Welsh Assembly Government – Evaluating Tenant Participation in Housing Management and Design

Contents

Acknowledgements

1 Introduction 1
1.1 Background to the research 1
1.2 Aims and objectives 2
1.3 Methodology 2
1.4 Structure of report 4

2 Evaluation of other studies and good practice guidance 7

3 Comparative analysis of the tenant participation framework in Wales with those in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland 13

4 Evaluation of tenant participation compacts in Wales 21

5 Findings of questionnaire survey, case study focus groups, telephone interviews and interviews with national organisations 29
5.1 Introduction 29
5.2 Stakeholders’ views of tenant involvement 29
5.3 How tenants are involved 34
5.4 Successful outcomes of tenant involvement 44
5.5 Problems with tenant involvement 59
5.6 Resources and training 66
5.7 Tenant participation compacts 72
5.8 Ideas for improving tenant involvement 77

6 Summary and conclusions 83

7 Recommendations 91

8 Appendices
8.1 List of participants in the research 97
8.2 Detailed methodology 101
8.3 Bibliography of other studies and good practice guidance 105
8.4 Tenant compact guidance core standards 107
8.5 Further information and resources 111
We would like to thank the many organisations and individuals that have contributed to the research. A full list of participants can be found in Appendix 1.

In particular we would like to thank the following case study organisations that contributed their experiences:

- Cadwyn Housing Association
- Charter Housing Association
- Gwynedd Council
- Mid Wales Housing Association
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
- City and County of Swansea
- Swansea Housing Association

Thanks are also due to:

- The Welsh Assembly Government Project Steering Group
- Translator
- Project consultants
1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the research

1.1.1 The Welsh Assembly Government commissioned this evaluation of tenant participation in the management and design of social housing across Wales, in line with the National Housing Strategy, Better Homes for People in Wales, which commits the Assembly Government to:

- improve the contribution, and widen the involvement of tenants, to complement and reinforce the application of the Wales Programme for Continuous Improvement/Best Value to Housing;

- deliver more efficient housing services with better quality decisions and sustainable improvements in council and housing association performance which will benefit everyone; and

- place tenants at the heart of the management of housing services in the future.

The principles of Continuous Improvement and Best Value are of particular importance to the study, as they require social landlords to involve tenants in planning, standard setting, reviewing, decision making and progress setting, and to develop mechanisms that ensure that tenants are involved in housing management at both operational and strategic levels.

1.1.2 To achieve the above aims, the Welsh Assembly Government has set a number of goals to increase and improve tenant involvement in decision making on housing issues. These have largely been derived from the Assembly Guidance Tenant Participation Compacts for Local Authorities in Wales (2000). To help achieve the goals, the Welsh Assembly Government has:

- produced good practice guidance on tenant participation for social landlords;

- provided guidance to help local authorities to produce formal agreements (tenant participation compacts) with their tenants, and separate guidance to require housing associations to develop compacts;

- allocated funding to the Tenant Participation Advisory Service Cymru and the Welsh Tenants’ Federation, to provide independent information, advice, training, seminars and conferences for tenants and residents;

- allocated funding to the National Tenants Resource Centre and a Tenant Empowerment Grant Scheme, to enable tenants groups to improve the quality of participation and involvement;

- invited social landlords to submit bids annually under ‘tenant participation’ themes, as part of the Social Housing Management Grant Programme.

1.1.3 This research set out to:

- assess the extent to which the above initiatives are contributing to achieving the National Housing Strategy’s tenant participation aims;
• achieve a greater understanding of how tenants in Wales are participating in design and management of their homes;

• establish a detailed picture of the levels and effects of tenant participation; and

• act as guidance to the Welsh Assembly Government on how to best promote the most effective forms of participation in the future.

1.2 Aims and objectives

1.2.1 The specific aims of the research were to gain a detailed picture of the level, quality and types of tenant participation activity in Wales both at strategic and operational management of housing services, and to determine the benefits that this is bringing to the design and management of social housing.

1.2.2 The objectives of the research were to:

i) evaluate the research literature from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland on the costs and benefits of involving tenants in the design and management of their homes;

ii) examine the role of tenant participation compacts in bringing about tenant participation in the design and management of social housing;

iii) assess the level, quality and types of tenant involvement in the design and management of social housing within Wales in order to produce a comprehensive baseline of activity;

iv) highlight case study examples of where tenant participation has positively and negatively influenced housing management and design;

v) recommend how the Welsh Assembly Government might best ensure that social landlords and tenants across Wales harness the benefits that tenant participation can bring to housing management and design.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 The research was carried out between November 2003 and March 2004. Contact was made with all 22 local authorities, the 29 major housing associations, 333 tenants and residents groups and a range of support providers.

In total, 130 landlord and tenant organisations, support providers and national organisations contributed their views via questionnaires and telephone interviews, and a total of 170 individual tenants and staff took part in focus groups. The research aimed to gather information and views from a balance of tenants and landlords. However, the numbers of tenants’ views gathered exceeded those of landlords in all areas of the research except the telephone interviews.

In summary, the views expressed in the research draw on the views of:

• 92 tenant organisations;

• 51 social landlords; and

• 10 support providers.

and the individual views of:

• 98 tenants; and

• 72 staff of social landlords.

In addition, views were gathered from 5 national organisations representing tenants, social landlords and support providers.
A complete list of those taking part in the research can be found in Appendix 1.

1.3.2 The research involved three stages. These are summarised below.

Stage 1 involved gathering, collating and analysing baseline data from tenant organisations, social landlords, and support providers. This was achieved by the methods set out below.

Questionnaires were sent to all 333 tenant organisations on the TPAS Cymru database, all 22 local authorities, the 29 major housing associations, and to a number of support providers including the Cymorth management committee and temporary acting director. The questionnaires sought to gather data and views on tenant participation activity across Wales. A total of 112 completed questionnaires were received. The respondents received were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>% response rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenant organisations</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing associations</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The low return from tenant organisations may in part be due to the difficulty of maintaining accurate information and contact details for tenants and residents associations.

Following receipt of the completed questionnaires, 33 telephone interviews were carried out with staff, board members, local authority members and tenants across a range of organisations to follow up specific issues.

Interviews were carried out with 5 national organisations representing tenants and landlords to gather their views.

1.3.3 Stage 2 involved collating and analysing information on tenant participation compacts, comparing frameworks for participation across the UK, and identifying examples of good practice.

All 22 local authorities and the 29 major housing associations were written to, requesting copies of their tenant participation compacts. A total of 39 tenant participation compacts were received from social landlords and analysed.

Tenant participation frameworks were collected from England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. These were analysed, and compared with the Welsh Assembly Government’s tenant participation framework.

A sample of other studies on tenant participation, and examples of good practice were collected and evaluated.

1.3.4 Stage 3 involved inviting six case study landlords to take part in four focus group discussions each, to discuss the experiences of tenant participation of different stakeholders.

Three housing associations and three local authorities were selected according to criteria which ensured that a representative range was covered.
The make up of the four focus groups in each organisation was as follows:

Focus group 1  Staff, board members and local authority members operating at strategic level.

Focus group 2  Staff delivering front line services.

Focus group 3  Tenant representatives from constituted and/or recognised tenant organisations.

Focus group 4  Tenants who do not normally participate in formal structures with their landlord. These included:
- people with learning disabilities;
- black and minority ethnic tenants;
- young people;
- people living in rural areas of scattered stock;
- people with physical disabilities;
- sheltered housing tenants.

A detailed methodology, including a breakdown of the numbers taking part in the research can be found in Appendix 2.

1.4 Structure of report

1.4.1 The report is structured in the following way:

Section 2 includes the research literature from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland on the costs and benefits of involving tenants in the design and management of their homes.

Section 3 compares the Assembly Government’s tenant participation framework with those in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 4 provides an analysis of tenant participation compacts in Wales to ascertain their compliance with the Assembly Government’s tenant participation compact guidance on core standards.

Section 5 outlines the findings of the questionnaire survey carried out with national organisations and tenants organisations to produce a baseline of tenant participation activity in Wales. Also, the section uses the information gathered through the case study focus groups and telephone interviews to highlight examples of where tenant participation has positively and negatively influenced housing management and design.

Section 6 sets out the overall summary and conclusions of the research.

Section 7 sets out recommendations for the Welsh Assembly Government, social landlords, tenants organisations and national organisations, on improvements to ensure effective tenant involvement in housing management and design.

Each section includes summaries of the key points arising from each part of the research.
Note on terminology
Throughout the report, the terms ‘tenant participation’ and ‘tenant involvement’ have both been used when referring to the process of tenants having their say in the service they receive. This is because the two terms were used regularly by tenants and staff taking part in the research, and because ‘tenant involvement’ was sometimes understood by some participants to best describe the range of processes and methods of tenants having their say, which were identified during the research.

The term ‘tenant organisation’ is used throughout the report to describe constituted and/or recognised tenants and residents associations, federations, forums or panels. These organisations may also include members who are leaseholders, owner occupiers and other residents in the community.

In addition, throughout the report:
- the term ‘housing association’ is used rather than registered social landlord;
- the term ‘social landlord’ is used as a collective term for local authorities and housing associations;
- the term ‘design’ is used to describe both the design of new build homes and estates and estate or property regeneration or improvement activities;
- the term ‘involved tenant’ is used to describe representatives of tenants organisations, who took part in the focus groups;
- the term ‘non-involved tenant’ is used to describe tenants not involved in tenant organisations, who took part in the focus groups;
- the term ‘elected member’ is used to describe a local authority councillor;
- the term ‘board member’ is used to describe a member of a housing association board of management.
2. An Evaluation of Research Literature and Good Practice Guidance

2.1 Introduction
This section of the report evaluates the research literature from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland on the costs and benefits of involving tenants in the design and management of their homes. The section is structured around a number of key themes and issues which were identified by:

- reviewing recent studies carried out in England, Scotland and Wales to evaluate different elements of tenant participation. The studies were identified by a literature search, with particular reference to research recently commissioned by government departments and the regulators in England, Scotland and Wales. For each of the twelve studies identified, the scope and methods, main findings and main recommendations were extracted. Common themes amongst the studies were then identified which are set out in section 2.2;

- reviewing existing good practice guidance on tenant participation. Good practice guidance from the twelve studies was extracted. In addition, recent good practice publications from the Chartered Institute of Housing, Audit Commission, Community Housing Task Force and Housing Corporation were reviewed. General and specific points of good practice guidance were identified under the common themes identified from the findings of the studies reviewed;

- outlining good practice examples and examples of innovation from a variety of sources including the studies and good practice guidance, the Chartered Institute of Housing’s Good Practice Unit, HouseMark and positive practice identified in Audit Commission inspection reports. Examples were identified which exemplified the common themes as well as examples of innovation. Summaries of the examples are included, where relevant, in section 5 of the report.

A list of all studies and guidance referred to in this chapter is provided in the bibliography in Appendix 3.

2.2 Common themes from previous research
2.2.1 Although the range of studies reviewed is diverse, it is possible to identify a number of common themes which are summarised below.

Link between good performance and consulting with/involving service users
2.2.2 Two of the studies - An Interim Evaluation of Tenant Participation Compacts, published by ODPM in 2003 and A Study of Methodologies for Obtaining Customers Views of Service Quality, published by Communities Scotland in 2003 - found a clear link between organisations which performed well and had a strong performance culture, and the commitment to seek views from service users, and to use these views to determine decisions and link tenant participation to improved service delivery.
Equalities
2.2.3  The issue of the importance of engaging with black and minority ethnic groups and meeting their needs was raised by six of the studies. Landlords consistently look for advice and examples of how this can be done appropriately and effectively. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) study which examined the involvement of black and minority ethnic communities and individuals in the stock options appraisal process, recognised that black and minority ethnic groups are one of many groups that are under-represented in tenant involvement activities. (ODPM, 2004). Other groups include young people, people living in scattered properties etc. Informal and proactive mechanisms to involve tenants from under-represented groups need to be integrated into wider participation processes.

Options for participation
2.2.4  Five of the studies raised concern at the emphasis on formal structures for participation and involvement, noting that this could exclude individuals and some groups, and could result in a concentration of decision making in the hands of a small number of tenants. Formal structures are not necessarily representative, even with the safeguard of equal opportunities statements, written constitutions etc, and tenant representatives do not always formally represent the views of a range of tenants. The former Tai Cymru topic audit of tenant participation noted that a number of housing associations found that they needed a flexible model for tenant participation that was able to cater for tenant preferences for both formal and informal structures. (Tai Cymru, 1998). Five of the studies agreed that there is a need for a clear and broad range of options for participation which include and legitimise informal networks and relationships, and there are many good examples of such methods in practice.

2.2.5  The ODPM study examining the involvement of black and minority ethnic communities and individuals in the stock options appraisal process, emphasised that short-term events which require communication and consultation with tenants/residents, such as stock options appraisals, can be used as a springboard to develop longer-term strategies and opportunities for effective tenant involvement, (ODPM, op cit).

Gathering and acting on users views
2.2.6  Three of the studies, most particularly A Study of Methodologies for Obtaining Customers Views of Service Quality, published by Communities Scotland in 2003, found that a range of methods are used to gather users’ views, but that the most appropriate method is not always used. This research concluded that the collection of consumers’ views needs to be focussed on assessing priorities for improvement. Customer Involvement: Opportunities for Learning from the Private Sector?, published by the Housing Corporation in 2002, found that housing organisations could do more to gather and act on users’ views about the design of products and services.

Resources for participation
2.2.7  Most of the studies found wide variation in the amount of resources that landlords invested in communicating with tenants, and tenant participation. There were uncertainties about what constituted a reasonable amount of funding, where money should come from (particularly in the case of funding for resident
participation), and assessing value for money. Housing Corporation research on tenant participation, published in 2000, found that there was no apparent correlation between money spent and the ‘success’ of tenant participation (Housing Corporation, 2000). However, recent Communities Scotland research found a clear relationship between the amount spent on tenant participation, and its effectiveness (Communities Scotland, 2004). Count Us In!, published by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service Cymru and the Welsh Tenants Federation in 1998, found a correlation between the resources for participation and the number of tenant organisations.

**Integrating tenant participation**

2.2.8 Three of the studies found that tenant participation was not being effectively integrated by organisations into all of their activities and was viewed as a ‘separate’ activity from the core work of the organisation. Specific examples were a lack of clear links between participation processes and business planning (Housing Corporation, op cit) and strategic decision making (Scottish Consumer Council, 2003), and a lack of training on tenant participation for housing association Board members (Housing Corporation, op cit).

**Measuring success**

2.2.9 Given the requirements of the national frameworks for tenant participation in Wales, England and Scotland, the success of tenant participation needs to be monitored and measured. Scottish Executive research found that this is the least well developed element of tenant participation practice. (Communities Scotland, op cit). The interim evaluation of the Innovation into Action programme found that there is a role for self-evaluation of tenant participation activity and individual projects, as well as for external assessment of the degree of success achieved, (ODPM, 2003).

