



Tenant Engagement Bi-annual Report



Engage
Listen
Act

Tenant
Participation
Strategy
2015-2018

October 2015 – March 2016

Content

1. Introduction	3
2. Events and Activities	3
3. Sounding Board	4
4. Residents' Advisory Panel	5
5. Going it Alone/ Young Housing Network	6
6. The Bus Stop Project	7
7. Service Area Engagement and the Difference Made	9
8. Community Fund	11
9. Personal Development Grant	11
10. Newsletter	12
11. Facebook	12
12. Improving Customer Service Consultation/ Customer Journey Mapping	13
13. Conclusions	14
• Summary of information	
• What areas can we look to develop in the year ahead?	

1. Introduction

This is our second bi-annual report about involving tenants since the implementation of our new tenant participation strategy in April 2015. The first report covered the period from April 2015 to September 2015.

The report sets out what tenant engagement opportunities are available and the activities that have taken place from October 2015 to March 2016.

Our aim is to improve our services by fully involving tenants in developing and influencing how these services are provided.

Our current strategy sets out our aim to improve our services by fully involving tenants in developing and influencing how these services are provided.

Working together we will:

- Increase the participation of tenants and service users in the planning and operating of services
- Improve the quality of participation
- Promote a wide range of options for tenants and service users across the organisation
- Improve our feedback to tenants and service users so that we can prove where they have influenced or shaped services
- Encourage involvement of under-represented groups such as young people and sheltered housing tenants
- Make sure that we communicate effectively with our tenants and service users, and provide good quality, accessible
- Improve the quality of life in the communities in which our tenants and service users live
- Increase skills and training opportunities for our tenants and service users

2. Events and Activities

We organise a number of events and activities to engage with a wide section of tenants. These events and activities should give the tenants the opportunity to get involved at North Wales Housing and improve the quality of life in communities in which our tenants live. Events and activities can also give the opportunity to learn and develop new skills.

The number of tenants who have attended events:

October – December 2015

October	November	December	Total
47	64	29	140

January – March 2016

January	February	March	Total
12	21	36	69

76% of those attended were very satisfied or satisfied with the events and activities.

Events can include focus groups, half term/summer activities on our schemes, and supported housing activities such as gardening projects.

In Maes y Llan we had Plants, Pots, and Patios in which Rakes and Ladders staff provided a winter bedding plants and hanging baskets workshop.

The Big Plant took place in Cae Bold Caernarfon in which Rakes and Ladders and NWH staff planted daffodil bulbs around the scheme.

3. Sounding Board

The Sounding Board was launched during the last reporting period of April to September 2015.

The Sounding Board is a database of tenants who are interested in acting as a 'reader' of leaflets, forms, policies etc. and providing feedback.

Members of the Sounding Board are also able to take part in occasional surveys, focus groups, and hear about new ways of getting involved as they develop.

There is no requirement to take part in every survey or focus group, just those that are of interest to the tenant and convenient to take part in.

The Sounding Board have participated in the following –

- Website focus group;
- Improving Customer Service Project;
- Newsletter workshop.

There are currently 37 tenants on the Sounding Board database, however we are publicising on an ongoing basis to increase awareness and membership.

Sue from Llandudno said – *“I really enjoyed taking part and I think it's empowering to be involved; I met friendly new people, felt like my opinions were listened to and appreciated AND my travel expenses were paid!”*

4. Residents' Advisory Panel

The role of the Residents' Advisory Panel is to act as a 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy makers and decision makers, and enable the voices and concerns of residents to be heard.

The Panel has the following aims and objectives:

- To form an integral part of NWH's governance and co-regulation management structure and can be directly accountable to the Board of Management
- To work constructively with the Board, Senior Management Team and all NWH employees to improve services and outcomes for customers and service users
- To form effective links with the Board, Senior Management Team and other tenants
- To provide an independent view to the Board of how the organisation is performing; aiming to fairly and broadly represent the views of NWH's customers and service users
- To challenge NWH to achieve continuous improvement in services standards and efficiency
- To influence policy and decision makers in NWH by monitoring progress to ensure that accepted recommendations from scrutiny activity shape future policy and strategy development

The Panel meets on a monthly basis alternating between Bangor and Llandudno Junction and has 8 members.

Food and refreshments are provided, as well as travel expenses to assist tenants in participating.

Since October 2015 the Panel have been involved in:

- Monitoring and providing comments on our quarterly performance reports
- Providing input on our Sustainability Strategy
- Reviewing our Tenants Handbook
- Reviewing products used by our Planned Maintenance team e.g. kitchen worktops
- Reviewing our Website
- Self-evaluation
- Digital First Project
- Improving Customer Service Project

Members of the Panel also attend Tenant Networks events organised and facilitated by TPAS Cymru. The meetings are open to tenants who are active members of representative tenant groups such as Tenants' Panels, Forums, Working Groups, Inspection and Scrutiny Groups.

