Challenging Stigma in Social Housing - The Tackling Stigma Journey Planner

Mercy Denedo, Amanze Ejiogu & Nic Bliss

Ending Social Housing Stigma Together...

About the Authors

Nic Bliss is the Campaign Director for the Stop Social Housing Stigma campaign. He was a tenant of a housing co-operative for 30 years and has worked as a Policy Officer for the Confederation of Co-operative Housing. He was a key player in setting up the National Tenant Organisations partnership that advise and supported the Government in the post Grenfell Ministerial tenant roadshows that led to the Green and White papers. He was also part of the first two initiatives to set up a National Tenant Voice.

Mercy Denedo is an Associate Professor of Accounting at Durham University Business School. Her research critically explores the intersections of social, accountability, and environmental challenges, with a focus on sustainability, housing, extractive industries, prisons, and water governance, to inform policy, enhance practice, and promote social justice for marginalized communities.

Amanze Ejiogu is a Professor of Accounting, Society and Accountability at the Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University. His research focuses on how accounting interfaces with societal issues and spans areas including sustainability, extractive industry, housing, prisons and gambling.

Acknowledgements

Address for correspondence

The Pioneer Travellers were:

Foreword

Social housing stigma is real, it has serious consequences, and it makes no sense at all.

We all need somewhere to live and making judgements about someone based on where that might be is downright bonkers. A quick trawl through the comments section of any news story on housing shows just how prevalent it is. And it isn't just the anonymous cowards online who hold these views: social housing stigma was one of the main issues raised by tenants at the post-Grenfell ministerial roundtables.

When I was a council tenant in the 1980s there were pockets of prejudice but nothing on the scale that we now see. As social housing has become a scarce resource the stigmatisation has increased. And making the political case for investment in new homes is only made more difficult when the false narratives about people living there are so widespread.

But stigma is not just something that takes place 'out there'. There are too many instances of tenants feeling disrespected by their landlord, of not being listened to and of hearing their homes talked about as 'assets', 'stock' and 'units'. Of being asked to contribute to making services better and seeing their efforts go unrecognised and unheard.

The Stop Social Housing Stigma campaign have worked tirelessly for many years to make sure that government, landlords and the media begin to take stigma seriously. The Journey Planner is a fantastic resource that will make it easier for landlords to listen to the experience of their tenants and to change how they work as a result. This is not a quick fix but will rely on hard work, commitment and a real change in the power dynamic. I hope you agree that it's a journey that the whole sector should embark upon with enthusiasm.

Alison Inman OBE

Chair Tpas
Past President, Chartered Institute of Housing

Contents

List of Abbreviations	
Codes	Abbreviations
CIH	Chartered Institute of Housing
TPAS	Tpas – The tenant engagement experts
ALMO	Arms-Length Management Organisation
SSHS	Stop Social Housing Stigma Campaign
CFG	Contractors Focus Group
HPF	Housing Professionals Focus Group
TFG	Tenants Focus Group

List of Figures
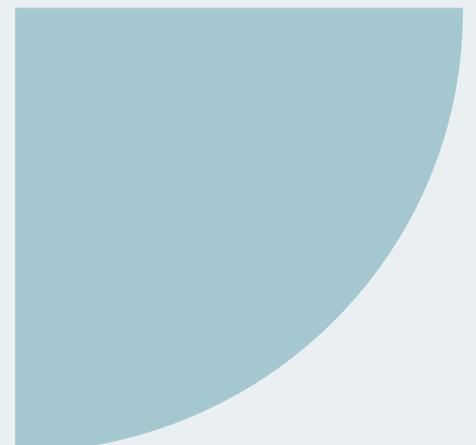
List of Tables

Executive summary and recommendations

Stigma has been a persistent concern raised by social housing tenants. Our previous research - "**Stigma and Social Housing in England**" and "**Stigma in Social Housing in England: Feedback on the Consultation Responses**" - identified stigma as a deeply rooted issue within the social housing sector and wider society and emphasised that it must not be overlooked. Both reports called for a collective, concerted effort from stakeholders - including government, politicians, media, housing providers, and tenants - to address stigma and drive the meaningful changes that tenants have long advocated for.

In 2023, we launched a project in partnership with the Stop Social Housing Stigma Campaign (SSHS), the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), TPAS, and YD Consultants to provide a framework and resources to enable tenants and landlords to collaboratively work to tackle stigma. As part of this project, we launched three set of surveys in 2024 and gathered responses from 364 social housing tenants, 63 housing professionals, and 9 contractors. Respondents strongly opposed the development of another superficial "tick-box" toolkit and called for tools that would drive genuine cultural change in tenant engagement, experience, and accountability.

Drawing on the survey findings, we developed the initial version of the Tackling Stigma Journey Planner, which informed a series of 13 focus group consultations: eight (8) with tenants, four (4) with housing professionals, and one with contractors. Across the consultations, participants emphasised that addressing social housing stigma should be viewed as a journey, requiring a culture of trust and accountability at its core.

The feedback from the surveys and focus groups shaped a prototype Tackling Stigma Journey Planner, launched at the Housing Community Summit in September 2024. This framework was piloted with 11 Pioneer Traveller landlords - six local authorities (including one Arms-Length Management Organisation) and five housing associations. Lessons and case studies from the pilot are presented in a separate report titled "**Tackling Social Housing Stigma Journey Planner: Pioneer Travellers' Case Studies and Learning Points.**"

Building on the pilot phase, survey responses, and consultation feedback, we developed a refined and more comprehensive framework. A summary is included in this report, while the full version is presented in a separate report titled "**The Tackling Stigma Journey Planner.**"
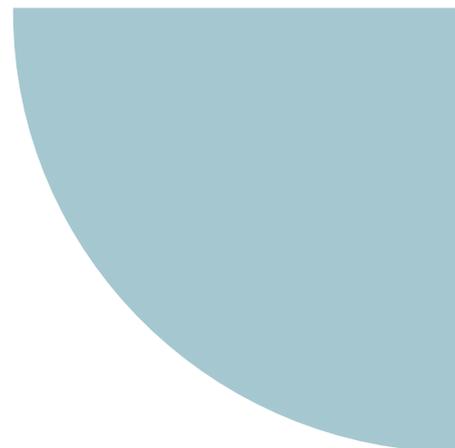
Complementing this report, the Pioneer Travellers' case studies and learning points, and the Journey Planner, we produced fifteen short films featuring tenants, housing professionals, and academics speaking candidly about social housing stigma. These films provide personal insights into the construction and experience of stigma and offer practical recommendations for addressing it. They are available on the Durham University and SSHS websites.

We hope that these materials will serve as powerful advocacy tools. We encourage housing providers, trade and professional bodies - including the Chartered Institute of Housing and TPAS - to integrate them into staff training and recruitment programmes, helping to raise awareness, enhance organisational culture, and recruit compassionate, high-performing staff. We also encourage Board Members, Councillors, and senior staff to lead by example and undertake their own tackling stigma journey.

Furthermore, we hope that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Regulator of Social Housing, and the Housing Ombudsman will use these resources to influence standards and policies that promote greater accountability, transparency, respectful and inclusive tenant engagement, and the provision of decent, high-quality accommodation across the sector.

Ultimately, our ambition is to inform policymaking, shift media narratives, and challenge public perceptions of social housing estates and their residents.
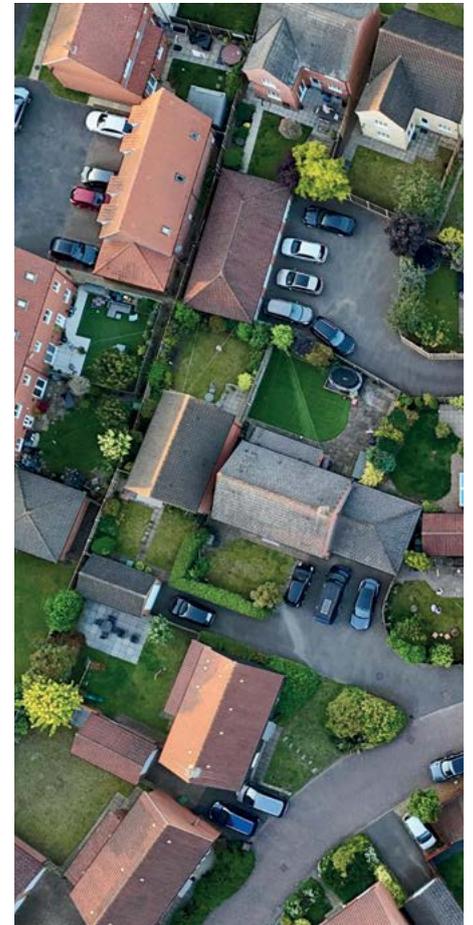
Recommendations from this report

This report examines the findings from the consultations (through survey and focus groups); and provided additional recommendations to support tenants, housing providers, policymakers and others in tackling stigma in social housing.

a) Recommendations from the survey and focus groups with contractors

In responding to the survey and in the focus groups, contractors and other stakeholders made several suggestions on what they thought would be effective in challenging stigma. These are summarised below:

i) **Education and Awareness:**

- Training programs for staff on diversity, equity, and inclusion and unconscious bias can equip them to sensitively handle stigma-related issues.

ii) **Tenant Engagement:**

- Engaging tenants in decision-making processes and design on repairs to be completed and quality measures within the contract will ensure their voices are heard and valued, which can help combat feelings of stigma.

iii) **Advocacy and Partnerships:**

- Collaborating with local organisations, councils, and advocacy groups can amplify efforts to challenge stigma. This includes advocating for policies that promote dignity and reduce discrimination against social housing residents.

- Developing partnerships with organisations focused on social equity can provide additional resources and support for stigma reduction initiatives.

iv) **Feedback and Continuous Improvement:**

- Establishing mechanisms for collecting feedback from tenants about their experiences can guide ongoing efforts to address stigma. This feedback is crucial for refining strategies and ensuring they are effective.

- Facilitating effective communication between contractors and tenants prior to contractors arriving onsite can help manage expectations and reduce the likelihood of tenants feeling that their needs are unmet.

- Regular collaboration between the landlord, staff and tenants can review progress and success and can help to reignite the importance of tackling stigma.

v) **Self-Assessment Tools:**

- Developing tools for housing providers that include checklists, case studies, and training resources can empower organisations to assess and improve their practices related to stigma.
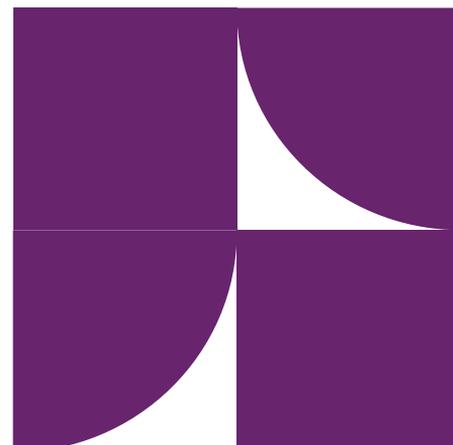
b) Recommendations from the survey and focus groups with housing professionals

Through the survey and focus groups, housing professionals made a number of suggestions in terms of what they think has been effective and what needs to be done to challenge stigma. These include:

1. **Awareness and Education:**

   ○ **Training for Staff:** Implement training programmes that focus on understanding stigma, unconscious bias, and respectful communication. This helps staff recognise their own biases and promotes a culture of respect towards tenants.

   ○ **Community Workshops:** Organise workshops that bring together residents and housing professionals to discuss stigma and its impacts. This approach can help foster a fundamental culture rooted in trust, empathy, accountability and transparency, understanding, and effective communication. It encourages active listening and open dialogue with tenants, which are essential in breaking down the barriers often created by stigma.

2. **Positive Communication:**

   ○ **Use of Language:** Shift the language used in communications to avoid terms that carry stigma. For example, referring to individuals as "tenants" or "residents" rather than "customers" can help change perceptions and foster a culture of fairness, respectful and inclusive engagement.

   ○ **Promoting Positive Stories:** Actively share success stories and positive experiences of residents living in social housing. This can counteract negative media portrayals and highlight the diversity and contributions of residents.

3. **Engagement and Empowerment:**

   ○ **Tenant Involvement:** Encourage tenants to take active roles in the co-production, co-design and decision-making processes within housing organisations. This can empower them and give them a voice in shaping policies that affect their lives.

   ○ **Support Tenant Movements:** Housing providers should support tenant-led initiatives like the Stop Social Housing Stigma Campaign, which encourages tenants to advocate for themselves and challenge negative stereotypes.

4. **Collaboration with Media:**

   ○ **Media Engagement:** Work with local media to promote fair and balanced reporting on social housing issues. This includes providing guidelines on how to report on social housing and its residents positively.

5. **Feedback Mechanisms:**

   ○ **Anonymous Feedback:** Implement anonymous feedback systems where tenants can share their experiences and perceptions regarding stigma. This can help organisations identify areas for improvement.

6. **Community Building:**

   ○ **Mixed Tenure Developments:** Promote high standard mixed tenure housing developments that integrate social housing with private housing. Promoting a high standard within mixed-tenure estates also plays a role in addressing stigma. Ensuring that the quality of housing for social renters is consistent with that of private homeowners - through design, build quality, and maintenance - can foster community cohesion. It prevents social renters from being visibly distinguished by details such as their door colours and quality, construction (i.e. exterior and interior) standards, or segregating hedges. Investing in a high standard mixed tenure estates can contribute to building a more integrated and equitable living environment.

c) Recommendations from the survey and focus groups with tenants

Suggestions for what could be done to challenge stigma were made through the survey and focus groups and are summarised below:

1. **Education and Awareness:**

   a) **Training for Staff:** Housing providers should implement training programmes for their staff to raise awareness about stigma and unconscious bias and its impacts. This includes educating them on how to treat tenants with respect, fairness and dignity, and understanding the biases that may exist within their own attitudes.

   b) **Community Education:** Initiatives that educate the broader community about the realities of social housing can help dispel myths and stereotypes. This could involve campaigns that highlight the positive contributions of social housing tenants to their communities.

