

ANNUAL ALL WALES TENANT VOICE: ISSUE 1



THE BASICS MATTER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

October 2021
www.tpas.cymru

BRIEFING: THE BASICS MATTER

This report by TPAS Cymru explores tenants' views of their homes, their communities and issues that really matter to them. The findings and recommendations within this research, offers valuable insight into the challenges tenants are experiencing and what tenants enjoy about their homes and communities.

As a sector, we face continuous challenges. The Covid-19 pandemic had an impact on repairs, maintenance and engagement across the sector, but listening to tenants, being open, honest and transparent with them, will bring services up to the standard we all want to see. We believe that this will enable tenants to live in homes and communities that they can not only survive in, but also thrive in.

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

- This survey was the largest response rate to date for Tenant Pulse. We had a wide demographic range of tenants which included a noticeable increased response in younger Private Rental Sector (PRS) tenants.
- A significant percentage of social housing tenants who took part are not currently engaged in established tenant participation channels. These voices need to be heard to give a wider, more diverse perspective.
- The majority of tenants in both Private and Social housing intend on staying in their homes long term but that doesn't mean they are satisfied with their home.

MORE TO BE DONE

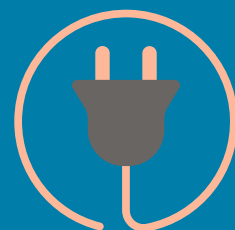
Tenants stated that landlord priorities (for both social and private homes) should focus on getting the basics right. For example, repairs, affordable rent and tackling Anti Social Behaviour (ASB).



There is still work to be done before tenants believe that landlords have got the basics right. i.e. well maintained, good community etc. Nearly 80% people believe their home is not energy efficient and over 60% believe their home has damp and mould. Whilst some in the sector will dispute these figures from a technical perspective, this is what tenants believe.



The highest level of dissatisfaction amongst social tenants and private tenants is around energy efficiency and perceived damp and mould



- Across the survey, tenants felt the basics are not being done – repairs, planned maintenance, and tackling ASB. Whilst Covid-19 will have hindered this work, there is noticeable dissatisfaction.
- Perceived lack of tackling ASB is still a key concern of tenants within social housing; impacting on tenants health and well-being.
- A key concern for tenants in private housing is insecurity of tenure and feeling stuck in private rental homes.

- Almost half of tenants in both private and social housing believe their homes are unaffordable.
- Social housing tenants rely heavily on Universal Credit and will be amongst the hardest hit by the £20 weekly decrease. Whereas private housing tenants rely more heavily on earned income, particularly amongst the younger demographic.
- For social housing, affordability satisfaction is higher in tourist-heavy, rural areas, whereas private housing renters in tourism-heavy rural areas are the least satisfied with affordability, indicating social housing has an important role in the current housing crisis of residential accommodation being converted into tourism accommodation and second homes.

We need to distinguish between tenants' ability to pay their rent and bills and their view of affordability. Making the payments to avoid losing your home and feeling it's affordable are perceived very differently.

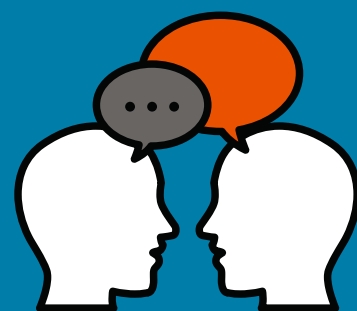
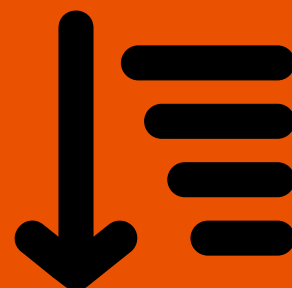
There were two tenant groups within the PRS who have been impacted as a result of Covid related employment challenges, and currently struggling to pay their rent



**18-30s Tenants
&
BAME Tenants**

TENANT ENGAGEMENT

- There are lower levels of tenant engagement amongst tenants who self identify as BAME. Highlighting the challenge the sector has to tackle and improve communication and engagement with ethnically diverse communities.
- Within the PRS, there is a more transactional relationship with their landlord and lower levels of expected engagement.
- Tenants within both tenures want to be informed about plans and decisions that impact their home. Specifically, maintenance and rent setting.
- There are significant differences between expectations of landlord communication from the PRS and social housing tenants. Whilst both tenures want to know about things that directly impact them, such as repairs, maintenance and rent setting, on wider issues like community development, PRS tenants are less interested in hearing from their landlords. On the other hand, almost half of social housing tenants want to hear about information in their community.
- Younger age groups within social housing are not participating and not having their voices heard when compared to over 60s.



TENANT SATISFACTION

Environmental factors such as the need for more amenities for litter and environmental planning, alongside ASB, continue to be key for tenants.



Two thirds of social housing tenants are proud to live in social housing compared to less than half of private tenants who feel proud to live in the private sector.

There are lower levels of tenant engagement amongst tenants who self identify as BAME. Highlighting the challenge the sector has, to tackle to improve communication and engagement with ethnically diverse communities.



- Over half (58%) of tenants in the private sector aged 30-45 had received negative comments for living in private housing due to judgement of their peers for not yet owning a home at that age. This is not the case for the majority of social housing tenants, however, over half of the BAME community within social housing (53%) have received negative comments about their living situation.
- Private housing tenants who have a direct relationship with their landlord are more likely to recommend them as landlords than those who are renting through a letting agent.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. WHQS2 needs to ensure that standards are not just maintained but improved. Tenants are suggesting the sector doesn't always get the basics right.
2. Tenants need to be aware of the options available to explore and move to accommodation that better suits their needs.
3. Further research is needed to understand why younger people are less satisfied with their homes when comparing with older generations.

4. Welsh Government and landlords across sectors must invest in existing homes to bring energy efficient ratings up to the new standards to benefit the tenant financially and provide a warmer home. Better engagement and communication on decarbonisation plans will improve satisfaction levels.

5. Welsh Government should abolish no fault evictions Section 21 (Section 173 Renting Homes) to provide better security of tenure for private renters.

6. Landlords should review their tenant participation strategies to ensure that services are being monitored by tenants to identify and track service improvement.

GOING FORWARD

The full report is available from TPAS Cymru inc. our website. We will be holding discussion events to look at the findings and recommendations in more detail.

This All-Wales Tenant survey is intended to be annually so we can track and benchmark tenant perceptions for the benefit of the sector. Finally, we would like to thank all the tenants who took the time to give their views. Your voice matters.