

SEE THE PERSON.

NOT THE STEREOTYPES

#SeeThePerson

@2benefitsociety

www.seetheperson.org

Martyn Lund, Campaign Chair, See The Person campaign, ARCH national committee, tenant of Kettering

Yaw Boateng, See the Person campaign, ARCH national committee, tenant of Croydon

Chris Moseley, Vice-Chair, See the Person campaign, tenant of Homes in Sedgemoor

Pam Hankinson, See the Person campaign, tenant of South Yorkshire Housing Association

About the campaign

- Founded 2017
- Tenant led committee
- 30+ housing organisations sponsor
- Aim to tackle negative stereotypes and stigma about living in social housing



Quick quiz!

1. What % of households in England live in social housing?
2. What % of people renting social housing in England are unemployed?
3. What % of people renting social housing in England are aged 55 or older?
4. What % of people renting social housing in England say the media portrays them in a negative light?

- Answers!

- * Do you think there is a stigma around social housing? Why? Discuss!



Why is there a stigma?

LSE research says:

Findings


- Social housing is increasingly a residualised sector. A reduction in numbers of properties, together with changes in housing policy, have led to the sector housing more vulnerable households.¹
- Fewer people now have direct experience of social housing and increasingly it is seen as a tenure of last choice and as a safety net. The public over-estimate the number of people in social housing who are unemployed.²
- This view of social housing is reflected in pejorative media programming, recognised in 'poverty porn' and moralising broadcasting such as *Benefits Street* and *Council House Crackdown*, which specifically link tenure and benefits status together, also drawing links to perceptions of unacceptable behaviours.² 90% of tenants say the media portrays a stereotype of social housing tenants.⁴
- Social housing tenants have a very different perspective and their narrative shows the value of community in their local area and of their volunteering, caring and work roles.²
- This narrative is supported by the English Housing Survey which shows that 70% of social housing tenants are in work or retired, with just 7% unemployed. The remaining 22% are unable to work due to caring responsibilities or disability with 1% in full time education. Tenants recognise the contributions made to society by all these people.¹
- Social housing tenants view an increase in stigma as being one of the major challenges to the tenure and to their wellbeing.²

Experience of stigma – quotes from survey 2019

- *“It is still a misheld believe that people in social housing are somehow less intelligent and therefore less able to make informed decisions about all sorts of issues from politics to their own housing needs. Social Housing tenants often feel they are of no worth as no one seems to listen or take seriously their opinions. There is still the idea that they should be grateful for their home and they should shut up and put up with it.”*

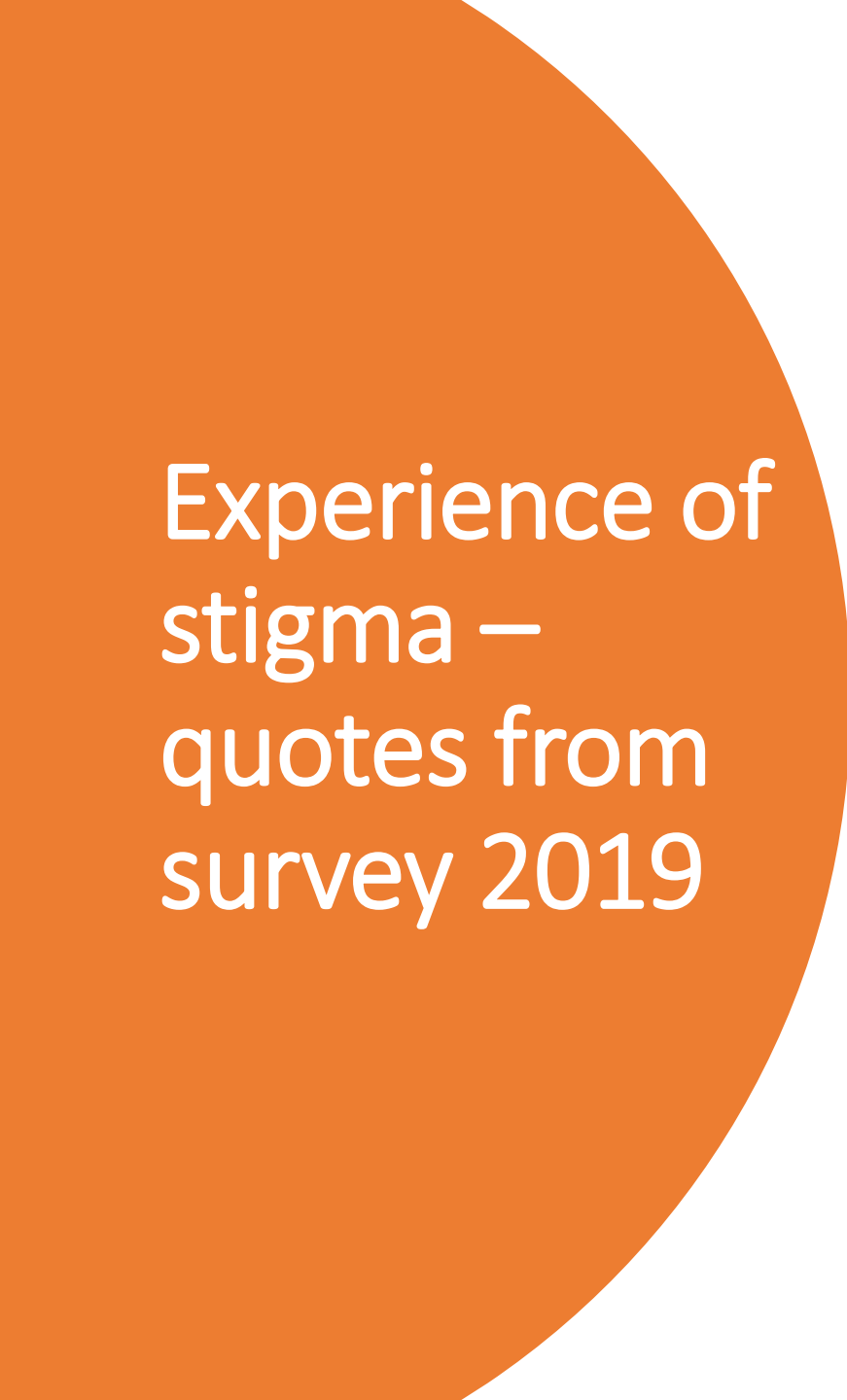
Experience of stigma – quotes from survey 2019

