

Welcome to the first issue of CT Brief. Aimed at organisations with which we work, the purpose of the bulletin is to keep you informed of work we're doing, trends we see emerging and elements of best practice that come our way. More issues in due course!

Better than Before: The Improvement Journey

How can housing organisations improve? What lessons can be offered by those that have made the leap from poor to good, from mediocre to excellent, indeed from good to great? This is the challenge posed by a new research report published by the Tenant Services Authority.

Researched and written by Campbell Tickell, the project engaged with over 75 senior executives and non-executives from more than 60 housing providers. In-depth case studies highlighted 13 organisations in particular.

The work seeks out common themes linking organisations that have demonstrated real improvement, and identifies steps that all landlords can take to become better than before.

Among the key findings were that:

- ⊕ Senior staff in landlords that have improved significantly enjoy stepping back and analysing that improvement – a facilitated conversation on these lines has intrinsic value whatever the outputs
- ⊕ Whatever an organisation is on the 'inside', invariably translates to the 'outside' – we witnessed the outcomes of investing in staff learning and development and tackling governance performance, while developing customer knowledge and insight
- ⊕ The culture and rigour of performance management needs to remain focused on delivering a difference



Senior Consultant Radojka Miljevic, who led the research team, comments: "We see this as a really important piece of work for the sector, at a critical time in the development of both regulation and resident expectations. Significantly, we learned that excellent organisations don't 'arrive' at an end point of good performance. Rather they keep asking the difficult questions and seeking to step up further. As external prescription is increasingly reduced, landlords need to be honest, outward-looking and creative, and to commit resources to trying to answer that thorny question 'how do we know if we're any good?'"

For Campbell Tickell, this new research provides a useful counterpoint to the publication 'With the best of intentions', our earlier work for The Housing Corporation. The third volume in the 'Learning from problem cases' series, the earlier research focused on what can go wrong in the governance and management of housing providers.

To read the report (and complete a senior team self-assessment on organisational performance), go to http://www.tenantservicesauthority.org/upload/pdf/Better_than_before.pdf

To revisit 'With the best of intentions', see http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk/upload/pdf/With_the_best_of_intentions_web_20060821141751.pdf

The TSA is planning seminars to introduce the research and explore the findings. At the time of writing, these are due to be on 9 September in Manchester, 14 September in Coventry, and 20 September in London.

To discuss how CT can assist your organisation in its own performance journey, please contact Radojka on radojka@campbelltickell.com.