

NHMF Awards 2026: Best Resident Impact – Shortlist (Exceptional Engagement & Outcomes for Residents)

- L&Q & Axis Europe
- Peabody & United Infrastructure
- Platform Housing & Voicescape
- Grove Community Housing Association

Summary: This Award had the largest number of entries and the shortlisted projects each demonstrate different ways in which resident experience can be improved across a wide range of housing providers of different sizes and demographics.

What is the project and what is innovative about the service provided?

L&Q – Major Investment Programme to three 17-storey tower blocks that improved 204 occupied flats for 240 residents. It combined comprehensive retrofit work (12,000m² EWI, 900 new windows, and innovative biomass-based roof system) using a resident-Centric Delivery Model (holistic engagement placing residents at the heart of every decision). A Residents Hub (dedicated on-site resident facility providing respite) was provided together with a purpose-built resident website and mobile app with live daily updates, integrated chat function, and appointment booking system. Three full-time, site-based RLO (one per block) completed the Personalised Support Infrastructure that transformed resident engagement.

Peabody – United Infrastructure's North Counties Responsive Repairs, Voids and Disrepairs contract, provides essential maintenance and improvement services across the region. It introduced resident-first initiatives going beyond traditional repairs, e.g. a free handyperson service to independent-living schemes. United supported Peabody to be the first housing association to go live with an Awaab's Law model to improve its response and accountability in tackling damp and mould. It also launched community repair hubs in East London, enabling residents to self-serve repairs and build stronger relationships with staff. They also delivered Minecraft education workshops for local schools, teaching damp and mould prevention in an engaging, interactive way. Supported local charities (donations £7,000+).

Platform Housing – An intelligent engagement system introduced with Voicescape to call residents proactively and give them real-time control of appointments (40,000 gas safety checks, 3,000 EICR inspections, and general repairs) to ensure no one is left behind. This replaced the previous system where residents had to call busy phone lines, wait in queues, and rearrange work or childcare (often more than once). This proactive system for resident engagement (via automated calls) empowers residents, and particularly benefits vulnerable residents who struggle with traditional contact methods. It offers multi-channel choice (phone or text message) with simple "YES" replies and provided a call queues bypass IVR systems, and automated transfers to connect residents directly to right team member when needed to transform a traditionally frustrating process into one where residents are in control.

Grove Community HA – "Helping Hand" service was created to address a significant need identified by its Tenant Voice Group: inability to afford or safely perform minor home tasks not covered by standard repairs. It directly benefits GCHA's aging demographic, nearly 50% over 55. The Tenant Voice Group acted as equal partners in the service's design, which has made a tangible impact, completed 295 jobs, and saved tenants an estimated £10,325. It is a physical, person-to-person service that avoids the need for online access.

What are the measurable benefits to the client, the contractor, the resident, and the neighbourhood?

L&Q – Client Benefits: EPC ratings improved from D to B (19 SAP points), space heating reduced by 74.19% (138.54 to 35.76 kWh/m²/yr) while CO₂ fell 52.38% (from 2.1 to 1.0 tonnes CO₂/yr/flat). Residents protected from fuel poverty (£199 or 31% savings/household) and reduced future maintenance related to cold, damp conditions. Innovative Eco insulated roof (80% biomass-based, London 1st) buildings future-proofed for Net Zero 2050. 92% resident satisfaction during major works with zero formal complaints and high engagement levels protected L&Q's relationship with residents during complex work in occupied homes. TPAS validated resident first approach.

Contractor Benefits: 100% on-time delivery and within budget on 20-month programme, 900 windows replaced in 10 weeks because residents were prepared, informed, and cooperative. RLOs prevented issues escalating. Axis can use this resident engagement model with TPAS endorsement for future projects.

Resident Benefits: energy bills reduced by over 50% (£199/household) addressed cost-of-living pressures and fuel poverty. Improved thermal comfort (U-Value 0.26) eliminates cold, damp conditions linked to respiratory illness. Enhanced acoustic insulation reduces noise stress. Residents were partners (Empowerment & Dignity), with Residents Hub providing practical support. Real-time updates via app/website, personalised text alerts, and face-to-face RLO support ensured residents felt informed and valued.

Neighbourhood Benefits: Social Value i.e. Lewisham War Memorial Garden railings restored, Community Recycle Day, bedbound resident's overgrown garden tidied up, Youth summer workshops. Community room renovated with resident-led design. Project provides a "lasting legacy of strengthened community spirit" (TPAS). Conservation Area respected by special acrylic brick slips to match original brickwork.

Peabody – Residents have seen tangible service improvements, faster response times, and higher satisfaction levels. An average end-to-end completion time of 13 days achieved for routine repairs (20-day SLA). 476 written compliments in the year, reflecting consistent, high-quality service delivery.

Peabody benefits from a transparent, data-driven service., with the live reporting dashboard giving real-time visibility of repair performance, postcode trends, and emergency demand. Its Awaab's Law implementation is the first new compliance model.

Contractor – Apprenticeships and trainee roles embedded in delivery and its Commercial QS team.

