

There's no place like home #2020vision



National Federation of ALMOs
Photography Competition **2020**

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There's no place like home

When the NFA Communications Group settled on a theme for our fifth annual photography competition back in the middle of last year, none of us could have anticipated how keenly that phrase would resonate when publication day arrived.

The UK has now been on lockdown for more than a month and during that time NFA members', staff and residents have found themselves embattled on one of the most overlooked frontlines of this crisis – their own communities.

We are tremendously proud of the ALMO professionals, tenant representatives, neighbours and friends who have been doing all they can to help some of the most vulnerable people in our society get through these unprecedented times. They are all celebrated in these wonderful photographs.

Never has the need for a good supply of affordable, well-run social housing been more obvious. Never has its critical role in a healthy mixed tenure housing market been thrown into sharper relief. And, on a lighter note, never has the central role played in the British sense of home by a good cup of tea been better illustrated than it is here by many of our finalists.

Everyone needs a home, a mug and a kettle to call their own. **There really is no place like home.**



Smiling four-legged photobomber Kobe steals the show from owners Brian and Lisa. For them, the offer of a permanent Cornwall Housing tenancy after many months of homelessness meant being able to start a family, and to feel they could offer a dog the secure, committed home every pet needs. They will never take that sense of sanctuary for granted again: “Here we know we can develop a nest and routines for our two children, gather belongings, enjoy friends, play music and read books and cuddle our dogs. We are warm and safe,” says Brian.

Cornwall Housing
Image: Toby Weller



Doncaster's place at the heart of England's history captured in a single frame by St Leger Homes resident Boleslaw Olszewski; the bridge that carries the old Great North Road, now the A1, across the broad, ancient River Don which is dotted with narrowboats. It's a view keen amateur photographer Boleslaw has grown to love in the seven years since he put down roots nearby. “It's a busy river, but it's still beautiful,” he says.

St Leger Homes of Doncaster
Image: Boleslaw Olszewski



It's not just about the veg. Work on the Poole Town community garden started back in 2014 as part of the Poole Housing Partnership's wider strategy to tackle isolation and loneliness among residents. In six short years, the once-bare patch of land has been transformed and links its thriving band of volunteers to a fruitful network of neighbours. Everyone agrees that lasting friendships have grown alongside the spuds and carrots.

Poole Housing Partnership



A long-standing Eastbourne Homes resident, Sheilah Roberts now serves on her landlord's governing board and adds a tenant's eye view to day-to-day housing management. "My favourite quote is by Plato," she says as she plants an apple tree whip near her home with fellow resident and volunteer Jed Powell. "A society grows great when people plant trees whose shade they know they will never sit in."

Eastbourne Homes
Image: Peter Cripps



Reverend Darren Howie works with Derby Homes residents in his role as a local chaplain and has always been very open about the difficulties he faced himself as a young man struggling with heroin addiction and the life of crime it led him into. So a couple of years ago with wife Jo, he founded Sacred Bean in the centre of town, a specialist coffee social enterprise. It's a place where volunteers, many working to overcome life-controlling issues, can leave behind addiction, criminality and homelessness as they help run Sacred Bean, selling ethically sourced, roasted and brewed artisan coffee.

Says Darren: "We all know that building a home is not as simple as putting a roof over someone's head. A sense of community, support and purpose is what helps people create a sense of home and build a new life for themselves."

Derby Homes



Retired nurse Mrs Austin – everyone calls her Mrs Austin – served her community for decades and has lived in the same home in Eastfield, Wolverhampton, for 45 years. She is one of Eastfield's most recognisable and most loved faces, and her neighbours say that simply a glimpse of her is what 'home' means to them. She was among the Wolverhampton Homes tenants honoured as part of the centenary celebrations of Britain's council housing. She embodies the words on the commemorative mug she was given: 'A community is only as strong as its people. Through acts of kindness, volunteering in the neighbourhood, or even just taking pride in our homes, together we can bring community spirit to life.'

Wolverhampton Homes



South Tyneside neighbours Theresa Brown and Amy Hedley have no doubt what home means to them. It's "the perfect place for a cuppa, a chilled afternoon reading and a catch-up with a friend".

Theresa moved to a sheltered flat at Davies Hall 20 years ago with her husband from the three-bedroom council house where they'd brought up their family. "My husband and I were happy from the day we moved in," she says. "It was the right time and the right place for us and it was wonderful to have that choice to move somewhere smaller, but still close to our friends."

South Tyneside Homes
Image: Rebecca Hughes



For this crowd, home is where the community is. Saxon Court is a new and outstanding extra-care living scheme in Solihull which has an open-door policy; a full-time co-ordinator organises all manner of daily activities for the over-55s who live there – but anyone from the residential area around it can join in, and they do. Children from the nearby nursery are regular visitors.

Solihull Community Housing



Southchurch Parade shows that a community's history is the very thing that breathes new life into it. When demolition day never came for these derelict shops, local ALMO Northwards Housing transformed them from a shabby century-old terrace into thriving and affordable business units for local residents who want to spread their entrepreneurial wings. Northwards tenant Althea Barnett (right, enjoying a cuppa with project CEO Gill Cook) leases space here for her 'Upcycle Collyhurst' business, selling refurbished goods and teaching locals how to do their own upcycling.

Northwards Housing, Manchester



This year would have marked the 10th anniversary of the annual Urban Gamez, a vital ingredient in the regeneration of more than 1400 homes on Barnet's largest post-war housing estate. The event takes over the central concourse of Grahame Park, though this year it's likely that residents will have to make do with just the memory of 2019's sunshine and fun. "Last summer, 102 children and young people took part in our ninth annual 60m sprint, and out of that came this perfect picture of one happy, excited little boy," says community engagement head Tim Blanc.

Barnet Homes

The National Federation of ALMOs team would like to thank its members for all their entries for this year's Photography Competition.

We also thank our sponsors, resource (www.wearerresource.co.uk), and our media partner 24 Housing who showcased the ten finalists' images in print and online.

The full gallery of photographs submitted for this year's competition is on display at almos.org.uk

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