

A snapshot of ethnic minority tenant experiences of engagement in Wales:

Insight report



1) PURPOSE

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Whilst we are currently witnessing a rise in race related-hate crime and push back against anti-racism, TPAS Cymru wants to make it clear we are committed to hearing from a range of tenant voices, including those from ethnic minority communities. We do so in numerous ways, such as our **Annual Tenant Pulse, Tenant networks and more. We wanted to hear more and give a safe space for ethnic minority tenants to do that.**

I would also like to thank each participant for sharing their experiences and time, which takes courage.

TPAS Cymru also remains committed to Tai Pawb's (Housing Equality Experts) **Deeds Not Words Pledge 2.0**. We have also more recently launched an **Ethnic Minority Tenant Panel**, in partnership with Tai Pawb and EYST. This panel aims to empower tenant voices across Wales to challenge racial housing inequalities.

Earlier this year, we launched our '**Facts Over Fear**' Tenant Guide, to dispell myths regarding social housing and immigration. These harmful narratives and ongoing racial division have had continued negative impacts on the wellbeing of ethnic minority tenants and fellow colleagues in the sector.

We know there has been vital work taking place with our regional partner at tpas England, highlighted by the extensive research and campaign led by **Kai Jackson**, in her groundbreaking report '**Ethnic Minority Voices in Housing: Is There a Seat at the Table?**'.

Our core message is simple: to ensure every tenant knows they matter, regardless of their ethnicity, and they are able to participate as we navigate a constantly evolving housing landscape.

Authored by:



Olivia Browne,
Policy & Engagement
Officer

Supported by:



Akshita Lakhiwal,
Net Zero Engagement
Officer

CONTEXT:

Ethnic Minority refers to all ethnic groups except the White British group. Ethnic minorities include 'White' minorities, such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups.

The term **'social tenant'** refers to anyone who rents through a social landlord, e.g., a Housing Association or Local Authority.

'Private tenant' refers to those who rent with a private landlord in the private market.

Wales, like other parts of the UK, is an increasingly ethnically diverse country, and ethnic minority tenants are an important and valued part of the tenant communities they live within. Cardiff, Wales' capital, was in fact one of the first multicultural cities in the UK, dating back to the 1800s.

According to the latest Census data, approximately 6.2% of the Welsh population (around 192,000 people) identified as non-White. This includes people from Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh; Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African; Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups; and Other ethnic group backgrounds.

Housing:

Housing is a vital component in people's lives. It provides shelter and safety. This study includes people renting across both the private rented sector (PRS) and social housing.

The Census found that households where all members identified as White were the most likely to own their homes outright, with 39.3% of households in Wales doing so.

Households where all members identified as Black had the lowest rates of home ownership and the highest levels of social renting, with around 42% of Black households in Wales living in social rented housing.

There is a breadth of existing research documenting the negative housing outcomes experienced by ethnic minority tenants, which highlight the following:

- Experiences of racism and discrimination from landlords and housing providers.
- Overcrowding and unsuitable housing conditions.
- Higher risks of homelessness.
- Barriers to accessing housing support and services.

The previous Welsh Government's **Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP)** recognises that housing is an important area of action in tackling racial inequality.

- The Plan highlights that some ethnic minority households experience disproportionately high levels of overcrowding, homelessness and barriers to accessing appropriate, affordable and good-quality housing. It sets an ambition for housing services to advance race equality, embed anti-racism and meet the diverse needs of ethnic minority people.
- Importantly, the Action Plan also recognises that tackling inequality in housing is not only about the services provided, but about who has a voice in shaping them. It commits to improving the engagement and representation of ethnic minority tenants, ensuring their experiences inform housing policy and services, and removing barriers to tenant involvement.
- For social landlords, this includes taking measurable action on equality, diversity and inclusion, including anti-racism and tackling hate crime.

Tenant engagement and tenant rights have increasingly gained importance within housing policy, recognising that tenants should have a meaningful role in shaping the services that affect them.

