

CAMPAIGN FOR HEALTHY HOMES



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The TCPA has been campaigning for political commitment to ensure that all new homes are healthy, secure and genuinely affordable.



HEALTH IS MADE AT HOME

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Lord Nigel Crisp

'Health is made at home. Hospitals are for repairs'. This quotation from Francis Omaswa, the former head of the Ugandan health service, is to the point. Health is made at home, in the community, the workplace, schools and beyond. Good health-promoting housing is a vital part of this: our homes should be a safe and healthy foundation for us all, at all stages of life.

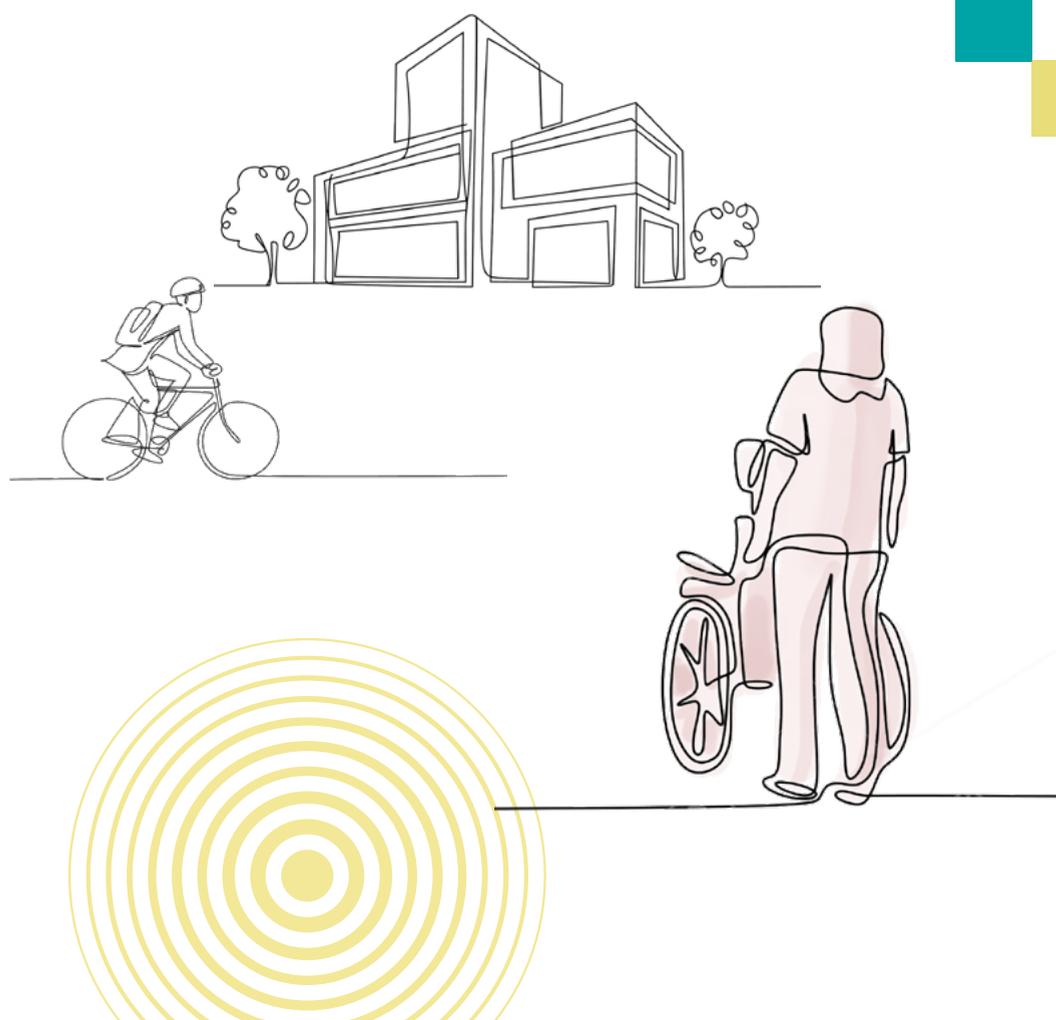
This Campaign for Healthy Homes ran for eight years, including during the Covid pandemic which exposed so many housing problems, and I was delighted to lead it in the House of Lords. We failed to get the Healthy Homes Bill passed but we have seen growing momentum and a wider understanding of the importance of the links between health and housing. Healthy housing contributes so much to people's ability to grow and thrive as individuals and contribute to wider society and the health and prosperity of the country.

The housing crisis is a complex and multifaceted problem and there is no one solution for everything - from the availability of affordable housing to the quality and safety of new and existing homes. The Campaign for Healthy Homes was designed specifically to influence the design, planning and construction of new homes while recognising that its proposals should also apply to refurbishment of older properties. Its aims were to:

'We have seen growing momentum and a wider understanding of the importance of the links between health and housing'.

We need to treat this campaign as a starting point in our efforts to make health through creating healthy homes and communities.

- Prioritise improving housing quality as a key determinant of people's health.
- Refocus on building homes in the right places - through effective planning policy, clear housing standards and scaling of good practice.
- Push back against the short-term approaches which lead to cutting standards in the interests of immediate costs savings and greater profitability.



