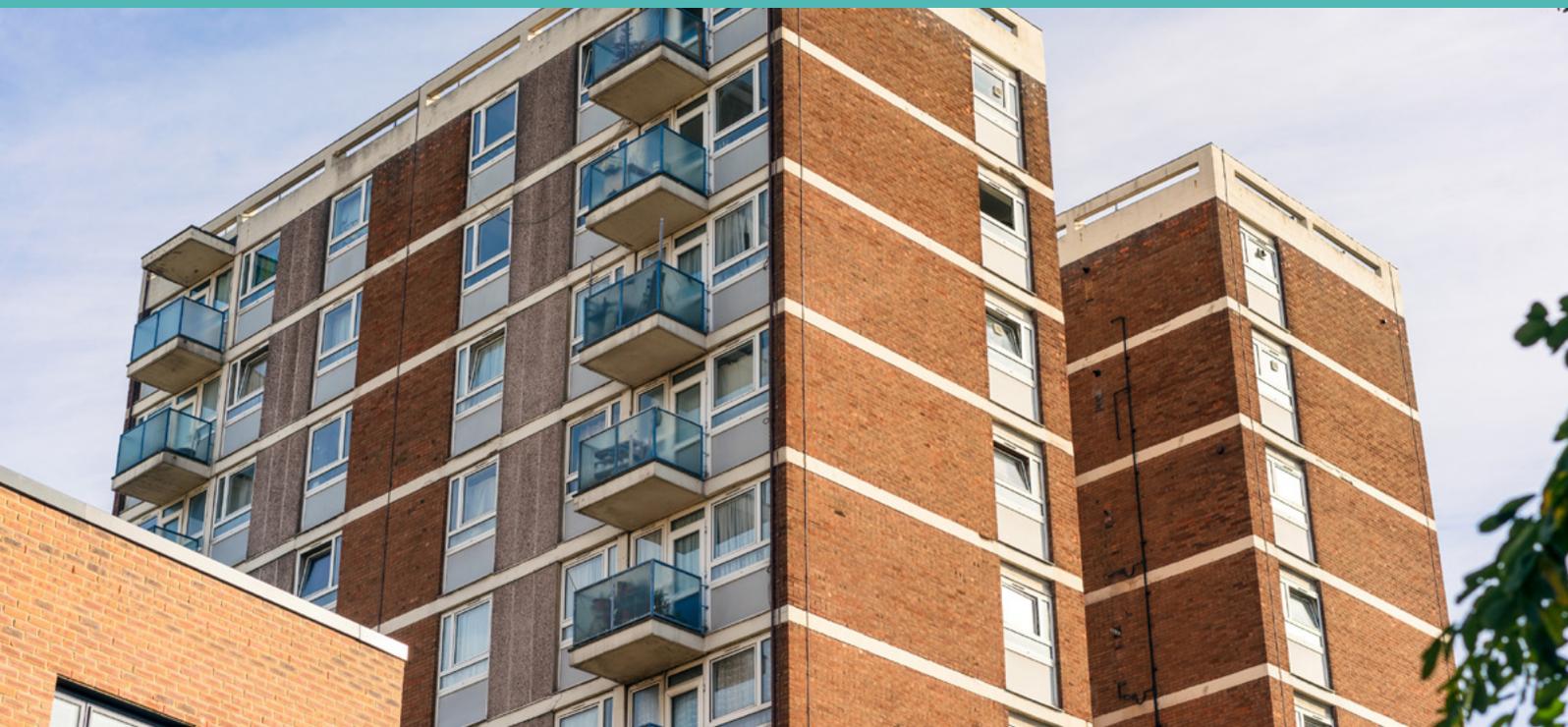


Responding to the Better Social Housing Review

A year on from the Better Social Housing Review – what's changing?

December 2023



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Foreword



Kate Henderson
Chief Executive
National Housing Federation



Gavin Smart
Chief Executive
Chartered Institute of Housing

A year ago, an independent panel called the Better Social Housing Review (BSHR) published a [report](#) looking into issues of poor quality in social housing. It made seven recommendations for social housing landlords.

