Introduction to Housing Management

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5 February 2024

Aimed at

- Essential for anyone who wants to find out more about housing management whether working in housing management or a related service area
- Ideal for anyone new to the sector or new to their post or as a refresher/update
- Suitable for involved residents and board members as well as staff

Objectives

To

- Learn about the **housing management** service - what it covers and how it relates to other areas of a social housing business
- Find out about the **behaviours and skills** that are needed for this role including its demands and challenges
- Understand the **range of tenancies** that residents hold, their legal basis and their implications
- Learn about the basics of **income management, anti-social behaviour and common tenancy breaches**
- Consider wider **estate and neighbourhood management** matters
- Appreciate the importance of **involving residents**

	Programme
9.30	Welcome and introductions
9.40	**What is *Housing Management?*** Principles and how does it fit into the wider Housing Service? Open discussion followed by presentation
10.00	The basis – **Tenancies** to be managed and implications Presentation and discussion
10.20	Some specifics 1 – **Income Management, Anti-social behaviour Case Management and Tenancy Management.** Presentation and discussion
10.40	Break
10.55	Some specifics 2 – continued Presentation and discussion
11.15	What about the wider neighbourhood and community? **Estate and Neighbourhood Management**. Presentation and discussion
11.35	How does this relate to **our experience** so far? Self-reflection and feedback
12.00	**Involving residents** – judging our performance, influencing how we do things Presentation and discussion
12.30	Break
1.15	**Mini quiz** – a refresher of the morning session
1.45	**Behaviours and skills** for Housing Management? Open discussion
2.00	Break
2.10	**Behaviours and skills** for Housing Management Presentation and discussion
2.20	What's **developing in Housing Management?** Changes now and ahead Presentation and discussion
2.40	The Chartered Institute of Housing **Professional Standards**
2.50	Conclusion
3.00	Close

What is Housing Management? Principles and how does it fit into the wider Housing Service?

Open discussion followed by presentation

What is *Housing Management?*

- Discussion

Housing Management - Principles

The birth of housing management



Housing Management – What might it cover?

- Rent setting
- Rent collection
- Rent arrears
- Former tenant arrears
- Reletting empty homes
- Allocations
- Transfers and exchanges
- Complaints
- Anti-social behaviour & harassment
- Resident disputes
- Racial harassment
- Domestic violence & abuse
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults and children
- Resident Involvement
- Succession
- Joint tenancies
- Abandoned properties
- Squatting and unauthorized occupation
- Subletting and lodgers
- Tenancy breach
- Pets
- Performance Reporting Framework
- Repairs and Maintenance

What is *Housing Management*?

Contractual

- Rents and service charge collection
- Allocation and letting of properties
- Tenancy management
- Estate management
- Repairs and maintenance (including managing empty homes)

Social

- Meeting housing need
- Tenancy support (including money advice and 'coaching' activity)
- Housing and health
- Community development and regeneration
- Employment support

See *New Approaches to Housing Management – CIH – March 2020*

Housing Management Roles

- One job role would not cover all of that
- Organised according to the housing provider's view of the best way
- 'Generic', specialist, or something in between

Housing Management - Objectives

- To provide **services and support** to the landlord's tenants
- To the **effective operation** of the landlord's **business**
- Of **mutual benefit** – the **landlord/tenant relationship**

Housing Management – Defined by

- **Law** – e.g., Housing Acts, Landlord and Tenant Acts
- **Regulation** – e.g., Social Housing Regulatory Standards in England and equivalents in the devolved nation administrations
- **Good Practice** – e.g., Chartered Institute of Housing Standards, HQN Charters

Housing Management – called different things in different places

- Landlord
- Tenancy Management and Services
- Operations
- Neighbourhoods
- . . . Housing Management
- Etc.

The basis – Tenancies to be managed and implications

Tenancies – Social Housing

- Tenancy – the legal right to use and occupy the dwelling
- With Security
- With Rights
- With Obligations

Tenancies

- ***Secure*** – mainly Local Authority Housing (and 'public sector'). Also Housing Association before February 1989 – Housing Act 1985
- ***Assured*** – Housing Association since February 1989. Housing Act 1988. Very similar, except *Assured* do not (currently) have the *Right to Buy*. Except where a Housing Association Tenant transferred from a Local Authority under a *Large-Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT)* with a *Preserved Right to Buy*
- See also *Extension of the Right to Buy* – Housing and Planning Act 2016, not implemented . . . yet . . .