**2.3 Existing good practice guidance**

2.3.1 There are a large number of publications which set out good practice guidance on tenant participation and involvement, as well as broader guidance on communicating with, and involving, users of services. Those referenced for the purposes of this research are listed in Appendix 3.

Some of the guidance accessed as part of this project is in the form of suggestions of what should be done by landlords, while other guidance is more detailed, setting out about how better practice can be achieved. Both types of guidance are usually accompanied by examples of how the principles have been put into practice by individual landlord organisations. Both types of guidance are included within the scope of this section.

Specific points of good practice guidance are summarised below, under the common themes identified from existing studies. It will be clear from these points that the level of detail of good practice guidance is very varied. Guidance covers both some very specific points which can be relatively easily translated into practical action by organisations, and some very broad-ranging points which, unless linked with practical examples of how the statements can be achieved, may not be particularly helpful to tenants, officers, board members or councillors.
**Link between good performance and consulting with and involving service users**

2.3.2 Specific guidance provided to landlords includes advice to:

- involve tenants in service improvement through methods such as mystery shopping, tenants’ juries, etc;
- implement good information systems so that information is shared across and between organisations;
- provide commitment and culture for communicating with, and involving, service users;
- ensure that effective feedback mechanisms about services are in place and are used by all customers, that services are changed as a result of feedback, and monitor to see if satisfaction levels have improved as a result of changes made.

**Equalities**

2.3.3 Specific guidance provided to landlords includes advice that:

- practical measures are needed to communicate and build capacity with BME tenants and groups, people with literacy difficulties, physically isolated tenants and all other groups;
- diversity must be achieved in representative structures;
- a good tenant participation strategy will:
  - actively try to engage all sections of the community.

**Options for participation**

2.3.4 Specific guidance provided to landlords includes advice to:

- carry out an audit of tenants so that participation options can be provided that meet different needs;
- encourage involvement at all levels;
- ensure that the tenant participation strategy includes opportunities for collective and individual involvement and is developed and reviewed with the active involvement of tenants;
- take participation to the tenants rather than expecting them to come to the organisation;
- provide practical approaches for tenants;
- tap into existing networks, groups, faith or community groups and their activities rather than creating new structures and activities.

**Gathering and acting on users views**

2.3.5 Specific guidance provided to landlords includes advice to:

- carry out an audit of tenants and their requirements so that information can be tailored to different groups/interests;
- use a database to log information such as preferred methods of communication, diversity issues, offers to participate in future consultation exercises etc;
- review current work practices alongside the introduction of customer
involvement techniques so that issues identified by consultation can be addressed;

• feedback what has happened to views/comments and what has been done as a result;

• acknowledge that one of the principles of effective consultation and involvement is demonstrating real results.

**Resources for participation**

2.3.6 Specific guidance provided to landlords includes advice to:

• provide support for tenant organisations;

• identify training and support needs, and implement plans to address them;

• budget realistically, including costs for travel, telephone, meetings and training, child care and other care costs and loss of earnings.

**Mainstreaming participation**

2.3.7 Specific guidance provided to landlords includes advice to:

• establish a commitment to tenant participation from staff;

• act on the basis that commitment and change should be undertaken with the overt authority and support of senior management;

• raise the profile of tenant participation, positioning it as something that affects all of society;

• put in place an appropriate structure to support participation and provide appropriate support;

• ensure that tenant apathy is not misinterpreted as tenant satisfaction;

• ensure that any staff dedicated to tenant participation are not isolated from the mainstream business of the organisation;

• work on the basis that a good tenant participation strategy will:
  - be linked to measures to bring about cultural change within the organisation;
  - involve consumers and staff at all levels; and
  - accept the need to let go to allow consumers to set the agenda.

**Measuring success**

2.3.8 Specific guidance provided to landlords includes advice to:

• evaluate everything;

• learn from the experience of others;

• involve all stakeholders in identifying what constitutes success and monitoring it;

• work on the basis that a good tenant participation strategy will:
  - have achievable goals linked to a timescale; and
  - include mechanisms for evaluation and review.
Key points: evaluation of other studies and good practice guidance

• Studies found a link between organisations which performed well, and commitment to effective service user involvement.

• An ODPM study found that many groups and individuals are under-represented in tenant involvement activities, including black and minority ethnic groups.

• The studies agreed that there is a need for a broad range of options for participation which legitimise informal networks as well as formal structures.

• Most studies found wide variation in the amount of resources landlords invested in tenant participation.

• Studies in Wales, England and Scotland reached conflicting conclusions on whether there was a correlation between money spent and effective participation.

• Some studies found that tenant participation was viewed as a ‘separate’ activity from the core work of organisations.

• Scottish research found that monitoring and measuring participation is the least well developed element of tenant participation practice.
3. Comparative Analysis of the Tenant Participation Framework in Wales with those in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This section sets out to examine and compare the Welsh Assembly Government’s framework for tenant participation in local authorities and housing associations and the frameworks in force in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The references for each framework are listed in Appendix 4.

3.2 Frameworks for tenant involvement in the UK

3.2.1 In England and Wales, tenant participation for secure tenants is enshrined in Sections 104, 105 and 106 of the Housing Act 1985, which provides individual tenants with the rights to:

- information about their tenancy terms, their landlords policies and procedures for allocating homes, their rights as tenants, and their landlords repairing obligations;

- be consulted about changes in housing management; and

- information about their landlords arrangements for consulting tenants.

3.2.2 Guidance on tenant consultation produced to support the Housing Act 1985 in England and Wales, recognises that tenant representatives and tenant groups need to be able to play a full role in making decisions about the direction of the housing service.

3.2.3 Tenants are also entitled to be given information about how their landlord manages their homes, under Section 167 of the Local Government Act 1989 and Section 130 of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993.

3.2.4 Tenants can become involved in the management of their homes and estates in a range of ways through locally agreed processes. However, representative tenant organisations have the statutory right to take over the management of their homes from local authorities, under the Right to Manage provisions, provided that they meet certain requirements and are competent to do so.

3.2.5 In 1999 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) produced the National Framework for Tenant Participation Compacts. This provides guidance to local authorities on the development of tenant compacts. Tenant compacts are viewed by the Government as an integral part of their Best Value regime. The core standards set out a broad framework for tenant participation compacts but provide local authorities and their tenants enough flexibility to enable the compacts they develop to be tailored to meet local requirements. The guidance produced by the Welsh Assembly Government in February 2000, Tenant Participation Compacts for Local Authorities in Wales, shares many similarities with that developed by the ODPM.

3.2.6 The framework in both England and Wales is based on the fact that tenant
involvement in making decisions about the management of their homes, is something that is entirely voluntary. This means that local authority landlords in both England and Wales are free to develop processes and structures that have no regard to the content or the spirit of the guidance. In addition there are no statutory minimum standards that social landlords must comply with, in terms of engaging tenant organisations.

3.2.7 The framework governing tenant participation for secure tenants and for non secure tenants holding periodic assured and shorthold assured tenancies in housing associations in Wales is set out in the Regulatory Requirements for Registered Social Landlords in Wales. These were introduced prior to the Government of Wales Act 1998, and are currently in the process of being amended by the Welsh Assembly Government. The proposed new Regulatory Code includes a fundamental obligation for housing associations as follows:

“Associations should provide readily accessible, clear and accurate information and advice for residents. Associations should be answerable to residents for the quality of services provided. Associations should ask for, listen to, and take account of the views of residents. Associations should encourage resident involvement.”

Regulatory Requirements for Registered Social Landlords in Wales (Tai Cymru, 1997)

3.2.8 Housing associations in Wales are expected to take a strategic approach to tenant involvement, produce a tenant participation strategy and develop tenant participation compacts on the basis of the same guidance used by Welsh local authorities. Additionally the tenant compact framework introduced for local authorities in February was extended to include housing associations, by a letter from the Welsh Assembly Government in February 2000.

3.2.9 In Scotland the Scottish Parliament has legislated to enshrine tenant involvement in statute, through Chapter 3 of Part 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. This statutory right came from the development of a National Strategy for Tenant Participation, published in 1999.

3.2.10 Both local authorities and housing associations in Scotland have a statutory duty to engage with their tenants. The practical requirements placed on social landlords are as follows:

• Section 53 - requires local authorities and housing associations to have tenant participation strategies in place, as directed by the Scottish Ministers. It also places a duty on them to maintain a register of tenant organisations meeting certain criteria. It enables the Scottish Ministers to make an order setting out the criteria for registration or removal from the register and the procedures to be followed in relation to registration and removal.

• Section 54 - introduces a new provision to enable both individual tenants and registered tenant organisations to be consulted by the landlord on issues affecting them, for the landlord to have regard to representations by tenants or tenant organisations within a reasonable timescale.

• Section 55 and 56 - sets out arrangements for a tenant management co-operative to enter into an agreement
with a local authority or housing association to manage the landlords homes.

- Section 106 – sets out equal opportunities provision within the Act and how they must apply to tenant participation strategies developed by social landlords.

3.2.11 In Northern Ireland the framework for tenant involvement is very different to the other countries in the UK, partly as a consequence of the fact that local authorities do not own homes and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) have a virtual monopoly position in terms of provision of social housing. The Housing (NI) Order 1983 placed a statutory duty on the NIHE to consult with tenants on matters affecting their tenancies, much like the Housing Act 1985 in England and Wales. However, from this point on the frameworks diverge dramatically.

3.2.12 The framework established in Northern Ireland is known as the Housing Community Network, and has been developed by the NIHE, the Northern Ireland Tenant Action Project (NITAP) and tenant/community representatives in the Province. The Housing Community Network is a four tier community involvement framework, details of which are set out in 2.3.22. Whilst the Network does not have the force of a statutory duty, it is being applied consistently across the NIHE housing stock.

3.3 Content of frameworks

3.3.1 The format of the ODPM framework for tenant participation and involvement, and the guidance offered to local authorities on tenant compacts in England and Wales are very similar. The guidance covers how tenant compacts should be developed, puts forward a set of core standards, and recommends how the compacts should be monitored.

3.3.2 Six of elements that make up the core standards in both sets of guidance are effectively the same, relating to:

- housing services;
- resources;
- meetings;
- information;
- tenant organisations; and
- monitoring and measuring performance.

3.3.3 The Welsh Assembly Government has inserted an additional element in the core standards for Wales. This additional element is called “Getting Tenants Involved” and focuses mainly on formal structures for tenant involvement. There is no similar element in the ODPM guidance.

3.3.4 In terms of the elements that relate to both sets of guidance, the major differences relate to the following:

- **Housing services** – the ODPM guidance contains three additional components relating to the areas that should be included in the tenant participation compact. These are as follows: Sheltered housing, equality policies and remedial action to address poor performance.

- **Resources** – the ODPM guidance contains an additional component with regard to resources for tenant involvement. This relates to the
information made available to tenants. This enables them to ask for any additional information relating to resources, as long as it is available and does not breach confidentiality.

• **Information** - the ODPM guidance contains three additional components with regard to the provision of information to tenants. These relate to the arrangements and requirements for delegating housing management, the council’s race equality and racial harassment policies, and the compacts themselves.

• **Tenant organisations** - the ODPM guidance contains two additional elements with regard to the criteria with which tenant organisations should comply. These are procedures to make sure that information on the group is made widely available to tenants and that all tenants are encouraged to become more active, and the production of regular newsletters or other written communication with members.

3.3.5 In Scotland, the framework is far more prescriptive than in Wales. All social landlords are required to produce a tenant participation strategy, and the Scottish Executive publication, *The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001: Guidance on Tenant Participation*, provides detailed guidance on the preparation of the strategy, the process that landlords should follow in developing strategy, how landlords should obtain and take account of the views of tenants, and the assessment of resource requirements.

3.3.6 The introduction of Registered Tenant Organisations is another major difference between Scotland, and Wales and England. This initiative ensures that all tenant organisations are able to become registered, if they wish, where they comply with the terms for registration. The Registered Tenant Organisation status of tenant organisations in Scotland ensures that the landlord not only recognises them but is also required to consult with them and consider their views before reaching their final decision, thus ensuring the involvement of tenant organisations in decision making.

3.3.7 This compares with Wales and England, where tenant organisations may be recognised by the landlord dependent on the criteria the landlord adopts.

3.3.8 The areas where landlords are required to consult with tenant organisations in Scotland is more limited than the areas to which tenant compacts apply in Wales. Section 54(2)(a) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 sets out the areas where a landlord must consult its tenants and Registered Tenant Organisations. These are as follows:

• The policy in relation to housing management, repairs or maintenance, where the proposal, if implemented, is likely to significantly affect the tenant;

• The standard of service in relation to housing management, repairs and maintenance which it intends to provide;

• The tenant participation strategy; and

• A disposal which would result in a change of landlord or, if different, of owner of the house which is the subject of the tenancy.
3.3.9 Whilst the areas on which Scottish social landlords must consult with their tenants are more limited than the areas outlined in the Assembly Government guidance, the Welsh guidance does not have the status of statute.

3.3.10 In terms of the framework for participation in Northern Ireland, whilst voluntary as in England and Wales, the framework has been consistently adopted across the Province and provides for a high level of tenant and resident participation, in housing and other community issues. The Northern Ireland framework, known as the Housing Community Network, facilitates tenant involvement in the review and development of services through a pyramid structure involving the following:

- 600 community groups;
- 36 District Housing Community Network of consumer panels at district level;
- 5 Area Housing Community Network of five community advisory groups at area level; and
- a central community advisory group.

3.3.11 The following provides a description of how the framework works:

**Local Community/Residents Groups**

Both Local Community Groups and Local Residents Groups raise locally identified issues with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and other agencies such as the local authority. Each Local Community Group and Local Resident Group is invited to select a representative on the District Housing Network.

- **The District Housing Network**

  The District Housing Network’s role is to:

  - provide consumer feedback on the overall quality of the housing services in the district;
  - monitor the performance of the NIHE against established performance standards;
  - seek ways of improving communication with consumers; and
  - provide advice and support to new and established community groups.

  Each District Housing Network is invited to select a minimum of two representatives to sit on the Area Housing Community Network.

- **The Area Housing Community Network**

  The Area Housing Community Network’s role is to:

  - provide feedback on area wide programmes;
  - act as a consultative reference groups on services and service standards; and
  - act as a sounding board of community development and related issues.

  Each Area Housing Community Network is invited to provide 3 representatives to sit on the Central Housing Community Network.
• **The Central Housing Community Network**

The Central Housing Community Network’s role is to:

• act as a customer panel for the NIHE by participating in policy working groups, and providing advice on tenant publications and communications; and

• address areas of concern referred to it by the Area Housing Community Networks.

