A new era for resident engagement for tenants and residents

Debbie Larner

Outline of the session

- The drivers for change – why residents must be at the heart of decision-making
- The resident's role in the new regulatory framework for housing
- The new standards for regulation – focusing specifically on the **Transparency, influence and accountability** and **Information** standards
- The Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- What professional attitudes and behaviours residents should expect
- Resident engagement in practice
  - Understanding the impact of resident involvement
  - Assessing the benefits of involvement.

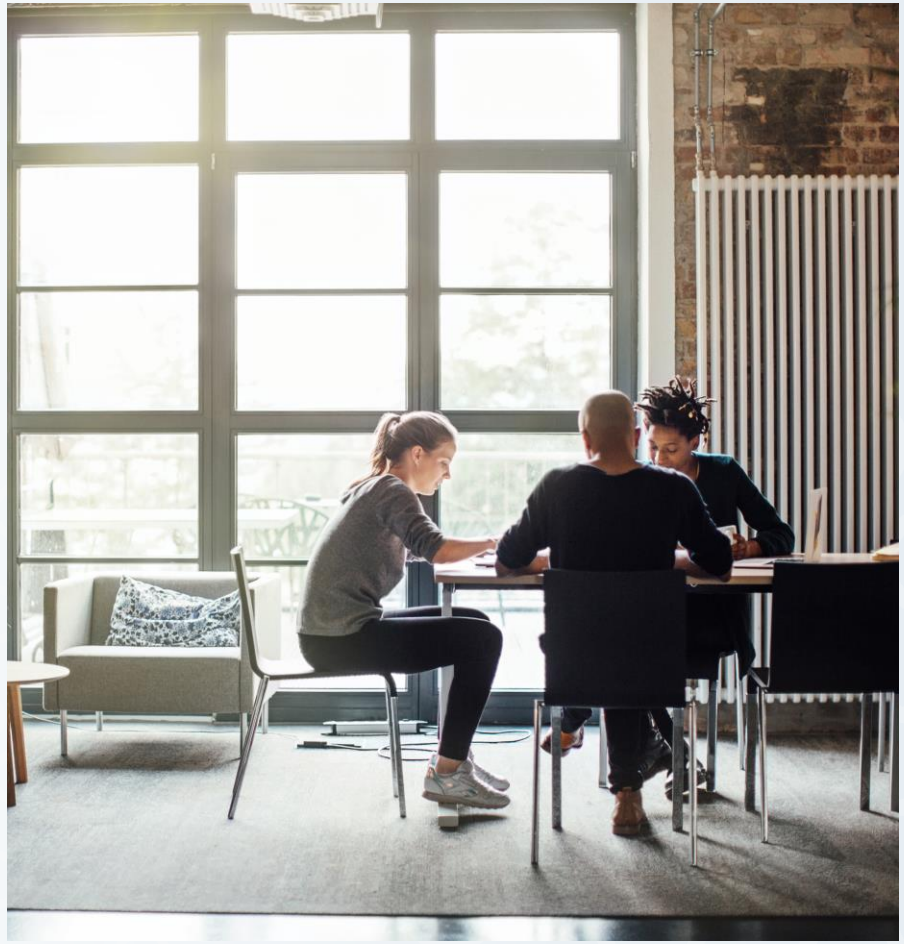


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Welcome and introductions

Introductions

- Who you are?
- Your level of involvement in your organisation?
- What you want to get out of this session...?



Some questions to get us started....



- What does resident engagement mean to you?
- Why do you get involved?
- What do you get out of being involved?

A new focus on residents – the drivers for change



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“Our investigation found reoccurring instances of residents being treated in dismissive, inappropriate or unsympathetic ways. In some instances, the language used was derogatory. It is highly unlikely that this endemic behaviour of ‘othering’ is isolated to a single landlord and the social housing sector should consider whether they also need to turn over the stone and do a deep dive into their culture and whether they are living their social purpose”







Why the need for change?





What do you think were some of the issues residents highlighted after Grenfell?

What residents said.....

- Lack of trust in the relationship between landlords and tenants
- Residents not having a voice or being listened to
- Lack of accountability and transparency about performance and decision making
- Slow and ineffective resolution of complaints
- General attitudes and behaviour of staff towards residents
- Safety and quality of existing stock and attitudes about how people live in their homes...
- Lack of relevant skills and knowledge among housing staff
- A pervasive culture of stigma and stereotyping....



Discussion



Can you think of some assumptions or stereotypes about people who live in social housing?

It is often assumed we are vulnerable, and we need to have things done for us and to us

Whenever there is trouble on mixed tenure estates, it is always assumed it is the social housing tenants who cause it.

It is assumed we don't work. So, they can turn up at any time for appointments

It is often assumed that we are all on benefits, so we should be grateful to be given a rent-free home

I am seen as somehow to blame for living in social housing

It is assumed we don't look after our homes because we don't own them,.

