

# Transforming lives and communities together



**CLARION  
FUTURES**

**Working with our partners**



Join us in our work to help improve the lives of our residents and make their neighbourhoods better places to live, as part of one of the biggest social investment programmes in the UK

## **Making a real difference**

to people and places

**Foreword from Phil Miles,  
Director of Clarion Futures**



# Investing in **people and places**

Clarion Futures is a charitable foundation, providing support and opportunities for people living in Clarion homes and communities. At its heart, our work is about providing people with the tools and support they need to overcome their challenges - transforming lives and improving communities.

We believe being a good social landlord is about more than building and maintaining homes. Clarion Futures offers professional help when times are challenging along with the opportunity to develop new skills and connections all year round.

Our teams work with any organisation, large and small, seeking to make a positive difference in our communities.

Our employment and training programme provides opportunities for thousands of people every year by helping them into work, training, apprenticeships, and work placements. Through our dedicated employment advisors, Clarion Futures has supported more than 18,000 people into work since 2017. This has been made possible by the partners



we work with, including major employers such as the NHS, Morrisons, and Royal Mail.

Our Money Guidance team provides practical advice and support to our residents, helping them manage their money, reduce their debts and increase their financial resilience. We work with partners in the community, including social supermarkets, debt advice providers and credit unions, seeking to understand and address the underlying issues that cause financial insecurity and unmanageable debt.

Another area of our work is tackling the digital divide and helping people to gain and develop the skills they need to prosper in an increasingly online world. To help our residents use the internet safely and confidently, we offer tailored support covering



informal sessions and courses to improve digital skills. We also provide access to laptops and tablets through our Digital Device Loan Scheme, many of which are donated by our partners.

Every year, we award hundreds of thousands of pounds in grants to local community groups and charities, supporting projects that benefit everyone from pre-school children to pensioners. Our younger residents can access a wide range of opportunities including our ambassador programmes, which provide the chance to gain valuable skills and qualifications and take part in local social action projects.

And our Age Friendly programme promotes intergenerational activities and explores ways to collaborate with our residents to make our communities places for people to live longer, happier and healthier lives.





# Joining together to change lives for the better

The Department for Work and Pensions, StepChange Debt Charity, the Trussell Trust and the Royal Commonwealth Society are just some of the partners we work with. Clarion Futures is the partner of choice for a large and varied mix of organisations, united in a shared goal of making things better for the people and communities we are working in. With over 350,000 residents in more than 170 local authority areas in England, we have a reach and presence that few other organisations can match. And we work with partners and stakeholders of all types, from multinational companies to small local charities and residents' groups.

Our approach is evidence-led and shaped by the needs of those we are trying to help. Our investment delivers quantifiable outcomes that can be set by our partners against CSR and ESG criteria. Every year we invest £15m in our residents and their communities. This work delivers over £100m in social value – showing the wider economic, social and environmental impacts of our work.

Clarion Futures works closely with Clarion Housing Group – including its supply chain and major contractors such as Equans, United Living, and Wates. This enables us to generate social value through the Group's buying power and generous contributions of our supply chain partners.



## Laptop Donations

In 2019, Clarion Housing Group selected three partners, Wates Living Space, Equans and United Living, to deliver a 20-year planned investment contract, covering 67,000 properties. Works carried out under the contracts include kitchen and bathroom replacement, boiler replacement, window installations, rewiring and roofing across our properties.

Having access to a device and to the internet is a lifeline for residents as it connects people with services, family and friends. In 2021-22 the

partnership committed to donating £62,000 towards high-spec laptops for Clarion residents. These devices were loaned to residents through the Clarion Futures Digital Device Scheme to improve access to online resources and training opportunities as well as increase connectivity for households, volunteers and community groups in need.

# Opening doors to jobs and training opportunities

Clarion Futures runs one of the biggest jobs and training programmes in the country, helping thousands of people into work each year.

Our Jobs and Training team provides a service that is free to all Clarion residents and people living in our communities. We provide tailored support to anyone looking for a job, whether they're taking the first step onto the career ladder or hoping to return to work after time out of the labour market.

We work with more than 300 employers, including the likes of the NHS, TFL, Primark, Galliford Try, Pret A Manger, and TSS Security, to source the right job opportunities for our residents. We also collaborate with more than 50 employers to provide apprenticeships in areas ranging from business administration and customer services to retail, health and leisure.

Clarion Futures has an excellent track record of working on major employment programmes, such as Love London Working, a £34m employment programme funded by the European Social Fund and

managed by the Greater London Authority. Clarion Futures leads the partnership of 16 housing associations to support more than 8,000 unemployed people into work over the duration of the programme. We are also involved in transnational programmes such as Increase Valorisation Sociale. This £10.3m programme is a partnership between English and French housing associations to support residents to reach their potential through entrepreneurship and employment.

