

Title: Tenant Engagement Update (inc. High Rise Building Safety Survey)

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Meeting Date: 6 June 2024

1. Introduction

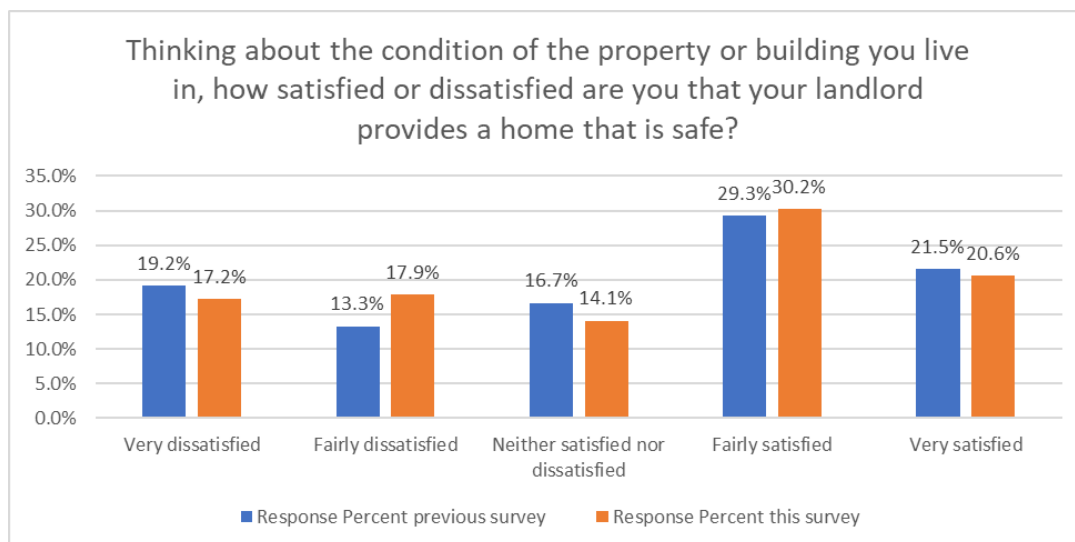
- 1.1. This report updates the board on recent tenant engagement activity, in particular, the findings of the high-rise building safety survey and the proposed updated local tenant engagement service offer.

2. High Rise Building Safety Survey

- 2.1. Our [high-rise resident engagement strategy](#) outlines our commitments to engage with all high rise residents. This included a commitment to carry out an annual survey to assess how effectively we are communicating key messages and if residents understanding of these was improving over time. This was in line with the [good practice recommendations](#) coming from the Social Sector (Building Safety) Engagement Best Practice Group.
- 2.2. Our first survey took place in November 2022. This helped us develop our engagement strategy and set a baseline from which we could assess progress. The most recent survey took place between February and March this year, and was responded to by 598 residents, representing a response rate of 8.6% (higher than the 6.5% in 2022). The survey was largely delivered online via emails and texts to residents, with additional in person visits to Retirement Life Schemes to increase the responses from those who may not have online access or be confident in replying to an online survey.
- 2.3. Similar to 2022, there is a slight under-representation of all age groups under 50, a slight over representation of residents between 50-80 and an under representation of those over 80. This year we mitigated the risk of under-representation from more elderly residents by visiting Retirement Life Schemes within high-rise blocks and completing the surveys in person. Overall, the proportions of responses from each age group are proportional to the number of residents in each age bracket.
- 2.4. Fewer Black/Black British residents took part in the survey compared to the tenant population as a whole, with different levels of participation by different ethnic groups taking part this year compared to previous years. Black/Black British residents are therefore under-represented in the survey results, with Asian or Asian British slightly over-represented.

