

**PROJECT  
FREEDOM**

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# PROSPECTUS

**| Pride of Place Living**

December 2020

*"I have very little biological family. My close family have never really accepted my sexuality and have chosen to ignore it for the last 40 years. I've made my own family with my close LGBT+ friends and these are just as strong as blood relations."*



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# PROJECT FREEDOM

## Executive Summary

This prospectus outlines the case for Pride of Place Living, a purpose-built multi-generational life-long co-housing project for the LGBT+ community in Leeds. The project plans to accommodate a range of LGBT+ housing needs including homes for people over 50, some with care needs, for families, for young people and for those at risk of homelessness.

This prospectus invites expressions of interest from local Housing Associations to deliver Pride of Place Living via a partnership arrangement with Project Freedom. The financial viability of the project has been confirmed in a report by Leeds Community Homes, and is based on a scheme with 29 leasehold sale near market value homes, 19 shared ownership homes and 20 social rented homes. A number of different partnership models are offered for consideration. An outline design brief is provided.

Project Freedom was established following surveys in Leeds that identified the need to address safety and well-being concerns in relation to housing, care and support, particularly for older LGBT+ people, and for an inclusive LGBT+ community centre. Several northern cities, including Manchester, are already establishing housing schemes geared to the needs of the LGBT+ community, based on similar survey evidence.

Leeds is proud of its reputation as a LGBT+ inclusive City. This is a unique opportunity to partner with Project Freedom to develop Pride of Place Living, a project that addresses an acute housing need for the local LGBT+ community and is a flagship in its forward-looking design.



*“As we get older we are having to think about what lies ahead for us. With a nine-year age gap, we know we will be in different stages of old age at different times. It would be wonderful to be able to live in a safe community environment where we can be ourselves as we get older as well as have the care we need on hand.”*

# PROJECT FREEDOM

## Introduction

Project Freedom is a Leeds based LGBT+ community-led organisation launched in 2018. In 2016, Leeds Community Foundation and Leeds City Council commissioned a report to 'map' the needs of the LGBT+<sup>1</sup> community. Two key recommendations were to address the need for an 'inclusive LGBT+ community centre' and to 'develop a multi-generational LGBT+ housing project supporting the needs of older and younger LGBT+ people'. Further consultations were carried out between January and May 2018 and a survey in August 2018. Project Freedom was formally constituted in February 2020 and established a social media presence in July 2020.

Housing specifically for LGBT+ people in Leeds is needed to address safety and wellbeing concerns in relation to housing, care and support, particularly for older LGBT+ people. National and international studies confirm these concerns and highlight the need for policy makers and housing providers to recognise diversity and difference (see Demand section page 11). It is estimated that at least 10% of the city's 793,139 residents are LGBT+ and yet there are no housing projects geared to the specific needs of the LGBT+ communities.

## Our Vision

To enable the creation of a vibrant and sustainable LGBT+ community in central Leeds where members can live, work, and enjoy life independently or with support. The two key components of our vision are:

**Pride of Place Living.** Our vision of purpose-built multi-generational life-long co-housing is intended to create an environment that will encourage intergenerational peer-support and thus increase safety and reduce loneliness and isolation.

We are setting out to provide a development of mixed market, affordable and accessible accommodation with the availability of extra-care for those who need it.

The model will accommodate a range of LGBT+ housing needs including a sizeable proportion of homes for people over 50 years old and in particular people with care needs, as well as homes for families, younger people and those at risk of homelessness.

**Pride of Place.** A fully accessible and thriving Cultural Arts and Community Centre for LGBT+ groups and organisations in the city.

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<sup>1</sup> An umbrella term for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, with the + used as an all-encompassing term for the expanding range of abbreviations that describe different identities in the LGBT community.

## PROJECT FREEDOM

# Proposed scheme for Project Freedom Pride of Place Living

A viability report produced by Jimm Reed of Leeds Community Homes provides a broad indication of financial viability for a scheme based on the project brief outlined below. The report is available on request. Whilst the report only provides an initial summary of the scheme based on broad costing assumptions it demonstrates that the extra care intergenerational design for the scheme with its associated tenures, is a viable development.