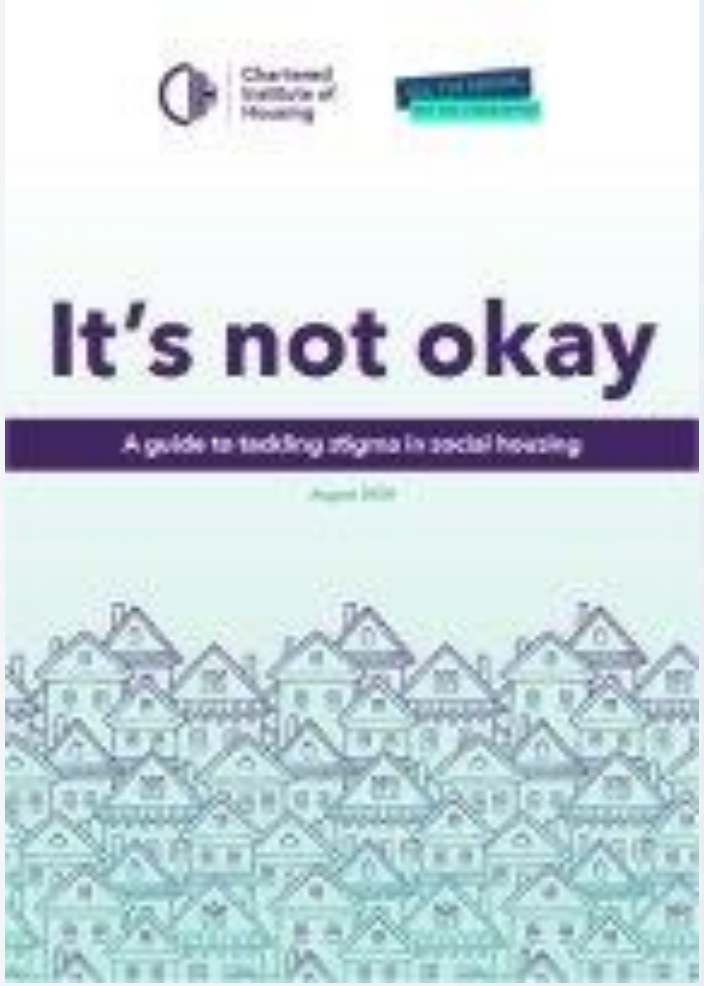
The operative stood there and said we come, and we do what we want because you have no rights. You're a housing association tenant- you know, you're nothing. You can't tell me when it's sort of convenient for you."

When signing up for the tenancy, it was assumed I was on benefits"

Challenging ourselves

"CIH, as the professional body for people working in housing, has an expectation that professionals will be aware of how their language and behaviour impacts on tenants and colleagues. So, it was quite shocking and upsetting to read some of the previous research with tenants by See the Person, which highlighted just how much housing organisations and staff contribute to the stigma that many tenants experience when we fail to live up to that expectation".

Gavin Smart – chief executive, CIH



The manifestation of stigma



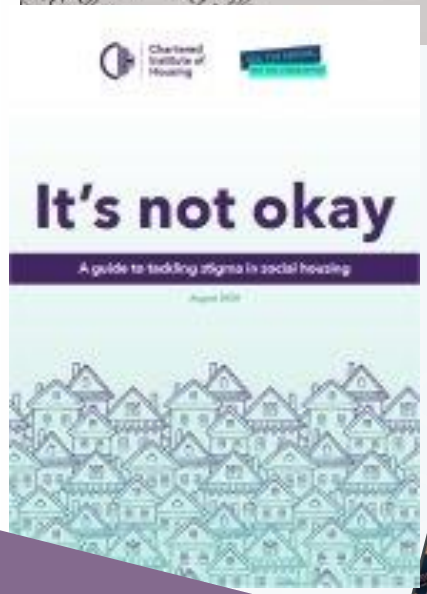
- Complaints ignored – seen as a “nuisance”
- Views not listened to – not seen as valid or informed
- Not consulted on key decisions – views are not seen as relevant or important
- Assumptions informed by perceived potential “behaviour” of residents
- Money-saving/ cost cutting measures – poor quality products and materials
- Services not designed to meet need – based on assumptions
- Decisions based on assumption that all tenants are needy or vulnerable
- Design reflects attitudes – “us and them”



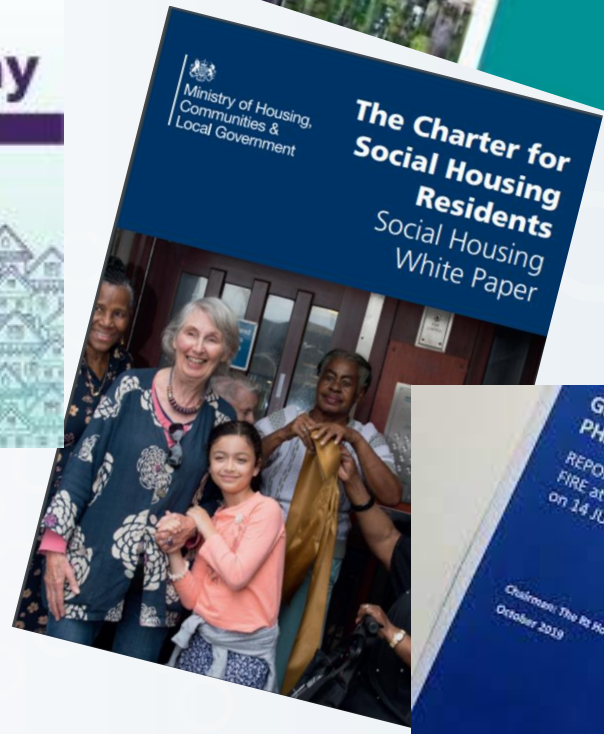
"Through consultation following the social housing Green Paper and the Call for Evidence we heard strong support for a more proactive approach to consumer regulation to achieve parity with economic regulation."

