CAMPAIGN ORIGINS & HIGHLIGHTS



The origins of the Campaign for Healthy Homes can be found right at the formation of the [Garden Cities Movement](#) at the turn of the 19th century. Social reformers such as Ebenezer Howard and Henrietta Barnett recognised something had to be done to address the slum housing that had built-up within the rapidly industrialising towns and cities of England – conditions which led to thousands of deaths from diseases that were entirely preventable. The Garden City vision was both practical and moral – to create healthy homes and communities where everyone could thrive, and not just for those who could afford it.

'The Garden City vision was both practical and moral – to create healthy homes and communities where everyone could thrive'.

It is notable that the Campaign for Healthy Homes formally launched in 2019, exactly 100 years after the [Housing, Town Planning, & c. Act](#), also known as the Addison Act, was introduced. The 1919 Act was radical – for the first time introducing housing provision as a national responsibility, permitting the state to build council homes for the working-classes.

The present day campaign emerged, in part, in response to actions by the Coalition Government – which insisted that cutting [planning 'red tape'](#) was necessary to 'facilitate growth'. The Government aimed to speed up the conversion of offices, industrial and other commercial buildings to residential use through Permitted Development (PD) Rights. PD Rights allowed developers to side-step planning scrutiny and were formally applied through The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (England) in 2015.

Many, including the TCPA, were concerned by this deregulatory drive and shocked by the

implications for people. Reports of families being housed in tiny windowless flats and dilapidated former offices alongside major roads and in isolated industrial estates miles from any amenities – led a coalition of organisations to call for clear housing standards that should apply to all new homes and including those produced through this PD route.

'There were reports of families being housed in tiny windowless flats and in isolated industrial estates miles from any amenities'.

Many PD conversions were poorly insulated and ventilated, resulting in damp and cold in the winter, overheating in the summer, and exposure to noise and air pollution. These 'homes' were often entirely unsuitable for anyone with a disability and accessibility needs. All too often, PD units have been used to house vulnerable residents in temporary accommodation – who described feeling unsafe, like living in a 'prison', with limited access to outdoor space or to local amenities. The TCPA was also very worried about the [impact to placemaking, including for high streets](#), because planners are highly constrained in saying where such conversions can happen.



Above: Back-to-back housing slums, Credit: London Metropolitan Archives

Early campaigning led the Government to introduce additional conditions on PD housing in 2021, to ensure 'access to daylight' – albeit not windows – and minimum space standards. But the changes did not address other concerns regarding the quality and location of these deregulated homes. Nor did they address the loss of developer contributions to community services that would normally be raised through Section 106 agreements via the planning process. The LGA estimates [that lost PD contributions would have paid for nearly 24,000 affordable homes](#).

It was not only PD conversions that raised concerns, however. Homogenized bolt-on housing estates have been built around the country, with limited amenities and disconnected from nearby communities – [locking in car dependency and social isolation](#). Too many new homes are [poorly designed](#) and unfit for future risks – poorly insulated, poor space provisions and not built to be resilient to the increasing incidence of extreme weather events, from heatwaves to flooding, and sea level rise in coastal communities. In 2024, the [Competition and Markets Authority](#) was highly critical and identified a 'significant minority' of volume housebuilders who produced homes that were structurally unsound. Others also criticised the use of [Non-Disclosure Agreements](#) to hide poor performance.



'Housebuilding in Great Britain needs significant intervention so that enough good quality homes are delivered in the places that people need them.' Sarah Cardell, Chief Executive, Competition and Markets Authority

The Campaign for Healthy Homes called for national and local reform. Promoting housing standards beyond minimum building regulations – seeking homes that are properly planned, designed and built to positively enhance people's health, wellbeing and life chances.

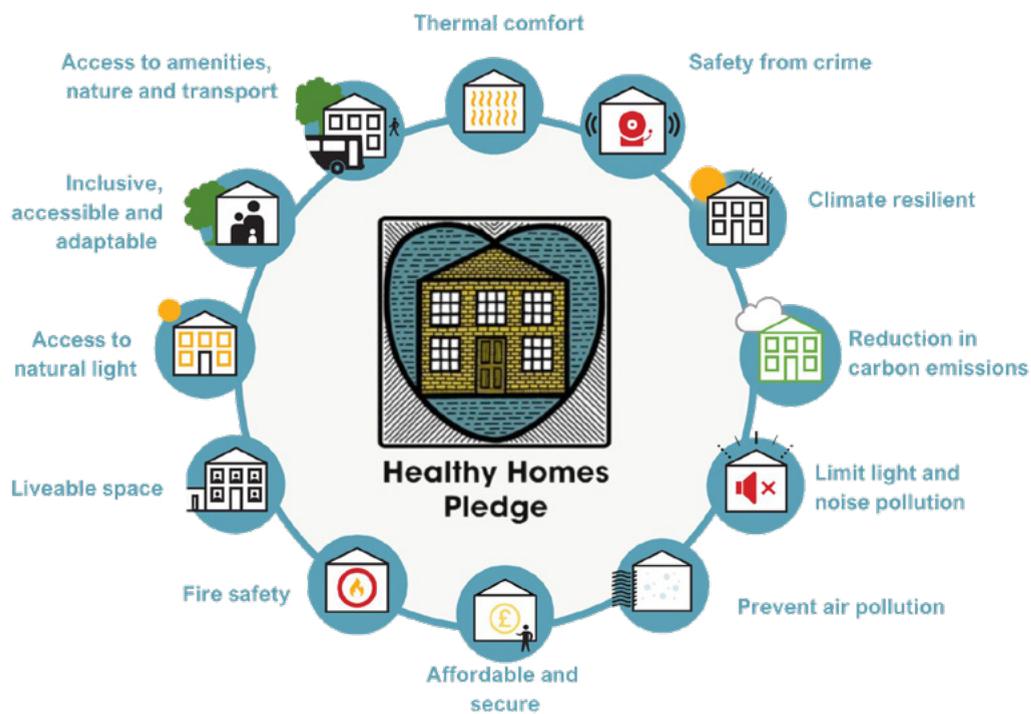
FROM SLUMS TO HOMES

'Homogenized bolt-on housing estates have been built around the country, with limited amenities and disconnected from nearby communities'.

