20% Movement can achieve collectively. This review captures both how far we have come and the opportunity ahead, and I look forward to building on this strong foundation together.



Inspiring careers in housing across Greater Manchester with the 20% Movement



March 2026 marked an important moment of collaboration across Greater Manchester, as housing providers came together as part of the 20% Movement, to deliver a series of interactive, community-based careers events. Hosted in neighbourhoods across the city region, the events were designed to encourage social housing tenants to consider careers within the housing sector — and to reflect more closely the communities social housing providers serve.

Beyond raising awareness of job opportunities, the events reinforced an important principle: that representation matters, and that those with direct experience of social housing bring valuable insight, empathy and perspective into the sector.

Community centres across Greater Manchester became welcoming spaces for conversation, curiosity and possibility. Those who attended were able to meet people working in a wide range of housing roles, broadening perceptions of what a career in housing can look like. Colleagues working for housing providers shared their own journeys into the sector, helping to demystify pathways into employment and illustrate the diversity of roles available.

A broad group of housing associations led and shaped the programme, including Jigsaw Housing, Southway Housing, Great Places Housing Group, Clarion, Onward, Together Housing, ForHousing, Stockport Homes, Wythenshawe, One Manchester, First Choice Homes Oldham and Be One Homes. Each housing provider brought its own approach, with events featuring speed networking, drop-in advice sessions and informal conversations with colleagues. Attendees explored opportunities across areas such as housing management, customer services, HR, caretaking and grounds maintenance, housing support, development roles and apprenticeships.

Many events also included creative and practical elements — from ‘day-in-the-life’ videos and interactive exercises to CV-writing support and workplace bingo — helping to make careers conversations accessible and engaging. Partner organisations, including Hays Recruitment, added further expertise, while the Wythenshawe Community Connector event alone attracted 200 people, highlighting the appetite for this kind of local engagement.

Across March and into April:

435 people were engaged with through these events

typically attracting **30-50** attendees each

directly resulting in at least **15** job applications

alongside numerous talent pool registrations, referrals and course enrolments.

These outcomes provide early but encouraging indicators of the potential long-term impact of the initiative.

The careers events stand as a strong example of what can be achieved through collaboration, shared values and a commitment to community-led opportunity. They have laid foundations not only for future recruitment, but for a more representative, inclusive and resilient housing sector across Greater Manchester.

Feedback was excellent, with some attendees commenting:

"I was impressed with how I was greeted and set up with someone to talk to, just after giving a quick insight of my current situation and role. It was super friendly and relaxed."

"... they explained the work process, made me feel good, and gave me hope for getting a job soon."

"It was great being able to talk to individual team members about their job roles, getting an insight into what working within the housing sector is like."

"I came here today with an open mind, and I've now registered my interest to apply for two different apprenticeship roles – they both would push me to learn new skills, which is great!"

"The welcoming seminar was really helpful – most events are just tables to walk around."

"Hearing similar stories made me much more confident about getting into work."



Onward Homes' Sharon Chuunga took part in one of the events in Salford, and commented:

"A lot of people don't know what a housing officer does, so we're here to enlighten them... there's a lot of challenges but it's a varied role – no two days are the same, and for someone who doesn't want that rigid 9-5, this could be the perfect job for them."

Alison Dean, outgoing Chair of the 20% Movement, commented:

"This is an initiative I believe really strongly in. It's important that our organisations reflect the communities we serve, and it's great to see the commitment of several Greater Manchester Housing Providers to really put the wheels in motion for this over the past few months of planning, collaborating and delivering such successful events with fantastic turnouts. Many in our communities face a range of barriers to pursuing a career, and not just in our sector, and a lot of hard work goes on behind the scenes to tackle these – I'm confident we can achieve the 20% goal in the next decade."

Incoming Chair, Michelle Tomlin-Flack, who took the lead in organising the full cohort of 20% Movement March events, commented:

"It's been fantastic to see such a large number of housing providers come together through the Careers events. Being involved in shaping these events has been a brilliant experience, especially working alongside so many committed partners who share the same goal – raising the aspirations of tenants and supporting the 20% Movement."

