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# Accessing Local News and Events: What do Tenants Really Think



## *Introduction*

TPAS Cymru has recognised that the way local communities and tenants receive information about local services and community activities is changing, with a shift away from reading traditional local newspapers and newsletters. In addition, there is a perception that people are increasingly using digital communications methods and new digital technology to both access services and find out local information. With many social landlords looking to use digital approaches to provide information and for tenants to access services we were interested to find out the following:

- What methods tenants use to find out about local information.
- How tenants are using digital technology and on-line services and for what purposes.

To gain this understanding we circulated a survey utilising our Tenant Pulse survey community.

## *Methodology agreed*

1. Tenant Pulse – on-line and postal survey for Tenant Pulse members, issued February 2019. The survey targeted social housing tenants from both housing associations and local authorities, as well as tenants from the private rental sector.

## *Survey questions*

The standard questions that were sent out in the survey questionnaire are set out in full in appendix A. Tenants were also given the opportunity to add comments. This data was analysed separately and can be found throughout the report analysis.

Tenants were given multiple choice questions on the following:

- 1) Firstly, can we ask what type of tenant are you?
- 2) To which age group do you belong?
- 3) How do you find out about local news and events?  
Tick all that apply to you and if 'Other' you can complete the box on next screen
- 4) Do you read the flyers/posters on community notice boards? (ie notice boards provided by the local council, in local shops, community centres)
- 5) Have you missed a local event you would have liked to have attended? Why was that? (tick any that apply).  
If 'Other' please could you let us know in the comments box on the next page
- 6) How often do you do the following?
- 7) Do you have any of the following in your home?
- 8) What help do you have with technology?
- 9) Do you do any of the following online?
- 10) Have you ever engaged with your landlord digitally?
- 11) By which method would you prefer to be contacted by your landlord? Choose as many as appropriate and add any "Other" in the box on the next page