Left: Modern housing slums, PDR Conversion. Credit: Rob Clayton

Below: A housing development in Wantage, Oxfordshire. Credit: R Callway 2025





The Healthy Homes Bill and amendments

The [Healthy Homes Bill](#) was a Private Members Bill championed by Lord Nigel Crisp – a cross-bench member of the House of Lords, former Chief Executive of the English NHS and Permanent Secretary at the Department of Health. The Bill sought to create clarity and level the playing field of housing standards. It set out twelve [Healthy Homes Principles](#) that should apply to all new homes – converted or otherwise. The principles reflected well-established evidence – formulated by the Campaign coalition of over 60 organisations – regarding essential housing requirements that go beyond minimum regulations by aiming to positively benefit people’s health outcomes.

Despite successfully passing through the House of Lords, the Bill was not tabled in the House of Commons by the then Conservative Government. So, we turned our attention to embedding the Healthy Homes Principles in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 under the Conservatives, and then in the

Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 under Labour. Despite supporting the Principles while in Opposition, Labour changed its stance once in Government.

The Healthy Homes Pledge

In parallel to the parliamentary process, the TCPA worked in partnership with housing associations, developers, local government and more widely, to encourage actors to adopt the [Healthy Homes Pledge](#). Akin to doctors’ Hippocratic oath, the pledge commits signatories to adopt the Healthy Homes Principles in policy and practice, and now has 149 individual and organisation signatories. In 2024, we launched the Pineapple Awards for Healthy Homes – in partnership with the Developer Magazine. Shortlisted and winning schemes demonstrate it is possible to deliver homes that meet all twelve Principles, including affordable homes.

A Vision for Healthy New Towns

The Government announced a New Towns Taskforce in 2024 to consider where a series

of future New Towns could be achieved in England, and what broad principles and processes should underpin these future communities. The TCPA worked with the Taskforce and the Government’s New Towns Unit, to encourage them to build on the positive, as well as more challenging, lessons of the past, and also to establish a clear strategic vision and principles to support thriving communities in the future. [Health, Hope and Prosperity – a Vision for Healthy New Towns](#) set out the high-level preconditions necessary to create a healthy New Town and reflects on some of the key lessons from the past needed to inform future thinking.

Local leadership in action

Despite huge resource pressures, local councils around England have been working hard to tackle the quality of existing housing stock and identify how best to deliver good quality and affordable homes in the future.

Throughout the campaign, the TCPA has worked alongside several county, district and unitary authorities to consider how they can effectively embed the Healthy Homes Principles. This includes application through local development plans, housing strategies and in councils’ own delivery of new homes.

We facilitated workshops and supported councils who are actively applying the Principles. For example, Lewes District Council adopted the Principles as a [motion to council](#) and the [new homes principles](#) underpin its council homes delivery programme, Northumberland County Council has prioritised the theme of ‘Healthy Homes and Healthy Neighbourhoods’, and Liverpool City Council, has applied the Principles as part of its ‘Health in All’ policies approach and its new Housing Design Guide.

‘The TCPA has worked alongside county, district and unitary authorities to consider how they can effectively embed the Healthy Homes Principles’.



Above: Citizen’s House, Lewisham



Above: Farmstead Road shortlisted for Pineapple for Healthy Homes 2026. Credit: Andrew Chard.

Below: Northumberland Council’s housing workshop, Oct 2024 brought together teams from planning, housing, highways, regeneration, public health, housing associations, landlords and community actors to consider how to deliver Healthy Homes.



‘We fully support the principles of [the Healthy Homes] campaign. We disagree with the government that the issue is already addressed...’ Shadow Housing Minister, Matthew Pennycook MP, 17 Oct 23 ([Hansard – Link here](#))



[Watch our Healthy Homes Pledge animation](#)

CAMPAIGN REFLECTIONS

While the Healthy Homes Campaign has had many successes in raising awareness about housing and health, we did not achieve our ambitious objective of securing a comprehensive system for health promotion across the built environment. The reason for this failure may be simple – we were just too ambitious! But, it is also worth reflecting on the power dynamics which drove housing and planning reform during the lifespan of the campaign (and beyond).

Lack of change from a new Government

As noted in the previous section, Labour Shadow Ministers supported the campaign around the Healthy Homes Bill. This support was not, however, reflected within the newly formed Government following the 2024 General Election. Back in 2023, in his speech to Labour Party Conference, Kier Starmer pledged to 'get Britain building again', promising to get 1.5 million new homes built within five years of the Labour government. This commitment was repeated in the Labour manifesto and following the General Election became an explicit target for the Prime Minister, Chancellor and the Cabinet.

Perhaps inevitably, therefore, of the diverse players in the development sector, four interrelated groups displayed greatest influence:

1. The volume house builders - these organisations and their representatives dominate UK housing production and have direct access to Number 10.
2. The land promoters lobby - a small but powerful voice representing the interests of individuals and investors with landowning interests.
3. Private sector consultancies - who are not primarily lobbying on their own behalf but work in the interest of their clients.
4. Legal firms – who have made a series of strong interventions supporting planning reform. This highly influential lobby represents both developer and landowner clients.

