Social Sector (Building Safety) Engagement Best Practice Group

Landlord and Residents' Responsibilities Sub-Group

Access for Safety

Clarion Housing Group, Poole Housing Partnership & Phoenix Community Housing

We would like to thank the following who have kindly supported this work:

Contents:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview of Work Undertaken

Over the past six months, a number of housing providers and other organisations have worked together to look at access to properties for important fire safety work. This work has been led by Clarion Housing Group (Clarion) and Poole Housing Partnership (PHP). It has covered a range of approaches and has focused on themes that would support access in any environment. This report has been developed by residents and staff members working together to co-create pilot ideas, which we were able to test in practice. Our experience of co-production has been very positive and we would encourage a similar approach for other projects.

Conclusion Drawn

The fundamental elements to any successful access campaign are as follows -
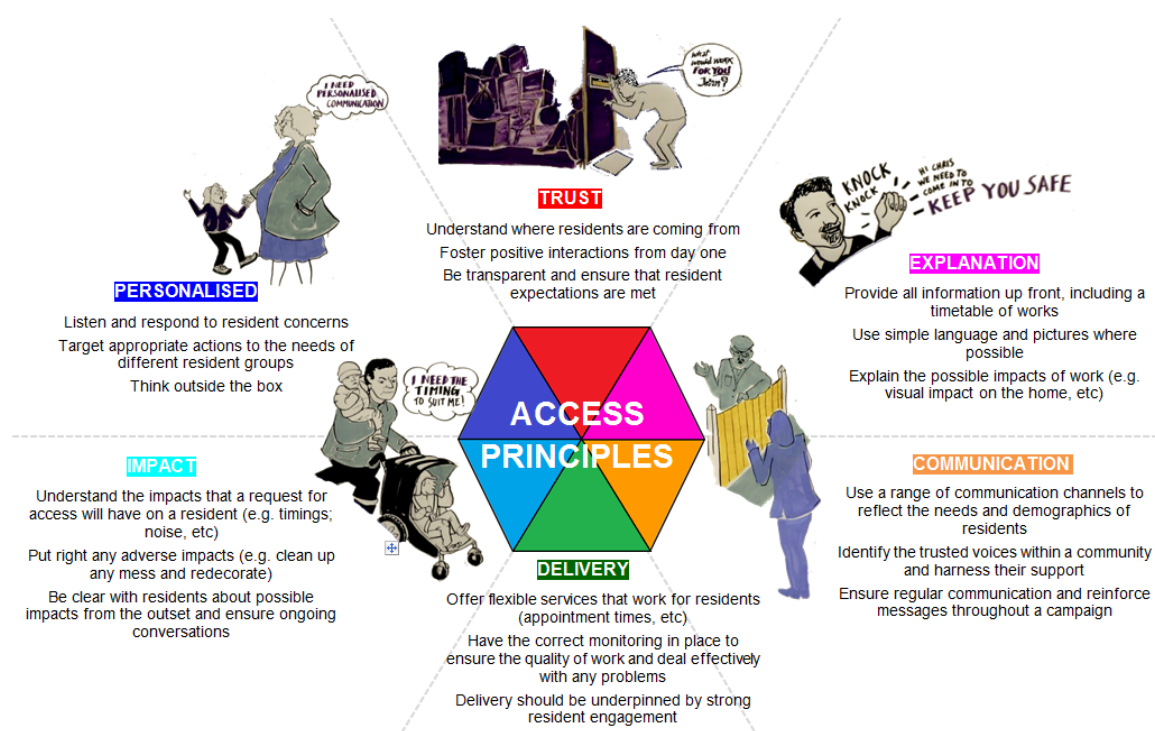
It is for each housing organisation when designing and delivering projects that require access to resident properties to challenge themselves on how effective they are at achieving each element. If these are in place then it is very likely that successful outcomes will be achieved.

Next Steps and Areas for Further Exploration

- National Government – to consider a strengthening in legislation to allow access to landlords for all properties (both tenanted and leaseholder) to undertake safety work
- MHCLG – to recognise the value of a wider range of organisations within the ongoing debate around engagement in this area, e.g. MIND, and bring them into the debate to support delivery
- The Fire Authorities – to set out an approach that is consistent across geographical areas and can support housing organisations to deliver a local message that is not dependent on postcode
- Landlords – to test services against the hexagon and understand whether this leads to an improvement in achieving access

- Residents – to seek to achieve regulatory standards that reflect the delivery of a personalised service by the landlord and how best residents can help shape what this looks like

MAIN REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Work to support how best to achieve access into properties has been undertaken by the organisations within the MHCLG sub group; Clarion Housing Group (Clarion) and Poole Housing Partnership (PHP). The work took place throughout 2019 and focused on a range of projects that would test current delivery models, suggest solutions and pull together thinking and best practice across a range of organisations. The resulting conclusions set out an approach that could be used across a range of projects, but would be specifically useful for access projects, seeking to ensure that the correct questions are being asked when designing an approach that will maximise benefits for both the landlord and the resident[1] who is the recipient of works.

METHODOLOGY

The work that was undertaken comprised a range of activities and methodologies. Each of these was designed to test different aspects of behaviours and approaches and to understand what worked and what didn't work. Each involved a range of organisations and both officers and residents living in different property types and in different locations. The resident voice was at the heart of the work with a clear aim to hear what residents are telling landlords about service delivery and how these can be designed to deliver more effectively.

Each project undertaken is described in detail in the attached appendices, along with evaluation criteria and conclusions drawn. In summary they are –

1. Personalised Communications - "The Nudge Approach" – a trial across 165 homes where 50% received personalised communications to test whether this encouraged greater contact with the landlord. The results of our trial were inconclusive, but we are keen to test other approaches and identify ways to communicate effectively.

2. Hoarding and Complex Cases – a review of one organisation's approach to accessing properties, demonstrating what can be achieved when a person centred, flexible approach is delivered and the relevant process behind this

3. A Listening Workshop – a development of the key aspects that drive a successful approach, with representatives from a range of organisations and residents

4. Resident Engagement Sessions – a resident led engagement approach that took place throughout the summer of 2019 and captured the views of residents with regards to what they considered to be the most important factors to consider when seeking to access homes

5. Engagement with partner agencies – a review of ongoing pilots and actions from partner agencies outside of housing who are working with local residents to address complex issues, including hoarding, to understand what works and doesn't work

All of the above led to the development of the six key themes that need to be in place to deliver successful outcomes.