However, it is clear that not all tenants experience the same awareness of rights, engagement and more.

Kai Jackson's report for TPAS England, "Ethnic Minority Tenant Engagement: Is There a Seat at the Table?", has generated much-needed attention on the experiences of ethnic minority tenants in England and the importance of ensuring their voices are represented within housing engagement.

It highlighted that representation alone is insufficient if individuals are not able to influence decisions or shape policy.

The report emphasised that social housing providers and landlords must dig deeper than simply 'tick boxing' engagement with ethnic minorities. Creating environments where tenants can genuinely participate and feel comfortable is vital to ensuring true representation.



Whilst the report offers valuable insight from across the border, we wanted to ask ethnic minority tenants from both private and social tenures what their experiences were in Wales.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of this research was to hear directly from ethnic minority tenants about their experiences of landlord engagement and to develop recommendations for best practice.

This insight aims to encourage discussion across the housing sector about how landlords engage with ethnic minority tenants, what barriers exist, and how engagement approaches need to change based on tenants' lived experiences.



The research sought to:

- 1) **Understand** the experiences of ethnic minority tenants when engaging with landlords and housing providers.
- 2) **Explore** experiences of communication, repairs, housing conditions, and tenant involvement.
- 3) **Identify** areas where landlord engagement could be improved.
- 4) **Highlight** examples of positive practice alongside areas requiring further action.

- The research was conducted through online Zoom focus groups, enabling tenants from across Wales to participate in a way that suited them, including using the chat function.
- There were x3 focus groups in total and all were recorded and transcribed, along with the chat, using thematic analysis.
- Participants also had the option to turn captions on if needing assistance.
- The opportunity to participate was advertised on social media Facebook Groups across Wales and via our tenant mailing list.
- A £20 voucher for each participant was provided as a reward for their time and contribution.

SAMPLE:

We note there were no participants who self-described as being Gypsy, Roma or Traveller. These diverse and distinct ethnic groups are often underrepresented in research and TPAS Cymru aims to continue our working with Gypsy, Traveller and Roma tenants through organisations such as There and Back Again.

No real names were used in this report to protect identities.

Participants represented a range of ethnic backgrounds, including:

- Black British
- Black African
- Caribbean
- British Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Iranian
- Asian
- Mixed South Asian
- Mixed White and Black African
- Mixed White and Middle Eastern backgrounds

Participants represented different regions of Wales, including South Wales, West Wales, North Wales, and Mid Wales, and included **both private and social housing** tenants renting in Wales. Of the sample, 17 lived in the private rental sector and 13 lived in social housing.

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Additional participant characteristics provided by respondents included:

8 participants identified as d/Deaf or disabled.

3 participants identified as LGBTQIA+. There was a near equal split of genders, with 14 identifying as male and 16 as female.

Things to note:

This is a small sample of tenants and the research itself is intended to start conversations and be built upon, not to generalised as the experiences of all ethnic minority tenants in Wales.

Our Annual Tenant Pulse survey captures a broader picture and more data, encompassing that of ethnic minority tenants.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

This insight report explores how ethnic minority tenants across Wales experience landlord engagement, housing services and participation. It draws on three online focus groups with 30 tenants from diverse ethnic backgrounds, regions and tenures, including 17 private renters and 13 social housing tenants.

What tenants told us

- Experiences varied significantly by tenure and landlord.
- **Social tenants** often viewed landlords as providers of homes, communities and neighbourhoods, but reported inconsistent communication and difficulty having racism, antisocial behaviour and safety concerns recognised.
- **Private tenants** more commonly described transactional relationships, usually focused on repairs, with WhatsApp often preferred for contact. Across both groups, participants highlighted past or ongoing experiences of racism, discrimination and feeling unsafe.