The interests of these groups are strongly aligned and together they have created an immensely powerful lobbying block as they were seen as central to the Government's ability to meet the 1.5 million home target in the absence of significant investment to enable public sector delivery.

The Treasury position

It is recognised that the view of housing varies between countries. In international law, shelter is a basic human right. However, in the UK, housing is a complex part of our economy. Following the cost-of-living crisis, HM Treasury was focused on the contribution of new housing to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) also analyses the impact of policy changes, including planning reform, to make forecasts about their impacts on construction and therefore growth. This in turn has a vital role in reducing government borrowing costs. In the final years of the Healthy Homes Campaign, planning reform, and its potential impact on housing delivery, became a central plank of macroeconomic policy which relegated considerations of quality, affordability and sustainability to a secondary status.

The continued emphasis, through successive governments, on planning reform to boost the delivery of private housing was based on an assumption that planning failed to deliver enough consents for homes at a fast enough pace. The most surprising feature of these assumptions is that the Treasury applied no balanced evidential justification for them. It is significant that a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of the impacts of the planning system has never been commissioned by any government.



The uncritical way the Government, driven by the Treasury, accepted private sector evidence that the planning system was a barrier can be explained by confirmation bias. It was a message decision makers wanted to be true. If planning was a barrier to GDP growth, then deregulation, to better enable the private sector to build more homes, more quickly, would promote economic activity without any public spending

The YIMBY movement

The YIMBY [Yes In My Back Yard] movement is made up of various diverse organisations, but all of these share a simple narrative - that building more homes in high demand urban areas will lower prices for young professionals. It is not a housing justice movement in the traditional sense, although it has colonised that language. YIMBY-ism has become a powerful global political movement and wherever it has gained traction, in cities such as San Francisco, it has been aligned with the deregulation of environmental and housing standards.

In the UK, the movement has become associated with think tanks such as Labour Together – which has been influential through direct donations to the [Labour Party](#) and by paying for key ministerial advisors in government departments. The organisation has consistently supported the YIMBY movement's drive for deregulation and has proved to be supremely effective in gaining traction with both Labour and Conservatives. The success of YIMBY-ism is related to its alignment with HMT and private sector thinking. It has wittingly or unwittingly, provided a brilliant narrative that has enabled real estate interests.



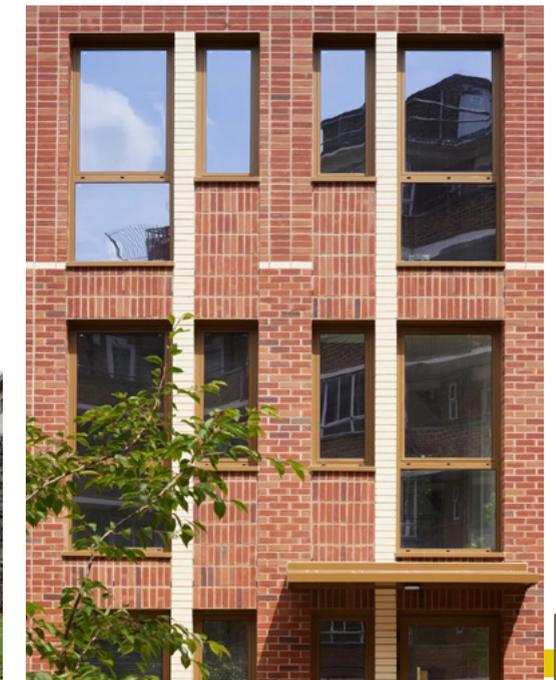
LESSONS

Lessons for future campaigns - winning the narrative?

Recognising how parts of the development lobby has operated to reframe political narratives helps to explain how effective they have been in driving deregulation. The current debate about cutting affordable housing targets in London, at a time when developers are making record profits, shows that there is no limit to the sector's ambition. It demonstrates how far the YIMBY mantra has embedded itself in the political discourse. Yet there is no credible pathway in which reducing affordable housing targets in London to provide greater levels of market-rate housing will meet the needs of those individuals and families living in temporary accommodation. The fact that this has become a credible argument shows just how comprehensively certain interests have colonised the language of housing justice.

Left: Cannock Mill; shortlisted for the Pineapple for Healthy Homes 2025. Credit: R Callway.

Below: Rowan Court, Haringey - short listed scheme for Pineapple for Healthy Homes 2026.





THE FUTURE OF HEALTHY HOMES

Evidence vs narrative

The TCPA and partners have presented [detailed evidence](#) about the health impact of the built environment and the appalling conditions produced by poorly regulated PD housing. [Our White Paper](#) highlighted the number of planning consents coming through the planning system -directly challenging the assumption that the private sector would ever build at a rate that reduces house prices. None of this cut through.

The hard lesson is that evidence, however compelling, will not be effective when it conflicts with Treasury macroeconomic policies which are so closely aligned with the property and development sector.

The future of Healthy Homes

The pace of planning deregulation should not undermine our confidence in the urgent need for change. Part of this change will be driven by the economic reality that volume housebuilders have no financial interest in delivering the numbers of homes set out in the government's targets. Their obligations to maximise profits and returns to shareholders mean they will only build at a rate which does not compromise their profit margins. Planning is not the cause of slow housing delivery. Instead, planning has been critical in ensuring what is consented is well connected, a decent standard and safe – including to the growing threats of extreme weather events. We must seize this opportunity to tell a different story about how to solve the housing crisis.