"A cultural change is required to rebuild trust and ensure residents feel safe in their homes again. Providing reassurance, recourse and responsibility to residents is one part of a systemic overhaul designed to deliver buildings that are safe now and will be in the future"

Building a Safer Future: Final report

"We know that many social housing residents are not receiving the service or respect they deserve."
Michael Gove

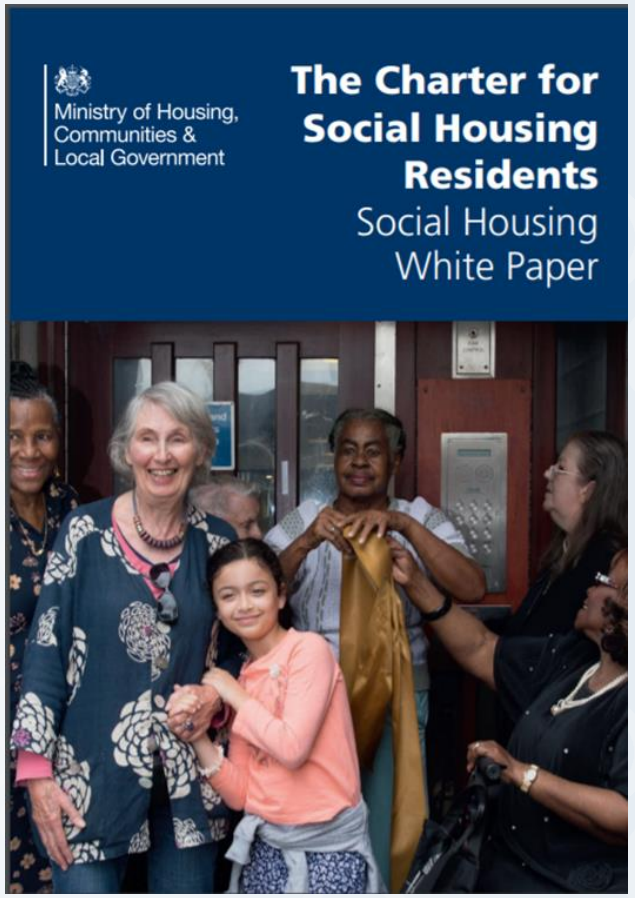
"Where change is needed, it requires a culture change within the relevant registered providers. The quality and safety of the homes you provide, your ability to maintain them, and the quality of your services to tenants are vitally important".
Fiona MacGregor, RSH

"A lack of respect, tenants not listened to, no transparency and institutional indifference"
Grenfell Tower Inquiry

"When residents interact with landlords they should expect and receive a professional service from "competent and empathetic staff"; "all landlord staff must act professionally, listen to their residents and, at all times, treat them with courtesy and respect" *Social Housing White Paper*

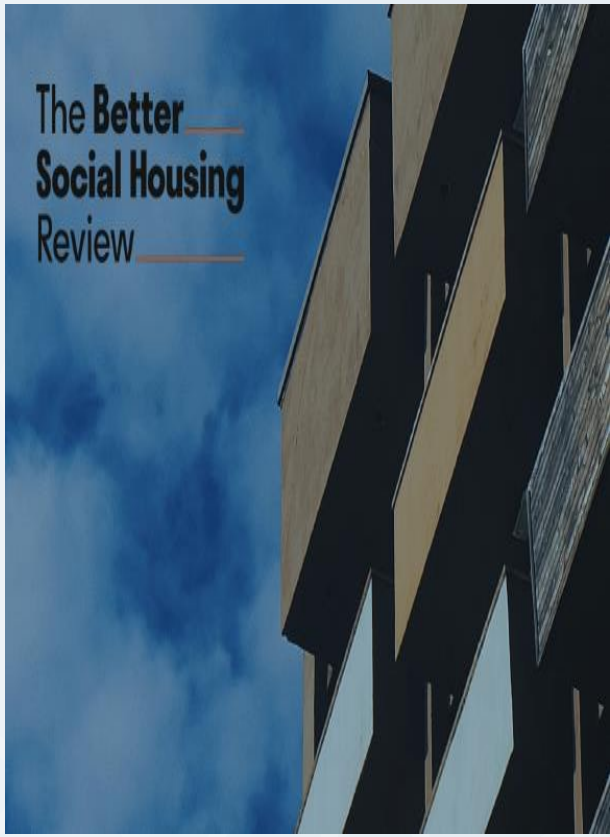
The Social Housing White Paper

1. To be safe in your home
2. To know how your landlord is performing
3. To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly
4. To be treated with respect
5. To have your voice heard by your landlord
6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in
7. To be supported to take your first step to ownership