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[1] The term resident is used in its broadest sense and used to describe all people who reside in a property regardless of tenure

THEMES

The themes that run through a successful project reflect a series of questions that officers should be reflecting on when developing services. Each will support or hinder the outcomes that an organisation is trying to achieve and will require effective reflection to be used properly. These themes are:

1. Trust

The way that a resident responds to the request for access will to some extent be determined by how much the resident "trusts" the landlord. The main factors here are likely to be experience of previous interactions, whether this has been positive or negative, or whether there have been no recent interactions at all. This theme suggests that by understanding the starting point of the resident's view of the landlord, that landlord can better design communications to achieve a successful outcome. It also suggests that a positive culture of service delivery that is flexible and responds to resident needs in other areas will enable access more easily, i.e. a good local repairs service that delivers first time fixes will support confidence and trust and start the discussion for access in a good place. Landlords should understand how they are viewed by their residents before beginning any access campaign.

2. Explanation

It is important that a landlord provides a full range of information in the explanation of the works and that this information uses simple language in what is often complex discussions and goes beyond the actual work. Residents will be interested in the impact on their actual home as well as the works to be undertaken and will want to understand how this fits into wider delivery of works across their homes, especially if this is within multi occupied buildings such as tower blocks. Simple language, pictorial where possible, and an explanation that covers the whole process (such as the timeline) not just the work to be completed will be key to building trust and gaining approval for access.

3. Communication

It is likely that a landlord will need to use many communication channels in order to reach all residents within a campaign. These could be traditional – letter, email, meeting – as well as use of more social media approaches – Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc. It is likely that a good campaign will use a number of communication routes and will reflect the age, demographic and relative needs of the audience in receipt of the campaign, ensuring variation to reflect local characteristics. In addition to this, landlords should understand who are the trusted voices within the local community and harness their support; this may be local residents, the fire service, local police service or family members. This would also include those that are working with households already and discussions about how they may be able to facilitate access. Communication must also be regular and reinforce messages throughout a campaign.

4. Delivery

A landlord must be honest in the methods of delivery and be confident that this delivery will reflect the explanations provided and included in the communications. This would include core access requirements around showing identification to build trust as well as overall service delivery. If performance of a contractor is below that expected this must be acknowledged (trust) and landlords should have the correct monitoring in place to oversee work, ensure the right quality is in place and deal with any problems (perceived or otherwise) quickly. A good delivery contractor supported by strong resident liaison will ensure a successful project and support access to other properties as well as building trust for future projects.

5. Impact

By understanding the impact that a request for access will have on a resident, the landlord can better plan for approaches to mitigate this impact. The impact may be about timing to access a property, therefore consideration of school runs, working hours or local community activities will be important. The impact may also be about what happens when the landlord is inside the property and the impact of the work on current decoration, requirement to move furniture or dust or dirt resulting from the work will need to be considered. The resident may also be required to be away from the property in order to allow the work to be completed or may be impacted by noise in other properties and may need some respite. A full understanding - either at the outset of a campaign or through ongoing conversations with residents - will support further access and facilitate a successful campaign. Needs are likely to be varied and the approach should be flexible enough to ensure equality of approach and that all needs are met.

6. Personalised

The key element for all of the campaigns is that the approach to access must be personalised. It is likely that a large percentage of access in any campaign will be gained by understanding the five other themes set out above and by having an open and honest discussion with residents. However to achieve full coverage and to maintain the approach with those willing to engage early on, the landlord must be prepared to personalise the approach and respond to individual circumstances. Campaigns should be segmented to understand the needs of different groups and target appropriate actions and the landlord must be prepared to think outside the box to be able to secure access to all properties. This may be about arranging respite, visiting numerous times to build trust or helping to move furniture or redecorate. The landlord must be willing to listen and hear what the concerns of residents are to be able to develop a campaign that is flexible enough to be personalised and reach all of those impacted.

CONCLUSION

Accessing properties for a landlord is not easy and life often gets in the way for most residents when responding to such requests. Most residents want their properties to be safe and are likely to work with their landlord to ensure that this is the case. The ability to achieve this is often determined by the six themes set out in this report and will determine the willingness of residents to engage. The coming together of residents and landlords in a way that is open, honest and listens to the concerns of both sides is most likely to deliver successful outcomes and it is for the landlord to facilitate that positive environment. The key factor is finding what works, not just for the many, but also for those that are difficult to reach, and ensuring that approaches are flexible enough to facilitate different routes. Resident liaison and strong housing management that listens and finds solutions rooted in local needs has been shown to deliver and the challenge for landlords is how to enact that in their own organisations.

APPENDIX – AN ACCESS WORKSHOP

Description of the pilot	
A Listening Workshop Exploring Safety Access – development of the key aspects that drive a successful approach with representatives from a range of organisations and residents	

Context and assumptions

A one day one workshop, using visual illustration to capture the outputs of complex and emotive detailed discussions.

The aim of the day was to take a fresh look at how residents and social landlords can work together to gain easier access to homes for important fire safety work especially with those residents who are harder to reach.

The workshop was designed to listen and explore thoughts and ideas and interrogate the concept of access and fire safety for both residents and landlords to see if there were any new ways of working, or to reinforce approaches that already provide successful outcomes.

Refer to the more detailed overview report in the appendix for further information and a more detailed review of the workshop.

Inputs

- 27 delegates attended from 14 different social housing providers or stakeholders that included residents, front-line staff working with vulnerable residents and colleagues working the areas of Housing, Policy and Fire Safety
- Visual illustration of the day to evaluate the key themes and conversation flow
- Agenda and day designed by CEO of West Kent MIND as an independent approach

Activities

Define access for residents and landlords
Four scenarios of fire safety work: retrofitting a sprinkler system, changing a flat front door, installing a smoke detector and carrying out an intrusive type 4 fire risk assessment.
Group work around four structured themes: empathise, define, ideate and prototype.

Outputs

Having explored the breadth and depth of the complex and emotive subject of resident engagement for safety access, the workshop returned similar and consistent approaches currently used by social landlords.

A person-centred approach is important when engaging with vulnerable persons in building a trusted relationship and gaining access into their homes.

Landlords should consider their corporate cultural approach to resident engagement and communication, ensuring that everyone understands their role.

Outcomes

Resident and landlord engagement, with the aim of undertaking critical fire safety works and gaining access into people's homes is a 'two way street'. To be effective and successful for both, the engagement needs to be considered, planned, appropriate and informative.

