

GATEWAY News

Spring 2019 - Issue 52



HAPPY 10th
BIRTHDAY PVC!

Also in this issue...

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STAR Survey 2018

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Pension Credit & Housing Benefit

Get Creative in the Library

Community
GATEWAY
Association

Welcome from the Chair

Hello and welcome to the first edition of Gateway News of 2019 – I hope you're enjoying your year so far!



In this edition, you'll be hearing all about the tenant involvement in creating our brand new logo. Last year we gave you the opportunity to get involved in developing a new CGA logo, and heard your feedback at the Annual General Meeting, so we're really excited to be sharing the finished product with you very soon!

We're also delighted to be nominated for 3 TPAS awards and cannot wait to find out the results at the ceremony. At the time of writing to you the winners had not been announced, but once you read this we'll know if we have won, so be sure to check out our website or social media pages for any exciting updates!

We're nominated for the Excellence in Tenant Communication Award for our brilliant 2017/2018 Annual report and the Excellence in Engagement and Support Care Award for our Independent Living Events and Activities Programme. David Yates, who is a Tenant Board member, has also been nominated as Tenant of the Year for The Cliff Whitely award.

For those of you who may not know, I will be stepping down from my role as Chair of the CGA Board in September. That means there will be a vacancy for a new Tenant Board member. If you're interested, keep an eye on the website and social media pages for more details and the application form.

I'd like to say a big thank you to CGA for the last 9 years I have spent representing tenants on the Board, and I look forward to seeing what is to come!

If you'd like to be involved with any of the programmes at CGA or have a story from your area that you'd like to appear in the next edition of Gateway News, please get in contact by emailing them to the team at communications@communitygateway.co.uk

I hope you enjoy the read!

Irene Bailey
Chair of CGA Board



Welcome from Rob

Hello everyone and welcome to our Spring edition of Gateway News.

We've lots to share with you about what's been happening at CGA over the past few months - and what a few months it has been!

In early February we celebrated the 10th birthday of Preston Vocational Centre (our vocational training company). This is a great achievement by a fantastic company. We were pleased and proud to welcome the Mayor, students past and present - and even had BBC Radio Lancashire presenting their afternoon show live from the Centre!

As a company we continue to grow - not only are we building much needed new homes across Preston but we've recently acquired over 400 news homes from two other housing associations - meaning we're well on our way to meeting our target of owning 7,000 homes and ensuring that local people benefit from services provided by a local housing association.

On top of that we are also keen to make the most of existing houses - and are actively working in partnership with Preston City Council to bring empty homes back into use across the city. I'm pleased to say that we recently handed over the keys to the first of these homes. What a transformation it was - and hopefully there's many more to follow.

The good news doesn't stop there. Over the past few months CGA has been recognised as a great place to work - coming 16th in the national Best Companies awards. I'd like to wish all our nominees the very best of luck at the TPAS awards being held in late March.

Rob

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Follow us on social media

@CGAPreston

/CGAPreston

Tenant led social media

/Gatewaycentralpreston

/PrestonYGAG



Careers Evenings

Come and meet some of the PVC team at Hutton Grammar School on 3rd July from 9.30am until 2pm.

centre will throw open their doors to young people and their families in creative programmes.

All workshops will be advertised on the website.
www.prestonvocationalcentre.co.uk

Building Skills Festival

PVC would like to thank everyone who generously donated to The Big Give Christmas Campaign. A grand total of £21,188 was raised towards The Building Skills Festival. This will be a jamboree of vocational activity throughout school holidays and the

Volunteering at PVC

We are very happy to welcome Jenni Farrer as a volunteer at Preston Vocational Centre to support the tutors in teaching all disciplines of bricklaying, painting and decorating, joinery and carpentry, plastering and building maintenance. Jenni previously attended Preston Vocational Centre during 2018

on the Heritage Lottery Programme.