One of the real highlights was speaking to our wonderful tenants, as well as hearing from so many colleagues across different organisations who shared their career journeys, what their roles involve, and what it's really like to work in housing. Their openness and enthusiasm truly inspired our tenants to consider future careers in the sector."

The feedback from the events has been incredibly positive, and as a direct result, we've seen an additional 22 tenants apply for the Tenant Talent Pool at ForHousing. This shows the real impact we can make when we come together with a shared purpose."



Spotlight on Best Practice

One of the most powerful aspects of being part of the 20% Movement is the opportunity it creates for housing providers to learn from one another and work together in new and meaningful ways. Across the Movement, partners are testing different approaches to supporting customers into employment – from developing tailored pathways and training programmes, to rethinking recruitment and creating clearer routes into housing careers.

Just as importantly, the Movement provides a platform for collaboration. Housing providers are not working in isolation, but alongside each other – sharing insight, co-designing initiatives and opening up opportunities across organisational boundaries. Whether that's coming together to deliver joint careers events, promoting job roles to each other's residents, or building shared talent pipelines, this collective approach is helping to widen access and accelerate progress.

There is no single model for success, but there is a shared commitment to learning, adapting and improving. By being open about what works – and what doesn't – members are strengthening their own approaches while contributing to a wider movement for change.

This section shines a spotlight on some of that work in practice. It brings together a selection of examples from across the Movement, highlighting the different ways organisations are creating opportunities, supporting customers into employment and building a more representative housing workforce.



Peer Navigator Programme, Be One Homes



Peer Navigators are residents employed to use their lived experience to support others in their community. They act as a trusted bridge between housing services and local people, offering practical guidance, building confidence and helping residents access the right support, while also shaping services through their insight and relationships on the ground.

Be One Homes Peer Navigator Programme continues to deliver positive outcomes for both tenants and communities. Delivered in partnership with Bolton CVS, the programme provides tenants with paid employment and development opportunities while strengthening trust, connection and resilience within neighbourhoods.

During the past year, six Peer Navigators were in post, supporting targeted neighbourhood activity, environmental improvements and community engagement, including work with the Farnworth Focus Team.

The programme continues to demonstrate its value as both an effective community engagement model and a pathway into sustainable employment.

Since 2018:

>42 Peer Navigators have been recruited

75% progressing into employment

8% moving into education or training

Find out more
about Be One Homes Peer
Navigator Programme here



Southway Academy Project Overview

The Southway Academy is a four-week employability programme that aims to support customers into work by building confidence in a professional environment, developing transferable skills, increasing understanding of housing as a sector for employment, and creating a talent pool for potential future roles at Southway. It does so by providing hands-on experience across Southway teams, alongside employability support such as CV and application guidance.

October 2025 Cohort

The October 2025 cohort supported six customers, with placements across teams such as Advice, Housing Management, Customer Hub, Property Services, IT and many more.

All customers involved in the programme reported increased confidence and employability skills. Two secured roles in Southway's Customer Hub, one gained employment with a Southway contractor, and the remaining customers moved into other employment; all were added to Southway's talent pool.

Learnings

The programme will work best when it is flexible and inclusive (including considering neurodiversity and cultural/religious needs), supported by clear schedules and careful timing. Colleague engagement is also key and the depth of work required from colleagues must be a factor when deciding on the frequency of Academy intake.

Next Steps

The Southway Academy met its objectives by supporting customers into employment, building their confidence and skills, and creating a pipeline of future talent. The learning from the 2025 cohort will be used to shape further development and support more customers into employment, with the next Academy which began in April 2026.

How the Academy supported customers

Muhammad: Improved confidence and knowledge of how he could work in a large UK business. He also developed new skills when with Southway's electrical team.

Michelle: Inspired to pursue a career in housing and had a clearer understanding of suitable roles from her transferable skills.

Rahima: Boosted her confidence and skills for career advancement in an office environment.

Hannah: Found an unexpected interest in an office-based role and broadened her scope when searching for jobs as she now recognises her transferable skills.

