



**Category:** Best Publication

**Company:** Home Group

**Entry title:** Homelife

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**Brief and objectives:**

Home Group is one of the UK's largest providers of housing, supported housing services and care and support services. We house over 120,000 people a year, managing 55,000 homes. Annually we work with 30,000 vulnerable people through 500+ supported housing, justice and health services.

Historically we have produced two magazines for customers – those who live in general needs properties and customers who live in or use our supported services.

To enhance our new mission and strategy our brief was to merge the two quarterly magazines, producing one joint magazine for all customers, whether they rent from us or use supported services. These two distinct groups of people shared many interests.

Our objectives were:

- to communicate with all customers in a way that they all felt included and treated as equals (despite the fact that our customer group ranges from general needs to customers with very specific support needs).
- To communicate in the most efficient way possible (saving money)

Our tactics were to:

- Create a magazine for all Home Group customers, bringing together two target audiences that have been separated for years
- Encourage greater participation from all customers and keep increasing participation in editorial contributions, workshops
- Launch an accreditation programme alongside the editorial workshops encouraging customer participation
- Use the new merged magazine as a tool to help promote an online digital style magazine, offering customers options in how they contribute and receive Home Group news
- Reduce print costs, but increase stock quality

We did not want to brand it as a 'new' magazine, but more of a refreshed, inclusive, all customer magazine really emphasising what Home Group represents.

Circulation figures:

Per issue

The Mag – quarterly 10,653

Homelife – quarterly 43,027

Overview

Publication Year launched no issues per year Total copies printed

The Mag 2010 21 (three per year) Over 200,000  
Homelife 2011 24 (four per year) Over 1,000,000

Our brief:

- Create one magazine for all customers (general needs and supported)
- April 2017 first issue
- A5 size (same as Homelife) but new stock
- Continued customer involvement in creation
- link to online magazine development

### **Rationale behind publication, including research and planning:**

We wanted to show efficiency by producing one magazine, reinforcing our mission statement to help foster independence and aspiration for all customers.

Planning: started in Autumn 2016

The following background work was carried out:

- Background research with customers
- Background information for colleagues on what was happening, the process and why the magazine was being merged to ensure buy in from the start.
- Magazine naming – involving all stakeholders to name the new magazine
- Design concepts – creating a new style for the merged magazine, including layout spreads, style, paper stock and binding
- Publicise and host the first editorial workshop with customers to encourage participation
- Finalise a content plan and cover photography

Background research into what customers have been telling us about both magazines: Customers had the opportunity to feedback, discuss and share their views in a number of ways before the merger, after design and during content gathering phase and after the first edition was published

Creating copy – February 2017 onwards

- Hosting the editorial workshop and trialling accreditation
- Customer briefs for articles / writing content
- Design and proofing
- Print and distribution
- Feedback/ lessons learned and second issue planning

Consultation about the merger and renaming it.

From Nov 2016: Sessions were held with customers and colleagues to ask them what they liked about Homelife and The Mag.

Homelife came out as the preferred name from both customers and colleagues.

### **Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:**

Our tactics were to:

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In 2016 we began the first editorial sessions, asking volunteers to come along and learn about putting a magazine together, gain feedback and suggestions on content as well as participation and contributions.

Face to face engagement during the sessions was key so that customers felt involved and felt they had some ownership of the magazine.

This has been a key element taken forward into planning all the sessions and offering an accreditation for participation.

### **Implementation of tactics:**

Nov - Face to face with customers.

Feb 2017: First editorial panel/ content planning to facilitate content submissions. Held with interested customers bringing together supported and rented for the first time and setting tasks for them to complete

From Feb onwards - Positioning of new magazine Content review with exec directors to get Exec buy in.

Extra time factored in for design team as they were using a new style

April - First draft new style magazine unveiled

April - Delivery to customers

Internal briefing to stakeholders and internal publicity

Feedback and evaluation.

### **Measurement and evaluation, including engagement of target readers:**

Homelife consultation - customer forum

Customers gave their feedback on the new Homelife magazine for rented and supported customers. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive with everyone loving the new look and feel of the magazine. They particularly liked articles by the customer guest editors.

The outcome of the customer promise element of scrutiny report:

customers satisfied that they helped to improve Homelife by writing articles; influenced changes.

Feedback from customers who attended editorial panel:

Enjoyed meeting new people, seeing in depth what's behind the scenes with Home Group

Helping to design Homelife, being part of a team

The complete participation of all customers

A great insight into magazine editing and writing, thanks for the opportunity

### **Budget and cost effectiveness:**

Copies	Price per copy	Issues per year	Total cost per issue	Total cost
10303	£0.40	3	The Mag	£4,121.20
				£12,363.60
43031	£0.19	4	Homelife	£8,175.89
				£32,703.56

£45,067.16

53334 £0.18 4 Homelife (joint mag) £9,600.12

£38,400.48

Savings £6,666.68