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SAFER HOMES CONSULTATION MINI-PULSE REPORT

THE TENANT VOICE ON
PROPOSED CHANGES TO
HOUSING POLICY

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Ariennir yn Rhannol gan
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TENANT VOICE SPONSOR

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Tenant Pulse

Tenant Pulse is the national tenant voice platform for tenants in Wales. It gives people living in social housing a simple, anonymous way to share their views, experiences, and ideas about their homes and communities.

We believe the best way to improve housing is to listen to the people who live in it – and that's precisely what Tenant Pulse is for.

We run a mix of regular and one-off surveys through Tenant Pulse to ensure tenants' voices are heard on the biggest topics in housing.

This work currently takes the following forms:

Annual surveys: On subjects we believe are essential and need tracking.

Currently, there are three annual surveys:

- **Energy & Net Zero** – How tenants feel about energy use and moving towards greener homes and cleaner energy.
- **Rent Consultation** – Sharing the tenant voice and experiences on how rent levels are set and what feels fair.
- **Our Annual Survey on 'what matters?'** – Our big yearly check-in to hear what's important to tenants right now.

2) Specific topical surveys: We run shorter, focused surveys in response to specific issues. We often work with partners like the Welsh Government to shape these. This Mini Tenant-Pulse forms part of this work.

3) Surveys for specific audiences: Depending on the topic, we sometimes run surveys with specific groups of tenants. This might include private renters in North Wales or tenants in Housing Associations sharing views on things like regulation reform. We believe that by listening to tenants and stakeholders, we can enable open, honest, and transparent conversations.

Together, we can improve housing in Wales by listening, learning, and acting on what really matters to tenants.

All reports are published on the Tenant Pulse portal on our website.

www.tpas.cymru/pulse

Background and Introduction to this survey

The heartbreaking death of Awaab Ishak – a two-year-old who lost his life due to mould in his social housing – shocked and saddened us all.

It's a painful reminder that everyone has the right to a safe, healthy home and that we must do better as a sector.

The Welsh Government is now consulting on new guidance to strengthen the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) and clarify how social landlords should respond to serious hazards like damp, mould, and other health risks.

What's being proposed?

The guidance would require social landlords in Wales to:

- Act quickly and effectively when a hazard is reported
- Publish their response times, so tenants know what to expect
- Report on performance as part of their WHQS responsibilities

It's all about improving transparency, accountability, and trust.

The impact

A group of housing and health experts in Wales has examined the lessons from Awaab's story closely. Their message was clear: We need to take tenant concerns seriously, act sooner, and ensure that all homes, especially for the most vulnerable, are safe and supportive of good health.

This conversation isn't just about damp and mould. The changes cover 29 types of hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, covering risks from cold and overcrowding to structural problems and poor ventilation.

For tenants, these proposals could lead to faster action, more consistent standards, and greater accountability from landlords.

The Welsh Government is now consulting on these proposed changes, and it has clarified that the tenant's voice is central to shaping the final version of the guidance.

TPAS Cymru's reaction

TPAS Cymru welcomes this work to raise housing standards and make things safer for tenants across Wales.

To ensure tenant views are part of this critical conversation, we ran a short Mini Tenant Pulse survey to gather feedback on the proposals. This report shares what we heard.

Some of the key elements we explored with tenants followed the Welsh Government consultation document questions. These themes included:

- 1) Categorising which hazards should be included in the new guidelines.
- 2) How and what do tenants describe as a 'significant risk'?
- 3) Expectations regarding timeframes for landlords by tenants to inspect and fix problems.
- 4) Reasonable timeframes for landlords by tenants in calendar days for a hazard to be investigated and a plan put in place going forward to deal with said hazard.

Key findings

1) Tenants want to see all hazards covered with no exceptions.

71% of tenants said the new rule in WHQS should include every kind of hazard. The message was loud and clear. If something could harm health, comfort, or well-being, it should be taken seriously.

2) Tenants feel that risk is not just physical but also related to their well-being and mental health.

