

Institution: London School of Economics and Political Science		
Unit of Assessment: 20 – Social Work and Social Policy		
Title of case study: Housing Plus – giving social housing tenants a voice		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2000-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Anne Power	Professor of Social Policy	1998-2020
Bert Provan	Senior Research Fellow	2011 to present
Laura Lane	Research Officer	2005 to present
Eleanor Benton	Research Assistant	2017 to present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Poor management and maintenance of social housing has well-evidenced negative impacts on the health and wellbeing of social housing tenants. LSE Housing and Communities' research illustrating the effectiveness of tenant-focused neighbourhood management has influenced providers to engage and empower local tenants and residents to deliver the better management of their estates. This has also included facilitating tenant input into enforcement on fire safety regulations, crime, and anti-social behaviour. This has been enabled through the efforts of the Housing Plus Academy – an academic/service provider/professional association partnership spearheaded by LSE Housing and Communities since 2015. It has reached over 1,500 tenants, housing providers, and local and central government officials through residential training and workshops. A body of research led by Professor Anne Power has been influential in driving forward operational best practices among social housing providers and advising national government. It has:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Prompted social housing providers to: (i) give tenants a voice and ability to participate in decisions about their estates, including in relation to fire safety; and (ii) implement neighbourhood management practices. (2) Informed UK Government consultation, strategy, and policy development. (3) Guided social housing landlords to foster new community actions tackling inequality and promoting community resilience in times of austerity. 		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>There are currently around one and half million people (tenants and owners) living in high-rise, council-built flats. LSE Housing and Communities has conducted qualitative research with social housing tenants and leaseholders living in blocks of flats in multi-storey estates around the country. This involves gathering residents' experiences and views, developing plans for estate upgrading, and collecting messages which are shared with landlords and professional bodies. Most recently this approach was brought to the urgent need to learn lessons from the 2017 Grenfell fire disaster [1]. This research drew on many years of prior research, described below, which had found that tenants and leaseholders wish and need to be respected, listened to, informed, and to count as equal-status partners with their social housing landlords. In the Grenfell context, the specific findings were that there was a need for on-site management, a single point of control for all high-rise buildings, an MOT-equivalent test for multi-storey blocks, and an approach of drawing on the lived experience of all residents within blocks. In particular, this includes the need to engage residents in the enforcement of safety regulations relating to the risks of fire, crime, and anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>The previous research and advocacy spans three decades. Within the REF research period, investigation of conditions in poor neighbourhoods identified the key drivers of poor outcomes for residents – those outcomes including disrepair, fuel poverty, low energy efficiency, unsuitable housing management, and a lack of empowerment. Power's review of ten years of government programmes focused on improving poor neighbourhoods [2] shows that neighbourhood management – a coordinated and localised effort to tackle basic area conditions and environments</p>		

– delivers measurable improvements in outcomes that can restore confidence, encourage investment, and signal wider progress, outperforming different approaches in comparable areas. Significant rises in resident satisfaction were also seen. The cost of organising this additional layer of supervision was relatively modest. It pays for itself in reduced vandalism and disrepair, and generates a form of self-policing by making streets and open spaces people-friendly again, attracting people and activities back. Complementary qualitative analysis from 1,400 in-depth interviews over 10 years with 200 families bringing up children in difficult neighbourhoods in East London and Northern England [3] provided longitudinal qualitative evidence around specific aspects of the impact of neighbourhood renewal and management, community cohesion, and empowerment. It documented views on why community matters, schools as community anchors, crime, safety and prevention, family ill-health, work, training and benefits, and housing and regeneration. Positive impacts included involving families with children in shaping neighbourhood activities, delivering programmes and services at a local scale, and responding quickly to the minutiae of neighbourhood problems. At the same time, problems included that many parents felt a lack of control and an inability to escape the problems of the area due to underlying inequality and a lack of housing options. Additional recent work has explored the stigmatisation of social housing tenants [4].