Zoe: Gained much-needed confidence and was inspired to go for interviews. She better understands how her skills fit into the workplace.

Alessia: Motivated to apply for jobs at Southway and gained an appreciation for office-based roles.

Find out more
about Southway's
Academy here



In February 2026, ForHousing launched its Tenant Talent Pool, a fast-track route into employment designed to support tenants into sustainable careers while strengthening the organisation through lived experience. The launch built on the success of an earlier pilot in 2025, which demonstrated the value of creating clear and accessible pathways into housing careers.

During the February intake:

51 tenant applications received

26 applicants invited to interview

19 tenants added to the Talent Pool

Created a high-quality pipeline of candidates ready to progress into roles as opportunities arise.

The formal launch of the Tenant Talent Pool also aligned with the Careers in Housing Event, which ForHousing hosted in March 2026. As part of this event, tenants were introduced to the huge scale of careers and opportunities within the sector and highlighted the Talent Pool as a direct route into work. Following this session, a further 22 tenants applied to join the Talent Pool, demonstrating increasing awareness and engagement.

The Tenant Talent Pool is open to any ForHousing tenant who is seeking employment. No previous experience is required — only enthusiasm, commitment and a willingness to learn. Tenants register by submitting a CV and cover letter, which are assessed through a structured interview and scoring process.

When vacancies arise, top-scoring tenants are prioritised. For entry-level, administrative and apprentice roles, the highest-scoring tenant is offered the role directly, without the need to reapply or attend additional interviews. For specialist roles, leading candidates are invited to interview ahead of external applicants.

Although still in its early stages, the Tenant Talent Pool is already delivering meaningful outcomes. Following the pilot, five tenants have secured employment, progressing into a range of roles including Income Assistant, Key Worker, Community Safety Officer.

By investing in tenant potential and embedding lived experience into recruitment, ForHousing is building a more inclusive workforce and ensuring services continue to be shaped by the communities they serve.

Find out more about
ForHousing's Talent Pool here



Supported Employment Pathway, Stockport Homes



Stockport Homes has developed a clear, supported employment pathway into current vacancies for customers engaged with its Employment Team, demonstrating a strong commitment to the principles of the 20% Movement.

As an organisation that actively promotes careers to its tenants, Stockport Homes offers an attractive employment package, including the Real Living Wage, health and lifestyle benefits, and Platinum Investors in People accreditation. By embedding a defined pathway into recruitment, the organisation ensures customers can clearly see, access and progress into opportunities within Stockport Homes.

Crucially, the approach delivers benefits on both sides. Customers are supported into sustainable employment, while Stockport Homes gains the insight and lived experience that tenants bring to the organisation. This strengthens how services are shaped, designed and delivered, and helps ensure they genuinely reflect the communities they serve.

Entry level roles within salary scales 3 and 4 (£25,500–£28,100) are identified at the point a recruiting manager logs a vacancy, triggering the supported employment pathway and placing a hold on external advertisement until the Employment Team have had the opportunity to explore potential candidates amongst the existing caseloads.

The process operates as follows:

- » Recruiting managers confirm within the recruitment portal whether a vacancy sits at scales 3 or 4
- » Roles in scope are directed to the Employment Team and placed on external advertisement hold for one week to provide the employment team time to contact prospective candidates
- » HR monitors and shares a unique application link with the Employment Team
- » The Employment Team identifies potential candidates from a live caseload of approximately 200–250 customers. Candidates are supported with applications which are submitted via the link
- » Recruiting managers review applications and invite candidates to interview when essential criteria is met
- » Where timescales are shorter, vacancies can be advertised externally while the Employment Team support candidates on the caseload to apply

This process sits alongside a broader offer of employability support, including one-to-one advice and guidance, CV development, job search support, job brokering, weekly job clubs, and a Job Booklet which is shared with over 500 customers.