Rights of Secure Tenants

- Right to sublet
- Right to take in lodgers
- Right to assign
- Right to exchange
- Assignment to potential successor
- Right to succession
- Right to repair
- Right to improve and receive compensation
- Right to buy
- Right to be consulted

Rights of Assured Tenants

- To get repairs done
- Pass on the tenancy upon death
- Exchange with another council or housing association tenant
- Assign to someone else
- Take in a lodger
- Not usually the Right to Buy for a housing association tenant. But may be able to buy the home at a smaller discount under a scheme called the Right to Acquire

Tenancies – General considerations

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 section 11
- Protection from Eviction Act 1977
- Health and Safety obligations, e.g. gas, fire, electric, water
- The *Regulatory Standards* set out by the Regulator of Social Housing in England, or Welsh and Scottish Governments

Other tenancies

- Introductory and Starter
- Assured Shorthold
- Flexible
- Demoted
- Leasehold and Shared Ownership

Introductory Tenancies – Local Authorities

- A '**probationary'** or trial tenancy granted to a **new tenant** that allows the local authority to **decide if they are a suitable tenant**
- Intended to give local authorities more power to **deal with Anti-social behaviour**
- In practice, however, they have had a much **wider application**, for example as a way of dealing with rent arrears
- Local authorities can **elect** to have an introductory tenancy scheme
- Can **revoke** the scheme at any time

Rights not available to Introductory Tenants

- Right to assign – except under certain circumstances
- Right to buy
- Right to sublet or take in a lodger (although can apply to take in a lodger)
- Right to improve (although they can apply)
- Right to exchange

Starter Tenancies – Housing Associations

- Many Housing Associations use *Assured Shorthold Tenancies* under the Housing Act 1988 as a form of 'trial' tenancy

- Implications of the Renters' (Reform) Bill . . . or not?

Flexible Tenancies

- A type of tenancy introduced by the *Localism Act 2011* which is for a fixed period
- A tenancy will be flexible if a landlord, before granting a secure tenancy for a fixed term of more than two years, informs a tenant that this is the case (*section 107A(2), Housing Act 1985*)

Flexible Tenancies ...(cont'd)

- During the fixed term, the tenancy will be similar to a secure tenancy with many of the same **rights** including the:
  - Right to exchange
  - Right to consultation
  - Right to repair
  - Right to buy
- However, at the end of the fixed term period, a tenant will **lose their security of tenure** if the landlord chooses not to extend the term or to offer to another flexible or secure tenancy

Some specifics

Income Management, Anti-social Behaviour Case Management and Tenancy Management

Why do rent arrears arise?

- Insecure work
- Irregular income
- Other spending/debt priorities
- ‘Robbing Peter to pay Paul’
- Job loss
- Relationship breakdown
- Unexpected major financial demand
- Housing Benefit/Universal Credit problems
- Wilful non-payment

Challenges faced

- Local economic circumstances
- Wrong attitude toward rent payment
- Competition from other creditors
- Keeping tenants focussed
- Benefit non-take up
- Housing Benefit/Universal Credit processes

