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Spotlight on:

# Employee experience in the housing sector

In this report we explore **what's key to improving the employee experience** of people working in the **housing sector.**

Our team has analysed our housing data and compared it with our other industries to reveal some eye-opening differences, things to celebrate and a couple of notable areas to address in leadership comms and enablement.

The housing sector is an area ETS has worked extensively in over recent years. Partnering with the likes of Clarion Housing, Guinness Partnership, First Ark (now Livv Housing Group), The Barnet Group and, most recently, Metropolitan Thames Valley has given us an unparalleled oversight. In particular, it has shown us what is enabling and disabling the sector, and specifically, how peoples' experience working here affects their engagement, fulfilment and impact in their role.

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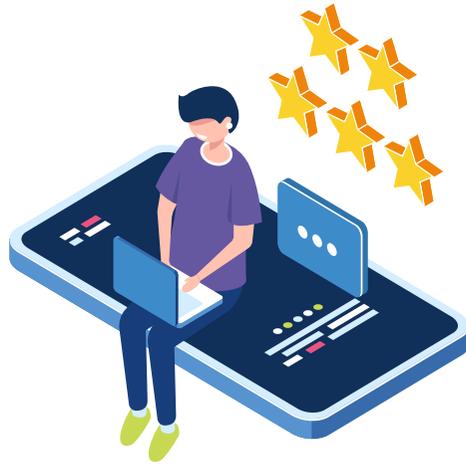
Managers performing well

We were encouraged by what we found about managers in this sector, with data suggesting they are performing well against our overall (all industries) benchmark.

Particularly noteworthy is their commitment to regular one-to-one meetings with their team members and that they appear to be adept at the giving of recognition, both of which show significant differences to what we see in the overall benchmark (+10% and +19% respectively).

I receive adequate recognition (beyond compensation) for my achievements

84% (**65%** overall benchmark)

I have regular one-to-one meetings with my manager

82% (**72%** overall benchmark)

My manager actively supports my development

86% (**80%** overall benchmark)

My manager gives me the support needed to do my job well

90% (**84%** overall benchmark)

2

Improvement needed in leadership communication

Effective communication, particularly 'top-down' from leaders is a priority area to develop for housing organisations, with data showing it is underperforming on key measures versus the benchmark overall.

"Great leaders communicate and great communicators lead." That's what Simon Sinek reminds us of. Clear, regular and effective communications are a staple part of good leadership. And with so much organisational change and uncertainty in and outside of workplaces at the moment, this is a crucial area to get right to inspire trust and confidence in employees.

72% (**83%** overall benchmark)

My company communicates effectively with its employees

70% (**72%** overall benchmark)

Senior managers are open and honest in their communications with employees

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We've spoken with many of our clients to understand what it is about their communication strategy that's hitting the mark right now. **Visibility of leaders** was a recurring theme with anecdotal feedback that many leaders have stepped up and are more visible than ever before, albeit by video blogs and video town halls! This fresh approach to comms is **making leaders more accessible** and **breaking down walls between the executive and employees**. It is a shame that for some it took a pandemic to get there, but it's a key learning for organisations not doing this to try to adopt and for others to sustain.

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3

Open culture for housing

Our findings show that housing associations are, by and large, doing a great job in the organisational culture they foster. Scores for key aspects like employee voice, inclusion and collaboration are all well above what we see in the overall benchmark. So, what is it that makes the difference in these organisations in comparison to others? And what can business leaders do to harness this strength?

Intrinsically it makes sense that organisations with strong values and a common purpose, intent and mission to serve the community might yield such an open culture. Certainly, this serves as a reminder for organisations as to the power of having absolute clarity over what they stand for and how they'll achieve it.

I think it is safe to speak up and challenge the way things are done within my company

78% (**72%** overall benchmark)

Our work environment is one that accepts everyone's individual differences (I&D)
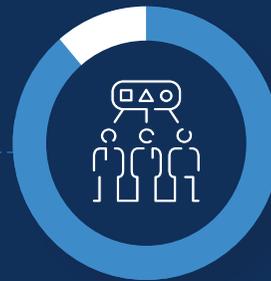
89% (**84%** overall benchmark)

"Employees now more than ever want to **see the big picture** and know what it is they are working for. The main takeaway for leaders here is that organisations must continue to ensure they are **keeping open lines of communication with their people**, and that they are promoting a **truly inclusive culture** in the midst of a rapidly-changing work environment."

All departments in the company work well together

77% (**62%** overall benchmark)

4

Mixed news on engagement, enablement & empowerment

We found a mixed picture for housing associations when looking at the key elements making up the employee experience. Engagement and empowerment are both pretty strong but employees have concerns around their enablement. The reason this is important is that the three elements effectively act as a tripod – if one is lower, the collective is weakened too.

Our research has found that high employee engagement in isolation doesn't necessarily translate to desired business outcomes. Engagement is one part of a larger and more complex puzzle, and that's why we must look at the holistic employee experience to get the full picture.

Engagement

+3%
I would recommend the company as a great place to work
80% (**77**% overall benchmark)

+3%
I intend to be still working for the company in a year's time
86% (**83**% overall benchmark)

Empowerment

+5%
I feel fully supported to do my job well
80% (**75**% overall benchmark)

+4%
I feel like a trusted member of the company
87% (**83**% overall benchmark)

Enablement

−8%
I have the tools and equipment needed to do my job well
66% (**74**% overall benchmark)

−3%
Overall, I have everything needed to do job well
67% (**70**% overall benchmark)

> The **biggest negative difference** we see here relates to employee perception of **one aspect of enablement** (having the tools and equipment to do the job). With such **diverse roles in organisations in this sector**, it would be interesting to understand more about how these perceptions vary between **field-based staff versus desk-based teams**. Indeed, in the current context with so many people working remotely, **a lack of enablement could be more debilitating than ever** if left unchecked.

Want to know how your housing association measures up?

If you would like a fuller and direct comparison with your own organisation's latest employee survey scores, speak with us about our free benchmark exchange initiative.

Our housing association benchmark consists of the most recent survey data from those aforementioned groups with which we partner. The data is reported on in percentage favourable (%FAV) terms.

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