At the National Housing Federation (NHF) and Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) we responded to the recommendations with a joint [action plan](#). It includes a range of resources, tools and programmes of work that support social landlords to make their own changes – to implement the BSHR recommendations and improve the quality of homes. It also brought our local authority partners – the Local Government Association (LGA), National Federation of ALMOs (NFA), Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) and Councils with ALMOs Group (CWAG) – on board with a programme of positive change.

Our action plan is a long-term programme of work, but we've made a lot of progress in the first six months. This report highlights the work we've done to support members, what's changed so far and the impact it's already having.

Shortly after the publication of our action plan, the Regulator of Social Housing and the government published [details](#) on their plans for change through new draft consumer standards. These will include mandatory qualifications for senior housing managers, a new Decent Homes Standard, Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Awaab's law. We are pleased to see that these align with the BSHR recommendations and our work, and we're working closely with the Regulator and the government to ensure our work remains aligned and best prepares social landlords for new regulation.

These regulatory changes make the work of the BSHR and our action plan even more relevant and urgent. But the scale of this challenge should not be underestimated. As a result of decades of underinvestment, the UK's homes are the oldest in Western Europe and are poorly insulated. Housing associations, local authorities and ALMOs manage many of these homes, which are difficult – and sometimes impossible – to repair.

“Together, we can ensure that everyone lives in good quality housing they are proud to call home”

The scale of the challenge requires collaboration and comprehensive funding. Which is why we're calling on the government to urgently fund new social homes and the regeneration and insulation of existing homes. These funding calls are supported by the independent BSHR panel and the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee.

We are committed to taking the recommendations of the BSHR forward, but we need the government to support this work with funding, long-term policy and regulatory stability, and action on regeneration. Together, we can ensure that everyone lives in good quality housing they are proud to call home.



Focusing on our core purpose

The BSHR panel highlighted that social housing is 'a system under pressure' and that, in this pressurised environment, there are too many examples of homes falling below acceptable standards.

Structural inequalities in our society mean that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people are more likely to live in homes with damp problems than their white British counterparts.

So, the BSHR panel's first recommendation was that every housing association, and the sector as a whole, should refocus on their core purpose and deliver against it.

Essentially, focus on getting the basics right, and test performance against core purpose – providing decent, safe and affordable homes.

Our action plan details a wide range of ways we're responding to this. Highlights so far include:

- ▣ **Making 'focusing on core purpose' the theme of this year's National Housing Summit.** This is a critical event in the housing calendar, attended by over 800 housing sector leaders, top politicians, journalists and commentators. Discussions at this event shape the sector's work for years ahead. Everything this year was focused on core purpose with key sessions on how to create an anti-racist working culture.

- ▣ **Publishing a comprehensive report on workforce diversity.** We need to know where we are on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) to know where we want to be and to measure our progress. In September, the NHF **published** the most detailed picture to date on the diversity of housing association workforces, promoting the importance of diversity. Our efforts to increase workforce diversity will help reduce discrimination and ensure all residents, regardless of their ethnic background or other protected characteristics, have equal access to housing associations' core services.
- ▣ Building on this, we're **promoting tools that support more inclusive organisational cultures.** These include the [2020 Code of Governance](#), an [inclusive recruitment toolkit](#), a report on [succession planning for inclusion](#), and the [Chairs' Challenge](#) (a public commitment on EDI action).

What is the Better Social Housing Review (BSHR) panel?

The BSHR panel was an independent group of diverse experts with direct experience of social housing.

Their comprehensive review of social housing in 2022 led to seven recommendations.

This 2023 report updates on progress against these, the changes already made, and the journey ahead.

Change in action improving diversity in the boardroom

Thirteen, North Star, Beyond and Gentoo worked together to introduce a trainee programme to increase diversity in their boards. These housing associations are all based in the North East, and came together to make a positive change.

Their aim was to increase the diversity of board members to improve governance. The group agreed that they wanted to increase diversity and make sure their boards have a variety of perspectives, challenges and questions, which would benefit their governance. They started by creating joint and individual diversity targets, reflecting on their current diversity and where they wanted to get to.

The recruitment for the trainees was mostly conducted through social media and aimed to spread the word to local community groups in particular. The first stage of the application was a written form, which asked questions about why they were interested and their link to the local community.

Through the project, Thirteen took on three trainee board members, and North Star took on four. The trainees attend board meetings, have a mentor who is either a board member or an executive from another housing association and go through the Housing Diversity Network [board excellence programme](#).

