

# Social Housing Professionalisation Review

## Topic Guide: Tenant Focus Group

J11741

Date 8/9/23

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### A Introduction (4 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 is needed for their staff to successfully provide a professional service. Throughout, we're including people who may not work directly for your landlord, such as people doing repairs.

#### Focus Group

The focus group will last about an hour. You're all welcome to contribute – please do ask if you don't understand anything.

#### 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 focus group, just so that I don't have to take too many notes as we go along. The recording will be stored securely, used only to write up the focus group, and not given to anyone outside IFF Research. **Is this OK?**

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

#### **START RECORDING**

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

**Does anyone have any questions before we start?**

## B Introduce the policy (2 minutes)

First of all, we should explain a bit of background about why we're doing this research.

In 2018, a government Green Paper 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, the government 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 focus group is part of that.

## C Your experiences as a tenant (25 minutes)

To begin with, we'd like to talk about your experiences as tenants in terms of the professional skills of your landlord's staff, or people working for them indirectly, for example people doing maintenance or providing care and support services.

ASK ALL

C1 **So, first of all, how long have you lived in housing owned by this landlord?**

- Are any of you a part of any resident committees, associations or panels?
- Have any of you ever worked within social housing?

ASK ALL

C1a **How knowledgeable do the staff or subcontractor operatives you encounter seem?**

- Does anyone have any examples of this?
  - *IF RELEVANT*: How did this make you feel?
- Does this differ depending on the type of service? If so how? Why do you think that may be?

ASK ALL

C1b **How motivated are they to deal with your concerns when you speak to them?**

- Does anyone have any examples of this?
  - *IF RELEVANT*: How did this make you feel?

ASK ALL

C1c **How able are they to ensure issues that you raise are dealt with?**

- Does anyone have any examples of this?
  - *IF RELEVANT*: How did this make you feel?
- Do you trust that they will do what they say they will do?
- Do they keep you informed?
  - *IF NEGATIVE*: What went wrong? How did it relate, if at all, to the professional skills of the staff you encountered?

ASK ALL

C2 **Do you feel you're treated with respect by your landlord's staff or their subcontractors?**

- Does anyone have any examples of this?
  - How did this make you feel?
- Is there anything which could improve your perception of that [further]?
- Did you report your concerns to your landlord?

ASK ALL

C3 **Do you feel you're treated fairly by your landlord's staff or their subcontractors?**

- Does anyone have any examples of this?
- Is there anything which could improve that [further]?

ASK ALL

C4 **Overall, what has your experience been like when receiving customer services from your landlord?**

- What factors do you think [could] contribute to a [more] positive experience when dealing with your landlord?

ASK ALL

C5 **Do you feel like your landlord listens and acts on the concerns you raise?**

## D Professionalisation (10 minutes)

**I'd now just like to ask a bit about your landlord's approach to professional training and development of their staff and their subcontractors.**

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 landlord?

ASK TO ALL

D2 **In your opinion how important is it to you to receive a professional service from your landlord?**

- Why do you say this?

ASK ALL

D3 **How important is it to you that your landlord's staff or their subcontractors have a 'professional' attitude?**

- Why do you say think this?

ASK ALL

D4 **How 'professional' generally would you describe the staff you encounter from your landlord, or their subcontractors?**

- *(Customers may link professionalism with communication and repairs – getting basic things right)*
- Does this differ depending on method of communication?
  - On the telephone?
  - On email?
  - In person?
- Does this differ depending on the situation?
  - When you have queries or questions?
  - When following up on an issue?
  - When something goes wrong?

## E Looking forward (10 minutes)

**Now I'd like to ask you to think about the future in terms of your landlord's approach to professionalism of staff and their subcontractors.**

ASK ALL

E1 **Does your landlord engage with you or request your feedback on staff?**

- Do you feel your feedback is proactively used to further develop staff?
- Do you feel you influence staff training or development?

ASK ALL

E2 **What things does your landlord do well and should continue?**

ASK ALL

E3 **What, in your view, do landlords need to do differently, so that you receive a more professional service from them, as a tenant?**

- What could your landlord improve?  
(Prompt: reporting to tenants, use feedback proactively from tenants)

## F Thank and Close (3 mins)

ASK ALL

F1 **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.**