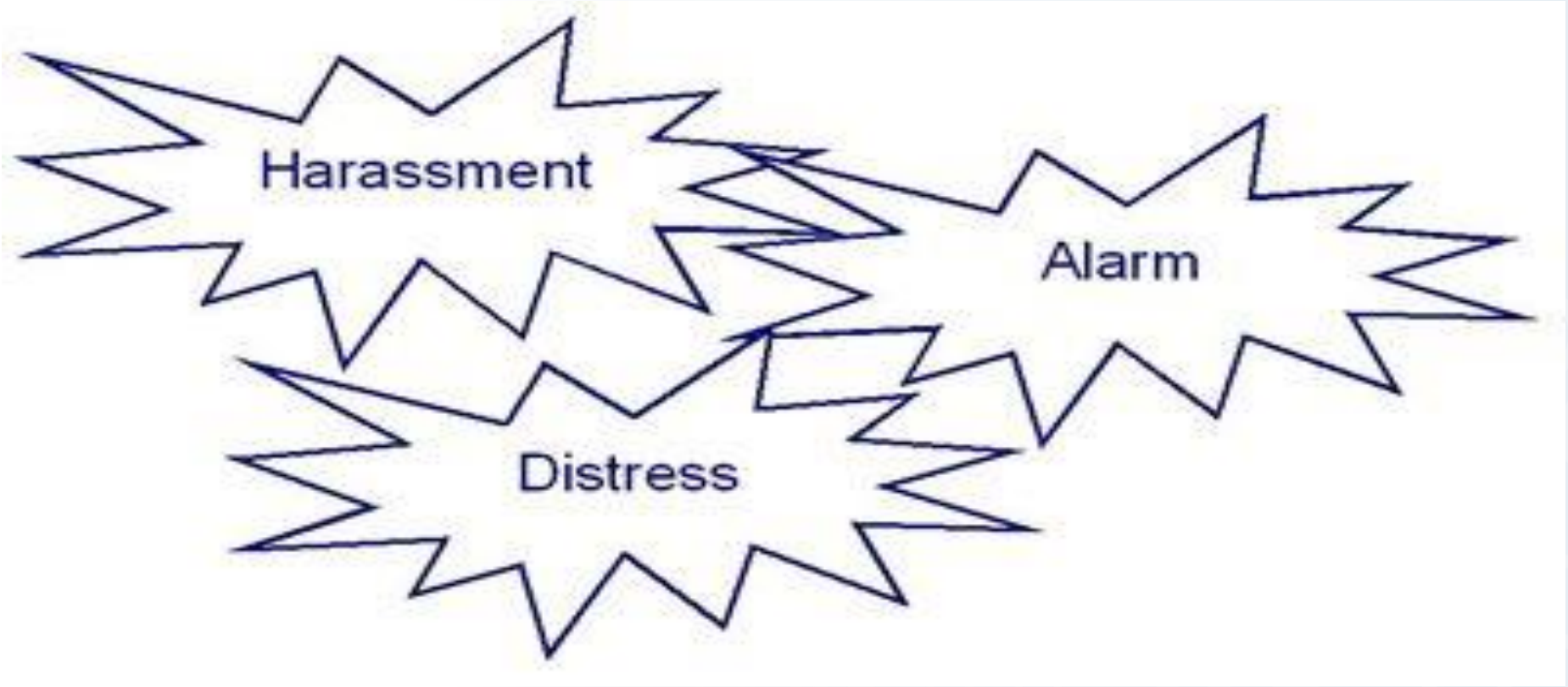
Tools and techniques

- Begins with the **start of the tenancy** itself
- **New tenants** often susceptible to rent payment problems
- **Pre-tenancy** (and early tenancy counselling) should be effective
- **On going customer care** can help
- Flexible **methods of payment** should be available
- Consider **incentive schemes** for payment, (e.g., prize draws)
- Consider **incentive schemes** for arrears repayment, (e.g., writing-off a matching amount)
- Provide tenants with **clear information** on rent payment and arrears policies and how matters are handled
- Include **advice** on rent payment methods and benefits
- **Encourage advice** to be sought if there are difficulties
- **Regularly update** on benefit changes and update campaigns
- **Regular liaison** with Local Authority Housing Benefit team/DWP
- Provide **regular rent account** statements
- Provide **additional statements** on request
- Issue a **clear breakdown** on how rents and other charges are calculated

Arrears Management

- **Sound policies** for the monitoring and control of arrears are vital
- **Clear policies and procedures** should be laid down to ensure uniformity of approach
- **Standardised** forms, letters and records should be a part of this
- Policies on **irrecoverable debts** should also be in place
- **Up-to-date** rent account information is vital
- **Good records** on contacts with tenants and details of repayment agreements are essential
- Rent accounts should **clearly distinguish** between rent and other charges, payments or debts
- **Identification of where action** is needed should be highlighted in the system, (e.g. missed payments or broken agreements)
- **Reconciliation and review** of accounts on a regular basis is important
- **Serious individual cases** should be monitored separately
- **Time should be set** aside for staff to concentrate on arrears work
- Tenants in arrears should be **contacted at least once every fortnight**
- **Prompt action** when arrears are small is essential
- **Personal face-to-face contact** should be made within a few days of two payments being missed, this can involve out of hours visits to the tenants' home if appropriate
- **Training** on debt counselling procedures, basic benefit calculations and the ability to calculate the affordability of tenants' offers to repay, should be provided
- **Repayment arrangements** should be confirmed in writing after a visit
- Rent arrears policies should lay down **timescales**
- If all efforts fail and **legal action** is required, tenants should be **kept informed**

Anti-Social Behaviour Case Management



Anti-Social Behaviour Case Management ...(cont'd)