In the last year:

213 customers supported into work

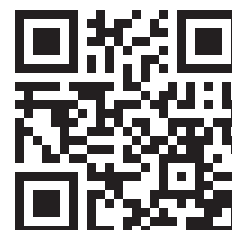
Over a two-year period:

>20 customers have secured roles within Stockport Homes

Accounting for approximately **7%** of all Stockport Homes recruitment

While not every vacancy results in a suitable supported employment candidate, the process ensures roles are routinely considered as opportunities for tenants, embedding access to employment at Stockport Homes as a day-to-day recruitment activity rather than as a standalone initiative.

Find out more
about the SKy light
programme here



Strengthening Our Approach to the 20% Movement

Jigsaw has enhanced its recruitment and engagement processes to better support the 20% Movement, creating more accessible pathways into employment for tenants.

We have changed our recruitment process, where new vacancies, under an agreed Banding, are now prioritised for tenants. Roles submitted by recruiting managers are held from external advertising for seven days, giving tenants an exclusive window to apply. During this time, the Employment Team actively identifies and supports suitable candidates from our growing talent pool, ensuring they are well-prepared to apply.

We have also introduced a more targeted approach to engagement. Insights from the Jigsaw Rewards survey (our tenant consultation platform) have been used to improve how we promote opportunities, leading to increased awareness and higher enrolment in our talent pool. This has been further strengthened through housing career awareness sessions, helping tenants better understand the range of roles available within the sector and the pathways into them.

In addition, newly designed 20% Movement promotional materials and strengthened partnerships with Tameside Council and the DWP have expanded our reach.

Our support offer has been enhanced to provide end-to-end guidance for tenants, including CV and application support, interview preparation, and clear insight into roles at Jigsaw. Alongside this, we are developing a structured talent pool, ensuring tenants receive regular updates on vacancies and access to tailored training opportunities such as First Aid, Food Hygiene Level 2, British Sign Language (BSL), and Barista Skills.

Through these improvements, Jigsaw is making the recruitment process more inclusive, proactive, and supportive, helping more tenants take their first steps into employment and build long-term careers.

Case Study: Adebola

Great Places Housing Group

Great Places Employability Service - Adebola's story

Empowering customers to overcome barriers and thrive is the mission of Great Places' Employability Service.

At Great Places, our Employability Service continues to be a lifeline for customers seeking meaningful work, personal growth and renewed confidence.

One of the driving forces behind this transformation is Naseem Akhtar, Employability Coach in Oldham, whose dedication and personalised approach have helped many customers overcome barriers and rediscover their potential.

Adebola's Journey: From uncertainty to confidence and success

Adebola first connected with Naseem through a proactive email outreach.

"She reached out to me to check if I needed help with employment," Adebola recalls.

That initial contact led to support with project management training and later, a deeper engagement when Adebola wanted to change her career path.

"She sat with me, helped me look for jobs, and gave me loads of interview tips," Adebola shares. "She kept saying, 'You'll be fine,' and that really boosted my confidence."

With Naseem's guidance, Adebola applied for a role at Great Places, secured an interview, and felt empowered throughout the process.

"Before, I felt laid back. I kept getting rejections and thought maybe this wasn't for me. But now, I know I can do this."

And she did. Adebola has now secured a job as an Independent and Wellbeing Housing Assistant at Great Places, a fantastic achievement and a fitting conclusion to her journey.

"It's really been helpful," she says. "The passion Naseem puts into her work is encouraging. I recommend this service to anyone who wants to improve themselves."

Adebola summarised the impact that her first-hand experience has had on her work:

"My experience as a customer with Great Places has given me a lived understanding of the challenges and expectations residents face, enabling me to empathise more deeply, build trust, and relate to their concerns, while motivating me to provide a compassionate, customer-focused service and advocate effectively for their needs in my role as a Housing and Wellbeing Assistant."

Find out more about
Great Places Employability
Service here



Case Study: Stuart

Be One Homes



Stuart had worked as a painter and decorator for most of his adult life. During the Covid-19 pandemic he was placed on furlough, and after this period he found himself out of work for a few years. Spending long periods at home with little structure or purpose had a significant impact on his mental health. His anxiety increased, his confidence dropped, and Stuart realised he would not be able to return to working on building sites.