Better social housing review

1. Every housing association, and the sector as a whole, should refocus on their core purpose and deliver against it
2. Housing associations should work together to conduct and publish a thorough audit of all social housing in England
3. **Housing associations should partner with tenants, contractors and frontline staff to develop and apply new standards defining what an excellent maintenance and repairs process looks like**
4. CIH should promote the traditional housing officer role as a supported and valued employment opportunity with a CIH recognised programme of training and continuing development
5. **Housing associations should work with all tenants to ensure that they have a voice and influence at every level of decision making across the organisation, through both voluntary and paid roles**
6. **Housing associations should develop a proactive local community presence through community hubs which foster greater multi-agency working**
7. **Housing associations should support tenants and frontline staff to undertake an annual review of the progress each organisation is making in implementing this review's recommendations**



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HOS: Complaint Handling Code

- Introduced in 2020 provides universal definition of a complaint
- Providing easy access to the complaints procedure and ensuring residents are aware of it, including their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service
- The structure of the complaints procedure - only two stages necessary and clear timeframes set out for responses
- Ensuring fairness in complaint handling with a resident-focused
- Creating a positive complaint handling culture through continuous learning and improvement
- Annual self-assessment against the Code
- From April 2024 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 places the Complaints Handling Code onto a statutory footing. It also puts a duty on The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) to monitor compliance with the Code.



NHF: together with tenants



1. **Relationships:** Housing associations will treat all residents with respect in all of their interactions. Relationships between residents and housing associations will be based on openness, honesty and transparency.
2. **Communication:** Residents will receive clear, accessible and timely information from their housing association on the issues that matter to them, including important information about their homes and local community, how the organisation is working to address problems, how the organisation is run, and information about performance on key issues.
3. **Voice and influence:** Housing associations will seek and value the views of residents and will use this information to inform decisions. Every individual resident will feel listened to by their housing association on the issues that matter to them and can speak without fear.
4. **Accountability:** Collectively, residents will work in partnership with their housing association to independently scrutinise and hold their housing association to account for the decisions that affect the quality of their homes and services.
5. **Quality:** Residents can expect their homes to be good quality, well maintained, safe and well managed.
6. **When things go wrong**: Residents will have simple and accessible routes for raising issues, making complaints and seeking redress. Residents will receive timely advice and support when things go wrong

Residents at the heart of social housing regulation

Aims of the Act....

- To deliver the reforms outlined in the Social Housing White Paper
- To address the concerns raised following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in 2017
- Bring forward a stronger and more proactive regulatory regime to drive up standards in the sector
- To create a framework to hold landlords to account for the services they provide to their tenants
- To strengthen the role and powers of the RSH in enforcing the consumer standards
- To bring parity in regulation of economic and consumer standards



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A new approach to consumer regulation

- Landlords maintain tenants' homes so that they are safe and of a decent standard and that landlords provide a quality service
- Where things go wrong, complaints are handled effectively, and things are put right
- The relationship between tenants and landlords is underpinned by shared expectations of fairness and respect and a shared understanding of their respective rights and responsibilities.
- Landlords demonstrate that they understand the diverse needs of the communities that they serve and their services reflect that
- Tenants understand, use and have confidence in the recourse that they have to get problems resolved

Increased expectations on involvement – you must be...

- Given "a wide range of meaningful opportunities" to get involved anything related to your housing and consider your views when making decisions relating to their housing management
- Given opportunities to "scrutinise" your landlord strategies, policies and services. This covers scrutiny of **all** aspects of social housing management
- Provided with opportunities to influence and scrutinise any prospective new services which your landlord may consider introducing and offering as part of their overall management responsibilities
- Supported to meet your diverse needs to make sure you are able to get involved

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Meeting diverse needs and treating residents with respect

- The Regulator emphasises that for all the new standards providers must ensure that they meet the diverse needs of residents
- The new regulatory framework is designed to ensure landlords deliver fair access to services, as well as equitable outcomes for their residents
- Landlords will need to know their residents so that they can respond to their needs
- Landlords must also demonstrate how they are treating residents with fairness and respect…..