Housing conditions and affordability

- **Repairs, damp and mould** were recurring concerns.
- **Social tenants** described delays, repeated inspections, limited follow-up and responses that could place responsibility on occupants rather than addressing underlying causes.
- **Private tenants** in this sample generally reported quicker responses, though this would benefit from further research. Tenants welcomed energy-efficiency improvements and reliable heating, but access to information about tariffs, retrofit options and available support was uneven.

Priorities for action

Landlords and the wider housing sector should create safer, more cohesive communities, this could be done in the following ways:

- Recognise and respond to racism and unconscious bias.
- Provide accessible, two-way engagement in channels tenants use
- Act promptly to concerns raised.
- Ensure tenant voices can influence decisions rather than being used for representation alone.
- Continued research, support for tenant-led projects and accountability through anti-racism commitments will be essential to meaningful change.

THEMES:

Based on our Annual Tenant Pulse work and insight, we asked ethnic minority tenants about the following key themes:

1. Landlord engagement



2. Repairs



3. Damp and mould



4. Affordable warmth



Each theme included a range of questions and prompts designed to understand tenants' experiences of housing services, communication, and landlord responsiveness.



1. Landlord engagement

Participants described a range of experiences when engaging with landlords and housing providers. It is also important to note that this varied depending on their tenure type e.g., private or social.

SOCIAL HOUSING TENANTS:

For the social housing tenants who participated, there was a strong sense of viewing their landlord as a holistic provider of more than only homes, but of communities and neighbourhoods.

There were also disparities in the levels of engagement and communication each tenant from different landlords received.

Some only received infrequent letters and emails, others reported multiple forms such as:

- WhatsApp
- Housing App
- Newsletters

Similarly to private tenants, social housing tenants also reported communicating with their landlord about repairs, but this was alongside other issues such as:

- Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)
- Parking issues

Tenants described difficulties when getting their landlord to understand when the ASB they faced was related to race.

For example, Sarah, a mixed race woman, described her and her Asian neighbour being deliberately targeted by a white woman on their street who was causing a parking conflict.

“Her parking causes a chain reaction, yet she only has an issue with myself and my Asian neighbour.” – Sarah

Sarah also described hearing the woman saying to another white neighbour **“I don’t give a f**k about them”**, meaning Sarah and her Asian Neighbour, the only non-white people who live on the street.

“She caused a lot of ASB and the landlord seemed to be taking her side. It took two and a half years of complaining for them to do anything” – Sarah

Another social housing tenant added:

“I find they (landlords) don’t want to cross the boundary of racism when it comes to ASB. It’s like they want to sugarcoat it and call it a tenant on tenant issue, when it’s not” – Yas

While on the one hand, some tenants described being unsatisfied with their social landlord’s response to ASB and its links to racism. On the other hand, there were positive sentiments about equal treatment from landlords themselves.

“Everyone gets treated equally” - Mushraf

This was echoed by other social housing tenants in the groups.

One tenant, who lives in a rural area, described attending a coffee morning and being made to feel welcomed. This is an example of ‘informal’ tenant engagement social landlords often offer.

“It was great, no one treated me any differently even though I was the only non-white person there” - Abi

Before moving into her current social home, Abi described the following experience:

“I was advised by the housing officer not to bid on any properties on a certain estate because they said ‘look, we’re going to be honest with you, you will probably face racism there’. Which I thought was a really nice thing to do, actually. I’d rather that because it felt like they were looking out for me” - Abi

Despite the reality of racism hindering where she could potentially live, in this instance the emphasis on tenant wellbeing in connection with community cohesion was something Abi actually appreciated as a woman of colour.

While Abi did in fact see the engagement she received from her landlord regarding racism in the community as a positive, it must be acknowledged that this is a reality recognised by many ethnic minority tenants.

Another tenant, “Amelia”, based in North Wales, described heated tensions in an area near where asylum seekers were being housed. As a person of colour herself, she said she felt **“scared and uncomfortable”** when approaching white people in that area, in case they mistook her as an asylum seeker due to her darker complexion. The area she described was near an immigration centre.