Bringing new voices and different views into the board room has already had a big impact. North Star's Chief Executive, Angela Lockwood, said: "The investment we have made in appointing these four new trainees from under-represented groups is a reflection of the importance we place on increasing diversity in the boardroom."

Manisha Sharma, a newly appointed apprentice said: "I am honoured to be part of this wonderful opportunity. It is vital that a range of diverse voices are heard in the boardroom. This is why I applied. I applaud all the partners for leading the way on EDI at a strategic level. This has been missing for too long".

"It is vital that a range of diverse voices are heard in the boardroom"



Knowing more about our homes



The BSHR panel found that housing associations do not have a shared, consistently detailed understanding of the quality of homes and recommended that action should be taken to improve this.

They also suggested that more should be done to robustly link information about residents' protected characteristics and additional needs with information about the condition of their home. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people living in all tenures are more likely to experience damp and mould in their homes. Housing associations having better information about who lives in their homes will allow this issue to be addressed in their properties.

Our action plan sets out our plan to respond to this challenge by delivering a **new programme of work called [Knowing our Homes](#)**. This programme will help to develop more of a shared approach for gathering and using information across the entire social housing sector about property condition and residents. It will be strongly aligned with new regulatory requirements.

Highlights from Knowing our Homes so far:

- ▣ **Surveying over 130 housing associations and local authorities to build a current picture** of how they collect and use data about the condition of homes and who lives in them.

- ▣ **Collating a set of property condition indicators** which are being collected by the Regulator, that will provide a sector-wide overview of how social landlords are managing the condition of their homes.

- ▣ **Drafting a set of key information to collect about residents**, which can be used to tailor services to meet individual needs and to assess whether services are being delivered equitably to different groups of residents. We have spoken to resident groups to address any concerns about landlords holding personal information.

- ▣ **Considering how we can monitor performance** across the sector to provide a meaningful overview and track progress.

This work has been developed in consultation with housing associations and their residents, and we'll continue to do so as drafts develop into solidified documents with guidance to support implementation.

Shortly after the publication of our action plan, the Regulator published new draft consumer standards for [consultation](#). We were pleased to see that these align with the recommendations of the BSHR, and we'll continue to work closely with the Regulator, alongside housing associations and local government, to ensure our work supports social landlords as they prepare to meet new regulatory requirements.

Change in action

The Big Door Knock

Prima Housing, a social landlord working across Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral, are responding to the Better Social Housing Review by knowing more about their homes.

“The aim was to get behind every door and speak to every resident individually”

In March 2023 they began The Big Door Knock. The aim was to get behind every door and speak to every resident individually, to find out how they were and if there was any support they needed. Staff were instructed to really listen to residents, making sure their data was accurate, and to inspect the quality of homes for outstanding repairs, or any damp or mould.

Prima Housing involved staff from every department across the organisation, regardless of their role, to ensure that everyone took the time to understand residents.

Through this work, Prima Housing identified that 21% of homes visited had damp or mould issues. Most cases were minor, but hadn't been reported before. This meant they could be managed quickly and at an early stage, keeping homes at a high quality.

Prima Group also improved information on residents, especially around health issues and vulnerabilities that had not been disclosed before. This has helped provide more support for families, including minor adaptations in homes.

Feedback from residents has been really positive, and Prima Group now plan to review their operating model to ensure greater visibility and presence in local communities.

“Prima Group improved information on residents, especially around health issues and vulnerabilities that had not been disclosed before”



Images supplied by Prima Housing



Delivering outstanding maintenance and repairs services



The BSHR panel found that dissatisfaction with repairs and maintenance work is a particular concern for residents. Barriers relating to disability, ethnicity, not having English as a first language, communication impairments and poor mental health, amongst other factors, all contribute to people not being properly heard when they raise concerns.

The panel suggested that housing associations should use the experience and knowledge of residents, contractors and frontline staff to develop and apply new standards defining what an excellent maintenance and repairs process looks like.

Our action plan details a wide range of ways we're responding to this. Highlights so far include:

- ❑ **Establishing the [Rethinking Repairs and Maintenance project](#).** This will define and agree the guiding principles that social landlords should use to co-design and deliver repairs and maintenance services.
- ❑ **Setting up a Best Practice Project group to define and agree guiding principles** of an excellent repairs and maintenance service. This group has already met four times and includes social landlords, and experts in EDI, resident engagement, and contracting and procurement.