It is proposed that the scheme will consist of:

- 29 leasehold sale near market value homes
- 19 Shared Ownership homes
- 20 Social rent

The provided homes are a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bed flats plus some 2,3 and 4 bed family homes.

Broad costing assumptions are as follows:

Works £9,104,000

On Costs £1,365,000

Development period Borrowing £257,800

TOTAL SCHEME COSTS £11,728,000



## PROJECT FREEDOM

### Community Led Housing (CLH) Context

CLH enables local communities to become active players in their own sustainable development. It is part of a grassroots movement responding to the longstanding gap between wages, house prices and rents, the loss of affordable homes through the Right to Buy, loss of community and lack of community involvement in housing delivery.

The value of CLH was recently recognised by the government, which provided major funding for the sector in the form of the Community Led Housing Fund which catalysed a huge number of projects around the country.

CLH takes a variety of forms including co-housing, co-ops, self-build and community land trusts. CLH may develop homes for a community of interest or a geographic community, and may include a mix of market and permanently protected locally affordable homes. CLH can be self-developed directly by groups themselves or developed via partnerships with Housing Associations (HAs).

Community Led Homes is a coalition of specialist support networks who work together to provide information and resources for CLH projects. Members include the Co-housing Network, Locality, the Co-op movement, Self Help Housing and the Community Land Trust Network. See types of, success stories and data at <https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/>.

### Leeds Community Homes (LCH) technical support role

LCH is one of the national networks of CLH enabler hubs which provide accredited technical support for community and voluntary groups, community land trusts, local authorities, developers, HAs and more to create new CLH schemes.

LCH helped to secure Start up Grants for a number of groups in the Leeds area, including Project Freedom. This enables local Hubs to provide training workshops to ensure groups are sufficiently well organised and informed to develop their potential projects and performs a key function in aligning the needs and purpose of CLH groups with strategic partners such as HAs.

# PROJECT FREEDOM

## Purpose of this Prospectus

The purpose of this prospectus is to invite expressions of interest from local Housing Associations (HAs) to deliver our Pride of Place Living project via a partnership arrangement i.e. to help source a site, develop the masterplan with Project Freedom, and facilitate construction. Leeds Community Homes and Project Freedom have explored the following partnership models:

### **Development lease**

This is a mechanism which has been extensively used for rural schemes in the South West. A larger 20 home project is underway in Lancaster City Council district.

- The Community Led Housing (CLH) company is helped to acquire a site either through asset transfer, grant, or the HA buys the land and transfers it to the CLH
- With legal advice, the CLH leases the land to the HA. The nature of project & partnership is defined in the lease
- A clause in the lease can protect from Right to Acquire for rented homes
- The HA retains rent income and can borrow against the asset
- No need for the CLH to be an Registered Provider (RP)

### **Consortium development**

HAs sometimes offer this as part of their social mission. The Older Womens Co-Housing scheme in London being one example.

- The HA helps to identify a site
- It then accesses housing grant and develops the project for the CLH partner
- Ownership is then transferred to the CLH organisation
- If rented homes involved the CLH will need to become an RP. This is a time consuming process but many CLH groups have successfully done this, and as development is taken care of the CLH just has to satisfy governance requirements
- PF can manage homes or contract to another RP

### **Commissioning arrangement with an HA**

- The CLH is treated as a community client
- Both parties agree the project specification and its management
- The HA builds, owns and manages the scheme
- No need for group to be an RP

### **An adaptation of the Accord HA co-op model**

- The HA identifies a community group (PF already provides this)
- The HA provides training in co-operative housing management (in this case the approach to housing management and allocations would be negotiated)
- The HA builds and owns the homes
- Management could be carried out by PF or the HA
- No need for group to be an RP

