

## GET LIVING UPS BTR OFFER WITH LONDON AND SALFORD LAUNCHES

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# Residential & Development

## Get Living ups BTR offer with London and Salford launches

■ Build-to-rent operator says it is focusing on tenant choice and brand building in the two new developments

### Helen Crane

Build-to-rent operator Get Living is gearing up to launch buildings in London and Greater Manchester.

The company, which is backed by Delancey Oxford Residential, APG and Qatari Diar, is readying the 482-unit Victory Plaza tower at its huge East Village development on London's former Olympic site.

In Salford, it is preparing to launch the first 275 homes at Middlewood Locks, where it purchased more than 800 units from FairBriar International late last year, in its first deal outside London.

These are significant projects, particularly considering the size of the wider schemes they are part of. "If East Village and Middlewood Locks were a BTR operator, they would be the third biggest in the UK," says Neil Young, chief executive of Get Living.

By the end of 2019, the company will own nearly 3,000 completed homes across the UK, making it the biggest BTR operator in terms of completed homes.

So what will these new schemes bring to the mix and what will Get Living do next?

Victory Plaza is part of a move to bring more one- and two-bed apartments into East Village, which is now dominated by larger flats used by families and sharers. Young hopes this will provide more sharers with the opportunity to stay in the scheme when they are looking for a place of their own.



Living it up: Victory Plaza tenants can pay more for premium features

He says one lesson Get Living learned from previous developments was to give people as much choice as possible, an approach that is reflected in the new building.

"We've got to think more sensibly about what people want, as the [BTR] market is so fast-moving," he says.

### Premium design features

Victory Plaza has 15 different apartment layouts and the flats are split into three different 'tiers', allowing residents to pay more for premium design features and larger living spaces.

"We want to have a sensible base rent and then you can pay for the extra bits you want," Young says.

This could include co-working space, as Get Living is considering

turning a 30,000 sq ft vacant space in Victory Plaza into a flexible office.

While Get Living is a well-established presence in Stratford, at Middlewood Locks it is still in the process of raising awareness about the brand.

"When you're starting a new community in a new city, you've got to get the message out there," says Young.



Neil Young  
Get Living

“We want to have a sensible base rent then you can pay for extras

Get Living has taken a base in a WeWork in Manchester to this end.

"We were really careful about not trying to be the London guys going into Manchester," explains Young.

This is reflected in the first leisure signings at the scheme, which include local brewery Se7en Brothers.

"The streetscape is really important to us - retail is not where we will make our money but it has an impact on what happens [to the flats] upstairs," he says, adding that it has used turnover rents at some of its schemes to get the right kind of operators.

### Brand improvements

Aside from launching new schemes, Get Living has also been working on improvements to its branding and technology.

We see ourselves as a lifestyle experience brand," he says. "There is a piece of work we have been thinking about involving how you link the different neighbourhoods. If someone from Manchester is coming to London, how do we engage with that?"

On the tech front, a Get Living app has been launched that can help residents book repairs and the company is also in talks about forming a partnership to install smart speakers in all of its homes. It also wants to expand its network of corporate partnerships, which currently account for around 10% of Get Living residents.

With the biggest BTR portfolio in the UK under its belt, the industry will surely be watching closely to see what it does next. ■