“A neighbour who had bought their house started moaning from the day I moved in about me being a single mum, (I was separated after my husband walked out on me and my children after 20 yrs). I was heartbroken at having to move and start all over again. I was working and supporting my children but that was not good enough for my neighbour, he never had a good word to say about me or my children and it got me down.”




Experience of stigma – quotes from survey 2019

"I work in social housing (three HAs, 15 years in total). The worst negative stereotyping has been from colleagues... I heard one colleague say: "You can tell who's in social housing, their curtains are filthy." At the same HA, I told another colleague that I had bumped into one of our tenants in town who I knew from our Tenants' Panel - this tenant had given me a hug. My colleague said: "You let a tenant hug you? Ew, gross!" I reminded both colleagues that I was also a tenant - cue apologies from them."

A large orange circle on the left side of the slide, partially overlapping the text area.

Experience of stigma – quotes from survey 2019

“I do not tell anyone other than those closest that our home is social rented, most will assume it is private rented, as many of these properties are having been sold off. I feel I have to keep it a secret to avoid stigma. I believe that the road has a stigma attached as a 'poorer road' despite being mixed tenure and a peaceful, well kept, low crime area. I dread contractors coming in to do work...as they often show little respect and express stereotypes about who or how they expect you to live. I feel as if I need to prove myself, and it is ridiculous, I shouldn't.”

A decorative graphic consisting of several short, curved yellow dashes arranged in a curved path at the bottom right of the slide.

Impact of stigma

1. Personal

“Serious anxiety in a place that you should feel most comfortable.”

“I feel ashamed to say that I live in social housing”

“It's painful to be looked down on and to know that to some you're a second class person.”

2. Family / community

A number of people reported their children's friends were told not to play with them after they had visited and parents realised they lived in social housing

People avoiding my neighbourhood / making assumptions about it



Impact of stigma

- Impact on support for new social housing?
- Impact on funding for new social housing?





- 15 tenants
- From around the country
- Working locally and nationally
- Mailing list of nearly 500 people who support us

See the Person Committee

Campaign achievements

- House of Commons launch in 2018 – with Housing Minister
- Last PM acknowledged stigma of social housing is an issue – we haven't heard from current PM
- Green Paper has a chapter on tackling stigma – tenant campaign leaders invited to discuss with the MHCLG
- Previous Housing Minister signed our pledge to tackle negative stereotyping
- We reached more than 300,000 people through social media
- LSE research published setting out the background of stigma
- Reprint of Fair Press for Tenants (our publication with the NUJ)
- Working with MHCLG on White paper (and working, and working...)

