

Social Housing Professionalisation Review

Topic Guide: Tenant-facing staff

J11741

Date 8/9/23

A Introduction (3 minutes)

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research project that DLUHC have asked us, IFF Research, to carry out for them.

Background

DLUHC have commissioned IFF Research to carry out research to better understand professional skills among social landlord staff. Essentially, we're seeking to understand what you need to provide a professional service to tenants.

Interview

The interview will last about 30 minutes, depending on what you have to say. Do let me know if you're pressed for time. The discussion guide was designed for a range of audiences – there may be a few pauses while I find the right questions to ask in your situation. Please do say if you're finding the questions difficult, or they stray into areas which you don't know enough about to comment.

Confidentiality

IFF Research is an independent market research company, and we are members of the Market Research Society, and must follow its Code of Conduct. Anything you tell us will be treated in confidence, and none of your answers will be attributed to you personally, or to your organisation, unless you give explicit permission for us to do so. The information we collect will be used only for the purposes of this research project.

Under GDPR legislation, you have the right to have a copy of your data, change your data or withdraw from the research at any point. If you'd like to do this, please ask, or you can consult the IFF Research website, or give us a call. We will be recording the interview, just so that I don't have to take too many notes as we go along. The recording will be stored securely, used for analysis purposes only, and not transferred outside IFF Research. **Is this OK?**

I will need you to complete a consent form – you can submit this after the interview if you haven't already.

START RECORDING

IF ASKED: iffresearch.com/gdpr – 020 7250 3035 – IFF Research, 5th Floor, St. Magnus House, 3 Lower Thames Street, London, EC3R 6HD

Do you have any questions before we start?

B Introduce the policy (1 minute)

We'd like to talk about the Social Housing White Paper and related work. We'll be speaking to a variety of people about this, but for this interview we're interested in your own views and experience at your organisation.

Following the Grenfell Tower tragedy, the 2018 Green Paper "A new deal for social housing" highlighted that some residents felt they were not being listened to or treated with courtesy and respect by their landlords. Off the back of this, in November 2020, the Government published a Social Housing White Paper, which sets out new expectations for customer service at social landlords.

As a result, DLUHC are now holding a review of professional standards at social landlords, aiming to drive up standards by better equipping social landlord staff to assist their tenants. It will provide recommendations for change, based on feedback from landlords, staff and residents, and this interview is part of that.

C Your role (6 minutes)

Firstly, we'd like to find out more about your role as a tenant-facing staff member.

ASK ALL

C1 **So, could you briefly describe your career path so far?**

- How long have you worked within social housing?
- Why did you consider this career path?
- Have you ever lived in social housing?
 - IF YES: did this influence you to work within social housing, and in particular this role?

ASK ALL

C2 **If you were looking for someone to do a similar role to yours at a social landlord, what would you look for?**

- What are the really important things you need for the role?
- How important are the qualifications and training you had before?

ASK ALL

C3 **Is there another role, outside of housing, which you think is particularly similar to your role?**

D Your organisation's approach (10 minutes)

I'd now just like to ask a bit about your organisation's approach to professional training and development.

ASK ALL

D1 **First of all, in your opinion, how do you define a professional service?**

- What are the skills and behaviours needed to deliver a professional service?
- When tenants don't receive a professional service, what do you think are the most common causes of that?
- In your opinion, how important do you think providing a professional service to tenants is to your organisation?

ASK ALL

D2 **What kind of training have you received to help you work with tenants?**

- Probe regarding specific types of training (mental health, empathy, safeguarding, domestic abuse, dealing with conflict?)
- Did the training come before or after you first needed the skills?
- How useful has this training been in your role?

ASK UNLESS NO TRAINING

D3 **How much do you need to ask for training yourself?**

- Are you aware of the types of training out there which you could ask for?

ASK UNLESS NO TRAINING

D4 **Do you receive refresher training, or CPD (Continual Professional Development) sessions?**

ASK UNLESS NO TRAINING

D5 **When you receive training, do you feel that generally there is a plan going forward for your development through your career?**

- Can you describe the process involved?
- How easy or difficult is it to get this training when you ask for it?

ASK ALL

D6 **Do you attend any events or conferences to support you within your role?**

- Is this actively encouraged by your organisation?

ASK ALL

D7 **To what extent do you feel supported when dealing with difficult issues with tenants?**

- What kind of support mechanisms are offered to you?
- Do you provide / receive informal peer to peer support? In what ways?

ASK ALL

D8 **How does the organisation monitor your performance in terms of how you deal with tenants?**

- Is feedback from tenants relayed back to you?
- Is this used to support your development?

E Joint working (5 minutes)

ASK ALL

E1 **When you encounter an issue which requires another department or agency to deal with it, how confident do you feel that you know who to pass it on to?**

- How do you pass this on?
- Is there anything that makes this difficult?
- To what extent do you remain involved after handing the issue on?

ASK ALL

E2 **To what extent do you feel you have learned from other organisations or agencies you have worked with to support your role?**

- Do you feel staff at these other organisations treat social landlord staff with respect?

F Looking forward (5 minutes)

Now I'd like to talk a bit about the future in terms of professional development and training.

ASK ALL

- F1 **What would help you to deliver a more professional service to tenants?** (prompts: training, support, resources, feedback, leadership from management)
- What needs to change to enable that?
 - *IF TRAINING*: What sort of training? (prompts: customer services, mental health, safeguarding, domestic abuse, dealing with conflict, teamwork, time management, Housing Studies qualification)

ASK ALL

- F2 **Is there anything that could be improved about the support available to you to work with tenants in your role?** (prompt: from employer or anywhere else)

G Thank and Close (2 minutes)

ASK ALL

- G1 **And is there anything else related to what we have been talking about today that you'd like to add?**

Before you go, just for the recording, I need to state that this interview has been carried out under IFF instructions and within the rules of the MRS Code of Conduct.

On behalf of the team at IFF Research and DLUHC, thank you very much for taking the time to help us with our research. If you haven't yet sent us the consent form, please do send it over by email after the interview.