Community – Social Value initiatives include:

- Supporting local charities and events (£7,000+ donated).
- Delivering Minecraft damp and mould workshops for schools, raising housing awareness in a fun, educational format.
- Delivering mock interviews and CV workshops through YouthBuild to promote careers in housing.
- Employing 2 apprentices and a trainee from the local community.

These initiatives strengthen local communities, enhance social cohesion, and create lasting impact beyond the contract itself.

Platform Housing – Technology being developed in partnership to reduce no-access, improve efficiency and tenant satisfaction.

Client Benefits: Dramatic operational improvements with no-access rates dropping for Gas servicing (31% to 17% since 2021), EICR inspections (41% to 18% since May 2023), and general repairs (92% response rate). 100% gas compliance achieved. Financially, with no-access costing £50/visit, the solution paid for itself in six months, enabling reinvestment into service improvements and enhanced team morale. Successful expansion from gas servicing to EICR inspections and general repairs proved model can grow with organizational needs.

Resident Benefits: Enhanced control and convenience (residents have immediate control over appointments, no phone queues or complex contact processes); satisfaction rates (96.4% resident and 95% response rate); reduced disruption (residents can schedule appointments around their lives) and reduced no-access rates; improved accessibility helps Vulnerable residents who previously struggled with traditional contact methods; faster issue resolution (general repairs - 92% response rate from 65,000 successfully connected calls).

Neighbourhood Benefits: Improved safety - 100% gas compliance means safer homes, risk of carbon monoxide incidents and gas-related emergencies reduced. Better-maintained housing stock contributes to neighbourhood pride and community standards. 96.4% resident satisfaction rate is building better overall relationships and trust with its local residents.

Grove Community HA

Client Benefits: established a tenant-led, co-production model that drives innovation and trust. Tenant collaboration was key in a novel approach to filling a critical vacancy, by developing the essential criteria for the Compliance and Maintenance Officer, which led to the selection of a skilled engineer chosen not just for technical background but for specific empathy required for this sensitive service.

Resident Benefits: 120 households had 295 crucial jobs completed, saving an estimated external contractor costs of £10,325.

Neighbourhood Benefits: "Helping Hand" is a significant investment in social cohesion and resilience, initiated by the Tenant Voice Group's concern for their neighbours – a benefit for the community.

What are the financial costs and measurable cashable benefits over a defined time period?

L&Q – Operational savings through reduced maintenance calls related to damp/cold issues, building fabric lifespan extended (25+ year EWI warranty), reduced void costs from improved thermal performance attracting tenants. Fabric-first approach ensures energy savings, while improved thermal performance future-proofs properties for heat pumps. Reduced emissions contribute to L&Q's Net Zero pathway and avoids future carbon taxes. Residents benefit directly through lower energy bills and improved living conditions.

Peabody – Strong financial efficiency through transparent cost control, improved productivity and embedded social value. In the first year of the re-mobilised contract (Oct 2024–Oct 2025), a 13-day average repair completion time achieved, reducing operational downtime and repeat visits, directly improving value for money. It has generated measurable savings through:

- Improved first-time-fix rates, reducing travel, call-outs, and material waste.
- Voids turnaround efficiency, completing 560 properties to standard faster than previously to reduce lost rent and increase tenancy income.
- Live data dashboards allowing early trend analysis and proactive resource management, preventing high-cost emergencies.

The Social Value delivered is a minimum 1% of contract value reinvested, equivalent to more than £1.7m of direct community benefit. This includes £7,000 in donations to local charities and events, 96 hours of free handyperson services, employment, and training opportunities for local residents.

The model demonstrates that an efficient, resident-focused service can deliver sustained commercial value, measurable savings, and stronger neighbourhoods - setting a clear benchmark for cost-effective, socially responsible housing delivery.

Platform Housing – robust financial for investment established from calculating the cost of no-access visits across its portfolio (£50/visit) and measuring savings after implementation. It achieved measurable cashable savings for gas servicing (since 2021) from reduced no-access (31% to 17%) equivalent to £280,000 annual saving. Similarly for EICR inspections (since May 2023), reduced no-access (41% to 18%) gave £34,500 annual saving, and for General repairs (since April 2024) improving to 92% response rate and substantially reduced failed visits. More successful visits mean fewer van miles, cutting fuel use and emissions while easing pressure on operatives (aligning financial, social, and environmental value). System paid for itself entirely within the first six months of implementation and ongoing savings create a sustainable financial model, simultaneously improving resident satisfaction while reducing operational costs.

Grove Community HA – The "Helping Hand" service represents a strategic operational and capital investment that delivers significant financial and social returns for both tenants and the organisation. Primary costs include dedicated Compliance and Maintenance Officer's salary, and new, fully electric van (aligns with GCHA's ESG commitments). Cost-per-use efficiency is maximized by also assisting local community groups.

The service has saved 120 households an estimated £10,325 by completing 295 crucial, minor jobs that would typically require costly external contractors (direct financial relief for residents).