The workshop was successful in bringing together ideas and reinforcing good work already being done in the sector with meaningful resident engagement for those who are harder to reach and engage.

Possible next steps

- Work with key stakeholders to produce a resident engagement pack with ideas and templates of best practice for social landlords to use when seeking engagement for fire safety works

APPENDIX – RANDOMISED CONTROL TRIAL (RCT)

Description of the pilot
Randomised control trial (RCT) – North London street properties
Context and assumptions
We used the opportunity to undertake a RCT to test the effectiveness of new ways of communicating planned fire safety work to general needs residents. Converted street properties in North London were to be fitted with Aico interlinked fire detection systems, made up of smoke detectors and heat detectors. There had been some resident resistance to the works, based in part on the unfounded notion that work would be carried out without full knowledge of the types of properties being worked on. To counter this, we included an image of the property in the FAQ sheet sent to residents alongside the letter outlining the work.
Inputs
165 letters were sent in total; 82 to residents in the control group and 83 to residents in the intervention group   - The images were sourced and by the Fire Safety Lead from fire and emergency files
Activities
Addresses were randomly allocated to two groups (control and treatment groups). Both the control and treatment groups received a FAQ sheet (reflecting existing practice), but a photo was added to the top of the FAQ sheet sent to residents in the treatment group. Response rates were recorded.
Outputs
More customers in the control group got back to us, but customers in the intervention group, responded to the letter quicker: - Control group **-** 21 responses. Average response - 10.6 calendar days   - Intervention group - 19 responses. Average response – 8.8 calendar days   Only 4 customers took us up on our out-of-office hours appointment offer. Two of these were in the control group and the other two in the intervention group.
Outcomes
The results of the intervention were not statistically significant. Although the outcomes of the RCT were inconclusive, limited uptake of the-out-of-office appointment offer suggests that this would not have a big impact overall in helping us to gain access to more properties.
Possible next steps
- Undertake other RCTs using more visually arresting images, or stickers on envelopes, etc.   - Other options to nudge residents may include a more personal approach from the Fire Safety team at Clarion, for example, including a calling card with the name and photo of a designated staff member for residents to contact

APPENDIX – HOARDING

Description of the pilot
Approach to Hoarding – Guidelines and Review
Context and assumptions
Poole Housing Partnership (PHP) reviewed its approach to hoarding across its business and compiled a set of guidelines, procedure plan and two case studies describing how its approaches hoarding and complex property condition issues. PHP is an ALMO located on the south coast and operates within the town of Poole supporting with management responsibility for approx. 5,000 households. The approach is therefore geographically focussed and reflects delivery in a relatively small housing organisation. The approach however sought to draw out behaviours that are applicable across all organisations regardless of size of geography.
Inputs
- Review of current hoarding and complex property conditions by the Engagement and Enforcement Team   - Production of guidelines, procedure plan and 2 x case studies   - Review of approach and discussion across six other housing organisations
Activities
The guidelines, procedure plan and case studies were shared with six other housing organisations for review. Each organisation was asked to provide feedback on their processes and whether the guidelines supported enhanced knowledge or any change in practice to be undertaken. The organisations that took part in the review were – Clarion Housing Group, Colchester Borough Homes, Derby Homes, Gateshead Housing Company, Homes in Sedgmoor and Lewisham Homes
Outputs
All respondents found the guidelines and case studies useful. Most reflected that they felt they had good processes in place and found it reassuring to see similar working in other housing organisations. Overall there was good knowledge about the factors that were important when dealing with a complex property condition issue or an individual displaying hoarding tendencies, although the responses were different across different organisations The importance of multi agency working was highlighted and reflected that housing organisations must build these relationships to be able to secure the right inputs that will support outcomes. Social services to meet safe guarding issues and local fire services to support a discussion around safety were key partners. Many highlighted the approach in the guidelines which was to gain "insight" (to allow the problem to be dealt with) rather than a focus that was to just deal with the problem, as being a culture that led to successful outcomes The use of the clutter rating to support a neutral conversation was also an important tool.
Outcomes
The guidelines were deemed to describe an effective approach that could be used by organisations to challenge and support service delivery locally
Possible next steps
- Share guidelines with other organisations   - Bring together best practice from participating organisations and share wider case studies covering organisations that are more diverse than Poole in terms of geography or housing type

APPENDIX – ENGAGEMENT DAYS

Description of the pilot

Resident Engagement Sessions – a resident led engagement approach that took place throughout the summer of 2019 and captured the views of residents with regards to what they considered to be the most important factors to consider when seeking to access homes.

Context and assumptions

The landlord invited customers to one of five regional Resident Engagement Days across London over the Summer of 2019.

The events gave residents the opportunity to hear about regional progress, the landlord's priorities and local offers. Residents also had the opportunity to network with staff, residents and stakeholders working in partnership with the landlord. LFB also attended some of these days. We used this opportunity to speak with residents and to find out what the landlord could do to make accessing residents homes easier.

Inputs

Colleagues from the Project Fire Team (Property Services) and the Health and Safety team attended the days and asked customers a series of questions around resident's responsibilities and access.

Activities

At each resident engagement day, a stall was set up with fire safety equipment for residents to look at as well as a picture board, which included photos of resident's responsibilities and ways to keep their home safe

Customers were invited to answer five questions around their responsibilities and how the landlord could make access easier:

- Do you have a smoke detector in your home?
- We understand that people lead busy lives, which means that it's not always possible to arrange an appointment when Clarion needs to undertake important fire safety work inside your home. What could Clarion do make accessing your home easier in order to carry out necessary fire safety work?
- What activities would you expect Clarion to undertake in order to protect your home from fire risks/hazards?
- Have you ever reported a suspected fire risk/hazard to Clarion? If so, what was your experience of this?
- How comfortable would you feel reporting fire risks/hazards to Clarion? Please explain your answer
- What information do you think Clarion should provide about fire safety in your home?

Responses were recorded.

Outputs

Customers wanted their landlord to offer out of hours appointment (evenings and weekend slots) as standard, to make access easier.

Customers told the landlord that missed appointments and trust in the contractor, makes access difficult. Customers require more reassurance from the landlord that contractor performance is managed and that missed appointments are minimal.

Communication should be regular from the landlord.

Outcomes

The offer of the-out-of-hours appointments suggests that this would have an impact in helping us to gain access to more properties, where customers work full time during the working week.