As his health continued to deteriorate, Stuart made the difficult decision to seek support. He attended the New Bury UCAN Centre, where he reached out for help. From there, he was referred to Be One Homes' Money Advice Service, accessed support through the food pantry, and was provided with gas and electricity vouchers. This early intervention helped stabilise his situation at a critical time.

During the same week, Stuart saw a social media post advertising a Peer Navigator role in Farnworth, funded for 18 months. At that point,

Stuart was unsure about his future and had no clear career direction beyond his previous trade. Nevertheless, he applied for the role and was successful.

In the first few months, Stuart shadowed the Community Development Officer and UCAN Centre staff, gaining insight into community engagement work, support services, and local outdoor sites. This period of learning and observation allowed him to rebuild his confidence in a supportive environment. The Peer Navigator role proved transformational for Stuart, giving him a renewed sense of purpose and belief in himself.

Stuart went on to join the Farnworth Focus Team, based on the Asda Estate, working as a Peer Navigator within his own local community. In this role, he supported a wide range of community activity, including local projects, tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB), and assisting with initiatives such as Opus Free WiFi. Drawing on his own lived experience, Stuart was able to connect authentically with tenants, helping them engage with services, build confidence, and feel supported.

Two years ago, Stuart was a Be One Homes tenant living in Farnworth and facing significant challenges. He was drinking heavily, struggling with his mental health, and feeling stuck. When he joined the Farnworth Focus Team, few could have predicted the changes that would follow.

What Stuart did next took real courage. He stopped drinking, made positive changes to his lifestyle, began eating well and exercising, and fully committed to everything the programme offered. He used his personal experiences to support other tenants, helping them navigate services and rebuild their own confidence.

Through this, Stuart became a completely different person — healthier, motivated, and hopeful about the future.

When the Peer Navigator role came to an end, Stuart continued his progression by applying for a Trailblazer scheme, working for four months as a Community Repairs Officer. During this placement, he supported the day-to-day repairs team alongside the Community Repairs Officer for the Farnworth Focus Team. His approach with customers was excellent, his enthusiasm to learn stood out, and he was widely regarded as a hardworking and reliable team member.

Stuart later applied for a full-time Property Maintenance Operative role at Be One Homes and came close to being appointed. Unfortunately, he wasn't able to take up the role at the time due to a driving licence issue.

However, Stuart remained committed. He has since passed his driving test, and conversations about future opportunities are ongoing. This marks another positive step in his journey.

As a Be One Homes tenant, Stuart is also a strong example of the Greater Manchester 20% Movement in action — the commitment that by 2034, 20% of the workforce will come from a social housing background. Stuart embodies exactly what this initiative aims to achieve.

Stuart's journey — from struggling tenant, to Peer Navigator, to Trailblazer, and to the cusp of full-time employment — demonstrates the power of timely support, meaningful opportunity, and personal determination. With the right help at the right time, and the courage to embrace change, Stuart has transformed his life.

Find out more about Be One Homes Peer Navigator Programme here



Case Study: Milly

Be One Homes



“Working in social housing, as a resident means I use my lived experience to create stronger relationships with other residents and the community. I advocate for residents and promote positive organisational change.”

Milly grew up on Johnson Fold Estate in Bolton, which she feels often gets a bad reputation, but her experience was really positive, with a strong sense of community and support around her. In 2010 her family moved into private renting, and in 2018 after rising costs moved back to a Be One Homes property.

After finishing sixth form studying Photography and Performing Arts, she went through a tough period where she wasn't sure what she wanted to do. She also struggled with her mental health and some difficult personal circumstances leading to her leaving home to live with her grandmother back on Johnson Fold.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Molly became a full-time carer to her grandmother, which gave her time to reflect. Eventually, she engaged with therapy and started rebuilding relationships with her family. In 2021, she got involved with the Sabden Growers Project on her estate, which helped her rebuild confidence and find a sense of purpose.

Through this, she connected with Be One Homes and got involved in more activities, including an arts project and a photography exhibition. She later applied for a Peer Navigator role - after not getting it the first time, she took the feedback on board, tried again, and was successful.

