

Notes from Webinar

How I Got Wheatley/Housing Association On Board

Step-by-Step: First, I found a place/space that would work and talked to Wheatley about using it. Easy start.

Explaining the Cause: I told the HA I work for a charity helping people who struggle to access affordable and nutritious food.

Community Support: I made sure everyone in the area knew my plans by chatting with people, handing out leaflets, and knocking on doors. This takes time, but it's worth it.

Getting People on Board: It's crucial to get everyone in the community to support you right from the beginning. When they know what you're doing, they'll spread the word, support you, and back you up. This can also be a very good place to start recruiting potential volunteers!

Talking to Many: I spoke to lots of people - local schools, Housing Officers, social work departments, churches, supermarkets, local doctors, local shops, businesses, and elected officials. The more people who know, the better.

Keeping Everyone Informed: Let the Housing Association (HA) know you're talking to the community about your plans.

Growing Partnerships: After working in one space, Wheatley asked me to open more. Now, I partner with multiple housing associations and plan to expand further next year.

For Any HA: All housing associations, big or small, can join in if they have a space with basic facilities like electricity, heat, and water.

We actually have a Larder in the back of a Housing Association building and after a successful first year there, are now being moved into a commercial property with the Larder extending it's hours.

Keeping Housing Associations Engaged

Good Communication: Ask the HA to be part of your plans. Housing Associations are full of many people with many skills who are genuinely interested in helping people. Their advice and support matter a lot.

Changing Role: Housing associations are not just about collecting rent anymore. They aim to support the community, especially during tough times like rising living costs.

Walking Together: Working as partners is the best way. The food club concept is new to many, so going on this journey together is important.

Making Intentions Clear: Make it clear from the start that you want to work together, not just use the space provided. You'll find that the HA will very likely be as interested and committed as you are.

Constant Communication: Keep your Housing Association partners updated, especially when inviting local newspapers or officials to visit. My experience has been that the HAs I work with are genuinely interested in what I am doing, and will have comms teams who want to be involved with any media opportunity to showcase or promote the good work we do together.

Building Relationships: Make friends with all HA staff, whether it's the concierge teams, their comms and media team, or any community groups who work alongside the HA, (community gardening groups, lunch clubs, pensioners clubs etc.)

Involving Housing Officers also helps break barriers between them and the tenants/members you serve.

Top Tips for Partnering with Housing Associations:

Research Matters: Before meeting them, do your homework. Know potential spaces and what the community needs.

Stay Open: Even if you don't have a location in mind, talk to the Housing Association. They might have hidden spaces/premises you don't even know about.

Space Requirements: An ideal place should be accessible, on the ground floor, in a community who will clearly benefit from what you offer.

Generally speaking, you are looking for weatherproof, warm premises, with basic facilities.

Local Insights: Present information about the challenges people face with accessing nutritious and affordable food locally. Share local facts/stats about the struggles people face. This shows why the service is necessary and can be a starting point for a good partnership.

Be Patient: It takes time. There will be lots of talks and meetings behind the scenes before getting an answer. HAs have their own duties too. It can take months for things to finally happen, but hang on in there, and keep in contact.

Designated Contact: It is always a VERY good idea to have one person from the HA to keep in touch with for updates.

Success Stories: Share Glasgow's successful partnerships to inspire others.