

MEASURING SOCIAL IMPACT FOR CHISEL HOUSING

HACT | CHISEL

CHISEL Housing is a housing association based in Lewisham, with 300 homes across London and the South East.

Formed as a secondary co-op 40 years ago to support the development of small schemes, CHISEL is best known for its self-build homes: 10 self-build estates in London, Brighton and Colchester, built in the 1990s for social rent, many by the residents who still live in them.

Working with HACT, CHISEL measured **£600,000** in **social value** across its **300 homes**, as measured by the **UK Social Value Bank.**

We spoke to **Miles Lanham**, CHISEL's Chief Executive, about the report and what it means for the organisation.



All photos from CHISEL's archive

What gets measured gets done, and that's why we're measuring it.

Miles Lanham, Chief Excutive, CHISEL Housing

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WHY HACT?

“Working with Resonance prompted our work with HACT. Resonance are a B Corp who raise funds on the open market to provide social housing, and they only partner with organisations that share their values and are genuinely interested in making a social impact. The message was clear: we should be measuring our social impact and reporting on it.

I was aware of HACT, I'd seen their presence at conferences, and it was clear that they were bothering to educate the sector. The other way in was through our bank, Unity Trust, whom you also work with.

I'm also driven quite personally to make a social impact. I was brought up as a Quaker, and there's a mandate there to improve life and to work with some of the most disadvantaged people. That's ingrained in me.”



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“There was also a practical need. The rents for our self-builders are pegged very low, sub social rent for some of them, because they built the homes with sweat equity. So we needed to grow our income, and being able to do that while increasing our social value is amazing. That's what we're all about.”

WHAT STOOD OUT IN THE RESULTS?

“A few things surprised me. We now have a full-time rents officer, and that role means we're doing proper referrals and working in partnership with residents, recovering funds through housing benefit, PIP, DHP and backdated housing benefit payments. It's about actively taking the lead for residents and moving them out of indebtedness, which benefits them and us. I hadn't realised that counted for as much as it did.

Supported housing also stood out as the right thing for us to do, and Stonewall Housing are the right partners. A lot of what they do really shone through in the survey.”

“We hold them to account for it: they report to us quarterly on the work, training and life skills our residents receive. They do a really good job. Recently, our residents have been going to spend the day at Google's headquarters, because Stonewall have so many partners. The report landed at the perfect time, just before our AGM, and it's going into our annual report, and we'll do it every year. I'd also like to run a session with the team on what social impact actually means in practice.”

We're punching above our weight because of the passion we have, and the impact report from HACT inform and reflect this.

Miles Lanham, Chief Excutive, CHISEL Housing

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WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS IT MADE?

“Using HACT brings a huge amount of gravity to our data, because it's one of the things they’re known best for.

I think it will pay off more than people expect. We're trying to expand our supported housing to provide for people fleeing domestic abuse.

That's a business objective in our corporate plan, and this will help with that. It's not that CHISEL can't prove itself. We just had a gap, a bit like a gap on a CV. How could an organisation that did so much up to 1994 have done so little since?”

“But everybody wants to work with us now; we've been working up proposals for a 100-home block with a London borough. We're punching above our weight because of the passion we have, and the impact report from HACT inform and reflect this.

This is really just the beginning of the story.



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GET IN TOUCH.

Ready to take the next step?

Get in touch with our team to learn more about how we can support your social value journey.

- Get in touch with our team
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- https://hact.org.uk/how-we-can-help/social-value/