- ❑ **Examining how these principles are inclusive** and tailored to those who experience racial discrimination and poorer outcomes from repairs and maintenance services.
- ❑ **Developing a set of tools and metrics that social landlords, boards and residents can use to scrutinise progress and performance** of repairs and maintenance services. These include ways of scrutinising whether services are delivering better and more equitable experiences and outcomes for residents.
- ❑ **Building a suite of resources** that social landlords can use to help improve their repairs and maintenance services in partnership with residents, colleagues, and contractors.

Through this work we will support social landlords to collaborate more effectively with residents, colleagues and contractors to design and deliver improved repairs and maintenance services across the country.

Change in action rethinking repairs

RHP, a social landlord working across West London, undertook a deep insight exercise into their repairs service. They are responding to the Better Social Housing Review by rethinking their repairs process to deliver an outstanding service.

“A repairs service tailored to reflect the different wants and needs of different residents”

They started by conducting 50 in-depth interviews with 50 residents who were representative of their diverse customer base. Through these interviews they discovered some gaps in customer experience, and changes that needed to be made.

RHP came up with a plan to provide an inclusive repairs experience that continuously improved to meet their residents' diverse needs. This meant that their repairs service could be tailored to reflect the varying wants and needs of different residents.

RHP tested these changes by going back to residents to hear issues and ideas, through in-person visits, video calls, and observations from frontline staff.

Changing repairs, a service that has many processes that staff become very used to, requires good staff engagement. So RHP created Change Champions, using staff that were most positive and passionate about the changes, to engage frontline staff, listen to their concerns, and take the time to explain why changes were important.

Through this combination of process change and cultural change, a new repairs service was rolled out. After just four months of the new service, RHP has seen an increase in the satisfaction with their repairs service, as well as an increase in overall resident satisfaction, with one resident saying, 'It has improved 100%'.

RHP are now on the path to delivering an outstanding repairs and maintenance service.

“After just four months of the new service, RHP has seen an increase in the satisfaction with their repairs service”



Image supplied by RHP

Change in action rethinking repairs and maintenance

Community-based housing association, South Liverpool Homes (SLH) was formed in 1999 following a stock transfer from Liverpool City Council. They manage approximately 3,850 homes predominantly based in the Speke and Garston areas of south Liverpool, and are a member of CIH's Rethinking Repairs and Maintenance best practice group.

SLH has a strong focus on community engagement with over 300 volunteers, who help deliver community activities which make a real difference to the lives of customers. SLH's repairs and maintenance service is delivered through a joint venture arrangement with Avela Home Service, which was established over 10 years ago.

“We recognised there was a lack of understanding about what a responsive repair was”

In 2022, although SLH had a 96% satisfaction rate, they were completing a high number of repairs on each home – around five per home. On top of that, the organisation was receiving a lot of complaints and completing repairs that should have been undertaken by residents. There was also a lack

of understanding across the whole organisation about what a responsive repair was and their responsibility as a landlord.

SLH came up with a plan to address these issues:

- ❑ They set up a quarterly repairs focus group, made up of customers who had been dissatisfied with a recent repair, in addition to holding a focus group with disabled customers to understand if their needs were being met.
- ❑ The organisation's tenant scrutiny panel followed the repairs process from end to end, conducting deep dives into two processes closely linked with repairs: void standards and their damp, mould, and condensation process.
- ❑ To strengthen the link between customers and SLH's board, the organisation introduced a customer services committee to sit above the scrutiny panel, to help deal with overall customer satisfaction.
- ❑ SLH's directors sat in on repairs calls to gain a greater understanding of the issues.
- ❑ Job shadowing was introduced throughout the organisation, to help colleagues develop an understanding of repairs.

- ❑ At every board meeting, they share a customer story about when things have gone wrong to make a direct link between customer and board and focus each meeting on what really matters.

“SLH knows that engagement with tenants is not a one-off exercise – it needs to be continuous”

From the feedback received, communication was highlighted as one of the biggest issues on a number of different levels – from details on the different types of repairs, to expectations of SLH vs. the customer, and how long certain home components were expected to last. Customers wanted more from SLH, so the organisation made plans to make improvements.