Ethnicity	All high-rise residents	% 2022	% This year
Any other background	6.85%	2.7%	2.01%
Any other White background	3.71%	2.4%	2.68%
Any Asian or Asian British	1.49%	2.4%	2.17%
Any black British	16.43%	12.8%	7.36%
Gypsy or Traveller	0.04%	0.2%	0.17%
Any white British	51.08%	62.4%	57.02%
Not known/home in void	20.41%	17.7%	28.60%

- 2.5. 17% of respondents had a known disability, the same proportion as those who live in high-rise homes. The survey responses are also broadly geographically representative with the highest number of responses coming from the communities with this most high-rise homes. There is slightly less ethnic diversity among this years respondents compared to last year and compared to the diversity of high-rise residents as a group.
- 2.6. 51% of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied that Housing Leeds provided a home that is safe, the same as in 2022.



This is lower than the 71% satisfaction reported by those living in all property types, and the 68% satisfaction living in high rise homes collected through the 23/24 TSM perception measures. However, as the method of collection was largely online, the satisfaction when compared to the TSM online only responses is similar.

- 2.7. This perception question asked respondents to 'explain why you said that'. A summary of the themes and responses is below. Further analysis is now taking place to identify if there are any service requests or issues that we can respond to on an individual or block basis. Note the below are responses from a largely online survey and will therefore be self-selecting

in terms of being more likely to have responses from those residents with a current concern or issue.

2.8. Key themes were:

- Security and access: feeling unsafe due to the security and access issues of the building, such as broken entry doors, CCTV, intercoms, or strangers accessing the building.
- Sprinkler system: feeling safer after the installation of a sprinkler system.
- Anti-social behaviour and noise: being impacted by noise from other tenants or visitors, smoking, littering, vandalism, or loud music.
- Cleanliness and hygiene: believing the cleanliness and hygiene of the communal areas, such as the lifts, stairs, hallways, or bin chutes could be better.
- Heating and insulation: being unhappy with the heating and insulation of the flats, which could be inefficient or costly.
- Maintenance and repair issues: Many residents highlighted what they felt was the poor condition of the windows, doors, lifts, plumbing, heating, or balcony. They said that these problems can cause damp, mould, leaks, cold, noise, or inconvenience. They also said that the council was slow or unresponsive to fix the issues or provide adequate compensation.
- Positive feedback: Some residents gave positive feedback about the building, saying that it was well maintained, looked after, or improved. They also praised the council staff, such as the housing officer, the caretaker, or the repair workers, for being helpful, friendly, or efficient.

2.9. The survey sought to measure the effectiveness of our communication and engagement work over the last 18 months, asking residents for their understanding of various aspects of building safety.

How do you rate your understanding of the following:	Responses	Last year
Answer Choice	Good Understanding	Good Understanding
What to do in an emergency or fire inside your flat	87.35%	86.36%
What to do in an emergency if a fire is in someone else's flat	85.35%	79.60%
How the sprinkler system works (if your block has one installed)	71.43%	63.76%
Electrical safety within your flat e.g., trying to keep to one plug per socket	87.35%	83.11%
How to use the chutes to get rid of waste	84.85%	82.92%

Keeping communal areas clear	82.15%	81.03%
Where you can and can't park (i.e., not blocking access for waste collection or emergency vehicles)	78.67%	70.88%

2.10. Positively, across all questions, residents reporting having an improved level of understanding of the above safety and safety related issues. Areas with any lower levels of understanding can now be used to inform our communication priorities for the year ahead.

2.11. Previously, 61% of residents said that Housing Leeds had given them information on building safety. This had increased to 77% this year.

2.12. The most recent survey also shows positive trends in terms of the familiarity of residents to report issues or undertake certain tasks:

Do you know how to:	% 2022	% This year
Test your smoke alarm	85.87%	87.35%
Report any rubbish or items left in hallways or staircases.	77.43%	80.94%
Report any problems like a broken communal light or door	78.13%	81.90%
Contact us for any help and support you may need	81.66%	86.87%
Make a complaint if we haven't got something right	New question	79.83%

2.13. When asked what issues residents would like to know more about, there was less interest this year in most topics which may indicate that residents have an improved understanding, with the exception of 'how we can work together to help keep your block secure' - see the below table. This may reflect residents interest in anti-social behaviour and how we manage this so the impact to residents is kept to a minimum. The 'other' comments most commonly referred to low and higher level anti-social behaviour, issues related to cleanliness and block security in terms of preventing access to non-residents.

