



# Tenant Engagement Annual Report

Engage  
Listen  
Act

Tenant  
Participation  
Strategy  
2015-2018

Your Future, Our Future

[www.nwha.org.uk](http://www.nwha.org.uk)

2016 -2017

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## **1. Introduction**

This is our third report about involving tenants since the implementation of the last tenant participation strategy in April 2015. The previous two reports were made on a bi-annual basis.

The report sets out what tenant engagement opportunities are available and the activities that have taken place from April 2016 to March 2017.

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.

Since April 2016, 407 tenants have engaged with us.

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

We delivered Street Farm events on two of our schemes in Llandudno. Residents were provided tips on growing vegetables. Residents were also provided with some herbs to plant and keep.

During this reporting period we trialled Get to Know Your Landlord events on Cae Bold, Llain Cytir, and Parc Clarence. These events were used to consult on our new Corporate Plan. Our Digital Officer also attended to promote what North Wales Housing offers digitally such as the tenant portal.

This period also saw the introduction of a gardening and photography competition. We will continue these initiatives to bring about more engagement and opportunities to build closer relationships with our tenants.

### **3. 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 currently has 8 members.

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

Notes are taken at all meetings which are submitted to the Landlord Services Committee.

Since April 2016 the key areas for the Panel have been:

- Development of a new Customer Charter
- Consultation on the new Corporate Plan – identification of priorities and draft
- Ongoing Scrutiny of Performance
- Review of the Customer Focus Strategy
- Reviewed RAP induction and information leaflets
- Contributed to the work of Bangor University Students undertaking research on customer service as part of their Consumer Psychology Masters
- Reviewed the self evaluation
- Undertaken a review and identified areas of improvement
- Reviewed the brand guidelines
- Review the annual complaints report

The Panel has also recently looked into how it can improve its relationship with the Landlord Services Committee to further strengthen governance at North Wales Housing. The Panel submitted a series of recommendations which were approved by the LSC.

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.

Panel member Justine says:

*"I joined the panel following reading about the panel in the newsletter whereby Iwan was looking for further members to join. I thought that I would enjoy being involved in being part of a scrutinising panel which looked closely at the way that North Wales Housing is run, being able to be the voice of the tenants, to ensure that they receive the best service and standards possible."*

*"I am pleased that I joined the panel, it is excellent, on a monthly basis I enjoy meeting up with the panel and going through the agenda, no 2 months are ever the same. The panel are lovely people and everyone gets involved. I would definitely recommend anyone considering joining the panel to come along and get involved, as it is a nice friendly group whereby everyone's opinion is respected, listened too and feel valued."*

In July 2016 the Residents' Advisory Panel came second in the Tenant Scrutiny award at the TPAS Wales awards.

#### **4. 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 April 2016 the Bus Stop Project has delivered a number of projects on behalf of North Wales Housing. Below are just some of the projects completed during this reporting period.

##### **Ffordd Dawel and Heol Dirion**

A health and wellbeing project undertaken on with young people and children living on Ffordd Dawel and Heol Dirion in Colwyn Bay.

The aim of the project was to run fun and informal sessions with the residents around the subject of Health & Wellbeing. Sessions included looking at a healthy body, mind, and attitude and touched on self-esteem.

12 participants.

Bus Stop is now running similar sessions at Woodlands in Llandudno Junction.

##### **Cae Garnedd Extra Care scheme**

The aim of the project was encourage the residents to participate in the sessions to target social isolation.

Bus Stop engaged with the residents and consulted with them on what activities they would like to see. This led to a variety of craft sessions and quizzes for the residents.

Bus Stop has also run similar sessions at Hafod y Parc and Taverners Court during this reporting period.

20 Participants

### **Summer Holidays 2016**

Over the summer period Bus Stop delivered a number of sessions on the following schemes:

- Parc Clarence (12 participants)
- Ffordd Dawe/Heol Dirion (12 participants)
- Maes y Llan (6 participants)
- Y Gilan/Trem y Don (6 participants)
- Maes Myrddin (12 participants)
- Cae Bold (19 participants)

The aim of these sessions were to keep contact with the young people by re-visiting estates that Bus Stop have previously delivered projects on. And to achieve good engagement with young people, children and families on new estates where Bus Stop hasn't been on before.

Sessions included crafts, sports, and health. Similar sessions are being delivered again this summer.

### **5. Opening Doors to the Outdoors**

Opening Doors to the Outdoors is a 5 year partnership project between the Outdoor Partnership and North Wales Housing.

The aim of the project is to provide opportunities for our tenants on low incomes and economically inactive to be able to participate in outdoor activities.

The project also aims to develop opportunities for participants to gain employment and volunteering opportunities in the outdoor sector. Tenants have since had opportunities to participate in hill walking and canoeing, with mountain biking due to start in September as the final activity of the year.

8 tenants participated in the climbing course.

- 4 participants have achieved the NICAS level 1 certificate. The National Indoor Climbing Award Scheme (NICAS) is a UK wide scheme designed to promote climbing development and accredit individual achievement on climbing.

13 tenants participated in the hill walking course.

10 tenants participated in the canoeing course

- 4 participants achieved the level 1 star award with the British Canoeing Association

This project is being used by NWH as a pilot in measuring social value based on the HACT social value calculator. Participants are asked to complete starter (before the activity) and an exit forms (after completion of the activity) so that we can measure the impact of the activity.

Case studies will also be produced to demonstrate the value of the project. So far we have seen participants confirming their health and fitness have improved, while many have also commented they have met new people and formed new friendships.