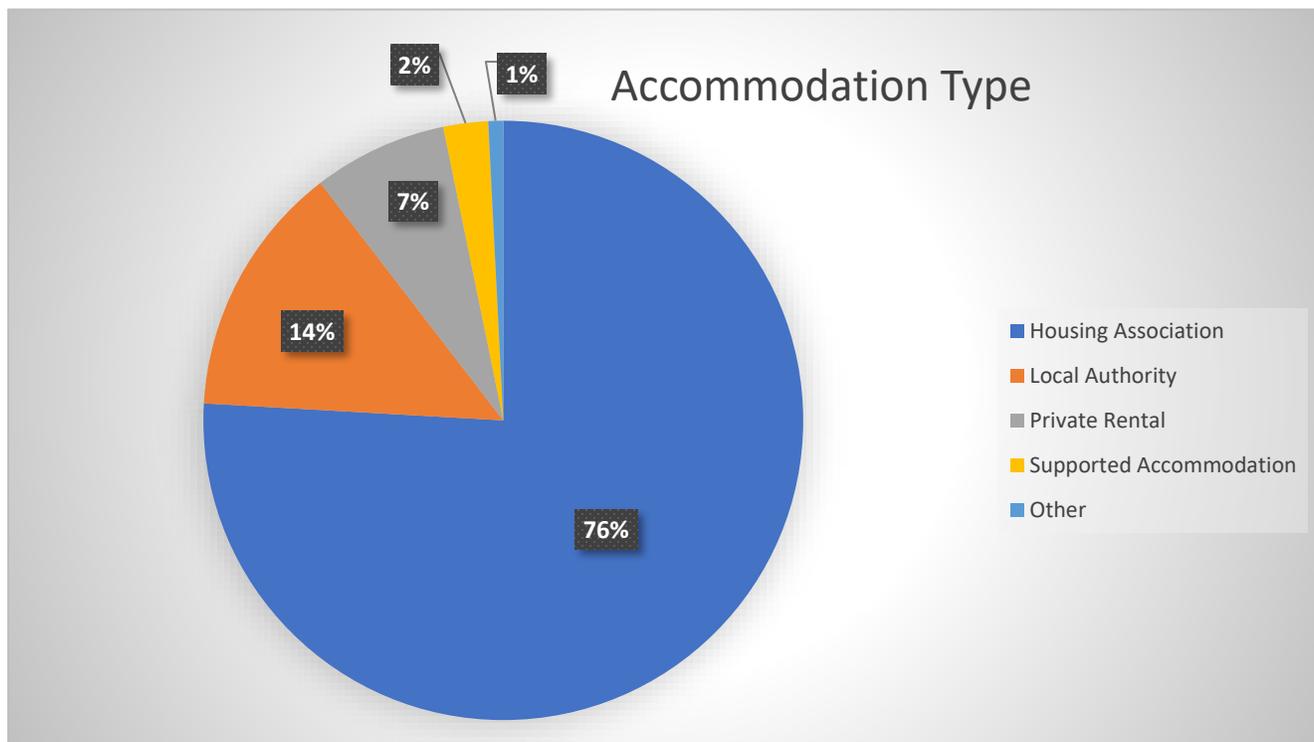
## *Response rates*

In total 252 tenants completed the survey; a 33% completion rate. Of the 252 completion responses, 190 were from housing associations, 34 from local authorities, 18 from private rental and 6 from supported housing.

## The information gathered

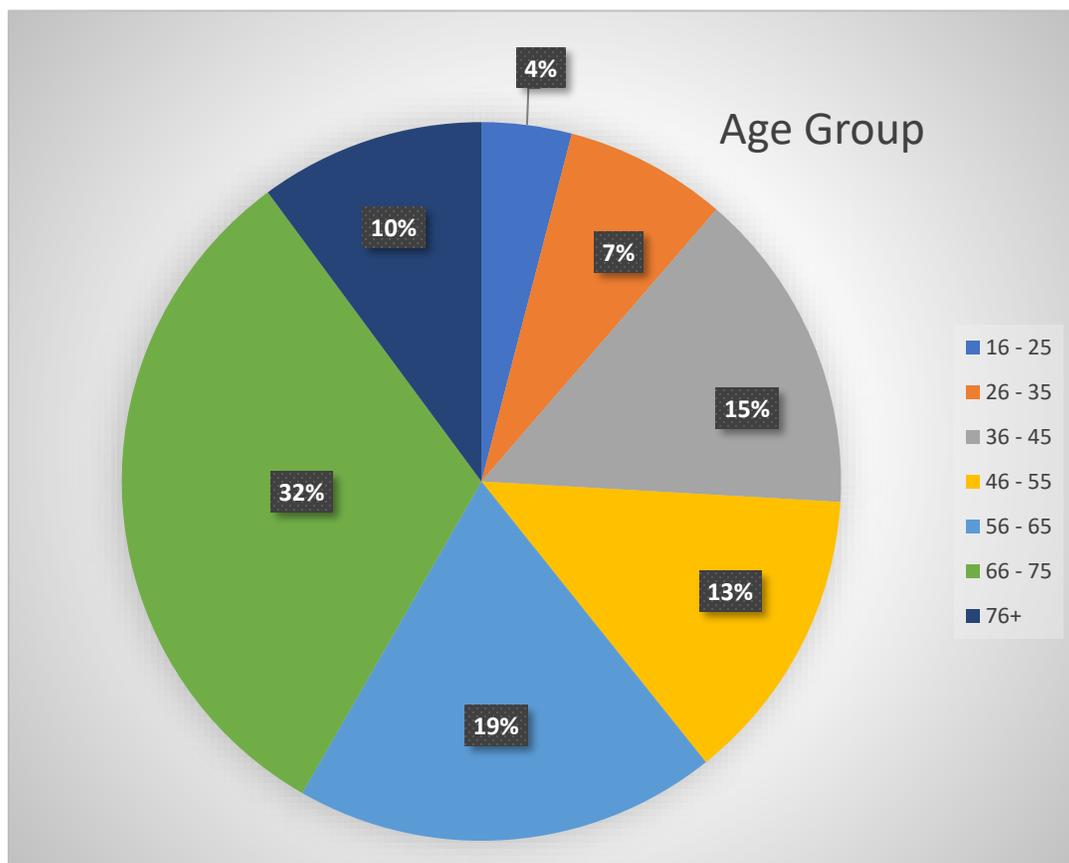
In June 2019, TPAS Cymru shared the results of the survey with the Regulatory Board for Wales; as well as sharing on the TPAS Cymru website so that landlords and tenants have access to it. This is promoted through social media platforms.