We must continue to promote viable alternative models of housing delivery, models which are central to creating homes for those most in need. It is still possible that this could be delivered through mechanisms like the New Towns programme - if it is, we need to try our best to make sure it works.

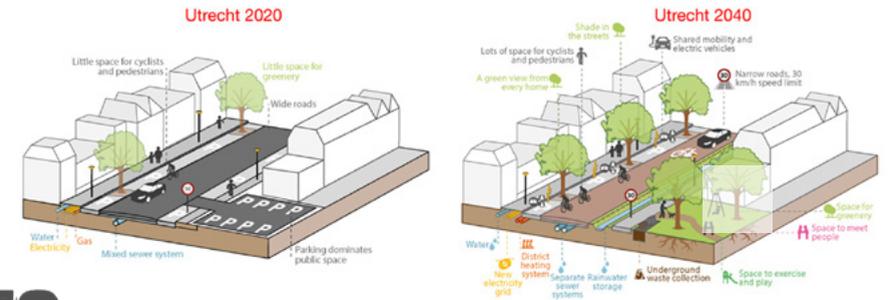
'We must seize this opportunity to tell a different story about how to solve the housing crisis'.



Below + above: Hazelmead co-housing, Bridport - winner of 2025 Pineapple for Healthy Homes. Credit: Barefoot Architects.



Our vision for Utrecht in 2040. Credit: Municipality of Utrecht.



VOICES TO THE FUTURE

We invited key leaders and thinkers across the housing sector to share their views on the future of the housing. We asked the question 'Where does the housing sector need to be in the next ten years?' and invited them to share images of good practice they think we can learn from. Here's what they said:

Fiona Howie, chief executive, the Town and Country Planning Association

'The original language we used in the Healthy Homes Campaign is that we needed homes that supported people's health, wellbeing and life chances – and that is where I hope the housing sector will be in the next ten years. We do need more homes, and we need more genuinely affordable homes, but we need to make sure that all new and existing homes are of good enough standard. Even in the absence of Healthy Homes legislation – the Principles must live on. Their emphasis on quality in terms of the individual homes, but also the environments in which the homes were located, needs to be reflected for the good of people, prosperity and the environment. To achieve that, the Association has long been clear that we need a different delivery model. The private sector will play a role, including

'To really make a difference in terms of housing numbers and quality, we need to see a boost in public sector led delivery'

through public-private partnerships, and outputs from the Campaign have showcased good practice from the private sector. But, to really make a difference in terms of numbers and quality, we need to see a boost in public sector led delivery – both by local authorities and through Development Corporations. Conservatives. The success of YIMBY-ism is related to its alignment with HMT and private sector thinking. It has wittingly or unwittingly, provided a brilliant narrative that has enabled real estate interests.'

Jan Bessell, 2026 President, Royal Town Planning Institute 'The coming decade will require a shift in the housing sector's approach to outcomes: moving beyond housing delivery to the delivery of sustainable, resilient and healthy community needs. Good homes and environment are fundamental to quality of life, and sustainability matters deeply, but so does public confidence.

Unconnected, poor-quality, unaffordable developments are failing residents and communities, undermining support for regeneration, best use of land, and the new homes we urgently need. Too often we see unsustainable, uninspiring developments that lock in poor health and inequality.

To move forward, we need greater focus on community-led housing. Polling from the RTPI and YouGov found the public wants more say in how future New Towns are planned, designed, and funded, and want places that aren't just built by large housebuilders. The same would likely be said for places across the UK. After all, who understands local needs better than the people who live there?

Local and strategic authorities may need to be more active, not only in shaping a healthy and diverse market, but in directly building homes and communities in connected and sustainable environments, integrating transformation and best use of our existing built environment and new development.

To achieve this, we need a renewed regenerative approach and spirit of experimentation. We've done this before, at scale, and successfully. The task now is to start with the outcomes we know we need and design systems that deliver them. Ambitious, effective planning, rooted in communities and sustainable outcomes that endure, can be extraordinarily powerful.'

Professor Ben Clifford, Bartlett School of Planning, University College London

'The housing sector needs to have the concept of housing as a basic need, human right and key social determinant of health at its heart in the next 10 years. The evidence for the impact housing has on our physical and emotional wellbeing is large and growing, but at the same time housing quality remains far too low for far too many people. Too many actors put profit before people in relation to housing, whilst government remains wedded to a failed market-led experiment to try and meet our housing needs.'

The case of commercial-to-residential conversion under Permitted Development rights exemplifies these broader trends: an obsession with deregulation and planning as a problem and a focus on unit numbers rather than home-making has enabled a race to the bottom which has particularly failed the most vulnerable in our society with temporary accommodation residents in some of the worst conversions. The Grenfell Tower scandal shows failure across the broader housing ecosystem beyond just planning regulation. My hope is that we can move beyond current crises and approaches which keep causing more of the same, and instead have more affordable, better designed and quality homes for all of society in future.'

Below: 8TALLET in Copenhagen: '8Tallet is an inspirational housing scheme demonstrating thoughtful design at higher density. The mixed tenure housing has generous space standards and a design to maximise views to the world outside and sunlight and fresh air into homes, a long-inclined path provides great accessibility to all apartments and there are really good communal facilities for all residents. To top it all, quite literally, is an enormous green roof, promoting sustainability'.



