

WINNER

Property Innovation Award

WINNER: Commonweal Housing



In the housing and social justice landscape, innovation in property isn't simply about acquiring buildings, but about creating targeted, evidence-led solutions that change lives. That is why the Charity Times Property Innovation Award is so significant: it celebrates organisations that rethink how housing can be used to address deep-rooted social issues.

This year, Commonweal Housing earned its place on the shortlist and took home the winning trophy for its learning-driven approach to tackling injustices through bespoke housing models. Judges praised Commonweal for delivering a clear, purposeful strategy aligned with key award criteria, while consistently working with groups too often overlooked.

Commonweal's unique property model was central to the judges' decision. Rather than simply funding or managing homes, the charity acquires properties tailored to the needs of each project and leases them to delivery partners at reduced rates. Projects are then independently evaluated over several years, generating rich evidence about what works.

What particularly impressed the panel was Commonweal's inventive social investment mechanism, which has leveraged over £10 million to purchase more than 30 properties. By paying investors a guaranteed yield and insulating them from delivery risks, the charity enables pioneering pilots that would struggle to secure capital through traditional avenues.

A further strength was Commonweal's commitment to cultivating new ideas. Its Call for New Ideas initiative funds feasibility studies for organisations exploring fresh housing solutions. This pipeline ensures a steady flow of early-stage concepts with strong potential.

The impact of Commonweal's pilots was another major factor in its shortlisting. Independent evaluations reveal consistent, measurable improvements for beneficiaries: women in the Re-Unit project reoffended at less than half the national rate; domestic abuse survivors in the Rhea project overwhelmingly reported increased safety and confidence; and migrant families supported through No

Recourse to Public Funds saw their immigration cases resolved significantly faster than elsewhere.

Two projects were singled out for special praise. Move on Up, providing homes for young adult carers at risk of hidden homelessness, demonstrated how tailored housing can unlock confidence, wellbeing and future stability. Meanwhile, Freedom2Work housed 96 people facing homelessness and generated £2 million in public savings over three years of operation.

Ultimately, the judges recognised Commonweal Housing for its rare combination of creativity, rigour and courage. By blending property acquisition, social investment, frontline expertise and independent learning, it is setting a new benchmark for how innovation can be used to tackle structural injustice.

This profile is sponsored by Commonweal Housing, which extends special thanks to its principal benefactor, Grove End Housing, whose continued support and guidance equip Commonweal with the resources to test housing solutions to social injustices.