### 1. What type of tenant are you?



### 2. Which age group do you belong to?

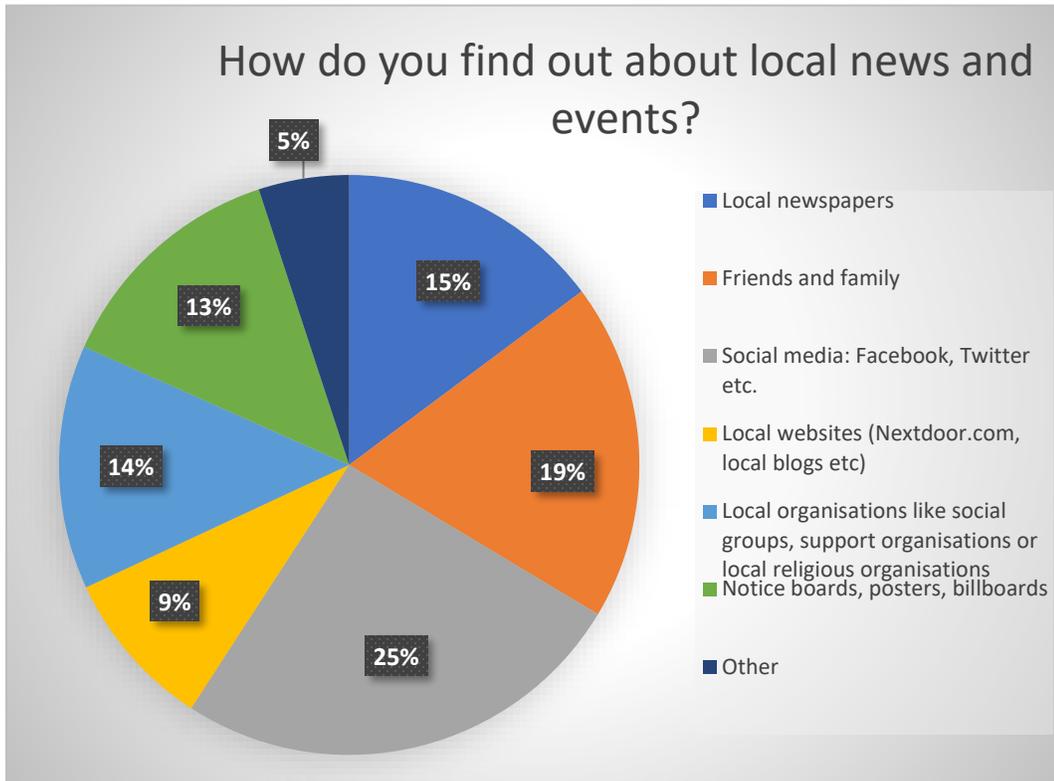
As expected, based on the age demographic of our pulse community, the largest proportion of respondents were of 'working' age (16-65).