Darrell Gale, co-lead for Healthy Places, Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH)

'Good housing is one of the essential building blocks of good health. Indeed, many of the greatest improvements to health have been made in the built environment, from sewers to public parks, to public transport and standards for decent housing. By 2035 the housing sector needs to take a leaf from medicine and focus on safety and quality, with a right home - right person approach. This requires architects working with local people, understanding local needs, and creating walkable communities, in the right places, fit for different generations and for healthy ageing.'

A mixture of tenures is required to create communities for all, those who can afford to buy and those for whom this is not an option or a choice, with more cooperative and land trust housing, and more self-build opportunities that can draw different groups and generations together. All spaces within and surrounding homes must be well-designed with a definitive use, including both formal and informal play. We must design for the impacts for climate change, so that homes regulate heat and respond to keep people safe during adverse weather. The homes must use resources wisely, and reuse of existing structures should be a key feature.'

Top: Plaça Gomila in Palma de Mallorca is a refurbishment of brutalist blocks, new housing and businesses creating new public spaces and making the most of a city centre location.

Judith Hedgley MCIEH, Chair, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health

'The current crisis of poor housing, homelessness and other housing needs is a result of complex and interrelated factors, not least the shortage of affordable and social housing. Our ageing housing needs to be maintained, repaired and modernised and made capable of being suitably adapted to meet the changing needs of occupiers. In parallel, the specific housing, health and social care needs of children and an ageing population must be recognised and addressed.'

The housing and public health issues that need to be addressed in existing housing stock include residential property condition and management, fire safety, indoor air quality, housing adaptations and disabled facilities grants, domestic energy efficiency and climate change, as well as security of tenure. Each is important in protecting and enhancing housing, promoting health and safety and creating places where people enjoy living.

47 Greenleaf Road, Walthamstow, is an exemplar demonstrating the possibilities of retrofitting a Victorian end of terrace house to improve energy efficiency. Now occupied and with ongoing monitoring assessing how the heating system is used and what it costs the residents, it was previously open to members of the public, who could view it and adapt energy saving ideas for their own homes.'

'The housing sector needs to have the concept of housing as a basic need, human right and key social determinant of health at its heart in the next 10 years'.

Below: 47 Greenleaf Road Retrofit Home — Aston Group



Kate Henderson, Chief Executive, National Housing Federation

'We are committed to a decade of renewal for social housing, and the government have laid the groundwork for housing associations to deliver.'

After years of fiercely advocating for the long-term vision and conditions needed to kickstart a generational boost in social housing, the government have now provided 10-year income and funding certainty, with a new £39 billion grant programme, which means we can start to turn the tide on the housing crisis. Over the next decade we need to significantly increase the supply of new homes, while ensuring that they meet the needs of all residents, present and future. This requires a planning system with the tools and resources necessary to enable us to ramp up the volume of social housing while ensuring a significant proportion are accessible and meet the needs of supported housing residents and our ageing population.

Our homes are also already the most energy efficient of any tenure, with more than 75% at EPC C or above, but we know there is more to do to improve the quality of existing homes. Housing associations are investing record amounts on upgrading their homes and we are focused on ensuring that they are fit for the future and our changing climate.

Most importantly, housing associations are rooted in their social purpose, and we take our role in providing the truly affordable, quality homes communities need, to heart. There are more than 1.3 million people on the social housing waiting list, and more than 170,000 children living in temporary accommodation. This crisis won't be solved overnight. But I am optimistic that our sector is best placed to make a real, tangible difference to people's lives over the next decade.'

Cllr Tom Hunt, Chair of the Inclusive Growth Committee, Local Government Association and Leader of Sheffield City Council

'Everyone deserves to live in a safe, warm and decent home. In ten years' time, the housing sector must be defined by quality, safety and affordability, with councils firmly back in the driving seat. This is not just about building more homes, but about building better and retrofitting existing homes that support health, cut living costs and create places people are proud of.'

Councils are central to this ambition: as place-shapers, planning authorities, landlords and convenors of local growth. A genuinely

plan-led system must give councils the powers, resources and long-term certainty to shape development, set high design standards and invest in infrastructure alongside new homes.

The sector must also see a major renewal of council and social housing, reducing homelessness and ending reliance on poor-quality temporary accommodation. At the same time, quality means future-proofing: ensuring homes are maintained to be decent and free of damp and mould, and that residents' voices are central to how neighbourhoods are improved and managed.

Ultimately, housing must underpin inclusive growth, supporting jobs, skills and resilient local economies. In ten years, success should be measured by whether councils are enabled to deliver homes that work for people, for places and for the long term.'

'The last eight years have shown that change is possible - the Healthy Homes Principles have shaped national debate, influenced local leadership and inspired practical action'.

Kate Markey, CEO, Nationwide Foundation

'We believe in the power of homes to change lives. Too often, homes are a driver of ill health. Poorly designed, unsafe, damp or cold homes, located far from jobs, services and community, profoundly affect people's wellbeing, life chances and ability to thrive.

If we are serious about reducing inequalities and creating a fairer society, healthy homes must be the norm. By 2035 we must be able to say, that every new home built in this country actively supports people's health and wellbeing.

The last eight years have shown that change is possible - the Healthy Homes Principles have shaped national debate, influenced local leadership and inspired practical action. There have been important successes, but we still have a long way to go to embed health at the heart of all housing delivery. We at the Nationwide Foundation remain committed to working with partners towards a housing system that improves health, strengthens communities and ensures that everyone can access a safe, affordable and healthy home.'