## PROJECT FREEDOM

### What does Project Freedom Pride of Place Living offer to its prospective partner?

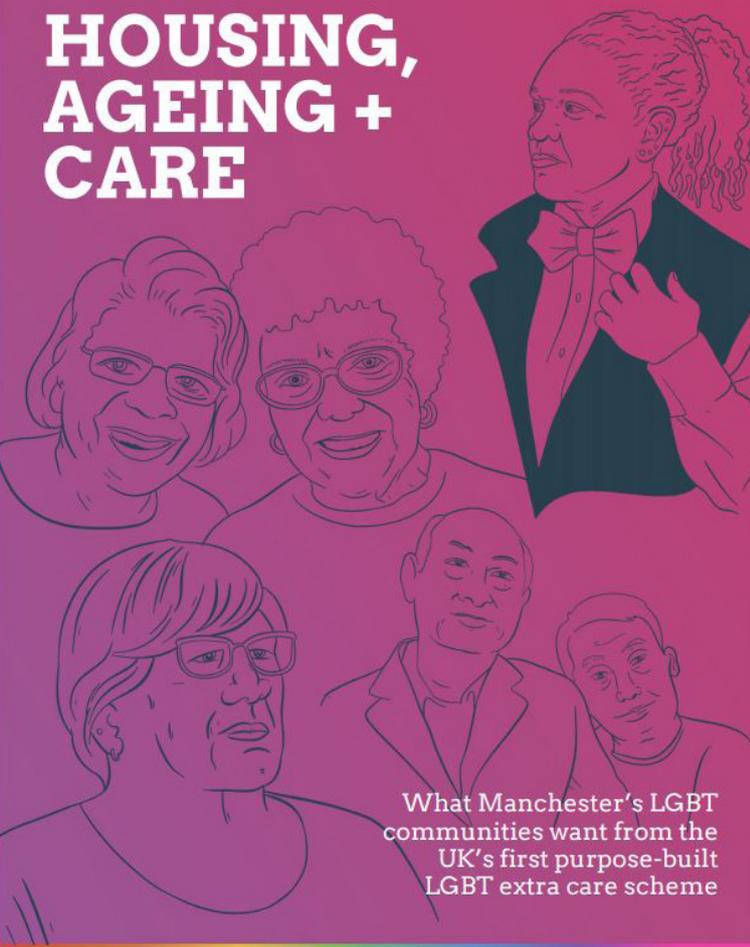
- A ready-made community of interest to work with, who have already generated substantial community support in their scheme;
- A sustainable vision for mutually supportive housing which increases well-being and reduces social costs;
- Potential specialist funding towards revenue and capital costs;
- Income generation.

### What are the key objectives of Project Freedom Pride of Place Living?

- To work with local housing associations (HAs) and Leeds City Council to advance the work of Project Freedom Pride of Place Living
- To identify a partner HA able to commit enthusiastically to the Project Freedom vision
- To work openly to evolve a model supported by both parties
- To secure a central Leeds site for either new build or refurbishment
- To ensure maximum accessibility, adaptability and affordability
- To engage with and develop a diverse multi-generational LGBT+ housing community

*“I’ve had to rely on carers to live independently for many years. Most have been good but some haven’t been able to hide the shock from their faces at finding out that I’m gay. It’s difficult enough having someone else showering you or helping you go to the toilet or get out of bed, without having to decide whether to come out to them as gay.”*

# HOUSING, AGEING + CARE



What Manchester's LGBT communities want from the UK's first purpose-built LGBT extra care scheme

lgbt.foundation  
0345 3 30 30 30

**WE'RE HERE IF YOU NEED US**

**LGBT**  
foundation

Source: LGBT Foundation (2020) Housing, Ageing and Care – what Manchester's LGBT community want from the first purpose-built LGBT extra care scheme.

*“Since I've had to use a wheelchair my options for housing have been very limited. I've been with my girlfriend for seven years but the chances of us ever being able to live together are probably around zero as we are both full time wheelchair users. Accessible properties are rare. Ones that can accommodate two disabled people are non-existent”*



# PROJECT FREEDOM

## Demand

There have been international and UK studies over the last ten years that demonstrate LGBT+ people have concerns about their safety and wellbeing in relation to housing, care and support, particularly as they get older. They are consequently likely to change their behaviours to address these concerns, such as hiding their authentic selves, 'going back into the closet', or living more restricted lives compared to their cisgender and/or heterosexual peers [2].