Wider work across six European countries [5] evidenced the effectiveness of local leadership, community enterprise, resident involvement and training, and local control of housing and neighbourhood conditions in aiding community and city regeneration and wellbeing. This approach was shown to be useful in large cities such as Birmingham [6], and to address the pressing issue of climate change [7]. This research has enabled an input into policy development among professionals and in government and helped residents and community activists living in those high-rise blocks to take local action.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[1] Power, A. (2020). *“Grenfell Changes Everything”: A new era for social housing*. A report on the Lessons from Grenfell project and an assessment of its impact. CASEReport 130. LSE Housing and Communities/CASE, LSE. Available upon request.

[2] Power, A. (2009). New Labour and unequal neighbourhoods. In J. Hills, T. Sefton, and K. Stewart (Eds.) *Towards a more equal society?: Poverty, inequality and policy since 1997* (pp. 115-134). Policy Press. ISBN: 9781847422026. Chapter DOI: 10.1332/policypress/9781847422026.003.0007.

[3] Power, A., Willmot, H., and Davidson, R. (2011). *Family Futures: Childhood and poverty in urban neighbourhoods*. Policy Press. ISBN: 9781847429704.

[4] Power, A. and Provan, B. (2018). *Overcoming the Stigma of Social Housing: Can social housing rebuild its reputation?* CASEReport 116. CASE, LSE. Available at: <https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cr/casereport116.pdf>

[5] Power, A. (2016). *Cities for a Small Continent: International Handbook of City Recovery*. Policy Press. ISBN: 9781447327530.

[6] Power, A. and Houghton, J. (2007). *Jigsaw cities: big places, small spaces*. Policy Press. ISBN: 9781861346582.

[7] Power, A. (2008). Does demolition or refurbishment of old and inefficient homes help to increase our environmental, social and economic viability? *Energy Policy*, 36(12), pp.4487-4501. DOI: 10.1016/j.enpol.2008.09.022.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

LSE Housing and Communities' research has generated impacts in three main areas relating to tenant voice and participation, operational practices and service provision, and influencing local and national government strategies and policies:

(1) Prompting social housing providers to: (i) give residents a voice and ability to participate in decisions about their estates, including in relation to fire safety; and (ii) implement neighbourhood management practices

LSE Housing and Communities' Housing Plus Academy has been running residential workshops, policy think tanks, and publishing reports since 2015 [A] [B]. These events involve front-line staff, social housing tenants, senior decision-makers, government, and third-sector organisations who debate and explore issues led and facilitated by LSE Housing and Communities. Events are based on LSE research evidence and recommendations, and serve to operationalise, challenge, extend, and implement that material. The Academy is funded by 17 leading housing associations, and partners include the National Housing Federation and the Chartered Institute of Housing, the main professional and coordinating bodies for social housing. Over 1,500 participants have attended 40 Housing Academy residential think tanks and several one-day workshops in the last five years. Good practice and conclusions from each event are widely shared with social landlords and government, feeding tenants' and staff perspectives into high-level policy and operational decisions.

In terms of providing safe and decent homes following the Grenfell Tower fire disaster, LSE Housing and Communities ran a bespoke programme funded by Direct Line in 2017-18, which informed the *Lessons from Grenfell* report [1]. This included running knowledge-exchange workshops for tenants, social landlords, government, architects, fire service, and other stakeholders living, working, and managing high-rise residential buildings. As part of the *Lessons from Grenfell* programme, LSE Housing and Communities ran a residential workshop for residents from the nearby Lancaster West Estate, where Grenfell is located. The workshop galvanised clear ideas on developing local housing management (building on the earlier work referenced above) and estate-wide upgrading.

