

Welcome to the Kent Housing Group Excellence Awards 2023



Excellence Awards 2023



Kent Housing Group
The Voice of Housing in Kent

**Tuesday,
26 September 2023**

Arrivals from 1pm
with the ceremony
starting at 1:30pm.

**Eastgate, 141
Springhead Parkway,
Northfleet, DA11 8AD**

Kent Housing Group Excellence Awards Schedule



Excellence Awards 2023

Programme:

1.00pm

Arrival

1.30pm

Ceremony begins

2.45pm

Interval

4.15pm

Closing Remarks

With grateful thanks to our sponsors:



Kent Housing Group Excellence Awards 2023

Nominations to the Kent Housing Group's Excellence Awards were made by the following organisations:

- Ashford Borough Council
- Dover District Council
- Folkestone and Hythe District Council
- Golding Homes
- Gravesham Borough Council
- Interventions Alliance
- Kent County Council and Folkestone and Hythe District Council
- Kent County Council and mhs
- Kent Housing Group
- KHOG sub group of Kent Housing Group
- Maidstone Borough Council
- Medway Council
- mhs homes
- Moat
- Pathways to Independence
- Porchlight
- Sevenoaks District Council
- Southern Housing
- Thanet District Council
- Town and Country Housing
- West Kent Housing Association

Categories

1

Excellent partnership

To be presented by
Chris Knowles

Award Sponsored by
Paramount Independent
Property Services



Winner

Shepway Community Larder,
Maidstone Borough Council



Highly Commended

Pathway Project,
Porchlight

Working in silos can restrict the potential to drive forward change and stifle innovation. In a sector where partnership working is crucial; this award is for an organisation, team or member of staff who has the strategic vision to recognise how working in partnership can improve the overall contribution to the customers and the communities that the organisation works with. The winning nomination will clearly evidence and showcase how partnership working has resulted in service delivery improvements, high levels of customer satisfaction, and overall, the positive outcome from a new/improved way of working.

Our judges said:

“Shepway Community Larder was developed by Maidstone Borough Council and the West Kent Health and Care Partnership, to support local people with the challenges around food insecurity, the cost of living and other issues. The work of staff, volunteers, Fareshare and local food providers enables the Larder customers to do a 10-item food shop for a small weekly donation and provides support and information around housing and debt.

The Larder provides flexible responses to customer feedback, with high levels of satisfaction from the customers and positive outcomes. Testimonies show the customers value and appreciate the Larder, with many speaking warmly about the interactions with the staff and volunteers there. ”

2

Excellence in Asset Management

To be presented by David Smith

Sponsored by: South East Consortium



Winner

Fire Safety Team
mhs homes



Highly Commended

Stay Green House
Sevenoaks District Council

This award recognises and celebrates individuals or organisations who are responsible for the provision of excellent services in one or more of the following areas:

- Responsive repairs
- Planned maintenance
- Major works
- Retrofit and energy efficiency
- Building safety
- Estate regeneration

This excellence award will recognise an individual, team or organisation who can demonstrate that they have improved the quality of homes or services and demonstrate their commitment to resident engagement. The nomination could also highlight how activity in this sector has improved the health and wellbeing of residents or used technology to deliver longer-term benefits for all. Can you evidence this and what impact it has on residents, communities and your organisation?

Our judges said:

“The Fire Safety Team looked beyond what was expected of them, taking a more holistic approach to managing communication with the affected residents, clearly advising what was happening and reacting positively to tenants’ complex needs while achieving the project’s objectives.”

3

Excellent Community Project

To be presented by Brian Horton

Sponsored by: Kent Housing & Development Group



Winner

Daisy Den
mhs homes



Highly Commended

Dover Pantry
Southern Housing

Does your organisation support and provide the platform for projects within local communities to grow and thrive? Has a local community-based project had such a positive impact on the local community that it needs recognition? This award recognises a project, person or group and there are no restrictions as to what the project outcome could be. Examples of previous winning projects include contribution to improving health and wellbeing, improving physical conditions and contributing to community engagement or projects that have positively addressed issues such as vandalism, anti-social behaviour and social inclusion.