A positive culture of service delivery that is flexible and responds to resident needs in other areas will enable access more easily, i.e. a good local repairs service that delivers first time fixes will support confidence and trust and start the discussion for access in a good place.

Possible next steps

- Undertake more surveys with more residents across the country- and not just specific to London.

APPENDIX – NEW BEGINNINGS

Description of the pilot	
New Beginnings – a programme for residents who hoard (in association with West Kent Mind)	

Context and assumptions

High levels of clutter make it much easier for a fire to start. The clutter means that a fire has a greater risk of spreading, which increases the risk of injury and death. Clutter can also make it very difficult to escape. Research suggests that a quarter of accidental domestic fire deaths involve hoarding and that hoarding disorder affects over 1.2 million people in the UK.[12]

Inputs

New Beginnings is an innovative project offered by West Kent Mind for people in the Sevenoaks district who have problems with hoarding and self-neglect.[3] The project aims to improve the mental/physical wellbeing of people who hoard and help prevent the need for statutory intervention. The 12 week programme includes six therapeutic group support sessions facilitated by a counsellor, and 1:1 support from a 'de-clutter buddy'. De-clutter buddies are experienced support workers and volunteers who attend the therapeutic group and support clients in starting to de-clutter and re-organise their homes

Activities

Clarion identified and supported a small group of residents who hoard through the New Beginnings programme. The residents were interviewed by a Clarion staff member at the end of the programme to discuss their thoughts and experiences

Outputs

Prior to undertaking the programme, residents reported feeling "overwhelmed" by their situation, which led to stress and inertia. In one particular case, hoarding was triggered by a recent bereavement. Residents reported feeling anxious about possible punitive landlord action and did not want to engage - "I knew we had someone coming around to the house, but I didn't want to let them in".

In undertaking the programme, residents received support from their Housing Officer. One participant was asked by their Housing Officer, "do you need help? / would you like help"?, which they described as "a lightbulb moment" as nobody had ever asked them this before. This helped to foster a trusting relationship between the Housing Officer and resident.

After completing the programme, residents reported the following:
- "Stress levels about the situation in the house are down to about 10% of what they were"
- The programme helped participants to look at things from a different perspective - "I realised I hadn't used this (object) for five years"
- When the staff member first accessed the home, they couldn't get in the door – there's now a "hole" in the clutter and a "chair you can sit on"
- "We're more adaptable for anything that's thrown at us now"
- "I can cheerfully and confidently say that I am dealing with a hoarding issue"

Outcomes

Participants were asked what, if anything, could have been done to make access easier. Their responses focused on how housing providers could improve engagement with residents who hoard, including:
- When sending the annual gas safety inspection appointment letter, the letters should explicitly ask if the resident needs help or assistance with anything. Participants felt that if the landlord initiated a conversation, then this could help to break the ice

- Because residents who hoard may feel shame about their situation, participants suggested that initial contact should be made by phone and the first meeting with a staff member should be in a neutral location

Participants recommended that housing providers should host "open house" events to help foster engagement

Possible next steps

- Continue to grow partnerships between housing providers and mental health charities. Areas of shared interests could include co-creating training for staff members on how to identify and deal with cases where residents hoard

[1] https://www.foundations.uk.com/resources/health-and-housing/hoarding/
[2] https://www.helpforhoarders.co.uk/what-is-hoarding/
[3] https://westkentmind.org.uk/what-we-offer/new-beginnings

'A Listening Workshop Exploring Safety Access'

An Overview

On 28th November 2019, professionals and residents came together for a one-off workshop day to explore 'Safety Access'. This workshop was hosted by Clarion Housing in conjunction with Poole Housing Partnership and was part of the ongoing work that these providers are undertaking for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Social Sector (Building Safety) Engagement Best Practice Group; a group commissioned following the Grenfell Tower Tragedy in 2017.

The outcomes from the day, including findings and recommendations, will form part of a final report presented to the Government Ministers and other Government officials as the outcomes from our work in the Best Practice Group.

The workshop was kindly directed and the agenda formulated by Stevie Rice, CEO of West Kent Mind. Stevie brought her experience, compassion and an independent perspective to the day. She skilfully led the delegates through a fast paced agenda including energetic ice breakers, resident profiling, discussion and round table-focus work.

The aim of the day was to take a fresh look at how residents and social landlords can work together to gain easier access to homes for important fire safety work. The workshop was designed to listen to thoughts and ideas and explore the concept of access and fire safety for both residents and landlords.

27 delegates attended; they represented 14 different social housing providers or stakeholders that included residents, front-line staff working with vulnerable residents and colleagues working the areas of Housing, Policy and Fire Safety. Additionally, a representative from the Fire Authority and the Independent Chair of the Best Practice Group also attended as independent delegates. At the start of the day no one knew who anyone was, other than their first names. The objective was to bring together delegates with differing experiences and roles to draw on their expertise, opinions and thoughts, in a non-hierarchical and equitable manner. The outcomes would translate into profiles and personal journeys of fictitious residents and to better understand the barriers around access and fire safety in a relatable and plausibly realistic way.

We agreed to use visual illustration as a method to capture key themes and evaluate the day. This creative approach iteratively recorded the story board of the discussion while helping to maintain focus. Delegates were encouraged to speak freely to generate ideas and the visual illustration helped to summarise this content well.

Working on four round tables, delegates could sit where they wanted, but with the groups mixed up throughout the day, changing tables to ensure that views were varied and holistic.

The day was split into four sections (**empathise; define; ideate and prototype**) and at the end of each section groups were asked to feedback by summing up the ideas, discussions and conclusions from their table.

Before developing the personas, we looked at **defining 'access'** to ensure that everyone in the room was using the same meanings and terminology. This session covered access for landlords into residents' homes to undertake essential fire safety work and also how residents can help access safety information and support from their landlords.

Following the Grenfell Tower Tragedy event and the ongoing work to reform safety in high-rise housing, landlords are improving their resident engagement strategies and finding better ways to work with their residents to ensure the safety of all within blocks of flats. To demonstrate whole building safety and to keep people safe will require cooperation and working together for both landlords and residents. Vulnerable residents, those who face everyday challenges - such as unemployment, bereavement, disabilities and financial difficulties, and those who lead busy and demanding lives can be most at risk and can be harder to reach with engagement. This workshop focused on profiling residents with vulnerabilities and challenges that may affect their desire or ability to engage with their landlords.