2. **Tenant Empowerment and Accountability:**

   a) **Involvement in Decision-Making:** Encouraging tenants to participate in decision-making processes can empower them and help challenge the stigma. This includes involving them in discussions about policies that affect their living conditions and community.

   b) **Support for Tenant Movements:** Housing providers should join and support tenant-led initiatives. One of such initiatives is the "Stop Social Housing Stigma" Campaign (SSHS), which aims to raise awareness and advocate for better treatment of social housing tenants. SSHS has collaboratively published a Tackling Stigma Journey Planner to support housing providers and their tenants in working together to address issues that affect them.

3. **Policy and Structural Changes:**

   a) **Accountability and Transparency to improve tenant engagement and culture:** Housing providers were encouraged to demonstrate greater accountability and transparency in both their decision-making processes and service delivery. Participants in the focus group discussions emphasised that meaningful engagement with tenants can only be achieved when housing providers go beyond basic regulatory compliance and actively build relationships rooted in trust and mutual accountability. Many believed that this approach would lead to tangible improvements in the quality of services, delivered by both housing providers and their contractors and will help tackle stigma associated with their providers, improve fairness and respect and overall, improve the culture within their organisation.

b) **Improving Housing Conditions:** Ensuring that social housing is well-maintained and visually appealing can help change perceptions. When properties are kept in good repair, inside and outside, it can enhance the overall image of social housing.

c) **Addressing Anti-Social Behaviour:** Proactively managing anti-social behaviour within communities can help create a more positive environment, which in turn can reduce stigma associated with living in social housing.

4. **Positive Representation:**

a) **Showcasing Success Stories:** Highlighting success stories of tenants who have improved their lives through social housing can counter negative narratives. This can be done through media campaigns, community events, and social media.

b) **Promoting Community Engagement:** Organising community events that bring together tenants and the wider community can foster understanding and reduce stigma. This includes activities that encourage interaction and collaboration among residents.

5. **Engagement with Local Authorities, Central Government, Regulators and Watchdogs:**

a) **Advocacy for Policy Changes:** Engaging with local government and policymakers to advocate for fair treatment and resources for social housing to help address systemic issues that contribute to stigma.

b) **Recommendation for Government**

In issuing the direction on Competence and Conduct to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), ensure:

• The professionalism of social housing customer facing staff is not the only focus

• The spirit and the words of the Directive to RSH, is explicit to address social housing stigma through identification and collaboration between landlords and tenants, locally/

• Education programmes and qualifications address expectations that training for staff will include unconscious bias of stigma, organisational culture, and behaviours of staff

c) **Recommendation for Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)**

i) **Regulatory Standards**

In your review of the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Regulatory Standard, or a result of any new Competence and Conduct Standard directive from Government:

• Be explicit about the need for landlords to demonstrate they have considered localised stigma with tenants and have a plan to address this issue.

• Ensure educational qualifications and staff training includes the building of an understanding of the impact of landlord work which can exacerbate stigma and the need to collaborate with tenants in defining and addressing landlord culture and behaviours of staff.

• Ensure assurance on "diversity" includes inequalities and discrimination to address social housing stigma.

ii) Code of Practice, which accompanies the Consumer Standards:

• Expand the "fairness and respect" guidance to include examples and ideas from the Journey Planner and other reports of stigma to work with tenants to define and address stigma.

• Expand the "Local Cooperation" include ideas from the Journey Planner and Case Studies on stigma to showcase collaboration between landlords and tenants through co-design and coproduction.

d) Recommendation to the Housing Ombudsman Service

• Expand your recent work on "4 tests of good communication" in complaints to review good practice, work with academics and the Social Housing Stigma Campaign to deliver an Insight Report and recommendation to landlords on reviewing landlord culture and behaviours which can lead to complaints and concerns from tenants.
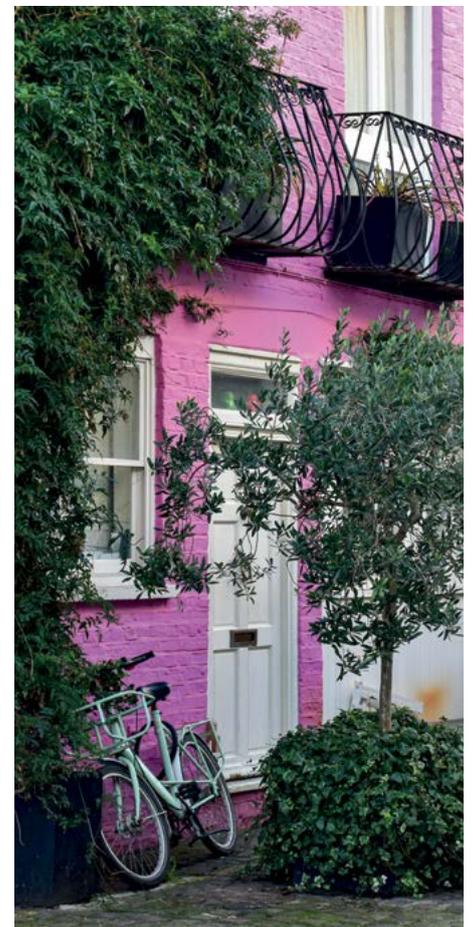
Chapter 1:
Setting the scene –
what we did

1.1. Introduction

From our previous research[1], we highlighted that stigma is a deeply rooted issue within the social housing sector and the wider society, it is tackled sporadically or brushed over.

To provide a pathway to address this endemic issue which is having debilitating impacts on the life chances of social housing tenants and their everyday realities, Stop Social Housing Stigma Campaign (SSHS) with Dr Mercy Denedo (Durham University), Professor Amanze Ejiogu (Sheffield Hallam University), the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), TPAS and YD Consultants initiated a project in 2023, to provide a framework and other valuable materials to enable tenants and landlords to work together to tackle stigma.

Following our consultations with tenants, housing professionals, contractors and others, and building on previous research on stigma, we have developed a much-refined Tackling Stigma Journey Planner having piloted this framework with eleven (11) housing providers since November 2024 to March 2025 – five with housing associations and six with local authorities (one an ALMO). The initial version of the Tackling Stigma Journey Planner was launched at the Community Housing Summit in September 2024. The revised version will be launched at the Parliament on the 19th of May 2025.

Those who attended the consultations agreed that tackling social housing stigma is a journey and when this is viewed as a journey, progress can only emerge where addressing stigma can be underpinned by the fundamental concept of trust and accountability.

This report examines the findings from the consultation (through survey and focus groups) with tenants, housing professionals, contractors and others; and provided additional recommendations to support tenants, housing providers, policymakers and others in tackling stigma in social housing.

Stigma has been a re-occurring concern raised by social housing tenants' overtime. It is not surprising that from engaging with tenants, they feel marginalised as they have not been listened to by their housing providers and feel stigmatised by the media and policymakers.

---

1   "Stigma in Social Housing in England" (Ejiogu and Denedo, 2021), "It's Not Okay – A Guide to Tackling Stigma in Social Housing" (Chartered Institute of Housing and Stop Social Housing Stigma, 2020) and "Stigma in Social Housing in England: Feedback on the consultation responses" (Denedo and Ejiogu, 2022)
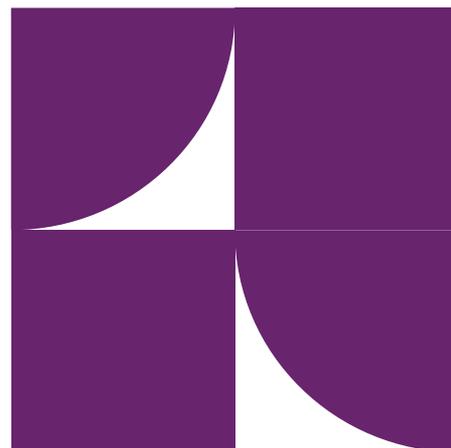
1.2. Methods: what we did

1.2.1. The Survey

To explore how to collectively empower and support tenants and landlords to address stigma in social housing, we launched three surveys aimed at evaluating what useful tools will support housing providers, contractors and their tenants to take further action to tackle stigma in social housing. The survey was designed to:

1. Evaluate the implementation and impact of the recommendations made by the previous reports on social housing stigma.

2. Develop a large publicity campaign to adopt a pledge to address stigma, locally by each landlord, or by area/estate/community.

3. Provide practical help for landlords, through a detailed toolkit, which will include, self-assessments; action plans; case studies and policies on how to address stigma locally, which will work across England.

Our initial plan was to develop and pilot a pledge and a self-assessment toolkit to support landlords to address stigma, with tenants, contractors and other partners. The Toolkit was to enable landlords and contractors to better understand stigma within their organisations and establish policies and procedures to effectively challenge stigma. Our plan was to enable organisations to agree action plans with the governing structures to evaluate their performance in tackling stigma within their organisation.

The surveys were launched in February 2024 and closed in May 2024. We gathered responses from 364 social housing tenants, 63 housing professionals and 9 contractors. The findings from the survey and the focus group discussions will be discussed in the next chapter.

However, our respondents emphasized the need to not produce another tick boxing self-assessment toolkit, "not another toolkit", and not to empower housing providers to self-assess their activities, without a cultural change which would better generate real impacts.

Following the responses from the surveys, the project team collectively decided not to develop a pledge and a toolkit, the responses made us to rethink our approach. Our refined programme was to support and empower tenants, landlords, contractors and others to critically think about their tackling stigma journey approach through the adoption of the Tackling Stigma Journey Planner programme.

1.2.2. Focus group

To help understand what we should do and what, who and how to address the issues identified from the survey responses, the authors collectively agreed to explore the responses from the surveys through an in-depth series of focus group discussions. Respondents from the surveys were invited to indicate their interest in participating in an in-depth follow-up discussion to explore the findings from the surveys. Those that indicated an interest to participate were invited to attend the focus group discussions. In addition, TPAS invited contractors in their own network to engage in the focus group discussion.

The earliest version of the Tackling Stigma Journey Planner framework was developed from the responses from the survey and then used as a proforma for the focus group consultations.

The survey responses emphasized the need for tenants to be treated as adults as they are capable and have a clear understanding of how they and their homes should be treated and supported.
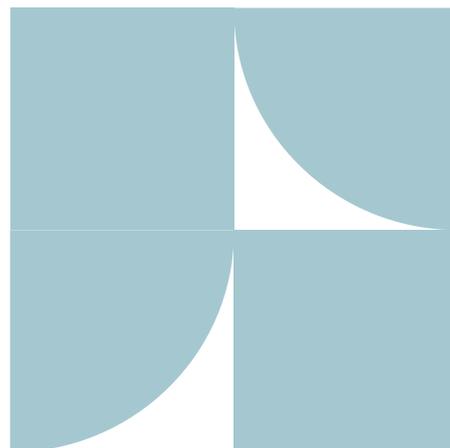
These consultations were organised to understand how to address stigma, the stigma experienced by tenants and to review the earliest draft version of the Tackling the Stigma Journey Planner. Comments and discussions from the focus groups discussions were paramount in shaping and in developing the Tackling the Stigma Journey Planner.

The earliest version of the Tackling Stigma Journey Planner explored and discussed by all the participants include a set of nine (9) proposed commitments called "Tickets" and set of questions called "Your travelling Options" to help tenants, landlords and their partners decide where their tackling the stigma agenda "train" should be heading. Following the focus group consultations, the revised tickets were updated to include twelve items, designed to ensure more manageable discussions between landlords, tenants and their stakeholders.

The focus group discussions were conducted from July 2024 through to August 2024. We held a total of 13 focus groups with social housing tenants, housing professionals and contractors. We had one focus group discussion with contractors, four (4) with housing professionals and eight (8) with social housing tenants. In total, we engaged with over 75 participants.

An overview of the findings from the focus group discussions are discussed in a subsequent chapter in this report.

1.2.3. Piloting of the Tackling Stigma Journey Planner

The survey and focus groups consultations led to the launch of a prototype Tackling Stigma Journey Planner at the Housing Community Summit in September 2024. Following the launch of the prototype Tackling Stigma Journey Planner, we then piloted the framework to test and further develop the Journey Planner with 11 Pioneer Traveller landlords (6 local authorities – including one Arms-Length Management Organisation – and 5 housing associations) from November 2024 to March 2025.

