



GEM Programme 2025

Future proofing housing
through people -

an inspiring programme for
housing's upcoming talent



The GEM Programme - what will #GEM25 look like?

The key themes of sustaining people, neighbourhoods, homes and buildings will run through the GEM Programme starting in January 2025.

The delivery of these key themes will also reflect the growing importance of the U.K. government's social housing professionalisation review which will be embedded in six GEM Shacks and CIH Level 4 qualification which all GEMs will experience.

There will also be an optional additional sustainability stream for GEMs to learn collaboratively with upcoming housing colleagues from the Netherlands through good practice study visits in the U.K. and Holland.

Launched in 2024, this optional sustainability stream will be delivered by the GEM Programme, our Dutch partners, Talent in Huis and the Northern Housing Consortium. There will be a limit to the number of places.



Learning in a 'GEM Shack' - a unique experience

GEM Shacks are intensive and immersive two-day themed learning experiences which give strategic and practical insight into key aspects of housing and the challenges posed by all aspects of sustainability. GEM Shacks are demanding events which enable GEMs to find their feet and their voice, and show up as people of influence during their time on the programme, and in their organisations and the housing sector.

Six GEM Shacks take place throughout the twelve months of the programme and are designed and delivered in collaboration with GEM partners and their GEMs in the UK, Ireland and Holland. These stimulating cross-organisation learning events incorporate a succession of 'GEM challenges' to ensure every GEM is engaged in learning experiences which stretch and grow them personally as future leaders.

GEMs work in teams to analyse, interpret, and develop creative ideas in relation to the challenges specific to the GEM Shack. All GEM Challenges culminate in GEMs presenting their ideas on key issues to senior leaders, subject experts and stakeholders and receiving feedback, plus a subsequent transfer of GEM Shack learning to vested interests in their employing organisations.



GEM Shacks - themes for 2025

Sustaining Homes & Buildings

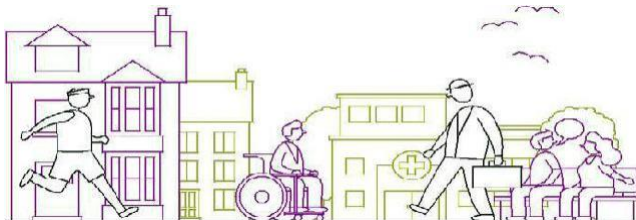
GEMs experience first hand the importance of the physical sustainability of homes. Site visits enable the study of retrofit and new build, plus a comparison between countries. The lived experiences of residents and communities are reviewed along with financial and resourcing considerations. Working in teams, GEMs are set the GEM Challenge which engages them in developing and presenting innovative ideas for improvement to senior executives and sustainability experts.

Sustaining People - Welcome Homelessness

GEMs take a holistic view of sustainability and its links to homelessness globally and locally, by interacting with subject experts, leaders from charities, the social housing sector, front-line workers, and people with lived experience of homelessness. This GEM Shack takes inspiration from the GEM Programme patron David Tovey, who issues a call to action on homelessness. David, a former homeless person, is a successful artist and housing campaigner.

Personal Leadership and Sustainability

GEMs leave this GEM Shack with a deeper understanding of themselves as people of influence. Based on positive and strengths based psychologies, GEMs develop creative leadership skills for application to the challenges faced by housing organisations. GEMs are introduced to the GEM Reflective Journal and engage in reflective practice throughout the programme with guidance and feedback from the GEM personal performance coach and their GEM workplace mentor.



Sustaining People Through Diversity and Inclusion

GEM partners in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are recognised for the work they have done over the last 50 years in bridging the gaps in a diverse society. GEMs are given the opportunity to explore how Ireland tackles equality, diversity, and inclusion through the lens of sustaining people, communities and place. GEMs engage with residents from across Ireland, community leaders, underrepresented groups and staff. In depth study visits are included and provide the basis for the GEM challenge.

Sustaining People, Neighbourhoods and Communities

Grounded in the principles of sustaining people and place, this GEM Shack looks at housing management and customer service through the lived experiences of residents and housing colleagues. The GEM Challenge engages GEMs with residents and other stakeholders in the co-creation of proposals for transforming housing management and customer service, culminating in GEMs presenting their proposals to stakeholders.

Government Policies and the Sustainability of Housing

GEMs have the opportunity to explore how housing policy is designed and delivered, with a focus on sustainability of people, place and the environment. With the support of politicians from Scotland, England and Northern Ireland, senior housing leaders, senior civil servants from DLUCH and various campaign groups, GEMs develop the knowledge, insight and confidence to ask questions about policies affecting the world of housing. A comparative study of associated policies in the countries represented on the GEM Programme provides the basis for this challenge.



Becoming a housing professional -

The GEM Programme is delivered from our own CIH approved centre, and GEMs complete the CIH Level Four qualification. This qualification is designed to give a broad overview of the sector and is an extension of the support provided by the programme to help GEMs thrive in their careers as housing professionals.