Neighbourhood management was then also implemented on the Lancaster West Estate, following principles advocated during the workshop. This has led to significant positive change for residents, including greater satisfaction with repairs, energy-saving works as a feature of estate upgrading, and better communication between residents and Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea staff. These findings are supported by central government officials: "*The local estate management team, with neighbourhood managers and locally recruited repairs team, set up on your advice, has started to get on top of local repairs. Its visible presence, combined with a willingness to listen and respond quickly has, I am told, gone down well with local residents [and is] a model social housing estate for the 21st century. I would appreciate your ongoing input*" [C]. LSE Housing and Communities' work with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea "*has been critical in helping them to start re-building trust and improve their local relationships following the Grenfell fire tragedy*" (Head of Housing Investment and Regeneration, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)) [C].

Housing associations such as Notting Hill Genesis, Riverside, Home, L&Q, and Clarion have intensified their efforts to introduce a return to frontline management services, including repairs. Following a March 2017 CPD course on the need for frontline housing management - developed and delivered by LSE Housing and Communities, backed by the Chartered Institute of Housing, and attended by staff from 29 housing associations - a senior government participant noted: "*Attending the workshop meant I was able to cover...neighbourhood management and professionalization as a proposal in the Social Housing Green Paper*" [C].

Another key audience for the research is providers and developers of social housing. The President of the Royal Institute of British Architects comments that Power's work has "*raise[d] the profile of social housing, the need for community representation and voice, the importance of neighbourhood management and improving the quality of services*". The Chief Executive of L&Q Housing Association (one of the UK's largest) has commented: "*The unique experience and expertise of LSE offers a powerful opportunity to listen, adapt and improve*" [C].

LSE Housing and Communities secured funding from Nationwide Foundation and L&Q for three learning events about developing community-led and community-based homes. These were in 2018 and 2019 and attracted around 150 participants from across the UK. The aim was to aid and develop participants' access to the government's Community Housing Fund and L&Q's own small housing associations development scheme. The core aim of the initiatives is to develop small-scale housing that is attuned to local community needs. L&Q are now partnering with small

housing associations across London to develop 1,000 homes by 2022 by unlocking “small sites” using GBP100 million from L&Q and GBP80 million from the Greater London Authority [D].

(2) Informed UK Government consultation, strategy, and policy development

The work on the *Lessons from Grenfell* programme (Power 2020, above) was “helpful in the development of policy at MHCLG. In practice, the *Lessons from Grenfell* have been increasingly reflected in the *Social Housing Green Paper*” (Head of Social Housing Safety, Decency and Climate Change, MHCLG) [C]. The recommendations from the research (see above) were adopted by government and subsequently featured in *The Guardian* and on the *British Politics and Policy at LSE* blog [E]. They influenced many aspects of government policy, including the landlord responsibility for all aspects of multi-storey block safety, including structural issues, design, construction, fire safety, resident communication, maintenance, and supervision. Specifically, they:

- Helped shape the *Hackitt Review on Building Regulations* [F] and the *Grenfell Inquiry Phase 1 Report* [G]. This reviewed building regulations, and government policy towards high-rise blocks, their management and maintenance.
- Led government to endorse listening to tenants, advocate a single point of control for high-rise blocks, and to require technical expertise and hands-on management for all multi-storey blocks. This was recommended in the *Grenfell Inquiry Phase 1 report* and has now been implemented by government.

LSE Housing and Communities had a direct influence on the 2018 Green Paper, *A New Deal for Social Housing* [H], and the subsequent White Paper [I], particularly around proposals for greater community cohesion and empowerment, and neighbourhood management. Research by Power and Provan provided advice for the MHCLG on the development of guidelines for tenant involvement, particularly with regard to the stigma of social housing. Promoting neighbourhood management as the leading model of social housing delivery, the Deputy Director of Social Housing at MHCLG noted that “[t]he *Green Paper* has reflected a number of the key issues we have discussed with Anne and explored through the [Housing Plus] Academy”, and also noted that “Anne’s influence, using the *Housing Plus Academy*, has been considerable... She has been invited in by me and other senior civil servants to meetings among government officials including with the Housing Minister, in order to develop ideas on a number of areas” [C]. The MHCLG Head of Housing Investment and Regeneration said: “in particular, the strong emphasis we placed on the role of residents in shaping a future for their estate and the need for sustainability and ongoing management to be central to any plans reflected the contributions made and evidence presented by [the LSE Housing and Communities] team” [C]. The Ministerial foreword to the Green Paper states that “it represents one of the most important steps we can take to reaffirm housing as this country’s first social service – for everyone” [H]. This focus was confirmed in the Social Housing White Paper, *The Charter for Social Housing Residents*, published in November 2020, where the PM’s foreword noted: “We’re levelling up this country, making it fairer for everyone – and that includes making sure social housing tenants are treated with the respect they deserve” [I].