This demonstrates a genuine fear faced by those in ethnic minority tenant communities and was echoed by others.

Other tenants, in both private and social groups, cited feelings of unease and rising racial tensions in their neighbourhoods, in relation to immigration and asylum—including those who were British Nationals, living in multi-cultural areas.

"It's like, they (white British people) see I'm brown and instantly distrust me. I've been told to go back to my own country, when I've lived here all my life"– Tre

It does also raise the question of how issues of racism and community cohesion can be improved in social housing and further, as it leads to tenants feeling unsafe.

PRIVATE TENANTS:

Due to the nature of private renting, it was clear from respondents that there were no formal opportunities for 'tenant engagement' e.g., forums, panels etc, which are more common in social housing.

In terms of how private tenants who participated in this group felt about their landlord, most spoke positively about their tenant-landlord relationship.

"I have a good relationship with my landlord. We have some misunderstandings, but I always feel respected."– Symone

There was a distinct pattern of private tenants describing a more transactional relationship with their landlord, which was more dominated around if something needed 'doing' e.g., repairs.

Private tenants in the focus group were also more likely to describe their landlord's main method of contact being through Whatsapp and this was also preferred to email.

"For us, I believe WhatsApp is much easier because, you know, most of us don't check our emails regularly, whereas with WhatsApp it just pops up"– Thomas

There was an acknowledgement of private landlords not always being able to be physically present due to geographical constraints and a view that landlords are busy people who often do it on top of their day jobs by some private tenants on the call.

" We don't always get to see my landlord because he's always busy. There seems to be a bit of a consensus because we are too-everything can be done on text or phone"– Yas

Participants voiced the following:

- Repairs require physical inspections, if not done by the landlord himself then by a representative
- other communication is preferred online

Past experiences of discrimination and racism in the private sector:

While, overall, private tenants who participated in the focus group described positive engagement with their landlords, including feeling they are treated equally, it was clear that this had not always been the case.

Some recalled past incidences of indirect discrimination, including one tenant who commented on a notable difference in treatment once he had met a potential landlord in-person after only communicating on the phone:

The way he was acting towards me, the energy, I could sense it even if he did not voice it out.

At first I thought I was overthinking. I've had this experience before, in school and in work, so on. I know what it is. I felt like he did not want me in the house as he started to act cold and unprofessional."-Chinedu

It is important to note that 2 participants said that while they had not experienced this from a private landlord, their friends / family members had, including not feeling welcomed or listened to when something needed to be done in the property.



2. Repairs



Repairs are often a topic of conversation in housing in relation to waiting times, service standards and the safety of a home.

For the ethnic minority tenants in this report, we found varying responses.

SOCIAL HOUSING TENANTS:

Windows needing to be repaired came up consistently with social housing tenants as an issue and was mentioned in 2 out of the 4 focus groups.

Long waiting times were reported by several tenants, including one who “waited three weeks” for one shower rail. This is not however uncommon with wider complaints in social housing.

This tenant also raised concerns around a disregard for the time commitment repairs take when you are working full-time, as it would require you needing to take time off work if repairs were to take place in those hours.

“The hours you're giving me to actually call out, I said it's not suitable. You don't think about people that work. They're out. And the days I have off, I have the weekends off and they're not circulating unless you live in sheltered housing. They'll come out at any time.” – Nicki

Other tenants expressed not wanting to call repairs if avoidable, due to long delays.

“Maintenance is a bit hard to keep up on because they take ages to fix stuff.”
— Ruth

PRIVATE TENANTS:

Private tenants described a relatively clear understanding of the different responsibilities between themselves and their landlord when it comes to repairs and maintenance. One tenant explained that where an issue was considered minor, their landlord would provide guidance or signpost them to someone who could help:

“If it's something minor that I could just solve by myself... he could just give me some guidance.”