In response to the issues, SLH implemented several new processes:

- ❑ An improved customer feedback report, including a summary of all repairs, complaints, and lessons learned

- ❑ Working with their tenant scrutiny panel, the new customer service committee developed a What is a Repair? tenant guide, which was issued to all existing customers and included in handover packs for new customers
- ❑ More KPIs were identified to monitor and manage areas of customer dissatisfaction
- ❑ Improvements were made to the website with information outlining tenants' responsibilities and work they can undertake themselves
- ❑ Target timescales were updated and communicated for different types of repairs.

During this work, SLH found that engagement with tenants is not a one-off exercise – it needs to be continuous, and target different groups, not just tenants who are already engaged. They learned to keep their language and wording simple with less jargon, and to have KPIs that truly tell you what's happening.



Image supplied by South Liverpool Homes



Boosting support and recognition for housing officers

The BSHR panel found that social housing staff, particularly those in frontline housing officer roles, are working under exceptional pressures and demands. This is leading to high staff turnover, making it harder for residents to build relationships and communicate with their landlord. Once again, the BSHR panel found that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents are disproportionately affected by this.

The BSHR panel recommended that CIH, as the professional body for housing, should promote the traditional housing officer role as a supported and valued employment opportunity through a CIH-recognised programme of training and continuing development.

Our action plan details a wide range of ways we're responding to this. Highlights so far include:

- ❑ **Running an extensive programme of webinars and conference sessions on the housing officer role.** These have been added to CIH's well-established professional development offer, which is an important resource for supporting staff.
- ❑ **Giving housing staff access to products and services** that develop knowledge and skills, professional behaviours and demonstrate they are working within recognised codes of conduct and ethics.

- ❑ **Ensuring that CIH Level 2 and 3 [qualifications](#) include the knowledge and skills required by housing officers.** These qualifications are well established in the sector, and reviewed and updated regularly to ensure they comply with equalities legislation.
- ❑ **Encouraging all housing officers to work within a framework of ethics and acceptable conduct set by their employer.** Alternatively, we are encouraging housing officers to sign up to CIH's [code of conduct](#) and [code of ethics](#) as well as demonstrate key behaviours and values set out in the CIH [professionals standards](#).
- ❑ **Developing guidance on [Continuing Professional Development \(CPD\)](#) for the housing officer.** This includes a sample career development framework and a development route for housing officers for organisations to use as a basis for developing their own frameworks internally. CPD is key to ensuring housing officers have the necessary opportunities to update their knowledge and skills and that working practices reflect current requirements.

Change in action

boosting support and recognition for housing officers

LiveWest, a social landlord working across the South West, is responding to the government's professionalisation agenda and the Better Social Housing Review by ensuring they have clear qualifications and a clear training offer and career development framework for all staff.

They already had a strong commitment to staff development with a well-established Level 3 offer for their frontline housing teams. Level 3 has been expanded to include housing maintenance and asset management, supporting homelessness, apprenticeships and a wide range of training as well as housing practice and management.

“LiveWest believes that professionalisation is so much than just qualifications”

LiveWest have undertaken a project to identify each role in the organisation and what legal, essential, and desirable qualifications are required.

Emma Withnell, Learning Technology and Partnerships Manager said, “LiveWest has always recognised the value that a CIH qualification provides and expects

our frontline housing teams to have a professional qualification through CIH. We currently have over 190 colleagues with a CIH qualification, and a further 55 studying for one this year.”

LiveWest believes that professionalisation is so much than just qualifications. As an organisation they have defined what professionalisation looks like for them and their staff in key frontline roles. Qualifications are a key part of that, but there is also ongoing CPD, coaching and mentoring, sharing knowledge with internal and external networks and learning communities. They have worked to map their LiveWest behaviour framework to relevant professional bodies, such as the [CIH professional standards](#). And they measure behaviours as part of their regular development and performance cycle with frontline staff; colleagues can track their progress to the organisational standards, but also their role specific standards.

“LiveWest have mapped their behaviour framework to relevant professional bodies, such as the CIH professional standards”

In order to provide additional support, they are building communities for various groups of colleagues. Colleagues undertaking the same qualifications can use these spaces to share learning, best practice and real-life experiences. When they have groups of colleagues undertaking the same qualifications, they add them to cohorts for them to collaborate and share.