We also led a consortium of more than 80 organisations from across the UK housing sector that secured £6m in funding from the Department of Work and Pensions to create hundreds of six-month paid work placements for unemployed 16-24 year olds under the Government's Kickstart scheme.

Every year we help 3,000 people into jobs, including 200 apprenticeships and 150 business start-ups.

Together with our partners, we deliver training to over 5,000 people every year.

## Chadni's story

We support the most vulnerable members of society to achieve their goals irrespective of the barriers they face. Last year, at the age of 20, Chadni lost her sight completely. This significantly impacted her wellbeing and self-esteem. One of her main concerns was around how she would cope in the workplace and if she would get adequate support.

Our Love London Working team worked with Chadni to update her CV, discussed the different software that could aid her in a potential job and helped to relieve her fears about coping in a work setting. Our Love London Working Mental Health Employment Specialist, scheduled frequent sessions with Chadni to create a wellbeing plan enabling her to reflect on her strengths, achievements and goals for the future.

Chadni was referred to the Clarion Futures Digital team, who were able to provide her with a Braille keyboard and we also helped Chadni apply for a grant from the RNIB to help her purchase equipment and specialist software.

She was also referred to Transform and Achieve, a digital wellbeing and employability service. Once in contact with Transform and Achieve, Chadni was offered a volunteering opportunity to write blog posts for them.

Chadni continues to work with her In Work Support Officer, which has given her confidence to know she won't be alone when she enters the workplace.



## Helping residents to make ends meet

Financial problems are a significant obstacle to people being able to fulfil their potential and can adversely affect the physical and mental health of those struggling to make ends meet. Over a third of our residents run out of money before the end of the week and 20% of our young tenants have had to use a food bank in the last year.

Every year, we help thousands of our residents to improve the management of their household finances, helping them to maximise their income and find ways of making their money go further. The skills and confidence gained by these residents stands them in good stead if their circumstances change, whether it's a problem with cash flow while waiting for their first payment from a new job, delays with Universal Credit, or moving into a new home.

Our partnerships with specialist providers mean that our residents benefit from a comprehensive range of financial advice, products and services: StepChange Debt Charity and Pennysmart provide intensive debt advice, and Leeds Credit Union, offers savings products and affordable loans developed for households on low incomes.

For residents in greatest need, we provide grants for essential white goods like cookers and fridges, as well as vouchers for food, gas and electricity, to give people the financial 'breathing space' needed to help deal with their situation.

Our Money Guidance staff and partners support residents on more than 20,000 occasions each year.

In the last 5 years we have provided one-to-one money guidance to over 10,000 households, and supported 13,000 to access specialist debt advice.

## Partnership with Charis

The Covid-19 pandemic had a huge impact on our residents, with many experiencing money worries and struggling to put food on the table. By working with Charis we are now able to offer immediate emergency support in the form of food and heating vouchers, giving residents short-term financial relief.

Our resident Sarah had recently moved house due to anti-social behaviour from her previous neighbour and because of this she had the usual house move costs coupled with the added stress of trying to make her new home habitable for herself and her children. Sarah knew she needed help with her money, but was not in the right headspace when she was first referred for help.

Sarah worked with one of our Money Guidance officers and it was immediately apparent that setting up the house had wiped out Sarah's budget and had left her in a deficit. Sarah was very upset by the situation and felt she was becoming a burden on her wider family. She had no

money to put on the meters to keep her own family warm.

We were able to offer Sarah £28 on both her gas and electric meter as well as a £60 supermarket voucher and arranged a follow-up appointment. She ended up positively engaging in further money guidance, which helped her to reduce her monthly outgoings to a more affordable level.



# Bridging the **digital divide**

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of the internet and the value of our long-running digital inclusion programme that works to ensure our residents are not left behind and denied the benefits of being online.

Our Digital team delivers free digital support tailored to the needs and aspirations of our residents. We deliver a training programme of foundation and essential digital skills, so that day-to-day digital interactions like shopping, using social media and job searches can be carried out with confidence. Advanced learners also have access to the Microsoft Academy and to our own accredited training service.

We work with digital skills provider, Digital Unite to provide a digital champion service to residents. Digital champions are volunteers of all ages and from all backgrounds and communities that help others understand the benefits of using the internet. We also fund local digital grant partners to establish hubs across the country, where free courses and community based peer-to-peer digital support are delivered.

Our work to promote digital services was recognised when we were chosen as one of the partners on the 'One Digital' programme funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. Other partners included Age UK, Citizens Online, Digital Unite and Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations. It succeeded in helping more than 61,000 people to gain new digital skills.