### 3. How do you find out about local news and events?

As can be seen, social media is the main area for tenants to find out about local news and events,

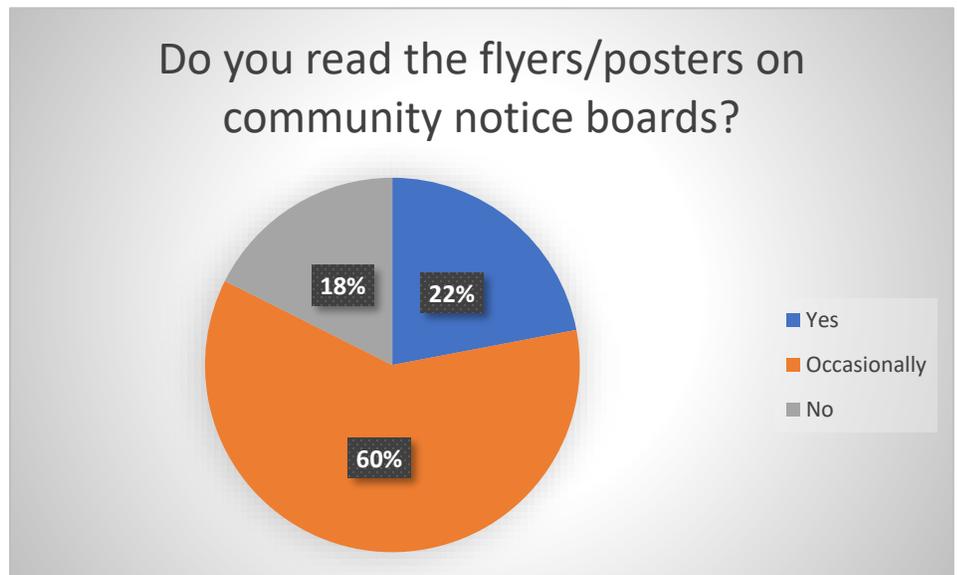
closely followed by friends and family. Interestingly, local newspapers were still utilised by 15% of the pulse population. When comparing different age groups, it seems that younger people find out through facebook groups and via friends and family. Mid age ranges commented that they get invited to events through facebook events or it 'pops -up' on their newsfeed. As expected, the older



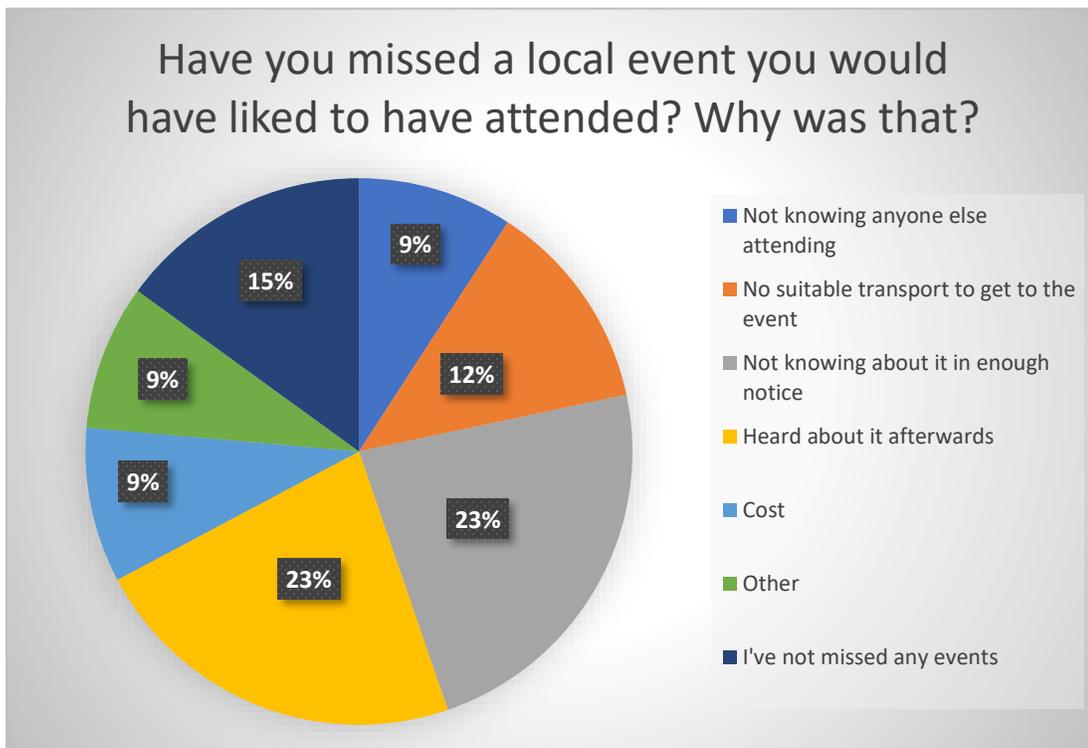
the tenant, the more of a focus on newspapers and word of mouth through talking to people in the shops and being on tenant representative groups already. There were no significant differences between the type of landlord they had and how they accessed information.