When we asked what a “significant risk” meant, tenants told us it was about more than just bricks and mortar. A definition of risk means different things depending on the circumstances of the tenant. Tenants identified that hazards are daily sources of anxiety and discomfort when not resolved.

3) Tenants want the same rules for everyone, everywhere

A huge 83% of tenants said landlords across Wales should follow the same response time in the proposed rule. Tenants don’t want a postcode lottery; tenants want a fair and consistent approach, and to know what to expect if something goes wrong.

4) When considering speed of response, three days feels fair to tenants.

The most popular response to “How long should a landlord have to investigate a hazard?” was three calendar days (36%). This shows how important quick action is, especially when someone’s health or safety could be at risk.

5) Good communication is just as important as good repairs.

Time and again, tenants have told us what made a situation worse wasn’t just the hazard, it was being left in the dark. Tenants want clear updates, honesty, and to feel like someone is taking their concerns seriously. That’s not just good customer service for landlords, it’s essential to safe, healthy homes.

6) It’s not just about damp, it’s about dignity.

Tenants told us that damp and mould aren’t just a health risk; they feel they’re a sign that their voices aren’t being heard. This included sharing stories of living with mould for months, feeling unwell, avoiding parts of their homes, and feeling embarrassed about their living conditions. One said, *“I don’t use my bedroom anymore—no one’s taken it seriously.”* For tenants, damp and mould represent more than a repair issue and a lack of seriousness about hazards; it reflects a system that feels slow to act when it matters.

Demographics of respondents

Under the TPAS Cymru Tenant Pulse branding, TPAS Cymru conducted a 'Mini Tenant-Pulse' survey in April 2025 using the Tenant Pulse platform. The smaller scale of this survey provided an opportunity for TPAS Cymru to gain an immediate snapshot of tenants' perceptions on this important topic.

The short survey included 4 demographic questions to understand the type of renter and 4 questions on the topic, gathering insights from tenants across Wales on their views and attitudes regarding hazards and building safety related to the Welsh government's proposed changes to WHQS.

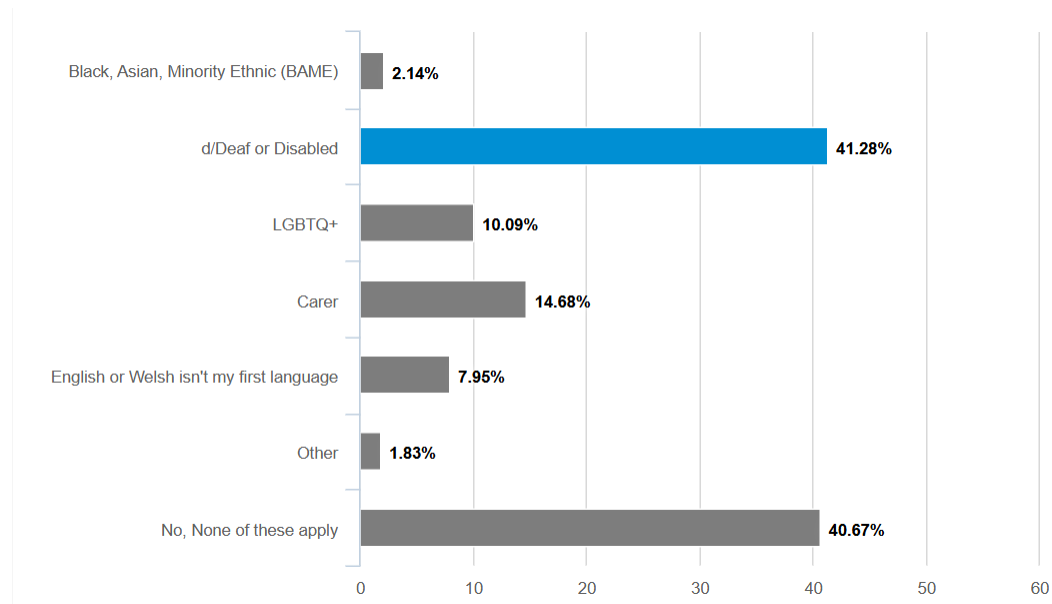
Response summary

A total of 377 tenants responded. The target audience for this survey consisted of tenants who only rent from a Housing Association or Local Authority (social housing). The response rate was 98% Housing Association or Local Authority tenants, with 2% marking themselves as 'other'. (Those who tick 'other' tend to be tenants in supported housing, shared ownership, etc, so have registered for Tenant Pulse under social housing.)

