

# Negative perception of social housing is outdated, say researchers

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Housing conditions, management and the extent of social problems on estates have improved. Credit: University of York

Social housing has improved over time, and is not as negatively perceived by residents as is so often thought, a major review has revealed.

The [review](#) states that many people in social [housing](#) are in paid work

and social homes are valued by the people who live in them.

Led by researchers at the University of York's Centre for Housing Policy, the review showed that since the 1980s, housing conditions, management and the extent of social problems on estates have improved.

Poor management can still be an issue, but social housing is delivering many benefits to tenants and wider society by meeting housing need, the review shows. The biggest issue, however, is the shortage of social housing, which was recently acknowledged by the government with the announcement that £2bn will be made available for new housing projects.

## **Many benefits**

Professor Nicholas Pleace, Director of the University's Centre for Housing Policy, said: "Social housing gives millions of people adequate, affordable and secure homes. Social housing is a vital part of society that, like the NHS, ensures that many lower income people, including many working people, have their most basic needs met and can enjoy a reasonable quality of life.

"There are positive developments in the government green paper. Investment in social housing, however, has been too low for decades and the continued attempts to promote the right to buy social housing, rather than increase social housing supply, when many people renting or buying privately are experiencing after-housing-cost poverty, will not fix England's broken housing markets."

The review also shows that social housing gives people much greater security of tenure than renting privately. Social housing still provides affordable, secure and adequate homes for many people, including many working people, who cannot afford to rent privately or to buy their own

[home](#) on the open market.

## Greater security

Professor Rebecca Tunstall, from the University's Centre for Housing Policy, said: "The review acknowledges that social housing still has weaknesses. There are a small percentage of social renters that experience serious problems and regulation and opportunities for tenant consultation and participation have reduced in recent years. It is also hard to tell how well landlords are managing their homes overall.

"The biggest issue, however, is the shortage of social housing. The proportion of people able to get [social housing](#) is falling."

Provided by University of York

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