

whg feel at home with Tribe's approach to culture change and making messages stick.

Client story

# whg

**Who Risked It? Who Wants to be a Million Times Safer? Just two of the ways we've used 'sticky' communications to help whg raise the profile of health, safety and wellbeing across all levels of the housing association...**

whg is one of the Midlands' leading and most successful providers of good quality, affordable homes. With a workforce of around 750 people and 22,000 properties to maintain, their Trades Colleagues span many professions including plumbers, carpenters and electricians.

## The story

whg knew they needed to shift the organisational culture. Steven Davis, Health, Safety and Environment Manager, heads up the three-person Health and Safety team: "We needed to have more managers engaged with the safety agenda."

"We have good buy-in from the top and most of the people doing the work, our Trades Colleagues, are on board. They do the right thing because they know the reason why," he continues.

"The middle layer of the organisation has conflicting priorities. They get pulled in all different directions," Steven says. "I wouldn't say we're failing, but to shift any culture takes longer than five minutes."



**"After a recommendation from someone so senior at Tesco, we didn't feel a need to look elsewhere."**

**Steven Davis, Health, Safety and Environment Manager, whg**

## Tribe highly recommended

Steven used to sit next to a colleague whose husband was the Group Safety Director at Tesco. Tribe had worked with Tesco and she shared examples of Tribe's work. "I heard so much about Tribe and so I asked Mark Ormond, Managing Director, to come and see me. He talked about the work he'd been doing and it was so interesting."

Tribe were whg's first choice for the culture change work. "After a recommendation from someone so senior at Tesco, we didn't feel a need to look elsewhere," says Steven.

"The thing I like about Tribe and working with Mark is that he doesn't push anything on you. It's all about what fits for us as an organisation. Everyone who I've come into contact with at Tribe has been great."



**"It's still early days but there's a lot more talk about safety. People are starting to realise that ticking a box and passing an audit isn't good enough."**

**Steven Davis**

## Consultant expertise

We place a lot of importance on matching clients to the right Tribe Lead Consultant. Colin Hewson has experience working within the public and private sectors. Steven says of Colin, "He understands the hierarchy and the politics at whg and he's also good at talking to people. It's a skill he's learnt and he's brilliant at it."

Since we began working with whg in 2019, we've delivered a culture assessment, made their conferences and away days more interactive and engaging ('sticky'), and created a leadership workshop format. They're now also members of Chrysalis Culture Hub, our online platform to support organisations through the culture change journey.



## The results

As a result of working with Tribe, they're seeing health and safety rise up the agenda. And for the first time, their latest corporate plan features statements about improving health and safety.

Steven can see the culture is beginning to change. "It's still early days but there's a lot more talk about safety," he says. People are starting to realise that ticking a box and passing an audit isn't good enough."

"They're starting to put themselves in the other person's shoes." He says, "They realise there's a person behind it all."

## In more detail

Our Activate, Motivate, Cultivate three-element approach has guided our work with whg



# Activate

## Culture assessment - survey and interviews spanning the entire organisation

A culture assessment is the first step to help you understand where your organisation is on its culture change journey. For the whg culture assessment, we ran an online survey and had 500 responses. “We had a pretty good response rate of 70%,” says Steven. “The survey had ten questions and people from across all levels of the business got involved.”

Tribe consultant, Colin Hewson, interviewed 130 colleagues over four days. “It was an interesting thing to do,” says Steven. “To make it as accessible as possible, Tribe gave our Trades Colleagues the option to complete the survey by hand or on their tablets.” There was also a poster campaign and activity on the company intranet to raise awareness.

“It definitely prompted discussion,” says Steven. “And the responses were really varied. Some people thought no one was listening while others thought everything was amazing.”

Colin says, “When we presented the results, we weren’t too sure how they’d be received. But our findings aligned with the People and Learning assessment carried out earlier in the year.”

Steven adds, “It felt like we were all on the same page internally and that certainly helped to gain buy-in from other areas of the business.”

**“The face-to-face interview process was enjoyable. I met great people from across the entire organisation, including plumbers, joiners and the executive team.”**

**Colin Hewson,  
Tribe Lead Consultant**

# Motivate

## Conferences and workshops - memorable and engaging activities

The 'motivate' stage of our three-element approach engages leaders and the workforce in the health, safety and wellbeing message.

### Sticky conference activities

At Tribe, we talk about making messages 'sticky'. For us, it's about sharing information in a way that's memorable. Colin says, "We like things that are sticky - even a bit mad - because people remember it."

We've been asked by whg to deliver sessions at various internal conferences. We've shared our 'Who Wants to be a Million Times Safer?' interactive game and their people have got involved playing Safety Jenga. "The massive Jenga game was brilliant," says Steven. "We had great feedback. It was easily the best workshop of the day."

Colin explains, "We have a giant Jenga kit and there are various scenario and outcome cards. For instance, you spot someone working on scaffold without PPE. What do you do? Do you go on your break or speak to someone about it? We get the audience to say how many Jenga blocks to pull out."

Steven says, "It provided a good analogy. People could make a direct link - the more fragile the safety culture, the more unsustainable it becomes."



### 'Making a difference in a culture that cares' workshops

We've worked closely with Steven and his Health and Safety colleagues to develop a workshop format for all levels of the organisation and new colleagues.

As well as sharing the results of the culture assessment, a major feature of the workshop was a 'Who Risked It?' activity. Colin says, "Who Risked It?' really gets workshop participants thinking. I always say, 'they're not bad people, but why do they do what they do?'" He continues, "We ask leaders and colleagues to consider the organisational and system factors that may have influenced why these good people did what they did."

Colin says, "The activity was based on a scenario that could happen at whg - someone drilled through a cable in a communal block. We gave participants 18 pieces of evidence in small groups and asked them to start thinking about why this incident happened."

The team at Tribe created three films to break up the journey through the scenario. The films featured local news reports, social media activity and highlighted how storytelling can make a message stick.

Steven says, "It's quite challenging for some of our people to take part in this activity as it resonates. It makes them think about the 'what ifs'. We can talk about anecdotal evidence until the cows come home but when you see it in front of you, you realise it isn't far from reality."

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**Steven Davis**



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**Colin Hewson**

# Cultivate

## Becoming Chrysalis Culture Hub members

The final 'cultivate' phase of our three-element approach is about delivering change and sustaining momentum for the long term. One way to do this is by becoming Chrysalis Culture Hub members. whg did this in 2021.

Tribe's Chrysalis Culture Hub is an online platform packed full of expert advice, the latest culture change research, as well as communication and engagement tools needed to drive momentum within an organisation.

At the moment, Colin is working with Steven and his two team members to tailor resources on Chrysalis so it resonates with team leaders and supervisors.

As well as having various communications tools and research reports, Chrysalis houses a community section and articles. Steven says, "I'm always interested to see the blog and the community to gain inspiration. Consultants post articles on there and it helps you explore an area more widely. It's a nice community."



**"We don't want people to walk out of our leadership workshops for nothing else to happen. There are amazing resources in there to continue the journey. It's all quite thought provoking and will keep us motivated for a long time yet."**

**Steven Davis**

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