In that role, Milly got hands-on experience supporting her community, through local projects and campaigns, helping residents find the support they need. It really helped her grow in confidence and skills. Since then, she's moved into a role as a UCAN Project Officer and in 2024 also a role as a Community Engagement Project Officer. Milly now supports residents with things like housing, wellbeing, and community projects across Bolton.



Case Study: Craig

Southway Housing Trust



‘The best thing that’s ever happened to me’... How Craig found his way forward with our Employment Support Team.

A few months ago, tenant Craig McGowan was working part time in hospitality and struggling with motivation. After meeting Southway Housing Trust’s Employment Support Team and securing a job with Southway, his confidence has never been higher.

Why did you get in touch with Southway’s Employment Support Team?

It was like a touch of fate. Southway rang my house and asked about any unemployed or part-time workers. My mum said to ring them back, and then Zeek got in touch.

I was part time, at my mum and dad’s, with no money... It was like, *‘Ahhh help me!’*.

The confidence and drive I had was zero. Everything was uphill, everything was a slog. The world was against me.

I had the same narrow-mindedness about this journey. I didn’t even know it would even be a journey! I thought it would just be a tick-box for Southway, but it was genuine help.

**Find out more about
Craig’s story here**



What is your job with Southway and how have you been finding it?

I’m a Customer Hub Advisor, the first person tenants speak to when they call for help and advice. It’s great! I really like helping other tenants and Southway is a terrific place to work. The staff here really care about the customers and really want to make difference to our communities.

What would you say to someone in the position you were?

Just do it, just go. Just count to three, kick your legs out and stand up.

I understand if you need that nudge. Everyone deserves a Zeek to tell you *‘You can do it’*. I knew what I needed to do for 10 years, you just get stuck in a rut.

I can never thank him enough because I’ve never had someone who said, *‘come on Craig you are good enough, get out of bed, have you applied for this?’*.

I keep saying it, but it’s the best thing that’s ever happened to me.



Case Study: Caroline

Jigsaw Homes



Caroline became a Jigsaw tenant in 2013, when it was still known as New Charter Homes. Securing her home marked a fresh start for Caroline and her children following the end of a domestic abuse relationship. Reflecting on that time, Caroline shared that having a safe, affordable place to live helped her feel in control of her life again for the first time in years, rebuilding her confidence and independence.

From 2013 onwards, Caroline worked tirelessly to create a better future. As a single parent, she balanced two jobs while studying at college and later progressing to university. She believes that without the stability and affordability of her home, achieving these goals would not have been possible. Despite the challenges, often feeling exhausted from juggling work and family life, having a secure home provided the foundation she needed to pursue her education.

Caroline said:

“Having a stable, affordable home gave me the chance to rebuild my life. It meant I could focus on my children and my future, even when things felt really tough. Without that security, I don’t think I would have achieved what I have today.”

Caroline first applied for a role with Jigsaw several years ago but was unsuccessful at the time. Undeterred, she continued to develop her skills in a range of roles, gaining valuable experience working with people from diverse backgrounds. Her career eventually led her to the prison service, where she regularly encountered individuals facing housing difficulties.

Drawing on her own positive experience as a Jigsaw tenant, Caroline felt inspired to pursue a role within social housing. In October 2025, she successfully joined Jigsaw’s caretaking team. She sees her current role as a fantastic starting point, allowing her to gain first-hand insight into tenants’ needs, the challenges they face, and how she can help provide practical solutions.

Caroline is thoroughly enjoying her role and values working for an organisation she believes genuinely cares about its colleagues. She is excited about the opportunities ahead and looks forward to continuing her development and contributing her skills within Jigsaw.



Case Study: Curtis

Irwell Valley Homes



“Living and now working on the estate, I’m really proud to be making a difference to my community”

When Irwell Valley Homes brought the management of the grounds maintenance service for their two largest estates in-house, they were determined to use the insight and experience of local residents to help it succeed.

They were also keen to promote the new employment opportunities it offered to customers living on their estates of Sale West in Trafford and Haughton Green in Tameside.