Our judges said:

“Volunteers from mhs homes and their partnering contractors completely transformed a derelict garage into a much needed therapy room called Daisy Den, for the charity Dandelion Time. This farm-based, North Kent charity supports children affected by trauma and complex emotional difficulties.

The volunteers rose to a huge challenge, having originally anticipated only a little gardening!

They specified the work required, organised the labour and obtained donated building materials. This was different to the normal volunteer projects, taking place over two weeks rather than the usual day.

mhs homes were not only able to do something to support their customers but we were also able to provide support to families in the wider Kent area.”

4

Excellence in Delivering Services for Vulnerable People

To be presented by
Vanessa Biddiss

Sponsored by:
Southern Housing



Winner

Ladies Night Project
Medway Council



Highly Commended

Foy House Project
Thanet District Council

Highly Commended

Sarah Moore
and Michele McLoughlin
Interventions Alliance

At a time when residents are facing such challenging times, its critical, as a sector we focus our services on how we support those most vulnerable. Without the commitment and dedication of some amazing people, we would not be able to make a difference. This award is one of the most important, it evidences the services we're providing to those who find it most challenging to get the help they need.

Our judges said:

“The judges were impressed by this innovative, supportive community project in Medway. The project draws in women from all walks of life who can access a range of support and advice services, making them feel welcome and comfortable. Information is shared and services are promoted in a convivial setting. Everyone has a fun evening and the barriers come down. Women who have attended the project for a while feel empowered to start looking at providing services and arranging evenings for others, so the ripples spread wide.”

5

Excellence in Development and Regeneration

To be presented by
Brian Horton

Sponsored by:
Kent Housing &
Development Group



Winner

Lenham Springs
mhs homes



Development of high-quality homes, on new sites or regeneration of existing places (urban and rural) can have a significant impact and make a contribution to meeting housing need, changing the perception of affordable housing and how well a community thrives. This excellence award will recognise the development of homes (new or refurbished) which can evidence this. There is no size criteria, the winning development won't necessarily be a large scheme, the key is demonstrating the achievement of meeting housing need and the provision of well-designed and affordable homes, all delivered in a way that delights residents and the wider local community through excellence in design, construction or public realm.

Our judges said:

“In this category KHG wanted to see evidence of meeting housing need and the provision of well-designed and affordable homes. The judging panel welcomed mhs's ambition to deliver more affordable homes to deliver a high-quality all affordable housing scheme and improve the energy efficiency of the new homes.

The impact of this was exemplified in feedback from a new mhs tenant: ‘We are a family of 7 and therefore generally do 4-5 wash loads a day. I wasn't quite understanding how to make the best use of the solar panels. I contacted mhs who helped with this. Since then our electric usage has gone from £10 a day to £4. This will only get better throughout the summer months and I will manage my electric use as and when the solar is creating free energy.’

6

Excellent Health and Social Care Professional

To be presented by
Vanessa Biddiss

Sponsored by:
Southern Housing



Winner

Stephanie Line
Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells
NHS Trust



Joining up services, is fundamental in ensuring people receive a seamless service of support. This award recognises those who role model, being the driving force for change, making a difference to achieve outcomes for their organisation and service users. Their dedication and innovation, ensures we continue to strive towards people receiving the right care, in the right place at the right time.

Our judges said:

“Steph has a clear passion and ability to understand the complexities around her role ensuring that services work in partnership to meet the demands of the complexities on a daily basis for the Integrated Discharge Team, leading by example and with knowledge and confidence.”

7

Excellent Housing Professional

To be presented by
Chris Knowles

Sponsored by:
Paramount Independent
Property Services



Winner

Amber Tipping
Town and Country Housing



Highly Commended

Dominic Norwell
Town and Country Housing

Highly Commended

Mark James
Ashford Borough Council

To be awarded to someone who truly is an ambassador for housing, a person who has made a significant contribution to the housing profession and/or residents throughout their housing career. This award will recognise an individual who demonstrates an in-depth understanding and knowledge of the sector, who has effectively driven change and helped to put housing at the top of the agenda among their peers. Do you work with or for someone who’s a role model, and who continues to demonstrate personal and professional integrity with the passion and ability to help and support others?