If you are interested in volunteering or know anyone who is interested in volunteering at PVC, please contact the centre on **01772 880680** or info@prestonvocationalcentre.co.uk

INTACT Community Project

From April, PVC will be working with the residents of Ingol and Tanterton on a community project at INTACT's Dob Croft Nature Reserve that provides a safe place for breeding, nesting and hibernating, for declining species.

This Natural Heritage project will consist of 8 woodcraft workshops to produce bat boxes, hedgehog boxes, bird boxes, two seater benches and picnic tables.

PVC 10th birthday

Back in February 2009, as the UK had its worst snowfall for almost 20 years, Lily Allen was number 1, Jedward first graced our TV screens, and a litre of unleaded petrol was just 98 pence. Preston Vocational Centre opened its doors.

A lot can change in ten years, as have the lives of the nearly 6,000 PVC students who have benefited from the centre since it began on 2nd February 2009.

Obviously the achievements of all of our students, colleagues and partners over the last ten years is something worth celebrating!

That's why we held a celebration event at the centre on Friday 1st February.

BBC Radio Lancashire broadcast live from the event, where guests heard from staff and students past and present about their experiences of PVC, and how the centre has changed their lives.

A video to celebrate the last ten years is available to view on the PVC Website.

Cacophony Arkestra got the party going playing live music, and with balloons aplenty, cupcakes galore and a visit from Henrietta (the CGA mascot) the event was a huge success. Thank you to all our CGA colleagues who helped to organise the event and to those who came along to help us celebrate!

Martin Grayston, Centre Manager



Welcome to the family

CGA is delighted to announce that we have bought 306 properties from Clarion Housing Group in Preston, and 124 properties in Preston and Blackpool from Regenda Homes. These include general needs, supported housing and CGA's first Shared Ownership homes.

Louise Mattinson, Executive Director of Customers and Communities, said,

“This is an important milestone for CGA - not only is it a big step in us achieving our aim to own 7,000 properties by 2022, but it is our largest stock acquisition to date, and some of these properties will see CGA venture in to the world of Shared Ownership. These are really exciting times for Gateway; we have ambitions to grow, but we will continue to put our tenants at the heart of what we do, and to provide high quality, affordable homes for the people of Preston and surrounding areas.”

The properties we have bought from Regenda are in Preston, Chorley and Blackpool. Whereas the Clarion properties are in one location, just off Blackpool Road,



where we also own a number of other properties, which means we can easily deliver our excellent services to our new customers.

We carried out formal consultation with the customers affected, and we were pleased to hear the positive feedback from them about the transfer.

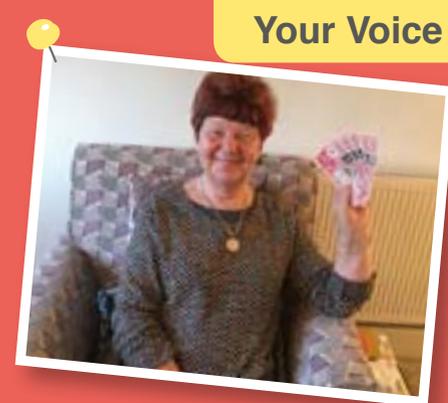
This acquisition is as a result of hard work alongside our partners at Regenda and Clarion and we are delighted to welcome all those customers who now join the CGA family. We do hope they will be very happy in their homes and with CGA as their new local landlord.”



STAR 2018

Last year you may have received a survey asking you what you think about your home and the services we provide. This is called the Survey of Tenants and Residents or STAR. If you didn't receive a survey it is because we only sent it to a group of randomly selected customers, but we will be sending STAR out to all of our customers in the coming year.

We always aim to deliver high quality and cost effective services to you and this survey helps us understand what you think we're doing well and where we could improve. We've also used



the survey results to help inform our new Corporate Plan.

We received 567 completed surveys. We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who completed a survey and congratulations to the 5 lucky winners of the prize draw!

Here's just a few of the survey results....

