Welcome to the Centre for Excellence in Community Investment conference 2025

Addressing Stigma

STOP SOCIAL HOUSING STIGMA





Tackling social housing stigma

HACT Community Investment Conference

The Tackling Stigma Journey Planner

A flexible tool to enable discussion between tenants, landlords and others about how to tackle social housing stigma

- Ticket (a) – Culture moves at the speed of trust
- Ticket (b) – Tenants Leading Change (TLC)
- Ticket (c) – Tackling stigma in service delivery and repairs
- Ticket (d) – First class staff
- Ticket (e) – Stigma and governance
- Ticket (f) – Celebrating social housing

The Pioneer Travellers

- Colchester Borough Homes – Local authority ALMO
- Greatwell Homes – Wellingborough – Housing Association
- London & Quadrant Housing – Housing Association
- London Borough of Croydon – Local authority
- Medway Borough Council – Local authority
- Mid Suffolk & Babergh District Councils – Local authorities
- Newcastle City Council – Local authority
- Progress Housing – Leyland – Housing Association
- Thirteen Housing Group – Middlesbrough – Housing Association
- Trident Housing – Birmingham – Housing Association



The Pioneer Traveller methodology

- Each landlord chose the tickets they wanted to work with their tenants
- Workshops to generate discussion and “blue sky” action points with tenants, landlord staff, contractors and others
- We drew up action plans from the action points
- The landlords then refined the action points
- The challenge of linking action points into existing programmes



Thirteen Housing Group – action point list from Pioneer Traveller session – 5/12/2024

Issue	Detail	Current status	Decision to progress?	Initials of person to progress
Communications				
Review "knowing tenants" programme	To check that data is gathered through all available opportunities; concern that Touchpoints may not always be asking for data relevant to repairs (such as health issues); ensure data is passed on such as learning, disability & vulnerability; need to fully understand customer needs in major works programmes			
Identify when to summarise information to customers	Clear summaries of information at particular points of a customer journey (ie. at end of tenancy – set out balance of rent account – and potential consequences)			
No "drivel & promises"	Develop a culture of open honest integrity where the truth is told to tenants rather than raising false expectations			

Issue	Detail	Current status	Decision to progress?	Initials of person to progress
A “would your gran be proud of you” culture	Consider how to introduce a “would your gran be proud of you” culture – training, staff awareness – for staff and contractors			
Mental health issues/dementia	Consider how to raise staff and contractor awareness of mental health and dementia issues			
Consistency of information	Ensure that information provided by letter, text and phone is consistent			
Repairs				
Building one team between Thirteen staff, contractors and tenants	Hold events to bring operatives and tenants together to ensure consistency of service between Thirteen staff and contractors			
Taking ownership/responsibility	Create a culture where all Thirteen staff and contractor staff take responsibility for issues as they arise – eg. passing issues back to the right people to ensure that they are addressed			
Review availability of repairs appointments	Consider whether tighter allocated time slots could be available and evening/weekend appointments			
Consider alternatives if repairs cannot be done immediately	Concern that heaters were not offered when a boiler could not be repaired			
Consider re-introduction of choice relating to major works				
Explore whether target times for some routine repairs could be reduced				

Issue	Detail	Current status	Decision to progress?	Initials of person to progress
Review contractor adherence to Code of Conduct	Check how contractors and sub-contractors adhere to code of conduct			
Complaints				
Review complaints handling and information annually with customers with a view to building confidence amongst customers to make complaints	Ensure awareness of rights relating to complaints; the different ways to make complaints; the difference between expressing dissatisfaction and making a complaint			
	Consider what could be done to ensure that customers do not consider they will be seen as a trouble maker if they raise a complaint			
Ensure that contractors understand the complaints process and can take issues back to Thirteen as necessary				
Involve tenants generally, and specifically those who have made complaints, in discussions about lessons learnt				
Other service issues				
Consider service offer to non-core areas	Concern about inconsistency of service between core/non-core areas			
Develop new starter pack	Develop new starter pack with customers including outlining the complaints process			
Use 2 way customer pledge	Already being developed			
Use recommendation tracker	Issue raised about request for a change to a letter that took a long time to change (and had to be escalated to do so)			