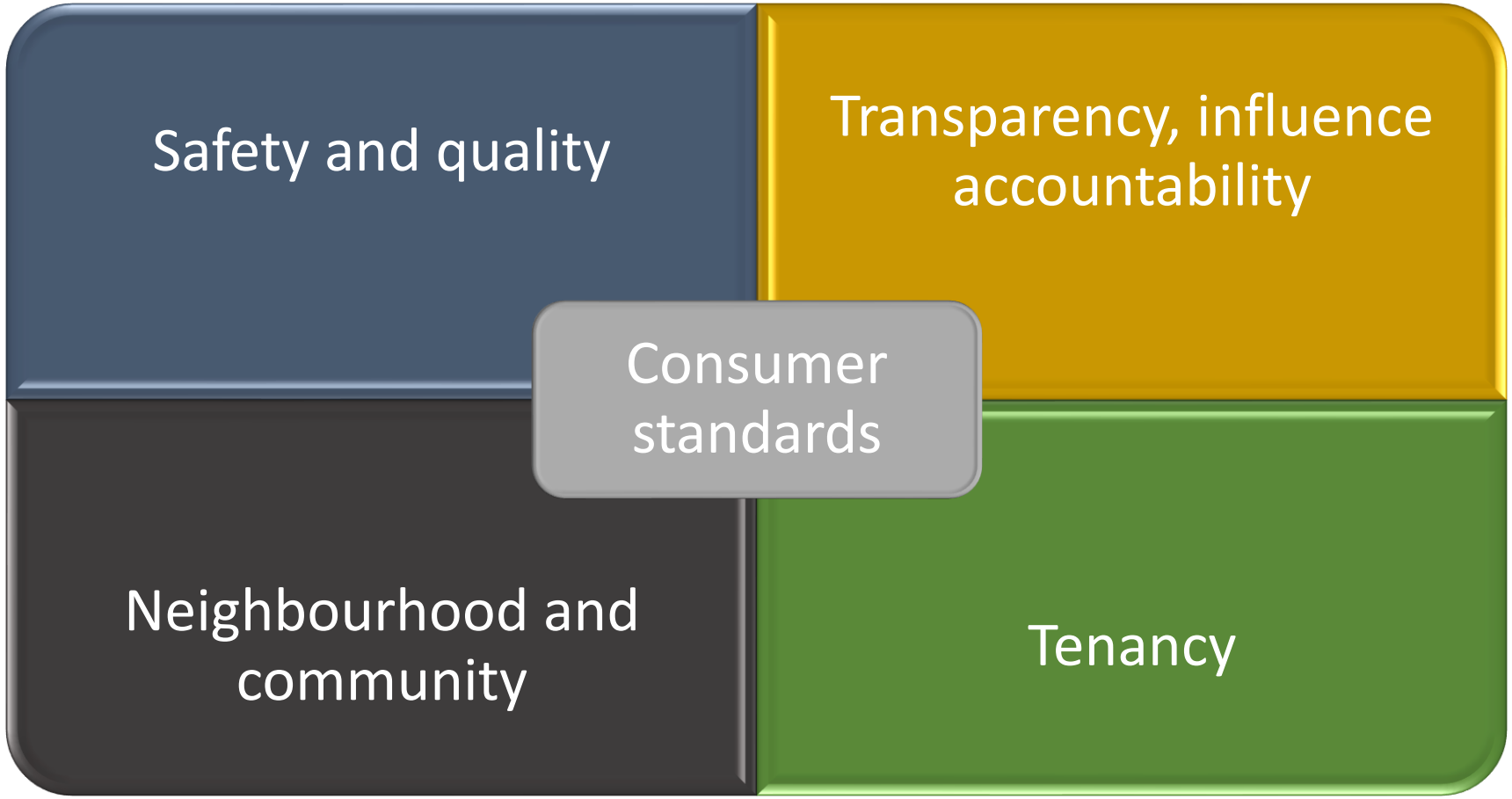
What is fairness and respect?





The Consumer Standards

New consumer standards



Safety and quality

- have an accurate, up to date and evidenced understanding of the condition of their homes that reliably informs their provision of good quality, well-maintained and safe homes for tenants
- ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in section five of the government's Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard unless exempted by the Regulator (under direction from government 2012)
- take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of tenants in their homes and associated communal areas.
- provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which they are responsible.
- assist tenants seeking housing adaptations to access appropriate services

Stock quality
Decency
Health and safety
Repairs, maintenance and planned improvements
Adaptations

Neighbourhood and community

- work co-operatively with residents, other landlords and relevant organisations to contribute to the upkeep and safety of shared spaces associated with their homes
- co-operate with relevant partners to promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they provide social housing
- work in partnership with appropriate local authority departments, the police and other relevant organisations to deter and tackle ASB in the neighbourhoods where they provide social housing.
- work co-operatively with other agencies tackling domestic abuse and enable tenants to access appropriate support and advice

Maintenance of shared spaces
Local co-operation
Safer neighbourhoods
Domestic abuse

Tenancy

- allocate and let their homes in a fair and transparent way that takes the needs of residents and prospective residents into account
- support residents to maintain their tenancy or licence. Where a registered provider ends a tenancy or licence, they must offer affected residents' advice and assistance
- support relevant residents living in eligible housing to mutually exchange their homes
- offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their housing stock
- meet all applicable statutory and legal requirements in relation to the form and use of tenancy agreements or terms of occupation

Allocations and lettings
Tenancy sustainment and evictions
Tenure x 2
Mutual exchange

Transparency, influence and accountability

- treat all tenants with fairness and respect
- take action to deliver fair access to, and equitable outcomes of, housing and landlord services for all tenants
- take tenants' views into account in their decision making about how landlord services are delivered
- communicate with tenants and provide information so tenants can use landlord services, understand what to expect from their landlord, and hold their landlord to account
- collect and provide information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in delivering landlord services
- ensure complaints are addressed fairly, effectively, and promptly
- communicate in a timely manner with the Regulator on all material issues that relate to non-compliance or potential non-compliance with the consumer standard

Fairness and respect
Diverse needs
Engagement with tenants
Information about landlord services
Performance information
Complaints
Self-referral

And also standards on....

Provision of information

Social landlords will be required to provide information to their tenants on:

- their tenants' rights in connection with their homes and with the facilities and services provided in connection with those homes;
- how their tenants can make a complaint against them; and
- relevant regulatory requirements in connection with their homes and with the facilities and services provided in connection with those homes.