Our judges said:

“Amber’s colleagues find her to be a great mentor, counsellor and leader. She has a reputation as a troubleshooter and her kind and firm approach is valued. She is also an excellent partnership worker, building great working relationships with many agencies, and gaining the right outcomes for residents. Recent achievements include creating the Neighbourhood Housing Manager Guide, completing a CIH qualification and completing a complex and highly pressurised court case.”

8

Innovator of the Year

To be presented by
David Smith

Sponsored by:
South East Consortium



Winner

Lisa Clarke
Clarion Housing Association



Winner

Vicky Hodson
Kent Homechoice



The housing sector, like others, is moving towards service delivery and outcomes that rely heavily on innovation. This excellence award will recognise and share an example of an organisation, project or person that’s able to demonstrate a truly innovative approach. Technology may have been central to your innovation but technology alone isn’t essential. This award is not limited to the ‘finished article’, this is recognition of innovation and this could mean that it’s a work in progress. The winning nomination will demonstrate how you’ve thought outside of the box to deliver with effective leadership and change, improving service outcomes as well as improving efficiency. The winner of this excellence award would have the opportunity to share learning and expertise to benefit other members of Kent Housing Group.

Our judges said:

“The Kent Housing Reciprocal Agreement is a collaboration between social landlords across Kent which aims to enable tenants to move to a safe area whilst retaining their tenancy rights. The judges were impressed by this innovative approach that puts the survivor at the heart of the services. Lisa led the project team for this work and they all recognise that without her drive and knowledge it may not have happened.”

Our judges said:

“Vicky has ensured that all social landlords across Kent and Medway have understood and prepared for the changes that were implemented in July. The skill, patience and scale of commitment Vicky has shown to implement this project while meeting the diverse demands of our providers has been amazing and the service for households and partners will be improved. Everyone wins! ”

9

Excellence in the Private Sector

To be presented by
Chris Knowles

Sponsored by:
Paramount Independent Property Services



Winner

Thanet District Council
Tamiz prosecution team
Thanet District Council



Highly Commended

Clare Reynolds
Gravesham Borough Council

This award recognises and celebrates individuals or organisations who are responsible for providing a high-quality service within the private rented sector. This excellence award will recognise an individual, team or organisation that can demonstrate that they have improved the quality or access to good private sector housing or services to the tenants and or landlords in this sector. The nomination could also highlight how activity in this sector has improved the health and wellbeing of tenants and/or provided additional quality rented homes to respond the local housing need, bringing longer-term benefits for all. Can you evidence this and what impact it has had upon your area of service delivery?

Our judges said:

“The dedication from the project team who successfully prosecuted a vicious landlord group working in their district is outstanding, the horrors described in the nomination highlights the commitment to ensuring good quality safe private sector housing. The four-week trial resulted in prison sentences, community orders and an order that the defendants pay £200,000 in costs, in addition the court successfully applied to the court to ban the defendants from engaging in letting or property management work or being landlords in England as well as applying for compensation for the victims. The team have worked tirelessly since their creation in 2019, with this case alone highlighting their ability, dedication and determination to support good quality housing.”

10

Team of the Year

To be presented by
David Smith

Sponsored by:
South East Consortium



Winner

Tenancy Sustainment Team
Southern Housing



Winner

Income Management Team
Town and Country Housing



This award will recognise and celebrate a team who can clearly demonstrate excellence in customer service, in practice or through innovation. Do you work within a team which is passionate and excels in providing an outstanding level of customer service? Is there a team within your organisation that is driving forward change through innovation in customer service and has had a positive impact on the overall business? Do they always go the extra mile to achieve the best outcome possible?

Our judges said:

“We all know that the cost of living crisis is making this area of work particularly challenging yet this team have improved their already good rent collection rate, whilst halving evictions. They do this by matching their approach to each tenant, giving the support and advice they need to solve their problems. They have revised the way they work, including changing standard letters and the methods used to contact tenants, and the feedback from tenants shows the customers value the new ways of working.”