3.3.12 This framework is supported by the Northern Ireland Tenant Action Project, which is funded specifically for this purpose. The framework facilitates tenant involvement in not only community issues but also the development of policy at a Province wide level. However, it must be recognised that the development of this framework relates to the particular circumstances in Northern Ireland, and the existence of the NIHE, which is the monopoly social landlord in the Province, has been able to ensure consistency in tenant involvement across Northern Ireland.

---

**Key points: comparative analysis of tenant participation frameworks**

• Secure tenants in Wales and England have rights to receive information and be consulted about changes to their conditions of tenancy.

• The framework for involving housing association tenants in Wales is set out in the Regulatory Requirements for RSLs.

• The frameworks in Wales and England are based on organisations involving tenants on a voluntary basis.

• The National Frameworks for Tenant Participation Compacts provide guidance to English and Welsh local authorities for developing compacts.

• Core standards for compacts in England and Wales are very similar, with an additional element in the Welsh standards called “Getting Tenants Involved”, which focuses on formal structures for tenant involvement.

• The Scottish Parliament has passed legislation which places a statutory duty on local authorities and housing associations to engage with tenants.

• Scotland has introduced the Registered Tenant Organisations initiative, where all tenant organisations can register if they comply with the terms. Registration provides tenant organisations with the right to be consulted on a range of defined areas of landlord activity.

• The areas on which landlords are required to consult with tenants in Scotland are more limited than in Wales.
• Northern Ireland places a statutory duty on the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to consult with tenants. The Executive have established a voluntary framework for community involvement.

• The Northern Ireland framework, the Housing Community Network, provides for a higher level of participation in housing and community issues.
4. Evaluation of Tenant Participation Compacts in Wales

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section provides an analysis of tenant participation compacts in Wales, to evaluate their compliance with the Welsh Assembly Government’s guidance on core standards for tenant participation compact guidance. This section is supplemented by Section 5.7, which considers landlord and tenant perceptions of the positive and negative aspects of tenant participation compacts, together with ideas for improving their use.

4.1.2 The evaluation focuses on the types of compacts developed by Welsh social landlords, the process involved in their development and the linkages between compacts and the Wales Programme for Improvement and Best Value. The evaluation will establish the extent to which social landlords in Wales comply with each of the seven core standards developed and published by the Assembly Government in February 2000 entitled Tenant Participation Compacts for Local Authorities in Wales. These standards were extended to housing associations in February 2001.

4.1.3 Each local authority and housing association landlord in Wales was asked to provide a copy of their organisation’s tenant participation compact for evaluation as part of the research. A total of 39 tenant participation compacts were received. Of these, 14 compacts were received from local authority landlords and 25 were received from housing associations, representing an overall response rate of 64%.

4.1.4 Each of the tenant compacts received from social landlords in Wales was then assessed, in a desk-top exercise, to establish the level of compliance of each with the seven cores standards contained in Tenant Participation Compacts for Local Authorities in Wales, their type, the process involved in their development, and their stated linkages to the Wales Programme for Improvement and Best Value. In terms of compliance with the core standards, each tenant compact was assumed to comply with the core standards if the tenant participation compact explicitly mentions any of the components of each of the core standards, in either the compact itself or any supporting information provided by the landlord, such as a tenant participation strategy. The level of compliance for each of the seven core standards is reported in detail below.

4.1.5 The findings are reported in relation to the two groups of social landlords, local authorities and housing associations. Comparisons are made both with compacts developed by similar social landlords, and between the two groups of social landlords. All figures provided in this section relate to the 29 landlords who provided copies of their tenant participation compacts.

4.2 Types of Tenant Participation Compact in Wales

4.2.1 13 of the 14 local authority compacts provided were single landlord agreements with tenants of all their stock. An exception to this was one compact which was developed jointly with the local authority, a local housing association and an overarching tenants federation. This compact sets minimum standards for tenant participation in the locality, but only involves one of the three housing associations active in the area.
4.2.2 9 of the 14 local authority tenant participation compacts contained provision for, or commitment to, the development of compacts at a smaller geographical level, e.g. town, village and neighbourhood. 3 local authorities returned examples of neighbourhood compacts that they had developed in partnership with tenants in specific neighbourhoods.

4.2.3 23 of the housing association landlords had developed single landlord compacts. Of these, 13 related to all of the landlords’ tenants, 8 related to tenant participation structures, for example Tenant Consultative Committees and Tenant Panels, and 3 related to local tenant/resident groups.

4.2.4 3 housing association compacts differed significantly from the norm. The first of these was the compact agreed between the housing association, council and federation, discussed above. The second was a compact jointly agreed between two housing associations with a residents association made up of tenants of both landlords. This compact set out agreed minimum standards for participation in relation to the tenants of both landlords in a specified area. The third compact that differed from the norm was that of a specialist association offering services to vulnerable women. This compact is between the association, and its tenants and their children.

4.3 Development of Tenant Participation Compacts

4.3.1 Local authority and housing association landlords were asked to explain how they had developed their tenant participation compacts. Figure 1 shows how compacts were developed by the 39 landlords who returned compacts.

Figure 1: How compacts were developed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How compact was developed</th>
<th>Local Authorities</th>
<th>Housing Associations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In partnership with tenants</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landlord drafted and consulted with tenants</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By the landlord alone</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No explanation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.2 It can be seen that the vast majority of social landlords developed their tenant participation compacts in partnership with tenants. However one local authority did not involve tenants when developing their compact, and a significant number of social landlords did not answer this question.

4.4 Links to the Wales Programme for Improvement and/or Best Value

4.4.1 The links that tenant participation compacts have to the Wales Programme for Improvement (WPI) and/or Best Value, were assessed by noting whether explicit mention of either WPI or Best Value was
made in the compact, and whether the compact described how it fits with the organisations approach to achieving best value. Figure 2 shows how compacts link to the Wales Programme for Improvement and/or Best Value.

Figure 2: How compacts links to the Wales Programme for Improvement and/or Best Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Links</th>
<th>Local Authorities</th>
<th>Housing Associations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit statement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief mention</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No mention</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.2 The table shows that well over half of local authorities, and approaching half of housing associations, make no mention in their tenant participation compacts of how tenant participation links to the Wales Programme for Improvement and/or Best Value.

4.5 Compliance with Welsh Assembly Government Framework

4.5.1 This section evaluates the level of compliance with the 7 core standards set out in the Welsh Assembly Government’s guidance Tenant Participation Compacts for Local Authorities in Wales, which were extended to housing associations in February 2001. The core standards are as follows:

• Housing services;
• Resources;
• Meetings;
• Information;
• Getting tenants involved;
• Tenant organisations; and
• Monitoring and measuring performance.

The detailed content of each core standard is included in Appendix 4.

4.5.2 Each social landlord who provided their compact/s was scored against the number of components in each of the seven core standards that they explicitly mentioned in either the compact itself or any supporting information provided by the landlord, such as a tenant participation strategy.

Housing Services

4.5.3 The first element of the core standards relates to the areas of housing services to which tenant participation compacts should apply. Figure 3 shows the level of compliance of the sample of Welsh social landlords with the housing services element of the core standards.
4.5.4 The tenant participation compacts of 19 of the 39 social landlords complied with less than half of the components of the housing services core standard.

**Resources**

4.5.5 The second element of the Welsh Assembly Government’s core standards is the support offered by landlords to tenants to enable them to participate. This is measured by the resources landlords offer to tenants. Figure 4 shows the level of compliance with the resources element of the core standards, amongst the sample of Welsh social landlords.

4.5.6 35 of the 39 Welsh social landlords complied with half or more of this element of the core standard. 20 of the 25 housing associations complied with at least 4 of the 6 components of this element of the standard, compared with 9 of the 14 local authority landlords.

**Meetings**

4.5.7 The third element of the Welsh Assembly Government’s core standards relates to the conduct of meetings to ensure effective communication between landlord and tenants. Figure 5 shows the level of compliance amongst the sample of Welsh social landlords in respect of the meetings element of the core standards.
4.5.8 Thirteen of the Welsh social landlords fully complied with all of the components of this standard. However, 9 social landlords included in the sample fail to state the standards that they will adhere to in arranging and servicing public meetings with tenants.

4.5.9 The fourth element of the Welsh Assembly Government’s core standards relates to the provision of information by landlords to tenants to meet their needs, to enable them to reach informed views on the issues and participate effectively in decision making. Figure 6 shows the level of compliance amongst the sample of Welsh social landlords in respect of the information element of the core standard.

4.5.10 15 of the 39 Welsh social landlords complied with at least half of the components of the information element of the framework.

4.5.11 The fifth element of the Welsh Assembly Governments core standards relates to the opportunities tenants are offered to get involved in management and the decision making process, through formal and informal structures.
4.5.12 Figure 7 shows the level of compliance amongst the sample of Welsh social landlords in respect of the getting tenants involved element of the core standard.

Figure 7: Social landlords’ compliance with the getting tenants involved element of the core standards

4.5.13 Only 9 Welsh social landlords complied with more than half of the components of this element of the core standard. 11 housing association landlords and 5 local authority landlords failed to comply with any of the five components of this element of the core standards.

Tenant organisations - A Menu of Options

4.5.14 The sixth element of the core standards relates to the criteria that tenant organisations should meet to be formally recognised by their landlord. The framework recognises that tenants should have the power to choose tenant involvement structures that best meets their needs.

4.5.15 Figure 8 shows the level of compliance amongst the sample of Welsh social landlords in respect of the tenant organisations element of the core standard.

Figure 8: Compliance with the tenant organisations element of the core standards
4.5.16 Seven local authorities and ten housing associations achieved compliance with at least half of the components of this element of the core standards. Fifteen housing associations and four local authorities in the sample do not have any publicly available information on the recognition of tenant organisations.

**Monitoring and Measuring Performance**

4.5.17 The seventh and final element of the Welsh Assembly Government’s core standards for tenant participation compacts relates to monitoring and measuring performance. The framework aims to ensure that tenant participation compacts are monitored and assessed consistently and suggests areas where tenants and landlords should review practice and some relevant performance standards.

4.5.18 To assess compliance with this element, the number of landlords who mentioned measuring and monitoring performance in their compacts, were assessed to establish the extent of compliance with the components of the core standard on an individual basis.

4.5.19 Figure 9 shows the level of compliance with the monitoring and measuring performance element of the core standard amongst Welsh social landlords.

**Figure 9: Compliance with the monitoring element of the core standards**

4.5.20 Seven local authorities and 13 housing associations either fail to mention or make a non specific mention about monitoring and measuring performance in relation to their tenant participation compact.
Key points: evaluation of tenant participation compacts

- The majority of the compacts analysed were single landlord agreements with all tenants. Some were local area compacts, others were neighbourhood agreements. One was a joint compact between the local authority, a local housing association and a tenants’ federation.

- The majority of the compacts analysed were developed through a partnership between tenants and landlords.

- The majority of compacts did not have explicit links to the Wales Programme for Improvement and/or Best Value.

- 7 local authority and 11 housing association compacts complied with less than half of the Welsh Assembly Government core standards relating to housing services.

- The vast majority of compacts complied with the resources element of the core standards.

- 13 compacts fully complied with the meetings element of the core standards.

- 15 compacts complied with at least half of the information element of the core standards.

- Only 9 compacts complied with at least half of the getting tenants involved element of the core standards.

- 17 of the compacts complied with at least half of the tenant organisations element of the core standards.

- 20 of the compacts either failed to mention or made a non specific mention about monitoring and measuring performance.
5. Findings of Questionnaire Survey, Case Study Focus Group Telephone Interviews and Interviews with National Organisations

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section assesses the level, quality and types of tenant involvement in the design and management of social housing within Wales in order to produce a comprehensive baseline of activity, and to highlight case study examples of where tenant participation has positively and negatively influenced housing management and design.

5.1.2 The section draws on the following elements of the research:

- The questionnaire survey;
- The telephone interviews;
- The focus groups with case study organisations; and
- The interviews with national organisations.

Stakeholders’ views have been collated under the following main themes which emerged during the research in this part of the project. These themes have been used as a framework for presenting the findings:

- Stakeholders’ views of tenant involvement;
- How tenants are involved;
- Successful outcomes of tenant involvement;
- Problems with tenant involvement;
- Resources and training;
- Tenant participation compacts; and
- Ideas for improvement.

Within each of the above themes a number of sub-themes have been identified, once again reflecting the issues raised by participants in the research.

5.1.3 The views of tenants, landlords and support providers expressed in this section are the views of the 78 tenant organisations, 36 landlords and 5 support providers who completed the questionnaires and of the 108 tenants and 95 staff taking part in the focus groups and telephone interviews.

5.2 Stakeholders’ views of tenant involvement

Attitudes to tenant participation

5.2.1 Staff, board members, local authority members and tenants taking part in the telephone interviews were asked to give their opinion of attitudes of the different stakeholders within their organisation to tenant participation. Figure 10 shows the responses of stakeholders.
5.2.2 Two representatives of national organisations had the following comments about tenant participation:

‘It’s impossible to say that tenant participation is always positive – but tenants’ knowledge of their homes and community is paramount to a wide range of issues, not just housing – anti-social behaviour, community safety, community participation’. (tenant officer, national organisation)

‘Tenant participation is always positive, even though it can be painful – it’s crucial if you want to genuinely be a learning organisation’. (director, national organisation)

Do tenants want a say?

5.2.3 The majority of tenants in all the focus groups said they did want a say in the service they received, to be listened to and for their views to make a difference.

‘Tenants want to be listened to, make a difference.’ (Involved tenant)

‘Yes more than ever, (tenants are) more aware now than before, get more information….are reading stuff (from the landlord) more.’ (Involved tenant)

5.2.4 However some involved tenants wondered if the majority of tenants really did want to have a say:

‘Most just want to have their home, pay the rent and get on with their lives….they’re not interested unless something goes wrong.’ (Involved tenant)

5.2.5 All non-involved tenants said that they did want a say in the service they received.

‘Want to be heard, (for landlord to) acknowledge my comments.’ (Non involved tenant)

‘I would have liked a say when warden’s job description was changed.’ (Non involved tenant)

‘Yes, (I would like a say) especially if I get problems with other tenants or support.’ (Non involved tenant)
5.2.6 Most staff agreed that tenants want a say, although a small minority of frontline staff said that tenants only want a say if they have a complaint.

Do tenants have a say?

5.2.7 Tenants and landlords completing the questionnaire survey, perceived that consultation and involvement took place on a wide range of issues, albeit to differing degrees. Figure 11 shows stakeholders’ perceptions of the types of issues in which tenants are involved.

**Figure 11: Stakeholders’ perceptions of the types of issues in which tenants are involved**

![Bar chart showing stakeholders' perceptions of the types of issues in which tenants are involved. The chart includes categories such as housing, void management, rent settings, rent arrears, customer care, producing tenant handbook, lettings, estate management, anti-social behaviour, planned maintenance, producing newsletter, and day to day repairs. Each category is represented by a bar showing the percentage of stakeholders who perceive tenants' involvement.]
Does tenant involvement make a difference?

