



STOP SOCIAL HOUSING STIGMA

Stigma in social housing: what tenants told us

What this is

We asked tenants across the country how much stigma affects them. Hundreds of you shared your views and experiences — good and bad. Many thanks to every tenant who did! This is a summary of what you told us.

What you said about stigma

70% of the tenants who responded to us said they feel stigmatised
54% said it's because of something their landlord has done

Why?

Many of you feel looked down on

Tenants told us you are often:

- Spoken to rudely
- Treated like you're stupid
- Not believed
- Treated as "less than"

**"Staff view us as
scrounging, lazy,
undesirable people"**
**"Workmen talk to you like
you should be grateful"**

Repairs and poor conditions make stigma worse

Tenants said:

- Repairs take too long
- Work is rushed or badly done
- Homes are left damp, mouldy, or unsafe
- Communal areas look run-down

This makes tenants feel embarrassed about where they live.

Anti-social behaviour is not dealt with properly

Many tenants said:

- ASB is ignored
- Victims are left to gather evidence
- Problems go on for years

Whole neighbourhoods look bad, but most tenants do nothing wrong.

The media adds to the problem

Tenants said TV and social media show social housing neighbourhoods as dangerous, dirty and full of crime, feeding stereotypes that hurt everyone.

Some tenants feel ashamed — and hide where they live

Tenants told us:

- They avoid telling others their address
- They don't invite friends over
- They feel judged

“Being a tenant has left me feeling worthless”

But ... not everyone feels stigmatised

25% of the tenants who responded said:

- Their landlord treats them with respect
- Repairs are managed well
- Their homes and neighbourhoods are well looked after
- They feel proud of where they live

This tells us that stigma can be reduced — if things are done right.

What Stop Social Housing Stigma is doing about it

Stop Social Housing Stigma:

- provides opportunities for our tenant and other members to talk about how stigma affects them
- is getting publicity for the views that tenants expressed to us
- has come up with ways that landlords can work with tenants to tackle stigma and we will develop more
- talks to Government about what it is doing to tackle stigma
- is asking the other major political parties what they think
- we have launched a call to action – the full call to action is available here – below is a summary

Our call to action – key asks

We ask everyone to:

- be shocked by the statistics we have gathered in this survey
- sign up as members of the campaign – its FREE. Tenants, everyone else and organisations can sign up – you sign up here

We ask tenants to:

- ask your landlord to sign up as members of the Campaign (it's FREE)
- discuss the tenant survey report at your next tenant meeting
- ask your landlord what it is doing to tackle stigma
- invite us to talk to your tenant group and to your landlord
- tell your Chief Executive and Board members (if you are a housing association tenant) or your Director of Housing and your Councillors (if you are a Council tenant) about our call to action
- discuss our Tackling Stigma Journey Planner with your landlord
- get involved with discussions with your landlord about what language, behaviours and attitudes are acceptable
- don't take no for an answer. Stigma is fundamental for most tenants

We ask the Government and Regulator to:

- develop a tackling stigma vision and publicise a national strategy to send a clear message that you want to tackle social housing stigma
- require that landlords have a tackling stigma strategy

We ask landlords to:

- engage with and contribute to the Campaign's activities
- have ongoing dialogue with tenants about how best to tackle stigma
- change your culture, behaviours and attitudes
- consider language you use – are you promoting a culture of home
- don't let anything happen in a tenant's home that you would not want to happen in your home

68% of the tenants who responded to us said that the Government had done little or nothing about it

Our report concludes with **key questions** for Government, the housing sector and society in general:

- How do we rethink social housing as a desirable option for a home?
- How do we celebrate social housing?
- How do tenants and landlords work together to tackle stigma?
- How do we promote tenure blind design?
- What is needed to develop the right culture, attitudes, behaviours and language?
- What is Government's role in tackling social housing stigma?

A final message from tenants:

“Treat us with dignity, and the stigma will fall away”