Mental Health in All Housing Policies

Why this matters

- One in three people in social housing live with a long-term mental health condition versus one in seven of the general population.
- Social housing residents are more exposed to poverty, ill health, trauma and insecurity, so the mental health risks are higher.
- Most housing processes assume a "sunny day" resident who can always read, respond and open the door on demand. That is not how life works for many people.

Our aim

To design and run housing services that protect and promote mental health, rather than unintentionally making things worse – especially for those already struggling.

Principles

Every policy and procedure should be tested against these questions:

1. Safety and stability

a. Does this policy protect people's ability to stay in a decent, safe, warm, stable home?

2. Choice and agency

a. Does it give residents real choices and a sense of control, or does it do things "to" people?

3. Trauma-informed in every interaction

a. Would this process feel respectful and safe to someone with a history of trauma or poor mental health?

4. Communication and follow-through

a. Is the language clear, non-threatening and honest?
b. Do we reliably do what we say we will?

5. Joined-up and evidence-informed

a. Are we working with health and other partners where it makes sense?
b. Do we use data on needs and outcomes to improve, not just to report?

6. Workforce wellbeing

a. Can our staff work safely, without burning out, and with the skills and support they need?

7. Community and connection

a. Are we creating environments that foster connectedness, time outdoors, and physical safety for all of our residents?

What success looks like

- Fewer "no access", escalations and complaints driven by anxiety and confusion.
- More residents reporting that they feel safe, listened to and in control.
- Staff who feel confident dealing with mental health, and supported when things are tough.
- Less waste in the system and more capacity to focus on those who need the most support.
- People delivering this policy are supported to do it well.

Healthy Homes Hub

CENTRE FOR MENTAL HEALTH