Emma continued, “We aim for all colleagues to understand what qualifications and behaviours are required for each role, to support them to choose the direction of their career at LiveWest, and how to get there”





Ensuring all residents have a voice and influence

Many housing associations have made focused efforts over recent years to engage residents and listen to their experience and ideas. The BSHR panel recognised the value and intention of [Together with Tenants](#) – the NHF’s initiative to strengthen the relationship between landlords and residents. This includes a charter, which sets out in clear terms what residents can and should expect from their landlord. This has been widely adopted across the housing association sector.

However, many residents and stakeholders told the BSHR panel there is more to do to engage with marginalised residents, and to ensure residents are heard and have influence across all levels of decision-making in organisations.

Housing associations should work with all tenants to ensure they have a voice and influence at every level of decision making across the organisation, through both voluntary and paid roles.

Our action plan details a wide range of ways we’re responding to this. Highlights so far include:

- ▣ **Talking to residents to refresh the Together with Tenants charter**, making changes to boost resident voice and support new consumer regulation. This is a significant piece of work that is still in development – to ensure we get it right, we will consult with a wide range of residents and housing associations.

- ▣ **Encouraging more housing associations to sign up to the Together with Tenants charter.** Over the last few months, we’ve promoted Together with Tenants with our Tenant Advisory Panel, including at major events and conferences. There are now 225 signed up, representing over 86% of housing association homes, and our goal is to increase this number further.
- ▣ **Updating our library of resident partnerships.** Our Together with Tenants library shares examples of housing associations working in partnership with residents and is a popular resource with housing associations. It continues to grow.
- ▣ **Launching a new conference on customer experience and resident engagement.** Developed in partnership with residents, this new event puts resident engagement on the centre stage and focuses on how housing associations can ensure residents have a voice and influence.

Change in action residents directly influencing decisions

Sanctuary, a large social landlord working across the country, are responding to the Better Social Housing Review by revisiting their resident engagement work.

Over 500 residents from a range of backgrounds expressed interest in joining and 10 people from diverse backgrounds formed the new panel.

The first advisory panel meeting was held in May 2023, with a focus on how Sanctuary can enhance its engagement locally. Views shared are now being acted upon by the leaders of those services. The advisory panel has since met Sanctuary's Chief Financial Officer to help plan budgets and strategy for next year.

It's only been a few months, but staff have already reported that the panel is having a very important role in supporting Sanctuary to give residents a more meaningful say on what matters most to them, giving them a clear voice and a direct route to influence their landlord at the most senior level.

“Sanctuary asked more than 50,000 residents if they were interested in joining a new resident advisory panel”

They already had a 'scrutiny panel' of residents that focused on the organisation's performance and investigated where Sanctuary should improve.

Building on this, they wanted to create a new 'resident advisory panel' to ensure that residents are heard within Sanctuary's strategy, and have an even more direct influence, on decision-making at the top table.

Sanctuary approached more than 50,000 residents across England and Scotland to ask if they were interested in joining the new resident advisory panel. In order to attract residents from different backgrounds and experiences, they ensured people were asked what support they needed in order to apply – for example, any technology or transport needs.





Proactive community presence

The BSHR panel found that many residents are concerned about reduced face-to-face contact with their landlord. This can make it difficult to resolve issues, particularly where English is not a first language.

In response to this, the panel recommended that housing associations should proactively work to increase their physical presence in the communities they work in. The panel saw some positive examples of community-based hubs and recommended that, where possible, more housing associations should seek to create them or engage with existing services.

Greater community presence can also foster greater multi-agency working – where housing associations, public and voluntary sector organisations collaborate – which can make things easier for residents.

Our action plan details a number of ways we're responding to this. Highlights so far include:

- ▣ **Publishing [a collection of case studies on building community presence](#).** The examples span a mixture of housing associations, ALMOs and partners across the country, highlighting good work already happening and sharing lessons that have been learnt. These have been shared with both CIH and NHF members to promote action for others.

