

# Crystal Hicks

Chair at Women In Social Housing

**Innovation Award Winner**  
**NPWAwards 2022**



**WISH**  
NORTHEAST  
THE NETWORK FOR WOMEN  
WORKING IN SOCIAL HOUSING



## HOW TO CHAMPION FOR CHANGE

NORTHERN POWER WOMEN  
PODCAST



### What is WISH?

WISH stands for Women In Social Housing.

WISH is about creating a fun networking community of encouragement and support for women working in the social housing sector.

"My role as chair of WISH for the North East is about really empowering women to be everything they want to be now and in the future. It's really done through generosity, kindness and support across a network of wonderful women and organisations."

### What is Wishlist?

"Let's put what women want working in social housing into a wish list and let's challenge social housing sector partners and their employers themselves to pledge their support to it and actually commit to delivering on it."

"We hear all the time, that organisations want to be really good at diversity and inclusion and they want to improve, but actually the reality is that they don't know how, it's really difficult to know how to do that. We decided that we were going to produce this wish list and say, this is what women are saying that they want you to deliver on."

"They want to be in the room when decisions are being made. They want to have an ally in the room and be represented and hear their voice within those decisions."

### The importance of male allies

It's both men and women who need to step up and be the change and lead that change.

We've got male allies from boardrooms, chief executives, all the way through organisations in the sector who are championing our cause.

"It's made a big difference, especially in social housing where we have real divides across the workforce between men and women. So we've really needed that male allyship to come forward and really break through into those male-dominated service areas within our organisations."

### Advice for people wanting a purpose driven career

The most important thing to do is to define what your purpose is.

You've got to work out what is it that actually will get you out of bed every morning with that same grit and determination and drive. Once you know that, what is your joy?

Surround yourself with people who are going to be your champions, who are going to support you and encourage you.

"Another thing that's really important for me, is don't feel like you have to justify yourself to other people and never feel guilty for the decisions you are making if they are driven by that purpose."