11

Unsung Community Hero Neighbour of the Year

To be presented by
Vanessa Biddiss

Sponsored by:
Southern Housing



Winner

Mandy Relf



Winner

Paul Jenkins



This award celebrates those inspirational individuals who work tirelessly in their communities, supporting residents and local organisations to make a difference. They truly are the unsung heroes, helping to build successful communities in the neighbourhoods they work in. They inspire others to promote a sense of community and bring people together.

Our judges said:

“The judges recognised how Mandy has overcome her own health issues to devote her time and energy to helping others. Mandy encourages residents to get involved and helps people tackle the daunting forms to claim benefits. She is a community champion, bridging the gap between residents, the community and mhs homes bringing people together to help influence, design and procure excellent services that meet their needs. Mandy’s enthusiasm shines through and she provides an important voice for residents and encourages estate champions.”

Our judges said:

“Paul has overcome his disabilities to devote his time, energy and enthusiasm to helping others. He transformed the communal garden space where he lives in Maidstone to create a lovely, welcoming garden for everyone to enjoy. Paul’s efforts have encouraged his neighbours to come outside, socialise and enjoy the fresh air and garden space. This has helped to combat the feelings of loneliness and isolation that many people feel if living alone. Paul is a superhero bringing the pleasure of flowers and green spaces for his fellow residents to enjoy.”

12

Excellent Young Professional of the Year

To be presented by
Brian Horton

Sponsored by:
Kent Housing &
Development Group



Winner

Ellie Ballard
Golding Homes



Highly Commended

Ben Turner
Moat

This award recognises the importance of roles and work undertaken of young people in the housing sector. The winning nomination will have clearly demonstrated their commitment to their role alongside commitment to their personal development (including attainment and achievement in learning where applicable). Has the young person demonstrated how their contribution to the workplace has exceeded expectation and made a real difference to the organisation they work for? This excellence award category offers the opportunity to recognise young people in a variety of employment capacities, from those officers employed full-time, apprentices or those trainees on work placements, working in housing or a housing-related service.

Our judges said:

“Ellie’s commitment to her role and her impressive, innovative approaches to her work have made a great difference to the organisation. Ellie is adept at building and maintaining professional relationships, is well respected and has made good progress in her career since she started.

Ellie made considerable savings for the organisation by halving staff sickness absence rates. In helping to improve call waiting times, Ellie has helped the organisation’s reputation with customers. Ellie has had a positive influence on the management’s way of working as well as helping to encourage staff to think of their mental wellbeing and ways they can access support.”

About Kent Housing Group

Kent Housing Group (KHG) is a forum for housing organisations in Kent and Medway. KHG has representation from all the Housing Authorities in Kent and Medway, fourteen Housing Associations, Kent County Council, Kent Public Health, Support Providers and the Interventions Alliance. KHG also has affiliate members including Homes England, the SE Local Enterprise Partnership and the Kent Housing and Development Group and the Kent Chief Planning Officers Group.

KHG prides itself as being the ‘Voice of Housing in Kent’ to represent the collective voice of Kent’s housing bodies providing advice and a ‘Kent perspective’ to regional and national organisations for the benefit of Kent’s residents.

KHG promotes best practice in the housing sector in Kent, working across all tenures, levels of responsibility and service provision.

KHG aims to:

- Provide strategic leadership – shaping and setting the housing agenda
- Build relationships and influence decisions for the benefit of Kent
- Draw in resources from both traditional and alternative sources
- Work together to improve the supply and quality of affordable homes
- Create sustainable communities in Kent

Meet the Judges

The judges enjoyed reading all the nominations though sometimes choosing the winners and highly commended entries was very hard with so many excellent nominations! The judges were Becs Wilcox and Hannah Rourke from Medway Council, Brian Horton the interim chair of Kent Housing Group, Julia Gavriel from Thanet District Council, Nicola Bowen from Choice Support, Robyn Jarrett from KCC, Sharon Irvine and Helen Miller from Kent Housing Group. Since the judging we’ve welcomed Lauren Wilson and Toyah Bicker from Golding Homes who also helped plan the event.

Meet the Team



Brian Horton,
Director, Horton Strategic

Brian is a housing enthusiast with over 30 years of professional experience in the Housing and Development sector and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Brian is the Director at Horton Strategic a housing, development and regeneration consultancy working independently and collaboratively to provide specialist strategic advice to clients in the public, private and third sector.