Anti-Social Behaviour

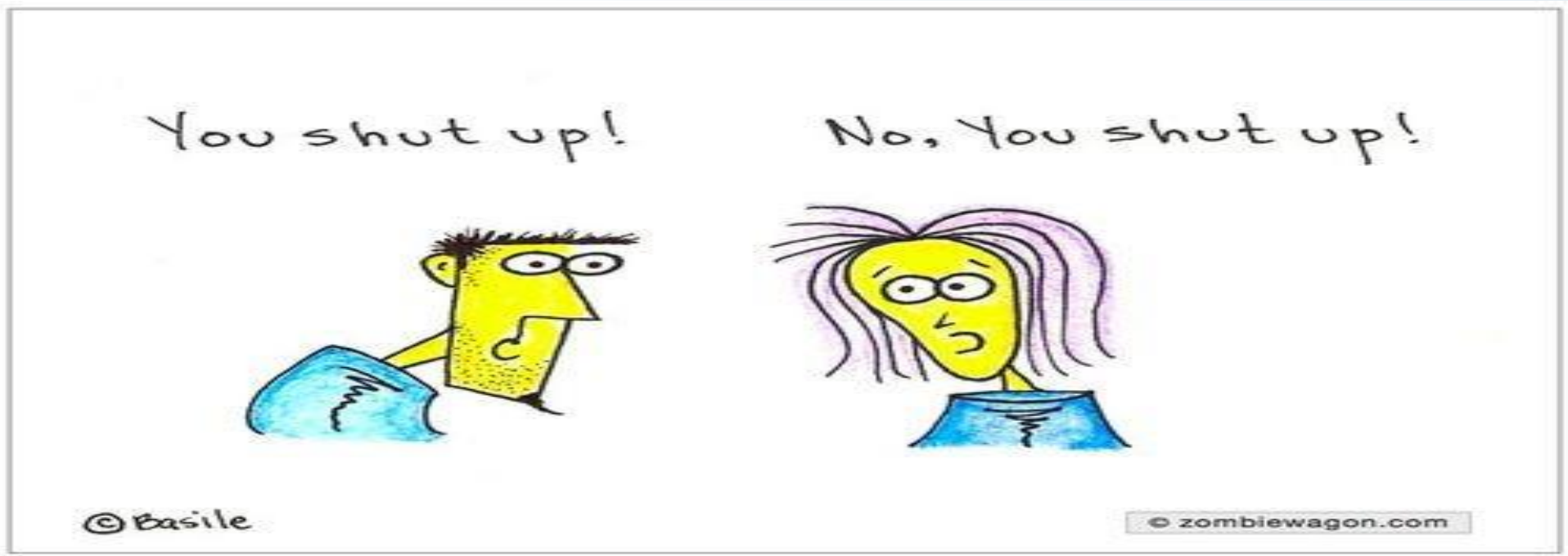
- The main test is that there is a **pattern** of behaviour which **continues** over a period of time but **cannot be dealt with easily or adequately as a single** criminal event

Anti-Social Behaviour ...(cont'd)

The Importance of early action

Preventative measures

- Working with Resident Groups
- Working with other agencies
  - Police
  - Youth Groups
  - Schools
- 'Diversions'
  - Positive
  - Displacing
- Education – schools, direct
- 'Stance'
- Publicity


You shut up!
No, You shut up!
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‘Toolkit’ – England and Wales

- Policies and Procedures
- Dispute resolution and mediation
- Moving the perpetrator or victim
- Introductory and Starter tenancies
- Demoted tenancies
- Injunctions
- Eviction
- Family Intervention Projects/Troubled Families programme
- Noise nuisance powers/duties
- Acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs)
- Parenting Orders
- Use of covenants on right to buy properties

Anti-social Behaviour, further developments

- Government announcement of 27 March 2023

Tenancy Management - Grounds for Possession – Secure Tenants

- **Discretionary grounds** - the court must decide if it's reasonable for the tenant to be evicted
- **Mandatory grounds** - the court must order the tenant to leave if the council proves the ground applies

Discretionary grounds for possession – Secure Tenants

The Judge considers

- The council can prove the ground applies
- It is reasonable to make a possession order
- The court uses its discretion to decide if the tenant should be evicted or if a possession order should be suspended on terms (for example that they repay rent arrears regularly).
- If they break the terms of a suspended possession order, they risk being evicted by bailiffs.