— Chinedu

The tenant also recognised that responsibility for repairs can depend on the nature and seriousness of the problem, explaining:

“There are certain things in their home whereby when it's damaged, the landlord's responsibility is to fix that stuff. And there are also some things that when it's damaged, it's always the tenant's responsibility to fix those things.” – Alex

This distinction was further described in terms of “major” and “minor” repairs, with the tenant viewing major repairs as the landlord's responsibility, while tenants may be expected to deal with minor issues themselves:

“The major repairs are those that have to be fixed by the landlords while the minor ones are the ones we can fix or we have to fix by ourselves.”— Josh

Where tenants were unable to resolve minor repairs themselves, the landlord could support them by providing contacts for maintenance services:

“He (the landlord) gives us contacts of some maintenance team that could help us fix minor issues like taps and... those minor minor issues.”—Sarah

Overall, this experience highlights the importance of clear communication between private tenants and landlords about who is responsible for different types of repairs, alongside practical support when tenants are expected to resolve minor issues themselves.





3. Damp and Mould

Black and minoritised ethnic households in the UK experience disproportionately higher rates of damp and mould in their homes compared to White British households (UK Gov, 2025). Damp and mould can pose serious health risks, including respiratory conditions.

SOCIAL HOUSING TENANTS:

One tenant, referred to here as "Sarah", described repeatedly reporting damp and mould in her daughter's bedroom. Despite visible black mould affecting the wall, she said surveyors dismissed the issue and suggested the room was not damp. Sarah believed the problem was linked to faulty guttering outside her bungalow, but reported that multiple inspections had not resulted in a resolution:

"I've just reported damp again today... they keep sending surveyors out and then they tell me it's not mould."

Sarah also explained that when black mould appeared in her bathroom, she was initially told it was caused by her failure to open windows during showers, letting it get in a worse state?"—Sarah

However, a later inspection found that bathroom tiles had been incorrectly installed, allowing water to penetrate behind the wall and cause the damage. This experience left her feeling that responsibility had been unfairly placed on her rather than the landlord addressing the underlying issue.

Similar concerns were raised by "Megan", who discussed neighbours' experiences of damp and mould in council-owned properties. She explained that tenants were often advised to leave windows open, keep curtains open and wash affected areas with bleach, but these measures did not prevent the mould from returning:

"The advice they were given was just to keep the window open... and wash it down with bleach. But I think it still kept coming back."—Megan

Participants questioned why landlords did not view early reports of damp and mould as an opportunity to protect their housing stock. Reflecting on landlord responses, Megan argued:

"If that was your house, because it's an asset to the council, you'd be glad, wouldn't you, if somebody was reporting that rather than letting it get in a worse state?"

A recurring theme was the perception that landlords focused too heavily on advice and behavioural changes rather than undertaking effective repairs. One participant, referred to as "Lisa", summarised this concern directly:

"I think there needs to be more on fixing the problem than just advice."—Lisa

Several participants also highlighted the gap between inspection activity and meaningful action. "Janet" described surveyors visiting properties to assess damp and mould, only for tenants to receive no follow-up communication or information about next steps:

"They've had surveyors coming into your property looking for damp and mould... but I haven't heard anything more from that outcome."—Janet

Janet explained that she regularly cleaned mould from windows, skirting boards and curtains and had even been forced to replace window blinds at her own expense after mould damage. Despite surveyors documenting the issues, she felt no action was taken:

"If you're not going to act on that feedback, it serves no purpose."—Janet

Participants strongly linked damp and mould to issues of landlord accountability and trust. Many felt that inspections alone were insufficient unless accompanied by visible repairs and ongoing communication. One participant drew a comparison with vehicle safety standards, arguing:

"If your car has an MOT and it fails because of dangerous points, you're not allowed to drive it. The same should be with damp and mould."—Bethany

Overall, social housing tenants described experiences characterised by repeated reporting, delays in action, a tendency for landlords to focus on occupant behaviour, and frustration when inspections did not lead to tangible improvements.

These experiences often undermined confidence in landlords and left tenants feeling that their concerns were not being addressed with the seriousness they deserved.

