

Six Town Housing – Press Release

Council tenants speak up against unfair media stereotypes

8th August 2018

Social housing tenants from across the borough are taking part in a campaign that aims to combat negative media stereotypes by encouraging others to speak up.

Benefits themed television shows and some national newspapers often depict council tenants in a negative light. The local campaign, entitled We Benefit Bury, aims to challenge these depictions by encouraging tenants to use social media to speak up against the stereotypes and talk about the large contributions they make within the borough.

We Benefit Bury will consist of an ongoing series of adverts and posters featuring photos and quotes from a number of local tenant ambassadors who proudly dismiss the stigma. Through these posters, the ambassadors will encourage others to show their support by downloading a branded Facebook frame and using the hashtag #WeBenefitBury to provide their point of view.

The campaign was launched by Six Town Housing, who manage 8,000 homes on behalf of Bury Council, at their most recent Summer Roadshow event on Powell Street.

The event was attended by James Frith MP, who met with three of the tenant ambassadors. James said, “Representations of social housing tenants within the media is often negative, which is damaging as it drives the public to have a stereotypical view of all tenants. They usually don’t show the high number of those living in social housing who work hard to support themselves or their families. This campaign aims to provide tenants with a way to show that they are people, not stereotypes.”



Hugh Broadbent (Six Town Housing Board Chair), James Frith MP – top; and tenant ambassadors, Kelly Dickinson, Scott Whitestone and Amy Kirk

Initial ambassadors for the campaign include Kate Walker from Prestwich, who volunteers her time to run a community café to tackle isolation and Scott Whitestone, a young tenant who is starting his career as an electrician within Six Town Housing’s Repairs Direct team.

Kelly Dickinson, another tenant ambassador for the campaign, said, “The stereotypes are ridiculous. Living in Council housing doesn’t make you a certain type of person, it’s up to each individual how they behave and contribute to society. I want as many people as possible to get involved with this project to show people how we all pull together and build strong communities.”

Hugh Broadbent, Chair of Six Town Housing's board, said "For too long newspapers and TV shows have depicted Council tenants in a negative way. The truth is tenants are like any other group of residents - nationally 48% are in work, 28% are retired, and only 8% are unemployed. Nearly 60% receive help with their rent, including those in work. Tenants live in their homes for an average 11 years, much longer than private tenants. We want to encourage tenants to take ownership of this campaign and show just how valuable they really are as members of their communities.

Tenants who want to share the Facebook frame or find out more about the campaign can do so at www.sixtownhousing.org/WeBenefitBury

Notes for editor

Six Town Housing is an arms length management organisation (ALMO) set up in April 2005 to manage Bury Council's housing stock and a range of other assets, including garages, shops and a number of community facilities.

We provide a wide range of services to our customers, directly and through service level agreements, contracts and partnerships.

Media Contact for Six Town Housing is Steve Whiley. Email s.whiley@sixtownhousing.org or call 0161 686 8018.

Steve Whiley is on leave from Friday 10th August until Monday 27th August. In this time, please call 0161 686 8000 with any enquiries and ask to speak to Alison Leach or Carran O'Grady.