

# Housing professional futures: resilience on the frontline.

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# Outline

- Welfare retrenchment and professionalism
- Housing frontline profession – research project
- Changing sector
- Housing professional competencies now and in the future
- Balancing institutional logics – ‘commercial’ V ‘social’
- Educating the housing professional
- Conclusion

## Welfare retrenchment and professionalism

- Blurred boundaries between public and private
- The market can solve everything (?)
- 3 key features of changed welfare professionalism (1. increasing commercialism; 2. rise of managerialism; 3. partnerships and networked governance – implications for core technical knowledge claims).

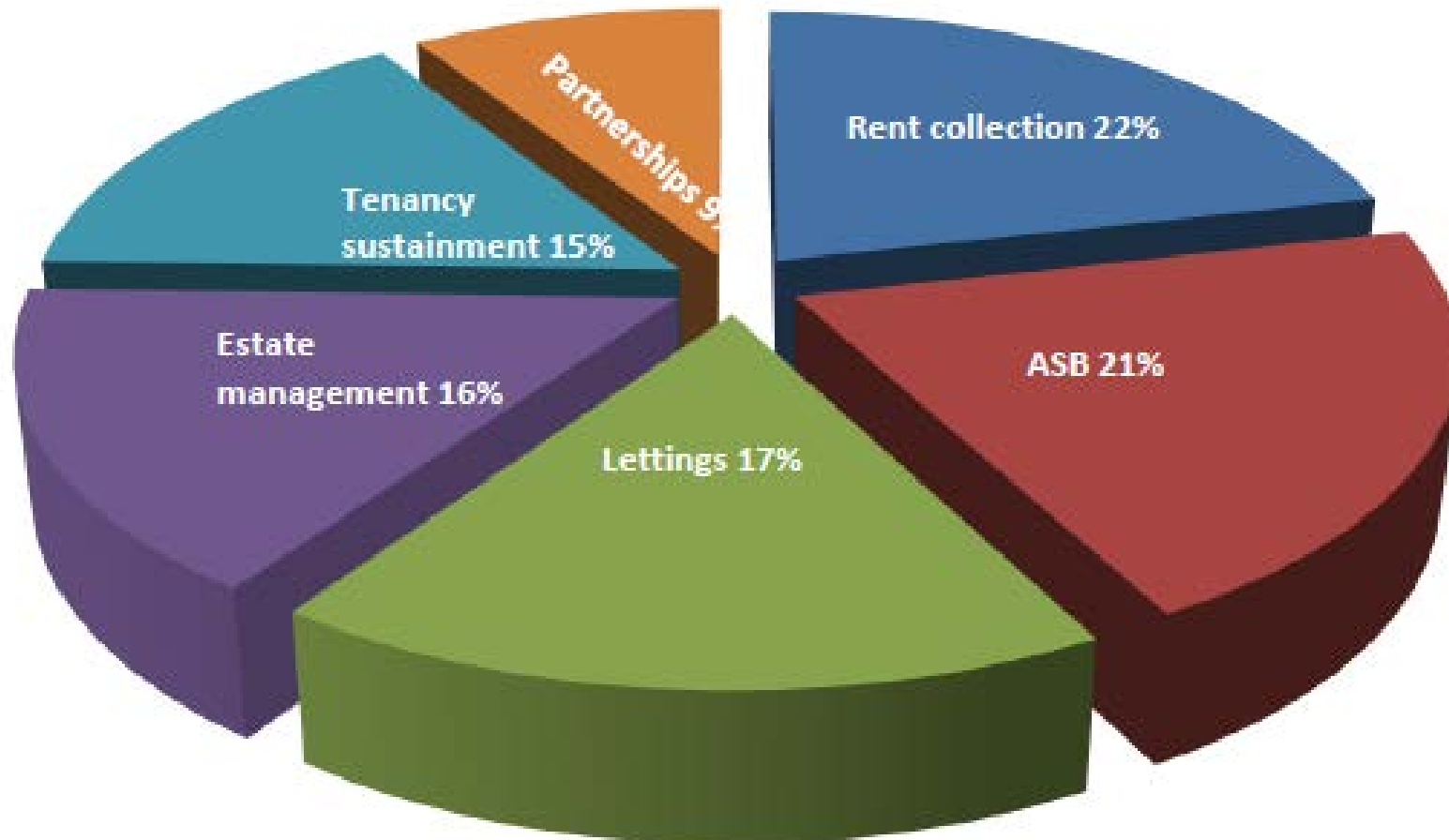
# Frontline Housing Research (Methodology)

- 1054 survey responses (2014)
- Participation in interviews and focus groups
- Professional and tenant involvement in 4 x Appreciative Inquiries (2 in Scotland and 2 in England).
- At least 257 roles 'core housing' (HO, neighbourhood management) but job titles not simple/consistent. 174 had 'housing officer' in their job title
- Range of roles

# Changing Sector: External influencing factors on the frontline housing role

Top six external influencing factors	
Influencing Factor	Total rating count
1. Welfare Reform	677
2. Housing supply	625
3. Increasing gap between earnings and housing costs	558
4. Ageing Population	550
5. Technological advances	406
6. Grant Reduction	361

## Top six functions of the current frontline housing role



# Top Ten competencies overall for the frontline housing role

- **1** Ability to problem solve
- **2=** Customer focused
- **2=** Good communicator
- **4** Understands the needs of vulnerable groups
- **5** Ability to negotiate and liaise
- **6** Ability to manage change
- **7** Professional
- **8** Ability to be creative and respond according to the situation
- **9** Able to work with minimal supervision
- **10** 'Can Do' improvement-focused

# Changing importance of housing frontline competencies, now & future

Competency	Now	Future
Commercially minded	61	336
Ability to manage change	268	390
Critically reflective practitioner/ self-awareness	111	119
Able to be creative and respond according to the situation	255	294
'Can Do' improvement focused	238	269
Ability to inspire and gain the confidence of others	169	196





## Resilience on the frontline?

- Follow up survey with 59 respondents in 2016 plus focus group – asked particularly about *emotional resilience*
- Levels of ‘pain’ for tenants and applicants in social housing – felt by workers and need to show ‘resilience’
- Complex lives of tenants + changes in the housing sector = increased stress.

## Meaning of resilience

- *“I would describe it as Bounce, the ability to get back up. To see the challenge ahead as positively as you can.” (Respondent 1, phase two)*
- *“It means taking on more without complaining or you'll lose your job/ profession as the role diversifies beyond recognition. I feel I have no choice but to be resilient” . (Respondent 2, phase two)*
- *“I do feel resilient but think it isn't always a helpful term. Experienced housing officers are feeling it is a slight on them if they are unwell or feeling over whelmed. There are concerns that they won't be seen as resilient when they are but they are also human” . (Respondent 12, phase two)*

## Conclusion

- Changes felt in the sector – is there a housing ‘profession’ in the UK in 2017?
- Blurred boundaries between public and private sector – implications for housing sector ethos
- Challenge of balancing institutional logics – commercial v social.
- Impact of austerity on tenants + impact of changes within the social housing profession.
- Overuse of ‘resilience’ in a narrow view – need to dig deeper – acknowledge & embrace emotions at work.