### 4. Do you read the flyers/posters on community notice boards? (ie notice boards provided by the local council, in local shops, community centres)

As can be seen from the chart, the need for flyers is still important as long as they are 'eye catching'. Unexpectedly, the results revealed that the younger groups of respondents read notice boards more than the older groups. Two respondents in the 16-25 group pointed out that they rarely see notice boards around so when they do, they are interested. Again, there were no significant differences in the type of landlord.



## 5. Have you missed a local event you would have liked to have attended? Why was that?



This chart reveals that 46% of respondents have not attended events due to not knowing or hearing about it afterwards. A few respondents within both the 26-25 group and the 66-75 group commented about the cost of transport to certain events, living in rural areas with little transport and for those less able, they felt excluded, commenting that “as pensioners, we feel excluded from social

events because of costs that we cannot afford, eg, ticket charges to concerts or classes. LA tenants and HA tenants focussed on there not being enough notice where as PRS felt they usually heard about it afterwards. Interestingly, for the younger tenants aged between 16-25, the reason for not attending was due to not knowing anyone else.

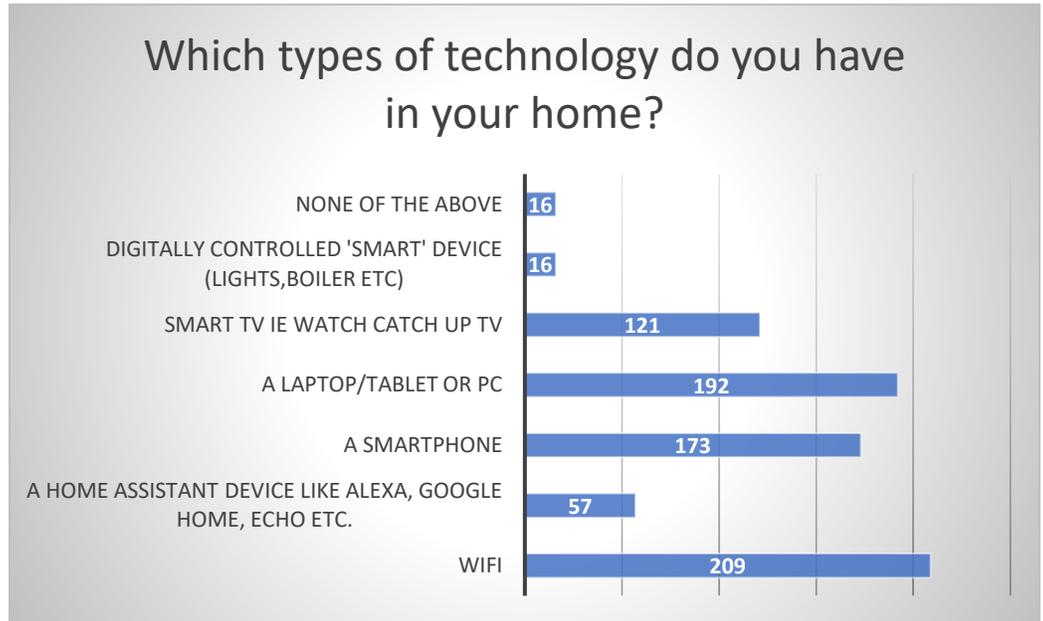
## 6. How often do you do the following?