Through drop-in events in the local community centres along with a communications campaign to local residents, they collected feedback to shape the new service and shared the job opportunities with customers – encouraging anyone interested to apply.

Curtis Wilson, a resident of the Sale West estate since he was 13, was successful in being appointed as an estates officer working in the team, delivering the grounds maintenance service for his community.

He said he’s never looked back since joining up in April 2026 and gets such job satisfaction from seeing the difference the service is making to the estate environment and customer satisfaction.

“For 21 years I worked in finance – every day sat at a desk in an office,” Curtis explains.

“But I love the outdoors – I go hiking, paddleboarding, anything to get me out in the fresh air and nature. I’d wanted to do something different for some time, but after so long in a job and with limited experience of other areas, I felt a bit stuck and I wasn’t sure how I could move the idea forward.

“When the email came through about the new grounds maintenance service and the potential job opportunity, it felt like a sign. It felt like it was my calling. I went along to the drop-in at the community centre and had a chat with the estates manager. I knew it was the right thing for me, even though it was a bit frightening diving into something completely different. But I took a leap of faith and I’m so glad I did!

“I absolutely love my job now. I can stand back at the end of the day, take a look at what I’ve achieved and know I’ve really made a difference for my community and my neighbours.

“I know there have been issues with the service in the past and it feels really good to be part of the solution. Being a tenant and a resident here too, it means people know me – they feel comfortable raising things with me, having a chat as we work around the estate. I think they’ve been pleased to see the opportunity go to someone local, who really knows the area.

“I think the 20% Movement is a great initiative. It recognises that residents bring unique insight, local knowledge and a real passion for their communities. By creating opportunities for customers to become colleagues, housing providers can tap into that experience while helping people develop new skills and careers. For me, it’s been life-changing and it’s making a real difference to the estate too.”



Video Case Studies

Great Places Housing Group

To support awareness of the 20% Movement and the breadth of careers available across the social housing sector, Great Places Housing Group produced a series of videos.

Scan the QR codes below to find out more.



Lorna Garratt

Neighbourhood Services Officer - Great Places Housing Group

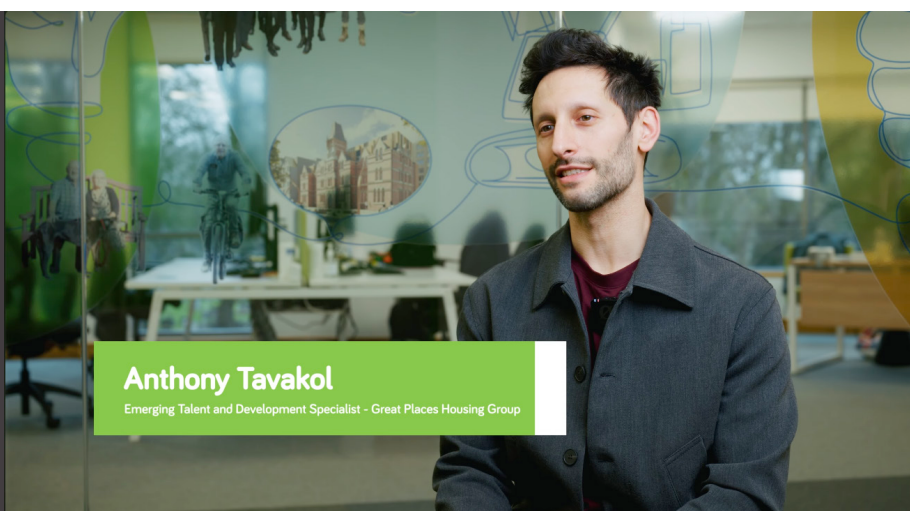
Lorna's Video



James Feetham-Evans

Inclusive Services Team Leader - Great Places Housing Group

James' Video



Anthony Tavakol

Emerging Talent and Development Specialist - Great Places Housing Group

Anthony's Video



The 20% Movement:

What Hiring Managers need to know



What is the 20% Movement?