The methodology we used with the Pioneer Travellers is set out below. Lessons learnt and case studies from the pilot phase is presented in separate report titled "**Tackling Social Housing Stigma Journey Planner: Pioneer Travellers' Case Studies and Learning Points**". This methodology can be replicated by other tenant/landlord partnerships at other housing providers, but there may be other methodologies. The key intention is that:

a) there is consideration of the tickets and questions set out in the Journey Planner.

b) the more that tenants are part of that consideration, the more likely that outcomes from using the Journey Planner will result in tackling stigma.

c) There are potential benefits from involving staff, operatives, contractors, board members/councillors and others, in consideration of the Journey Planner.
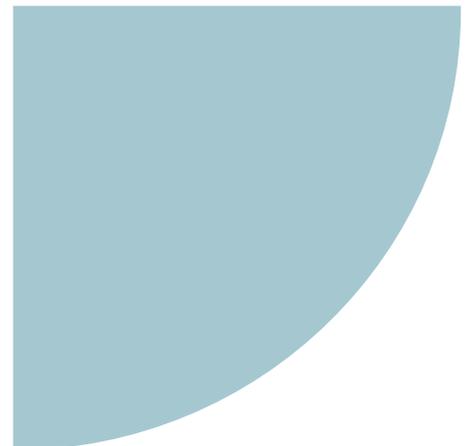
Methodology used with the Pioneer Travellers

1. Tenants, the landlord (through staff from various departments), operatives, contractors and other stakeholders were asked to come together in a workshop to consider tickets in the Journey Planner. The original Journey Planner included twelve tickets aimed at ensuring manageable discussions. We learnt from our work with the Pioneer Travellers that there was repetition in some of the tickets and the large number of tickets made the Journey Planner overly complex. Hence, we have refined the tickets down to six.

2. The Pioneer Traveller landlords picked out the tickets in the Journey Planner that they wished to prioritise to start their tackling stigma journey, in most cases having asked their tenants what was most important to them.

3. Following introductory discussions explaining the process, workshop attendees were asked to consider the questions in the Journey Planner and use them to help identify action points to tackle issues of concern. We suggested that action points should be "blue sky" – meaning that tenants and others in the workshop could raise any issues they considered important regardless of potential restrictions.

4. We then assembled the consequent "blue sky" action points to enable each Pioneer Traveller to determine which action points were already being done; which could be taken forward, either in the short, medium or long term; and which could not be taken forward and why.

5. Pioneer Travellers were invited to use their own action planning and review processes to take action plans forward.

6. We asked the Pioneer Travellers to complete a questionnaire which helped us to draft the case studies; we met with each Pioneer Traveller to discuss various issues; we drafted the case studies; the Pioneer Travellers signed them off.

The methodology generally worked well. Feedback from the Pioneer Traveller workshops was overwhelmingly positive, and generally each of the Pioneer Travellers has reported progress in tackling stigma as a result of them.

1.2.4. Filming of those with lived experience

Finally, we have produced a series of short fifteen (15) films featuring tenants, housing professionals, and academics speaking candidly on camera about social housing stigma. These videos offer firsthand insights into how stigma is constructed and experienced, alongside practical recommendations for how it can be addressed. The videos are available on both the SSHS and Durham University websites.

During filming, contributors were encouraged to openly share their personal experiences of stigma and to propose actionable solutions to help tackle this deeply rooted issue in social housing. Filming took place across two primary locations - Manchester and London - with contributors invited to attend the site most convenient for them. However, due to scheduling challenges, three (3) were conducted online.

Along with the Tackling Stigma Journey Planner, our aim is for these videos to serve as powerful advocacy tools. We hope housing providers, trade and professional bodies, such as the Chartered Institute of Housing and TPAS, will also incorporate them into their staff training and recruitment programmes to raise awareness of stigma, enhance organisational culture, and support the recruitment of compassionate, high-performing staff.

We hope that Board Members/Councillors and senior staff will instigate their own tackling stigma journey. In addition, we hope that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Regulator of Social Housing, and the Housing Ombudsman will use them to influence standards and policies aimed at improving the culture of accountability and transparency; fair, respectful and inclusive tenant engagement, and the provision of decent quality accommodation across the sector. The films are intended to inform policymaking, shape media narratives, and challenge public perceptions of social housing estates and their residents.

Chapter 2: Challenging Stigma – evidence from the surveys and focus group consultations
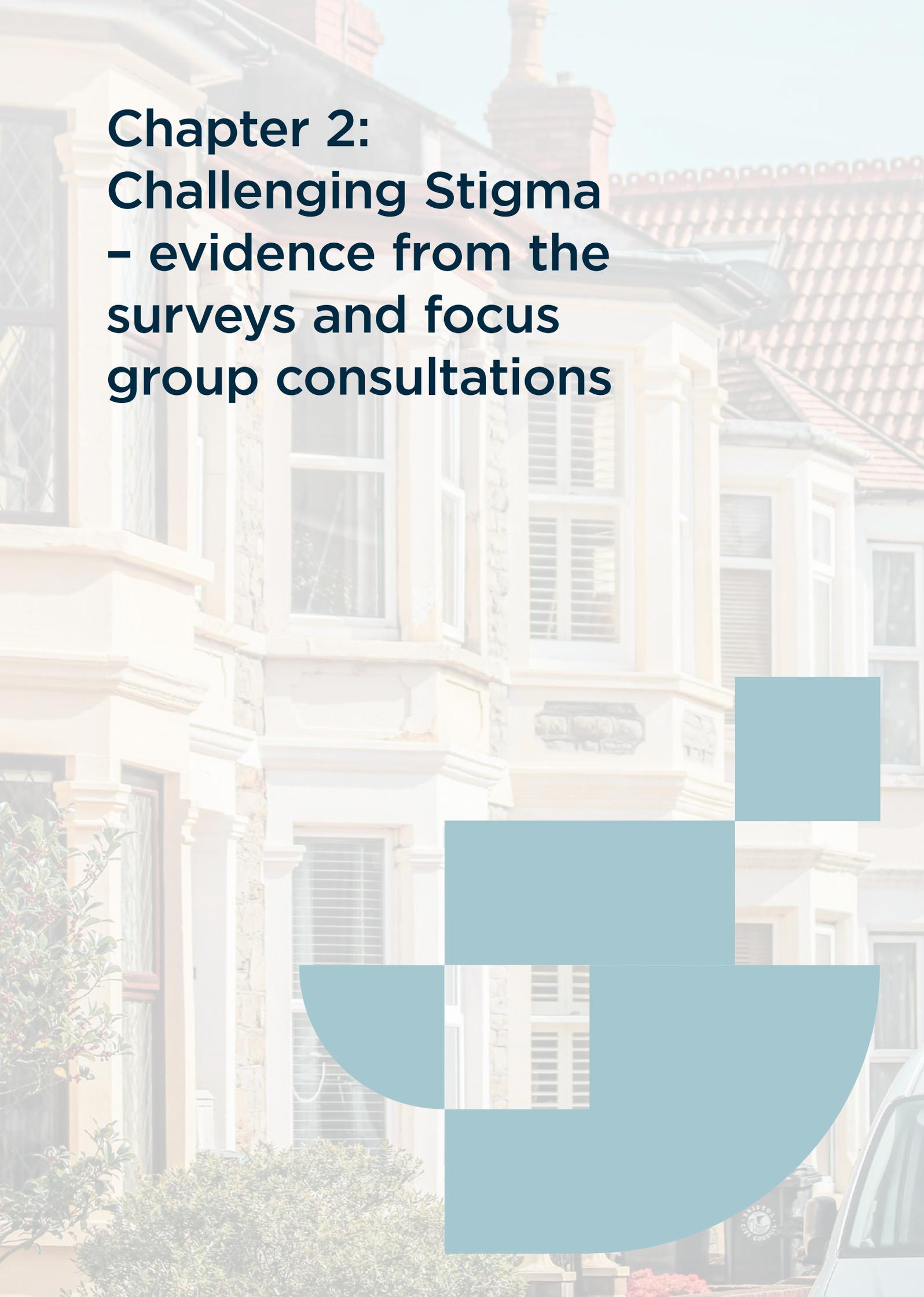
2.1. Research with contractors

2.1.1.   Survey responses from contractors and other stakeholders.

Survey responses show that contractors and other stakeholders are broadly aware of stigma towards social housing tenants and as such tackling stigma should look at all levels of the organisation.

Are you aware of any stigma in social housing?

100%
(8)

0%
(0)

Yes   No
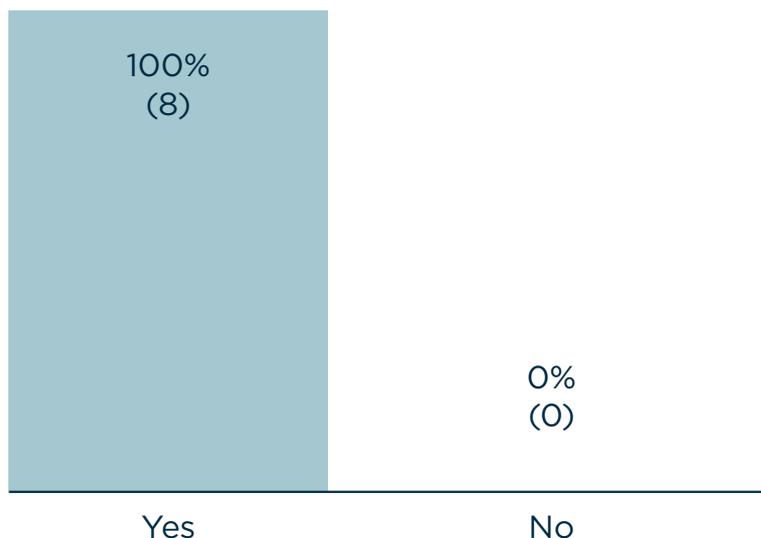
The responses indicate that:

- They have witnessed housing organisation staff making stigmatising comments about tenants and treating tenants "as if they were different/less".

- Stigma within housing organisations usually takes the form of paternalism, benevolence bias and a lack of understanding and empathy towards tenants. These are most commonly present in complaints handling and customer services, like repairs, maintenance and allocations.

- Are aware of the 'stereo typical' view in society of social housing tenants as being not well educated; out of work and lacking in values; refugees; drug dealers and takers.

88% of contractors and other stakeholders surveyed indicate that they are taking action to challenge stigma.
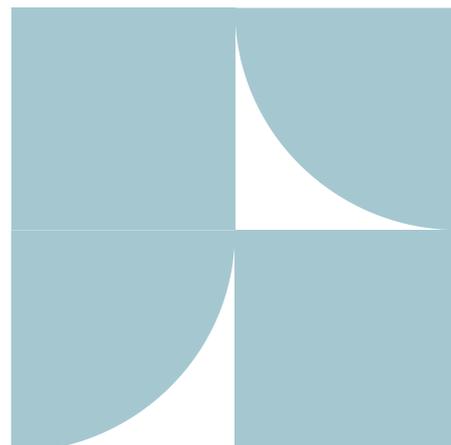
Is your organisation doing anything to challenge or tackle stigma in your organisation?

- Yes - 87% (7)
- No - 13% (1)

13%

87%
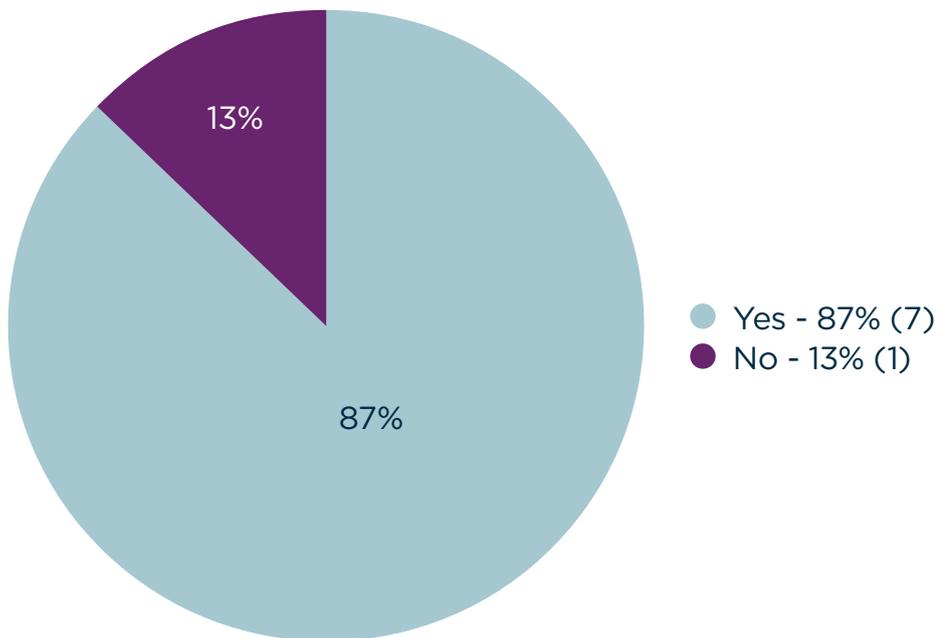
Contractors highlighted with relevant examples, communication issues between housing providers and tenants. They highlighted that communication issues created expectations in terms of service delivery, timescales and quality, in turn impacted on their interactions with tenants

Focus group with contractors and other stakeholders

These actions already implemented include:

- Individual staff calling out stigma during repair/maintenance jobs.
- Staff training on unconscious bias and work to improve customer engagement.
- Community engagement and education to shift perceptions about social housing.
- Collaboration with housing associations, local councils, and non-profits to advocate for policy changes and promote the benefits of social housing to create a positive narrative around social housing.

The motivation for taking action against stigma seem to be value driven. However, there is also a general lack of awareness amongst contractors of existing research on stigma and associated tools to help them in challenging stigma.

2.1.2.   Focus group with contractors and other stakeholders

In the focus group discussion facilitated to help refine the earliest version of the tickets in the Tackling Stigma Journey Planner.

Our participants observed that these communication issues are most evident in repair and maintenance services. One contractor, for instance, highlighted the difficulty of investigating and addressing cladding-related issues in social housing, attributing many of these challenges to the absence of credible information and ineffective communication between stakeholders.