Empathise

Each table was asked to create the profile of a fictitious resident. In groups, each table spent time to define the daily life of this person and to draw them and their concerns. Participants considered how the resident might spend their time, their worries and any possible life challenges. The room was given some optional challenges to choose from to help profile their resident, including:

A person who is unable to read; someone who is a full time carer; someone who is suffering with alcohol and drug addiction; someone who has recently lost a spouse; a person with severe hoarding lifestyle; someone who is a full time shift worker & single parent; a person with chronic depression & loneliness; a person who is Agoraphobic; an elderly person living alone with limited mobility…

The four representative profiles created were:

1. Chris aged 19 is unemployed. He smokes weed, plays computer games and sleeps for most of the day. His challenges are finding money for food; he feels isolated and has low self-esteem. He would like to travel and train to get a job, but is unsure how to do this.

2. Frank is aged 41. He is single and works shift work on the railways. He is the primary carer of his two children, aged 3 and 9. His concerns are his children, money and safety. He juggles childcare arrangements during the week.

3. John is aged 35 and works in the city. John is a hoarder. He lives alone in a flat. He spends most of his time at work and socialising. He is embarrassed about is home. He showers at work and eats out mostly. He has money to support his lifestyle but is lonely living with his secret. His possessions are important to him.
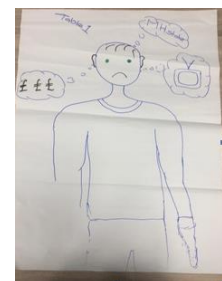
4. Cheryl, 40, has two children aged 13 and 8 and is pregnant with a third. She has recently lost her husband so is grieving. She works part time in a local supermarket. Without her husband's income she is very concerned about how she is going to cope in the future.

Each resident profile stayed with the table for the duration of the day. One person, designated as a scribe from each group, remained on the table to ensure consistency, and the other delegates were moved to another table in scenario carousels to give depth and bring new ideas.
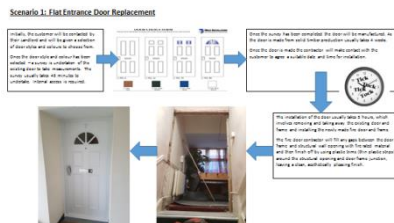
Scenarios

Each table was then given a scenario, which required the landlord to gain access to the resident's flat to undertake essential fire safety works.

The 4 scenarios were:

- retrofitting a sprinkler system,
- changing a flat front door,
- installing a smoke detector and
- carrying out an intrusive type 4 fire risk assessment.

The scenarios were presented to the group with photos and a brief overview of what the works required and the implications of those works.

Using the resident profile and the given scenario, each table then brainstormed a range of key concerns their resident would have in relation to the proposed works and how the works might impact them.

Define

The next session was to select and then fully define a single key problem that emerged from the discussions. Each group used a flipchart to frame that problem in the form of a question: 'How might we…?' This key question was then used at the top of the flipchart.

The key questions defined by each table were:

How do we get a response? How might we engage with Frank to agree to complete the works? How might we build a rapport? How might we listen and respond appropriately to the individual's voice? How do we get residents to open their front doors?

> *"If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask… for once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than five minutes."*
>
> *Albert Einstein*

Ideate

At this point the groups landed back on their original tables.

This next stage was to consider how the Landlord might undertake communication and engage with the resident with the aim of getting a response to the proposed works. Using post-it notes, each delegate contributed ideas and responses to the questions posed. The delegates were encouraged to think expansively and after considering the situation from the resident's position, the scenario impact with the residents concerns and the question posed, to provide as many suggestions as possible - with the aim of finding solutions themes and popular ideas. The groups again moved around the tables to review each concept, validate the practicality of the suggested communication channel, and come up with any further ideas.

Themes and ideas from the groups included:

Invite resident for a coffee or to a different location or to a meeting; face to face home visit;

before any communication directly with a resident, make sure their records are up to date with needs and communication preferences; make contact by phone or in person; allocate specific experienced staff; name a trusted member of staff; offer an incentive; webpage newsflash;

Offer reassurance that we want to help; ensure eye contact; use humour; ask: 'how are you?' or ask them about themselves; discuss fear; listen!, don't judge; be empathetic; give resident time to respond; be flexible; be honest; explain situation and consequences fully; do what you say you are going to do;

Hold community events; encourage residents to join focus groups and ask focus groups for ideas; make landlord contact envelopes more appealing; work with other agencies such as fire engines on site; …

After a brief networking lunch, the groups were invited to review their ideas, reordering the post-it notes into sections, identifying similar ideas and clustering the post-it notes into themes. Were there any new ideas to bring or ones which stood out? The delegates were then each given 5 dots to vote for the solutions with the most potential.

Prototype

Once the solution with greatest potential – the one with the most dots - had been agreed for each table, the groups were asked to work on a Prototype template. This asked several specific questions: *What was the problem? What was the focus question (How might we…?), summarize the solutions and outcome. Consider next steps for implementation.*
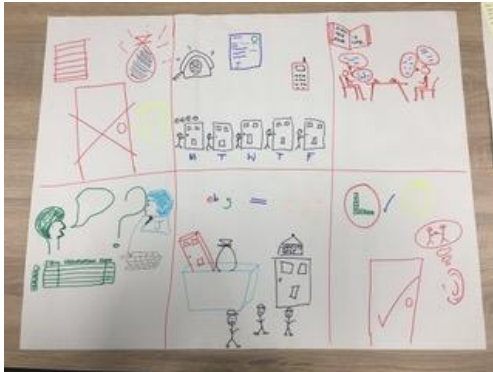
To help come up with an implementation strategy, groups also developed a 6 step storyboard of the process–to move from the problem (the first square) and to the solution (the last square). Drawings in between are the necessary intermediate steps towards the solution.

The outcomes from the prototypes suggested that the more detailed and complex the work required, the better the communication with the resident needed to be, explaining in clear language what was involved in the process, and the impacts at each step. It was important to have a chance for residents to ask questions and to provide FAQs. Photos and pictures were a useful way to relay information to residents. It was also important to ensure that all parties involved were given clear, relevant information about vulnerable residents within the GDPR regulations, to ensure the contractors were sensitive to the individual's circumstances in addition to contractual requirements of tiding up and delivering promised work in the timescale agreed.