A recent survey into the impact of Covid-19 on the LGBT+ community in the UK found that 30% of the 555 respondents are living alone at this time, rising to 40% of LGBT people aged 50+. Also, 8% of respondents did not feel safe where they are currently staying, rising to 15% of disabled LGBT+ and 17% of trans people and non-binary people [3].

Care and support services tend to overlook the sexual and gender identities of older LGBTQ+ people, and therefore fail to meet their specific needs. Stonewall research has found that 3 in 5 older LGB people were not confident that support and social care services, for example paid carers, would be able to understand and meet their needs [4].

There have been two recent surveys in the UK that have sought to capture the 'voice of demand' of older LGBT+ people with regard to housing care and support. The key messages from the 624 respondents over 50 in London [1] are that there is a need for:

- Housing, care and support services that are safe
- Policy makers and providers to recognise their diversity and difference
- More advice and support around housing and assisted services

A preference to live in a specific LGBT+ retirement community was stated by 56% of respondents and a further 23% stated they wanted to live in a retirement community that was LGBT+ accredited i.e. where LGBT needs and equality is fully understood. The survey of 349 respondents in Greater Manchester [5] also found that 51% would not be comfortable living in retirement without specific LGBT+ considerations and this was significantly higher amongst non-binary respondents where 71% would not be comfortable.

In the Greater Manchester survey, 48% strongly agreed or agreed that would prefer intergenerational housing rather than retirement housing, 34% neither agreed nor disagreed, with 17% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. 74% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that LGBT+ extra care provision is needed.

A number of other cities in the UK are currently exploring specific housing and social care provision for the LGBT+ community including Manchester<sup>1</sup>, Salford<sup>2</sup>, Birmingham and London. Projects of this nature already exist in the Netherlands and Sweden.

1 <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/oct/21/uks-first-extra-care-housing-lgbtq-manchester>

2 <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/business/business-news/forviva-housing-scheme-salford-lgbt-13991737>



*Delivering training to care home staff in Leeds has demonstrated that many are not aware of LGBT+ history and the life experiences of older LGBT+ people.*



*Older gay or bisexual men have lived their young lives in fear of criminalisation, indeed many were imprisoned. Older lesbians and bisexual women felt invisible, their partners hidden as female 'companions'.*

*Trans people have struggled alone with their identities whilst non-binary and gender-fluid people had no name for their identities.*



# PROJECT FREEDOM

## Pride of Place Living: design brief

### **The accommodation**

The intention is to build 68 units in the city centre that will accommodate a range of housing needs. All units are intended to be life-long in respect of accommodating changing support and care needs.

The units are planned to serve the needs of the following residents:

- 45 units for over 50-year olds, catering for people who are active and people with care and extra care needs
- 5 units for vulnerable adults
- 5 family units
- 11 units for young people, a mix of double and single units
- 2 units - one for shared emergency housing and one for guests/overnight carers

### **Communal facilities**

Communal facilities on the site should ideally include access to a communal space with a café, parking spaces for disabled residents, day carers and visitors; Changing Room facilities, shared garden plots, secure bike shelter and tool area.

An LGBT+ Cultural and Community Arts Centre on an adjacent site with offices and performance space to hire would offer an expanded choice and/or sharing of some communal facilities for residents and add vibrancy to the housing environment. This is being pursued separately through the project Pride of Place.

### **Build design**

Key concepts in the design of the accommodation are accessibility, adaptability and affordability. Each residential unit would be provided with standard fittings, but be able to be adapted to residents' needs.

Project Freedom is keen that the development follows eco-friendly and sustainable design, within the context of affordability. Build quality and aesthetics need to be modern and future-proofed and reflect 'Pride of Place' Living.

Project Freedom would prefer to engage LGBT+ architects and other professionals to fully reflect the needs of the LGBT+ community.