Answer Choice	% 2022	% This year
Fire Safety in your individual flat	38.4%	26.7%
Fire Safety in communal areas	37.4%	28.3%
How we keep communal areas safe	38.8%	32.9%
How to dispose of waste/rubbish	27.4%	24.4%
How we can work together to help keep your block secure	Not asked	57.4%
Other (please specify):	41.1%	31.0%

2.14. The survey identified up to 200 residents who reported they may not be able to self-evacuate. These residents are currently being contacted by the service and a person-centred fire risk assessment undertaken if

required/if not already in place.

- 2.15. 45% of respondents reported having received the bi-monthly e-bulletin and finding this useful. 41% of respondents said they did not receive the bulletin, but 1 in 3 of these then gave an email address to help us improve our data quality and ensure were included in future mailing lists. 13% of respondents said they received the bulletin but did not find this useful.
- 2.16. In line with our engagement strategy and reflecting residents had reported to us that both digital and hard copy content was how residents wished to be communicated with, in September 2023 we issued a building safety themed hard copy newsletter. 50% reported having received the newsletter and finding this useful, 33% reported having not received this, but may include some newer residents and 14% reporting receiving the newsletter but not finding this useful.
- 2.17. As a result of the survey, we have increased the number of high-rise residents volunteering to be part of the Tenant Voice Panel to 74.
- 2.18. In summary, the survey as a whole has been a positive exercise in terms confirming that a higher proportion of residents are aware of certain building safety features or know how to action or report issues that impact on building safety. This suggests that our activity related to sharing more information and communicating with residents is having an impact.
- 2.19. Suggested actions in response to the survey to help further our approach include:
 - Using high-rise members on the TVP to help us review the e-bulletins (and other communications options including hard copy newsletter, leaflets) and other service improvement activity, to continue to improve this with resident input.
 - To extract and respond as far as possible to any comment that suggests there is an open service request, either to individual homes or in specific blocks.
 - To undertake an equality analysis of the results to better understand the experience of specific customer groups, especially those from ethnically diverse communities.
 - To include within the above, analysis to help identify any learning or improvements we can make to how accessible our communications are, language needs or other barriers to accessing or receiving building safety related information.
 - To consider how we include community safety and anti-social behaviour advice and guidance in future communications. To this end we included an item about how we report ASB in the last e-bulletin and introduced the role of the Leeds Policing Team, with a view to sharing outcomes from this team in future newsletters.
 - Use the information to influence the content of our communications on specific issues where this will help improve residents understanding of key issues.

3. Wider high-rise engagement activity

- 3.1. A [Building Safety Hub](#) was launched in November 2023, following input from residents on the Tenant Voice Panel. This allows residents access to building safety information unique to their flat and block and request information in other formats. New website content is also available to allow residents to [report a building safety concern](#). The Hub has been visited by 1,000 residents to date, with 380 going through the registration process to access documents.
- 3.2. Individual block engagement strategies that summarise the citywide approach, along with some headline information about each block, have been uploaded to the Hub for residents to also access and are in the process of being added to the hard copy poster suite within individual blocks.
- 3.3. The electronic noticeboard trial is progressing, with content now on display in Cottingley Heights. A number of technical issues have needed to be overcome but is useful learning in terms of assessing the feasibility and value for money of further investment in this method.

4. An updated Tenant Engagement Service Offer

- 4.1. Following the decision in February to stop funding the Housing Advisory Panels (HAPs) into 2024/25, the HAPs concluded their activity and held their final meetings in March. Staffing changes linked to the removal of the HAPs have also now concluded and we now have a local Tenant Engagement team of six Tenant Engagement Officers supported by a Housing Manager.
- 4.2. It is important that we continue to offer local opportunities for tenants to provide feedback on and influence housing service delivery and local priorities and to this end, we will shortly be consulting on a future local tenant and community engagement Service Offer.
- 4.3. Key attributes of the new approach include creating a strong interface between the service and Community Committees and offering both a generic level of support for all residents, with additional support and activity taking place in priority wards or places with particular local issues. A full outline of the proposed new offer is attached as an appendix to this report.
- 4.4. It is proposed that engagement and consultation of the updated local tenant and community engagement offer is undertaken as follows:
 - Engagement with the Housing Leeds Tenant Voice Panel, former HAP members and wider tenants including a survey and follow up online discussion.
 - Engagement with Elected Members at a local level and via Community Committee at their Chairs meeting in July 2024.
 - Engagement with Housing and Communities teams.