5.2.8 Figure 12 shows that there was a significant difference between the general perceptions of outcomes of participation between tenant organisations and landlords taking part in the questionnaire survey.

Figure 12: Differences in perceptions of outcomes of tenant involvement

5.2.9 Only 67% of tenant organisations said that tenant participation always or sometimes results in positive outcomes, compared with 94% of landlords and 100% of support providers. Although no landlord said there were never any positive outcomes, three authorities and one association said that they did not know whether outcomes were positive.

5.2.10 The positive perceptions of participation by the vast majority of landlords and support providers contrasts significantly with the views of the 33% of the tenant organisations who said that they did not know, or thought that participation did not have positive outcomes.

5.2.11 Tenants and landlords were consistent in their perceptions of the areas of the service where tenant involvement has the most positive outcomes.

The top six rating areas identified by landlords in priority order were:

- repairs;
- producing newsletters;
- planned maintenance;
- anti-social behaviour;
- lettings; and
- tenants handbooks.

The top five rating areas identified by tenant organisations in priority order were:

- newsletters;
- handbooks;
- day to day repairs;
- anti-social behaviour; and
- planned maintenance.
5.2.12 Housing association responses indicated that they were consistently more likely than local authorities to involve tenants in each of the 12 areas specifically mentioned in the questionnaire. For example, 95% of housing associations, compared to 64% of local authorities, said they involved tenants in day to day repairs, while 55% of housing associations, compared to 14% of local authorities said they involved tenants in rent arrears, policies and procedures.

5.2.13 Participants in the focus groups and the telephone interviews were asked whether tenant participation makes any difference to how things are done in the organisation.

5.2.14 Involved tenants held divided opinions on whether their input did make a difference. Three groups were positive:

‘Everything we put forward is acted on.’
(Involved tenant)

‘The council are upfront and accept (us) as a strong group.’
(Involved tenant)

5.2.15 Tenants in the other three groups said that generally their input did not make any difference, that they received information and discussed it, but that their views were not acted upon.

‘(O)ur involvement) makes no difference. We understand more but aren’t influencing housing management.’
(Involved tenant)

‘We get information after the decision has been made. They listen, but we make no difference.’
(Involved tenant)

5.2.16 None of the focus groups of non-involved tenants said that they had an influence on what happened in the organisation.

5.2.17 Nearly all staff in all organisations gave a very positive response, saying that tenant participation did make a difference to how their organisation did things:

‘It makes a total difference. We know we’re going to have a successful project as tenants say up front what they want.’
(Senior manager)

‘Resident involvement underpins everything we do - it is an integral part of all our activities. Residents are valued and respected and we could not achieve what we have without their active involvement.’
(Support provider)

Terminology

5.2.18 A significant number of participants in the focus groups, in particular front line staff, understood the term “tenant participation” to describe only involvement by tenants in formal groups, for example tenants and residents associations, panels, forums and federations. When asked to describe other ways that tenants of the organisation had their say about the service they receive, staff were able to describe a range of other methods in which they obtained tenant views on the service, which they had not previously considered to be valid tenant participation.

‘I wish we could get rid of the term ‘tenant participation’ – it should be ‘customer involvement’.
(Front line staff)

‘Has the term ‘tenant participation’ had its day?’
(Tenant participation worker)
### Key points: stakeholders’ views of tenant involvement

- The vast majority of board members, staff and involved tenants were positive about tenant participation.

- The majority of non-involved tenants were neutral or negative about tenant participation.

- The majority of all tenants said they do want a say in the service they receive, to be listened to and for their views to make a difference.

- Most staff agreed that tenants want a say.

- Tenants and landlords both identified a wide range of issues that tenants were consulted on and involved in.

- A third of all tenant organisations completing the questionnaire, and half the focus groups of involved tenants said they did not know or thought that their involvement made no difference.

- The vast majority of landlords completing the questionnaire and staff taking part in the focus groups said that involvement always or sometimes resulted in positive outcomes.

- Tenants and landlords agreed on the areas of the service where tenant involvement has most positive outcomes.

- Some staff understood the term ‘tenant participation’ to describe only tenant involvement through formal tenant organisations.

---

### 5.3 How tenants are involved

**Involvement through groups and formal structures**

5.3.1 Landlords completing the questionnaire survey worked with a total of 311 local tenant organisations.

5.3.2 According to landlord respondents, local authorities had nearly twice as many tenants’ organisations as did housing associations, a total of 188 local authority groups, compared with 123 housing association groups. This reflects the fact that authorities have on average three times the stock of housing associations. 35% of local authority tenants lived in areas covered by local tenant groups compared to 18% of housing association tenants, reflecting differences in stock profiles, with local authority stock more likely to be concentrated on estates.

5.3.3 Local authority groups represented on average, two and a half times as many tenants as housing association groups as shown in Figure 13.
5.3.4 All local authorities and 85% of housing associations surveyed had a landlord-wide tenants’ forum or federation. Figure 14 shows the make up of members of forums or federations.

### Figure 13: Number of tenants represented by tenant organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landlord</th>
<th>No of Local Tenant Organisations</th>
<th>No of Tenants Represented</th>
<th>Average per Group</th>
<th>% of Stock for which there are Tenant Organisations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local authority</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>37,035</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing association</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>9,116</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.5 71% of tenant groups said that they were members of their federation or forum. 43% of authorities, 55% of housing associations and 42% of tenant groups said that individual tenant organisations were members of multi tenure federations. Half of local authority wide bodies were based on representatives from local groups. Housing Associations were twice as likely to base their landlord wide body on individual representatives (60%) than local groups (30%). 50% of housing associations said that their tenants were part of a multi landlord umbrella group, compared with 43% of local authorities.

5.3.6 Both tenants and landlords expressed some concern about the representativeness of local groups. One national tenant organisation representative felt that more needed to be done to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of groups.

5.3.7 One national landlord organisation representative thought that more formal ways of engaging the public were being overtaken by alternative methods. This was being exacerbated by concerns that some tenant groups were unrepresentative of the overall communities they serve. This issue was also identified by a significant number of landlords and tenants, as set out in Section 5.5.

5.3.8 All but one of the organisations taking part in the focus groups, had developed formal structures for tenants to
participate with the organisation. These included:

• open panels or forums where all tenants are able to attend and give their views. These are also attended by senior staff of the organisation who fed the views back to the organisation;

• overarching federations comprising of nominated representatives from local tenants and residents federations. The federations meet with senior staff of the organisation, receive information and give views on proposed changes to policy and procedure, and discuss issues of common concern to all the organisation’s tenants;

• local tenants and residents associations open to those living in a specific area, and which deal with local issues, meeting when necessary with local housing officers and other relevant staff;

• other groups, including two sheltered housing forums, a group for tenants under 35 and their children, and county forums of representatives from tenants and residents groups in a specific area.

Involvement through offering a menu of options

5.3.9 The questionnaire survey found that a wide variety of means, in addition to traditional tenant organisations, were being used to involve tenants in the service. Figure 15 shows the range of methods identified by landlords and tenant organisations.

Figure 15: Range of methods of tenant involvement
5.3.10 The most common method of involvement identified was through local tenant organisations, perhaps reflecting the fact that the questionnaire was sent out to tenant organisations. However, many landlords also identified alternative means of involving tenants that did not involve tenant organisations. For example, whilst 4 in 5 landlords used working parties and task and finish groups, only 1 in 5 tenant groups were involved in these, although a selective nature of the activity may partly explain this.

5.3.11 Concern was expressed by tenant activists taking part in the research, that alternative means of involving tenants through techniques such as focus groups, undermine the role of local tenant organisations.

‘Focus groups are very much the landlord’s agenda’. (tenant representative, national organisation)

5.3.12 The highest scoring methods (those scoring around 80% or more) favoured by landlords contained a mix of formal structures through local groups, federations, questionnaires and public meetings; and a range of other methods of involvement including task and finish groups and focus groups. Three landlords offered payments to tenants for attendance at focus groups.

5.3.13 100% of supported housing organisations carried out regular satisfaction surveys, the highest scoring activity for any group. A number of other means of involvement were identified:

- Best value reviews;
- Tenant members of boards and committees;
- Tenants conference;
- Key tenant scheme;
- Tenants on recruitment panels;
- Citizens panels; and
- Set meetings with senior officers

5.3.14 Several of the organisations taking part in the focus groups and telephone interviews gave examples of successfully involving tenants who did not take part in tenant organisations, by offering a range of options for tenants to get involved:

‘We are trying to sever links with the theory that you have to go to endless meetings to become involved. All our groups allow participation on a ‘dipping in’ basis – they are issue specific, area specific.” (Senior manager)
Example of positive practice

Providing a range of options for tenant involvement

Cadwyn Housing Association provides a range of formal and informal opportunities for tenants to get involved in the organisation.

‘We are finding different ways for people to feel comfortable to express their views... 25% of tenants (250) have been involved over the last 12 months on different issues... the fact that we have increasing numbers of people involved shows that having a variety of ways to get involved is working...’

TACT (Tenants and Cadwyn Together) is an open forum which all Cadwyn tenants can attend. TACT meets 8 times a year, has its own terms of reference, and meetings are chaired alternatively by tenants and officers. TACT holds social events, has talks and discussions on different areas of the service, and issues raised are fed to the board of management via the Director of Housing.

Chips and Chat is a group open to all young people and families between the ages of 16 and 35. It meets every two months, has developed its own rules, and holds social events for members and their children three times a year, in addition to their normal meetings.

The Tenants Panel is open to all tenants and holds regular meetings to discuss policies and procedures.

The BME Group is open to all black and minority ethnic tenants and has collected information on the profile of Cadwyn’s tenants, and is currently discussing in what and how it wishes to get involved.

Tenants with disabilities have opted to have their say in other ways than attending meetings. The association is working to develop the most convenient ways for them.

In addition to these groups, tenants have the opportunity to get involved through:

- local tenants associations;
- a tenants’ editorial team which produces the newsletter;
- task and finish groups and workshops on specific topics;
- compact meetings to monitor and review the compact;
- a contractor group which comprises tenants and staff from 3 housing associations who choose contractors;
- developing a new handbook;
- fun days, where tenants can also give staff their views and priorities;
- satisfaction questionnaires which are sent to all those who have a repair done, with incentive prize draws to encourage them to be returned;
- becoming a shareholder or board member. Currently three tenants become board members by being elected by all tenants in a ballot.
Example of positive practice

Providing a range of options for tenant involvement

Rhondda Housing Association provides a range of options for tenant involvement through formal and informal structures. There are a number of local tenants’ associations, and an overarching tenants forum which is elected at a combined AGM and social event once a year. The forum works closely with both housing and community development staff and can nominate its members for board positions. There are seven sub-groups of the forum which members can join according to their interest:

The social committee – raises money for Forum activities by holding social events for all tenants.

Rhondda Housing Association Disability Action Group - tenants with disabilities who provide information and support to tenants with disabilities and their families, hold social events and organise trips.

Youth Forum – supported by the Association’s Community Development Department to carry out projects, hold social events and give their views as part of the process.

Crime and Disorder sub group – works with staff on a Best Value review of crime and disorder, and assists with developing a neighbour nuisance policy and procedure.

Maintenance Forum – tenants and staff discuss day to day and planned maintenance issues.

Policy and Procedure panel - meets with the Director of Housing to develop housing management policies and procedures.

Best Value panel - works with the Corporate Services Manager on forthcoming Best Value reviews.

Rhondda Housing Association Time Exchange project - carrying out a feasibility study to set up a pilot Time Exchange Scheme with Rhondda Housing Association tenants.

In addition, tenants can become involved in the association through its community development activities which include:

- toy and book library promoting positive parenting and early learning;
- after school and holiday play schemes;
- lifelong learning opportunities, including IT and first aid;
- healthy living projects - stress management and alternative therapies;
- arts and music projects;
- community gardens and environmental improvements;
- improving play and recreational facilities; and
- intergenerational projects.
Involving young people and black and minority ethnic tenants

5.3.15 The results of the questionnaire survey identified a range of activities landlords are undertaking to encourage the involvement of specific groups:

- Young people

A total of 8 landlords had specific initiatives aimed at engaging young people. These included:

- youth meetings (2 landlords);
- initiatives under Communities First;
- Kid Zone website;
- Blue Light disco, in partnership with the police;
- away day for young people;
- community fun day; and
- involving young people in planning a skateboard park.

One supported housing organisation involved mothers and their children in interviewing and appointing support workers.

Example of positive practice

Involving young people

The Oldford Youth Power Group is a youth group driven by young people on a mid Wales estate. The group carry out a range of activities aimed at, and with the participation of, young residents. They are working to improve facilities for all age groups, ranging from setting up a playgroup for toddlers through to getting proper facilities for teenagers.

Among the group’s achievements are:

- setting up a drama group and staging the **Wizard of Oz** as a Christmas community pantomime, which was recorded on video and widely circulated on the estate;
- campaigning for better amenities for young people, and organising fundraising events to support this – a recent bingo night raised £100 for the group’s play park project; and
- creating a float for the 2004 Oldford Carnival and winning first prize as the Wizard of Oldford.

The group has recently obtained a grant from Communities First to develop the drama group, and members are currently writing the script for their next Christmas pantomime, **The Babes in the Wood**.
• Black and minority ethnic tenants

Seven landlords mentioned that they were using the development of their BME Housing Strategies to engage with black and minority ethnic tenants. Other specific initiatives included using ‘alternative’ media, the Social Housing Management Grant funded ‘Making Voices Heard’ project and the Zebra League.

Two landlords had successfully accessed Social Housing Management Grant funding to engage under-represented groups. One landlord had cited Tenant Empowerment Grant funding to support work in this area.

5.3.16 Staff from several organisations taking part in the focus groups and telephone interviews identified the need to explore a range of ways of involving young people and BME tenants.

‘Young people don’t buy the tenant participation label, we can’t find young people to get involved. We need to be flexible about how people can get involved.’ (Front line staff)

‘If they (young people) are written letters there is no response. If we go and talk to them, ask them for help, we get loads of volunteers.’ (Young people worker)

‘We wanted to set up a meeting to consult them (BME tenants). They said ‘what for, we’ve got a life, families and kids, are exhausted.’ (BME worker).

Example of positive practice

Involving black and minority ethnic tenants

Gwalia Housing Group, in partnership with Dewi Sant, Family and Swansea Housing Associations, the City and County of Swansea, Mewn Cymru and the Swansea Bay Racial Equality Council, is undertaking the ‘Making Voices Heard’ project to improve consultation with BME tenants and applicants to gather their views on existing services and their priorities for future service delivery. The project aims to engage with both BME individuals and BME groups, asylum seekers and people who may not be aware of the services offered by social landlords, to find out what people think is good about the area, the reasons why people might want to move on, and identify gaps in service provision. The project is due to be completed in 2005.
Involving tenants as part of social events

5.3.17 Several organisations taking part in the focus groups, said that they involved tenants who would not normally attend meetings through holding social events and gathering tenants’ views informally.