"….A lot of it is to do with there isn't the information, the building information is not available up front. It's impossible to design or to provide a new design, if you haven't been provided with the existing design of that building to start with. So, we don't know what the composite materials are in most of the buildings that we're asked to

remediate. [....] I think a lot more work needs to go into the way that the clients give us that work. The work that they do upfront before we're given those kinds of jobs, it's six of one and half a dozen of the other. I think what happens as well is the residents are unaware. [...] I think there's no clarity before we arrive on site. No one – very rarely do the landlords actually communicate anything to the residents until we come onsite, and then they say, oh, the contractors are here now. [...] The clients back off, because they don't want to deal with the residents, their own residents. The clients back off and say, well, tell them this. Tell them that. It is the site teams that are front facing, and they get most of the flak..." - CFG

This lack of transparency and communication often undermines their capacity to meet tenant expectations, as they cannot effectively tailor their work without a comprehensive understanding of the building's structure and requirements.

In addition, housing providers' procurement frameworks were described as overly rigid, often excluding tenant input. Contractors noted that this rigidity stifles innovation and limits the ability to adapt services to meet residents' evolving needs. As a result, tenants may experience services that fall short of expectations, further eroding trust in housing providers and the contractors' capacity to provide high standard repair and maintenance services.

Contractors reported that their ability to deliver high-quality services is significantly hindered when they are not provided with essential building and existing design information from the outset.

Focus group with contractors and other stakeholders

2.1.3.   Recommendations from the survey and focus groups with contractors

In responding to the survey and in the focus groups, contractors and other stakeholders made several suggestions on what they thought would be effective in challenging stigma. These are summarised below:

2.1.3.1.   Education and Awareness:

- Training programs for staff on diversity, equity, and inclusion and unconscious bias can equip them to sensitively handle stigma-related issues.

2.1.3.2.   Tenant Engagement:

- Engaging tenants in decision-making processes and design on repairs to be completed and quality measures within the contract will ensure their voices are heard and valued, which can help combat feelings of stigma.

2.1.3.3.   Advocacy and Partnerships:

- Collaborating with local organisations, councils, and advocacy groups can amplify efforts to challenge stigma. This includes advocating for policies that promote dignity and reduce discrimination against social housing residents.

- Developing partnerships with organisations focused on social equity can provide additional resources and support for stigma reduction initiatives.

2.1.3.4.   Feedback and Continuous Improvement:

- Establishing mechanisms for collecting feedback from tenants about their experiences can guide ongoing efforts to address stigma. This feedback is crucial for refining strategies and ensuring they are effective.

- Facilitating effective communication between contractors and tenants prior to contractors arriving onsite can help manage expectations and reduce the likelihood of tenants feeling that their needs are unmet.

- Regular collaboration between the landlord, staff and tenants can review progress and success and can help to reignite the importance of tackling stigma.

2.1.3.5.   Self-Assessment Tools:

- Developing tools for housing providers that include checklists, case studies, and training resources can empower organisations to assess and improve their practices related to stigma.

2.2. Research with housing professionals

2.2.1.   Survey responses from housing professionals

Our survey of housing professionals showed a high awareness of stigma in social housing with 95% of respondents indicating that they were aware of stigma towards social housing tenants.

Are you aware of any stigma in social housing?

95%
(56)

5%
(3)

Yes   No
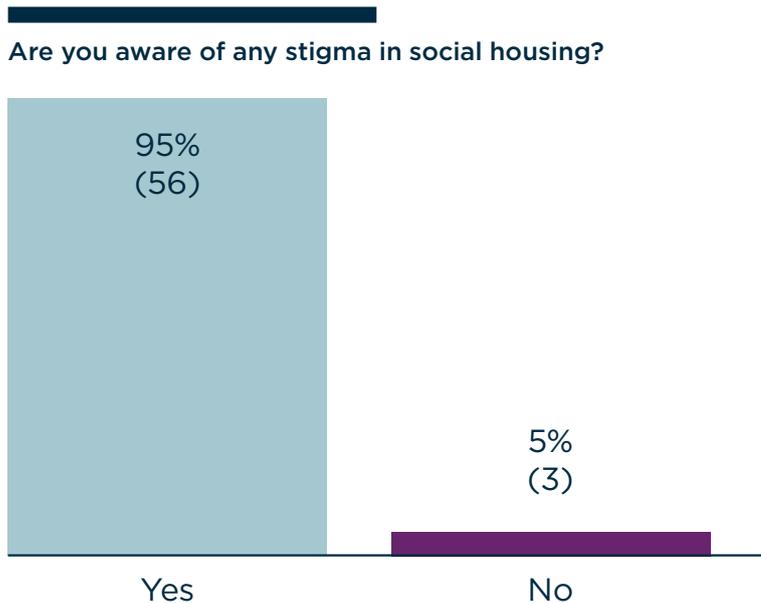
Responses mainly highlighted stigma as coming from housing professionals and wider society and in particular from homeowners, the media, other public service providers and politicians. This stigma usually takes the form of stereotypes around poverty, benefits, being out of work and vulnerable. Some responses indicated an awareness of stigma towards tenants from staff at housing providers and other public services. The respondents noted that:

- Stigma is present at all levels within the housing providers as well as in the media and wider society.

- Stigma is more evident in tenant facing services particularly repairs, maintenance and complaints handling.

- Stigma is also present from other public services.
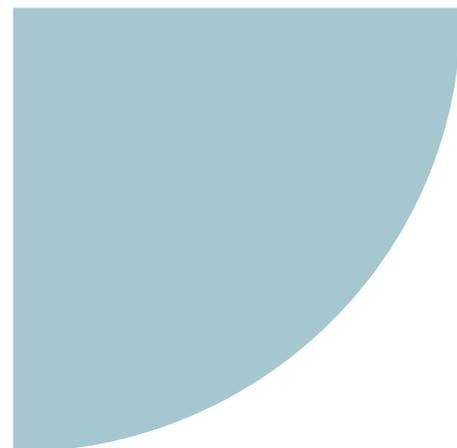
"Paternalistic approach which can be seen in the way services are delivered and the tone of comms. The 'we know what's best for you' approach where services are based on what the landlord thinks is best rather than understanding their customers and building services around this. Assumptions and unconscious bias about social housing residents' circumstances and how they've come to be in social housing - unfortunately we see a lot of stigmas from residents towards other residents too, especially sometimes between different tenure groups. This is all off course often made worse by the media's depiction of social housing as a negative thing."

"Yes, I have seen and heard people make derogatory comments about tenants in social housing. Following the Grenfell Fire, I received communications from individuals who did not want Council tenants who were survivors or bereaved to move into buildings which they lived (the Council having purchased properties to provide homes for the bereaved and survivors)."

While the respondents recognised stigma in housing providers including their own, they tended to distance themselves from stigmatising behaviour. For example, a responder talking about stigma in their organisation noted:

"I do not feel that it exists within my team, although I have witnessed presumptuous conversations in a different team, when they were trying to arrange an appointment to visit the tenant at home. It was almost as though the tenant did not have the right to have find the appointment inconvenient. It appeared that whether they had a job or not was irrelevant."

"I see and hear stigma towards social housing regularly, more so out of work than in work but I know from speaking with customers that they have had experiences which are negative due to their tenure."

Our survey also indicated that 80% of respondents said that their organisation is doing something to tackle stigma.

"I see and hear stigma towards social housing regularly, more so out of work than in work but I know from speaking with customers that they have had experiences which are negative due to their tenure."

Responder talking about stigma in their organisation

Is your organisation doing anything to challenge or tackle stigma in your organisation?

● Yes - 80% (47)
● No - 20% (12)

20%

80%
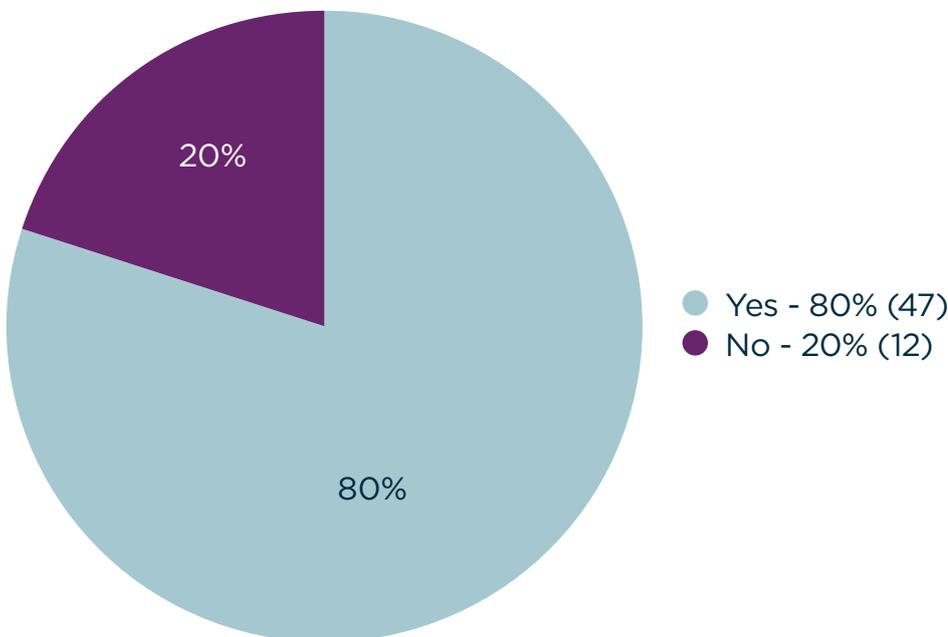
80% of respondents said that their organisation is doing something to tackle stigma

Actions taken by these organisations include:

- Staff challenging stigma at all levels particularly when politicians use it to stigmatise tenants and the sector.

- Lobbying for change in the welfare system and advocating for investment in more affordable social rented housing.

- Carrying out research the better understand the organisation's customer base to design and tailor services appropriately.

- Training staff on stigma and unconscious bias.

- Engaging more with tenants through the decision-making process.

- Involving tenants in writing communications and in delivering training to housing staff to ensure that things are seen from the tenants' perspectives.

- Developing videos and learning materials to encourage housing professionals to think about the impact of social housing stigma and to understand what can be done by them to tackle it.

- Challenging complaints that contain social housing discrimination.

- Updating service standards in line with leading from ombudsman and regulators, and the creation of new customer charter which is much clearer about how tenants should be treated with respect and fairness.

- Addressing quickly and efficiently issues related to anti-social behaviour as they arise.

- Building high standard homes to demonstrate that social housing can be attractive and desirable.

- Creating more awareness on the different types of tenants who are moving into social housing to fight against stereotypes.

53% of respondents showed an awareness of existing research on stigma and associated tools to help them in challenging stigma but generally did not draw on these resources in challenging stigma.

Respondents from organisations which did not take action to challenge stigma attributed the inaction to a lack of understanding of stigma and how landlords can take action to challenge stigma, as well as a focus on 'more urgent issues like damp and mould' and, managing a huge daily workload.

53%
showed an awareness of existing research on stigma and associated tools to help them in challenging stigma but generally did not draw on these resources in challenging stigma

2.2.2.   Focus group with housing professionals

The **focus groups** highlighted that stigma is primarily viewed by housing professionals as an issue related to communication and engagement with tenants or poor services, leading to expressed concerns or complaints, rather than as one which relates to the culture of the organisation.

Several participants observed that communication challenges were most pronounced in repair and maintenance services, particularly due to the involvement of external contractors with the assumptions that tenants would always be at home.

> *"….the point about missed appointments and communication, it's just whether it could even be that they communicate with the tenant in advance. I know there's so many issues where it's like people are waiting in all day and then they're calling up and they're like, 'oh they can't come today, or they're not coming.' They need to be told that beforehand, it's not good enough to just tell them. ….and also, the assumption that tenants are always going to be home. …. They have to take time off work and if the contractor doesn't show, then they've lost a day's leave or a day's pay." – HPF 2*

Many believed that fostering more open and honest communication would not only enhance the relationship between tenants and housing providers but also contribute to building a stronger culture of trust and accountability to and with tenants. For example, a participant noted:

> *"One of the difficulties with communication that comes up quite a lot is other people who are working on our behalf with tenants in their homes. We are judged by their level of communication. So, housing organisations might do their utmost to make sure that everything is customer friendly, and we can have some influence on how other people communicate, but when you've got subcontractors sending out letters of their own and how they interact, I think it's how we can have greater influence on that so that they're also delivering the standards as if we were delivering it.   [….] if there needs to be something wider about language and tone in communication. It's absolutely key, isn't it, that we're talking person to person. There's nothing that makes communication stigmatising. There's none of this paternalistic approach. It's clear, simple, non-judgemental information and communication." – HPF 3*

> *"I think there's also a balance that's needed in terms of what organisations put out. Because when we put out our annual reports and our impact assessments, and any other communications that we might be putting out, it's always about how good we are. We know that actually, from the number of complaints we get, that actually our residents are sat there thinking, well what about the things you don't do so well? What are you doing about those? I think there is a big cultural piece around how we disseminate that information to make it more – to make it real, rather than to make it look like we are an amazing organisation, and this is what we do, and aren't we wonderful. Because there are a lot of residents that would really put my back up if I was receiving a service from any organisation, and they were telling me how brilliant they were when actually I've had an awful experience." – HPF 4*

"….the point about missed appointments and communication, it's just whether it could even be that they communicate with the tenant in advance"

Housing professional focus group responder

2.2.3.   Recommendations from the survey and focus groups with housing professionals

Through the survey and focus groups, housing professionals made a number of suggestions in terms of what they think has been effective and what needs to be done to challenge stigma. These include:

2.2.3.1.   Awareness and Education:

- **Training for Staff:** Implement training programmes that focus on understanding stigma, unconscious bias, and respectful communication. This helps staff recognise their own biases and promotes a culture of respect towards tenants.