Sam Rees, Senior Public Affairs Manager, RICS

Over the next decade, the housing sector must deliver not just more homes, but demonstrably healthier ones.

The Government of the United Kingdom is rightly focused on boosting supply, with planning reform, ambitions for 1.5 million homes, and renewed interest in New Towns a political priority. At the same time, we must not overlook the 30 million existing homes across the country.

Challenges range from building safety and energy inefficiency to damp, mould and poor access to local infrastructure. This in turn harms health and wellbeing, productivity and overall levels of happiness.

Progress is being made on building safety, but at a pace few would consider sufficient or effective enough. Greener homes, which are warm in winter and cool enough in summer, are fundamental to better health outcomes, while simultaneously helping households manage living costs. Recent experiences, however, with schemes such as ECO and the Great British Insulation Scheme show what happens when professionalism is not placed at the heart of delivery, the consequences are not only financial but risk damaging reputation and undermining consumer trust.

It is essential, that to deliver healthier homes, we need professionalism, stable investment and consumer protection to be at its heart. Surveyors provide trusted advice on building performance, safety and retrofit, helping turn policy into practical, measurable improvements for people and places, in support of the healthy homes principles.

Ian Shapiro, CEO, Building Research Est

'Housing quality is a cornerstone of public health. The need for shelter is fundamental, and the condition of homes is a critical determinant of health and wellbeing. Substandard housing costs the NHS in excess of £1 billion every year. Poor housing leads to preventable illness, falling productivity, costs and misery. All of which can be addressed through targeted improvements.

Over the next decade, we require a decisive shift in how we view and manage our homes. All homes must meet basic, healthbased standards, with a renewed focus on eliminating serious hazards that remain widespread across England. At the same time, policy and practice must continue to evolve as our understanding of the housing-health relationships grow. It is vital to tackle issues such as indoor air quality and overheating, alongside problems that have been understood for a longer period, such as damp, mould, overcrowding and cold.



Above: York Way Estate, Islington. Regeneration project of 275 flats which meets the BREEAM New Construction: Residential standard

We are championing sustained investment in upgrading the existing housing stock, supported by strong collaboration across housing, planning and public health systems — all working towards the shared goal of healthy homes. This is crucial for growth, prosperity and dignity. By 2035, all housing needs to move beyond providing shelter to protecting and promoting health and wellbeing.'

Gavin Smart, CEO Chartered Inst of Housing

'The challenge is always not just about how we deliver the numbers of homes we need (although that is significant) but about these being the right homes in the right places: meeting the needs of current and future communities, and supporting the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of local places and people.

This starts with development but continues with a long-term commitment to places and working with residents to sustain wellbeing with high quality services and support too.

The long-term housing strategy is an opportunity to build a shared vision for healthy places and homes nationally, setting the framework for local partners – housing developers, health and care teams, registered providers and local authorities - to reflect this in their own strategies and plans, and embedded in overarching Local Plans and Spatial Development Strategies.

This should, as a minimum, reflect the Healthy Homes Principles, producing homes that are safe, accessible (including adequate provision of wheelchair accessible homes), decent, adaptable for climate change, and affordable to local people.

It will take ongoing investment in workforce skills and capacity for the sector to meet this opportunity to deliver homes that meet local needs, but CIH and other Healthy Homes supporters show clearly that this can be achieved.'



Above: Bournville Village Trust: demonstrates that we have succeeded once - and can again - at creating health and sustainable places

Chris Williamson, RIBA President

'By 2035, the housing sector must continue to build on the work we have already begun. As part of the push to build 1.5 million homes, we must prioritise providing social homes to replace the homes lost to the right to buy scheme, which has dramatically impacted the ability of millions of people to access safe, suitable housing.

We will hopefully have refurbished, renewed and repurposed enough substandard housing and other relevant building stock to elevate the appalling conditions that thousands of our citizens currently endure.

RIBA members have the skills, talent, energy and enthusiasm to contribute to this vision, and we hope to continue to collaborate with both the Government and our colleagues across the housing sector, including through the ambitious and exciting New Towns programme.

We must also continue to push for more routes into the sector, such as through our call for the eligibility for Level 7 apprenticeship funding for built environment professions to be raised to 25. This will allow us to strengthen our ability to tackle the key issues facing us today and take on the opportunities of tomorrow.'

Below: Goldsmith Street in Norwich, RIBA's 2019 Stirling Prize winner, is an example of exemplary housing delivery which stemmed from cooperation between architects – Mikhail Riches – and a local authority, Norwich Council.



CAMPAIGN LINKS & RESOURCES

Campaign links; Good practice resources

- [Campaign for Healthy Homes webpage](#): landing page containing all the resources and information for the campaign.
- [The Healthy Homes Bill](#): the Bill aimed to create a legal duty on the Secretary of State for the delivery of healthy homes and neighbourhoods; set out a clear definition of the Healthy Homes Principles; and established the office of the Healthy Homes Commissioner.
- [Healthy Homes Principles](#): linking to a [summary of the evidence](#) and separate blogs about each of the 12 Healthy Homes Principles.
- [The Healthy Homes Pledge](#): Those organisations across the housing sector who want to lead the way in delivering the Healthy Homes Principles in new housing have adopted this pledge and taken steps to implement the principles in policy and practice.
- [Securing Healthy Homes Locally guide](#): Illustrates ways councils can adopt a more comprehensive approach to linking housing to health, including through council policy, Local Plan policy, as well as housing delivery.
- [Health, Hope and Prosperity – a Vision for Healthy New Towns](#): outlining the high-level preconditions necessary to create a healthy New Town and reflecting on key lessons needed to inform future thinking.
- [Planning for healthy places - a guide on embedding health in Local Plans and planning policy in England](#): The guide covers examples of adopted local plan policies to embed healthy placemaking criteria across five themes, including housing.
- [Design codes for health and wellbeing](#): This guide outlines a policy framework and practical

principles for incorporating health into design codes, to complement existing national design guidance on placemaking.