The most popular method of finding news was via watching local news, closely followed by social media and reading local news online. As can be seen, the difference in method choice was not particularly significant. As expected, there was a difference based on ages. The majority of 16-25 and 34-45, 46-55 year olds, found information via local events and social media, 26-35 were the same but closely followed with reading local news online. Whereas the majority of 66+ watched local news on TV. This demonstrates the need to utilise various methods based on age.



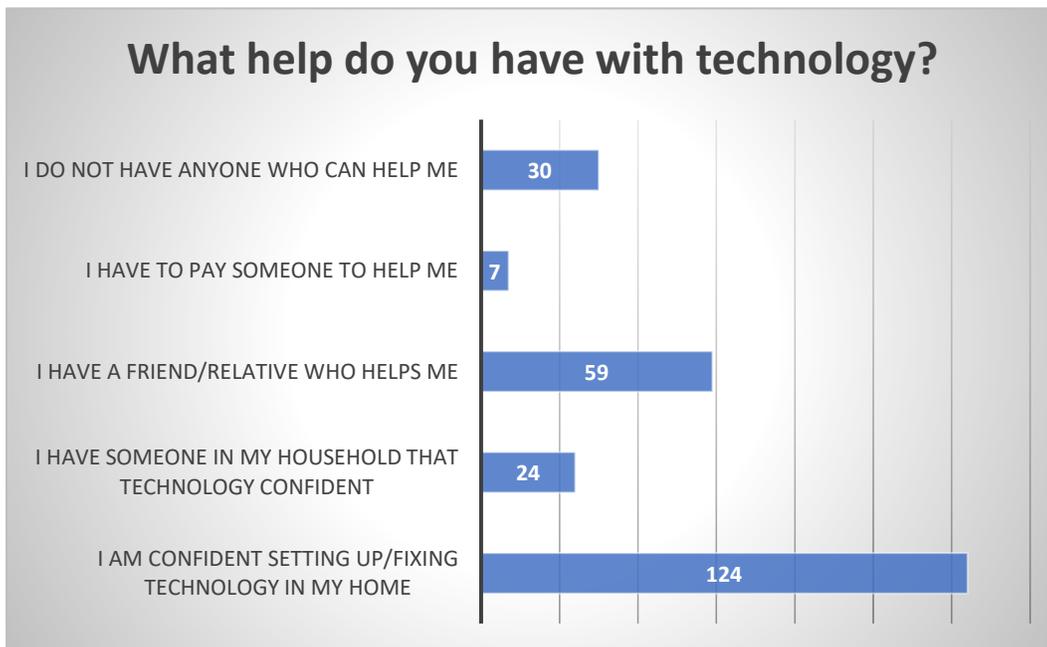
## 7. Do you have any of the following in your home

Out of the 252 tenants responding to this survey, this chart reveals that 209 of them have Wi-Fi in their home. This is of course positive but it still leaves 43 of the respondents without internet access and when broadening that out to the renting population in Wales, that leaves a significant number of people digitally excluded. This highlights the need for continuing and developing the work



around digital inclusion. As well as continuing development of local newspapers as there was a clear link between those that read local newspapers and those without Wi-Fi in their property.