Kier from Colwyn Bay says *I'm now better around other people and more able to talk, be more open, and join in.*

We have one more activity (Mountain Biking) to come during 2017. We will then have a review of what has/not worked well during the first year of the project.

## 6. Service Area Engagement & Difference Made

### General Housing

Engagement Activity	Difference Made
Customer service staff have accompanied Housing Officers to visit tenants.	This enhances the relationship with tenants as they can put a face to the name, and also familiarise themselves with the layout of the schemes. Tenants feel that they are treated as a person and not a number. This has also been useful for sign-ups, as tenants remember who has signed them up and will frequently ask for that person.
Visits by Digital Officer	Visited Metropole- assisted tenant re choice of i-pad, set up training in Extra Care and elderly schemes, encouraging tenants to use MyNWH, also attended general needs schemes (e.g. Clos Owen, Wrexham) to encourage use and signpost to training classes for IT.
Consultation regarding Careline equipment and charges	Reduction in service charges for those who do not require the service, and more up-to-date equipment for those who do. Removed unfairness of everyone having to pay even if they didn't want the service.
Worked with residents in Llanberis	Resolve communal bin and recycling issues, also involving a private owner/neighbour. No longer leaving bins on this private land.

Plas Garreg Domas	Presentation arranged by Emma with Cyngor Ynys Môn for new residents to meet with recycling staff
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### Older Persons

Engagement Activity	Difference Made
Tenants Meetings	Listening to Tenants Views/Presenting Information/Consulting on priorities. Acting on feedback
Residents Meetings/Committee	Consultation / Presenting Information / Improvement to Services / Prioritising
Questionnaires	Satisfaction with Services – opportunities to improve/change
Social Events/Activities Community Well Being	Social Inclusion/Educational opportunities/Digital Inclusion/Well-Being
Age Connect Forums	Age Connect Forums
The Bus Stop Project	IT and Craft Sessions – prevents loneliness and isolation

### Planned Maintenance

Engagement Activity	Difference Made
Planned Maintenance information leaflet	All property packs have been rebranded in the new Corporate branding style. Tenants to feel they know who the team are as names and photos are in the packs

### Supported Housing

Engagement Activity	Difference Made
Regular house meetings	Listening to service users' views / presenting information / consulting on priorities. Acting on feedback, amending house rules etc.
Regular "healthy cooking and eating" sessions	Improved health and well-being Budgeting and planning skills Social inclusion Confidence building
Film nights	Negotiating and social skills Social inclusion Confidence building
Art groups	Improved emotional and mental well-being Social inclusion Confidence building
Music sessions	Improved emotional and mental well-being, social inclusion, and confidence building

## **7. 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 2 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 of courses (e.g. IT and Welsh classes) in the library. The other successful applicant was Grwp Carnifal Caernarfon.

## **8. 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

4 Successful applications have been received with one being from a tenant called Delyth – “I had wanted to work as a career and this grant has helped me get the full time job I wanted. Thank you!”

## **9. Newsletter**

All tenant engagement opportunities are promoted in the tenant’s newsletter.

We had two newsletters planned during this reporting period but it was put on hold due to budget constraints. The newsletter will return in August 2017.

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

Tenants are always asked to contribute to the newsletter and are asked what they would like to see in it.

## **10. Facebook**

The Facebook page is managed by the Communications and Marketing Manager. If on leave it is monitored by the Tenant Participation Co-ordinator.

The number of likes for our Facebook page has increased from 1347 at the last reporting period to 1601.

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.

## **11. Corporate Plan Consultation**

During this reporting period a consultation was undertaken with our tenants with the results being used to help develop our new corporate.

The consultation was undertaken to ensure the new corporate plan was developed taking into account resident views.

Consultation took place between the 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2017 and the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2017. This consultation was undertaken:

- Paper questionnaire made available at the reception areas in both the Llandudno Junction and Bangor offices. Staff at sheltered schemes were also given questionnaires and asked to encourage residents to complete
- Housing Officers and other staff asked to promote the completion of the questionnaires

- The Tenant Participation Co-ordinator carried out telephone surveys – staff answering telephones asked tenants whether they would be willing to receive a call back to answer some questions.
- Questionnaires sent out via email to residents
- An online survey was made available on our website, Facebook page, and Twitter
- Face to face consultation during our Get to know Your Landlord events

During the consultation residents were asked:

- What do you think North Wales Housing do well?
- Are there any areas where you would like to see improvements?
- Do you think we could offer any new services that would benefit you/ our tenants?
- How can we help you live the life you want to lead?
- Any other comments

A total of 62 paper surveys were returned, 67 online surveys complete, 21 telephone interviews undertaken, and 3 Get to know Your Landlord events.

## **Conclusion**

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

The Residents' Advisory Panel has continued to flourish as an avenue for tenants to have an input on performance and improving service.

We can build on Get to Know your Landlord events; however we need to ensure that there is a purpose to these events and not just an opportunity to tick a box. These events were an excellent opportunity to consult on the corporate plan.

Moving forward if NWH knew of areas needing consulting on or any particular information need passing on to residents, events and activities could be planned ahead with this in mind. This can ensure we maximise the benefit of any event or tenant engagement activity.

It needs to be considered that the Tenant Participation Co-ordinator is informed of any consultation required to ensure its carried out following the 10 Principles of Public Engagement

Despite challenges in recruiting the Outdoor Partnership project has been a great success in its first year. A report will be produced following the final activity of 2017 in September to include some case studies and the social impact of the project

Our Tenant Participation Strategy will come to an end in 2018 so this can be an opportunity to evaluate what we are doing now and what we want to achieve in the near future.