- Engagement with the Leeds Housing Board.
- 4.5. Final proposals will be developed following conclusion of this engagement, by the end of August 2024 and will be shared with Leeds Housing Board for their support.

5. Other updates:

- 5.1. Following the completion of their review into the advice and support we give to residents about damp and mould, the Tenant Scrutiny Board have selected complaints as their next topic for review. They are currently finalising the scope and action plan for their review but is likely to include looking at how we ensure 100% compliance with responding to complaints in timescales and how effectively we learn from complaints.
- 5.2. The service is due to present a final report to Tenant Scrutiny Board in July with an update on the delivery of the recommendations from their damp and mould review, though many are now delivered including new, more detailed, [website content](#) and more engaging [video content](#).
- 5.3. Our Annual Report for 2023/24 is currently being developed with input from Tenant Voice Panel members and will be shared with the Board ahead of release in July.
- 5.4. The Tenant Engagement Strategy is currently being updated following the work to self-assess ourselves against the Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Consumer Standard. To help ensure we can evidence positive outcomes from residents engagement across the whole service we will be shortly implementing an internal self-assessment for teams so all teams to understand the opportunities and can build in using feedback and insight from customers in any changes made.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1. The Leeds Housing Board are asked to:
- a) Note the content of this report and discuss any matters arising.
 - b) Comment on and support the proposed local tenant engagement Service Offer.

Appendix 1:

Proposed Local Tenant and Community Engagement Offer

1. Key Principles of Any Tenant and Community Engagement Offer

- 1.1 It is proposed that the following principles will influence the future tenant and community engagement offer:

- a) The new approach will further build on Housing's ABCD influenced '[Communities On Top](#)' service offer, supporting community groups to implement tenant-led activities.
- b) With a smaller team supporting tenant engagement, less staffing resource will be available to support local tenant and community engagement activity and so any future service offer must be focused on engagement that has most impact and reduces administrative burdens.
- c) Any new ways of working will need to help us comply (or exceed) the current and future '[transparency, influence and accountability](#)' regulatory standards as set by the Regulator for Social Housing.
- d) The new approach must be accessible and inclusive so that we serve and respond to a diverse range of customer voice, using wider local customer insight to inform priorities.
- e) The new approach will provide a strong interface between Housing and Community Committees, ensuring that there is an opportunity for Housing, Elected Members and communities to discuss local housing issues and identify joint solutions.
- f) The offer must in the main be focused on providing support to Council tenants, or communities where Council tenants will be the main beneficiaries of the engagement.
- g) Whilst a generic support offer will be available to all residents' particular support will be provided to some communities, e.g. priority wards / neighbourhoods, communities with particular issues such as community safety.
- h) It is important that the updated service offer is flexible – enabling the service to adapt its service offer to meet emerging engagement priorities and adapt to new circumstances and pressures.
- i) The service offer will be closely aligned to the Best Council Ambition and wider strategic priorities, supporting tenant and community engagement on wider priorities, including inclusive growth, health inequalities and the cost-of-living crisis.
- j) As far as practical the service will monitor its engagement activity and report on outcomes to residents, the Leeds Housing Board and the Social Housing Regulator.

2. A proposed updated Service Offer

Proposed strands of Housing's updated Tenant and Community Engagement offer are as follows:

Communities on Top

- 2.1 A continuation of the current service offer to develop and support new and existing local tenants, residents and community groups in line with the 'ABCD' influenced 'Communities On Top' Service Offer. Supporting groups with advice, training and development, and helping them achieve their aims. This could include becoming more expertise in the sourcing and gaining of external funding (using www.fundingleeds.co.uk) and strengthening our relationships with the 14 ABCD 'pathfinder' sites and third sector organisations who employ a Community Builder. Assisting those who wish to implement any tenant-led activities that influence what we do locally.

