



Pride in Place

Views from Northern communities

Fostering pride and belonging in local areas is a source of community cohesion and social capital and will play a key role in reducing local and regional inequality across the UK.

Research commissioned by the Northern Housing Consortium enabled residents in locations across the North of England to discuss life in their local area. In doing so, residents highlighted a wide range of specific factors which contribute to feelings of pride in their local area. These are:

- Access to basic services
- Sense of community and decision-making
- State of the local environment

Executive Summary | Key findings from workshops
with residents across the North of England



Background

Fostering pride and belonging in local areas is a source of community cohesion and social capital and will play a key role in reducing local and regional inequality across the UK.

The Northern Housing Consortium (NHC) commissioned Thinks Insight and Strategy to conduct research with residents and relevant stakeholders across the North of England to explore resident perspectives on pride in place at a neighbourhood level and understand the role NHC members could play in boosting pride in place.

This work was also supported by NHC member Housing Providers: Blackpool Coastal Housing, MSV Housing Group, Livv Housing Group, Karbon Homes and Yorkshire Housing.

The research comprised of five three-hour deliberative workshops across the North of England; in Blackpool, Moss Side in Manchester, Prescot in Knowsley (Merseyside), Benwell in Newcastle, and Skipton in North Yorkshire; and brought together both social rent and private rented sector residents. Residents were then brought together for a co-creation workshop in Leeds alongside other stakeholders including the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities.

Fieldwork took place between 17th July and 9th August, 2023.



Pride in Place –

What Do Northern Communities Think?

On discussing life in their local area, residents highlight a wide range of specific factors which contribute to feelings of pride in their local area. These are:

- Access to basic services
- Sense of community and decision-making
- State of the local environment

In order to improve Pride in Place in areas across the North, there are nine key priority areas that fit into the three categories set out above:

1. Access to basic services:

- Improving access and quality of basic services like housing, transport, and other public services
- Addressing personal safety issues
- Better waste management

2. Sense of community and decision-making:

- Tackling loneliness and isolation
- Creating opportunities for young people
- Improving resident involvement in decision-making

3. State of the local environment:

- Ensuring green spaces reach their full potential
- Tidying up neighbourhoods
- Reflecting local communities



Overarching Solutions

Addressing each of these priority areas requires specific action from housing providers, local councils and national government. However, there are three overarching solutions – relating to three consistent challenges – which would aid success in each of these areas.

CHALLENGE

Fragmentation of services

Currently, problem solving for residents is often hampered by the fragmentation of services which risks duplication of work, work or people falling 'between the cracks', and also makes it difficult to make holistic improvements to services which benefit both residents and staff.

SOLUTION

Encouraging devolution of power to a regional or local level

Devolution of power would bring decision-making closer to the communities being impacted, allowing local councils and combined authorities to operate in a way that best reflects their communities, enabling greater growth and stronger local partnerships.

A lack of capacity across public services.

A lack of available resource may prevent many public services and housing providers from addressing the challenges we have identified.

Rebuild local capacity and support innovative engagement

Fair and sustainable funding for public services would ensure adequate provision for communities whilst also alleviating the pressure of funding gaps being displaced onto households through increased local taxes.

Local areas should also be supported to explore new models of community ownership and involvement which would assist in getting ideas off the ground and establish ongoing ownership, improving pride in place.



A lack of visibility of housing and other service providers to residents

A lack of visibility can not only make it harder for residents to find solutions to their problems, but can also work to erode trust towards housing and other service providers as they are then deemed 'faceless'.

Creating a community hub

As also recommended in the Better Social Housing Review, there is clear demand for a physical community hub for residents which would improve service accessibility, facilitate multiagency working, and could also provide a venue for community activities.



**The full report of
Pride in Place:**

Views from Northern
Communities can be
accessed using the
QR Code:



We would welcome any further discussion
on the themes of this research.

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