These meetings are an opportunity to exchange experiences, issues and ideas with tenants of other social landlords.

Two Panel members attended a half day training course on tenant scrutiny – The Scrutiny Surgery: fit for the future?

During this training session the Panel members explored the role scrutiny may play in the future; assessed our scrutiny practice; and identified how they could ‘future proof’ our scrutiny practice.

The RAP have recently been presented with tablets to support their work as members. The tablets will be used to read reports before meetings as well as to help them carry out research.

The Tenant Participation Co-ordinator will be planning a recruitment drive from June 2016 to attract new members to the Panel.

Panel member Roger says – *“Being a member of RAP helps me develop my social and communication skills in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere whilst, at the same time, helping to improve the efficiency of NWH and also the quality of life of its tenants”*

5. Going it Alone / Young Housing Network

This is a partnership project with Cartrefi Conwy, Grŵp Cynefin, and the Bus Stop Project aimed at young people.

Young residents of North Wales Housing and the other two social landlords have been invited to participate in the Young Housing Network meeting on a fortnightly basis working on various projects.

During the previous reporting period the young people developed a ‘Going it Alone’ board game. The game has been developed to help young people learn about life skills such as budget management and living costs.

The Board game is now due to be rolled out with training being provided to organisations to use it as a learning tool with young people.

The Project won Campaign of the Year at the CIH Welsh Housing Awards in November 2015.

Following consultation with the young people, the website has now been developed and is now available as a resource <http://www.goingitalone.co.uk/>

The next step of the Project will be to arrange a Youth Event. The event will promote the Young Housing Network and attract new members. We will also be consulting with young people on issues important to them and determine what projects they would like to participate in.

6. The Bus Stop Project

The Bus Stop Project is a mobile community development project which is free and confidential.

North Wales Housing is a project partner along with Grŵp Cynefin, Cartrefi Conwy, and Conwy County Borough Council.

The Project offers a wide range of services and opportunities, including:

- Informal and accredited learning for those wanting to gain new skills, including CV writing, interview techniques and confidence building
- Information and support on relevant topics; including benefits, health and wellbeing and your rights
- Opportunity to take part in local community projects
- Projects that encourage young people to positively engage in their communities
- Opportunities for people to share their thoughts and feelings on their local communities

All the above can take place from the Project's vehicle which can be parked right outside people's front doors or any other convenient location.

Since October 2015 the Bus Stop Project has delivered the following projects on behalf of North Wales Housing (The type of projects were determined by the time of year):

Cae Garnedd Extra Care Scheme

A series of crafts sessions were arranged. These sessions aimed to continue engagement with residents over the winter months. The sessions were run every other Wednesday 2-4pm in the Hobbies Room.

The aim of the project was to run fun and informal sessions with the residents to target social isolation. Encourage residents to positively engage within the extra care scheme. Give opportunities for the residents to share their thoughts and feelings on their community and living area.

10 participants

Maes y Llan Anti-social behaviour

The main aim was to reduce ASB on the estate by engaging with as many young people as possible. Bus Stop aimed to raise awareness of how ASB can affect not only them, but their family and wider community.

Participants 20

Half Term Activities

During half term period Bus Stop were asked to organise Halloween activities with the young people of Heol Dirion, Maes Myrddin, and Parc Clarence.

Participants

- Heol Dirion 11
- Maes Myrddin 8
- Parc Clarence 12

Christmas Activities

Bus Stop ran a number of Christmas craft sessions leading up to the Christmas holidays on Heol Dirion, Maes y Llan, and Parc Clarence.

The aim was to offer free and informal sessions that the young people could positively contribute towards. Bus Stop delivered Christmas craft session on each of these estates, and young participants were able to take a homemade Christmas decoration home to their family.

Participants

- Heol Dirion 12
- Maes y Llan 10
- Parc Clarence 10

Digital Inclusion Taverners Court

Bus Stop have been running IT drop-in sessions at Taverners Court. The sessions have provided residents the opportunity to learn more about emails, how to connect to wifi, Facebook privacy settings, connecting a printer, downloading apps, internet shopping, using ipads, and windows 10.