Individual involvement

5.3.18 The majority of non-involved tenants, and all the tenants with support needs, taking part in the focus groups, said that they prefer to have their say individually rather than in groups.

‘Prefer to talk one to one.’ (Non involved tenant)

‘Yes (I want to have a say), want someone to visit us, not us have to go to them.’ (Non involved tenant)

Example of positive practice

Involving black and minority ethnic tenants

The London Borough of Southwark has put a number of measures in place to try and ensure that BME tenants and residents are able to put forward their views and influence the Council’s decision making. These include:

- working with the Black and Minority Ethnic Tenants and Residents Organisation (SBM ETRO) to encourage higher levels of participation from BME people;
- including SBM ETRO representatives on Housing Neighbourhood Forums and the borough wide Tenant Council;
- including membership clauses in Housing Neighbourhood Forums and the Tenant Council to give places to under-represented sections of the community;
- requiring that all tenants and residents associations adopt a standard constitution that reflects the Commission for Racial Equality’s recommendations on good practice;
- having a procedure which sets out action to be taken if there are racist incidents within tenants and residents associations;
- including in the Borough’s tenant participation compact action points to increase the representativeness of consultation mechanisms by encouraging the involvement of young people, disabled people and those from BME groups.
5.3.19 Non involved tenants identified a range of preferences for having their say, most of which involve individual involvement. Some of these included:

- a phone line for questions;
- a complaints surgery;
- a suggestion box;
- a play bus on estate so young mums can speak to people there;

- telling support staff or sheltered housing warden if anything is wrong;
- talking one to one with staff. Have staff visit tenants at home;
- filling in satisfaction slips;
- telling support staff, warden or tenant participation officer if tenants need anything sorted out; and
- exit surveys from properties.

Example of positive practice

Involving tenants individually

Charter Housing Association staff carried out some focused doorstep interviews with tenants, using methodology similar to that employed by Priority Research. Tenants were asked one question - ‘How could Charter be a better landlord?’.

The responses were collated into themes. The themes formed the basis of the questions in the questionnaire sent out to all tenants. The questions were asked in the form of two statements for each question, with people asked to indicate which statement they preferred or agreed with.

From the results of the questionnaire the organisation drew up a list of tenants’ top ten priorities, and these were used as a driver for the service.

“The questionnaire captured the whole tenants’ voice, what they really wanted, in a way we felt we couldn’t get through individual tenants and residents associations and the tenants consultative committee.” Senior Staff, Charter Housing Association
5.4 Successful outcomes of tenant involvement

Housing management

5.4.1 Specific service improvements identified by tenants taking part in the questionnaire survey included a significant number of positive outcomes that were not housing based, but rather related to wider community issues. Service improvements identified by tenants’ organisations included:

- repairs and maintenance (4 groups);
- major improvements (3 groups);
- anti-social behaviour (2 groups);
- improved health and safety (2 groups);
- lettings (2 groups);
- best value (2 groups);
- estate design;
- estate management; and
- introduction of Gold Service

5.4.2 Landlords were able to give examples of a range of mainly general outcomes with the majority being process based activities including:

- input into best value reviews (3 landlords);
- minor works / repairs (3 landlords, including a repairs task and finish group);
- major works;

Key points: How tenants are involved

- 35% of local authority tenants lived in areas covered by local tenant organisations, compared to 18% of housing association tenants.
- All local authorities and 85% of housing associations had a landlord-wide tenants’ forum or federation.
- Many landlords identified means of involving tenants other than through tenant organisations by offering a range of options for involvement.
- Tenant activists expressed concern that using alternative means of involving tenants undermined the role of tenant organisations.
- All supported housing organisations carried out regular satisfaction surveys with service users.
- Tenants and landlords expressed concerns about the representativeness of local groups.
- Landlords were undertaking activities to encourage the involvement of specific groups such as young people, BME tenants and tenants with support needs.
- Some landlords involved tenants who would not normally attend meetings by gathering their views at social events.
- The majority of non-involved tenants said they preferred to have their say individually rather than in groups.
• joint estate inspections;
• tenant insurance scheme;
• rent ‘swipe card’;
• establishing 8 local resource centres;
• improved services;
• better targeting of resources;
• increased awareness of customer needs;
• tackling anti social behaviour; and
• prioritising maintenance and improvement programmes.

5.4.3 Four out of five supported housing organisations involved tenants in their repairs service. Two supported housing organisations mentioned feedback on services as significant positives arising from involvement.

5.4.5 Tenants and staff taking part in the focus groups and telephone interviews identified a wide range of specific examples of successful outcomes to tenant involvement in housing management, as follows:

Policies and procedures
• Developing or revising:
  - tenant participation compacts and maintenance compacts;
  - anti-social behaviour policies;
  - local lettings and allocations policies;
  - standards for voids;
  - tenancy agreements.
• One landlord altered its lettings policy to give priority to existing sheltered housing tenants to enable them to transfer to vacancies in sheltered housing schemes.

Surveys and information
• Sending a welcome letter to all new tenants which includes information on local services, e.g. which day the bins are collected. This was done at the request of tenant organisations.
• Housing officers contacting new tenants 3 months after they move in. This provides useful information and feedback from tenants on how they were treated at letting stage.
• Landlord holds an exit poll with tenants leaving their tenancy. This has a 25% response rate.

Estate improvements
• Landlord consulted tenants on where CCTV cameras should be placed.
• Landlord replaced communal refuse bins and bin areas with individual lockable bin stores at the tenants’ request.
• Local housing manager has an estate improvement budget for added value items in each area. Housing officers gather tenant comments and ideas throughout the year about what the budget should be spent on.
• Landlord works with tenants to identify planned and cyclical maintenance priorities, and develop standards and agreements.
New initiatives

- A tenant organisation was consulted about introducing a new provider of electricity and gas for all voids.
- A landlord introduced a tenant incentive scheme in response to tenants’ views that the landlord was spending too much time on problem tenants and ignoring the ‘good’ ones.

Best Value

- Landlords involve tenants in Best Value reviews.

Example of positive practice

Tenant and resident involvement in a community lettings scheme

Caerphilly County Borough Council tenants and residents took a leading role in the development of pilot community lettings schemes on two estates with small waiting lists and high turnover – Trinant and Graig y Rhacca.

Tenants and residents took part in two groups which:
- helped to develop the policies and procedures for community lettings;
- researched and developed welcome packs for their area;
- took part in training sessions; and
- encouraged new residents to get involved in community activities.

Representatives of the groups were involved, alongside staff, in informal welcome meetings with prospective tenants. These provided prospective tenants with information about local facilities, amenities and activities, gave them a chance to ask questions, and enabled existing tenants and residents to show them around the area. Community lettings also involved awarding additional points to applicants where appropriate, for connection with the local area, being in employment, full-time education or training, or undertaking voluntary work.

The community lettings initiative has had benefits for both applicants, local residents and the Council:
- Waiting lists have increased;
- Refusals and turnover have reduced;
- Better relationships have been established with local residents and housing staff;
- The process has given applicants the opportunity to make an informed choice about a key decision – their future home.
5.4.6 With the exception of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme mentioned by one association, landlords taking part in the questionnaire survey did not specifically mention community improvements arising from tenant involvement. In contrast, tenant groups identified a list of community improvements that were the result of their involvement. This included:

- transport and highways including improved street lighting (2 groups);
- car parking (2 groups);
- traffic lights;
- crossing keeper;
- safe routes to school;
- traffic control and double yellow lines;
- community facilities including play areas (2 groups);
- community house;
- benches;
- tree planting; and
- community garden.

5.4.7 Tenants also mentioned specific work their groups had undertaken in partnership with other organisations, including the police and other council departments.

5.4.8 A tenant representative from one of the national organisations taking part in the research thought that tenant participation had a very important role in addressing community safety issues:

‘From day one tenant participation was about more than housing management - you can’t disconnect the houses from other issues like poverty. Communities First wouldn’t have happened without

---

Example of positive practice

Consultation over changing services supplier

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is entering into an agreement with Scottish Power to become the preferred gas and electricity supplier, initially for void properties. The benefits are that the supplier will guarantee that tenants are charged a competitive rate, the meters will be in place and the supply already on when tenants first move in, thereby reducing the delays experienced with tenants moving into properties. The local authority will receive commission on expenditure from Scottish Power, which it will then use to fund energy efficiency schemes back into the housing stock.

Scottish Power did a presentation on the scheme to the Rhondda Cynon Taf Tenants and Residents Federation Executive at which senior managers of the Council were also present to answer any questions. The Federation Executive subsequently invited Scottish Power to attend an open meeting of the Federation’s members to present the scheme and gather tenants’ views. After discussion, tenants were agreeable to the Council pursuing the scheme, and the Federation has confirmed its support for the initiative.
tenant participation. (Tenant representative, national organisation)

5.4.9 Tenants and staff taking part in the focus groups and telephone interviews, identified a number of practical examples of where tenant involvement has had successful outcomes in the areas of community and environment:

- A tenant organisation requested that the association put up signs next to the play area to show that the traffic is dangerous;
- A fun day was funded by landlord in partnership with a tenants and residents association;
- A landlord removed a shrubbery when tenants said they could not get to their windows to clean them. A paved area and seat were provided instead;
- Tenants were consulted over where to put external lights and whether to have them on timed or sensors;
- A landlord consulted tenants on where to put benches on an estate, and where traffic calming bumps and signs should go;
- Gardens were enclosed on one estate after complaints from residents about dogs and children;
- Tenants were asked for their views on the use of open space when 4 garages were demolished. They decided to make a skateboard park;
- A tenants and residents association sent out a survey to youngsters on what facilities they would like. As a result the council are going to provide a skateboard park and ‘kick about’ area.

Example of positive practice

Community and estate regeneration

Fernhill Residents Association set out to find out residents’ priorities for the area by canvassing all residents through house visits, public meetings and regular newsletters. They also used local media extensively through providing regular information in the community notes section of the local paper.

Successful outcomes have included:

- setting up and running a fully equipped community office;
- establishing seven separately constituted committees to represent all social, environmental, recreational and functional activities on the estate;
- holding regular surgeries with housing officers, voluntary organisations, the police, local schools and national and local politicians;
- establishing a strategy group, now under the Communities First banner, to co-ordinate the work of all estate committees with that of the Local Authority, South Wales Police, National Health Service, Drug Support, Crime Reduction, Community Safety, local youth facilities, Groundwork Trust, Princes Trust and Interlink;
Welsh Assembly Government – Evaluating Tenant Participation in Housing Management and Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of positive practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community and estate regeneration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pengwern Residents Association has played a major role in building a strong community spirit on this Denbighshire estate through a series of projects, including developing a play area, an internet site, and managing and running a resource centre.

The association’s achievements include:

- raising £50 000 to upgrade a rundown play area, the design of which was based on the ideas of children at the local primary school;
- setting up an internet site to provide general information about the association and its activities;
- getting speed humps installed at 8 locations on the estate;
- organising a wide range of social activities including bingo and coffee mornings; and
- holding regular estate surgeries on benefits, rents, repairs and lettings getting environmental improvements including park benches, litter bins and a community Christmas tree.
Strategic level

5.4.10 Landlords taking part in the questionnaire survey provided a number of examples of where tenant involvement had helped shape policies, including:

- anti social behaviour (2 landlords);
- estate / neighbourhood management;
- community involvement strategy;
- introductory tenancies;
- utilising tenants’ expertise as a ‘sounding board’ for policy changes.

5.4.11 Tenant organisations identified the following examples of influencing policies:

- allocations (3 groups);
- rent collection;
- tenant compacts (2 groups);
- establishing housing policy review forum.

5.4.12 In relation to other strategic issues, landlords specifically mentioned tenants on boards of management (2 landlords) and staff selection panels. Supported housing organisations mentioned tenant board and sub committee membership and involving tenants in staff interviews. One organisation involved tenants in its annual review of strategic objectives.

5.4.13 Tenant groups were able to evidence strategic involvement in a number of ways including:

- making investment decisions based on resident priorities (3 groups);
- stock transfer;
- access to senior councillors;
- building active links with the local Communities First Partnership, Care and Repair, Youth Access Team, Community Education and Crime Prevention Panel.

Example of positive practice

Community and estate regeneration

In 2000, Fir Tree Drive Residents Association was reconstituted, after 8 years of inactivity, in response to concerns by residents about their housing service.

Following a feasibility study the association accessed funding for two portakabins in an abandoned car park and transformed them into a community Resource Centre. They now organise a number activities including:

- youth clubs for children and young people, 4 nights a week;
- Easter, Halloween and Christmas parties;
- surgeries with housing and maintenance officers and the local MP;
- an information drop-in day for the local college;
- working with the landlord on a sensitive lettings policy; and
- building active links with the local Communities First Partnership, Care and Repair, Youth Access Team, Community Education and Crime Prevention Panel.
• tenant membership of boards / committees (2 groups); and
• sitting on staff interview panels.

5.4.14 Landlords also mentioned that involvement had resulted in a positive impact on the process of participation itself and in particular had led to:

• increased number of tenant groups;
• more formal ways of involving tenants;
• tenant participation compacts; and
• a tenants conference.

Figure 16: Summary of strategic level outcomes of tenant involvement

5.4.15 Figure 16 sets out the summary of the strategic level outcomes most often mentioned.

5.4.16 The table shows that housing associations consistently reported greater degrees of involvement than local authorities. This was particularly evident at senior strategic levels where all associations reported tenants at board level compared to less than half of authorities reporting tenant representation on council committees. The table also shows that tenant organisations identified a much lesser extent of tenant involvement in strategic issues than did their landlords. The ranking for each of the issues was however identical across all groups of respondents, with tenants on boards/committees highest and reviewing performance targets lowest.

5.4.17 Respondents also mentioned other examples of involvement on strategic issues:

• Local housing strategies (2 landlords);
• Tenant participation compact review;
• Housing options; and
• Tenant observer at scrutiny committee.

5.4.18 Two practical examples identified by participants in the focus groups, of where tenant involvement has resulted in positive
outcomes at strategic level, are set out below:

- The BM E strategy is being rewritten in response to BM E tenants’ views on the way they would like to be consulted, i.e. not in writing but more informally and individually.
- The Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) strategy was reviewed in response to tenants’ views that the organisation didn’t deal well with ASB. A good neighbour strategy was put in place and an internal mediation project and specialist ASB unit was set up. Starter tenancies were introduced and housing officers were trained as mediators.