The 20% Movement is a voluntary, long-term pledge by Greater Manchester Housing Providers. It aims for 20% of staff across Greater Manchester Housing Providers to come from social renting households by 2034.

It is about:

- » Widening access to careers in housing
- » Valuing lived experience alongside skills and qualifications
- » Better reflecting and understanding the communities we serve

It does not change employment law or remove existing recruitment standards and safeguards.

What is the purpose of this FAQ Document?

From the very beginning of the 20% Movement, partners have been open about the challenges as well as the opportunities. During the initial Movement event, colleagues from employment, skills and HR teams across member organisations shared a consistent message: one of the biggest barriers to increasing customer employment was not ambition or lack of opportunity, but the perceptions and biases that can exist within recruitment processes.

For many hiring managers, these perceptions are often unintentional – shaped by assumptions about skills, experience or what makes a ‘typical’ candidate. But left unchallenged, they can create barriers for customers who have the potential, motivation and lived experience to succeed and add real value within our organisations.

A core aim of the Movement is to address this directly. By creating space to have honest conversations, sharing evidence and practical examples, and highlighting the value that lived experience brings, we can begin to shift thinking and build confidence. It’s about supporting hiring managers to see talent differently – recognising potential alongside experience and understanding how inclusive recruitment strengthens teams and services.

This section is designed to support that shift. It brings together key information, myth-busting guidance and practical insight to help hiring managers feel confident in their role in widening access to careers in housing, and in building teams that better reflect the communities we serve.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does being a customer mean someone automatically gets the job?

No.

Being a customer does not guarantee employment. All candidates are assessed fairly against the skills, experience, and requirements of the role. Lived experience is valued alongside other essential criteria, helping to broaden access and bring additional insight to the organisation.

Do we have to hire a customer over more qualified candidate who isn't a customer?

No.

All candidates still need to meet the essential requirements of the role. The 20% Movement is about broadening access, valuing lived experience, and creating opportunities for customers, ensuring recruitment decisions consider both skills and lived experience, and that everyone is assessed fairly and appropriately for the role.

How should we think about candidate suitability beyond formal qualifications?

When recruiting, consider two key factors beyond formal qualifications:

1. Lived experience: Candidates with relevant life or work experience may bring insights and perspectives that directly enhance service delivery. This can sometimes be more valuable than formal credentials alone.

2. Potential for development: It can be advantageous to hire someone who has some development needs but demonstrates motivation and potential. Supporting them with a tailored Personal Development Plan (PDP) can help them grow into the role and succeed long-term.

By considering both lived experience and development potential, you can build more diverse, capable, and adaptable teams.

Does this apply to all roles, including specialist or regulated roles?

Yes.

All roles continue to require the appropriate qualifications, skills, experience, and professional standards. Lived experience is considered alongside these requirements, helping to broaden access to opportunities where it adds value.

Are roles ringfenced or reserved for customers?

No, not by default.

There is no general requirement to ringfence roles. However, some organisations may choose to ringfence certain opportunities as part of targeted programmes.

If we hire customers, will they be able to see other customers' personal information?

Not automatically.

Access to customer information depends on the requirements of the job role and system permissions. Customer employees are subject to the same confidentiality, data protection, and access controls as all other colleagues.

All customer employees:

- » Complete the same GDPR and data protection training
- » Sign the same confidentiality agreements
- » Are held to the same standards and disciplinary processes

This ensures that all colleagues handle customer information responsibly and in line with legal requirements, regardless of whether they are a customer.

Isn't there a conflict of interest if someone is both a customer and an employee?

No.

Being a customer does not automatically create a conflict of interest.

Any potential conflicts are managed through:

- » Conflict of interest declarations
- » Clear role boundaries
- » Line manager oversight

These processes are already in place and apply to many situations, ensuring all staff are supported and managed fairly.

Could a customer employee look up their own records or those of neighbours?

No.

Systems are designed to:

- » Restrict access to information outside an employee's role
- » Monitor and audit usage
- » Flag inappropriate access

Contact Us



If you're interested in finding out more or joining the 20% Movement, **contact us via email:**

20PercentMovement@forhousing.co.uk