The response provided an overview of tenant perceptions and attitudes on this subject across Wales. Tenants from all four regions of Wales (North, South West, South East, West, and Mid) provided a response.

The survey included all ages from 18 to 60+, with the largest responding group being aged 60+. This aligns with our previous Tenant Pulse surveys and Wales's overall social housing population. Our smallest responding age bracket was the 18-30 age bracket. To resolve this and provide an accurate response in our Welsh Government Consultation Response, TPAS Cymru will target this age bracket during our 1:1 consultation period outside this Mini Tenant-Pulse survey.

Underrepresented groups



We included optional questions about demographics to help us better understand who we're reaching and who we might need to do more to engage.

Among respondents, 41% identified as d/Deaf or disabled, 8% said English or Welsh was not their first language, 2% were from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic backgrounds, and 10% identified as LGBTQ+.

Looking more closely at the responses:

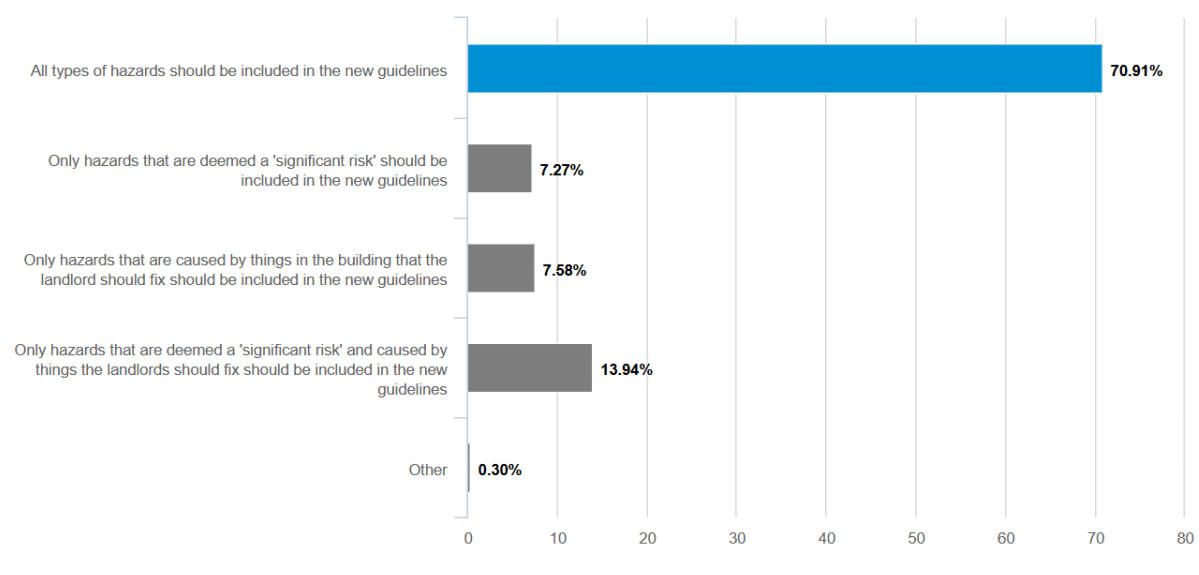
- For those from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic backgrounds, 79% also reported that English or Welsh was not their first language. The majority of this group lived in South West Wales (41%), and 18% also identified as d/Deaf or disabled.
- Of those who identified as LGBTQ+, 58% also reported being d/Deaf or disabled, and 27% identified as carers.

Section 1- The new guidelines

Question 1) Which of the following statements do you most agree with?

We began by asking tenants what hazards they believe should be covered in the new Welsh Government guidelines. Should the guidelines include *all* hazards? Or just those considered high-risk, or the landlord's responsibility?