## 8. What help do you have with technology?



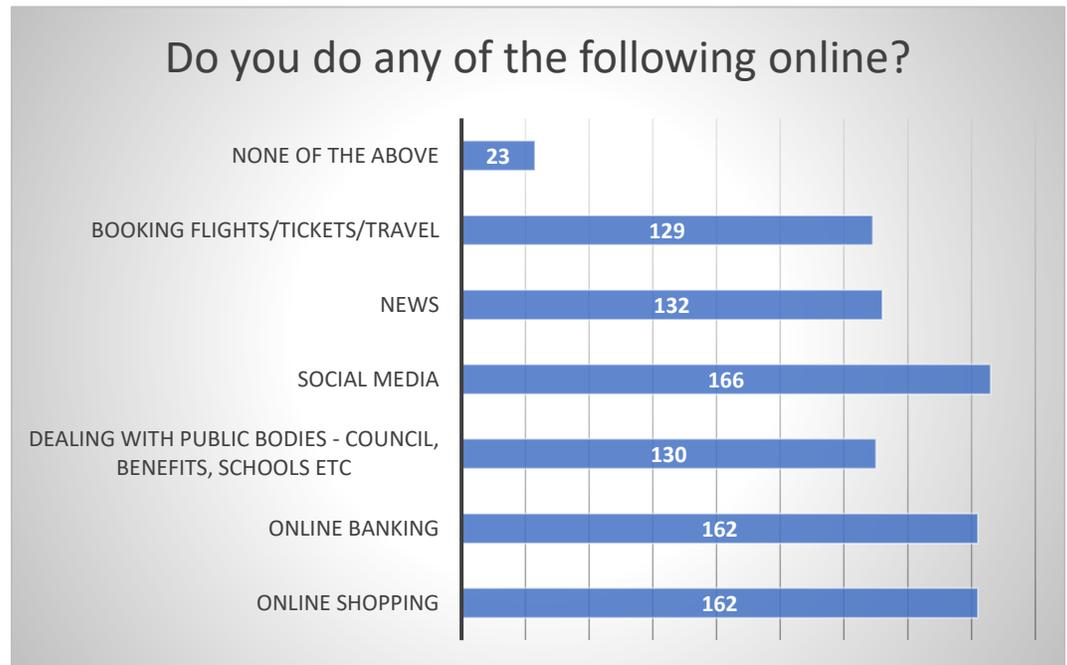
As can be seen on the chart, almost half of the respondents felt confident in setting technology up themselves. As expected, this varied across age groups. 94% of 26-35 year olds felt confident whilst only 37% of respondents at retirement age felt the same way. It cannot be ignored that there is clearly still a high number of tenants

needing support, some of which are having to pay for this support. Again, this highlights the need for continuing and developing the work around digital inclusion

## 9. Do you do any of the following online?

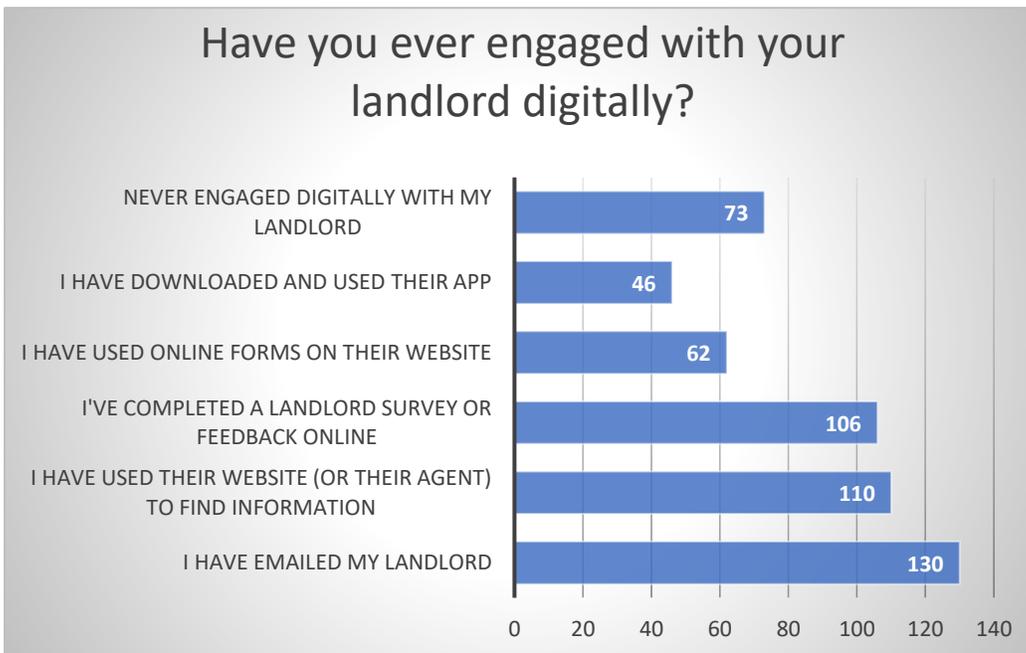
Tenants are certainly utilising various websites to gain information. As expected, social media was the highest, closely followed by online banking and online shopping. Only 23 respondents didn't use any of the online platforms, all of which were over aged 66+.