Discretionary grounds for possession – Secure Tenants ...(cont'd)

- Rent arrears
- Antisocial behaviour
- There is also a mandatory ground for antisocial behaviour.
- Breaking the tenancy agreement
- Fraudulent applications
- Inheriting the tenancy of a home that's too big for them
- Adapted accommodation

Mandatory Grounds for possession – Secure Tenants

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Demolition or Major Work
- Deliberate Overcrowding

Mandatory Grounds for Possession – Assured Tenants

- Ground 8: rent arrears of more than 8 weeks or 2 months
- There are also discretionary grounds for rent arrears.
- Antisocial behaviour
- There are also discretionary grounds for antisocial behaviour.
- Demolition or major works

Discretionary Grounds for Possession – Assured Tenants

- Rent arrears and late payment of rent
- Antisocial behaviour
- Breaking the tenancy agreement
- Tenancy agreement sets out rights and responsibilities as a tenant.
- Fraudulent applications

Tenancy Management

- Includes support
- Income Management – supporting tenants to be able to make their rent payments/repay arrears
- Anti-Social Behaviour – resolving disputes between neighbours/encouraging appropriate behaviour
- Direct
- Working with partners

Estate and Neighbourhood Management







Nature of estates and issues

- Low rise/high rise, low density/high density
- Cleaning
- Grounds Maintenance
- Repair
- Caretaking
- Security
- Car parking
- Anti-Social Behaviour/Vandalism/Graffiti
- Resident Involvement
- Leasehold Management issues
- Health and Safety, including fire safety
- Other bodies and agencies
- Etc., etc.

Principles of Estate Management - Objectives

- Provide services that **residents want and need**
- Maintain a high standard in the upkeep and cleanliness of communal areas on estates giving residents a **peaceful, clean and tidy environment**
- Create and maintain **stable and socially inclusive** communities where **people want to live**
- Ensure that estate services represent **value for money** and are delivered in a way which meet service standards that have been agreed with residents

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Estate Management - Approaches

- **Involve** residents and partners at all stages of the process
- **Conduct** community needs and buildings **assessment** to identify needs
- Set community **improvement targets**
- Draw up **Communities Plans** which address not only service standards but also community development, sustainability, estate improvements and partnership working
- Implement the **Communities Plans** with residents, partners, stakeholders and other teams
- Develop **local service standards** and agreements in consultation with residents and partner agencies

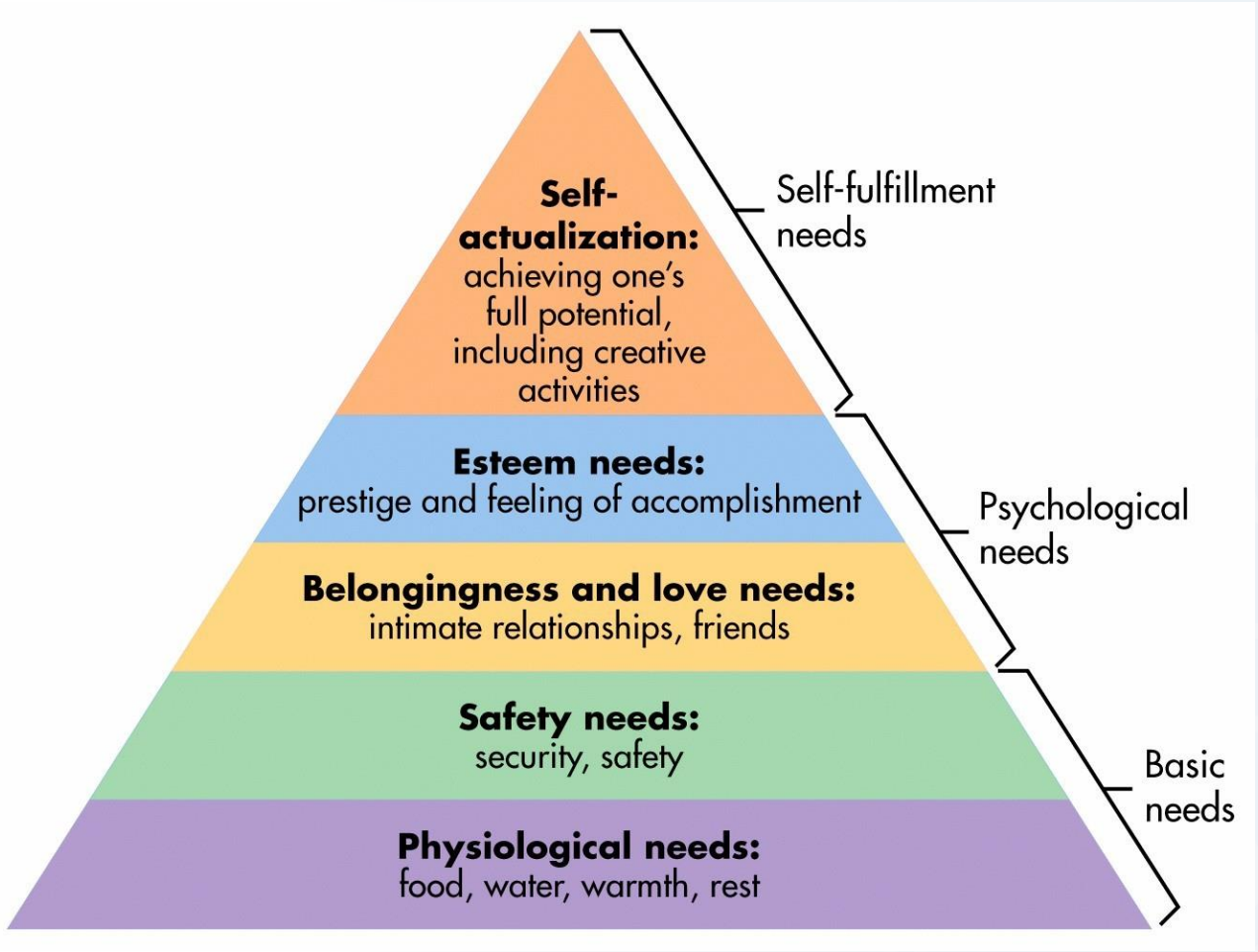
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Estate Management – Monitoring and Review