Our Digital Device Loan Scheme provides access to laptops, tablets and connectivity for households, volunteers and community groups in need. The scheme is supported by contributions from our contractors and more than 600 devices have been given out in the community as a result. Devices offer a lifeline by connecting people to jobs and training opportunities, as well as to family and friends. We also offer a telephone-based support and guidance service for customers to help them buy the most appropriate devices and connectivity to meet their needs and budget.

## Hilary's story

Hilary has been a resident for 35 years. She began her digital champion journey as a learner herself and after completing her own digital skills course, signed up to be a digital champion.

She volunteers at a Clarion LiveSmart sheltered scheme for older people and spends two days a week helping residents to get online and develop digital skills. She works with a range of residents, including people with sight impairments, epilepsy, arthritis and depression.

Hilary's calm and friendly manner gives learners the confidence to use new technologies on their own, enabling them to see how digital skills can enhance their lives, help them to stay in touch with family members and use online services.





# Connecting people and improving communities

We work with our residents and organisations to improve our local communities. We provide hundreds of thousands of pounds in grants each year to projects, including community gardens and food growing projects, sports activities, youth clubs and music and dance workshops.

When the pandemic struck we launched an emergency response fund to help our partners continue to deliver vital services and support to our residents and communities across the country.

We support, fund and advise local community panels made up of residents and stakeholders in some of our most challenging neighbourhoods, enabling a hyperlocal approach to providing support.

We act as the lead agency in pulling together collaborative funding bids, which enables us to pursue new opportunities across our communities.

We support our charitable partners who manage our portfolio of 50 community centres across England, many of which play a vital role in acting as a local hub for much-

needed neighbourhood services.

We also act as the locally trusted organisation for the National Lottery funded Big Local programme in Borehamwood, administering and distributing up to £1 million to support a range of local projects

We fund a wide variety of projects encouraging community engagement and promoting health and wellbeing. These include 'buddying' intergenerational schemes bringing old and young people together, and projects to act as catalysts to regenerate local communities.

Our younger residents can get involved in our ambassador programmes, which enable them to develop life skills, gain qualifications, and take part in local social action projects, helping them to become a force for good within their own communities.

We also work with our older residents, including our partnership with HomeShareUK, which aims to match people aged 55+ who can offer a spare room with a younger person looking for somewhere affordable to live.



## Partnership with Hadley Property Group and Brompton Bike Hire

Clarion Futures has joined forces with Hadley Property Group and Brompton Bike Hire to open CYCLE 42, a pop-up cycle hub, offering Brompton folding bicycles to residents on our estates in Merton on a free 90-day trial basis. All three CYCLE 42 partners believe in the power of cycling to improve physical and mental health and recognise its crucial role in making our communities more environmentally friendly.

After the 90-day free hire period, residents are able to purchase a discounted

refurbished bicycle from Hadley's charitable partners, The Bike Project.

Feedback from Merton residents who took part in the first round of the scheme was overwhelmingly positive, with 97% of respondents saying that they intended to continue to cycle after the programme ended. 90% of those surveyed attested to improved physical and mental health and 100% said that the scheme had improved their lifestyle and travel habits.



# Contact us

If you are interested in supporting our work to transform lives and improve communities, we would like to hear from you.



If you would like to get in touch about working with us to deliver jobs and training opportunities, please contact our Head of Jobs and Training, Victoria Whittle:

Email: [Victoria.Whittle@clarionhg.com](mailto:Victoria.Whittle@clarionhg.com)



If you would like to work with us to help people find ways of making their money go further and improve their digital skills, please contact our Head of Money and Digital, Stephanie Noyce:

Email: [Stephanie.Noyce@clarionhg.com](mailto:Stephanie.Noyce@clarionhg.com)



