



The Chartered Institute of Housing

# HOUSING 2011 CONFERENCE



Housing 2011 Session Information

## Nobody gets us, why?

**What's your image of social housing? A tenure of last resort, dominated by estates plagued with anti-social behaviour or a positive housing choice which is the foundation for thriving communities? While the sector strives to deliver excellence, negative perceptions of the communities we work in can be both frustrating and counter-productive.**



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### BACKGROUND

TV shows such as *Shameless* could be said to present a popularised, and less than flattering image of “the council housing estate”, and a stereotyped image of the “social housing tenant”. In a recent interview, the script writer, Danny Brocklehurst argues that the programme presents social housing with “a degree of honesty” and acknowledges that while it sometimes does present people in an unflattering light, the characters are portrayed with considerable warmth and humour.

But *Shameless* isn't alone, both social housing and the tenants who live there are fairly regularly portrayed by the media in a less than positive light. The proposed housing and welfare reforms could be said to have increased the perception of social housing as “welfare housing” so we may now have an even bigger job changing perceptions.

### CHALLENGES

- Can perceptions and attitudes be changed by a campaign of branding and marketing? Several housing organisations have gone down this road, working with marketing and design company to review their image to appeal to a widening target audience.
- Do we need our own branding guru – our very own “Jamie Oliver” of housing? Could this really work for housing and what would be our USP?
- Does the term “social housing” support negative imagery? If so what are the alternatives? This is a question that has been vociferously debated for many years, but no answer has been reached. Is it time to reopen the debate?
- Will the current housing reforms enable people to exercise more flexibility about their housing choices? Will this create more balanced and mixed estates or will it create more polarised estates and reinforce stereotypes?

### OTHER INFORMATION

CIH briefing on social housing reform  
<http://www.cih.org/policy/CIHBriefing-Housing-ReformNov10.pdf>

CIH briefing on welfare reform  
<http://www.cih.org/policy/CIHBrief-WhitePaper-WelfareReform-Nov10.pdf>

CIH response to the DCLG consultation: Local decisions – a fairer future for social housing  
<http://www.cih.org/policy/CLGLocalDecisionsafairerfutureforsocialhousing-Jan11.pdf>

CIH impact of housing benefit reforms  
<http://www.cih.org/policy/AnalysisofHousingBenefitChanges-Nov10.pdf>



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