Operationally, GCHA's efficiency enhanced by standard repairs service not being called for low-level tasks (reduced reactive callouts and administrative overhead), as well as reversing decline in overall tenant satisfaction.

Structurally, the model is built for the long term, featuring low EV running costs, a permanent staff role, and a reproducible co-production blueprint that extends benefit across the wider housing sector. It is positioned to continue delivering high value for the foreseeable future.

How relevant is this as an example that might be followed by other organisations?

L&Q – Fully replicable framework for the sector facing identical challenges – delivering essential retrofit works to occupied homes while maintaining resident satisfaction and achieving ambitious decarbonisation targets. 3-pillar approach (dedicated on-site RLOs, digital communication platform & community hub) can be scaled for projects of any size. Partnership with local charities demonstrates how contractors can use existing community resources rather than building expensive in-house capabilities. The project shows how to deliver essential works (fire safety, retrofit, decarbonisation) without traumatising residents, a proven solution for thousands of social homes requiring retrofit. 100% on-time, on-budget delivery while maintaining 92% satisfaction proves commercial performance does not need to be sacrificed. The construction sector needs RLO training programmes and professional development pathways. Elevating customer care and community engagement from "nice to have" to "core competency" requires formal qualifications and career structures.

Peabody – This partnership demonstrates how a truly resident-focused delivery model can transform housing services and outcomes in a way that is replicable, scalable, and achievable for any organisation seeking to enhance resident impact. From the outset, the contract was designed with residents at its core, both partners committed to a “one team” culture, shared service standards, and direct resident involvement in shaping delivery. Every decision, from scheduling repairs to defining communication protocols, is framed by the question: “How does this impact the resident?”

Other landlords and contractors can replicate the structure of this successful partnership:

- Resident accessibility – Drop-in sessions allow residents to discuss issues face-to-face, providing the opportunity to fully explain their situations and get direct answers in person.
- Proactive communication – Bespoke posters, visit rotas and request forms give residents clear, predictable access to support.
- Live data dashboards - Real-time visibility of repair performance enables intervention early, reduced waiting times and prevents dissatisfaction.
- Empathy-led culture - Rebranding “Aged WIP” to “Families Still Waiting” humanises data, reminding all staff that behind every job is a household waiting for comfort and safety.

Each of these measures delivers tangible resident impact - faster repairs, higher satisfaction, and a greater sense of trust, while remaining cost-effective and easy to adopt across other contracts.

Best practice is shared via NHMF Service Provider Forum, Peabody’s internal contractor network, and quarterly collaboration days. These platforms showcase how social value and operational delivery can directly enhance resident wellbeing. Other contractors have since replicated this handyperson model and local engagement approach to support vulnerable residents in their own regions.

The joint rollout of the Awaab’s Law delivery model – the first of its kind nationally, provides the sector with a working example of how to strengthen responsiveness to damp and mould concerns, protecting residents’ health and homes.

Small innovations for big impact. Beyond repairs, initiatives such as the Minecraft damp and mould workshops, handyperson schemes and youth employment sessions build lasting trust and connection. These activities demonstrate that when contractors and landlords invest in people, not just properties, resident satisfaction and community pride follow naturally.

This partnership framework is transferable to any organisation. Others can learn from their collaborative and flexible ways of working. As service providers, remembering who their customer is, putting themselves in their shoes and actively engaging with them, will result in a long-term positive impact on residents’ lives.

Platform Housing – This model can be adopted by housing providers of any size seeking to improve resident engagement while addressing universal operational challenges, such as all no-access visits. Traditional appointment methods systematically fail residents and organisations alike. This system is scalable and adaptable across any size of organisation since Platform has expanded it from gas servicing to EICR inspections to general repairs. This approach could be applied to boiler servicing, kitchen and bathroom installations, planned improvement works, estate inspections, or any service requiring resident access. It is a Technology partnership model rather than complex in-house development, making the model accessible to organisations without extensive IT resources. Establishing clear metrics of cost per no-access visit, baseline no-access rates, and resulting savings enables other providers to build compelling business cases and to refer to this proven investment return. It also improves accessibility for vulnerable residents, increases trust (compliance is not just safety certificates) and improves satisfaction rates.

Grove Community HA – The "Helping Hand" service is intentionally designed as a blueprint for the entire housing sector. Its replicability lies in its foundational philosophy: shifting from transactional service delivery to genuine co-production (tenant-led intervention, bypassing top-down assumptions to start with a tenant identified problem). Any organisation can use this model of tenant-led identification of specific, unmet needs. Engaging tenants in co-design, and aligning staff recruitment accordingly now serves as a blueprint for co-design.

Its operational design (Tenant Voice Group an equal partner in shaping the service and recruitment). The model's low-cost, high-impact results (295 jobs, £10,325 tenant savings) prove its viability. Deep social value and inclusion for the most vulnerable ensured by a non-digital, person-to-person service. Other organisations can adopt this three-step framework of Tenant-ID, Co-Design, Skill-Empower to build resilient, trust-based community services that deliver lasting social and economic value.