- ▣ **Hosting a [webinar](#) on how to develop a proactive local community presence.** This highlighted how a strong community presence can help address some of the challenges highlighted by the BSHR panel, making the case for more proactive community presence.
- ▣ **Hosting a [webinar](#) on how to engage with residents to improve service delivery.** This highlighted how a proactive and inclusive approach to resident engagement can strengthen the community offer.
- ▣ **Working with HACT as they develop the [Community Centres Network](#), run by the [Centre for Excellence in Community Investment](#).**

Change in action more staff in the community

whg, a social landlord working across the Midlands, are responding to the Better Social Housing Review by demonstrating a real commitment to staff being present in the community.

A few years ago, under whg's old standard operating practice, housing officers managed between 900 and 1,200 homes. Under the new CHO approach, each person manages a community of between 400 and 700 homes. This is a significant increase in housing officer per home.

The impact has been significant. By connecting with a greater number of residents, whg has increased community sustainability – the percentage of residents with established tenancies (those of more than two years) has increased from 79% to 85%. There has also been improvement in the overall customer satisfaction with whg's services.

“whg introduced 30 community housing officers who visit residents in their homes”

whg made the decision to move away from standard operating practice and introduced 35 community housing officers (CHOs) who visit residents in their homes, removing the barrier that exists for some customers who struggle to come into the office or access services online. The CHOs look for those times of crisis to step in, aiming to sustain tenancies and build successful communities across whg's whole operating area.

The CHOs have become a vital part of whg's multi-agency working, regularly holding community action days with the police, fire service and the council, among others, as well as estate walks and drop-in sessions.

“The number of residents with established tenancies has increased from 79% to 85%”



Images supplied by whg



Reviewing our progress

The BSHR panel recommended that housing associations should support residents and frontline staff to do an annual review of the progress each organisation is making to implement the BSHR's recommendations.

It will take time for housing associations to implement the recommendations and for the impact of these changes to be felt by residents.

This report, less than a year into the action plan, outlines the progress we've made so far and the positive changes we've already seen. Other ways we're driving change are by:

- ▣ **Identifying a list of measurements and data that housing associations already collect or will have to collect soon** under the new regulation. This will support housing associations to collate information and refer to it when assessing progress against the BSHR recommendations.
- ▣ **Planning a series of case studies** where housing associations are successfully making changes and monitoring them. These will support and inspire senior housing association leaders who want to implement the BSHR recommendations and monitor its impact.

While the BSHR panel and its report was commissioned by and focused on housing associations, the local authority sector is committed to supporting it and the accompanying action plan. We have therefore provided an update on progress from our local authority partners below.

“NHF and CIH did an impressive job in bringing together an alliance of all parts of the social housing sector in response to the findings of the Better Social Housing Review. One year on from the publication of our report they have produced and are working together to deliver a plan which responds to all of the panel’s recommendations whilst still keeping tackling inequality and discrimination and the voice of tenant at its centre. It will be important to continue to hear the views of tenants on the progress the sector is making against the BSHR recommendations. Actively working with government, the regulator and the Ombudsman as well to align quality standards and outcomes opens up the potential now to transform the lives of individuals and communities.”

Helen Baker, chair of the Better Social Housing Review panel

An update from our local authority partners



Local authority membership bodies – the Local Government Association (LGA), Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH), Councils with ALMOs Group (CWAG) and National Federation of ALMOs (NFA) – have welcomed the opportunity to collaborate across the whole social housing sector on improving the quality of homes and services and have been involved with taking the recommendations forward.

Many local authorities and ALMOs have been reassessing the full range of their housing management work over the last few years, prompted by the combined influence of the BSHR and Social Housing White Paper, the work of the Housing Ombudsman and the advent of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act. Local authorities and their ALMOs are reviewing approaches to:

- ❑ Surveys on the condition of homes.
- ❑ Management of damp and mould.
- ❑ Collation of data to inform effective processes and systems.
- ❑ Best practice in evidence and assurance.
- ❑ And, importantly, working on better use of resident voices to shape and monitor services.

Specifically in relation to the BSHR, the LGA, ARCH, CWAG and NFA have partnered with the Knowing our Homes project and Rethinking Repairs and Maintenance project mentioned earlier in the report.

In addition to the above, local authority membership bodies are delivering the following work.