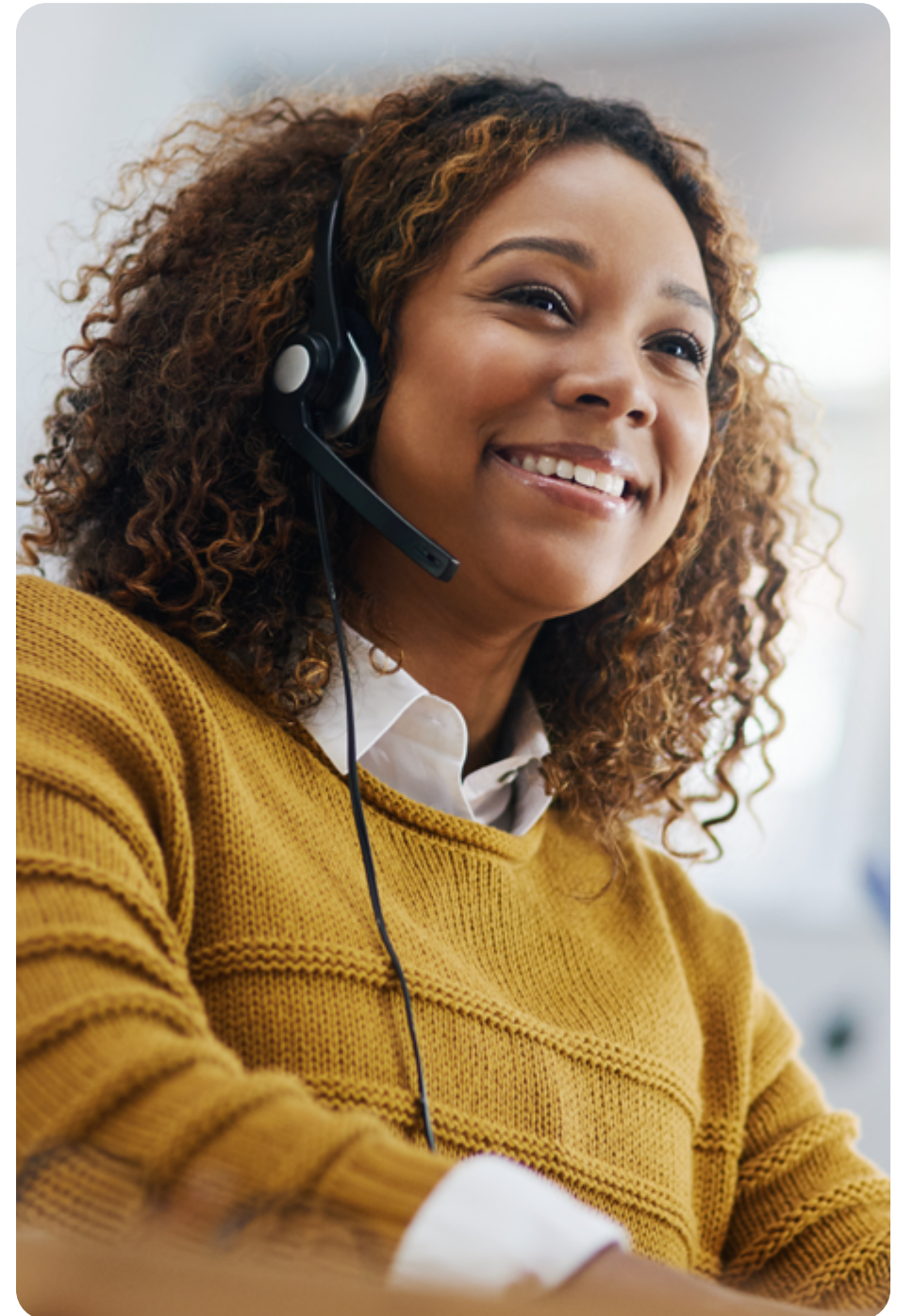
If you would like to work with us to improve communities and collaborate on wellbeing initiatives, please contact our Head of Communities, Matthew Parsonage:

Email: [Matthew.Parsonage@clarionhg.com](mailto:Matthew.Parsonage@clarionhg.com)



If you would like to find out more about how we deliver social value with our partners as well as our grant giving and volunteering activities, please contact our Head of Partnerships and Projects, Shelley Hathaway-Batt:

Email: [Shelley.Hathaway-Batt@clarionhg.com](mailto:Shelley.Hathaway-Batt@clarionhg.com)



# List of recent

## Clarion Futures awards

### 2017

Olena Batista, one of our money guidance specialists, shortlisted in the Public Servant of the Year category at the Guardian Public Service Awards

### 2018

Winner in the 'community impact' category at the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion Awards

Winner in the 'national partner' category at the WEA Awards

Shortlisted in the 'outstanding approach to promoting digital inclusion' category at the UK Housing Awards

Nominated in the 'outstanding employment' category at the Business in the Community Responsible Business Awards

### 2019

Shortlisted in the 'social impact' category at the EG Awards

Shortlisted in the 'youth volunteering and social action' category at the Children & Young People Now Awards

Jason Davis, one of our employment support specialists, won the Adviser of the Year category at the Employment Related Services Association's awards

### 2021

Kickstart Housing Partnership led by Clarion Futures highly commended in the 'Community Partnership of the Year' category at the ERSA Employability Awards

Shortlisted in the 'Resident employment and training' category for housing associations with more than 15,000 homes at the UK Housing Awards



## Clarion Futures

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