Participants 9

7. Service Area Engagement & Difference Made

General Housing

Engagement Activity	Difference Made
Environmental Action Days Conwy	Cleaner neighbourhoods, arson reduction, less vandalism
Mediation and ASB consultation Bangor	Manages expectations and enables

	agreements
Cleaning standards review, Llain Deri	Ensure that standards are acceptable to residents
Plas y Berth re: age lowering, provision of guest bedroom and access bridge	To provide a facility for tenants' visitors, allow disabled access to help all, and to be able to offer to slightly younger people to reduce voids
Parc Clarence scheme surgery	To nip issues in the bud and prevent arguments between neighbours, also to make sure that problems are dealt with quickly e.g. obstacles in hallways and fly-tipping
Swift Boxes, Arafadon	Improvement to natural environment and interest from tenants
Wild Flower Project, Eithinog	Area more attractive for tenants

Older Persons

Engagement Activity	Difference Made
Questionnaires/Surveys	Helps identify strengths and weaknesses in services so we can continually improve
Tenants Meetings	Refurbishment of kitchens//improve communication/minimise disruption. Improvements to scheme/facilities ... you said we did i.e. gate in park Hafod y Parc – ticks so many boxes (improvement in health, well-being, opportunity to make new friends, working with other RSL's). Consult on menus/satisfaction Working with community i.e. Library Service at Llys y Coed Suggestions for activities – residents fund expenditure Tenants volunteering on Reception, leading on activities i.e. craft Llys y Coed, art Hafod y Parc, knitting Y Gorlan, Fire Marshall Uxbridge Court Clarification and educating on procedures i.e. Fire Safety
Guest Speakers	Neighbourhood Watch, PCSO's, Mobility Scooter advice, Scam Awareness, Educational Talks (learn new skills)

Planned Maintenance

Engagement Activity	Difference Made
Planned Maintenance information leaflet	Ongoing at design stage

Rakes & Ladders

Engagement Activity	Difference Made
Gardening Club Hafod Y Parc	Improvement of the surrounding area
Bryn Heli working with the community to improve planting	Improvement of the surrounding area
Llan Deri working with tenants in the scheme	Improvement of the surrounding area
Llys Y Coed planting of bulbs in consultation with scheme manager and residents purchased through own money	Improvement of the surrounding area
Parc Clarence consultation with residents to get the best from the scheme	Improvement of the surrounding area
Planning community days	Involving communities in Horticultural activities to improve their living environment.
Community days at Maes y Llan and Cae Bold	Involving the community in Horticultural activities.

Supported Housing

Engagement Activity	Difference Made
Service users' involvement in Scheme Showcase Event (West)	Service users benefited from the contact with a range of professionals and individuals. Confidence building. Feedback from service users about their roles at the event feeds into planning for 2016 events ("steward" type roles introduced)
Ongoing regular house meetings	Service users' views regarding day to day management taken on board
Climbing wall, art group in local museum/gallery, music sessions, "Cook and eat", DVD nights etc.	Service users' views regarding our services taken on board
TPAS service user involvement sessions for staff and service users	Service users' feedback on what support they would need and how they can be involved in staff recruitment and selection and service evaluation

8. Community Fund

Our Community Fund has been developed to provide funding to assist voluntary, community, recreational or residents groups that are based in the counties of Conwy, Gwynedd, and Ynys Môn.

These organisations/groups should be developing projects and initiatives that benefit the local community. Organisations applying for funding must be:

- A constituted organisation/group and have a bank account with a minimum of two signatories
- Follow an open access policy towards membership, use of their facilities and participation in activities
- Be non-political

During this reporting period small grants have been awarded to 4 community groups. One of the successful applicants has been the Friends of Llanfairfechan Community Library group. They have taken over running of the library and are providing a mobile library service to the Llys y Coed Extra Care Scheme. The group are also running a number courses (e.g. IT and Welsh classes) in the library. The other 3 successful applicants were:

- Deganwy Play and learning
- Conwy Thunder Wheelchair Basketball
- Junction TRAKZ

Helen from Junction TRAKZ said:

“I am writing to say thank you to North Wales Housing for supporting Cyffordd Llandudno Junction Trakz in their project to put on Busking Street Festival with Fringe Events. We endeavour to be inclusive of all the elements of community that make up our now sprawling little town.”

“It is good that North Wales Housing sees the importance of getting involved with community events, especially ones which include and benefit their tenants. This makes a great contribution to social cohesion and wellbeing within the community.”

9. Personal Development Grant

Our Personal Development Grant has been developed to tackle financial barriers that may be preventing our tenants from accessing education, training or employment.

Examples of what can be funded include:

- Tools or equipment for a job or qualification e.g. hairdressing kit or books for college
- Course fees
- Interview clothes

The eligibility criteria are as follows:

- Applicants must be aged 16 or over and reside at a NWH property
- Applicants should not have a history of substantial rent arrears or tenancy management issues (such as anti-social behaviour)

- Applicants should be in receipt of either a means tested benefit or tax credits due to low income
- Applicants in receipt of Disability Living Allowance will also be eligible to apply
- Applicants should not be an employee of NWH

3 Successful applications have been received with one being from a tenant called Tracy in Colwyn Bay:

"I decided that instead of years of dead end and seasonal jobs I would like to work in the NHS, and wanted to start studying a Level 3 Medical Administration Course full time. I'm a single mum on benefits and would not have been able to get on the course without the grant"

10. Newsletter

All tenant engagement opportunities are promoted in the tenant's newsletter which is sent out three times per year.