- **Community Workshops:** Organise workshops that bring together residents and housing professionals to discuss stigma and its impacts. This approach can help foster a fundamental culture rooted in trust, empathy, accountability and transparency, understanding, and effective communication. It encourages active listening and open dialogue with tenants, which are essential in breaking down the barriers often created by stigma.

2.2.3.2.   Positive Communication:

- **Use of Language:** Shift the language used in communications to avoid terms that carry stigma. For example, referring to individuals as "tenants" or "residents" rather than "customers" can help change perceptions and foster a culture of fairness, respectful and inclusive engagement.

- **Promoting Positive Stories:** Actively share success stories and positive experiences of residents living in social housing. This can counteract negative media portrayals and highlight the diversity and contributions of residents.

2.2.3.3.   Engagement and Empowerment:

- **Tenant Involvement:** Encourage tenants to take active roles in the co-production, co-design and decision-making processes within housing organisations. This can empower them and give them a voice in shaping policies that affect their lives.

- **Support Tenant Movements:** Housing providers should support tenant-led initiatives like the Stop Social Housing Stigma Campaign, which encourages tenants to advocate for themselves and challenge negative stereotypes.

2.2.3.4.   Collaboration with Media:

- **Media Engagement:** Work with local media to promote fair and balanced reporting on social housing issues. This includes providing guidelines on how to report on social housing and its residents positively.

2.2.3.5.   Feedback Mechanisms:

- **Anonymous Feedback:** Implement anonymous feedback systems where tenants can share their experiences and perceptions regarding stigma. This can help organisations identify areas for improvement.

2.2.3.6. Community Building:

◦ **Mixed Tenure Developments:** Promote high standard mixed tenure housing developments that integrate social housing with private housing. Promoting a high standard within mixed-tenure estates also plays a role in addressing stigma. Ensuring that the quality of housing for social renters is consistent with that of private homeowners - through design, build quality, and maintenance - can foster community cohesion. It prevents social renters from being visibly distinguished by details such as their door colours and quality, construction (i.e. exterior and interior) standards, or segregating hedges. Investing in a high standard mixed tenure estates can contribute to building a more integrated and equitable living environment.

"....the point about missed appointments and communication, it's just whether it could even be that they communicate with the tenant in advance"

Housing professional focus group responder

2.3. Research with tenants

2.3.1. Survey responses from tenants

Our survey of tenants revealed a strong awareness of stigma associated with social housing. 73% of respondents indicated that they were aware of stigma in social housing, either because they have experienced it firsthand from their housing providers and contractors, discussed it with other tenants, or heard it portrayed by the media, colleagues at work, neighbours, family and friends and politicians.

Are you aware of any stigma in social housing?

73%
(260)

27%
(98)

Yes   No
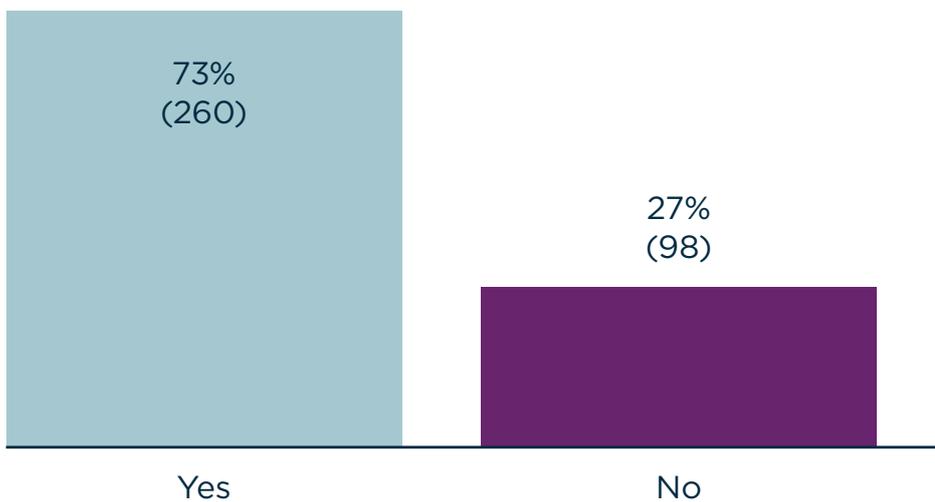
73%
of respondents indicated that they were aware of stigma in social housing

Social housing and its tenants are often depicted as benefit scroungers, poorly educated, and categorised into 'deserving' and 'undeserving' groups. For instance, our responders provided several comments arguing that...

"I am aware that, from some quarters, there is a stereotypical view of those who live in social housing. That stereotype being of an ill-educated, lower 'class' person who doesn't contribute much to society, economically or culturally."

"Friends who own their homes. Council staff when you get to talk to some treat you in a non-pleasant way. Deliveries be it post mainly can't be bothered to come into the block and search for home number or floor number. List is endless. Council tenants are second class!!!!"

"Media perception is that social housing is in disrepair, tenants are lazy, feckless, drug addicted or drug dealers, out of work, and entitled. It's a depressing stereotype played out on programmes, newspapers and social media."

"People are regularly surprised that I "still" live on a council estate. I have been a single parent for 18 years and one of my daughters is still at university, the other one graduated with a first last summer. People are regularly surprised that we are educated, working but still living in social housing."

"The judgement more often is those who live in social housing properties are poor, uneducated, on benefits, do not look after their homes including levels of cleanliness and basic standards of living. The culture needs to move forward. Anyone fortunate to have a social housing property especially given the housing crisis is in a position of prestige and empowerment."

This discomfort can lead to the marginalisation and exclusion of tenants, further entrenching inequality and undermining efforts to foster a fair, respectful, inclusive and supportive housing services and communities.

Furthermore, responding to the question "Have you directly experienced any form of stigma associated with being a social housing tenant?", 55% of respondents indicated that they had personally experience stigma associated with social housing.

The tendency to label tenants reinforces harmful stereotypes, casting them as submissive individuals in a highly compliant environment. When tenants fail to conform to these preconceived notions of who a social housing tenant should be, or how they should behave, it often creates discomfort for those who perpetuate these stigmas.

Tenant talking about stigma

Have you directly experienced any form of stigma associated with being a social housing tenant

45%

55%

● Yes - 55% (196)
● No - 45% (162)
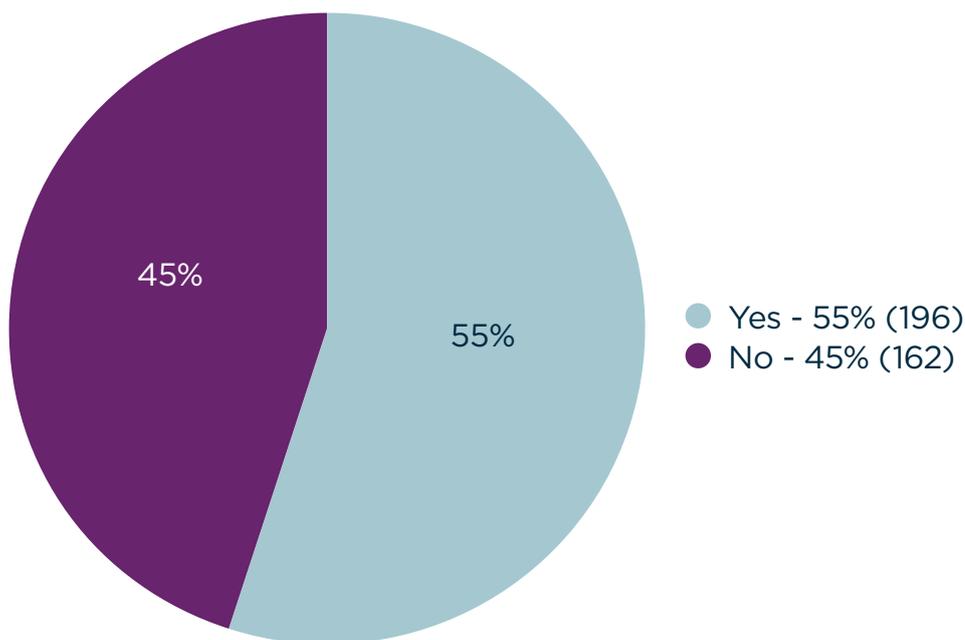
55%
of respondents indicated that they had personally experience stigma associated with social housing

A lot of the examples of stigma given by the respondents related to stigma from their housing provider and their contractors. Stigma from the wider society, relatives and friends and public services, including differential policing of social housing estates, was also highlighted. Many of our responders shared troubling experiences that highlighted how they have been stigmatised by those responsible for designing and delivering services, as well as by colleagues, friends and family:

"The police treat tenants differently, dismissing criminal behaviour as unimportant (talking down to victims as if we are children) leaving vulnerable tenants feeling as if they are living in a lawless ghetto, with no protection from the state. I have learnt that the law only protects the wealthy, the middle classes, that social housing tenants are a second-tier citizen with less rights."

"People have a tendency to look down on us because of living in social housing and a few friends I had prior to moving out of my private rented home, to go to social housing, actively stopped having anything further to do with us. They themselves live in posher areas and consider that we have dropped down socially. One couple even thought our home was disgusting (before we had moved in) and said they wouldn't live in it. We were extremely grateful to be offered the home, as we had been given a no-fault Section 21 and had been desperate to find a new home. We were very upset by these comments and these one-time friends no longer wanting to visit us like they once had. I have been offered lifts home by colleagues, and I am always wary of their reactions to learning where to drop me off. My road has a mix of private properties and social housing (the latter about 35%), and I can see their expressions change when they see we have gone past the private houses. There is definitely an assumption that we have 'dropped' and not many understand that it wasn't our fault that we couldn't find another private rented property to go to and had instead to 'go to the council' for homing, like we were down and outs."

"Yes, as a disabled/vulnerable tenant, I have been left living in a property with damp, mould, mould mites and dust mites. My home is freezing, even with the heating on full, my windows are not keeping the warmth in, and the window also don't open. If there was a fire, I would be unable to get out of my living room or bedroom (adjacent to the living room) my front door would also melt. {named a council housing provider} homes are aware of the problem but have refused to update my window (every other tenant has had their windows and doors changed)."

"The block attached to ours has 5 leaseholders and one tenant. Our block has two Leaseholders and 4 tenants. Unfortunately, the leaseholders in the block next to ours have over the years blocked badly needed improvements i.e. security doors. Everyone else has to suffer because of them. I personally have had a resident tell me to get down my end of the grassed and communal garden. That it is their end not ours."

"I had suffered mental health and addiction problems in my previous life. These stigmas "stick like glue", even when they have gone away. They resurface as judgments that once a person has suffered personal challenges; the label is retained forever in social housing settings as they expect history to repeat."

"The police treat tenants differently, dismissing criminal behaviour as unimportant (talking down to victims as if we are children) leaving vulnerable tenants feeling as if they are living in a lawless ghetto, with no protection from the state."

Social Housing Tenant

"I have been assumed to lack ambition and aspiration, it is often assumed I will do things for nothing while others get paid and monetise my lived experience, skills and experience for their own benefit and for that of their organisations. I am often left with the feeling that I should be grateful to be 'included' but not make things uncomfortable by asking awkward questions, especially for those with less experience, skills or qualifications. Being a social housing tenant is inherently 'political', our homes are someone else's 'stock' or 'asset'."

"I was invited to be part of a panel at a conference by {named a known trade body in the sector}. The host was appallingly rude and dismissive towards me. When I went to introduce myself, she merely said. "Oh, so you're the tenant?" I wanted the ground to swallow me up. Sadly whilst, not lots, most of the stigmatisation I have been on the end of, has been from housing professionals."

"My landlord's staff are extraordinarily odd in their relationship with tenants, communicating as if from a lofty height to beings lower than themselves. It's a behaviour I've not encountered in any other context, so I can only explain it by their apparent views on tenants being inferiors. Particularly bizarre as so many tenants are elderly, often two or three times the age of the employees for whom we pay."

However, 45% of respondents indicated that they had not directly experienced stigma. Many of them emphasised the importance of tenants taking pride in their homes and neighbourhoods, noting that neglect or visible disrepair can sometimes lead to stigmatisation by housing professionals and other public service providers. For example, respondents shared instances where poorly maintained communal areas, or individual properties were interpreted as a lack of care or responsibility, reinforcing negative stereotypes and influencing how services were delivered. For instance,

"When I see the councilmen outside on the grass saying ignorant bastards and that there is dog poo everywhere in very loud angry voices as they do their word. I cheer them on quietly to myself. I do not think the answer is to tell these councilmen to be quiet and give them an anti-stigma training course."

"The answer is for the council estate culture of selfish horrible behaviour to come to an end. Not for everyone to be told that selfish behaviour must be accepted and allowed to increase. We have rotten food outside our flats left there by tenants. Right now, there is a quiche on the floor that has been there since November (it is March). There are also sharps on the floor outside and dog poo. You cannot tell people to not be angry when kids are playing outside with neighbours exposing them to profane language, sharps, rotten food and putting their feet in excrement. You cannot and must not say it is stigma to be angry and want these children to not be subjected to this as their childhood!! If you do, then it's another blow to the cause of fighting discrimination because discrimination makes us able to identify there is a problem. If you are saying to stop disrespecting people that is right. its disrespect to do that to children. But if you are saying to accept people harming children because calling them out on it is discriminating against them that is going to lead to these anti-stigma projects being rejected by the general public."