There were no significant differences noted across landlord type.



## 10. Have you ever engaged with your landlord digitally?

Emailing landlords was the highest form of digital engagement reported by tenants. Others used

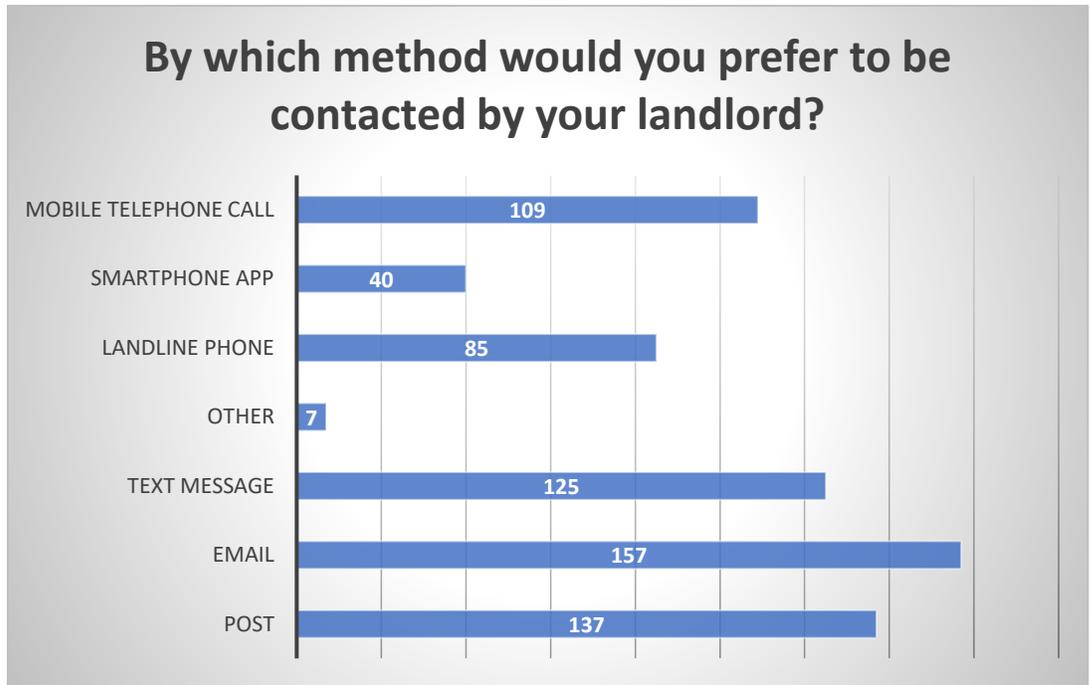


different avenues such as using the website to find out information. In terms of giving feedback, there was a significant difference between PRS tenants and social housing tenants. Only 4% of PRS tenants had completed online feedback compared to 21% in both LA and HA, totalling 106 respondents. There was also a notable difference in tenants accessing their landlord's website for information. LA tenants were less likely

than HA tenants to use the website. In terms of age differentiation, 20% of 16-25 year olds had never engaged with their landlord digitally. TPAS Cymru is not fully informed about the number of social landlords that utilise apps but this research reveals that this is an area for improvement.

## 11. By which method would you prefer to be contacted by your landlord?

As can be seen, over half of the tenants in who completed this survey felt that they would rather be contacted by email. This was consistent across age groups, minus the 66+ group who preferred to be contacted by post. There were comments around needing a paper trail which is why email was the preferred method but text message could also be sufficient. Text



message was also a preferred option for individuals working as they couldn't pick the phone up at work. Interestingly, there was a clear difference in perceptions across tenants, with some stating they wouldn't want to be contacted by their landlord and others emphasising they want more contact. Smartphone apps were also commented on in that they would welcome an app to ensure things are done faster.