Example of positive practice

Tenant inspectors of service delivery

The Torfaen County Borough Council Tenant Inspectors’ Scheme is a project to train tenants to conduct detailed and robust assessments of the council’s service delivery. The scheme equips tenants with the skills to conduct assessments of housing services. Tenant inspectors are recruited and trained on a wide variety of techniques including report writing, mystery shopping, inspection methods and presentation skills.

Inspections have been carried out and reports produced on repairs, homefinder, area office service and customer care centre.

The beneficial outcomes of the scheme have included:
- opportunities for tenants to get involved in service improvement;
- opportunities for tenants to get involved in decision making;
- action plans developed between service managers and the tenant inspectors;
- identification of service improvements for the services inspected;
- an additional route for tenants to get involved with the housing service;
- clearer understanding for service managers of what really matters to tenants;
- tenants gaining a better understanding of the issues facing service managers;
- opportunities for tenants to learn new skills, for example, mystery shopping; and
- an effective tool in the development and provision of services provided.

Supported housing

5.4.19 One supported housing organisation taking part in the questionnaire survey had successfully accessed funding from the Communities Fund. Other specific positive outcomes cited by supported housing organisations included:

- opportunities for personal development (2 organisations);
- feedback on services (2 organisations);
- tenants on board / sub committees (2 organisations);
- involvement in newsletter;
- staff recruitment; and
- a tenants conference.

5.4.20 Five landlords mentioned measures to encourage tenant involvement by supported housing tenants, including:
employing a specialist tenant participation officer to consult with older people, particularly in sheltered housing;

commissioning a consultant to work with older and disabled people;

encouraging home visits; and

individual contact.

One landlord was working with a specialist support provider to involve tenants.

5.4.21 Supported housing tenants taking part in the focus groups identified the following successes resulting from their involvement:

- Additional security locks;
- Change of support worker;
- Got a move because of harassment;
- Had problems with neighbours sorted out satisfactorily; and
- Got rubbish shifted from the back garden on request.

Information

5.4.22 The questionnaire surveys identified a variety of types of information which were provided for tenants. Figure 17 shows examples of the range of different types of information.

Figure 17: Examples of the range of different types of information for tenants

![Bar chart showing the percentage of tenants receiving different types of information](chart.png)
5.4.23 A small number of landlords thought that tenant participation had led to improvement in the information provided to tenants, specifically mentioning:

- involvement in newsletters (2 landlords);
- a joint newsletter on benefits advice; and
- a tenants’ handbook.

5.4.24 A similar number of tenants cited information improvements including:

- tenants newsletters (2 groups);
- a repairs handbook; and
- an annual calendar with key contact information.

5.4.25 All supported housing organisations provide an annual report to tenants including large print versions. 60% (3) provide audio versions. Four out of five supported housing organisations involve tenants in producing newsletters.

5.4.26 National tenant support organisations provide information to tenants and landlords in a variety of formats:

- Regular national and regional newsletters;
- Briefing papers including Solutions;
- Tenant participation advice sheets;
- Member mailings;
- Reports;
- Websites;
- Solutions briefing notes; and
- Dolan-supported housing tenant participation newsletter.

5.4.27 Several groups of staff taking part in the focus groups and some staff taking part in the telephone interviews, highlighted the importance of providing clear information to tenants in order that tenants had the opportunity to gain an understanding of issues to enable them to participate effectively. Staff gave the following examples of how information to tenants had been revised in response to their views:

- One association explained the law, procedures and action possible on abandoned vehicles. This did not solve the problem, but it did enable tenants group members to explain the position to other tenants;
- One landlord revised its maintenance handbook revised at tenants’ request to make it more accessible and to include pictures of repairs problems;
- One landlord altered its standard letters to tenants in response to tenant feedback. Letters were streamlined and made jargon-free and more user friendly.
5.4.28 Responses to the questionnaire survey showed that levels of tenant involvement identified in the design of new homes and feedback on existing homes, were significantly higher for housing associations. This is unsurprising, given associations’ leading role in new developments. Figure 18 shows examples of tenant involvement in design issues.

![Figure 18: Examples of tenant involvement in design issues](image)

**Example of positive practice**

**Tenants’ newsletter**

Vineyard Vale Community Group is made up of tenants and residents of a small estate who produce a lively newsletter and have carried out a range of activities to build a strong and close knit community spirit.

The activities include:
- producing a community newsletter;
- working with Pembrokeshire Housing to promote awareness on anti social behaviour, noise and vandalism;
- organising a jubilee event, Easter egg hunt and harvest festival;
- setting up a neighbourhood watch scheme;
- holding barbecues and social events at Halloween, Xmas and Valentine’s Day;
- developing a ‘caring for pets’ scheme; and
- organising visits, trips and away days.

Vineyard Vale Community Group won first place at the 2004 TPAS Cymru tenant participation awards, for the best tenants and residents group in Wales.
5.4.29 In relation to involvement in property improvement schemes, there was little variation between landlords. Figure 19 shows the variation in tenant involvement in property improvement schemes.

**Figure 19: Variation in tenant involvement in property improvement schemes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>Housing Association</th>
<th>Tenant Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property improvement</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community regeneration</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.30 Other examples of involvement in regeneration given were:

- Communities First programme
- Estate Partnership;
- Healthy living centre; and
- Community planning exercise.

5.4.31 Tenant organisations mentioned their involvement in a number of specific improvements to properties including:

- new windows (2 groups);
- insulation;
- central heating;
- exterior decoration;
- installation of handrails; and
- upgraded kitchens and bathrooms.

5.4.32 Participants in the focus groups and telephone interviews identified the following examples of tenant involvement in design or estate/property improvement programmes.

**Choosing and monitoring contractors**

- Tenant representatives are involved in the choosing of contractors.

**Choices of equipment and materials**

- Tenants are provided with choices of 3 types of kitchen unit. Staff take the tenant to a kitchen suppliers to choose what they would like when putting in a new kitchen;

- Tenants are involved in choosing replacement kitchens, new windows, new heating systems;

- Tenants were provided with choices of bricks and colours for new boundary walls. The contractor built sample walls on the estate, and each street voted on the type of wall for their street;

- Tenants chose the colours and types of replacement doors from a range of UPVC secured by design types;

- The type of heating on one estate was changed from solid fuel to gas when tenant feedback showed that this was
the main reason for applicants not accepting an offer, and for existing tenants wanting to move. This has made a huge difference to voids and transfer requests.

Design brief
• Design brief reviewed to take account of feedback from BME tenants and meet cultural needs, e.g. cooking safety, installing increased ventilation.

Landscape, gardens and community safety
• CCTV cameras were installed at the request of the tenants group. Staff walked the site with tenants and agreed where cameras should be installed;
• Tenant organisation had input on new estate re. the play area;
• Tenants have identified priorities for improvements on estates;
• Community safety – planning security improvements, improved visibility, car parking, street lighting, speeding restrictions;
• Landscaping and gardens – gardening competitions, bulb planting schemes, garden and landscape design.

‘We have ‘landscape tenants’ who monitor the contractors, on most estates. We give them £100 of bulbs/shrubs for the community and encourage them to involve children in planting these, so that the children feel a sense of ownership as well’ (Housing Association)

Example of positive practice

Environmental improvements and involving young people
Tan Lan Association represents tenants and residents on a mixed tenure estate in Old Colwyn. The association received a Tenant Empowerment Grant to develop the association and establish concerns of all residents on the estate. A newsletter was produced telling residents about the project, a survey was carried out and an estate walkabout was held with ward councillors, housing association officers and tenants to make a list of environmental issues that needed attention. The main achievements of the association so far are:

- producing a regular newsletter for tenants and residents;
- improving the environment by clearing ‘grot spots’, planting bulbs, and holding a gardening competition for residents;
- the Council employing a local person as an Environmental Operative to work on the estate;
- involving young people in the association;
- young people have arranged their own disco and held their own fund raising activities
- the association has received funding from the Community Safety Partnership to buy a pool table and set of disco equipment;
- the association obtained funding for sports equipment for the park, and for a trip for young people to Trafford Hall to take part in Young Movers – a creativity and expression course.

The association is currently fundraising to enlarge the Community Centre.
**Personal development**

5.4.33 Tenant organisations completing the questionnaire survey, identified as a positive benefit of tenant participation, the opportunity to enhance their personal development, including the opportunity to attend conferences and the development of tenant advocates. One tenant said that their tenant group had helped them to develop friendships and opened up an array of informal, community networks. A number of landlords agreed that tenants could benefit in this way, listing several positive results including:

- more positive and confident tenants;
- more knowledgeable and experienced representatives; and
- tenants having a greater understanding of the landlord structures and procedures.

5.4.34 Supported housing organisations said tenant involvement resulted in tenants having a greater enthusiasm for things that they had helped to organise, improved self esteem and more independent living.

**Improved tenant/landlord relationships**

5.4.35 A number of tenants groups completing the questionnaire survey cited better relationships with their landlord as a successful outcome of tenant involvement. This included:

- better communication;
- ‘common sense’ improvements;
- opportunity to ‘thrash out’ problems;
- gaining a greater understanding of housing; and
- the developing of more cordial relationships.

5.4.36 A significant number of landlords also identified improved tenant and landlord relationships as positive outcomes of tenant participation. This included:

- increased two way understanding (3 landlords);
- more open and honest relationships;
- joint ‘ownership’ of issues;
- focussing on tenants’ priorities;
- improved satisfaction; and
- local involvement leading to sustainable communities.
5.5 Problems with tenant involvement

5.5.1 A number of tenant organisations completing the questionnaire survey identified the following difficulties with sustaining or developing their groups:

- A lack of interest among tenants in getting involved in groups (7 groups);
- Making existing groups more representative;
- Sustaining involvement;
- Dealing with group ‘politics’; and
- Frequent turnover of members.

5.5.2 The vast majority of staff and tenants taking part in the focus groups, and many of those taking part in the telephone interviews, identified the most common problem to do with tenant participation as a preference by tenants to get involved in ways other than through Welsh Assembly Government – Evaluating Tenant Participation in Housing Management and Design

### Key points: successful outcomes of tenant involvement

- Tenants and landlords identified a wide range of successful outcomes to tenant involvement in housing management, including policies and procedures, surveys and information, estate improvements, new initiatives and Best Value.
- Tenants identified a significant number of positive outcomes that were not housing based but related to the community and environment.
- The majority of landlords did not generally identify community or environmental improvements as part of successful outcomes of tenant involvement.
- Tenant organisations were more likely than landlords to evidence strategic involvement in landlord activities.
- Housing associations reported greater levels of tenant involvement at strategic level than did local authorities.
- A number of landlords were undertaking measures to encourage involvement by supported housing tenants.
- A small number of tenants and landlords said that tenant participation had led to improvement in information provided to tenants.
- Several groups of staff highlighted the importance of providing effective information to tenants.
- Staff and tenants identified a range of successful outcomes to tenant involvement in design and/or estate/property improvement programmes, including choosing and monitoring contractors, choices of equipment and materials, feedback into the design brief, landscape, gardens and community safety.
- Some landlords, support providers and tenants identified as a positive outcome, tenants’ increased personal development as a result of getting involved.
- A number of tenants and landlords identified improved relationships between tenants and landlords as a positive outcome of tenant participation.
formal groups, and difficulties in recruiting new members to existing groups, particularly younger people. Several landlord organisations said that they had particular difficulty involving BME tenants, young people and vulnerable client groups who do not always want to participate in groups.

5.5.3 A number of tenant organisation representatives identified difficulties with recruiting and keeping new members.

‘We need to bring in new people. It’s difficult to get new people involved. We’ve had young people in, but it’s hard to keep them.’ (Involved tenant)

‘We could do with getting more members.’ (Involved tenant)

‘Numbers have dwindled… now sometimes more staff than tenants.’ (Involved tenant)

‘We can’t get people involved – there is a lack of interest.’ (Involved tenant)

A number of staff held similar views:

‘Lack of enthusiasm by tenants, it’s difficult to get new tenants involved.’ (Tenant participation officer, housing association)

5.5.4 Two landlords had carried out surveys with their tenants, finding that although a significant number of tenants said they did want to get involved in tenant organisations, the majority, 75% and 60% respectively, expressed a preference to get involved in ways other than through groups.

‘People often don’t want formal structures...we’re looking now at a menu of options, - different opportunities for people to get involved.’ (Front line staff)

‘Tenants and residents’ associations don’t work in our experience... we can’t impose TP on tenants – they have better things to do with their lives... modern day life is about consumerism and citizenship... tenants must be listened to as consumers.’ (Senior manager)

5.5.5 Participants in two staff groups highlighted the pressures that the Welsh Assembly Government requirement on landlords to participate can bring on both tenants and landlords:

‘The problem is that while tenant participation is a requirement on the landlord, there is no requirement on the tenant to turn up!’ (Senior manager)

Ensuring involvement is representative

5.5.6 All landlord respondents to the questionnaire survey had some concerns about engaging a range of tenants. These included engaging:

• under represented groups in general;

• younger tenants (2 landlords);

• young people;

• BME communities;

• single parents; and

• disabled tenants.
5.5.7 6 landlords mentioned difficulties involving tenants in rural and scattered stock. Two landlords were concerned about involving owner occupiers and lease holders. Supported housing organisations specifically mentioned problems involving people with profound disabilities, involving the frail elderly, involving people over a scattered area, and providing childcare, particularly for demanding children. A number of staff and tenants taking part in the focus groups and telephone interviews, identified difficulties with involving tenants representative of their tenant profile, in particular young people and BME tenants.

‘We can’t engage young people.’ (Front line staff)

‘There are certain sections of the community with which we have failed to engage, including young people and the BME community.’ (local authority)

‘Young and BME tenants don’t want to come to meetings, we need to look at other ways of involving them.’ (BME worker)

‘It (tenant participation) tends to be a bit of a minority sport. We have failed to secure wider involvement, it tends to be older, retired people that get involved.’ (Front line staff)

**Overburdening existing tenant organisation members**

5.5.8 Concern was expressed by a participant from a national organisation that other organisations were adding to the pressures on already stretched tenant activists, and gave the example of a recent speech by the Health Secretary which encouraged tenant organisations to take part in local health boards. Concern was also expressed about tenants taking on additional high level responsibilities without adequate support. This was seen as particularly relevant with the emerging stock options agenda.