The data revealed the following:



The response was clear and consistent. 71% of tenants said that all types of hazards should be included, strongly supporting a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to the proposed policy changes.

Only 14% of responding tenants felt that the guidelines should focus only on significant risks caused by things the landlord is responsible for.

We also saw some interesting differences across different groups.

Tenants identified as d/Deaf or disabled were especially likely to support full inclusion of all hazards within the proposed rule, with 74% selecting the 'all hazards' option. That's 10% higher than those who did not identify with any underrepresented group.

Age also played a role in tenant response. Support for including all hazards was highest among younger tenants, with 100% of those aged 18–30 backing the inclusion of all hazards under the new rule. By comparison, a lower 72% of tenants aged 60+ supported the same option, which is still a substantial majority, but slightly lower than the younger age groups.

Overall, the message from this question is clear: tenants want the new guidance to be as thorough and inclusive as possible of all hazards.

Tenants don't want to see certain hazards ignored or downplayed, and they value the protection of the 'all hazards' wording, especially when each hazard could have a serious impact on health, well-being, or quality of life.

Section 2: Definitions of 'significant risk'

When tenants were asked: **Question 2: "How would you define a 'significant risk' in your home?"** Their responses showed that risk isn't just about physical danger; for tenants, it's about feeling unsafe, being protected from feeling unwell, or being supported to live comfortably. This was an open text box, providing tenants to say what they were truly thinking. This method is a great way to understand tenants' true feelings on the subject.

Tenant responses developed 3 clear messages about risk and how tenants would define a significant risk.

- 1) The definition of a significant risk depends on the tenant's own personal circumstances.*
- 2) The definition of significant risk to a tenant is hard to define, as all tenants' circumstances are different.*
- 3) What may be considered a significant risk to one tenant may not be to another. This is due to differing health, financial and emotional circumstances for all tenants.*

Diving deeper

Common concerns listed by tenants included mould, leaks, faulty electrics, and broken windows or doors. These weren't just seen as hazards on their own; they often led to further problems, like damp, poor health, and stress, which was defined as the 'significant risk'. In the tenant response, mould was mentioned frequently, with many linking it to severe health conditions.

Equally important was the emotional impact on tenants, which highlighted the link between hazards and a significant risk to tenants' feelings of safety and emotional well-being. Tenants described how delays in repairs, poor communication, and not being listened to made them feel anxious and ignored and took a huge toll on their mental health. For vulnerable residents, like older adults or disabled people,

seemingly small issues such as a lack of handrails or poor lighting became major barriers to safety and independence when paired with new risks.

“Something that has a detrimental impact on the safety and fabric of my home, including those which have a demonstrable impact on my health and/or perception of safety in my home.”

A few tenants also raised broader issues, such as anti-social behaviour or security problems in communal areas. These may not always fall under traditional definitions of risk, but they greatly impacted how safe people felt in their homes.

Many tenants said what makes something a “significant risk” is how it affects their daily life, especially if problems are left unresolved and not acted on immediately. As put by one tenant:

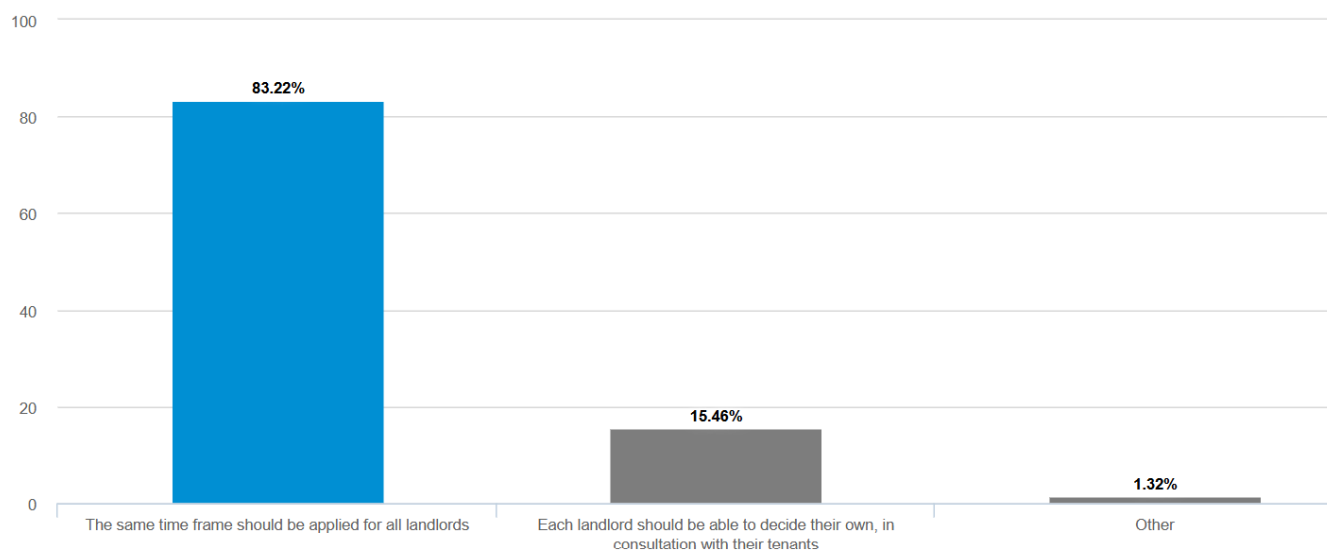
“Significant risk should be defined not only as something that is hazardous to life, but something that makes you feel considerably unsafe or unhappy in your own home.”

The message was clear: housing risks aren’t just about structure or compliance; they’re about people, their health, and their ability to live safely and with dignity. Listening to tenants and acting on their concerns is key. Tenants identified that significant risk lies not only in the physical hazard but also in the speed of landlord response.

" A significant risk is something that endangers my physical and / or mental wellbeing."

Section 3- Timeframes for landlords to fix hazards

Question 3: These new proposed changes outline that landlords must inspect and fix problems within a certain amount of time. Do you think all landlords should have the same amount of time to fix problems, or should each landlord talk to their tenants and decide how much time they need?



One of the proposed changes from the Welsh Government concerns how quickly landlords must act when a problem is reported, such as damp or mould. The idea is to set clear timeframes for inspections and repairs.

We asked tenants whether they think *all* social landlords across Wales should follow the same timescales or whether landlords should have the flexibility to agree on their own timeframes in consultation with tenants.

The response was clear: 83% of tenants said there should be one consistent timeframe that all landlords must follow.

Some tenants, especially in rural areas, felt there should be some flexibility. 19% of rural tenants supported landlords setting their own timeframes (in agreement with tenants), compared to just 12% of tenants in urban areas.

A few tenants selected "other" and shared more detailed views. One tenant shared:

"There are lots of factors involved. There needs to be specific time frames to acknowledge a report of concern. For example, reporting mould that is affecting health and prevents a tenant from using their bedroom should not take 3+ months to send an inspector, who then denies there is a problem. Landlords need to work with tenants and make a plan. Social landlords should be held to the same strict rules private landlords are. If a building remains unfixed for so long, a tenant should be reimbursed or given a reduction in rent."

Another added:

"Use the second option for non-urgent issues – but the first option for anything urgent that affects a tenant's health or safety."

