



Involving, informing and
inspiring **communities**

Our future

We are a dynamic association with a promising future. Our vision is that as a successful membership-led organisation, we will empower our communities to regenerate and grow.

The Gateway has 10 designated local community areas. Each of these areas has a task force, made up of community members and other partners; the task forces influence and monitor our work. There are also tenant-led scheme panels making local decisions on improvements in their area. Panel members attend site meetings with contractors and monitor our improvement programme achievements.

Tenant involvement will remain at the heart of our work, and we will continue to develop new, interesting ways of encouraging feedback. Residents can influence our work in numerous ways, including:

- ▶ Suggesting how services should be delivered locally
- ▶ Taking responsibility for how some services are delivered to neighbourhoods
- ▶ Setting up community organisations, ranging from toddler groups to new businesses
- ▶ Developing new links with partners to tackle local issues together.



Partnership working is central to our approach; we strongly believe this helps us all to achieve better results than could be achieved in isolation.

We also support and promote best practice in communities. For example, local residents Debbie Clegg and Lynn Fahy set up a uniform recycling scheme, provided sports kits for schools and groups and distributed warm clothes to homeless people.

The Gateway has always been, and will always be, about people. We are delighted to work alongside valued volunteers at Board, Gateway Tenant Committee and wider membership level. Their boundless enthusiasm, honesty and dedication continues to inspire and motivate our team.



About the **Community Gateway Association**

The Community Gateway Association, also known as the Gateway or CGA, is a community-based housing association. We provide high-quality homes and services for people in need in Preston and the surrounding areas.

We were the first housing association in the UK to pioneer a new style of involving tenants in decision-making about their homes and neighbourhoods. This approach, called the 'community gateway model', allows tenants to gradually take greater control over their communities.

We believe that residents hold the key to our success - and with their influence, we can unlock local potential and transform the communities we serve.



Gateway services

As a not-for-profit housing association and registered charity, any extra money we make is reinvested into the business. This helps us to maintain existing homes and finance new housing.

We work hard to meet local housing needs and invest £15 million each year to ensure that residents can live in modern, comfortable homes. As a landlord, we house people, improve homes and neighbourhoods, provide tenancy support and collect rents.

But that's not all. The Gateway is also about creating friendly communities, where people want to live. We place great importance on our partnerships with local communities, and other agencies servicing those communities. Plus, we invest a substantial amount of time, money and effort to help residents learn and develop their skills, as this both enhances our services and builds community integration.



Our past

We were formed in November 2005, when more than 6,000 homes transferred from Preston City Council to the Gateway. The council could not afford to bring tenants' homes up to the Decent Homes Standard. Stock transfer was not a popular option, unless there was a way of involving local people that could also bring about positive social change. Developing the Community Gateway Association proved to be the perfect solution.

Transferring homes to a new landlord could only happen with tenant support. Before homes transferred, the Community Gateway Association promised tenants a list of improvements and benefits. Tenants were sent an offer document explaining what would happen if they voted for, or against, transfer. We were committed to protecting tenants' rights and putting an £80 million home and neighbourhood improvement programme in place.

In the ballot, 81% of voting tenants supported transfer to the Community Gateway Association. And true to Gateway principles, residents have been central to our work from the very start. Tenants helped us to develop plans for the CGA, supported local events and open days and recruited new members to the organisation.

By the time the Gateway was launched, we had an impressive resident involvement structure in place. Our Board includes seven members (out of 15 places), which is a higher proportion than most housing associations. The Gateway Tenant Committee, a team of 30 elected residents, was actively involved in our business plans and developing communications work. And more than 400 tenants had chosen to become members of the Gateway. In short, our way of working means that tenants can be involved in local plans and decisions as much, or as little, as they want to.



“We all know that where tenants get actively involved in managing their estate and planning for their future, then we are likely to see better results. I agree that tenant-owned housing associations would be a good thing, like the ones in Preston and Walsall”.

Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, June 2006

Our present

Since taking shape, we have invested all our energies into making our new approach successful - and our hard work is generating significant results. For example:

- ▶ We spent our first £1 million on home and neighbourhood improvements in just 59 days
- ▶ We were shortlisted at the 2006 National Housing Federation Neighbourhood Awards
- ▶ We won the Lancashire final of the Problem Oriented Partnership Awards 2006
- ▶ Our core membership has grown to more than 750 members, who are invited to comment on any proposed policies or procedures prior to a Board decision
- ▶ At a national conference in June 2006, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government praised our community-based approach.

The Gateway's work is based on a series of key values, which underpin everything we do and ensure consistency and quality in our work. These values include being open and honest, effective and efficient and acting with integrity and trust.

Keeping our promises is another core value. We are working hard to deliver our pre-transfer commitments to tenants. Current priorities include:

- ▶ An £80 million programme of repairs and improvements in the first five years, including new kitchens, bathrooms, central heating and double glazing
- ▶ Improving housing management services, including developing new ways of partnership working to tackle anti-social behaviour
- ▶ New and improved timescales for day-to-day repairs, and an improved appointment system

- ▶ Investing £400,000 every year for the first five years, to further increase resident involvement in our services.

We will continue our efforts in these areas, to make sure the promises are delivered on time and take account of tenants' views.

To bring about positive change, we need to maximise staff potential. We do that by helping team members to develop skills and knowledge that benefits both them and the organisation. We also encourage people to go the extra mile for customers.



Developing neighbourhoods in Preston

For more information about the Community Gateway Association's work and services, please get in touch:

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