- Regular **estate walkabouts** by staff at intervals **agreed** in advance with residents
- Regular **communication** with residents about when estate inspections will take place and **feedback about actions** taken as a result
- **Involvement** with residents or residents' representatives in **estate inspections**
- **Involvement** of residents in the specification, procurement and monitoring of **contracts for estate services**
- **Involvement** of residents in the **selection of contractors** for estate services

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Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Neighbourhood Management

Goes beyond Estate Management

- Involves all local residents (of all tenures)
- Co-ordinates all local services (the housing provider, other housing providers, local author(ities), police, other agencies
- Sometimes to a plan
- May link with a Neighbourhood Planning Forum

Aims of Neighbourhood Management

- Lower levels of unemployment
- Higher educational attainment
- Better health outcomes
- Reported lower levels of crime/ASB and/or fear of crime
- Better housing conditions
- Reported higher satisfaction with environment

How does this relate to our experience so far?

Involving residents

Judging our performance, influencing how we do things

Resident Engagement

- The way in which tenants can "influence a social landlord's activity" (Pawson et al., 2012, p.1)
- From **contributing to landlord decisions** on local service delivery, to **influencing strategic policy**
- Not new, but growing expectation since Grenfell Tower disaster indicated in the Social Housing Green Paper (Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG, 2019) and White Paper (MHCLG, 2020)
- *"...tenants taking part in decision making processes and influencing decisions about housing policies; housing conditions; and housing (and related) services. It is a two way process which involves the sharing of information, ideas and power"* (Pawson et al., 2012, p.11)

Resident Engagement – Why?

- Knowledge available to improve services
- Hold social landlord to account
- Reality check
- Empower communities and capacity build
- Co-regulation
- Meet regulatory requirement

Resident Engagement – Outcomes?

- Better communication
- More efficient allocation of resources to services that really need them
- Improved employee motivation because they are more empowered to place the resident first
- A reduction in costs through optimising services that are needed, wanted and valued
- Enhanced resident experience and satisfaction (LGA 2019)

Resident Engagement – How?