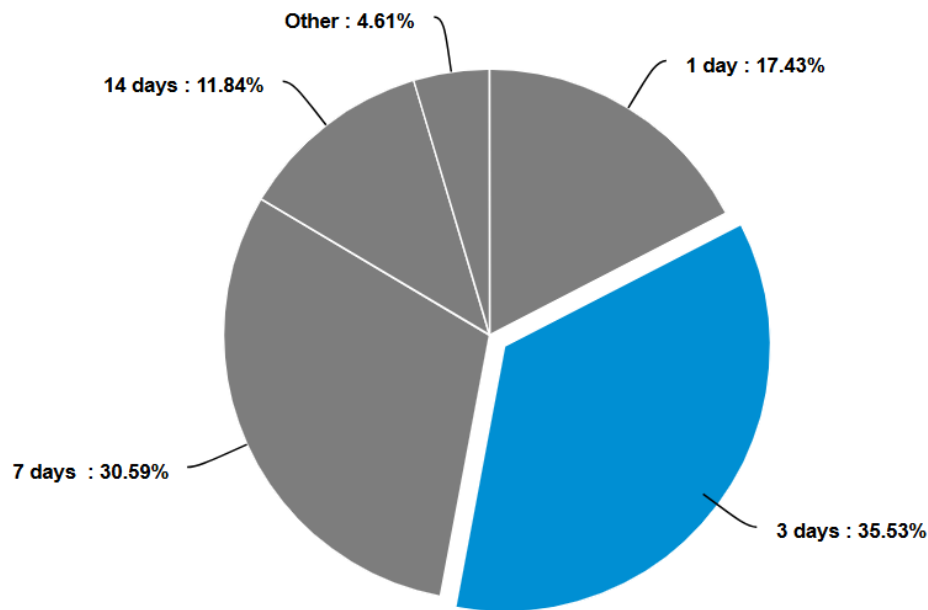
Overall, the message from tenants is clear: most want a fair and consistent approach across Wales, but with some room for common sense and urgency when people's health is at risk.

Section 4 – Reasonable timeframes for action

Question 4: In your view, what is a reasonable timeframe (in calendar days, not working days) for a hazard to be investigated, and a plan to be put into place?

Following the introduction of Awaab's Law in England, which clearly expects landlords to investigate hazards and put a plan in place within 14 calendar days, we asked tenants in Wales what they think is a reasonable timeframe for this.

We clarified that we were asking about *calendar days*, not working days, so there's no confusion around weekends or bank holidays.



The most common response was three calendar days, which 36% of tenants chose. Many felt this was a fair and urgent timeframe, particularly when health and well-being might be at risk. The second most popular choice was 7 days, with 31% of respondents selecting this option.

Only a small number of tenants (5%) selected “other,” but almost all of these responses came with an important message:

“It depends on the nature of the hazard.”

- This suggests that while tenants want action taken quickly, they also understand that not every issue can be approached in the same way. Flexibility, but not delay, was a recurring theme. Tenant feedback on this question highlighted that tenants want a high-quality service, with communication at the heart of the response.
- There was also a noticeable difference between tenants living in different areas. Those in urban areas were more likely to favour a 3-day response time (42%) than tenants in rural areas (31%). This could reflect differing expectations based on service access, past experiences, or knowledge of resources or capacity available.

Overall, tenants told us that quick and reliable action matters. While many supported very short timeframes, there was also a clear call for a common-sense

approach that ensured tenants waited the shortest possible time for the highest-quality service.

Acknowledgements

We want to take this opportunity to thank our Tenant Pulse panel for their continuous inspiration and commitment to taking part in our surveys. Your input is truly valued and helps to shape the future of housing.

We would also like to thank the Welsh Government for part-funding TPAS Cymru as an organisation and Wales & West for the year-round lead sponsorship.

About TPAS Cymru



TPAS Cymru has supported tenants and landlords in Wales for over 30 years, developing effective tenant and community participation through training, support, practical projects, and policy development. Locally, we support community empowerment through practical advice, support, training, and project work.

At the Government level, we contribute to policy changes by working with partner organisations to ensure the tenant voice influences decision-making.



Tenant Pulse is the voice of tenants in Wales. www.tpas.cymru/pulse. It's been created by TPAS Cymru and is supported by the Welsh Government. We aim to:

- i) Find out what matters most to tenants.
- ii) Release regular surveys.
- iii) Hold prize draws to reward people who take part.

The results of our surveys are used by decision makers to create housing policy that works for tenants and helps make housing in Wales safer and fairer.

Tenant Voice sponsor



Tenant Pulse is part of a programme of work to amplify tenants' voices. We are very grateful to Pobl Group, which sponsors this work.

To meet one of our team to discuss the points raised, please contact Eleanor Roberts at Eleanor@Tpas.cymru.