

Press release
FINAL
08 January 2019

NFA Pledges Support to GUAC's Communities that Work Campaign

Efforts to win recognition for housing management teams that help tenants into work are boosted today [Tues 8 January] by fresh support from the NFA, the body that represents 31 council house companies across England.

The Communities that Work campaign, which is being led by Give us a Chance (GUAC), seeks to raise awareness for the work that the social housing sector does to help people into employment.

Recent research commissioned by Give us a Chance, led by the IPPR (2018) shows that unemployment amongst social housing tenants is far higher than the national average, and far outstrips any other UK tenancy breakdown.

In recent years, NFA members – who collectively manage around 420,000 council-owned properties – have given thousands of tenants access to apprenticeships, training academies, work experience and mentoring.

“Our members manage council housing across England and have been routinely helping their residents improve their employability for many years,” said Chloe Fletcher, NFA’s policy director.

“Many NFA members see tenant welfare and improving life chances as an essential part of what a locally-owned housing service should offer.

“Now, after a reduction in budget, the services that once offered this kind of help, such as education and local authority-run community hubs means that our members’ housing teams are almost the last source of help residents have.

“But we fail to get the recognition we deserve. This is why we need to shout much louder about the value, both social and financial, that these initiatives bring to their communities, towns and cities. Our members have cast-iron evidence about what works, and we are now putting that evidence behind the Communities that Work campaign.”

GUAC managing director, Lynsey Sweeney added: “We’re delighted to have the NFA on board with our Communities that Work campaign, it will help to extend our reach and representation of the social housing sector, and highlights the important work that housing providers undertake in helping to get their tenants into employment.”

The NFA’s [Improving Lives](#) report showed that almost three-quarters of council housing companies were actively tackling worklessness among tenants. Around 70% had developed initiatives that targeted unemployment and 65% had apprenticeship schemes. Seven of the NFA’s 31 members also offer support and advice to tenants who want to start their own businesses or who are already self-employed.

-ENDS-

For case study and data samples - employability initiatives run by council housing companies: see next page

Detailed information and named/pictured case studies available on request

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About GUAC: Give us a Chance (GUAC) is the leading consortium of social landlords who are rising to the challenge of helping people into work.

Our Mission is to transform lives by enabling housing providers to support people into employment.

Around half of working-age social housing residents are currently out of work and the unemployment rate among working-age social housing residents is almost three times that of other tenures.

Creating long-term and genuinely sustainable employment opportunities for social housing residents is vital in order to help residents sustain their own tenancies, whilst also making a crucial contribution to cutting the welfare bill.

GUAC works in partnership with a range of stakeholders to build influence around the housing and employment agenda, on behalf of our members.

Through our influencing, sharing and partnership development priorities we aim to put social housing providers at the heart of the employment and skills agenda.

About the NFA: The NFA is the membership body for council housing companies, ALMOs, in England. They represent 31 ALMOs who manage around 420,000 council-owned properties across 33 Local Authority areas.

Case study and data samples - employability initiatives run by council housing companies

Six Town Housing, Bury, launched Steps to Success (S2S) in 2014 for tenants of the homes it manages on behalf of Bury Council. S2S is increasingly seen in the region as a quality employment broker. In the last four years:

- 6,400 tenants have used S2S to access training, work experience, apprenticeships and placements.
- 242 people have found jobs; 1713 have taken courses through S2S to improve their employability.
- The social value of S2S's work is estimated to be £7.6m (using the HACT measurement).

Wolverhampton Homes, in partnership with its parent authority Wolverhampton City Council, launched the IMPACT youth employment programme in 2017, and it has been extended to 2021. The percentage of residents in the area aged 18 to 24 (7.26%) not in work or training is double the national rate of 3.04%, and higher than the Black Country rate of 5.98%. In the last financial year, IMPACT has:

- reached over 1500 young people and
- supported 149 tenants into employment.

Cheltenham Borough Homes

In the last year, CBH has:

- Run three six-week Employability Workshop Programmes, reaching 43 people
- Run four work clubs a week for tenants - 200 a year
- Worked with Adult Education in Gloucestershire to deliver six ICT courses completed by 98 people

Homes for Haringey launched the Project 2020 Hub in 2012. First aimed at young workless tenants on the Northumberland Park state, it has recently been extended to all residents.

Achievements to date include:

- 201 residents supported back into paid work, including two who are self-employed.
- 204 residents supported into training and apprenticeships.
- Radio 20x20 scheme where 20 young people learnt radio/interview skills, podcast production and DJ skills in partnership with Community Music.