

Overton Road Group



A small development of six two-bedroomed bungalows on the Larches Estate in Preston, started in 2013 and completed in early 2015, the Overton Road development marked the first community-led development with Preston's Community Gateway Association (CGA). CGA was the first tenant and community-led mutual housing association set up using the CCH's community gateway model and registered as a housing association in 2005. Under the model, the association is owned by its tenant members, represented by an elected Gateway Tenant Committee (GTC) who work in partnership with the CGA Board. CGA's mutual structure, where it actively seeks to develop local community activity, lends itself naturally to community-led housing development.

The Overton Road development, on a vacant and unloved former garage site, was part of CGA exploring the potential to develop small housing schemes to meet local housing needs and impact on security and general environment. Over 20 local residents formed the Overton Road Group (ORG) in 2012 as a result of CGA inviting local residents to lead on the development project. With few of them ever having taken part in any community project, training was provided by CGA officers on how to function as a group and then on the build process and the role of the architect. The group led the design, procurement and tendering processes and recruited a local apprentice. They also requested that the scheme be developed to Lifetime Homes standard, and that there should be a local lettings policy. The group were supported by the GTC who had initiated the project, by the local Larches & Savick

6 homes
Affordable rented

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Community Association who helped raise local awareness, by local councillors and the local authority planning department who helped the group navigate the planning process, and by the local police who advised on security aspects. The group also liaised with the Homes & Communities Agency who had funded the scheme and who were fully involved with ORG throughout the development.

The ORG development programme ran over three years and the group formed links with the wider community and became volunteers with the other local groups. A couple of ORG members have also joined the Police and Communities Panel (PACT) and made arrangements for the PACT meetings to be held in the local sheltered scheme lounge in order for the older residents to attend. As well as this, some ORG members are now acting as mentors to another group that is working with the CGA to deliver a second community-led project on a number of small sites. CGA are looking at building on the experience gained from the first development and utilising social media to widen the local engagement.



Thank You CGA for selecting Larches as a community led development. I've made new friends and feel like part of this community now.

Gillian Bennett - Overton Road resident

I enjoyed the experience and learnt so much not just about building but about myself

Pauline Smith - Chair ORG



Overton Road was a great experience for all involved and everyone has learnt a lot from it. Supporting the local community to lead on developments like these is what Community Gateway is all about and so we are now using what we have learnt to support other communities lead on developments elsewhere.

Diane Bellinger – Chief Executive Community Gateway Association