

Neighbourhood wellbeing and a sense of community are at the heart of a good home, say researchers

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A sense of wellbeing and a thriving community are key to a happy neighbourhood, according to housing researchers, who looked at the relationship between the experience of the home and wellbeing.

The study led by the Centre on Household Assets and Savings Management based at the Universities of Birmingham and Manchester and funded by VIVID homes, examined a mix of social renters compared to, shared owners and owner-occupiers.

Building on initial findings published in winter 2017, the full research report "Homes & Wellbeing – breaking down housing stereotypes" suggests that [social housing](#) plays a positive role in protecting people from anxiety.

Interviewing different types of tenants, including owner occupiers and social renters, the researchers found that what really mattered was feeling secure and having a degree of control over their home. In comparison, other aspirations such as climbing onto the housing ladder featured as less of a priority.

Dr. James Gregory, Centre on Household Assets and Savings Management, University of Birmingham said: "We have consistently found that, no matter what the tenure or ownership status of a person's home, one of the most significant features of a good home is a sense of

security and confidence that you can 'get away from it all' at home. Good neighbours, good design and good management are all as important for wellbeing as a person's tenure or tenancy."

Other factors found to affect well-being included financial pressures such as debt and the stress of raising children, with the view that housing was a vital part of the wellbeing story, but should be understood in a wider setting.

Based on their findings the researchers made key recommendations:

- Social housing should be seen as a policy tool for addressing the housing needs of more than just the most vulnerable;
- A wider social housing offer may actually be better for their wellbeing, providing the emotional security and stability that is one of the key drivers of the apparent aspiration to own a home;
- The report points to a need to look at how the social housing sector could deliver a step-change in the supply of social housing.

Professor Andy Lymer, Centre on Household Assets and Savings Management, University of Birmingham, explained: "There's an affordability crisis in the housing system and financial challenges are driven by government policy (the loss of grant and changes to how developers can discharge their Section 106 obligations), as well as the cost of land in the ever-rising housing market.

"But, it's more vital than ever that [housing](#) associations shape the future delivery for the wellbeing of its customers and society as a whole."

Mark Perry, Chief Executive of VIVID said: "We're dedicated to building more homes, while looking after the [wellbeing](#) of our customers.

"Our research shows that the most crucial part of the [home](#), is the social fabric of the neighbourhood in which it's embedded. The social value of tenure mix and giving people the opportunities to interact with each other, all reduce neighbourhood tension. Build quality also comes hand in hand with this; ensuring we have well-built homes that help give security as well as allow for the development of a community is clearly very important.

"We need to think harder about how we build new homes and neighbourhoods, and create the right environment for communities to thrive. It's important we get it right, to make sure everyone has the best chance in life."

More information: The report is available online:
[www.vividhomes.co.uk/media/165 ... eimg-full-report.pdf](http://www.vividhomes.co.uk/media/165...eimg-full-report.pdf)

Provided by University of Birmingham

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