Overall Service

91% satisfied with the overall service we provide
92% agree that we have friendly and approachable staff

Supporting You

89% satisfied with the information, advice and support you receive from us on claiming benefits

Listening to and Involving You

92% agree that we keep you informed about things that may affect you as a tenant
74% satisfied with the opportunities to get involved with us

Your Home and Neighbourhood

90% satisfied with the way we deal with repairs and maintenance
88% satisfied with the quality of your home

Together With Tenants

Community Gateway is delighted to announce that it is working with the National Housing Federation as part of its “Together With Tenants” programme.

Housing associations like CGA work hard to create a positive relationship with tenants and residents, while aiming to provide safe, decent and affordable homes. However we cannot do our job properly without the input, help and support of our tenants and residents. Tenants and residents can not only help identify where improvement is required, but play a key role in making changes happen that will benefit whole communities as well as individuals.

We also think it is important that tenants and residents have a strong collective voice, which is why we support the A Voice for Tenants steering group and its aim to establish a national body for tenants.

The “Together With Tenants” draft plan includes 4 proposed actions :

1. **A new requirement in the National Housing Federation Code of Governance for boards to be accountable to their tenants and residents.**
2. **A new Together with Tenants Charter setting out what tenants and residents can expect from their housing association landlord.**
3. **Tenant and resident oversight and scrutiny of the Charter, with a report on how their landlord is doing against the Charter commitments.**
4. **A closer link with regulation.**



Have your say

The National Housing Federation want to know your views. You can participate in an online questionnaire or get in touch with us to discuss your feedback. Visit www.housing.org.uk or call us on 0800 953 0213 for more information.

We Would Like Your Help....

.... to review our service standards and customer satisfaction surveys over the next few months. If you would like to help us do this, please contact Emily Howell on 0800 953 0213 or customerservices@communitygateway.co.uk

Let's Talk Engagement



The Let's Talk Engagement project is reviewing the ways CGA involves our tenants and members in the work of the organisation. The Social Engine, working with the Kaizen Partnership, have now reported its findings to CGA following conversations and surveys with over 500 people, including staff. An action plan has been developed to take forward the findings. Fundamental to what they have found is the need for CGA to develop more bite-sized opportunities for people to share their views, alongside a focus on supporting more young people to get involved with CGA. A community report will shortly be delivered to everyone's homes. So keep an eye out for further information.

All tenants who had completed a Let's Talk Engagement survey were entered into a prize draw. 5 very lucky people each won £100 of vouchers. Well done to them!



(Pictured: Kim Carlton, one of the lucky winners!)

For more information on Let's Talk Engagement or ways you can get involved with CGA contact Paul Kelly on 0800 9530213

New CGA logo

Last year we announced that we were considering getting a new CGA logo. We asked you for your thoughts and invited readers of Gateway News to join our Brand Champions Group of tenants and staff. We also showed you some potential designs at the AGM back in September, and asked for your feedback. The Brand Champions have worked really hard over the past few months to capture all the comments and we're excited to be launching the new logo very soon! So keep your eyes peeled! We would love to hear what you think of the new logo once it's launched – email the Communications Team at communications@communitygateway.co.uk



Allow us access

When you report a repair to our office you will be given an appointment date and time for us to come to your home and carry out the repair. Please make sure that you are home for the time arranged – if you do have to go out just give us a quick call on **0800 953 0213** to rearrange.

Gas Safety

If your property has a gas supply we need to carry out an annual gas safety inspection.

Gas safety in your home is important for us and for you. The Law says all landlords must make sure that all gas appliances, flues and pipework within CGA properties are safely maintained and checked once a year. This is to make sure your home is safe for you and your family to live in, and means your neighbours can enjoy their homes in safety too.

The Gateway PropertyCare Team will arrange a convenient date and time for our operatives to carry out the gas safety inspection. If you cannot keep the appointment, or can't arrange for someone else to be there, it is

important that you contact us to make a new appointment for a time and date that suits you. Do not ignore your appointment; it is for your own safety.

Repeatedly failing to allow our gas engineers access to the property is a serious breach of your Tenancy Agreement. This may lead to court action and possibly forced entry into your home. If we have to do this, you will be recharged any costs that we incur, including our administration costs.