Issue	Detail	Current status	Decision to progress?	Initials of person to progress
Governance				
Information to Customer's about Board issues	Request the Board for a summary of key issues the Board is considering; consider holding public Board meetings			
Request the Board to produce a Social Housing Stigma statement	Ask the Board's view about what social housing stigma is and how it should be tackled. Concern was expressed that there was no Board representation at a debate about stigma and governance.			
Request that tackling social housing stigma be included in the business plan	Request that the Board takes responsibility for ensuring that actions are taken to tackle stigma			
Request that Board reports include a standard section on impact on social housing stigma				
Provide governance information to customers	Explanation of what the Board does; how the Board/Committee/Sub-committee structure works and how feedback works between them and to involved customers			
Carry out a staff/contractor survey into tackling social housing stigma				
Explore how different Board members, the Chief Executive and Executive Team members can be involved in stigma debates	Consider setting up a customer panel/board member committee (possibly also involving staff and contractors)			

Issue	Detail	Current status	Decision to progress?	Initials of person to progress
Explore how the Board and Executive Team engage with and feedback to involved customers	Concern was expressed that relying on the customer present at Board meetings for customer perspective is placing too much responsibility on her			
Hold Board member & staff away day to discuss stigma	Feedback outputs to involved customers			
Produce videos of tenant stigma experience for the Board and Exec Team				

Journey Planner
Progress – September 2025



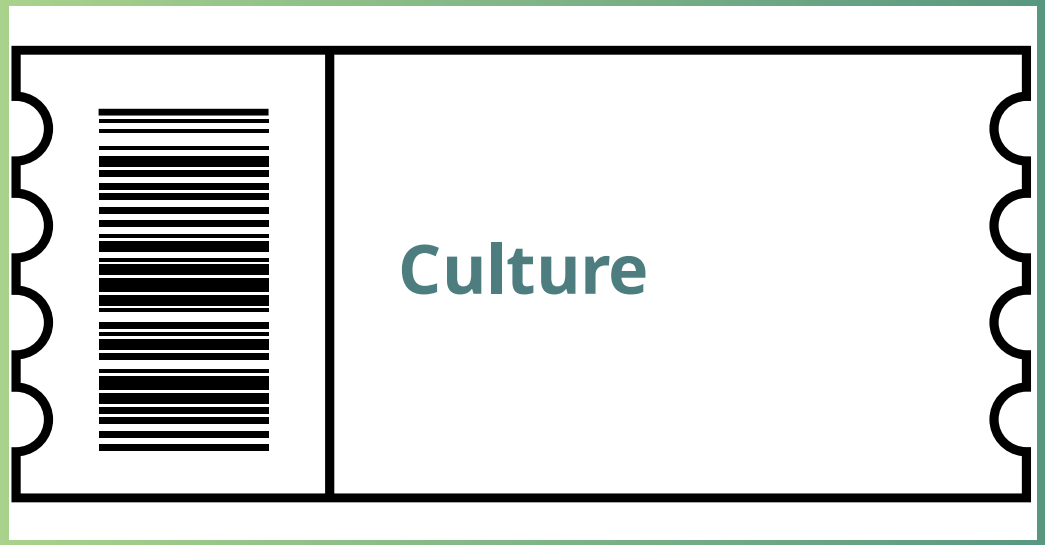


David White - Head of Housing

Transformation and Regulation

Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils

Our Tickets - Chosen by Tenants







Progress

- 26-point action plan – 50% Complete
- Regular Feedback to Tenants and Members
- Working group continue to meet quarterly

Complete

Action Title	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Notes & History Latest Note
Review stigma related values, attitudes, characteristics in job descriptions/person specifications	100%			All JDs for Housing Management team were reviewed as part of the restructure to include ensuring tenants are treated fairly and with respect as part of the skills and attributes that they should display. This will be replicated across all customer facing JDs as they are reviewed.
Review how tenants can be involved in staff recruitment	100%		Georgia Mecoy	Tenants now involved at interview stage and included in both interviewing and scoring candidates.
Enable tenants to apply for staff posts – add to MHB / Handbook	100%		Kerry Lecomber	
Give staff copies of the tenant handbook	100%		Victoria Freer	Tenant Handbook launched February 2025, is on the website and has been shared with https://www.babergh.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/download-our-tenant-handbook?p_l_back_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.babergh.gov.uk%2Fstaff.

Nearly there…

Investigate flexible repairs appointments	80%			As of 1st July our new job management system has gone live and we are now able to offer four different appointment slots including all day, morning, afternoon and a 10am to 2pm slot.
Carry out stigma training for all staff	80%		Victoria Freer	Training modules have been drafted in Oracle and will be rolled out to all staff by Summer 2025.
Share stigma videos with staff	80%		Victoria Freer	43% of staff have fully completed the training and a further 23% are nearly finished as at 4th August 2025. 32% haven't yet started it. Staff have been given until the end of August to finish it.
Develop ongoing complaints, concerns, compliments communications	60%			Will be developing a 'lessons learnt' log to be monitored by Complaints Taskforce. Tenant Engagement review will also be used to signpost this.
Empower and train staff to make decisions where health and safety issues and safeguarding issues are involved	60%			Awaab's Law training being rolled out to all customer facing officers to ensure we are fulfilling our obligations to the health and safety of our residents. We have also recently had a vulnerability improvement session for staff which launched our new vulnerability policy and helped staff to understand reasonable adjustments when delivering services to residents.
Enable tenants to apply for staff posts	50%		David White	Link to jobs page added to My Home Bulletin.