This consultation has closed

Competency and conduct

Social landlords will be required to ensure that all housing staff

- have the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours they need to be technically competent for the role they perform and to conduct themselves in a professional manner
- are equipped to listen to what tenants say, act upon it and treat people with courtesy and respect

Consultation closes 2nd April 2024

Competency and conduct standard

- The competency and conduct standard will implement a broad outcome-based standard for all staff in the Social Housing Sector and require a specific sub-set of senior staff to have or be working towards housing management qualifications over two years:

- **Element 1 – the broader competency and conduct element**: an overarching competency and competency standard that will apply to all **staff** connected with the management of housing – including frontline, tenant-facing staff. It aims to drive culture change and is focused on outcomes.

- **Element 2 – the qualification element**: a qualification requirement requiring **senior staff** – "to undertake a housing management qualification within a specified time period.

- The competency and conduct standard, taken as a whole, aims to ensure that **all housing staff** have the knowledge, skills and experience and exhibit appropriate behaviours and attitudes towards tenants – such as empathy, reliability, honesty and professional curiosity - needed to deliver a good quality service.

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What the standard requires landlords to do:

1. ensure that staff (and those of relevant service providers) have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience, and exhibit the behaviours needed, for the relevant services provided by those individuals to be of a good quality
2. have up to date written policies which set out (in relation to "relevant individuals"*) which sets out:
    - their approach to managing and developing the skills, knowledge, experience and conduct of their staff tailored to their different roles – this recognises that different roles will require different skills and knowledge
    - their approach to learning and development which includes how they will ensure that staff maintain and demonstrate appropriate and up to date skills, knowledge and experience and behaviours for their roles
    - their approach to appraising and reviewing performance
    - how they will manage poor performance
3. Adopt or develop an appropriate code of conduct and to ensure this is embedded within their organisation
4. Policies must be regularly reviewed and updated

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Regulatory tools



Consumer inspections

either as part of a planned programme of gathering assurance, or where the Regulator is responding to information that standards are not being met



Reactive engagement

responsive follow up on information that indicates a potential breach of the standards (similar to the current approach to consumer regulation)



Desktop reviews

reviewing information about landlords' performance from tenant satisfaction measures and other sources



Data returns

the RSH already collects a wide range of information from landlords as part of the framework for economic regulation; the Regulator is looking at the additional data that might be needed for consumer regulation in future



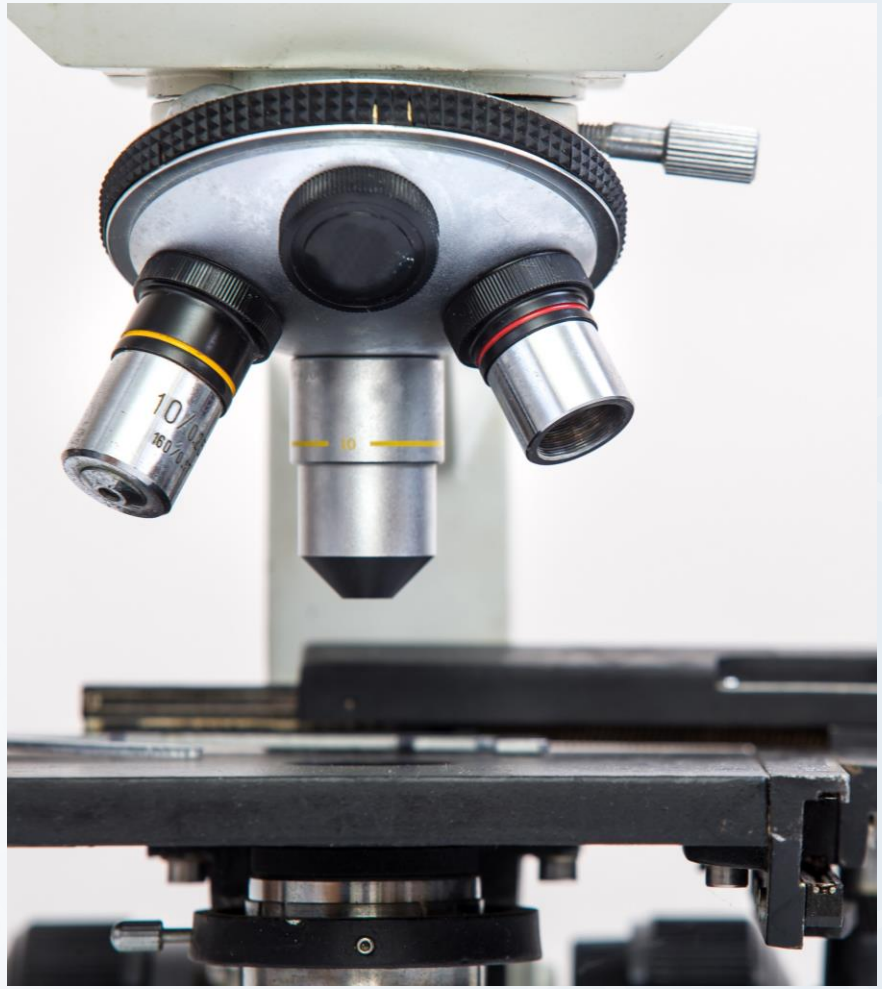
Tenant Satisfaction Measures

7 themes, 22 measures – 12 through perception surveys.