5.5.9 Some involved tenants, front line staff and senior managers taking part in the focus groups and telephone interviews, said that tenant participation was placing increasing demands on a few people’s time:

‘The amount of time tenants have to spend on tenant participation...its difficult to get new people. It’s a lot of work for the same people.’ (Involved tenant)

‘There’s always a core of people who have to do everything. Takes a lot of time.’ (Involved tenant)

‘Tenant participation can be quite onerous. We ask a lot of their (tenant organisation) time. Any other services we use, we don’t have to attend meetings, give up our time. We don’t do that in our lives.’ (Front line staff)

‘Problem with local groups...work often gets left to one or two people.’ (Senior manager)

**Inadequate information, communication and feedback**

5.5.10 Nearly a third of tenant organisations taking part in the questionnaire survey, felt they did not receive enough information in the following areas:

- Major works and planned maintenance (2 groups);
5.5.11 Landlord respondents were concerned about the commitment and capacity of their organisations to deliver effective information. A number of landlords highlighted the difficulty of securing the commitment to tenant participation across all departments to ensure that participation was a landlord wide initiative rather than just seen as belonging to the housing department. This included the need for all departments in contact with tenants to provide information in clear and accessible formats. Other concerns included:

- bureaucratic and over formal structures (2 landlords);
- securing individual staff commitment; and
- lack of involvement in major decisions, e.g. investment option appraisals and measuring and evaluating outcomes.

5.5.12 Tenants taking part in the focus groups and telephone interviews, expressed a number of concerns regarding lack of information, communication and feedback on outcomes of participation from the landlord.

‘There’s a lack of communication and information. Our comments are being ignored. We’re told about things, we’re not participating.’ (Involved tenant)

Some staff also said that their organisation did not communicate effectively with tenants and that lack of interest by tenants in participating, might link to lack of accessible information provided for tenants.

**Lack of meaningful consultation**

5.5.13 Tenants completing the questionnaire survey identified a number of problems relating to ineffective consultation by landlords. These included:

- lack of real consultation;
- paying lip service to tenant participation through inaction following consultation; or ignoring tenants views;
- buck passing and evasion;
- patronising, intimidating and oppressive attitudes; and
- contradictory information from landlords.

5.5.14 Several of the involved tenants taking part in the focus groups and telephone interviews, said that their participation did not result in any differences being made by the organisation.

‘(the group) is a talking shop, it makes no difference.’ (Involved tenant)
‘Not a lot comes out of what we discuss. We come back next time and discuss it all again.’ (Involved tenant)

‘We make no difference. We understand more but aren’t influencing housing management’ (Involved tenant)

‘We get information after the decision is made. They listen but we make no difference’ (Involved tenant)

5.5.15 The above contrasted with perceptions of some staff, who identified many instances where tenants’ views had had an impact on the policies and procedures of the organisation, but acknowledged that this information may not be being adequately fed back to tenants. For example, senior staff in one organisation described how they had made major changes to their lettings policy, anti-social behaviour policy, and introduced a tenant incentive scheme, all as a result of listening and responding to tenants’ views and priorities gathered through a questionnaire. However, a focus group of involved tenants from the same organisation did not appear to have been informed that the organisation had introduced these changes as a result of listening to tenants.

**Time and resources**

5.5.16 Landlords completing the questionnaire survey, saw lack of resources, especially finance and staff time, as a significant impediment to developing effective tenant involvement. Some staff taking part in the focus groups said that asking tenants’ opinions takes time, increases staff workload and results in it taking longer to review policies.

‘TP is only one of many things we are asked to target. It takes time with no additional resources. Recent door knocking exercise took two days and had two days work to catch up on when I got back to the office.’ (Front line staff)

**Personality problems**

5.5.17 A number of involved tenants and front line staff taking part in the focus groups and telephone interviews identified problems with individuals in tenant organisations. These covered the following areas:

- Strong personalities dominating other members of tenant organisations;
- Tenant representatives not communicating with other tenants effectively or feeding back accurate information from the landlord;
- Problems with some tenant officers not carrying out their role effectively, but being unwilling to undergo training to help them do this; and
- Personality clashes within tenant organisations.

A number of tenants also identified problems with individual staff attitudes to tenants.

**The Welsh Assembly Government Pattern Book**

5.5.18 Housing Association participants were asked to give their views on the effect that the Welsh Assembly Government Pattern Book has had on the ability of tenants to be involved in housing design. The Pattern Book sets out housing design requirements for housing associations.
Many staff taking part in the focus groups and telephone interviews, said that prescriptions imposed by the Welsh Assembly Government Pattern Book restricted the ability of landlords to effectively involve tenants in the design of their homes. Landlords identified the following problems with the Pattern Book, which tenants had identified:

- Restrictions on sizes of kitchens and living rooms;
- A lack of storage facilities;
- Inadequate standards of sound insulation.

5.5.19 Participants in one focus group said that the Pattern Book was too rigid, and limited tenant choice in design. The Pattern Book should set out guidelines rather than requirements, to enable associations to have the flexibility to make changes to suit tenants’ needs and choices. One landlord taking part in the questionnaire survey, suggested that the Welsh Assembly Government should carry out updated market research with tenants living in Pattern Book homes built in Port Talbot.

5.5.20 The requirement to install baths in all properties was identified by participants in one focus group as a problem:

‘The Pattern Book demands that we put in baths for new properties even if we know they are going to be let to elderly tenants. We have to rip them out as soon as they move in and put in a shower.’ (Senior manager)

Inadequate sound insulation standards were seen as a particular problem by one group in view of changes to living patterns, with children having televisions and audio equipment in their bedrooms and increasingly using them as living areas.

One group identified problems with the limited size of bedrooms in shared supported housing:

‘The size of the bedrooms are very small when they’re the tenants’ only private area. They’re too compact for the supported housing environment.’ (Senior manager)
Key points: Problems with tenant involvement

- A number of tenant organisations, and the majority of staff and tenants taking part in the focus groups and telephone interviews identified the most common problem to do with tenant participation as a lack of success in engaging the majority of tenants in formal groups, leading to difficulties for tenant organisations with recruiting new members, ensuring that their groups were representative, and sustaining their groups.

- A number of landlords and some tenant organisations said that they have particular difficulty involving those who prefer not to participate in groups, especially young people, BME tenants, those with support needs, single parents and disabled tenants.

- Concern was expressed by national organisations that non-landlord organisations were adding to pressures on tenant activists by asking for involvement in other areas, for example local health boards.

- Concern was expressed by national organisations about tenants taking on additional high level responsibilities without adequate support.

- Some tenants and staff said that tenant participation was placing increasing demands on a few tenants’ time.

- Some landlords were concerned about the commitment and capacity of all departments within their organisations both to the process of tenant participation, and to delivering clear and accessible information to tenants.

- Nearly a third of tenant organisations felt they did not receive enough information in a number of areas.

- A number of tenants said that there was a lack of information and feedback on outcomes of participation from their landlord.

- A number of tenants said that consultation by their landlord was ineffective and that their involvement did not make any differences to outcomes.

- Some landlords saw lack of resources especially regarding finance and staff time as an impediment to developing effective tenant involvement.

- A number of tenants and staff identified problems with individuals in tenant organisations. A number of tenants identified problems with staff attitudes.

- Staff from a number of housing associations said that prescriptions imposed by the Welsh Assembly Government Pattern Book restricted their ability to effectively involve tenants in the design of their homes.
5.6 Resources and training

Resources

5.6.1 Landlords responding to the questionnaire survey, together commit almost £1 million (£0.98m) annually to support tenant participation. If the figures for respondents are representative of all social landlords, then the total budget to support tenant participation in Wales is approaching £1.5 million per annum.

5.6.2 When stock numbers were taken into account it was found that housing associations spent almost twice as much as local authorities per tenancy, being £9.31 and £4.84 respectively.

5.6.3 All landlords spent on average £696 on direct grants to local groups and this was confirmed by groups themselves who estimated they received £707 p.a.

5.6.4 Figure 20 shows the breakdown of landlord funding for tenant participation activities.

Figure 20: Breakdown of landlord funding for tenant participation

5.6.5 Training for, and direct support to, tenant groups and representatives accounted for 54% of budgets. Nearly 40% of budgets went on staff costs and training.

5.6.6 64% of local authorities employed a tenant participation officer compared with 40% of housing associations.

5.6.7 73% of tenant groups said they received support from officers with 68% citing specialist tenant participation staff as the source.

5.6.8 All supported housing organisations had staff whose job descriptions included tenant participation, with 60% having all or a major part of a dedicated post.

5.6.9 In addition to the above, landlords allocated resources to the following:

- Alternative tenant participation methods including tenant surveys, focus groups, key tenant scheme and a neighbourhood tenant participation compact;
• Social activities such as day trips, Christmas parties, garden competitions and a ‘tenants fayre’;

• Payment in kind including printing and publishing newsletters, mail outs and providing stationery;

• Fees and subscriptions for support organisations such as TPAS Cymru, mediation services and professional and legal fees.

5.6.10 Significantly more local authorities (57%) than housing associations (35%) had accessed funding from external sources to support tenant participation. A total of 3 local authorities and 2 associations had accessed Social Housing Management Grant (SHMG) funding. Tenant Empowerment Grants were mentioned by 4 local authorities and 4 associations.

5.6.11 Tenant organisations had accessed grant support from a wide variety of sources including:

- Communities First (5 groups);
- Community / Town councils (5 groups);
- Kick Start (2 groups);
- Councillor donation;
- TPAS start up grant;
- WCVA Social Risk Fund;
- Healthy Living;
- Safer Cities; and
- Regeneration funding.

5.6.12 One supported housing organisation had accessed grants from the Communities Fund to support involvement.

Example of positive practice

Funding agreement between landlord and tenant organisation

Clackmannanshire Council have a service agreement with the tenants and residents federation which sets out the amount of funding to be made available to the federation, to be paid quarterly in advance and reviewed annually.

Other resources made available to the federation include free photocopying, administrative support such as access to computers, information and regular mailings to members and the provision of meeting space.

The service agreement notes that the federation monitors its spending against the budget. It also sets out the performance expected of the federation in relation to the number of meetings to be held, opening hours for the federation offices, and attendance at conferences.
5.6.13 All housing associations and 79% of local authorities completing the questionnaire survey, stated that they provided some training for their tenant representatives. However only 56% of tenant groups said they were aware of this. Training was marginally more likely to be provided in-house than via external trainers. Figure 21 shows the types of training organised for tenants and staff.

Figure 21: Types of training organised for tenants and staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landlord</th>
<th>Tenant Only Training</th>
<th>Joint Staff &amp; Tenant Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing associations</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant Groups</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.6.14 Joint training with tenants was more favoured by authorities; tenant only training by associations.

5.6.15 Training was provided on a wide range of topics including (numbers following topics indicates number of times it was referred to by different respondents):

Basic Organisation (22)
- Committee skills;
- Running events;
- Tenant Empowerment Grants;
- Fundraising;
- IT;
- Managing buildings;
- Consulting and engaging the community.

Housing Policy and Practice (17)
- Anti social behaviour;
- Repairs and maintenance;
- Lettings;
- Voids;
- Rents;
- Homelessness;
- Tenants handbook.

Regulation and Legal (7)
- Best value / Wales Programme for Improvement;
- Tenant participation compacts;
- Housing law;

Equality and Diversity (5)
- Black and minority ethnic issues;
- General equalities.

Management and Business Planning (8)
- Stock transfer;
- Role of board members;
- Housing finance.
Miscellaneous
• First aid;
• Child protection;
• Role of housing officers;
• Community development;
• Housing benefit;
• Prescribed drugs;
• Self defence;
• Food hygiene.

5.6.16 88% of tenant organisations that received training said it met their requirements. Those that did not receive training or were dissatisfied made a number of comments including:

• training was expensive; and
• access was via the Welsh Tenants Federation and restricted.

5.6.17 All 5 supported housing organisations provided training for tenants, open to any interested tenants to participate. Training had been provided in:

• policies and procedures;
• skills training;
• tenant involvement;
• supporting people;
• mental health issues;
• anger management;
• DIY;
• arts and crafts; and
• black and minority ethnic issues.

5.6.18 The two national tenant support organisations provided training in a wide variety of topics including:

• anti social behaviour;
• housing benefit;
• supporting people;
• key tenant scheme;
• best value / WPI;
• mystery shopping;
• stock transfer;
• committee and organisation skills;
• assertiveness;
• newsletter production;
• involving black and minority ethnic tenants;
• tenant participation compacts and strategies;
• major works agreements; and
• tenant management organisations.

5.6.19 Both tenants and staff taking part in the focus groups and telephone interviews, identified problems with getting tenants to take up training opportunities.

‘We need a proper training programme - its in the business plan, e.g. training on the role of officers, how to speak to
people. Problem is that people don’t think they need training.’ (Involved tenant)

‘We have offered lots of training, but getting people to attend is tricky.’ (Staff)

5.6.20 Some tenants commented that their training had either been too crowded, or that they had to travel too far to access it:

‘We had training on the benefits of being a panel member. The training was too crowded. Smaller groups would be better.’ (Involved tenant)

‘I would like to see Wales having an equivalent to Trafford Hall here in Wales and not have to travel to England.’ (HA tenant board member)

Example of positive practice

Tenant involvement in training

West Glamorgan Housing Consortium have produced a guide to tenant involvement in interviewing and recruiting staff, based on the experiences of tenants with learning disabilities who took part in recruiting Consortium’s tenant participation officer.

The guide sets out ways of enabling those with limited reading skills to take a full part in the interview process including:

- developing a person specification;
- familiarisation with interview procedures including confidentiality and equal; opportunities and role play;
- developing questions for informal and formal interviews;
- building up picture profiles of candidates’ skills and interests;
- scoring and recording; and
- agreeing and making the final decision.

Example of positive practice

Tenant involvement in training

First Choice Housing Association, Cartrefi Cymru and West Glamorgan Housing Consortium staff and tenants set up the Living in Your Home project, to increase tenants’ understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Staff and tenants worked together to produce and pilot a training guide and tenant workbook to enable tenants with learning disabilities to train other tenants to understand their rights and responsibilities. The workbook covers:

- running a training session;
- using training equipment;
- ice breakers and role play; and
- evaluation.
Example of positive practice

Tenant involvement in training

The Federation of Flintshire Community Houses has produced a workbook to help tenants set up and run a community base. The guide was developed by local residents working with the council. It offers comprehensive, easy to understand advice on all aspects of setting up and running a community house.

The workbook includes sections on:

- undertaking a feasibility study;
- launching a community house;
- running a community house;
- carrying out a review; and
- costs of setting up and running a base.

Key points: resources and training

- Landlords responding to the questionnaire, together commit almost £1 million annually to support tenant participation.
- Housing associations spend almost twice as much as local authorities per capita on tenant participation.
- Training for and direct support to tenant organisations accounted for 54% of budgets.
- Almost 40% of budgets went on staff costs and training.
- 64% of local authorities employed a tenant participation officer compared with 40% of housing associations.
- All supported housing organisations had staff whose job descriptions included tenant participation.
- 57% of local authorities, compared to 35% of housing associations, had accessed funding from external sources to support tenant participation.
- Tenant organisations were able to access funding from a wide range of sources for tenant involvement in community and environmental activities.
- All housing associations and 79% of local authorities provided some training for tenant representatives. However only 56% of tenant groups said they were aware of this.
- Joint training with tenant and staff was more common for local authorities, tenant only training for housing associations.
- 88% of tenant organisations that received training said it met their requirements.
- All supported housing organisations provided training for tenants.
- Both tenants and staff identified problems with getting tenants to take up training opportunities.
5.7 Tenant participation compacts

Introduction
5.7.1 This section sets out stakeholders’ views on the use and effectiveness of tenant participation compacts. The section relates to the information provided in Chapter 4, which contains an analysis of compacts to evaluate their compliance with the Welsh Assembly Government’s core standards for tenant participation compacts.