PRIVATE TENANTS:

Private tenants participating in the focus group generally reported more positive experiences when dealing with damp and mould issues.

Participants described relatively straightforward reporting processes and quicker responses from landlords compared with the experiences shared by many social housing tenants.

"Daniel" reported experiencing mould in his bathroom and explained that after contacting his landlord, the issue was addressed promptly:

"I've had an experience with mould in my bathroom area. I did a report and he (the landlord) got it fixed."—Daniel

"Similarly, "David" described a damp and mould issue that developed as a result of a leaking pipe. He contacted his landlord by telephone and felt that the matter was dealt with appropriately:

"I reached out to my landlord through calls. He was able to respond immediately."—David

Importantly, David noted that his landlord treated the issue as a maintenance problem rather than attributing blame to the tenant:

"The leaking pipe- he didn't blame me he just said he'd fix it."—David

Unlike the experiences reported by some social housing tenants, private tenants generally did not report being blamed for the presence of damp or mould. Instead, landlords were described as responding quickly to reports and taking action to address the immediate cause of the problem. Participants also reported that repairs appeared to resolve the issue, with one tenant stating:

"The mould hasn't come back."—Ali

However, two private tenants recalled instances with previous private landlords where damp and mould had been blamed on them, with one tenant describing a scenario where she actually had to move out of her home due to damp and mould issues being so severe, it was impacting her health.

"It got so bad. It was everywhere and on everything. I kept telling my landlord and he just told me to wipe it off. I moved out in the end"—Jessie

While the sample of private tenants discussing damp and mould was relatively small, their accounts suggest that direct communication with a landlord, often through phone calls or text messages, contributed to quicker responses and a clearer route for resolving problems.

These experiences contrasted with the more complex and prolonged reporting journeys described by social housing tenants, where multiple inspections and disputed assessments sometimes delayed effective action.

Overall, private tenants who had experienced damp and mould reported a greater sense of responsiveness from landlords, with repairs being completed relatively quickly and fewer examples of tenants feeling blamed for conditions within their homes. This does not however necessarily reflect broader data collection on this topic in both social and private housing.



4. Affordable Warmth



Affordable warmth means keeping your home safely and comfortably warm without heating costs placing an unreasonable burden on your household, influenced by energy prices, income, energy efficiency and home condition.

SOCIAL HOUSING TENANTS

Among social housing tenants, affordable warmth was primarily discussed in relation to energy costs, energy efficiency improvements, and access to information about support available through landlords. Experiences varied considerably, with some tenants reporting significant benefits from recent investments in their homes, while others felt unclear about what improvements might be available to them.

"Bethany" spoke positively about a range of energy efficiency measures installed in her home, including solar panels, insulation and an electric vehicle charging point. She reported that these improvements had resulted in substantial savings on her household bills and eased pressures associated with the rising cost of living:

"I get excited because I think of all the money I can save down the line."- Bethany

She further explained that her electricity bill had reduced significantly following the improvements:

"My electric bill alone was £190 a month and it's gone down to around about 90 quid."-Bethany

She viewed energy efficiency measures as directly contributing to household affordability:

"It's all helped massively towards my cost of living."- Bethany

Bethany also highlighted the importance of communication from landlords. She described receiving information through newsletters, followed by discussions with housing staff who explained how the technologies worked:

"They talked us through it for the solar panels and the insulation and that sort of thing."-Bethany

For her, effective communication was crucial in helping tenants understand and benefit from energy efficiency improvements. She advised tenants to engage with information provided by their landlord:

"Anything that comes through, make sure you read every part of it and don't miss anything."-Bethany

In contrast, Amelia described feeling uncertain about what energy efficiency options were available to her. Although she considered her heating system reasonably effective, she reported concerns about heat loss and energy costs:

"My flat does warm up quite quickly. But then it also loses heat quite quickly."- Amelia

Amelia explained that she had received little information about possible improvements and felt unsure about the options available to residents in her type of accommodation:"

"I'm a little bit clueless as to what's available to me." -Amelia

Despite being interested in technologies such as solar panels, she said these possibilities had never been discussed with her:

"It's never been communicated to me that that's even an option." -Amelia

A wider theme emerging from the discussion was the need for better information and advice about energy use.