Help us to help you stay safe – let us in when we need to check for gas safety.

Over 6,000 appointments were missed in the 12 months from April 2018 to March 2019

Bogus callers

We have had an increasing number of reports from customers recently that people are knocking on their doors and claiming to be working with or for Community Gateway.

All our staff and contractors carry formal identification cards to prove who they are and who they work for. If anyone visits you, please ask to see their identification cards and if you are not expecting their visit or want to check the person is working for us, please give us call on 0800 953 0213.

Follow these tips to keep Bogus Callers at bay:

STOP - Before you answer the door, stop and think if you are expecting anyone. Make sure your back door and any other doors leading outside are locked before you go to the front door. If you feel uncomfortable don't answer the door and lock it.

CHAIN - Open the door with the chain or door bar in place. These act as a barrier when talking to unexpected callers. Talk through a window if you can.

CHECK - Always ask for ID. Genuine callers will always have identification and will be more than happy to show you their ID.

If you are not expecting a visitor, do not know who is at the door, have any doubt or feel uncomfortable **DO NOT** open the door.

If unsure, don't open the door!



Empty Homes

Working in partnership with Preston City Council we acquired a property in Westbrook Crescent in Ingol. This severely fire damaged property had been blighting the local community since February 2017. It has now been brought up to Gateway Homes Standard by Gateway PropertyCare; work was completed in February and the property has now been let and brought back in to use.



Pensions and Housing Benefit

From 15th May 2019 most mixed age couples (where one is of pension age and the other isn't) will no longer be able to make a new claim for Pension Credit or Housing Benefit. Instead, if they need a financial top up and/or help to pay their rent they will need to claim Universal Credit.

Some mixed age couples could be £140 per week worse off compared to how much they would get from Pension Credit and Housing Benefit. For help and advice please contact our Welfare Benefit Advisers on **0800 953 0231**.

It is estimated that 4 in 10 households who could qualify for Pension Credit fail to make a claim, which means around £3.5 billion a year in Pension Credit goes unclaimed. Call our Welfare Benefit Officer for a free benefit health check to see if there are any benefits you are entitled to claim on **0800 953 0213**

*Mixed age couples already in receipt of Pension Credit and Housing Benefit will not be affected, unless they have a break in their claim.

Universal Credit

As the number of customers claiming Universal Credit continues to grow, there is an increased need for the availability of digital technology.

To assist with this, the bank of computers in our reception area now allow access to the Universal Credit website, and enable customers to log on to their online journal. If you are struggling with a Universal Credit claim, please contact our Tenancy Support Team on 0800 953 0213.



Helping you back in to employment

The Employability Team are being funded by the Lottery and European Social Fund to deliver the following projects to help people within the community who may need support in getting into work.

We support participants with any barriers they may have such as: **Confidence building, improving IT skills, health and wellbeing support, helping you manage your money, childcare and respite care, volunteering, disability support, business start-up, the list is endless..... the support offered is totally individual.**

Invest in Youth

funded by The Lottery & European Social Fund

Are you unemployed and aged 16 to 24 and NOT in learning, training or working, if so, come and have a chat and let's see how we can help you.

Changing Futures - funded by The Lottery & European Social Fund

Are you out of work because of health issues, lack confidence, low motivation, have a criminal record, housing problems, money worries? We can help you deal with all sorts of things that may be stopping you getting a job. Come and have a chat and see how we can help you. No age restrictions.

More Positive Together – funded by European Social Fund

If you're currently unemployed you could get a tailored programme of 1 to 1 mentoring, physical activity sessions, training courses, employment advice and work experience opportunities – designed to boost confidence, improve wellbeing and increase the chances of you getting a job.

Please contact Ve, Tasha or Kelsie for more information on 0800 953 0213 or email us on EmployabilityTeam@communitygateway.co.uk



Get creative in the library

Some good news for the Savick and Larches community - Savick Library Community Friends (SLCF) received funding from Community Gateway Association and The National Lottery Community Fund, so they can add to the growing list of events they already run at Savick library.