Conclusions

Collectively the delegates felt that it was fundamental to make the first contact with a resident count. In building a trusting relationship with residents, the first impression is important. Having to revisit residents is an inconvenience to residents, costly to landlords and time consuming for all so engaging in a meaningful way with residents on the initial contact is vital to successful outcomes. It is also important to make every contact with residents count as time is a precious resource to people. The engagement between residents and landlords needs to select the most appropriate form of communication choosing between letter, email, social media, telephone or face to face meeting. No one solution fits all residents and their circumstances and additional effort is required to reach out to residents who are harder to engage, and if the initial approach is rebuffed or ignored to find and alternative approach.

Building partnerships and taking a person-centred approach is important in gaining trust and ensuring that time is used effectively when engaging with the resident. Taking steps so that residents feel valued, safe and not judged are all vitally important in the process of gaining access for fire safety critical works. Using appropriately trained internal staff and/or having a designated team (which some landlords currently have in place) and who are able to use the specific tools at their disposal (dedicated budget and resources to allow a more personalised and time efficient engagement), also help particularly finding ways to overcome obstacles to ensuring essential safety works are carried out according to plan and in a reasonable timescale.

It is important to recognise a successful outcome depends on getting the corporate cultural response right, ensuring all staff across a business understand their role to play in supporting residents and supporting the business in achieving critical works on time and in budget. Resident and Landlord engagement with the aim of undertaking critical fire safety works and gaining access into people's homes is a 'two way street' and to be effective and successful for both engagement needs to be considered, planned, appropriate and informative. The workshop was successful in bringing together ideas and reinforcing good work already being done in the sector with meaningful resident engagement for those who are harder to reach and engage.

THE JOURNEY OF THE VISUAL ILLUSTRATION BOARD
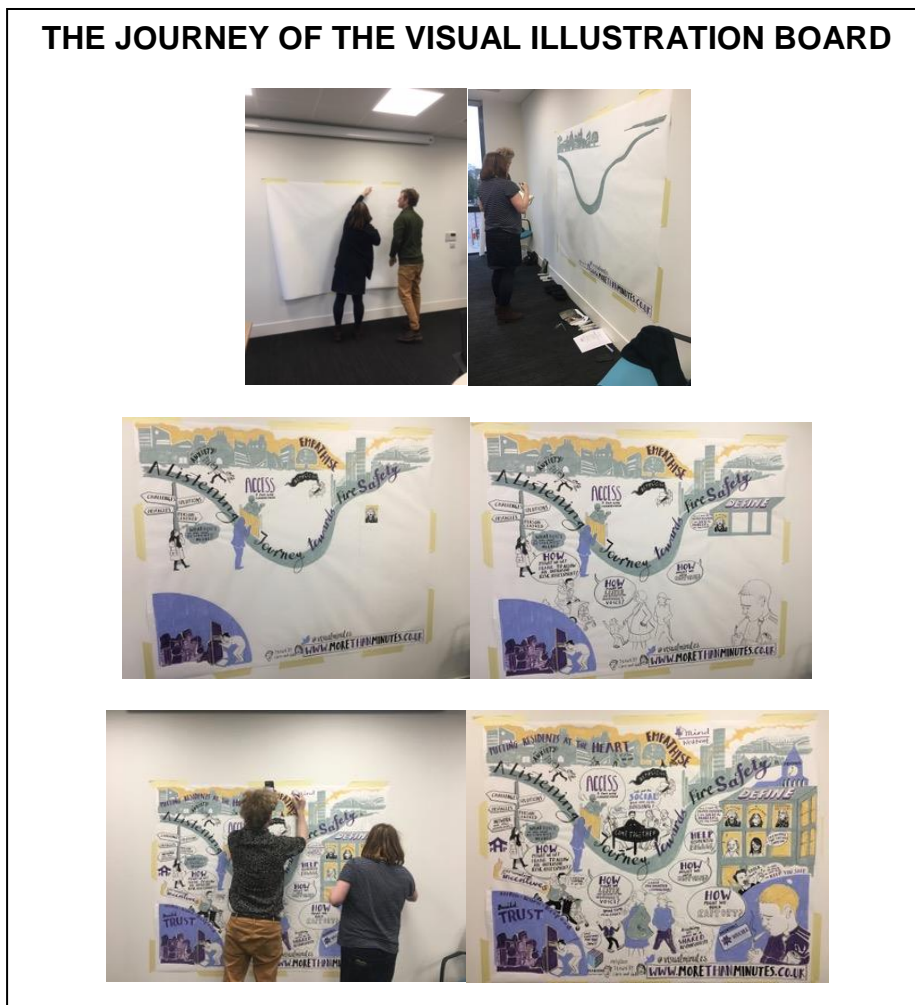
Agenda for the Workshop

Time	Item
9.45	Arrival & Refreshments
10:00	Welcome and Introductions
10.05	Outline of the day and outcomes
10.10	What is access? – definitions of access
10:20	Ice Breaker
10:30	Profiling in Round tables
10.45	Feedback Profiling Session
11.00	Scenarios carousel
11.30	Comfort Break
11.40	Define key concern with Feedback
12pm	Ideate with Feedback
12.30	LUNCH
1.15	Review of ideas
1.45	Prototype of winning solution and complete template
2.00	Storyboard the process
2.25	Feedback prototype and storyboard
2.50	Reflection questions and share with group
3.10	Closing statement
3.20	Next Steps
3.30	Finish

A Listening Workshop Confirmed Attendance List   28/11/2019

	Name	Organisation
1.	Stevie Rice	West Kent MIND Facilitator
2.	Iskra	Paradigm Housing Group
3.	Gordon	Paradigm Housing Group
4.	Dave	Poole Housing Partnership
5.	Lesly	Poole Housing Partnership
6.	Emily	Poole Housing Partnership
7.	Su	Poole Housing Partnership
8.	Dee	United Living
9.	Kate	United Living
10.	Victoria	Independent Chair of MHCLG Best Practice Group
11.	Christine	Tower Hamlet Homes
12.	Alana	L&Q
13.	Anthony	Peabody
14.	Lisa	Tower Hamlet Homes
15.	Linda	Resident
16.	Rosie	Resident
17.	David	Resident
18.	Chris	Resident
19.	Sara	Clarion Housing
20.	Sheena	Clarion Housing
21.	Michelle	Clarion Housing
22.	Becky	Clarion Housing
23.	Dawn	Clarion Housing
24.	Suzanne	Clarion Housing
25.	John	Clarion Housing
26.	Tim	Fire Authority Representative
27.	Victoria	Optivo

Slides describing the workshop activities by Stevie Rice
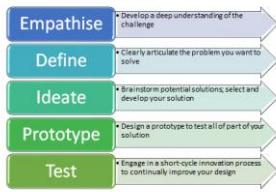
○ Give them a name, age, occupation

○ How do they spend their time?