- Information
- Consultation
- Involvement
- Empowerment

Resident Engagement - Approaches

- Remote – surveys, use of technology, perception
- One off exercises
- Local estate involvement, liaison, estate inspections
- Reading Panels
- Local Forums
- Specific activities such as in procurement, policy review, performance review
- Permanent structures such as Resident Panels
- Resident Scrutiny
- Co-regulation
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

Together with Tenants – National Housing Federation – 20 October 2020

A **four-point plan**

- A new requirement in the National Housing Federation Code of Governance for **boards to be accountable to their residents**
- A new **Together with Tenants charter**
- **Resident oversight and reporting** of progress against the charter
- Giving residents **a stronger collective voice** with the regulator

Tenant Satisfaction Measures - TSMs

- 22 Measures, in 6 themes
- To enable ‘tenants to know how their landlord is performing’
- Data to be collected starting in April 2023 for 2023/24, then onward
- Mixture of Management Data and Perception Surveys
- To be shared and considered with tenants
- Will be used by the Regulator of Social Housing too

Mini Quiz

Mini Quiz

- Who **established** the first *Housing Management* **principles**?
- Name three things that *Housing Management* **might cover**?
- Name one **objective** of *Housing Management*
- Name on thing that **defines** *Housing Management*
- Name one **alternative title** that *Housing Management* might have in some organisations?
- What **type of tenancy** does a Local Authority Tenant usually have?
- What **type of tenancy** does a Housing Association usually have?
- What is the **significant difference** between those two tenancies?
- Name one **other type** of tenancy

Mini Quiz ...(cont'd)

Name one

- approach for effective **income management/arrears** control
- approach for effective **anti-social behaviour** case management
- discretionary ground for **possession** for a Secure Tenancy
- discretionary ground for **possession** for an Assured Tenancy
- mandatory ground for **possession** for a Secure Tenancy
- mandatory ground for **possession** for an Assured Tenancy
- approach to effective **Estate Management**

- Why do we involve residents?
- How do we involve residents?

Behaviours and skills for Housing Management?

Open discussion

Behaviours and skills for Housing Management

Behaviours and Skills for Housing Management – beyond knowledge

- Ability to **analyse** difficult situations and make **reasoned decisions**
- Ability to **manage and prioritise** high demanding workloads
- Good **interpersonal skills**
- The ability to **motivate and organise**
- Be able to **work individually**, as part of a **team** and with **multi-agency partners**
- Experience of using **own initiative**
- Apply **lateral thinking** to problem solving
- **Identify opportunities** for improvement in service delivery or partnership working
- Conciliatory
- Negotiation
- Listening
- Persuasion
- Confident, with a "**can do**" approach
- Not easily intimidated
- Court Skills

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What's developing in Housing Management?

Changes now and ahead

What's developing in Housing Management?

- Grenfell Tower Fire Disaster 14 June 2017 – continuing consequences
- Green Paper – Summer 2018
- Brexit
- The new, new, new Government
- Cladding
- Impact of Covid-19 – Vulnerable residents, systems of working, remote/office
- The Charter for Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper - 19 Nov 2020 – relationships, engagement, safety, listening, complaints resolutions, Decent Homes Plus
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Customer focus, customer changing needs and expectations
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)
- Technology
- Welfare Reform
- Questioning of professionalism/nurturing of professionalism/Compulsory qualifications for Housing Managers

The Social Housing White Paper: "The Charter For Social Housing Residents" (Nov 2020)

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**, backed by a **strong consumer regulator for tenants**
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**

Chartered Institute of Housing Professional Standards

Chartered Institute of Housing Professional Standards

- **Integrity:** A housing professional has a clear understanding of their values and acts in accordance with them – they will do the right thing, for the right reasons, based on the best evidence and without partiality
- **Inclusive:** A housing professional acts transparently and fairly; builds good relationships; and works collaboratively with partners, customers and communities to achieve better outcomes

Chartered Institute of Housing Professional Standards ...(cont'd)

- **Ethical:** A housing professional acts fairly and makes choices and decisions by applying principles and values consistently. They understand the impact that poor decisions can have both on people's lives and the reputation of their organisation and they challenge unethical practice in a fair and considered way
- **Knowledgeable:** A housing professional has relevant and up-to-date practical and specialist knowledge as required by their job role, understands the bigger picture and has a passion for continuous learning

Chartered Institute of Housing Professional Standards ...(cont'd)

- **Skilled:** A housing professional equips themselves with the relevant skills to deliver effective services to tenants, customers, colleagues and partners.
- **Advocate:** A housing professional acts as an ambassador for the wider housing sector and an advocate for the housing profession
- **Leadership:** Housing professionals at all levels should demonstrate leadership, be forward-thinking and create opportunities. They find solutions to improve outcomes for their organisation, tenants and communities and demonstrate their ability to adapt to the latest ideas, situations and change

Conclusion

Introduction to Housing Management

Michael Guest

5 February 2024