Tenant Voice Panel

- 2.2 Establishing a consistent citywide approach to local tenant engagement as a replacement / enhancement of tenant engagement via HAPs, inviting tenants to be part of a 'Local Tenant Voice Panel' community to be involved in a range of local tenant engagement opportunities:
- a) Sharing local information on Housing performance, customer satisfaction and other updates from local housing teams and providing an opportunity for feedback / challenge.
 - b) Communications to help connect tenants with other local tenants, residents and community groups in their area, community projects and initiatives, both in the locality but also at a citywide level.
 - c) Local engagement on issues, performance, priority setting and in developing proposed solutions within communities.
- 2.3 Whilst in the main this engagement will be managed online and with connections into local social media groups, some engagement will be facilitated using different approaches, such as postal communications, by phone or in person as part of a site visit or community drop in.
- 2.4 We will explore the use of digital and other approaches to broaden resident participation in priority setting and the scrutiny of our services, involving a wider range of residents in a locality in being able to review and comment on our service improvement plans and priority setting. Sharing with residents in a locality our performance and giving feedback on how we've taken their views into account.

Support to Local Housing Teams

- 2.5 Tenant engagement officers will continue to provide support to local housing teams with a range of meaningful opportunities to influence what we do at a local level:

- a) Help support and promote local estate action days or clean up days (involving Local Tenant Voice members).
- b) Support estate walkabout activity, helping to promote and make more accessible and helping find solutions to local issues that may fall outside day-to-day operational housing management.
- c) Support the digital 'virtual walkabout' offer, (involving Local Tenant Voice members) making this more commonplace across the city and feeding back outcomes to participants.
- d) Support local projects or initiatives, involving other partners, for example, open sessions with residents to help with the cost of living in line with local needs in priority wards or communities.
- e) Work more closely with the Retirement Life Service and local Support Officers, supporting the wider health and well-being offer given by the service. For example, instigating a programme of digital inclusion activity in partnership with a third sector group.
- f) Support the wider service in the delivery of the Social Value commitments of our contractors, helping connect contractors with local communities and their priorities.

Engagement with Elected Members and Community Committees

- 2.6 Each Housing Manager / Area Housing Manager already offers Elected Members regular meetings to discuss local issues, projects and casework with the opportunity for tenant engagement activity to be discussed on a routine basis. However, it is identified that HAPs provided a useful forum for Housing officers, Elected Members and residents to come together to discuss local issues and identify potential solutions and so it is important that an alternative mechanism is in place to facilitate this.
- 2.7 Some ideas for consideration of Housing's interface with Community Committees are as follows:
 - a) A regular Housing report presented to and attendance at Community Committee meetings by the Area Housing Manager (frequency determined by the Community Committee).
 - b) The Housing report to include local housing performance, an update on local tenant and community engagement and involvement activity, sharing any local customer insight, an update on investment programmes in the area, local community issues, e.g. community safety, environmental updates, trends and priorities.
 - c) Housing Leeds to feed into agenda setting in relation to particular local issues, promoting the Community Committee meetings with local residents encouraging participation in the meetings and then providing feedback to local residents e.g. You said, we did.

- d) Collective discussion of any local issues and priorities to identify actions. Such actions could include further targeted resident engagement or community interventions and collaborative multi agency responses.

2.8 Housing will formalise its new relationship with Community Committees as part of the current review of Community Committees.

Targeted Community Engagement Support

2.9 Whilst the above service offer will be offered across all areas, to ensure that we are hearing the voice of all residents on local issues, it is proposed that some of our community engagement offer will be targeted in areas which are identified as a priority for a particular community engagement intervention. Some examples of areas that may be identified as a priority for targeted community engagement are:

- Priority wards / neighbourhoods – ensuring that any targeted interventions are connected into wider Neighbourhood Improvement approaches]
- Areas which are experiencing particular issues, such as community safety issues, community tensions.
- Communities who may find it difficult to engage with our tenant and community engagement offer due to barriers, e.g. language, disability.