○ What are their needs and challenges?

○ What are they concerned about?

○ What is important to them about where they live?

"If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask… for once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than five minutes."

Albert Einstein

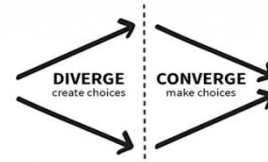How might we save parents time and money around the home….?

How might we enable people to make the perfect toast….?

How might we help consumers get more value for money on everyday items….?

How might we ….?

● What did you notice about yourself today?
● What did you learn?
● What are you excited about?
● What will you take forward in your work?

RCT TRIAL – EXAMPLE FAQ

Your Home – Drayton Road

Clarion Housing

Reed House
Peachman Way
Broadland Business Park
Norwich NR7 0WF

Telephone: 0300 500 8000
myclarionhousing.com

Your home is situated in a building that we class as a converted street property. In these buildings, we rely on early warning of fire to ensure that occupants are out of the building in less than 2.5 minutes.

The purpose of the works are to ensure that if there was a fire within one of the flats in the building, the other residents are notified by the interlinked alarm and can evacuate their property.

This is to help ensure residents safety which is paramount to us.

What will the work consist of?

The work consists of an alarm installation. This will be an Aico interlinked fire detection system made up of smoke detectors and heat detectors. The smoke detectors will be located in living spaces and communal areas, and the heat detectors will be located in the kitchen and internal circulation spaces. Alarms will be linked to the communal area and other flats.

Does the link between the alarms mean that there will be more nuisance/false alarms?

The heat detectors are the only ones linked to the communal area and the rest of the flats within the block. They are triggered when temperatures reach 58°C. This significantly reduces the likelihood of nuisance/false alarms between flats but ensures that in the event of a genuine fire, residents will be notified at the earliest opportunity.

How much are the works going to cost?

Clarion Housing are not charging for the initial installation, but there will be a service charge for the ongoing servicing of equipment of between £1 - £3 per building per week. This will be charged to residents where the tenancy agreement / lease permits this.

I receive Housing Benefit, will they pay the additional service charge costs?

If you receive full housing benefit, they will pick up this cost.

What will happen if I don't want the works to take place?

It's important for your safety and other residents living in the building's safety that these works are done. If you don't provide access for these works, legal action may be taken against you.

How long will the works take to complete?

The works will take between 2 - 3 hours to complete.

Do you do out of hours appointments?

Yes we're flexible and willing to attend out of hours so that these works can be completed.

When will the new equipment be serviced?

Once installed, we will be carrying out regular checks on the alarms throughout the building and flats to ensure that they are operating how they should be. This will occur every 6 months and in some instances, quarterly visits may be necessary. On servicing visits, our contractor will only need access to the communal areas. The detectors installed in flats have the capability to be checked remotely, so access into your flat will only be necessary if a fault is reported.

How long will the alarm system last?

The Aico alarms being installed have a 10 year battery lifespan. You will be notified leading up to this point to advise on arrangements for replacement.

BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES – BASED ON APPROACH IN POOLE

ACCESS WHEN A TENANT HAS COMPLEX NEEDS

<u>**Introduction**</u>

Landlords are required to ensure that the properties that they let are maintained to a good standard and that health and safety checks are completed regularly and to the required level. Tenancy conditions will set out how and when residents should provide access to landlords in order to complete these duties and while these will vary from organisation to organisation, overall legislative standards remain consistent across England and Wales.

Access to properties works well when all parties behave in a manner that facilitates timely and appropriate actions and appointments are made and kept as expected. However often residents (and sometimes contractors) do not behave as expected and this leads to concerns from landlords about gaining access. Sometimes this is because residents display a range of complex needs and low level or undiagnosed mental health conditions that hamper communication between the landlord and resident concerned. Often the complex behaviour that makes it difficult for a landlord to achieve all of its duties will manifest itself in other behaviours that may lead to property condition issues that increase the risk of fire or other potential property damage.

It is therefore essential that landlords have protocols and approaches that work when interacting with residents with complex needs and behaviours. These will need to be developed within each organisation to reflect the needs, types of properties and specific requirements relevant to that organisation. These guidelines provide an overview of the approach taken by Poole Housing Partnership to gain access when hoarding or self neglect is identified, but can equally be applied across all areas where complex behaviours exist and coincide with property access concerns. These are not designed to provide a solution for all providers on all issues but can be used to develop understanding and as a sounding board for local discussions.

<u>**Background**</u>

1. What is hoarding or self neglect?

Hoarding is a distinct mental health disorder that has its own treatment pathway and is usually expressed through the purposeful saving of possessions regardless of value. People suffering from hoarding will experience distress if these items are removed. Self neglect relates to a lack of self care by an individual and can manifest itself via a lack of personal hygiene, nutrition, hydration and/or health. Both conditions will often lead to situations where the safety of surroundings cannot be guaranteed and this means that there is a property condition concern for the landlord. Part of the conditions will be to refuse input from services that could mitigate the risk of harm either to the individual, the safeguarding of children or dependents in a property or the property itself.

Both situations require a managed and long term approach in order to safeguard the individual and any related persons and to manage access to a property in order to undertake effective property condition actions.

2.   Impact on Fire Risk

When identified, properties that demonstrate hoarding or self neglect issues must have fire risk considered. There are no national studies on the fire risk from hoarding, but anecdotally Fire Services would identify that 25% of accidental domestic fire deaths involve an element of hoarding or self neglect. This is demonstrated by the risks associated when attending a fire in a property with a high number of belongings, with expected difficulties for the Fire Service being –

- Difficulty in gaining access
- Difficulty in making progress through the property
- Difficulty in locating a casualty
- Difficulty in locating gas and electricity shut offs
- Potential for fires to be hotter due to higher than average quantities of flammable materials within the property
- Difficulty in applying water to the seat of the fire

The management of hoarding or self neglect actions within a property is therefore a critical element of managing fire risk across the property portfolio for a landlord.

3.   What is the level of prevalence of hoarding or self neglect

It is estimated that between 2-5% of the adult population in the UK are known to have some tendency to hoard that may impact on the condition of the property within which they live. Therefore for every 10,000 homes a landlord looks after there could be up to 500 properties at increased fire risk due to hoarding or self neglect by the resident.

