

NHMF Awards 2026: Rising Star – Shortlist

- Laura Marks, United Infrastructure
- Harvey Pipe, Dunhams (Part of Sureserve)
- Dana Wink, Peabody

Summary: There was intense competition for this Award with 7 entries. These 3 shortlisted people demonstrate the range of emerging talent, the opportunities they are taking and how they are developing their careers.

What makes this person a rising star?

Laura as United Infrastructure's Decarbonisation Project Manager is shaping the future of the social housing and retrofit sector. She is passionate about decarbonisation, innovation, and collaboration. As Chair of the NHDG Innovation Pillar, she brings together likeminded contractors and partners to accelerate sector-wide transformation through digitalisation, resident engagement, and emerging technology. She established United's pioneering Innovation Accelerator that connects clients, innovators, and delivery partners to explore practical solutions for decarbonisation. Laura champions green skills, upskilling, and inclusion.

Harvey exemplifies exceptional early career achievement from an apprentice (college one day/week), to a 19-year-old Contracts Administrator and Social Value Co-ordinator in under three years. He is willing to embrace every challenge, and has demonstrated a commitment to both academic and practical learning. He has pioneered Dunhams' social value activities, coordinating events that delivered £85,482.76 in community impact.

Dana, in five years, has progressed from Fire Risk Assessor to Assistant Director of Building Safety at Peabody, leading compliance across more than 400 high-rise buildings, including 248 higher-risk properties. Her career, to senior leadership, is driven as much by her lived experience of personal adversity as expertise. She reflects quiet resilience, discipline, and empathy. Dana recently started a Fire Engineering degree apprenticeship to expand her technical expertise and to continue developing her understanding of structural safety and risk management. Her approach is practical and proportionate. She identifies risks early, designs solutions that balance safety with efficiency, and communicates complex information clearly to residents and colleagues. Dana volunteers for the Institute of Fire Engineers' Southern Branch, delivering CPD webinars and supporting peers across the industry. She is actively shaping best practice across housing providers and is a founding voice in the Building Safety Housing Providers Forum to help others navigate new regulations. She is admired for calm leadership, mentorship, and integrity. She is already how the sector embeds building safety culture, treating it not as compliance but as care.

What impact have they had on the organisation or sector?

Laura – her energy and collaborative approach have strengthened the company's reputation as a leader in innovation, sustainability, and partnership working. As NHDG Innovation Chair, she actively champions collaboration to ensure knowledge sharing and innovation translate into tangible improvements in practice. Externally, Laura is a recognised voice. She featured on a Futurebuild Podcast, guest-edited its Newsletter, and at Homes UK shared insights on innovation and retrofit delivery. Her pioneering Digital Twin Retrofit pilot showed how technology can reduce repeat visits, streamline delivery, and open up new revenue opportunities. She is collaborating with HACT to explore retrofit credits.

Harvey has had an impact across its commercial excellence, community engagement, and organisational culture, demonstrating how young professionals can drive meaningful change whilst building successful careers. He has made a substantial commercial contribution, while managing diverse responsibilities (from contracts administration to resident engagement) to elevate Dunhams' operational effectiveness. He represented the organisation at apprentice fairs across London, inspiring other young people to consider housing careers, contributing to developing sector talent. He has influenced organisational culture positively, mentoring new apprentices. He is committed to developing others and understanding the importance of social recruitment.

Dana has had an exceptional impact on both Peabody and the wider sector. She joined just before the Building Safety Act came into force, and was instrumental in preparing them for the Act. She led the successful registration of Peabody's higher-risk buildings, and submitted 8 Building Assessment Certificates (all approved no corrections needed). Her leadership directly improved Peabody's performance, reducing risk exposure and increasing confidence from residents and the regulator. She designed a Building Safety Management System linking people, property, and process ("golden thread") improving transparency and data accuracy across teams. Sector-wide, Dana is recognised for advancing collaboration, contributing to NHMF working groups, the G15 Building Safety Group, and industry forums shaping proportionate and evidence-based building safety. She also supports smaller management companies and Right to Manage groups to help them understand their duties. Her impact is both technical and cultural, building trust in her team and across Peabody by mentoring others, sharing learning openly, and encouraging professional growth. Her work has made building safety both more human and more effective.