Power has also been a constant source of related advice to government, including as an independent expert on MHCLG’s Feeling Safer Board, assessing what helps high-rise tenants feel safer in their homes (2018-present); academic advisor to the Troubled Families programme (2015-present); and advisor on the development of the government’s *Estate Regeneration National Strategy* (2016) [J] where LSE Housing and Communities research and recommendations were cited as good practice. The Head of Housing Investment and Regeneration at MHCLG noted that they “valued [LSE’s] advice and guidance as [they] put together a new strategy for estate regeneration at the end of 2016” [C].

(3) Guiding social housing landlords to foster new community actions tackling inequality and promoting community resilience in times of austerity

The 2019 *Housing Plus Academy Impact Report* [B] showed that all but one of its policy think tank participants had made changes to their organisation as a result of attending. Examples included: attendees introducing a hardship fund to help people struggling with the move to Universal Credit after a welfare benefits workshop, and establishing a Tenant Scrutiny Panel with local powers to determine operational priorities.

An evaluation of outcomes of 24 think tanks organised through the Housing Plus Academy [K] indicated attendees had used the learning to bring about new community actions. One of the main reported benefits was an increase in confidence and motivation to take forward their ideas, as well as providing networking opportunities with other community groups to share best practice and learn from each other. For example, a Liverpool tenants' group that attended the workshop runs a very successful Scrutiny Panel holding the landlord to account. Other participating groups went on to visit the Liverpool group to learn from their experience and see first-hand how they ran their Scrutiny Panel and why it was so successful. The evaluation revealed the average number of people helped per project was 198, with each project attracting on average 15 additional community volunteers. The average yearly cash value of each volunteer's work contribution (at minimum wage) is estimated to be GBP8,844 [K].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[A] LSE Housing and Communities, [Agenda for Housing Plus. CASEReport 111](#), January 2017.

[B] LSE Housing and Communities, *Housing Plus Academy Impact Report 2019*. LSE Housing; CASE: London. This is part of the series of annual reports made available to funders and attendees of workshops.

[C] Supporting statements from research partners, collaborators, and beneficiaries. Includes: Head of Housing Investment and Regeneration, MHCLG, 9 November 2018; Head of Social Housing Safety, Decency and Climate Change, MHCLG, 26 October 2018; President, Royal Institute of British Architects, 1 November 2018; Chief Executive, L&Q Housing Association, 9 November 2018; Deputy Director of Social Housing, MHCLG, 6 November 2018.

[D] L&Q Group, [Small sites key to solving housing crisis: Build London Partnership starts on first site](#), 7 July 2019.

[E] *The Guardian*, [Expert: 10 Key Lessons from Grenfell](#), 24 May 2018; and *LSE British Politics and Policy Blog*, [Ten Lessons from Grenfell](#), 24 May 2018.

[F] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018), [Independent Review of Building Regulation and Fire Safety: Final report](#).

[G] Grenfell Tower Inquiry, [Grenfell Tower Inquiry: Phase 1 Report Overview](#), October 2019.

[H] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [A New Deal for Social Housing \(Social Housing Green Paper\)](#), 14 August 2018. See, in particular, Chapter 4 – Tackling Stigma and Celebrating Thriving Communities.

[I] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper](#), 17 November 2020.

[J] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Estate Regeneration National Strategy](#), 8 December 2016.

[K] Power, A. and Benton, E. (2019). [Private Action for the Public Good: Tenant volunteers and the role of training](#). The Marshall Institute: London.