



Press Release: immediate Release
To all news desks

Housing associations and local councils that don't collaborate are failing local communities, warns new report

A new report from the Young Foundation calls on housing associations to work much more closely with local authorities to give their residents a voice in local communities. In many areas housing associations and local authorities are the richest and strongest institutions – but often fail to communicate with each other let alone collaborate.

In the words of Young Foundation local projects director Nicola Bacon they are the **'two elephants in the room' both of which need to do more to devolve power down to neighbourhoods.** *If housing associations and local authorities are going to be good neighbours, they need to work together better in their strategic meetings and very locally to give communities and residents a real chance to shape the places they live in.'*

The report argues that:

1. residents are the biggest losers when associations fail to work closely with local authorities
2. demographic trends indicate growing social polarisation which will push housing associations to focus more on neighbourhoods
3. regulation must find a balance between encouraging innovation, and ensuring synergy between housing associations' neighbourhood working and Local Strategic Partnership strategies.

The 2006 Local Government White Paper accelerated neighbourhood empowerment and devolution to the local level. The report concludes that housing associations should make sure that their future residents are not only given new homes, but also a voice in their local communities.

The Young Foundation recommends that:

1. the Housing Corporation – and in future Communities England - should ensure housing associations give their residents and communities a voice in neighborhoods
2. associations who choose to take the lead in their neighbourhoods should invest their resources locally and work closely with other local agencies
3. housing associations should become key partners for local authorities in their Sustainable Communities Strategies.

The report will be launched on **Friday 13 July, 8.30 – 10 am Convocation Hall, Church House Conference Centre Dean's Yard, Westminster, London, SW1P 3NZ.** Please RSVP to Liz Bartlett, liz.bartlett@youngfoundation.org or 0208 709 9294.

Adrian Moran Policy Manager at the Housing Corporation said:

'The findings of this study tie in closely with our Neighbourhoods and Communities Strategy and the key roles that housing associations can play in communities. The report will be a very valuable contribution to the current developments of Communities England and the contributions of housing and regeneration bodies by working with local authorities and local neighbourhoods in the interests of residents.'

(ends)

Interviews or articles based on the report are available on request. For further information contact Faizal Hakim at the Young Foundation on 0208 709 9265/ 07899-931-477 or faizal.hakim@youngfoundation.org

Notes to Editors

1. *Good Neighbours: housing associations' involvement in neighbourhood governance* by Nicola Bacon, Liz Bartlett and Anne Marie Brady is available as a free download. An extended summary of the report is also available as a hard copy, price £10.00 from The Young Foundation, 18 Victoria Park Square, Bethnal Green, E2 9PF or www.youngfoundation.org
2. The Young Foundation's research was supported by Housing Corporation Innovation and Good Practice funding. It was carried out between September 2006 and March 2007. The four stages of the research were
 - an initial scoping stage
 - four case studies of housing associations considered to be exemplars of neighbourhood working. These were Penwith Housing Association, Poplar HARCA, Tees Valley Housing Group and Touchstone
 - 10 interviews with a broad range of associations to test findings from the case studies
 - a stakeholder seminar to discuss emerging recommendations.
3. The Local Government White Paper *Strong and Prosperous Communities* was published in Autumn 2006. It set out a new commitment to localism and community empowerment, and new expectations on Local Strategic Partnerships to act as 'place shapers', bringing together local agencies to deliver outcomes for communities.
4. This project is also informed by the Young Foundation's wider work on neighbourhoods and community empowerment. See www.youngfoundation.org/work/neighbourhoods for more information.
5. The Young Foundation is a centre for social innovation that undertakes research to identify and understand social needs and then develops practical initiatives and institutions to address them. For more information go to www.youngfoundation.org.