Brian is a Board Member at Gravesend Churches Housing Association and ABC Property Limited, Co-opted Interim Chair of the Kent Housing Group Executive Board and is Chair of the Margate Town Deal Board.

Prior to setting up Horton Strategic, Brian worked as Strategic Housing Advisor to Kent County Council, Chief Executive of Swale Housing Association and as Executive Director Kent for AmicusHorizon (now Southern Housing). He previously held positions at Thanet District Council, English Churches Housing Group (now Riverside), the Corporation of London and Wandsworth Borough Council.

As Strategic Housing Advisor at SELEP Brian works to promote the delivery of housing and encourage good growth. In this role, he works in partnership with central government and Homes England to accelerate housing delivery and regeneration across the South East.



Rebecca Wilcox,
Chair of Kent Housing
Group's Events Planning
Subgroup

Becs is a highly passionate housing professional having worked in the sector for 21 years. Becs has a breadth of knowledge from housing management and homelessness to the delivery of affordable housing. Becs has led several teams through housing policy and practice changes over the years while supporting not only the growth of her staff but supporting the positive agenda around empowering tenant and resident involvement. Becs has a long history of supporting officer development and giving back to the sector. Becs is Medway Council's new head of tenant services having moved back to her roots in April of this year. Becs joined Medway Council in December 2021 as their development manager leading their affordable housing and acquisition programme, where she over saw the delivery of 28 new council homes and the acquisition of 27 properties for affordable, temporary and rough sleepers before taking up her current role.

As Head of Tenant Services, Becs has returned to her roots overseeing income, arrears, leaseholders, tenancy management and tenant and resident engagement with the aim of improving service delivery of a diverse district while balancing the challenges and constraints within the sector. Becs was a board member for the southeast branch of Women in Social Housing for over 2 years, is a Trustee of SEC Foundation since its inception and is also the Chair of the Events Subgroup since May 2022. The group have worked extremely hard over the last 12 months which has seen an increase in the membership of the group, run a number of events in partnership with the KHG membership and associated members, planning another Excellence Awards and the aspiration of holding a KHG Conference in 2024.

About Our Generous Sponsors



Kent Housing and Development Group

The Kent Housing and Development Group (KHDG) is the collective voice of Kent's land and property owners, developers of commercial spaces as well as residential and mixed-use schemes across the county. Together they work alongside public sector partners including Kent County Council, Medway Council, Homes England and the Environment Agency.

The Group acts as an advisory panel and covers commercial property development, infrastructure both physical and digital, regeneration

and the creative economy. KHDG works to bring forward commercial and residential property development in Kent and Medway by uniting developers, Government, financiers and the relevant regulatory bodies to encourage economic activity in Kent and Medway and contribute to job creation.

The group is a member of Locate in Kent, Kent's official inward investment agency which supports businesses to set up and expand in Kent.



Paramount Independent Property Services

Paramount Independent Property Services LLP are an established provider of high quality temporary and emergency accommodation solutions to local authorities in Kent. We are proud to offer an extensive portfolio of properties across the county that all benefit from our extensive specialised support services and inhouse asset management teams.

Paramount work strategically with our local authority partners to provide everything from general needs accommodation to specialist supported schemes to cater to their local identified housing needs. Everyone at the Paramount Team is once again very proud to be involved in sponsoring the Kent Housing Group Awards in 2023.



South East Consortium

South East Consortium (SEC) is owned by 52 Social Landlords and Local Authorities. We provide procurement, training, thought

leadership & technical services. True not-for-profit partners to the housing sector, owned by the sector.



Southern Housing

We're one of the largest housing providers in the UK with over 77,000 homes across London, the South East, the Isle of Wight and the Midlands, giving over 167,000 people somewhere affordable to call their own. At Southern Housing we understand the difference safe, secure and affordable homes can make to people's lives.

Whether it's traditional social housing, shared ownership, affordable rent, private market rent, student accommodation, care and support or outright sales, we offer a range of services. Our vision is to create communities where everyone has a safe home in a place where they're proud to live.



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Awards 2023**