NFA

The NFA has developed its own action plan to help members implement the BSHR panel's recommendations. This work includes:

- ❑ Understanding how they currently measure up against the recommendations and report back good practice.
- ❑ Accessing cross-membership support and learning through NFA-hosted officer groups covering expertise such as asset management, data collation, resident engagement, housing management and complaints handling.
- ❑ Publishing good practice guidance, including a focus on resident scrutiny in the ALMO sector, [Critical Friends](#).
- ❑ Working with the NHF's Tenant Advisory Panel to make sure resident voice is heard and residents can feed in learning from first-hand experience.
- ❑ Working with NHF and CIH to share ALMO good practice across the wider social housing sector, particularly in housing management and resident engagement.
- ❑ Helping to put a clear case to government for giving councils sufficient resources to deliver core housing services, particularly through sustainable Housing Revenue Accounts.



CWAG

CWAG is working with member councils and their ALMOs on the Knowing our Homes project to better understand the current information held on the condition of homes and the people who live in them. This is an essential starting point for identifying and sharing good practice, particularly around improving the experience of residents.

ARCH

ARCH has been working with its members to identify learning from the BSHR recommendations so they can measure progress and report back good practice. This is being coordinated via a task and finish group, which is also taking account of inspections of ARCH members by the Regulator, to help members prepare for the new regulatory regime.

The ARCH Tenant Group is informing this work while sharing their first hand experience and inputting into various governmental working groups.

Like the NFA, ARCH is working with the NHF and CIH to share good practice across the wider social housing sector, particularly in housing management and resident engagement, and engaging with the government to outline the resource and financial challenges currently faced by the sector.

LGA

The LGA continues to share best practice as well as advocate on behalf of members when engaging with the government and stakeholders to ensure the best outcomes for the social housing sector.

As part of its sector-support offer, the LGA also offers a social housing management peer challenge to stock-owning councils. This enables councils to reflect on and learn how to improve the service they provide to social housing residents.

Alongside the NHF and CIH, the LGA is raising concerns about the financial pressures faced by the social housing sector, calling on the government for fiscal and policy changes so that councils can both invest in improving in existing homes, while delivering on new housing supply ambitions.

What happens next?



Our response to the BSHR, through our joint action plan, is a significant, long-term piece of work that demonstrates the whole sector's commitment to improving quality and services.

We've made a lot of progress in the first six months. Improving the quality of homes and creating more inclusive customer services have been at the centre of our work and conferences. The NHF and CIH have started sharing guides, resources and case studies to both support and mobilise the social housing sector.

We've laid the groundwork for several programmes of work that will deliver significant changes across the country. Preparing for these will take time to ensure that any changes are both meaningful and support upcoming changes to regulation. This includes the revised Decent Homes Standard, the implementation of the Social Housing Regulation Act and other consumer regulation.

By this time next year, our aim is to begin implementing these more systemic changes. From a more shared approach for gathering and using information about property condition and residents, to a new Together with Tenants charter that amplifies resident voice more than ever before, we are on a journey that will drive tangible improvements for residents.

Our goal is clear. We want to provide good quality, affordable social homes and customer service for people who need them, and ensure residents have equal access to these regardless of their ethnic background, mental health or disabilities.

The NHF, CIH and our members are committed to this goal, but we could not agree more with the independent BSHR panel's conclusion that social housing is a 'system under pressure'.

Alongside the BSHR panel, we are concerned that our actions alone will not address the fundamental problem that some of England's social housing is deteriorating. We also agree that the government remains responsible for ensuring social housing is properly and adequately funded. In 2010, the government cut capital investment in funding for new homes by 63% in real terms. The impact is starting to show. The UK's homes are the oldest in Western Europe, poorly insulated and with record levels of overcrowding.

As we look ahead to our next steps, we also look to our partners in the government to support this work with funding, long-term policy and action on regeneration.

About the CIH and NHF



Chartered
Institute of
Housing

CIH is the independent voice for housing and the home of professional standards. It is a registered charity and not-for-profit organisation with a diverse membership of people who work in the public and private sectors, in 20 countries on five continents across the world.

**NATIONAL
HOUSING
FEDERATION**

The NHF is the voice of housing associations in England. Our members own over 96% of housing association homes in England, providing 2.7 million homes to around six million people.

If you would like more information, both teams are happy to support you.

To get in touch with CIH, please email: policyandpractice@cih.org

To get in touch with NHF, please email: eam@housing.org.uk