



In conversation

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and

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Spotlight on Peter Bedford Housing Association

PBHA is a small supported housing provider in northeast London that delivers social and practical support to tenants as well as employment and training support.

PBHA hadn't developed any new housing for almost 20 years and we were looking for ways to grow and develop, while also trying to work with more people. We've identified that there were some neighbouring boroughs that had really high homelessness needs, and we wanted to try and help.

Working with SASC was such a positive experience. The funding helped us to, first of all, go out and find additional funding from the Greater London Authority (GLA). Through this initial work with the GLA we have become a GLA "Investment Partner" which will offer future avenues for investment. It helped us to really grow our purpose, and meet more need in more areas. We'd been able to work with individuals to reduce their homelessness and help them to become independent in the future.

By growing our asset base, the investment will help us to grow even further because we'll have more assets from which to build more properties in the future or to borrow money against. In addition, we feel we have are becoming stronger for the future as well. Not just in terms of buildings, but also in terms of the skills that we have and the people within the organisation.

In fact, the first investment went so well and we bought our properties so quickly that we were delighted to extend the funding to buy an additional nine properties.

We learnt so much from the first investment including setting up a project team to help deliver the second investment comprising of colleagues from the property, senior leadership, and finance teams.

To be able to give former rough sleepers their own front door, their own place where they can cook their own food and just be themselves, and have that sort of freedom again, is so important. And we can offer ongoing support to help them maintain that because part of the funding through the GLA is for a recovery worker who will help tenants grow into their community, manage their health and move toward employment.

In a place like London the housing market is so complicated. It takes time to get to know it and understand what you want to buy. We have been working with Red Loft for several years developing our own Development Strategy and we partnered again with them to support our search for the right kind of housing. They had the market knowledge and expertise around negotiation and really helped streamline sourcing of the properties. During the conveyancing process, they helped us to hold our nerve when it became stressful. Through this process and through working with them, we have developed our knowledge and understanding about renovation and refurbishment as well.



Social investment has given PBHA the opportunity for a strong future. To be able to look back on the process and see all the development you weren't expecting is so encouraging. We expect the financial resilience and the upskilling of the team will support us for the next 25 years at least. Which, sadly, is good given the need for supported housing isn't going to go away.

Clare Norton
CEO, Peter Bedford Housing
Association

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