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SENTIMENTS OF PRIVATE AND SOCIAL TENANTS REVEALED IN LATEST WALES-WIDE SURVEY

With 33.5%* of Wales' population living in rented and social housing and with the recent harrowing headlines on tragic toddler Awaab Ishak touching a nerve with sympathisers nationwide, TPAS Cymru (previously Tenant Participation Advisory Service Cymru) has surveyed tenants across Wales on their key concerns.

TPAS Cymru's second Annual All Wales Survey on Tenant Perception is particularly pertinent in light of the current cost of heating or eating crisis, as it confirms that damp and mould, energy efficiency and a well-maintained home are key concerns for both social and private tenants.

According to TPAS Cymru Chief Executive David Wilton, this is 'an inter-linked trinity' of problems, whereby tenants are following the nationwide trend to cut back on heating because of the cost-of-living crisis. This leads to the second and third issues of damp and mould causing major household issues, which worsen when not addressed and rented homes fall into poorly maintained disrepair.

David Wilton says: "This latest research is vital for the sector to understand what tenants really want from policy makers in Wales."

Despite the economic crisis, more tenants reported being more satisfied with their rent this year than last (60% compared to 54% last year), but younger tenants aged between 18-30,

self-payers and private rental tenants, reported struggling with rent affordability and keeping up with rent payments.

David Wilton explains: “While social housing rent might be perceived as affordable to some, the number of tenants telling us that they are struggling has risen from 29% to 46%. The main reason for this is rising costs of energy bills. Last year, energy costs were barely mentioned by tenants surveyed, but now it is the single biggest reason why they are struggling.

“Properties don’t become less energy efficient in a year: however due to the increase in energy costs recently, people are far more aware now of their heating costs. For those who have had to use their heating less or at a lower temperature this winter, damp and mould are now a concern when they may not have been previously.”

Findings demonstrate how private renters are also struggling with rising energy costs, and this is combined with the very real threat of rising rents. They also believe that the number of properties available to them to rent is limited and the properties that are available aren’t up to the standard of second homes and AirBnB rentals in their communities.

Fewer than half of respondents felt that they had a well-maintained home (41%); that their home was free from damp and mould (40%); was Energy Efficient (22%) and was in a good community (47%)

Similarly, fewer private renters this year than last year felt their home was energy efficient (down from 17% to 12%) and only 34% agreed that their home was ‘free from damp and mould,’ compared to 40% last year.

David Wilton continues: “This should be a concern to everyone within the housing sector and to those developing housing policy, legislation and regulation.

“The issue of well-maintained properties may be addressed under Welsh Government’s planned WHQS2 - but the sector needs to find a way forward fast to overcome some of the funding and logistical challenges.”

TPAS Cymru’s Engagement Officer, Eleanor Speer reflects that the core themes throughout the report of housing insecurity, affordability and energy poverty are echoed by other organisations in the sector. The Bevan Foundation reported in August 2022 that 11% of Welsh

people were worried about losing their home in the next 3 months, with 57% of people in Wales also restricting their heating, water and electric due to affordability.

Anti-Social Behaviour is the single biggest concern for social housing tenants who cited it as their main priority for things to change about their community – they also feel that landlords are not taking nearly enough action to tackle it.

“Tackling ASB is a complex subject with no easy answers,” says David Wilton. “However, all interested stakeholders must look at how it can be improved.

“Many social landlords have ‘tenants at the heart of our organisation’ in their mission statements, but this isn’t necessarily reflected in what their tenants tell us. Private renters are of a similar view, but are also concerned about more security of tenancy and greater enforcement of landlord regulations like notice period before visits and correct notice periods.”

The complete report and a video summary is available from www.tpas.cymru/pulse

**According to data released on the 5th January 2023 from the Census 2021 data on housing.*

(Link - [Housing in Wales \(Census 2021\) | GOV.WALES](#))

Notes to Editors

- **TPAS Cymru has supported social housing tenants and landlords in Wales for over 30 years and has a strong track record in developing effective participation, through training, support, practical projects and policy development.**
- **For further details, or for interview requests, contact David Wilton on: drw@tpas.cymru**

Ends