

Case study

entitledto
independent | accurate | reliable

believe
housing

Housing associations and affordability assessments - a new context for Open Banking data

 experian



Our mission at Experian is to help drive financial inclusion for everyone, continually exploring new ways to use our data for good to support consumers to meet their financial goals.

For this reason, we collaborated with entitledto, a leading provider of online benefits calculators, who help people determine what they can claim from national and local government. We gifted entitledto our Affordability Passport solution, helping to introduce Open Banking data into a space that could see immense benefits.

Even though Open Banking data had never been used in this sector before, entitledto, an innovative company who were the first to launch a benefits calculator in 2000, were keen to explore the potential in their work with housing associations.

entitledto approached believe housing, one of the largest housing associations in the North East and part of the Durham Key Options choice-based lettings scheme, to whom they already provided their Affordability Calculator. believe housing agreed to trial the ambitious project and play a key role in helping to shape, adapt and perfect the process for the communities that housing associations serve.

believe housing's vision for customers is 'life without barriers'. They achieve this by continually striving to provide better housing services, homes, and communities, with innovation at the heart of how they operate. Seeing the potential benefit for the people they served, believe housing agreed to take part.



A true partnership approach

Together, we began developing an application that would incorporate our Affordability Passport into entitledto's existing Affordability Calculator.

entitledto's Affordability Calculator is used by housing associations to determine ongoing tenancy sustainability and manage allocations. It helps housing associations to maximise the income of prospective tenants (so their tenancy succeeds), ensure tenancies are sustainable and identifies vulnerable tenants requiring support and intervention.

Affordability Passport uses consumer consented Open Banking data. It returns a personalised view of a person's income (streams, sources and frequency) and expenditure categorised into 186 categories. It is widely considered to be best in industry with accuracy levels of 95%. Crucially, it identifies behavioural trends and signs of financial vulnerability when assessed over time. Used primarily within the banking and financial services sectors, the benefits include over 50% reduction in the time taken to source data and 75% reduction in the associated costs.



Some applicants had concerns about the use of Open Banking data. Working closely with advisers has been critical in alleviating those concerns, ensuring they could confidently communicate both the process and value of sharing data to the customer, and answer questions about the use of their personal data.



Enabling better customer outcomes

believe housing is the first housing association to trial the new Open Banking powered journey. They've continued to carry out manual assessments during the trial, which has enabled comparisons. The initial results have been extremely positive.

Most customers were positive about the use of Open Banking and willing to consent to the process. They found the process easier and more user-friendly, especially as it removed the requirement for paper proofs and enabled access to housing more quickly.

believe housing found they had immediate access to more information with greater levels of accuracy than they had previously, saving staff time and resource.

One outcome that believe housing had not been expecting, but found extremely valuable, was a clearer picture of vulnerability. The new process was bringing back strong indicators of potentially vulnerable circumstances, which had not been uncovered through existing affordability assessments.

Ensuring the right provisions are in place, so that tenancies are successful and sustainable, are key priorities for believe housing. The new process was bringing to light circumstances of, for example,

significant gambling outgoings, multiple loans, or unexplained payments in and out of accounts. This provided an awareness that didn't exist before, enabling believe housing to proactively and pre-emptively put in place relevant support for those customers.

Thanks to the positive progress being made by believe housing, other partners within the Durham Key Options partnership are now exploring the opportunity to join the trial.

For entitledto, who took the first steps towards bringing Open Banking into a new sector, the trial has been a significant success. Once completed, the company hopes to widen the scope to other providers of housing.

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