"My landlord's staff are extraordinarily odd in their relationship with tenants, communicating as if from a lofty height to beings lower than themselves."

Social Housing Tenant

45%
of respondents indicated that they had not directly experienced stigma

However, tenants presented a mixed picture of landlords' efforts to address stigma. The majority of tenant respondents reported being unaware of any specific actions taken by their landlords to actively tackle stigma. For instance, from our respondents:

> "Since they are the source of stigma, it is hard to see how my landlord could design or deliver any useful initiative"

> "I'm not aware how the council is addressing this behaviour. Some contractors lack professionalism when it comes to council or social housing. They don't take the job seriously because there is rarely a follow up from the council except for major works."

> "The concern I have with my landlord is they talk the talk, but don't walk the walk. I am aware of many 'tenant led' services or initiatives (tenant board members/panels - more tenant representation). But culturally, my landlord feels like a distant business, who says it cares, but in reality, is looking for the cheapest/quickest option with existing tenants, in order to maintain an operating surplus and build more homes (admirable but misplaced when existing tenants' properties are not maintained like a home)."

Only a few respondents were able to identify initiatives aimed at championing tenants or raising awareness about the negative impacts of stigmatisation. Here are some of these examples:

> "Yes, my landlord supported 'See the Person' {now called Stop Social Housing Stigma Campaign} and I have led by example as a long time 'Involved resident' with a profile, pushing, with varying degrees of success (or lack thereof), for my landlord to understand that behind its culture, attitudes and performance data is a real impact on people's lives.."

> "I am on the scrutiny group of my organisation and on the Board so I bring stigma to the fore whenever I can. I have also worked on focus groups in developing the customer promises showing how my landlord will respect and work with tenants"

> "I am an active member of our {named a Council Housing provider} Tenant Inspectors Panel (all tenants with one Council facilitator) and we undertook a survey of Stigma in Council Estates. The outcome was that the Council have now included this theme within their training programmes, for new and existing staff members, which was heartening {…}."

2.3.2.   Focus group with tenants

The focus groups with tenants highlighted a lack of understanding by housing providers of how their actions are stigmatising towards tenants. It noted that current forms of engagement with tenants were not working as a culture of disrespect, lack of accountability and transparency, and not valuing tenant contributions is deeply inscribed into the structures and systems of housing providers. They emphasised the need to be transparent, accountable, listen to and work collaboratively with tenants to challenge stigma, but were keenly aware that the mechanisms used by housing providers to engage with tenants are fundamentally flawed as they allow for only very limited engagement. For example, tenant in the focus group discussions noted:

> "Part of the problem is they've got their own kind of framework so they can listen, but they're often listening within their framework.

"Part of the problem is they've got their own kind of framework so they can listen, but they're often listening within their framework. It's about actually talking to us, putting aside their framework and actually talking to us and working with our framework"

Tenant focus group 1
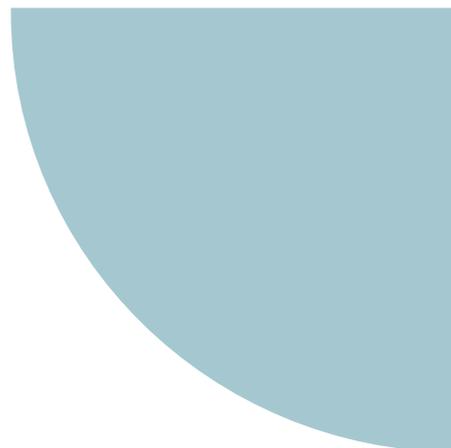
It's about actually talking to us, putting aside their framework and actually talking to us and working with our framework" – TFG 1

"Yeah, we've recently got in touch with another estate locally, and …they've basically said you need to record these meetings in secret. You need to literally go in with a recorder and record these meetings because they will lie to you at every stage and then deny they've done it. ….Now, we're doing this all {referring to tenants' engagement} as volunteers, we've come in good faith and now you're telling us we've got to run this as a CIA operation. What does that tell you about how we're seen? You won't minute it, so you don't even have faith in your own decisions. You don't want us to have the knowledge or information about what's happening to us. You don't want accountability. You don't want us to be able to come back and check. We've had experiences where we've gone back and checked, we've got our notes, and they've lied to our faces…." – TFG 3

"I think that definitely a cultural shift in organisations will make a big difference. Obviously, we have consumer standards, regulations, law, and everything like that, but a lot of organisations really need to be more proactive in their engagement with tenants, partnership with tenants, codesigning with them, getting them in on the ground floor as well. Being more aware of how they speak to tenants and speak with tenants. I know there are a lot of landlords and staff members who aren't as proactive when it comes to knowing their tenant bases, knowing the communities that their properties are in, the houses are in. So there definitely needs to be a cultural shift within organisations. More transparency as well. They need to just engage a lot more with tenants on all bases and throughout the whole organisation… I don't feel that there's a part of the organisation within social housing that doesn't affect the tenants in one way, shape or form, so having tenants input feedback on it should be a cultural thing and not an add-on to how they do their planning and service delivery." – TFG 6

2.3.3.   Recommendations from the survey and focus groups with tenants

Suggestions for what could be done to challenge stigma were made through the survey and focus groups and are summarised below:

2.3.3.1.   Education and Awareness:

- Training for Staff: Housing providers should implement training programmes for their staff to raise awareness about stigma and unconscious bias and its impacts. This includes educating them on how to treat tenants with respect, fairness and dignity, and understanding the biases that may exist within their own attitudes.

- Community Education: Initiatives that educate the broader community about the realities of social housing can help dispel myths and stereotypes. This could involve campaigns that highlight the positive contributions of social housing tenants to their communities.

"I don't feel that there's a part of the organisation within social housing that doesn't affect the tenants in one way, shape or form, so having tenants input feedback on it should be a cultural thing and not an add-on to how they do their planning and service delivery."

Tenant focus group 6
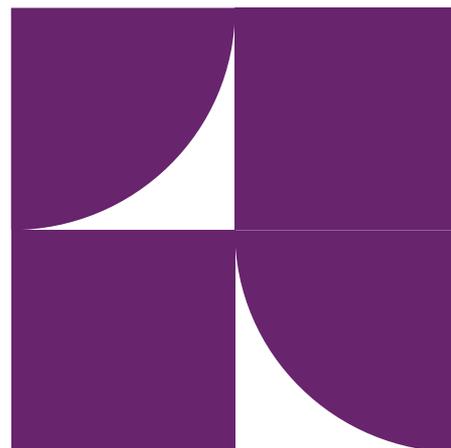
2.3.3.2.   Tenant Empowerment and Accountability

  ◦ Involvement in Decision-Making: Encouraging tenants to participate in decision-making processes can empower them and help challenge the stigma. This includes involving them in discussions about policies that affect their living conditions and community.

  ◦ Support for Tenant Movements: Housing providers should join and support tenant-led initiatives. One of such initiatives is the "Stop Social Housing Stigma" Campaign (SSHS), which aims to raise awareness and advocate for better treatment of social housing tenants. SSHS has collaboratively published a *Tackling Stigma Journey Planner* to support housing providers and their tenants in working together to address issues that affect them.

2.3.3.3.   Policy and Structural Changes:

  ◦ **Accountability and Transparency to improve tenant engagement and culture:** Housing providers were encouraged to demonstrate greater accountability and transparency in both their decision-making processes and service delivery. Many believed that this approach would lead to tangible improvements in the quality of services, delivered by both housing providers and their contractors and will help tackle stigma associated with their providers, improve fairness and respect and overall, improve the culture within their organisation.

  ◦ **Improving Housing Conditions:** Ensuring that social housing is well-maintained and visually appealing can help change perceptions. When properties are kept in good repair, inside and outside, it can enhance the overall image of social housing.

  ◦ **Addressing Anti-Social Behaviour:** Proactively managing anti-social behaviour within communities can help create a more positive environment, which in turn can reduce stigma associated with living in social housing.

2.3.3.4.   Positive Representation:

  ◦ **Showcasing Success Stories:** Highlighting success stories of tenants who have improved their lives through social housing can counter negative narratives. This can be done through media campaigns, community events, and social media.

  ◦ **Promoting Community Engagement:** Organising community events that bring together tenants and the wider community can foster understanding and reduce stigma. This includes activities that encourage interaction and collaboration among residents.

2.3.3.5.   Engagement with Local Authorities, Central Government, Regulators and Watchdogs:

2.3.3.5.1. Advocacy for Policy Changes: Engaging with local government and policymakers to advocate for fair treatment and resources for social housing to help address systemic issues that contribute to stigma.

Participants in the focus group discussions emphasised that meaningful engagement with tenants can only be achieved when housing providers go beyond basic regulatory compliance and actively build relationships rooted in trust and mutual accountability.
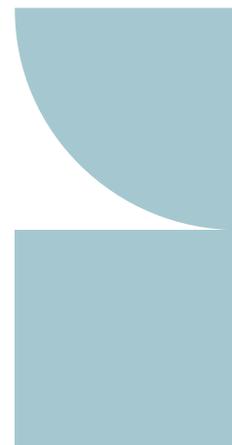
2.3.3.5.2.   Recommendation for Government

In issuing the direction on Competence and Conduct to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), ensure:

- The professionalism of social housing customer facing staff is not the only focus

- The spirit and the words of the Directive to RSH, is explicit to address social housing stigma through identification and collaboration between landlords and tenants, locally/

- Education programmes and qualifications address expectations that training for staff will include unconscious bias of stigma, organisational culture, and behaviours of staff.

2.3.3.5.3.   Recommendation for Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)

2.3.3.5.3.1 Regulatory Standards

In your review of the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Regulatory Standard, or a result of any new Competence and Conduct Standard directive from Government:

- Be explicit about the need for landlords to demonstrate they have considered localised stigma with tenants and have a plan to address this issue.

- Ensure educational qualifications and staff training includes the building of an understanding of the impact of landlord work which can exacerbate stigma and the need to collaborate with tenants in defining and addressing landlord culture and behaviours of staff.

- Ensure assurance on "diversity" includes inequalities and discrimination to address social housing stigma.

2.3.3.5.3.2. Code of Practice, which accompanies the Consumer Standards:

- Expand the "fairness and respect" guidance to include examples and ideas from the Journey Planner and other reports of stigma to work with tenants to define and address stigma.

- Expand the "Local Cooperation" include ideas from the Journey Planner and Case Studies on stigma to showcase collaboration between landlords and tenants through co-design and coproduction.

2.3.3.5.4.   Recommendation to the Housing Ombudsman Service

- Expand your recent work on "4 tests of good communication" in complaints to review good practice, work with academics and the Social Housing Stigma Campaign to deliver an Insight Report and recommendation to landlords on reviewing landlord culture and behaviours which can lead to complaints and concerns from tenants.
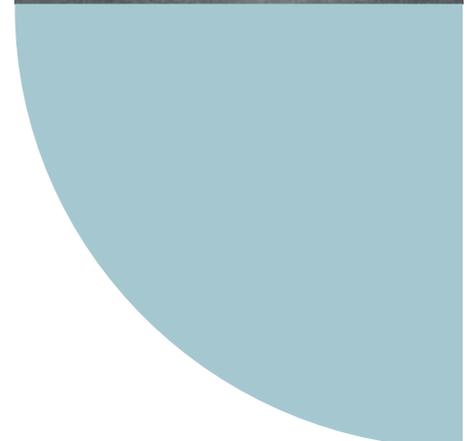
2.4.   Summary and Reflections

Our research shows that while some strides have been made in terms of challenging stigma since the publication of "Stigma and Social Housing in England" and "It's not okay – A guide to tackling stigma in social housing" and "Stigma and Social Housing in England: feedback on the consultation responses", a lot still needs to be done as tenants are still heavily stigmatised by housing providers, public services and society.

However, what has changed is there is now developing a critical mass of tenants and other stakeholder, including housing providers, interested in addressing stigma.

The growing awareness of stigma as an issue has given rise to a variety of approaches by housing providers to challenging stigma, especially stigma within their organisations. These approaches have tended to focus on issues of communication and tenant engagement.

However, tenants have not seen a significant improvement in relation to stigma as the issue is more cultural and systemic, which is deep rooted within housing organisations and more widely. To effectively challenge stigma, we identified a number of areas which need to be addressed and are essential in building a culture of accountability and transparency:

- ○ **Culture and Trust**

We found that stigma is embedded in the culture and structures of housing providers and over time this has eroded tenants' trust. To effectively challenge stigma, organisational culture needs to change and trust with tenants needs to be rebuilt. This is foundational and needs to be addressed if the organisation hopes to achieve any meaningful progress in challenging stigma in:

- • **Tenants' engagement:** Organisations need to ensure that tenants are part of the decision-making process, as well as working together with tenants to challenge stigma.

- • **Services:** Stigma is felt most acutely in accessing services, dealings with contractors and front-line staff and through the complaints processes. Policies, processes and services need to be redesigned to eliminate stigma and to build a culture of fairness and respect.

- • **Staff:** Organisations are made up of people and in order to challenge stigma effectively, behaviours and attitudes of staff needs to change.

- • **Governance:** Governance structures which present clear leadership to challenge stigma need to be in place within housing providers and be supported at the highest levels of the organisation i.e. Board/Councils and executive management.

- • **Advocacy:** The organisation needs to ensure that it is an effective advocate for tenants and social housing to policy makers and in the wider society. Housing providers should unite with tenants to tackle wider societal housing stigma.