10 through management info

Consumer inspections

- The inspectors will be very keen to talk to you!
- The '*conclusions*' of individual inspections will be published
- Inspections will increase RSH costs – and consequently fees will rise (and in future all RSH income will come through fees)
- New regime set to begin in April 2024 (very soon!)



Introducing the TSMs

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures

- 22 TSMs which reflect the themes and issues set out in the Social Housing White Paper
- 12 to be collected through tenant perception surveys (TP)
- 10 to be collected from current management information
- Applicable to ALL registered providers including local authorities
- Landlords will need to start to collect data from April 2023 and send the first year of data to RSH in Summer 2024

Timelines

- TSMs came into force 1 April 2023
- Data collation to be completed by 31 March 2024
- Submission to the regulator by "Summer" 2024
- Results published September 2024

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The purpose of TSMs

- “If tenants are to be able to hold their landlords to account, they need information on how their landlord is performing, what decisions it is making and who is responsible”.
- Aims to recreate strong connections between landlords and tenants to ensure **transparency** and **accountability**
- Ensures all landlords consider their **purpose** and their tenants, at all times
- Gives tenants access to a set of **clear, comparable** tenant satisfaction measures on the things they care about to ensure they can understand their landlord’s performance
- Informs the regulator about how the landlord is complying with the consumer standards under a proactive consumer regulation regime

The themes

- Overall satisfaction
- Keeping properties in good repair
- Maintaining building safety
- Respectful and helpful engagement
- Effective handling of complaints
- Responsible neighbourhood management

Sharing the information with tenants – your landlord must..

- Summary of approach
- Number of responses achieved
- Timing of survey
- Collection method
- Sampling method
- Weighting (if used)
- The role and name of external agencies (if used)
- Number of households excluded and justification
- Reasons for failing to meet minimum requirements (if relevant)
- Incentives used
- Any other methodological issues

The information must

- Be transparent and honest – focusing on what was negative as well as the positive in the findings
- Be accessible – provided in a variety of ways
- Provide a clear sense of what you are doing or planning to do as a result of feedback/ insight from the TSMs

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Responding to the new standards?

- Work with you to review the methods used to engage with residents
- Ensure residents are an integral part of their governance structure so resident views are well represented at board level or equivalent
- Work with you to understand current resident satisfaction and set targets for achieving high levels of satisfaction
- Work with you on reviewing their approach to complaints
- Consult with you on the TSMs – what are they telling you?
- Collaborate with you on developing new ways for resident to influence/ get involved
- Work with you to understand what complains are saying - and to learn from them
- Understand your diverse needs and how to respond to them
- Support the review and/ or development of a code of conduct based on what you expect



Group discussion

Do you think the new expectations will be a challenge for your landlord?

Have they involved you in preparing for the new approach to regulation?



The importance of involving residents



Discussion



- What are the benefits are resident engagement
  - For you as a resident?
  - For your landlord?

Benefits of resident involvement

- Empowerment and participation
- Improved housing quality
- Enhanced landlord- tenant relations
- More inclusive polices
- Increase satisfaction
- Promotes well-being
- Efficiency and cost saving
- Social/ community cohesion
- Opportunities for capacity building/ increased employability
- Better services



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Why you are so important to your landlord....

- You are best placed to provide insight into the customer experience
- You can suggest important areas of improvement that can otherwise be overlooked, or you never would have though about
- You have valuable ideas that can help you find new and more efficient ways to meet community needs.
- You can help to identify and address disparities in service access and quality
- You can help to tailor your services to better match the diverse and evolving needs of the community. This leads to more relevant and effective services that are more likely to achieve desired outcomes
- Your feedback helps a landlord understand whether what they do is good enough?
- You can offer “free” consultancy”



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Involvement and engagement activities

- Tenant and resident groups
- Questionnaires and surveys
- Estate walkabouts
- Consultations
- Tenant scrutiny groups
- Tenant panels
- Performance monitoring
- Tenant inspectors
- Ad-hoc engagement
- Mystery shoppers
- Conferences/talking to other groups
- Peer assessment
- Interview panels
- Management committees
- Governance
- Task and finish groups
- Involvement in complaints process

Barriers to engagement

- People have enough on their plate
- Apathy
- Staff don’t have time to do it
- Not sure what to do
- Tried it once it didn’t work
- Same people, same faces
- Difficult to access
- Can’t afford childcare/ transport
- Not representative
- You have lost faith/ trust in your landlord….

Any of these sound familiar?

- If you can't even fix the door handle, ***why should I*** bother helping you?
- If you can't keep me updated, ***why should I*** trust you?
- I've been in all day waiting for you to turn up – ***why should I*** give you any more of my time?
- I took a day off work, and you cancelled my job – ***why should I*** come to your session!
- ***Why should I*** help you when you can't even get my rent statement right!

