

Member Spotlight

October 2025





Member Spotlight - Gloucester City Homes



We asked Mandi Holt, Community Investment and Engagement Lead at Gloucester City Homes (GCH) to share some of the work they are currently doing.

If you'd like to contact Mandi about any of the below, click [here](#).

Give us a little known fact about your organisation

GCH is one of the last housing associations in the country to have been created through stock transfer, becoming independent in 2015 after operating as an ALMO since 2007. But our story began with a strong show of tenant voice. In the early 2000s, there was a proposal to transfer Gloucester's council homes to a large national housing association based in the North East. Tenants, concerned about losing local accountability, formed the Gloucester Tenant Federation and led a successful campaign to stop the transfer. Their efforts ensured that homes remained locally managed and laid the foundation for GCH to be established as a truly local organisation. Today, we continue to honour that legacy. GCH is proud to be rooted in Gloucester, shaped by tenant voice. We continue to take pride in knowing our neighbourhoods, listening to our residents, and delivering services that reflect the needs of Gloucester.

Tell us about a time that engagement has made a difference to your services or communities?



Last autumn our Scrutiny Group completed a review of communal areas, covering cleaning, health and safety, and communal garden management. They ran a survey to gather wider feedback, but it was clear from those taking part, all of whom lived in blocks with communal areas, that cleaning was the issue causing the most frustration. Many felt their service charge did not represent value for money. In response, the group met directly with the cleaning contractor to present their findings. This led to regular quarterly meetings where tenants and the contractor could discuss ongoing issues, hot spots, and possible solutions. This process gave customers a stronger voice, helped clarify what the contract covered, and ensured their feedback shaped improvements.

The strength of customer influence through this scrutiny was a key factor in GCH's decision to make changes to the cleaning service in 2026. To build on this, we are creating a new full-time role dedicated to working with customers, making sure their voices continue to shape service quality and design. We are also looking for customers to join the team developing the new service and monitoring it in its early days, so the positive impact of scrutiny continues long into the future.

What are you currently working on when it comes to engagement?



We are currently actively working on encouraging a wider group of customers to get involved in shaping their housing services. Our Scrutiny Group is active with a core membership of 10 but they are keen for people to join in with their reviews in anyway they can, for a one-off exercise, joining online or via their local residents' group. In addition, we are looking specifically for tenants to help us with some new developments, the development of a new customer portal and changes to the cleaning service contract delivery.

This summer we have made changes to the way that we have directly engaged with our customers. While we have still attended some key community events we have moved away from our traditional programme of summer engagement events and moved over to specifically discussing hot topics with customers via more door knocking. Our customers have told us via the TSM responses that fly tipping and anti-social behaviour are big concerns that they have, so our teams have been out on the patches to chat directly with residents about these concerns. We held a fly tipping day out on estates that are badly affected by this and included partners from the City Council. We ensured that we gave information about bulky item collection and reporting fly tipping as well as listening to people's experiences and concerns. During ASB week (30th June – 6th July) we held a similar estate activity, giving people advice and guidance on what is ASB and what is considered to be neighbourhood nuisance and who to report to. We have based the conversations around a consultation form, but staff were able to take any feedback on the doorstep that customers wish to share. It has been a great success, and we have engaged directly with many more customers than we did previously via the traditional “stand under a gazebo” style event.

Why did you decide to join Tpas?

GCH were a member of Tpas before I joined them back in 2012, so I don't know why the decision to join was made in the first place, however I am really glad that we did! I have benefitted in so many ways, from the support and training that I received back in my early days as a Community Involvement Officer (even pre-GCH) to the inspiring conferences and specific, ever evolving tenant training sessions that are always up to speed with the latest developments in Housing. Tpas is my go-to organisation for updates on changes to legislation. I also love that I have got to know the staff over the years, so it is lovely to attend events and see some old friends there.

What is your top engagement tip?



Time and trust. Trust can only be built up slowly so always build in the time to get to know your tenants before expecting them to want to help you with feedback and attending engagement activities. Popping into community groups for a cuppa might be seen as a waste of time by some, but that's when the magic starts to happen.

What's the one thing you are really proud of when it comes to engagement?

I am really proud that GCH continue, in this challenging financial climate, to provide spaces in our communities across the city, for people to get together and run groups and activities to enrich the lives of the local residents. GCH currently provide 4 spaces for community use, and each one is used very differently depending on community need, we have art and craft sessions, free and low-cost food distribution, after school activities, mental health support groups and Residents' Group meetings, to name just a few, all going on because there is a local space available to get together. It might be tempting to think that these buildings are a "nice to have" and not a necessity but for some people they provide a real lifeline, combating isolation, providing help and support in tough times and just making life a little more pleasant. We benefit from these spaces too as they are a natural bumping space to meet with our customers, attend a local residents' group and develop community partnerships. We can deliver information, reassurance and advice, listen to current local concerns and pick up on important information. Even in these days of online engagement, MS Teams meetings and social media, there is still a place for good old-fashioned face to face engagement in a place where everyone feels welcome and included.