



The Tenant Voice for 2018

Introduction

To ensure that tenants voice is heard at a strategic decision-making level, TPAS Cymru have circulated four tenant surveys throughout 2018; regularly feeding back the results to the Regulatory Board for Wales. To circulate these surveys, we have used our survey community; Tenant Pulse and general feedback from tenants during our regional events and networks. The surveys covered a range of areas, including Value for Money, repairs, general tenant satisfaction regarding their properties and landlords, and Affordable Housing in Wales.

2018 points from Tenant Pulse

- We recruited a new staff member (Lewis) to lead on Tenant Pulse
- The number of participants has doubled during 2018
- Established that 2/3rds of tenants are of working age
- We delivered four surveys in total
- RBW has really valued the insight from tenants
- The results from the Affordable Housing survey were used at the CIH - Tyfu Tai event, TPAS Cymru annual conference and the CHC annual conference
- The results from the surveys have been on the agenda and discussed at tenant group meetings

Methodology

1. Tenant Pulse – on-line and postal survey for Tenant Pulse members.
2. Completion of survey questionnaires at TPAS Cymru events.

Response rates:

The survey questions covered 4 areas; repairs, value for money, affordable housing and tenant satisfaction.

Value for Money: In total 235 tenants completed the survey. 166 members of Tenant Pulse completed the survey online. An additional 69 tenants completed the survey at TPAS Cymru events. At the time 398 tenants were signed up to Tenant Pulse meaning that the response rate was 42%.

Repairs: This was a Tenant Pulse survey for social housing tenants. At the time the survey was issued there were 571 social housing tenants registered on Tenant Pulse. In total 212 tenants completed the survey meaning that the response rate was 37%.

Tenant Satisfaction: This survey was sent out to members of our Tenant Pulse who were living in social housing. This was a total of 597 tenants with 185 completing the survey; an overall response rate of 31%

Affordable Housing: In total 224 tenants completed the survey; a 40% completion rate. Of the 224 responses, 206 were completed online whilst a further 18 were completed through paper copies.

Survey Results

Value for Money

- Findings from the Value for Money report highlighted that a large percentage of social housing tenants felt that their rents were good value for money. This was influenced by several factors, the most important of which was the cost of energy bills. Tenants felt that to maintain value for money, landlords needed to keep both rents and service charges affordable and maintain

homes to a good standard. Finally, tenants emphasised that; in order to provide better value for money, landlords must recognise the importance of tenant involvement to shape and prioritise service budgeting.

Repairs

- The repairs survey revealed that tenants' priorities with regards to repairs are: being able to set appointments for repairs, contractors arriving on time, and prompt notification of any changes to their appointment. Tenants' views on the quality of repairs varied although there was a significant focus on the standard of the repair completed, and whether the contractor treating their home with courtesy. The use of digital technology to manage repair services was the final factor of this report; tenants felt this to be very important.

Tenant Satisfaction

- Tenants highlighted that their main concerns were affordability of rents, closely followed by the costs of running their home. When asked what was working well tenants' priorities were: home improvements, availability of digital services, and information being provided by landlords around universal credit. The general emerging themes from tenants within RSLs were; service standards and the lack of information around them, investment in existing homes, a need to develop more affordable housing, and rent/service charges levels. Tenants do not like the uncertainty of the rent increases and the impact this may have on affordability.

Affordable Housing

- Our largest survey to date highlighted that tenants value space in their living room, airing cupboards and bedrooms as priority inside the home. Outside the home, security was the biggest factor, closely followed by transport. In terms of running their home, tenants felt that low energy bills and good digital access were paramount; however, this differed over sectors. When thinking about how new homes should be built, tenants felt that traditional methods of development were preferable; however, this was related to perception of traditional properties being larger than timber framed or factory builds. In terms of affordability, tenants in housing association properties felt their rent was currently affordable. Tenants in local authority housing agreed, however, the numbers weren't as significant as HA tenants. Private rental tenants disagreed and felt strongly that their rent was unaffordable. All tenants felt that their rent was going up faster than their income and that rent should vary based on location. When tenants were asked if they would rather rent or buy their home, there was a significant difference in perception between PRS and social housing tenants. PRS tenants wanted to own their own property where as social housing tenants would rather rent. There were common themes related to the lack of affordable homes in wales, insufficient community areas, the importance of space in the home and the cost of rent being too high.

Plans for Tenant Pulse 2019

- Increase numbers to ensure tenant voice is heard on a wider scale
- Widen membership for PRS tenants to gain a broader understanding of tenant issues
- Revamping our pulse webpage to include live polls and access to all reports
- Continue to use pulse to increase understanding of tenants needs and to help shape policy in the housing sector.