The issues raised in the Stigma and Social Housing in England report around the intersectionality of social housing stigma with stigma around poverty, disabilities, race, etc., as well as the sources of stigma being varied from the media, politicians, housing providers etc. were reiterated by our respondents in the surveys and the focus group discussions.
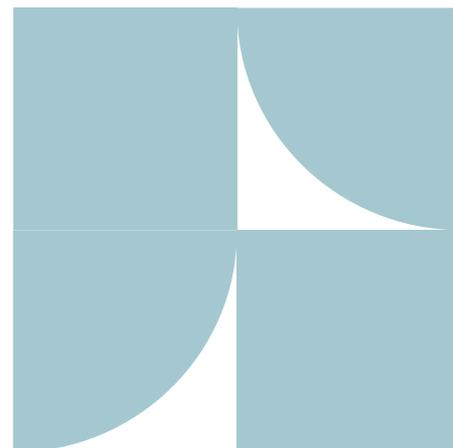
These ideas are summarised in our model below:

| Tenants' engagement | Services | Staff | Governance | Advocacy |

Culture and Trust

What is now required is a concerted effort by housing providers and other stakeholders to drive a culture change within organisations and the sector more broadly. The regulation of fairness and respect must also address issues of stigma, culture, and trust. This approach will help to further strengthen the regulatory framework and foster a culture of trust, accountability, and transparency across the sector. Our research points at the need for tools which can encourage collaboration between housing providers, tenants and other stakeholders to challenge stigma within organisations and society more broadly. The next chapter presents the '**Stigma Journey Planner**' which we have co-created with tenants, housing providers and other stakeholders as a tool which could be used in challenging stigma.

Chapter 3:
The tackling social housing stigma journey planner

The Journey Planner is aimed at getting everyone thinking! What are we aiming for? What can we do to get us there? A journey starts with getting tickets – a set of commitments that will help you to board or remain on the tackling stigma train:

The tickets	
Ticket (a)	**Culture moves at the speed of trust** – doing what is necessary to build the right culture and trust between tenants and the landlord
Ticket (b)	**Tenants Leading Change** (TLC) - enabling tenants to play leading roles in decision-making
Ticket (c)	Tackling social housing stigma in **service delivery** and **repairs**
Ticket (d)	**First-class staff** demonstrating values and respect and addressing conscious and unconscious stigmatising attitudes and behaviours
Ticket (e)	**Stigma and governance** – ensuring that the governing body considers how stigma impacts tenants, communities and organisational culture and having oversight of how stigma will be tackled
Ticket (f)	**Celebrating social housing**, the volunteers and community work done by tenants; enabling tenants as ambassadors; uniting with tenants to tackle wider societal housing stigma

Within each ticket are a set of questions designed to help tenants, landlords and others decide where your tackling stigma train is going; when you are going to take each leg of the journey and in what order; and the actions you need to make your journey successful.

There could be various ways that you and your tenants consider your journey. We set out how we approached the Journey Planner with our Pioneer Travellers in section 1.2.3 and in the case studies report. It is intended that tenants, landlords, contractors and any other stakeholders can use the Journey Planner in whatever way suits them to work together to address stigma issues that are important to them. The more that tenant voices are heard in considering the Journey Planner, the more effective outcomes are likely to be.

If you want our help to navigate the tackling stigma journey planner please get in touch
Nic - **info@stopsocialhousingstigma.org** or **07947 019 287** or
Mercy - **stigmaconsultation@gmail.com** or **0191 334 5107**

The Tackling Stigma Journey Planner is a framework for tenants, landlords and others to use to plan out a journey to tackle stigma. It is a flexible framework that enables discussion and debate about what social housing stigma is and what actions can be taken to address it.

We welcome you telling us how you are approaching the Journey Planner. We may produce a case study of what you are doing if you wish.

The tackling stigma journey planner

It is up to tenants, landlords and other partners to decide together which tickets are needed, when and the plans needed to make the journey successful. The questions below are designed to help you make the right decisions for you about your journey.

Overarching questions to be considered alongside each ticket:
• **Stigma strategy** - how successful is our strategy to tackle stigma?
• **Dialogue** - how successfully are we creating dialogue between tenants, staff at all levels, operatives, contractors and others?
• **One Team** - how much of a "one team" approach have we built, bringing together tenants, staff from all sections, contractors, Board Members/ Councillors and others?
• **Feedback** - have we fed back to Stop Social Housing Stigma about our progress to share best practice and continually improve the Journey Planner for others?
• **Stop Social Housing Stigma campaign membership** – is the landlord a corporate member; have we encouraged tenants, staff and contractors to sign up as members?

Ticket (a) - Culture moves at the speed of trust

|	
Trust	do we regularly discuss with tenants what trust means to them? Do we assess how much tenants trust the landlord; do we consider what can be done to build trust?
Culture	do we have a culture of fairness, respect, compassion, accountability, empathy, listening, dialogue & partnership with tenants? Do behaviours of staff, board members/councillors fit within that culture?
Communication and partnership	do we regularly communicate collectively and seek partnership dialogue with tenants about key issues and challenges?
Transparency	do we have a culture of transparency, where we explain how and why decisions are made? Do we aim to ensure tenants get all the information they need to input into decision-making?
Follow up	do we have a culture of following up issues with tenants?
Dialogue	do we have an honest and grown-up dialogue with tenants regarding issues they raise, respecting their knowledge about their homes?
A culture of home	does everyone appreciate that the houses we own are tenants' homes and that they should be respected as such? Have we ensured that no one uses words such as stock, voids, assets, units?
A right to expect respect	do we set out the rights that tenants have and that they have a right to expect a respectful, listening and empowering culture where assumptions will not be made about them?
Breaking down tenure barriers	do we have a culture where social housing tenants, leaseholders and shared homeowners are not treated differently? Do we actively seek to break down barriers between them?
Beyond tick boxes	do we go beyond simple tick box regulatory compliance? Do we consider with tenants why compliance with each regulation is important to tenants and the right thing to do?

Ticket (b) - Tenants Leading Change (TLC)

Co-design and co-production	do tenants play a leading role in decision-making throughout the organisation? Do tenants have opportunities to shape strategies and policies at blank sheet of paper stages? Can tenants participate in difficult and/or financial decisions?
A collective tenant voice	are tenants encouraged to engage collectively in dialogue with the landlord as well as being able to input individually through digital methods? Are tenants encouraged and supported to build networks between themselves? Are tenants encouraged to have a collective voice and use it to hold us accountable?
Diversity and inclusion	can tenants help shape diversity in tenant involvement – where active steps are taken to enable young and old, people from different backgrounds, ethnicities, and those who are unable to access services online to engage? Do we ensure that tenants from diverse cultures are encouraged and supported to participate?
Multiple methods	are the multiple methods by which tenants can be involved in the organisation developed by and agreed with tenants?
Interpreting data	are tenants able to collaborate with the landlord to interpret any data gathered from them?
Making involvement enjoyable	have we considered what is likely to lead to tenants wanting to be involved? Have we developed involvement activities around tenants? Do we use innovative techniques to get across complex information? Do we hold events that are of relevance to tenants? Do we aim to make involvement enjoyable?
Demonstrating tenant impact	do we demonstrate clearly how tenant involvement leads to action and delivery? Are we clear about how final decisions are made and if decisions are changed? Do we publicise how tenants have impacted on decisions? Do we acknowledge and publicise tenant achievements?
Personal benefits	do we consider with tenants what personal benefits might be available to support tenant involvement – eg. personal development through supporting CIH, TPAS or other qualifications; attendance at conferences; nominations for awards?
Tenant training	do we provide training for tenants who play a role in decision-making?
Direct engagement	does our approach to strategic involvement of tenants include direct engagement between staff and tenants?
Stigma surveys	do we survey tenants about social housing stigma and/or include questions about stigma and its impact in tenant surveys?
All staff buying in	do we encourage a positive relationship between tenants and Board/Council/Executive decision-makers? Are all staff (including back-office staff) encouraged and supported to engage with tenants?
The usual suspects	do we ensure we never refer to usual suspects?
Tenant scrutiny	do we encourage tenant scrutiny in all we do? Do we provide support as necessary to tenant scrutineers? Do we show enthusiasm for tenant scrutiny in all its forms as a means of improvement?
New build and major repairs programmes	do we welcome tenants helping to shape any new build or major repairs programmes? Do we encourage tenants to input into the design, repair and build process?

Ticket (c) – Tackling stigma in service delivery and repairs

Believing and trusting tenants	do we believe and trust tenants unless there is a clear reason not to? Do we recognise that tenants are the experts in their homes and knowledgeable stakeholders? Do we ensure that tenants' concerns are not dismissed? Do we ensure that we don't stigmatise the majority of tenants as a result of our systems to protect the landlord from negative actions by a minority of tenants?
A can-do culture	do we have a "can do" culture where everything is done to respond positively to tenant requests? If we can't, do we explain why and offer alternatives? Do we explain how systems work, not simply stating that something can't be done?
Getting to know you	are we using resources to gather information about tenants as a means of building relationships with them, enabling tenants to raise issues and discuss issues of concern? Are we publicising why we are gathering tenants' personal data? Are we using all staff or contractor contact to gather information?
Tenants' time is valuable	are we ensuring that no one makes assumptions about what tenants do or do not do in their personal lives or that their time is not valuable?
What do tenants want	are we making sure we never make assumptions about what is right for tenants and that we always actively seek tenants' views on what they want?
A follow up culture	are we instigating a follow up culture, where repairs, complaints and other service issues are routinely followed up to ensure matters raised by tenants are fully resolved?
Warm and friendly communications	are we working with tenants to review all communications to tenants to ensure they are clear, jargon and acronym free, warm and friendly, free from stigmatising rhetoric and assumptions and in normal language?
Personalising communications	do we personalise communications with tenants – sense checking and adapting template letters and other communications?
Landlord entrances	are the physical entrances to landlord offices accessible, welcoming and community friendly? Do tenants have to wait a long time to be seen?
Allocations	does debate happen with tenants, the local authority and others on how allocations systems can be adapted to better support sustainable communities?
Tenancy sign-ups	are there discussions with tenants about how tenancy sign-ups and follow up meetings are carried out to ensure that new tenants are welcomed into their new communities and that they are offered the information and support they need?
Complaints	do we actively encourage tenants to say when they are not happy about something in their home, neighbourhood or how the organisation is managed? Does our complaints culture go beyond simple tick box compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code and the Regulatory Standards?

Ombudsman requirements	do we consider with tenants why compliance with the Ombudsman's Code is the right thing to do? Do we communicate well with those who have made complaints? Do we discuss the annual report and self-assessment required by the Ombudsman with tenants, including those who have made complaints?
Learning from complaints	do we discuss lessons learnt from complaints and actions that will prevent re-occurrence with tenants?
Repairs (all the above applies also to repairs, but our work with tenants has shown that repairs is an area that tenants can find particularly stigmatising)	
Repairs communication	are we communicating well with tenants so that they are kept informed about repairs, particularly where there might be delays or challenging issues? Are we treating tenants as part of the team to get repairs done?
Reviewing conscious and unconscious stigma	do we regularly review with tenants, conscious and unconscious stigma in the repairs and planned maintenance services?
Setting tenant expectations	do we provide information to tenants about what they should expect from repairs managers, contact centres, our directly employed operatives, and our contractors and their operatives?
Respect and assumptions	do we regularly review with tenants whether: a. they are treated with courtesy and respect b. they feel that assumptions are being made about them, their homes, their communities, and the roles they play in society?
Appointments and cold calling	do we ensure that flexible repairs appointments are available? Do we ensure that there is no cold calling, including by surveyors and others working on behalf of the landlord? Do we ensure that those managing repairs and operatives respect tenants taking time out to be at home for repairs appointments? If there are reasons why appointments can't be kept, is this communicated to the tenant?

Providing information to contractors	do we review with tenants how providing the right and sufficient information to contractors carrying out works (especially where vulnerabilities are involved) lessens the chances that contractors will behave in stigmatising ways in respect of appointments, access and other features of the repair?
Addressing additional needs	do we review with tenants how those managing repairs, operatives, and contractors are addressing issues relating to vulnerability, accessibility, language barriers and other additional needs?
No access communications	o we review whether our "no access" communications are valid and/or whether the way they are done is stigmatising?
Asset management	are major works and improvements programme, lifecycles of components, the lettable standard, environmental improvements, and health and safety compliance and funding priorities all discussed with tenants?
Home Condition Survey	do we refer to "Home Condition Surveys" rather than "Stock Condition Surveys" which suggests that they are not tenant's homes?
Major works information and choice	are tenants provided with information about when major works will be done in their homes? Are choices available to tenants? Can tenants pay for higher standards or additional components?
Quality assurance	do we review the attitudes and behaviours of repairs operatives (directly employed or through contractors and their sub-contractors) alongside quality assuring standards of repair and issues raised through complaints?
Contractor procurement	are tenants fully involved in the procurement of contractors? Are anti-stigma clauses included into contractor contracts? Do anti-stigma requirements filter down to sub-contractors?