Participants expressed an interest in receiving more practical guidance about reducing energy costs, understanding energy tariffs and accessing support. As one participant explained:

"There should be more communication about energy use, tariffs, and how you can save your bills." -Josh

Overall, social housing tenants were generally supportive of energy efficiency improvements and recognised the potential financial benefits they could bring. However, experiences highlighted inequalities in awareness and access to information, with some tenants feeling well informed and others unsure what support was available to help reduce energy costs.

PRIVATE TENANTS:

Private tenants discussed affordable warmth largely in relation to the performance of heating systems and the role of landlords in investing in energy efficiency measures.

Compared with social housing tenants, there was less discussion of formal communication and support programmes, but some participants described positive experiences of improvements made in their homes.

"Omar" reported living in a privately rented property where an air source heat pump had recently been installed. He viewed the technology positively and compared it favourably with heating systems he had used previously:

"I feel it's modernised and doesn't give us regular issues." -Omar

Simeon explained that his previous accommodation relied on older electric heating systems that frequently experienced faults. In contrast, he felt the air source heat pump provided a more reliable and efficient source of heating. He also valued the environmental benefits of the technology and its lower energy consumption.

Private tenants also appeared interested in the wider concept of energy-efficient homes, although discussion tended to focus on practical outcomes rather than environmental objectives.

“I just want my bills to come down. They are through the roof” – Ali

Warm homes, reliable heating systems and manageable household costs were prioritised above technical discussions about decarbonisation or net zero targets.

As expected, private tenants did not discuss receiving newsletters, consultations or structured communication about energy efficiency measures. Instead, information tended to be communicated directly through landlords when improvements were planned or installed.

Overall, private tenants who contributed to the discussion reported largely positive experiences of energy efficiency measures where these had been introduced.

Their comments suggest that reliable heating systems and landlord investment in modern technologies can play an important role in improving comfort and reducing concerns about energy use.

However, there was limited evidence of broader engagement or guidance around energy tariffs and household energy management, indicating that this may remain an area where additional support could be beneficial.

The contrast between social housing and private rented sector experiences may reflect the differing regulatory obligations placed on landlords within each sector.

Social landlords operate within a framework that requires ongoing investment in housing quality and energy efficiency. Consequently, social housing tenants were more likely to discuss energy efficiency improvements already installed within their homes and direct communication from landlords regarding these measures.

By comparison, private tenants' experiences were more dependent on individual landlord practices and investment decisions, resulting in less consistent access to energy efficiency upgrades and information about affordable warmth initiatives.

This suggests that policy-driven investment within the social housing sector may be contributing to greater awareness and uptake of energy efficiency measures among tenants.

CONCLUSION:

This research shows that ethnic minority tenants' experiences of engagement vary considerably by tenure, landlord and individual circumstance. While some tenants described positive experiences, others reported feeling unheard, misunderstood or less confident in raising concerns.

These experiences were shaped by wider pressures, including:

- **discrimination & racism in communities**
- **poor communication, repairs**
- **damp and mould**
- **and the rising cost of keeping homes warm.**

It also poses some key questions for landlords to take action on:

1. Are we recognising racism and discrimination with confidence?

- Do staff feel equipped to recognise and respond to race-related ASB and unconscious bias? Are tenants confident that their concerns will be taken seriously?

2. Are we acting on what tenants tell us?

- When tenants report repairs, damp and mould or other concerns, are we following through? Do tenants understand what action is being taken and why?

3. Are we making tenant engagement genuinely inclusive?

- Who is participating in our forums, panels and consultations? Whose experiences might be missing? Are we creating welcoming spaces where people feel comfortable speaking openly and see the difference it can make?