Why do they deserve to win this award?

Laura shows vision, determination, collaborates and leads by example. Her passion for creating meaningful change is contagious and inspires others to think differently and act boldly. She leads initiatives that drive innovation and sustainability. Her leadership style is people-centred and purpose-driven, empowering others to shape the future - mentoring colleagues, promoting SMEs, and championing green skills and social value. Her leadership potential and commitment to continuous growth was recognised by being selected as one of the Chairman's 12. She is helping to build a more sustainable, innovative, and inclusive future through her drive, creativity, and collaboration.

Harvey exemplifies how young professionals with determination and support can rapidly become valuable contributors to the social housing mission. His transformation from an apprentice through self-directed learning through multiple responsibilities to a multi-role professional shows remarkable adaptability, exceptional motivation, and ambition. He has pioneered social value delivery for Dunhams, showing a genuine commitment to balancing commercial success with community benefit. He is a member of the company's ED&I Council, showing his commitment to sector-wide improvement. He advocates for fairness, representation, and inclusive practices with clarity and compassion. His authentic approach to sharing his transformation story inspires others.

Dana – represents the best of modern leadership: authentic, technically skilled, and purpose driven. She leads with empathy, rooted in her own experience of housing insecurity which fuels her commitment to making homes safer for others. She consistently delivers results, such as regulatory approvals, improved resident engagement, and measurable gains in compliance. Yet she remains focused on developing others, sharing credit, and raising

professional standards across the sector. She has contributed to building safety nationally through her mix of technical skill and compassion that has earned respect from regulators, residents, and peers. Few have achieved this level of progression and influence within such a short time. She should be recognised as a leader who is transforming Peabody's safety culture and shaping the direction of the industry through integrity, collaboration, and measurable impact.

What do you see them contributing in the future?

Laura should have a long and influential career shaping the future of sustainable housing and construction. She is deeply motivated by social purpose, innovation, and empowering others. Going forward, Laura aims to develop her leadership, expand her skills and influence through groups such as WISH (Women in Social Housing). Her goal is to inspire and mentor other women entering the construction and retrofit industry, helping to create a more diverse and representative workforce. Through the NHDG Innovation Pillar, Laura will continue driving collaboration between public, private, and third-sector to accelerate decarbonisation delivery. She plans to develop United's Innovation Accelerator into a recognised national platform for new ideas, products, and partnerships, to help shape policy, procurement, and practice. She wants to use AI, digital twins, and automation to make retrofit more efficient and cost-effective.

Harvey – his trajectory suggests future leadership potential in the sector. At just 19, he articulates clear career aspirations, expressing his vision to become a director whilst maintaining focus on social impact. He demonstrates long-term strategic thinking, and understands that sustainable leadership requires commercial success to be balanced with community benefit. His commitment to mentoring new apprentices will expand sector talent development, and address skills shortages by attracting young people through his authentic narrative about discovering purpose in social housing. His commitment to developing others continues his sector leadership and advancement. Harvey is a natural communicator with a genuine passion for making a difference.

Dana is on a clear path towards senior sector leadership. She is already influencing policy discussions and operational models around building safety. She will continue to drive industry-wide collaboration, creating consistent, proportionate, and resident-focused safety standards. Her Fire Engineering degree apprenticeship will strengthen her technical expertise and credibility to be a future strategic leader in housing safety. She should play an increasingly visible role through the Institute of Fire Engineers and cross-sector groups, to contribute to professional development frameworks, while mentoring emerging talent. Dana is positioned to lead the shift from compliance-based systems to proactive, intelligence-led safety management, integrating engineering, data, and resident voice in every decision. Her impact will extend beyond Peabody, influencing how the sector delivers safety, sustainability, and trust at scale.