The modules include:

- Buildings, community and the environment
- Housing management
- Professional practice skills for housing
- Housing policy
- Equality, diversity and housing law
- Customer service
- Finance for housing

All GEMs are granted student membership of CIH to support their studies. They also attend the CIH National Conference as delegates.

By successfully completing the GEM Programme and achieving the CIH Level Four qualification, GEMs have a pathway to CIH chartered membership status.



GEM Workplace Learning

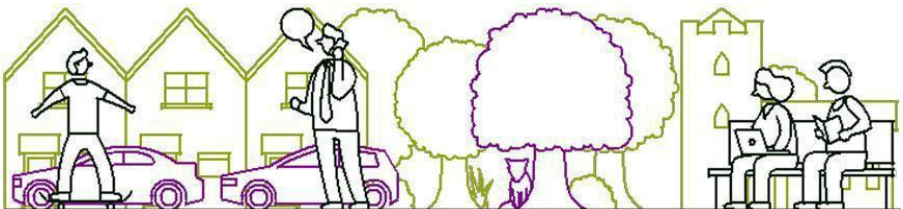
Workplace learning is an integral part of the GEM Programme as GEMs take part in the programme while fulfilling a full-time role.

GEMs are supported by dedicated Workplace Mentors whilst they are simultaneously exposed to real work experience and situations. With mentor support, GEMs develop their knowledge and skills and use their initiative to take action in their organisations. Learning from doing accelerates the GEMs personal growth and expands their capabilities.

Workplace learning allows GEMs to focus on their development as a housing professional of influence, while contributing to organisational needs and earning a salary.

The benefits of GEM workplace learning:

- ongoing personal support from a trusted source
- a value-adding relationship, driven by the GEM
- understanding of how the organisation and its stakeholders work in addressing housing issues in the round
- guidance on balancing work and life needs
- a sounding board for making sense of their GEM learning experiences
- guidance on strengths and career direction
- access to colleagues in all parts of the business and beyond
- a go-to person in challenging times
- the opportunity for two-way mentoring



GEM Team support - for workplace learning mentors & managers

The GEM team provides developmental support for GEMs' line managers and their dedicated GEM workplace mentors, whom they are assigned upon joining the programme. Experience is not essential to become a mentor, as an interest in people and the motivation to help upcoming professionals learn is key. Workplace mentors could be a member of staff with experience as a mentor or coach, or it could be a great development opportunity for someone new to mentoring.

The GEM Programme provides the *GEM Reflective Journal* to assure the quality of a GEM's learning journey in the workplace and to support mentors in their new role. This framework is available to GEM Line Managers, GEM Workplace Mentors and GEMs to provide structure to their learning conversations at work. Ongoing reflective conversations take place sequentially over the duration of the GEM Programme.



The GEM team provides support in the use of the GEM Reflective Journal. Mentors and line managers also have the opportunity to network with colleagues fulfilling the same roles in GEM partner organisations.

Workplace mentors and managers engage with their GEMs by:

- providing valuable feedback and guidance on a GEM's strengths and development
- helping GEMs understand how their organisation works and embedding sustainability
- supporting GEMs to succeed in their current role
- ensuring good practice and cross organisation learning from GEM Shacks is transferred to the workplace
- enabling GEMs to fully participate in the GEM Programme
- introducing GEMs to internal and external networks
- helping GEMs contextualise CIH assignments



The golden thread - personal leadership development

Personal leadership development is embedded in the GEM Programme as GEMs step outside their comfort zones and commit to fulfilling their potential as people of influence.

The GEM Programme creates opportunities for growth at every stage. This challenges GEMs, individually and in teams, to see the world of housing, and themselves, differently and become people of influence on a spectrum of housing issues. This challenging and inspiring personal leadership development and career-building programme is personalised to individual GEMs.

The programme combines real-life job experience with personal leadership development to give GEMs the confidence to excel in the housing sector. Grounded in the GEM Model of Influence, the *GEM Reflective Journal* brings reflective practice to life and accelerates personal leadership development for upcoming housing professionals.

GEMs develop confidence, resilience, initiative and creativity throughout the duration of the programme and accelerate their career development.



Future proofing through diversity

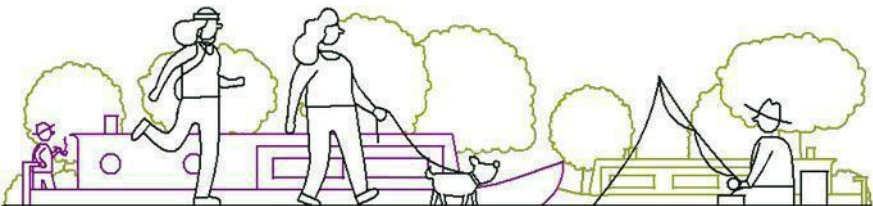
The GEM Programme continues to pride itself on being inclusive and accessible to all. It has recruited and developed talent from across diverse ethnic groups, age ranges, and genders. Accessibility will remain a guiding principle in recruiting the next GEM cohort.

A diverse and inclusive approach to both recruitment and development will enable housing organisations of all sizes and specialisms to engage in creating unique career building opportunities for upcoming professionals across a full range of roles.