4.   Approach in Poole

Like many social landlords, Poole Housing Partnership identified a number of residents that were hoarding items over the years and have worked to develop a set of guidelines to support officers when interacting with the residents. The over arching aim is to support the resident to sustain a tenancy while enabling that resident to be safe in the property and that all property condition duties of both the landlord and the resident are complied with.

4.1   Who does what and why?

The approach in Poole is a person centred approach that places care and support around the individual identified. The approach is led by a specialist officer in the housing enforcement and engagement team, but all housing officers are expected to be able to manage and develop a working relationship with individuals.

The approach uses a number of principles alongside a designated flow chart and agreed approach. These principles focus on finding a way to work with the resident that can achieves the aims of the landlord – either delivering regular landlord duties or reducing impact on property condition - and to improve the situation within which the resident lives. There are always consequences for the resident for non compliance but the focus is person centred rather than following a set procedure and expected to deliver results.

4.2 Mental Capacity assumptions

It is important to ensure that the approach to the resident follows a set of key principles when dealing with an individual who may (or may not) demonstrate behaviours that stem from an underlying mental health disorder. These mental capacity principles are as follows –

- Capacity is assumed
  Every adult has the right to make his or her own decisions and must be assumed to have capacity to do so unless it is proved otherwise

- Right to be supported
  All individuals have the right to be supported to make their own decisions and people must be given all appropriate help before any conclusion is drawn that they cannot make their own decisions

- The right to make unwise decisions
  All individuals retain the right to make what can be seen as eccentric or unwise decisions

- Best Interests
  When someone is without capacity, anything done for or on their behalf must be in their best interests

- Least Restrictive Intervention
  When making decisions for or on behalf of someone without capacity, the least restrictive option should always be taken, as long as it is still in heir best interests

4.3 Working with Key Agencies

There are a number of key agencies that can support the work of the landlord when a hoarding or self neglect area is identified. However it is likely that other agencies will engage for only part of the solution with regards to that which is most relevant to them, the overall issue of managing the property condition and risk of fire remains with the landlord. It is therefore expected that the landlord will remain the lead agency when seeking resolution to the issue and working with the resident concerned but will sometimes be supported by other agencies to deal with specific elements of concern.

- Adult Social Care

Adult social care will be expected to be a key partner of any landlord when dealing with hoarding or self neglect. It is likely that the individual will be known to both the landlord and social services and the landlord would expect to work jointly as part of a multi disciplinary team to gain the best outcome for the individual.

How this team would operate will reflect local arrangements and the overall assessment of need. A landlord should consider the following approaches to build the multi disciplinary team around the resident –

- Care Act context and responsibilities of the social services team
- Assessment of need within a social services context and the outcomes that the landlord is seeking to deliver
- Raising a safeguarding concern and action required of social services to manage that concern
- Referral to a "Self Neglect & Hoarding Panel" locally to coordinate responses

It is also important to ensure that the landlord liaises closely with family if appropriate and allowed. They will also be impacted by the behaviour of the resident and likely to support approaches to seek resolution.

- Children Services

Any children living in a property where there is hoarding or self neglect may be impacted by this behaviour and this could have an effect on their physical safety, emotional well being and / or their development. If there any children at a property then multi agency working will be crucial to reduce risk and an early referral to Children's social care is required if local LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children Board) thresholds are met.

- Health

Local health services will be critical to help support the ongoing health needs of the individual and may help to deliver better overall outcomes for the resident and impact on property management. Consideration should be given to working with the local GP to support referrals for the most common treatments in these types of cases. They would be –

- Referral to the community mental health team
- Referral to memory loss clinic
- Referral to steps to well being
- Blood tests and other relevant physical health checks

- Environmental Services

The effect of the deterioration in property condition is likely to lead in environmental concerns. Examples of such concerns would be

- Increase in pests present in the property
- Unpleasant odour emitting from the property
- High levels of waste found in and around the property
- Impact on drainage from the property
- Concern for animal welfare

These concerns are likely to impact on both the resident and any neighbours of the property.

Council environmental health services do have powers to serve notices to residents where the condition of the property is "prejudicial to health" or the premises "are verminous". These services also have powers to access the property where action is not taken to resolve an ongoing condition. These powers may be helpful in some circumstances to gain access but it should be noted that there is a high level of recurrence of the same behaviours following enforcement actions, therefore they should only be considered as part of a longer term strategy to address the root causes of hoarding or self neglect.

Other actions are likely to focus on actions to change behaviours and reward ongoing changes via pest control, rubbish removal and / or cleaning

- Other

There are many other agencies that may be appropriate to engage with and these should be considered on a case by case basis. These would include (but not limited to) the following

- Churches
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Day / Community Centres
- Social Prescription Services
- Age Concern
- British Red Cross
- Advocacy Service
- Mencap

4.4   Practical Steps

Properties may be reported via a variety of methods that identify that there are access issues within a property and that there may be property condition issues. Within PHP these would trigger a referral to the Engagement and Enforcement Team to identify if the resident will be managed via the complex needs approach or via normal access management protocols.

If accepted under the complex needs, the key elements of approach are described in the step by step procedure note. It must be noted that the steps are based on an underlying culture that seeks to find the individual solution for each tenant. Sustaining a tenancy is the most cost effective way to manage the approach and the best outcome for the resident. Consideration should be given to who will best engage with the resident and how this may be done given all the information available. Enforcement action is the last resort after all opportunities have been made available to tenants to engage and after different officers have tried to secure a breakthrough in communications.

Resident Engagement: Phoenix Community Housing Chat & Chips Programme

Chat & Chips is an initiative that engages with residents on their estates or in their local areas giving fish, sausages or halloumi and chips in return for chatting and engaging with staff. The locations are determined by the business needs of service areas across the organisation. The engagement is a mixture of consultation and information giving, most notably post-Grenfell, fire safety. Residents who attend must speak to each member of staff present before receiving their fish and chips and fruit.

Fourteen Phoenix teams were represented at one or more of the eight events from June – September 2019, and 385 adults and children representing 181 unique households attended. This has been particularly successful in reaching residents who have not engaged previously (64%). Twenty-seven households signed up for the resident Gold Membership scheme and 54% booked to attend the Annual General Meeting. Residents were consulted on the Community Engagement & Empowerment Strategy and some residents have become members of advisory groups. Satisfaction was very high (95%) with both the information and service provided by staff. Residents consistently said how informative the event had been and how much they enjoyed meeting staff face-to-face.

REPORT END