The evidence points to a clear need for landlords and the wider housing sector to make engagement more meaningful, accessible and inclusive. This means involving ethnic minority tenants early, communicating clearly, responding promptly to housing problems, and creating safer routes for tenants to share concerns without fear of being dismissed. Building trust through consistent action, not consultation alone, are key to improving housing conditions, representation and tenant voice across Wales.

THINKING POINTS FOR LANDLORDS & THE BROADER SECTOR:



Make engagement meaningful:

- This begins by ensuring landlords treat prospective and existing tenants fairly, regardless of race, nationality or ethnic origin.
- Involve ethnic minority tenants early when it comes to engagement, use accessible channels and show clearly how feedback influences decisions. Ensure that engagement does not feel tokenistic and also ensure that data is used to drive change.



Create safer, more cohesive communities:

- Recognise racism and unconscious bias, respond consistently to race-related ASB and hate crime, and support tenant-led solutions.
- Ensure that ethnic minority tenant complaints about ASB and hate crime are taken seriously and treated with empathy. For social landlords, taking strong stances against misinformation and racism within communities is vital.



Strengthen accountability:

- All landlords should act promptly on repairs, damp and mould; communicate next steps in an accessible way, including taking language and cultural needs into account; record outcomes; and learn from complaints.
- All landlords need to be aware of legal obligations they must comply with.



Improve access and representation:

- Explain rights and support clearly, widen participation across private and social housing, and invest in anti-racism training and better data.
- In social housing environments, empower ethnic minority tenants to have representation at all levels, including scrutiny panels, staffing and board.

Ultimately, good tenant engagement is not about ticking a box. It is about building trust, treating people with dignity and making sure every tenant has a meaningful opportunity to shape the services and communities they call home.

Resources

- **Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP)** – Sets out Welsh Government’s commitments to tackle racial inequality, including through housing. Its Homes and Places section covers housing services, homelessness, the private rented sector and ensuring ethnic minority people have a voice in housing policy.
- **ArWAP Progress Update 2026** – Provides an update on progress, including ethnic minority representation within the housing sector.
- **ArWAP Measurement Framework and Dashboard** – Provides data and indicators for monitoring racial inequality, including housing tenure by ethnicity.
- **Census 2021: Ethnic group differences in Wales** – Provides data on housing tenure, overcrowding and wider socioeconomic differences between ethnic groups in Wales.

Social Housing Programmes for Tenants:

1. Pathway to Board Programme: a leadership initiative between social landlords in Wales designed to support Black, Asian, and minority ethnic individuals to become board-ready and increase representation on organizational leadership boards. For more information, go to CCHA’s website.

2. Get into Housing Programme: a partnership programme that was created to open up access to the social housing sector for talented individuals from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds in Wales. People who bring lived experience, potential, and passion, but who’ve faced barriers to employment. More information can be found on CCHA’s website.

Our continued work:

We commit to hearing a range of voices and this is done in the following ways:

- Our Tenant Pulse Surveys, which are Wales-wide and for private and social tenants on matters such as Affordable Warmth and our Annual Tenant Pulse.
- Our Ethnic Minority Tenant Panel, in partnership with Tai Pawb and EYST, to empower ethnic minority tenants in Wales to challenge housing inequalities
- TPAG: Our Tenant Participation Advisory Group, which is open to all tenants for engagement.
- Various Tenant networks held both online and in-person.
- Online listening and engagement.
- Earlier this year, we published our 'Facts over Fear Tenant Guide' on immigration, asylum and social housing in Wales
- Policy work and influencing.
- Tenant Voice Cymru Forums
- Facilitation and learning opportunities.
- And many more!

But, anti-racism requires continuous work and accountability. It takes all of us to make a change. Let's work together to make a Wales where every tenant feels they matter.

**Interested in working with
us? Get in touch:
enquiries@tpas.cymru**