The GEM Programme recognises that non-graduate talent can bring the same potential, passion and initiative as graduates. The recruitment process is therefore also open to graduate equivalent talent.

The GEM Programme recruits talent externally – those who do not come from a housing background – as well as being open to talented colleagues already working in housing organisations and at a formative stage of their careers.

The programme has a diverse demographic and aims to continue this by encouraging applications from underrepresented groups. Since inception in 2009, 23% of GEMS are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and 52% are female. Pioneering work is also taking place to recruit neurodiverse GEMs.



Learning without boundaries

Importantly, the GEM Programme creates access to learning and networking in the housing sectors in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and Holland.

The reach of the programme goes beyond front-line and traditional housing roles and addresses the importance of developing housing's future professionals across every specialism. The diversity of each GEM cohort stimulates peer learning across functions and organisational boundaries which enhances a GEM's capacity to define business issues in different ways and deliver results.

GEMs are recruited across a full spectrum of roles including:

Housing Management	Construction	Community involvement
ICT	Asset management	Policy and strategy
Data analysis	Development	HR
Finance	Customer engagement	Marketing and communications
Sustainability	Health and safety	Governance



External recruitment - new graduate talent

The GEM team uses its years of experience of graduate recruitment to customise the design and delivery of an end to end recruitment and selection process which matches the needs of GEM partner housing organisations.

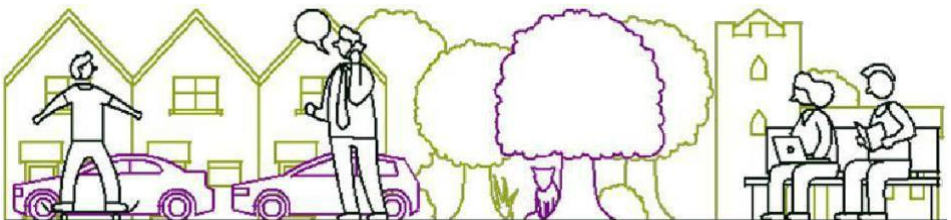
Essential criteria for external applicants is as follows:

1. Meeting the values and behaviours of the GEM Programme
2. Meeting the essential and desirable criteria of the specified role
3. Having a degree, any grade, any discipline, and/or completion of written assessment.

External GEM recruitment and selection process:

1. Role specification produced by GEM partner
2. Timeline produced by GEM team and agreed with GEM partner
3. Advertising campaign initiated by GEM team
4. Online applications received and sifted by GEM team
5. First-stage virtual interview with the GEM team
6. Final interview undertaken by the GEM partner

We recognise the challenges of the candidate market and all of our approaches to recruitment and selection are streamlined and agile.



Internal recruitment - GEM Talent in House

The second entry point to the GEM Programme is for upcoming talent already working in your organisation.

To be eligible for the GEM Programme via the 'GEM Talent in House' entry point, applicants must be able to evidence the GEM values and behaviours. Applicants may also have a degree or hold appropriate qualifications. Colleagues who do not have a degree or appropriate qualification will be asked to complete a housing-related written piece for evaluation by the GEM team.

Applications are welcome from all parts of the organisation and some GEM partners secure GEM Programme places for underrepresented groups.

The stages of internal GEM Talent in House recruitment are as follows:

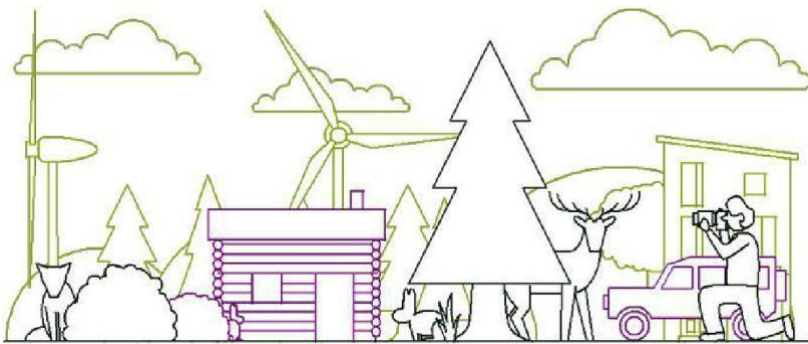
- Internal communication and promotion of the GEM Programme to increase awareness among prospective GEMs and line managers
- Expressions of interest received in house from prospective applicants
- Support of line manager agreed
- Submission of applications, based on GEM values and behaviours
- Internal evaluation of applications and validation of decisions by GEM team
- Feedback to all applicants



The importance of recruiting for values and behaviours

The first step in recruitment, for external and Talent in House GEMs, is to ensure a candidate's values fit with the housing sector. To succeed, candidates need to be able to demonstrate specified shared values and behaviours, including:

Social Justice	Societal and Interpersonal Empathy	Environmental Justice
Professionalism	Initiative	Respect for diversity
Critical thinking	Personal Ownership	Emotional intelligence
Self-discipline & Personal Organisation	Resilience	



Future Proofing Housing Through People

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