Nearly there…

Awards and rewards	50%		James Hart	Tenant Board has recognised the need to celebrate compliments received by members of staff. This will be picked up as part of the ongoing development of the Housing Complaints Taskforce where the tenant board can ensure that good behaviour and demonstrating our values is rewarded and recognised.
Staff understanding of tenant needs	50%		Victoria Freer	Embedding of vulnerability policy and vulnerability toolkit being issued. Our 'getting to know you' plan.
Carry out face to face sign ups	40%			This has started for some sign-ups with plans to carry out for all from September 2025 onwards.
Develop lettable standard with tenants	40%			Voids Contract Manager is organising a workshop with tenants to discuss and help shape our lettable standard.
Involve tenants in staff induction	40%		Kerry Lecomber	As part of staff induction staff are required to attend a tenant board meeting and complete training on our tenant engagement strategy and all staff should identify tenant engagement activities that they have completed during their 121s.
Use “You Said We Did” messages	30%		Kerry Lecomber; Georgia Mecoy	As part of our annual report to tenants on our tenant engagement activities we highlight how their insight has influenced service delivery.

Nearly there…

Review community outreach sessions	30%		Justin King	CADs being reviewed with a report being developed. Changes will be reported to members. Meeting with S Lake looking into linking in with existing community outreach sessions. K Lecomber and G Mecoy becoming digital champions to gain further opportunities for outreach.
Review start to finish transparency in housing decision-making processes	30%			Tenant influence included in business cases for change to housing services that directly impact service delivery. As part of the upcoming review of TE strategy we will ensure that the role of the tenant in decision making is easily identifiable.
Examine relationships with contractors with tenants	25%			Complaint these are being drawn out from contractors and Contract Managers will be raising and documenting tenant concerns around contractor behaviour and performance. Moving forward training in procurement and contract management will empower tenants to address their concerns directly with our contractors.
Review contractor performance with tenants	25%			Complaint themes are being drawn out from contractors and Contract Managers will be raising and documenting tenant concerns around
				contractor behaviour and performance. Moving forward training in procurement and contract management will empower tenants to address their concerns directly with our contractors.
Examine potential regeneration of stigmatised areas	25%			Continuing to identify and improve areas through Greater Places work. Working with Housing Management and Assets to identify larger investment programmes on suitable sites.
Transparent with capital works programme	20%			Capital Investment programme progress being tracked and published as part of new Council Housing Assurance Report.
Develop staff handbook	20%			Early discussions with colleagues have taken place and Compliance will be involved. Will work with CHO Team Leaders. Develop a staff working group to build this.
Review use of social media	10%		David White	DW has had conversation with Comms and we will be setting up a closed tenant Facebook group and potentially one other channel. Support will be given from Comms and Customer Services needs to be involved regarding interaction.
Develop “what happens next” guide for staff regarding taking responsibility	10%		Justin King	Same issue of the need for a single point of contact came out of the recommendations from the Complaints Scrutiny Project.
Communications between tenants and staff	0%			Part of service review of Tenancy Management.

Question

What principles do people think are important in tackling stigma?

Learning from the Pioneer Traveller sessions

- a strategic approach to tackling stigma – led by Boards/councillors
- believing and trusting tenants – safeguarding landlords against a minority of tenants – potentially stigmatising the majority
- listening to tenants – they know their homes better than landlords
- establishing an accountability culture beyond tick box regulations
- maintaining tenant involvement and showing its value in leading to change
- a “one team” approach involving tenants, staff from all sections, operatives, contractors and others
- the balance between stigma and operations
- a culture of ownership and responsibility to ensure that issues raised are followed through from start to finish

The Pioneer Traveller sessions

- face to face relationships between tenants and staff
- there are many staff who are passionate about tackling stigma
- involving tenants in staff recruitment and enabling tenants to apply
- involving tenants in asset management, improvements and compliance led by the relevant lead staff member
- flexible appointments and a corresponding, customised repair culture
- making tenancy sign ups welcoming and setting the right tone
- getting “getting to know you” programmes right – using all contacts to gather information and explaining to tenants why the information is needed
- the Journey Planner fits with landlords at different journey stages
- importance of aligning action plans with other landlord change programmes

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