# PROJECT FREEDOM

## Tenures and allocations

Mixed tenures are to facilitate social accessibility and cohesion with shared ownership for those with equity and affordable or social rents for others. The tenures will need to be accommodated within a leasehold scheme to ensure that owners and tenants sell or transfer ownership or tenancy with regard to Project Freedom's policies. For example, owned units will be on a 95% basis with Project Freedom retaining 5% for allocation purposes. Reference - the OWCH co-housing community in London <https://www.owch.org.uk/>

A bespoke points-based system for the allocation of the units will prioritise applicants according to the availability of accommodation and applicant's needs. This will ensure the accommodation is safe and inclusive for marginalised groups within the LGBT+ communities. For example, a points system could give extra weight to people from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic communities.

Occupants of both owner-occupied and affordable homes will be required to become members of the Project Freedom community-led housing company.

A further survey questionnaire will update the scheme of potential residents' tenure requirements, priorities and approximate numbers of people willing to purchase. This will continue to inform the basis of our design brief and target project construction cost.

## Financial aspects

The cost of the owner-occupied units would be covered by sales to the prospective owners. Homes will, as far as possible, be pre-allocated in the development phase, ensuring maximisation of sales and lettings (off plan).

Funding for the affordable homes will be accessed from Homes England by our selected HA development partner.

The costs of the community facilities could be funded through the combination of methods including:

- Owner-occupied units bought at market value providing a surplus to fund communal facilities
- Project Freedom community-led housing company funding through a loan paid back through service charges
- A community share issue

Project Freedom will explore specialist avenues available to CLH projects to raise funding towards revenue and capital costs. These include specialist CLH grants and loans, community share issues.

# PROJECT FREEDOM

## Governance

Project Freedom is currently working towards an appropriate legal structure which encompasses Project Freedom as the parent company with Pride of Place Living and Pride of Place established as separate organisations within an appropriate legal structure. Currently, Project Freedom has a Constitution, adopted in February 2020, with membership open to everyone who agrees with our vision and values. Everyone signs a membership agreement which outlines the aims and objectives and can vote at general meetings and be nominated for election as committee members at the annual general meeting.

Pride of Place Living has received a £10,000 grant from the Community Led Homes Start-Up Support programme to further develop it as a community housing organisation with an established legal status by March 2021. Leeds Community Homes is providing professional support and advising on the implementation of best practice. Legal advice on company status will be commissioned from one of the nationally recognised legal firms specialising in CLH, taking into account fund raising methods such as community shares.

## Invitation

**Project Freedom would be very excited to hear from the Leadership Teams of local Housing Associations who may be inspired by the ideas contained in our prospectus and would like to explore the possibility of working together to deliver Pride of Place Living.**

**Please contact [projectfreedom@gmail.com](mailto:projectfreedom@gmail.com)**



Source: Elliott Architecture

# PROJECT FREEDOM

## References

[1] 2019 estimate – Leeds Observatory, Available at: <https://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/population/>

[2] Tonic, Stonewall, Opening Doors London (2020) Building Safe Choices 2020 - our voices: LGBT late life housing demand in London. Available from: <https://bit.ly/2020buildingsafechoices>

[3] LGBT Foundation (2020) Hidden Figures: The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on LGBT Communities in the UK. Available from: <https://lgbt.foundation/coronavirus/hiddenfigures>

[4] Stonewall Housing Report, Building Safe Choices 2016. Available at: [http://stonewallhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/BuildingSafeChoices\\_full.pdf](http://stonewallhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/BuildingSafeChoices_full.pdf)

[5] LGBT Foundation (2020) Housing, Ageing and Care – what Manchester’s LGBT community want from the first purpose-built LGBT extra care scheme. Available from: [https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/lgbt-website-media/Files/8f229162-0589-4d8f-be67-cee5c610edc5/Housing%2c%2520Ageing%2520%2b%2520Care%2520\(4\).pdf](https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/lgbt-website-media/Files/8f229162-0589-4d8f-be67-cee5c610edc5/Housing%2c%2520Ageing%2520%2b%2520Care%2520(4).pdf)