Improving engagement

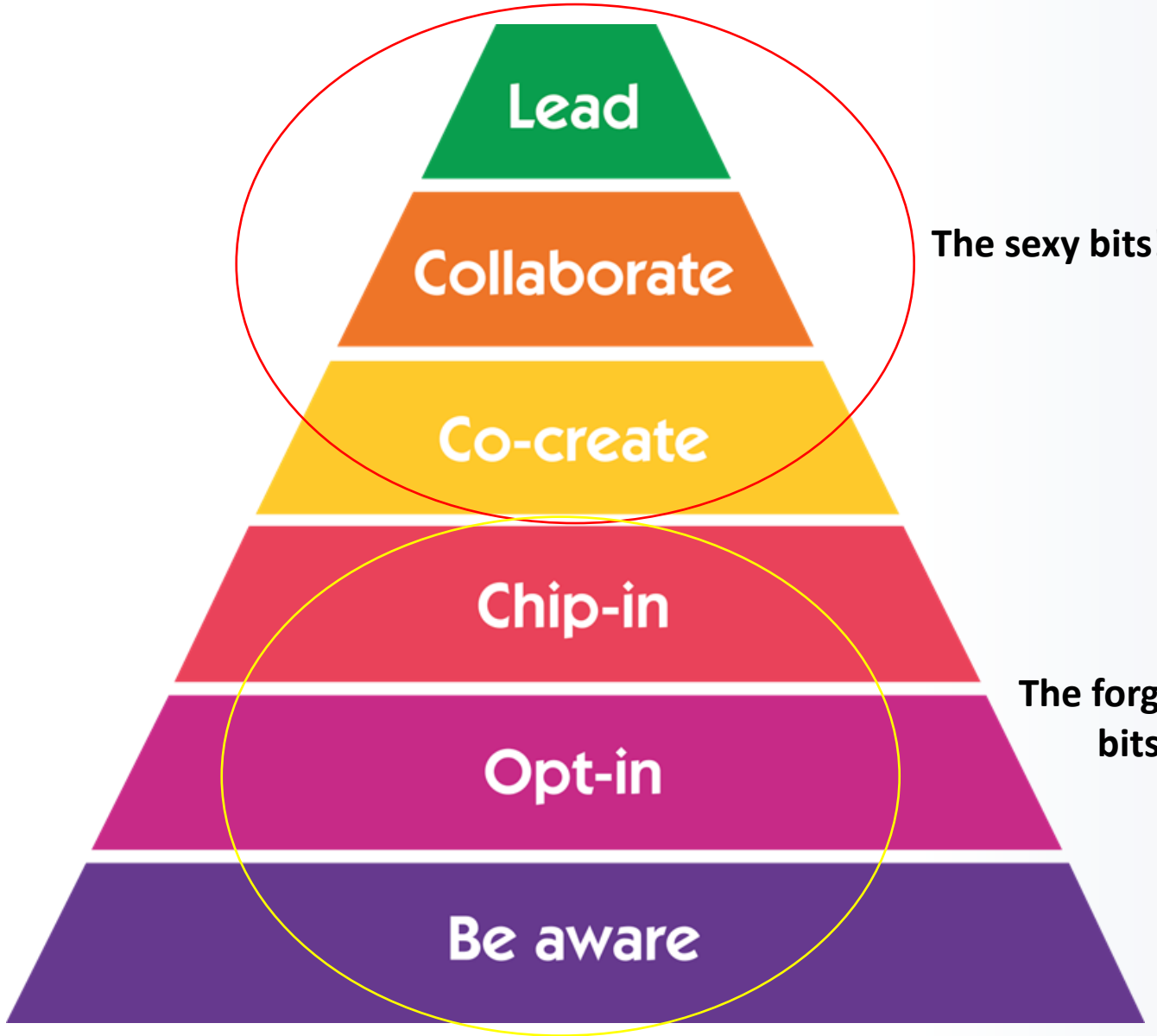
- Understand the impact/ what difference you are making
- Giving you a voice and listening to what you say
- Acting on what you say
- Providing feedback – you said, we did
- Making you feel included
- Providing accessible places/ activities
- Being recognised and appreciated
- Working together



Discussion

- So…how do you know your involvement has made a difference?

An alternative



The sexy bits!

The forgotten bits!

Tenant Panel Member , Board member
Scrutiny Panels
Member of formal involvement regularly contribute
Complete surveys, contribute to Soc Media, attend local meetings
Add name to database to be consulted in future
Read newsletters, website and Soc Media

Discussion: What attitudes and behaviours do you expect from housing staff?



- Respectful
- Empathetic
- Professional
- Balanced and approachable
- Informed
- Adaptable
- Open and honest
- Inclusive and collaborative

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Professional standards for housing

Integrity	Do the right thing, for the right reasons, based on the best evidence and without partiality
Inclusive	Act transparently and fairly, build good relationships and work collaboratively
Ethical	Understand the impact that poor decisions can have both on people's lives. Challenge unethical practice in a fair and considered way
Knowledgeable	Have relevant and up-to-date practical and specialist knowledge, understands the bigger picture and has a passion for learning
Skilled	Equipped with relevant skills to deliver effective services
Advocate	Act as an ambassador for the wider housing sector and advocate for the housing profession
Leadership	Demonstrate leadership, be forward thinking and create opportunities. Adapt to the latest ideas, situations and changes.

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