Over the coming months, there will be a new creative community art project called "Here and Far Away", which will involve a series of art and craft workshops culminating in a permanent art display in the library. The art sessions will encourage residents young and old to use and help improve the community facilities.

The project was the idea of artist, and SLCF member, Chantal Oakes, from Kitchen Sink Arts Group in Ashton, who will be running the workshops.

Chantal said, ***"We want the group to be a friendly learning and community activity hub for local residents and the artwork made by our community will be a welcome addition to the library."***

Savick Library Community Friends is a growing community group in the area, who have already facilitated a number of creative activities at the library. If you would like to get involved, have ideas for new activities or events, or want to find out more about the group, please get in touch via the SLCF Facebook page or pop into the library for more information.

Best Companies / Sunday Times Top 100

CGA has once again been recognised as one of the best organisations to work for in the country! The Sunday Times ranked us as the 16th best not-for-profit organisation at the official awards ceremony held in London on 20th February.

We also received one of the special awards announced on the evening, with ours being for all the great work we do around wellbeing.



Work Experience - Jack Frawley

Jack Frawley, 14, son of a CGA tenant from Moor Nook who goes to Christ the King School spent two weeks with the Empowerment team at CGA in February for his work experience. As part of his work he spent time doing administration tasks, he spent a day with the employment and skills team at Sion Hub, and delivered a presentation at the end of his placement on the impact of his time at CGA.

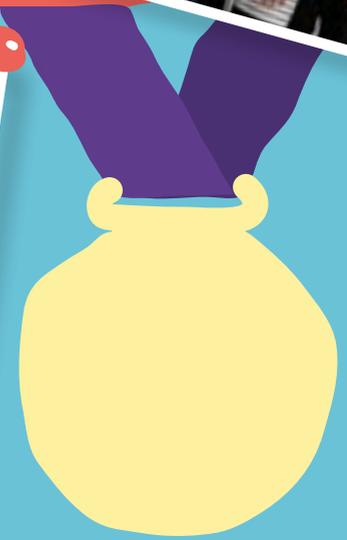
Jinty Williams, Community Development Officer, says ***"Jack made a great impact on staff at CGA and it was a pleasure having him in the office. His enthusiasm and energy were infectious – and we have all learnt some Spanish from him!"***

Jack says ***"It was brilliant being in the office. Everyone was very friendly, and helpful. I really enjoyed it!"***

Get in touch with Jinty Williams if you have a child who would benefit from a work placement in CGA offices.



Pictured here are Deb Dawson Colleague of the year and Jonny Smith from our Gateway PropertyCare team



Sheltered Housing Activities up to June 2019

We have planned a number of activities for all tenants over the next few months. If you would like to attend any of them, please speak to a CGA colleague or call us on 0800 953 0213.



April 2019

Wednesday 3rd April

Singalong and Luncheon Club @The Filberts – 1.00pm

Friday 12th April

Quiz @Ingolcroft – 1.30pm

Wednesday 17th April

Easter party @ Maudland House – 1.00pm

Friday 26th April

Armchair travel @Alexandra house – 1.00pm



June 2019

Wednesday 5th June

Singalong @ Astley Court-1pm

Friday 14th June

Quiz @ Almelo House- 1:30pm

Wednesday 19th June

Armchair Travel @ Maudland House 1pm

Friday 28th June

Sports Day -1pm- venue to be confirmed

Please note – venues may change at short notice due to numbers of people attending the events.



May 2019

Wednesday 1st May

Games afternoon @ Maudland House – 1.00pm

Friday 10th May

Singalong and luncheon club @ Oaktree Court – 1.00pm

Wednesday 15th May

Quiz @ Windsor Court – 1.30pm

Monday 20th May

Mental health awareness day – Alexandra House

Friday 24th May

Tea dance – venue to be confirmed – afternoon activity

Wednesday 29th May

Armchair Travel @ Alexandra house – 1.00pm

From February 2019 we will be making a small charge towards the cost of the activities we organise for you.