... but there is more to do



John Popham
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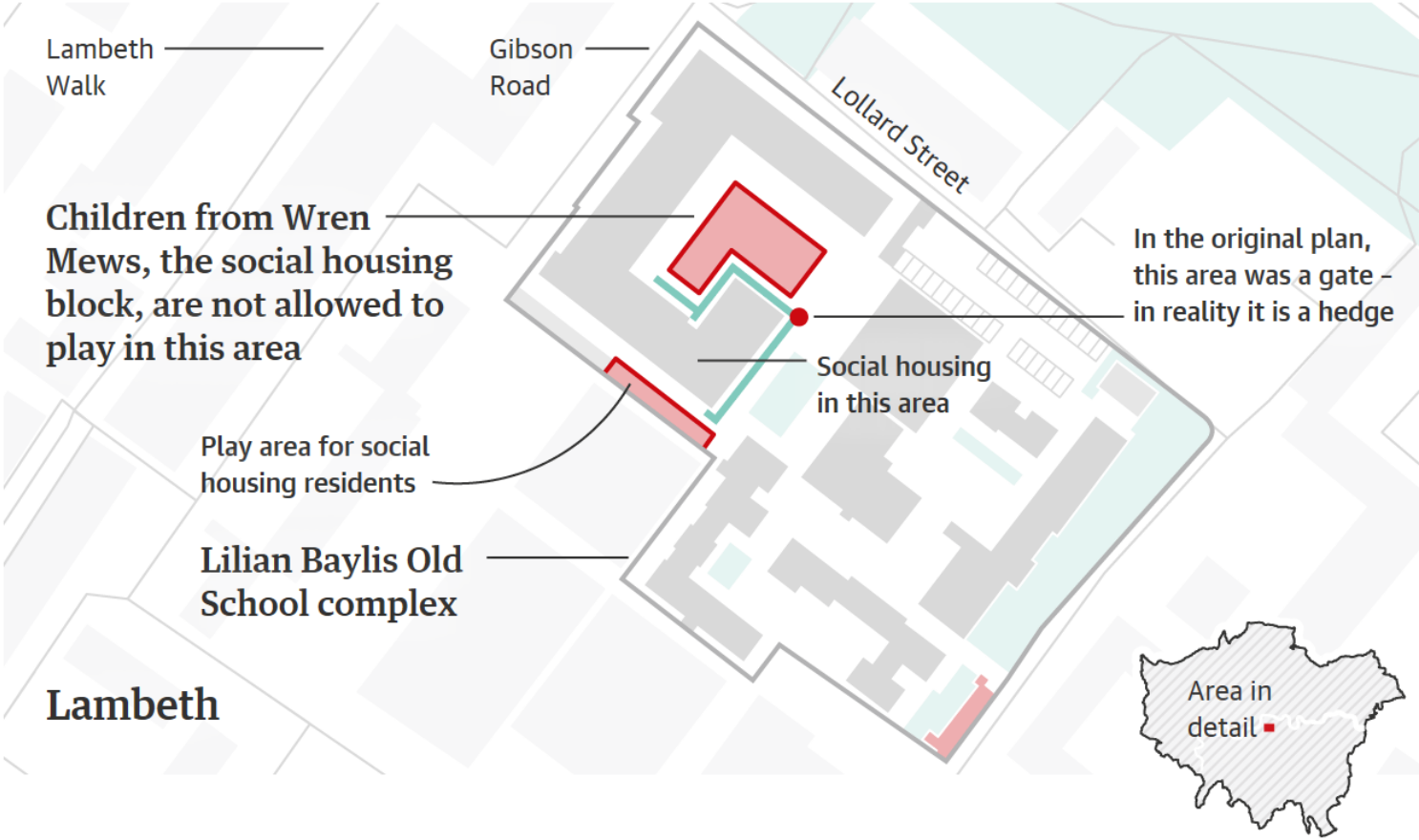
Following

This is the BBC adding to the stigma of social housing tenants on today of all days
[#NHF2018](#) [#NHF18](#) [#ukhousing](#)



8:59 AM - 19 Sep 2018 from [Huddersfield, England](#)

Social housing residents have been blocked from using shared play spaces at a 149-home development in south London



Guardian graphic

Current work

- MHCLG – questions in British Attitudinal Survey – they are taking it seriously!
- MHCLG – white paper – new housing minister?
- CIH joint project toolkit for landlord – watch this space!



Toolkit

- Working with the CIH
- Why we need a toolkit
- What we've done so far
- How you can get involved





https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRj_NgZEHXg