Ticket (d) – first class staff

Staffing culture	are we building a diverse staff team which embeds a culture of trust, fairness, respect, compassion, accountability and empathy? Are these cultural attributes are seen to be necessary to build a professional and competent staff team?
Staff recruitment	are tenants involved in staff recruitment, potentially for any role, but particularly for senior roles and contractor appointments? Does staff recruitment particularly highlight building trust, fairness, respect, accountability and empathy as being necessary requirements for all staff?
Staff handbooks	does the staff handbook reflect a culture of trust, fairness, respect, compassion, accountability and empathy?
Staff induction	is the right culture embedded into staff induction? Are tenants involved to instil appropriate behaviours and attitudes?
Interpreting data	are tenants able to collaborate with the landlord to interpret any data gathered from them?
Start to finish accountability	do we have a culture of "ownership" and "responsibility", ensuring that someone takes responsibility and "owns" progress on issues, jobs, complaints and concerns raised by tenants?
Stigma training	do we provide comprehensive stigma related staff training, potentially involving tenants in delivery, to include believing tenants; active listening; awareness of unconscious bias; professional conduct and boundaries; culture issues (tackling the "I'm the landlord and you're the tenant" culture); admitting when something has been done incorrectly; accountability for poor performance; being honest; not overpromising and saying when something can't be done; sharing reasons and any alternatives; the language and words used and how they feel to tenants?
Staff management and development	are conversations about tackling social housing stigma encouraged and supported in team meetings, line management conversations and staff training programmes?
Whistleblowing stigma	is it straightforward, non-discriminatory and acceptable to raise stigmatising behaviours and attitudes as part of the whistleblowing policy?
Staff/tenant relationships	are we developing and valuing strong and enduring staff/tenant relationships? Are we reviewing how staff from different departments are accessible on a face-to-face basis for tenants and that access is not only available through contact centres or online?
All staff engagement	are all staff, including senior and back-office staff, involved as part of their work in engagement with tenants and in the community?
Staffing structures	is our staffing structure publicised? Are the purposes of roles explained to tenants? Are key staff responsible for services and complaints identified?
Tenant employees	are tenants with lived experience encouraged and facilitated to apply for employment with the landlord and the landlord's partners? Do we review whether essentials that prevent tenants applying for roles are essential? Do we value lived experience alongside qualifications?
Empowered staff	are staff empowered to make urgent decisions where it affects a tenant's wellbeing?
Celebrating positive behaviours	are we recognising staff exhibiting positive action relating to tackling social housing stigma? Do we celebrate success? Do we pass on compliments and ensure that they are known about at a senior level?

Ticket (e) – stigma and governance

A Tackling Social Housing Stigma commitment	has the Board/Council made a commitment to their tenants to tackling Social Housing Stigma? Has it set an overarching tackling stigma strategy? Does it monitors its delivery?
Strategic responsibility for tackling stigma	does the Board/Council take overall responsibility that a tackling stigma culture permeates through organisational values, strategic objectives, structures and operational culture?
Governance information	is governance information provided to tenants – including: a) information about how the Board/Council and Committee structures are set up b) regular summaries of key issues being considered and agreed at governance level c) the issues that Board Members/Councillors consider are of most importance to tenants and how they know that this is the case?
Governance meetings with tenants	are Board Members/councillors taking part in multiple opportunities to meet with tenants?
The Strategic Plan	does the Board/Council seek tenant support for strategic priorities? Is tackling social housing stigma included as a strategic priority?
Stigma as a cross-cutting theme	does the Board/Council considers all housing related issues in the light of tackling social housing stigma?
How your rent is spent	does the Board/Council require that how rent income is used is explained to tenants? Does this explanation include comparisons with previous expenditure and expenditure in other landlords? Does the explanation set out how good value for money is being achieved?
Promoting community cohesion	does the Board/Council take responsibility for ensuring promotion of community cohesion, good neighbourliness and civic engagement as a means of tackling stigma, particularly when approving development of new homes?
Tenant voice	does the Board/Council regularly review with tenants how tenants' voices are amplified in decision making? Does the Board/Council see, recognise and value tenants voice at the governance level?
Wider influence	does the Board/Council consider how its wider influence can tackle the wider stigmas felt by tenants from external bodies?
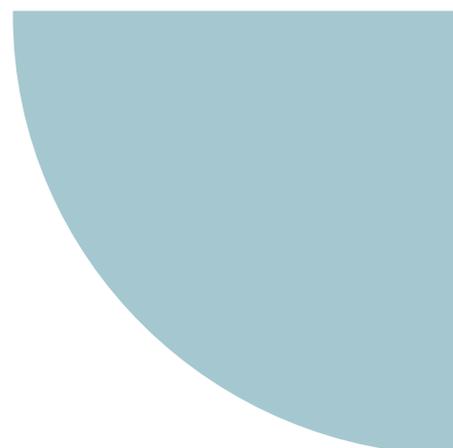
Ticket (f) – celebrating social housing

Positive stories	do we publicly celebrate the positive benefits of social housing? Do we work with tenants to put out positive stories about social housing tenants (using pictures of real tenants (not images from websites) in social media, newsletters and in the press?
Publicity strategies	do we widely publicise the importance and benefits to society of social housing and its tenants?
Celebrating tenant leadership	do we widely publicise where tenants play a leading role in decision-making?
Portraying tenants	do we ensure we do not portray tenants as vulnerable people we are here to save or that tenants need saving?
Negative stereotypes	do we regularly consider whether any publicity reinforces negative stereotypes of social housing tenants, their homes and their neighbourhoods? Do we ensure we never refer to sink estates, deprived areas or challenging/difficult neighbourhoods?
Cross tenure harmony	do we seek to facilitate harmony and partnership between tenants, leaseholders, shared and outright homeowners?
Community initiatives	do we empower tenants to be involved in community initiatives and to create positive stories of their lived experiences and contributions?
Fair Press for Tenants	do we consider the Fair Press for Tenants guide and how we can help to support and deliver it?
Schools, colleges and the Police	do we engage with schools, colleges, the police and others in the community to educate on the benefits of social housing and the roles that they can play to help us and tenants tackle social housing stigma?
Local politicians	do we support tenants to raise awareness of social housing stigma with local politicians and challenge any misrepresentations or stereotypes portrayed?
Tenants as social housing ambassadors	do we support tenants to be social housing ambassadors and to play a role in national and local policy making that affects their lives and homes?
Listen to the voices of tenants	do we engage tenants in national debate about consultations and policies that affect them? Do we suggest to Government and others that they should listen to the voices of our tenants before developing their agendas and policies?
Tackling wider societal social housing stigma	do we participate in debates with the Stop Social Housing Stigma campaign, other landlords, other tenant groups, and others to develop ways to tackle societal social housing stigma?

References

Chartered Institute of Housing, and See the Person, (2020). It's not okay - A Guide to Tackling Stigma in Social Housing. [Online]. Available at: https://www.cih.org/publications/its-not-okay-a-guide-to-tackling-stigma-in-social-housing/ [Accessed 10 February 2025].

Denedo, M. and Ejiogu, E. (2022). Stigma and Social Housing in England: Feedback on the Consultation responses. [Online]. Available at: https://www.durham.ac.uk/business/research/centres/centre-for-organisations-and-society/research-profile/case-studies/stigma-and-social-housing-consultation-report/ [Accessed 10 February 2025].

Ejiogu, A. and Denedo, A. (2021). Stigma and Social Housing in England. [Online]. Available at: https://www.durham.ac.uk/business/research/centres/centre-for-organisations-and-society/research-profile/case-studies/stigma-and-social-housing-consultation-report/ [Accessed 10 February 2025].

Additional recommended reading

Flagship Housing, (2025). Breaking Barriers: Understanding and Reducing Social Housing Stigma. [Online]. Available at: https://www.flagship-housing.co.uk/news/article/new-report-sheds-light-on-social-housing-stigma/#:~:text=Called%20'Breaking%20Barriers%3A%20Understanding%20and,involving%20more%20than%201%2C600%20people. [Accessed 10 February 2025].

G15, (2025). Taking the Stigma out of social housing: The Residents View. [Online]. Available at: https://g15.london/news/taking-the-stigma-out-of-social-housing-the-residents-view [Accessed 10 February 2025].
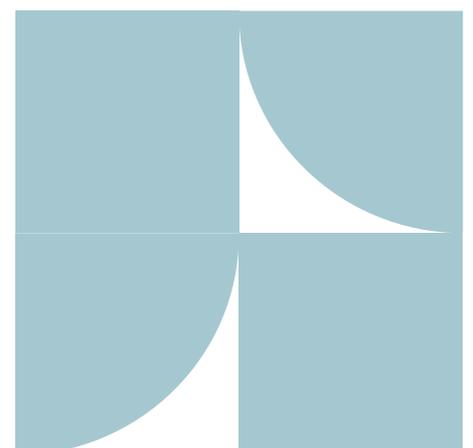
Appendix One – the journey planner and the Regulatory framework

The **tackling stigma journey planner** complements various elements of the Consumer Standards. Whilst the regulatory standards are about evidencing what landlords are required to do, the journey planner is about tenants and landlords working together to work out why certain things need to be done and discussing how operational practice needs to change. The **tackling stigma journey planner** builds on the understanding that shared common ground between landlords and tenants will result in growing hearts and minds to support what tenants want and what landlords are required to do.

- Required Outcome 1.1 of the **Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard** requires Registered Providers to treat tenants and prospective tenants with fairness and respect. The journey planner seeks to provide greater definition of what respect in this context means.

- Tickets a (culture moves at the speed of trust) is relevant across all service delivery Consumer Standards

- Ticket f (celebrating social housing) is relevant to the **Neighbourhood and Community Standard** Required Outcome 2.1 Local Co-operation

- Ticket c (Service delivery and repairs) is relevant to the **Safety & Quality Standard** Required Outcome 2.3 Repairs, maintenance and planned improvements in respect of how repairs services are delivered and in respect of how tenants are communicated with and given information in respect of repairs

- Ticket b (Tenants Leading Change) is relevant to the **Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard** Required Outcome 2.1 in respect of meeting diverse needs and ensuring effective communications and information and Required Outcome 2.3 in respect of appropriately providing information about landlord services

- Ticket d (a first-rate staff team) is relevant to the **Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard** Specific Expectation 2.1.3 in respect of enabling accessibility to staff

- Ticket b (Tenants Leading Change) is relevant to the **Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard** Specific Expectation 2.2.1 in respect of providing tenants with a wide range of meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise landlord strategies, policies and services

- Ticket a (culture moves at the speed of trust) is particularly relevant to the **Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard Specific** Expectation 2.3.2 in respect of providing information to tenants that they have a right not to be stigmatised by their landlord or by repairs operatives

- Ticket c (service delivery) is relevant across all service delivery aspects of the Consumer Standards but also specifically to the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard Specific Expectation 2.3.3 regarding an appropriate follow-on culture

- Ticket d (a first-class staff team) is relevant to the **Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard** Specific Expectation 2.3.5 in respect of providing information to tenants about the staff team

- The Complaints Culture element of Ticket c (service delivery) is relevant to the **Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard** Required Outcome 2.5 in respect of providing a simple and accessible complaints procedure and that accessible information is available. Clearly the Complaints Culture element of Ticket f (service delivery) directly relates to the Housing Ombudsman's **Complaints Handling Code**.

- Ticket e (stigma and governance) and ticket b (Tenants Leading Change) are relevant to the **Governance and Viability Standard** Required Outcome 1.1 in that Registered Providers are required to be accountable to their tenants

The stated aim of the forthcoming **Competence and Conduct Standard** was identified in the Ministerial consultation as setting a "broad, outcome-focussed standard which will help to drive culture change and reduce unprofessional attitudes and stigma within organisations".

It is not yet known what will be included in the Government's direction on the **Competence and Conduct Standard**, but clearly all parts of the tackling stigma journey planner are directly related to achieving this stated aim.
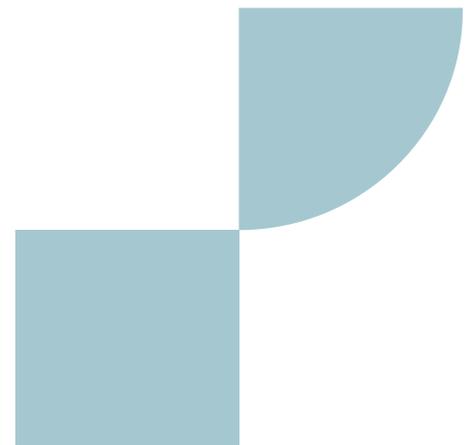
Appendix Two – partners to the project

a.   The partners to this project:

i.   **the Stop Social Housing Stigma campaign**

The SSHS committee:

Lynne Brosnan - **Chair**	Nigel Hickmott
Yaw Boateng - **Vice Chair**	Nasir Hussain
Sally Trueman - **Secretary**	Becci James
Fiona Brown - **Treasurer**	Colin Lincoln
Nigel Bowness	Jim Martin
Joseph Deville	Keith Playell
Pam Hankinson	Barbara Seacombe
Pauline Hardmann	Sarah Simmonds

Nic Bliss - **SSHS Campaign Director**

ii.   **Chartered Institute of Housing**
Sarah Davis – Senior Policy & Practice Officer

iii.   **Durham University Business School**
Dr Mercy Denedo – Associate Professor in Accounting

iv.   **Sheffield Hallam University**
Professor Amanze Ejiogu - Professor of Accounting, Society and Accountability

v.   **TPAS**
Jenny Osbourne MBE – Chief Executive Director
Caritas Charles – Policy and Insight Manager

vi.   **YD Consultants**
Yvonne Davies

https://www.durham.ac.uk/business/
research/centres/centre-for-
organisations-and-society/research-
profile/case-studies/stigma-and-social-
housing-consultation-report/

https://stopsocialhousingstigma.org/
journeyplanner/