All activities will be charged at £1.00 per person (apart from the quiz which will still be 50p per session)

Taxis will be provided to and from the events – please speak to your Outreach Support Officer if you need transport arranging for the events.



Recycling, Rubbish and Bulky Waste

In partnership with Preston City Council

Grey bin

Your grey bin should be for household waste items that cannot be placed in your recycling bins.



Brown bin

Your brown bin can be used for compostable garden waste such as:

- grass cuttings
- hedge trimmings
- cut flowers
- weeds



If you are a Preston resident and wish to receive fortnightly garden waste (brown bin) collections, you need to subscribe (fees may apply) to the Council's garden waste collection service at www.preston.gov.uk

Only garden waste that is inside a brown bin will be collected.

Recycling

It is everyone's responsibility to dispose of their rubbish correctly and help protect their local environment. By using the Council's schemes, you can recycle up to half of all the rubbish you produce. Recycling is important but, where possible, you should also try to reduce and reuse your waste.

Bulky waste

Please do not attempt to dispose of large household items in the bins. The council offer a collection service for bulky waste items that do not fit inside a grey wheeled bin. Most household items can be collected, such as:

- Beds
- Mattresses
- Settees
- Fridge freezers
- Carpets

Phone **01772 906905** to arrange a collection. There is a cost for collections, but if you receive certain benefits you may qualify for a reduced rate.

To report illegal dumpings call 01772 906909

Carpet collections

Rolls of carpet can also be collected and are carried out by a crew of two. Large amounts of carpet which are too heavy to be moved safely by two people will not be collected.

Communal areas

Rats and other vermin are attracted to rubbish. Make sure your rubbish goes in the bins and you close the bin lids properly afterwards.

Do NOT leave bags of rubbish on the floor or on top of the bin, the council will not collect them. Place your bags of rubbish through the holes in the cages and in to the bins.

If one of the bins is full, please use one of the other bins. Do NOT drop bags or rubbish on the floor or anywhere other than in the bins.

If your bins are always overflowing, please phone 01772 906905 to report this. Please dispose of your litter, cigarette butts and dog fouling in a litter bin. If you are caught littering you WILL be fined! Don't take the chance and put your litter where it belongs.

The bin store area is covered by CCTV cameras. If you are responsible for leaving rubbish on the floor this will be treated as fly-tipping and you may face enforcement action.

You could be fined or it could affect your tenancy.

Request a new bin

you can request a new or replacement waste or recycling bin. For more information please visit the Preston City Council website at www.preston.gov.uk



General enquiries: 01772 906 905
Bulky Collections: 01772 906 905
wastemanagement@preston.gov.uk



Preston
City Council



#MAKEANOISE Festival

Saturday 24th August 2019

– Preston Flag Market 10am – 4pm

#MAKEANOISE is a new youth music and graffiti arts festival for Preston organised by CGA's Young Gateway Action Group (YGAG) in partnership with Sound Skills and Whittlelab Records based in Brookfield, Ribbleson.



The event has come out of consultation with young people, who said they wanted to see more arts and music festivals for young people in Preston, and will be free to attend!

In partnership with Preston City Council we are now working towards building the festival and we need your help. If you are a musician, performer, DJ, graffiti artist, we want to hear from you if you are interested in performing on the day. We are also looking for young people who want to help us plan the event, work behind the scenes, or who might want to help us with social media promotion for the event.

Help us deliver a great festival for Preston, and learn new skills in the process. Full training and support will be provided. So what are you waiting for?! Get in touch with Kirstie Sherrington if you are interested in being involved. Kirstie.sherrington@communitygateway.co.uk

To contact us, call Gateway Direct on **0800 953 0213**

If you're using a mobile call **01772 268 000**

Harbour House, Port Way, Preston, PR2 2DW.

Email: customerservices@communitygateway.co.uk

Web: www.communitygateway.co.uk

Tel: **0800 953 0213**

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Tenant led social media

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