Town and Country Planning journal – Healthy Homes special issues

[January to February 2022](#)
[September to October 2023](#)
[May to June 2025](#)

Good practice examples

- [Pineapple for Healthy Homes](#): In 2025, six completed housing schemes were shortlisted for this award. The Pineapple for Healthy Homes appraised whether and how the schemes met the 12 [Healthy Homes Principles](#), as well as how health evidence was used to inform the context for the scheme, how community actors were involved in shaping proposals, and whether post occupancy appraisal was applied. A new group of housing schemes have been shortlisted for the 2026 award. These schemes demonstrate it is possible to meet and go beyond all 12 of the principles.
- [Lewes District Council New Homes Principles](#): These principles underpin Lewes District Council's Housing Delivery Programme from 2024 to 2028.
- [Waltham Forest Sustainable Procurement Policy](#): Social value procurement can be used to embed human health (and planetary health) requirements when procuring projects and shape the housing standards applied. Waltham



The winners of last year's Pineapples: Appleby Blue Almshouse, London Borough of Southwark, joint winner of the Pineapple for Healthy Homes

Forest's Sustainable Procurement Policy (2023-25) requires 'physical construction projects' to include strong BREEAM requirements (beyond 'Very Good'), Passivhaus or HQM (now BREEAM New Construction: Residential) standards.

- [Hertfordshire County Council's Healthy and Safe Places Framework](#): Strategic frameworks that embed health promotion and Healthy Homes will be vital to shape delivery of future homes. Hertfordshire's Growth Board's Healthy and Safe Places Framework sets out seven healthy placemaking principles, including Healthy Homes.

- [BREEAM New Construction - Residential](#): This sustainability standard (formally the Home Quality Mark) from the Building Research Establishment's addresses all the Healthy Homes Principles. Two affordable housing schemes in London applied the standard - [Sydenham Hill Estate, LB Lewisham](#) and [York Way Estate, LB Islington](#).

New policies supporting Healthy Homes and neighbourhoods

- [Strategic authorities' health duty](#): [Clause 44](#) of the Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill 2025 defines the determinants of health, which includes housing standards. It requires strategic authorities to 'have regard to the need to— (a) improve the health of persons in the combined authority's area, and (b) reduce health inequalities between persons living in the combined authority's area'.
- [Spatial Development Strategies and Local Plans must support health improvement and reduce health inequalities](#): Strategic planning authorities will be expected to prepare a spatial development strategy (SDS) for their areas, and local plans will need to be

in general conformity with these strategies. SDS's include policies on the use and development of land of strategic importance to an area – including for housing and infrastructure requirements. [Clause 58 of the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025](#) states that strategic planning authorities must consider the effect of a draft SDS on: the health of persons in the strategy area; health inequalities between persons living in the strategy area; the achievement of sustainable development.

Evidence - making the case for Healthy Homes

Datasets and local evidence on health inequalities, community infrastructure, housing mix and quality should underpin the narrative and rationale for targeted and appropriate housing strategies, policy and provision:

- [Indices of Multiple Deprivation](#): these composite indicators include local area maps.
- [Household Deprivation Data \(2021\)](#): uses census data to examine four composite indicators of Household Deprivation: Education, Housing; Employment; Health.
- [Health Inequalities Dashboard](#): this tool presents evidence of health inequalities in England.
- [Local Health and Wellbeing Strategies and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#): should be used to clarify local health priorities that should inform housing and neighbourhood needs
- [English Housing Survey: Live tables](#): covers data on housing stock condition based on the Decent Homes Standard disaggregated by tenure of housing – social housing, private rental and owner-occupied homes.

About the TCPA

The TCPA's vision is for homes, places and communities in which everyone can thrive. Our mission is to challenge, inspire and support people to create healthy, sustainable and resilient places that are fair for everyone.



Housing with a heart

by Elieen Gbagbo

I read something in the news about a Peckham estate
Where a poet saw an angel drop onto the concrete pavement
His mother's tears broke through the fog
I'm sorry, she said
I'm sorry this community could not hold you
I'm sorry this community could not catch you

On the way home I saw a butterfly
It emerged from the streets
And danced all the way from Little Kumasi to this Garden City
Where the leaves were bright, and
Cut through the muted tones of winter

Here each mother builds her own small world
Here each child is tall with expectations
Of the person they may become
Here remains the hunger for the stillness
That comes after reform

Nature demands that we listen to her again
This time, she sounds just like the songs from a neighbour's
garden
This time she sounds like rediscovering a child's laughter
This time she sounds just like the rhythms of safety

I know what it means to move from one place to another
I know what it means to make a home
I know that love is a community undivided
I know that life can be certain
That life can be without crises, economic or otherwise

And what is better than believing
That we are heading towards housing with a heart?
I now can see the vision.

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