We have been keen to get some tenant input on the newsletter and perhaps have a team of editors or contributors.

We have recently held a workshop in which 4 tenants attended. During the workshop tenants reviewed our newsletters and those produced by other social landlords.

The tenants were asked what do you like about the existing newsletter; what don't you like; what would you like more of?

Refreshments were provided and travelling expenses reimbursed.

This also took place during house meetings at our Hostels, and our Sounding Board members were invited to put forward their ideas via email.

All those taking part were entered into a prize draw to win high street vouchers.

11. Facebook

The number of likes for our Facebook page has increased from 1320 at the last reporting period to 1347.

We continue to inform our tenants about tenant engagement opportunities and other information about our services. Facebook is also an opportunity for tenants to communicate with us by either posting comments or sending direct private messages.

Facebook engagement is mostly from tenants, or potential tenants.

Historically, most communication has been regarding Repairs - complaints/follow up on incomplete repairs. However, there has been an increase in the last few months

in engagement regarding Tenant Engagement and Marketing. This is due to more posts about activities and events being posted on Facebook.

During the last reporting period we trialled live chat on our Facebook page with the Chief Executive. We have continued with this activity and had a further live chat with the Chief Executive and Repairs staff.

12. Improving Customer Service Consultation / Customer Journey Mapping

To understand how tenants feel about the customer service they receive from North Wales Housing a Customer Journey Mapping consultation was undertaken.

A Customer Journey can be defined as the complete sum of experiences that customers go through when interacting with an organisation or company. Instead of looking at just a part of a transaction or experience, the customer journey documents the full experience of being a customer.

During a two week period a record was kept of tenants contacting North Wales Housing. These tenants received call backs and were asked if they would be willing to participate in the Customer Journey Mapping exercise. Tenants were informed that each participant would be entered into a prize draw to win a Samsung Galaxy Tablet.

41 tenants were interviewed on a one to one basis and were asked what 'touch points' they had with North Wales Housing. From these interviews 78 journeys were recorded with a total of 337 individual touch points.

In each interview tenants were asked what experience they had with North Wales Housing in terms of the customer service they had received over the past 12 months. Each experience is called a 'journey'. An interaction or an emotional response within this journey is called a 'touch point'.

During the interviews tenants were asked how they felt at each touch point. These emotional responses are represented by five categories:

Very Negative Negative Neutral Positive Very Positive

An online questionnaire was also undertaken with a link posted on our website and Facebook page. A total of 53 tenants completed the questionnaire.

During the consultation period events were organised in Cae Bold and Maes y Llan which was an opportunity to talk to tenants regarding their experience of customer service at North Wales Housing.

13. Conclusions

Summary of information

As you can see there have been a significant variety of tenant engagement opportunities.

The Residents' Advisory Panel and Sounding Board have continued to flourish as two avenues for tenants to have an input on performance and improving service.

The Going it Alone project has again been a success and an opportunity for young residents to participate in fun and educational projects, whilst the Bus Stop Project continues to be important in community development and improving the skills of our tenants

Supported Housing continues to provide a wide variety of activities and opportunities and is also in the process of looking into how service users could be involved in staff recruitment.

We have used Customer Journey Mapping for the first time as a consultation method which proved a success. It has given us greater insight into how tenants feel about North Wales Housing and is more emotional than a standard survey or questionnaire.

What areas can we look to develop in the year ahead?

Over the coming months we will be working on a project to ensure our Tenant Participation Strategy is fully implemented.

The project has the following objectives

- Increase the participation of tenants in the planning and operation of services
- Improve the culture and practice of involving tenants across the organisation
- Promote a wide range of options for tenants to get involved
- Encourage the involvement of under representative groups
- Increase skills and training opportunities for our tenants

We need to raise greater awareness of the Residents' Advisory Panel and Sounding Board launch a recruitment drive to increase numbers.

An evaluation of the gardening completion will be undertaken and also look into other initiatives we can deliver over the course of a year to engage with our tenants.

Personnel are trialling a job skills day for our tenants in July and its hoped staff from a variety of service areas will volunteer to provide support on the day. Workshops will include:

- How to Complete an Application Form

- CV Writing Skills
- Interview Skills
- Mock Interview

We will also be organising an event for young people over the next few months. The event will be an opportunity to consult with our residents aged 16 -25 on how they would like to get involved and what are the barriers stopping them getting involved.