Terminology
5.7.2 Feedback from several focus groups of staff and tenants, indicated that the term ‘tenant participation compact’ was not understood by the majority of tenants. Many participants said they would prefer to change the term to “tenant participation/involvement agreements” which they felt would be easier to understand and better describe what the documents are about.

‘The title of them is wrong – ‘compact.’ It’s an agreed action plan by landlord and tenants. It should be an agreement with tenants and the local authority.’ (Senior manager)

Numbers and types of compacts
5.7.3 Two authorities and two associations completing the questionnaire survey, do not yet have compacts in place.

5.7.4 Generally, tenant participation compacts seem to be established at a landlord wide level with a number of examples of local/specialist compacts also cited. Half of authorities and a third of associations had developed local neighbourhood compacts. Specialist compacts were much more prevalent with associations who reported 12 of various types compared to 3 authorities. These included:

- sheltered housing compacts: These had been developed by 6 associations and one authority;
- multi landlord compacts: One authority and 3 associations had developed these;
- supported housing compacts: These had been drawn up by two associations
- local planned maintenance compact;
- multi agency compact involving non landlord organisations.

5.7.5 Figure 22 shows the different types of tenant participation compacts developed by landlords and tenants.

Figure 22: Types of tenant participation compact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compact</th>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>Housing Association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landlord Wide</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.7.6 60% (3) of supported housing organisations had tenant participation compacts in place. One organisation was considering additional specialist compacts for floating support and young women.

5.7.7 Tenant organisations indicated how they had been involved in developing their compacts as follows:

- Joint meetings (13 groups);
- Special panels / forums (10 groups);
- Through the federation (3 groups);
- Assisted by consultant or an external organisation (5 groups);
- Pilot scheme;
- Road show;
- Local seminar;
- Via newsletter.

5.7.8 In terms of monitoring and evaluating tenant participation compacts, landlords identified the following means:

- Annual review with tenants (11 landlords);
- Regular meeting with Tenant Forum / Federation (11 landlords);
- Survey / feedback mechanisms (6 landlords);
- Task and finish review group, including one two day dedicated session (3 landlords);
- Externally facilitated review (2 landlords);
- As part of a Best Value review of housing management.

Positive views

5.7.9 Involved tenants in three focus groups said that they did find compacts useful and used them as a reference document, although most acknowledge that the majority of tenants in the organisation do not know what they are.

‘It’s useful if we need to refer to it, we’ve got it.’ (Involved tenant)

‘It’s not static, its improving every year, its always going forward.’ (Involved tenant)

‘Very helpful...used as a reference document.’ (Involved tenant)

5.7.10 Many staff agreed that compacts provided a useful framework for participation, and were positive about their compacts:

‘It’s my bible! Everything we do is done through the compact.’ (Front line staff)

‘The process of developing it was good, it made us look at ourselves.’ (Senior manager)

‘It’s very helpful...used as a reference document...its always going forward. We’re revising to make it more user friendly, with bigger print, easier to understand, not prescriptive.’ (Senior manager)
‘Useful for landlords who wouldn’t otherwise bother with tenant participation.’ (Senior manager)

‘Have allowed us to engage with tenants in a more targeted way with detailed and structured targets to meet.’ (Tenant Participation Officer, Housing Association)

Problems identified
5.7.11 A number of concerns were expressed about compacts by tenant organisations completing the questionnaire survey, including:

• compact prepared mainly by officers (5 groups);

• still on going because of disagreements; and

• not yet published / only just distributed (2 groups).

5.7.12 One national organisation expressed concerns about the current framework and suggested:

• that the Welsh Assembly Government should consider making the Welsh framework for participation a legal requirement;

• there should be a statutory right to participate as in Scotland; and

• there should be minimum standards of involvement.

5.7.13 Tenants and staff taking part in many of the focus groups and telephone interviews, agreed that the Welsh Assembly Government guidance leads to compacts that are too prescriptive and inflexible, concentrating on process rather than outcomes. Of respondents who say they have experienced problems, staff and tenants identified difficulties with:

• apathy and lack of involvement of majority of tenants;

• getting representative age range of tenants;

• keeping people involved;

• people trying to move the goal posts/not sticking to the agenda;

• action points not met;

• timescales over optimistic; and

• issues with spread of properties, cultural and language problems.

5.7.14 These concerns were echoed by some involved tenants:

‘Tenants (other than the tenant organisation) don’t know what compacts are about.’ (Involved tenant)

‘Not enough tenants know about it and it is long winded.’ (Involved tenant)

5.7.15 This view was confirmed by all but one group of non-involved tenants, who had not heard of tenant participation compacts and did not know what a tenant participation compact was.

‘Don’t know what it is.’ (Non involved tenants in four groups)

‘Never heard of it.’ (Non involved tenants in one group)
5.7.16 Many staff said that compacts were long winded and difficult to understand and that both staff and tenants had problems with compacts being too prescriptive and rigid.

‘Too much based on process, it’s the outcomes that are important.’ (Front line staff)

‘The problem is that they are a formal framework, allowing no flexibility, but the relationship between tenants and landlord is flexible. If you have a work to rule, nothing works.’ (Front line staff)

‘(Compacts are) wide ranging, detailed, ambitious, too many things included, unrealistic’. (Director of Housing, Housing Association)

5.7.17 Some staff said that their compacts were not used as working documents, but are only referred to if there was a problem. In one group of ten front line staff, only one member had read the compact. In another group, front line staff said that the compact had not been given to staff and that most are not aware of it.

5.7.18 Concerns were expressed by staff of one landlord that their compact did not represent the views of the majority of their tenants:

‘(our compact was) drawn up with an unrepresentative body, so we have no basis for knowing it is what the majority of tenants want. The compact only caters for 10% of involved tenants.’ (Senior manager)

Example of positive practice

Developing a tenant participation compact

Charter Housing Association’s tenant participation compact was developed in partnership with tenants over a 14 month period. The compact was developed through discussions at 10 meetings of the tenants consultative committee, a tenant satisfaction survey and a tenant conference. The draft compact was then subject to further consultation with the tenants consultative committee and with the organisation’s recognised tenants groups.

The compact recognises that there are a number of ways that tenants can become involved in the decision making process in Charter both on an informal and a formal basis. These opportunities are set out clearly in a diagram and a table in the agreement. Informal involvement enables individual tenants (or applicants) to provide their views by responding to surveys or participating in focus group meetings. Formal involvement is via traditional tenant participation routes such as a recognised tenant association or the tenant consultative committee.
Ideas for improving compacts

5.7.19 Supported housing staff in one group said that the format of compacts should be changed for those with learning disabilities to make them accessible.

5.7.20 Staff in a number of the focus groups suggested that compacts would be improved if they were shorter and simpler, and less ambitious.

‘They need to be very precise slim documents...they are just an aid to listening and conversing with customers...not central to the whole process of tenant participation.’ (Director of Housing, Housing Association)

‘Compacts are still aimed at the one track approach...need a more innovative, lateral approach.’ (Support provider)

Key points: tenant participation compacts

• A number of staff and tenants said that the term ‘tenant participation compact’ is not understood by the majority of tenants.
• The majority of compacts are at a landlord wide level.
• Half of local authorities and a third of housing associations had developed local compacts.
• Over half of housing associations had developed specialist compacts.
• Over half of supported housing organisations had compacts in place.
• Many staff and tenants agreed that compacts provided a useful framework and reference document for participation.
• A significant number of staff and tenants said that the Welsh Assembly Government guidance on compacts was too prescriptive and inflexible, and concentrated on process rather than on outcomes of tenant involvement.
• Many staff said that their compacts were long winded and difficult for staff and tenants to understand.
• The vast majority of non involved tenants did not know what a tenant participation compact was.
• Some supported housing staff said that the format of compacts should be changed to make them more accessible for tenants with support needs.
• Suggestions by some staff and tenants for improving compacts included making them shorter, simpler and less ambitious.
5.8 Ideas for improving tenant involvement

5.8.1 Staff and tenants taking part in the focus groups and telephone interviews had a wide range of ideas for improving tenant involvement.

Developing a range of ways to involve tenants

5.8.2 Tenants and staff from several organisations said that they were achieving success with non formal methods of participation. A number of staff said that they found that by adopting more of an innovative and sometimes consumer based approach to gather views on some issues, they were able to obtain the views of a range of tenants who would not normally get involved via a traditional group or forum.

‘We are trying more of a consumer based approach, ie focus groups.

We are trying to identify ‘communities of interest’ around issues such as ASB... We find that focusing on one issue at a time is more helpful and effective.’ (Director of Housing, Housing Association)

‘(we have) moved to a more consumer based approach... consultation through text, internet, telephone etc.’ (Housing Association Officer)

‘We need to get away from the idea of getting groups of people together in a room to be able to consult. There are other ways. We need to expand the ways people can access us... We all need to be more innovative.’ (Local Authority staff)

‘Usually tenants prefer to get involved in less formal ways. We have found combining a meeting with a social event quite successful.’ (Tenant Participation Officer, Housing Association)

The use of information technology

5.8.3 One of the improvements mentioned most frequently was developing tenant involvement and improving communication and information through the use of information technology. Several organisations were currently or had already undertaken surveys to establish how many tenants had access to computers and the internet. The following are some of the ideas put forward by participants in the focus groups and telephone interviews:

• Gather information on tenants’ use of computers and the internet to inform information procedures;

• Put information on the website;

• Communicate more by e mail (several groups);

• Look at flipping out one single question by text and e mail to get more response from young tenants;

• Ensure questionnaires include questions to find out how many tenants have access to the internet and e mail;

• Interactive computer project helping people get access to Broadband;

• Home page on landlord website for tenants;

• Pop up surveys on website.
‘Development of work based technologies, customers conducting their business with us in different ways. We’re gathering information on (tenant) use of the telephone and internet.’

(Housing Association)

‘From our tenant attitude study we have found out that tenants access to IT has greatly increased and is likely to increase to 27% of our tenants by next year.’

(Local Authority)

**Example of positive practice**

**Using information technology to promote tenant involvement**

TPAS Cymru undertook a survey of tenant organisations and social landlords to establish a baseline of tenant access to information technology and the issues that need to be addressed to improve access. TPAS worked with Cadarn Housing Group to produce a best practice guide and recommendations for landlords and tenants organisations to improve access to information technology. Further information about the project is available at: www.tpascymru.org.uk.

**Example of positive practice**

**Using information technology to promote tenant involvement**

West Glamorgan Housing Consortium has produced its Annual Report on its website and on a cd rom. The report includes video and sound clips of tenants, board members and staff providing information about the organisation and its activities. The report is available at: www.wghc.co.uk (go to tenant pages).

**Example of positive practice**

**Using information technology to promote tenant involvement**

Carr Gomm staff and tenants have developed a lively and informative tenant website with a chat room. The website includes:

- information about the organisation and how to get involved;
- opinion polls;
- discussion forums;
- regional newsletters and events listings;
- web based e-mail facilities;
- a tenant chat room which only Carr Gomm tenants can access by using a password;
- tenant art, pictures and writing; and
- life long learning opportunities.

A group of service users have undertaken training to enable them to train others to access the site and to provide basic IT support. Service users are also helped to use the website by volunteers and staff. The website is available at: www.tenantsonline.org
Tenant involvement at local level
5.8.4 Several housing associations explained how they encouraged tenants to get involved at local level by empowering housing officers to make more decisions and have more of a presence on site, and by providing budgets for tenants and staff to spend on improvements at local level.

‘We are aiming for instant involvement. Our housing officers are being more empowered to make decisions and be on site more. We want them to be on the streets, able to answer questions, not have to pass them on to the office.’ (Senior manager, Housing Association)

‘People need to think they can do something – have local activities, budgets for tenants to access and manage for small projects.’ (Housing Association)

5.8.5 Several tenants and staff made other suggestions for improving tenant involvement at local level. These included:

- the landlord making resources available to enable tenants to control small budgets to undertake local initiatives;
- the landlord agreeing a local lettings policy with tenants and being selective in allocations to some areas to reduce ASB;
- developing service monitoring panels with reports on performance by the area manager; and
- holding regular tenant and staff estate walkabouts to look at estate management, car parking, community safety.

Tenant involvement in design
5.8.6 A number of housing association staff said that the Welsh Assembly Government Pattern Book limited landlords’ capacity to effectively involve tenants in the design of their homes. There were suggestions that the Pattern Book be revised to make it less prescriptive and restrictive. One group suggested that the Welsh Assembly Government undertakes

Example of positive practice

Using information technology to promote tenant involvement

The TP Herts Group website project aims to promote tenant involvement, and share skills, experience and good practice by offering all tenants the chance to have their say regardless of sight, hearing, or language impairment, reading and writing difficulties and any other disabilities.

Information about opportunities for all tenants to have their say about matters that affect their home and/or their community, has been produced on the project’s website which includes video and sound clips, and which features more than 30 languages including sign language.

The website is intended for use by housing providers, tenants and community groups across the UK. It is available at: www.tpherts.org.uk.
research with tenants living in Pattern Book houses, to gather feedback on whether they were the kind of houses people want to live in.

‘Not sure how far the Assembly Government Pattern Book allows for user preference.’ (Front line staff, housing association)

‘Remove Pattern Book. Take away straight jacket to allow innovation. Is Tai Cymru model appropriate nowadays? Pattern Book is causing a problem with the new care home we are building at the moment.’ (Senior manager, Housing Association)

5.8.7 Other suggestions made by both tenants and staff, for improving tenant involvement in design included:

• consulting tenants on a scheme by scheme basis, e.g. for fencing front gardens; and

• setting up sub committee to draw up a major works agreement;

• training officers and tenants on how to listen;

• tenant organisation to meet development team to help with any proposed improvements;

• allowing attic conversions to avoid the need to move to another property; and

• providing showers for people with children who play football and rugby – much cleaner and more efficient than a bath. (or at least go 50:50 if a tenant wants to put one in.

---

**Example of positive practice**

**Tenant involvement in redesigning an estate**

Swansea City Council carried out redevelopment of one of its estates in partnership with Swansea Housing Association.

A public meeting was held to inform the public and any interested bodies, of the need to redevelop the properties. A selection panel for deciding on the developers for the project was formed, comprising 3 tenants, the local ward councillor, the Cabinet Member for housing, with officers advising.

Council staff visited tenants and homeowners, to carry out an assessment of need, and where appropriate, an occupational therapist carried out a formal assessment.

Focus groups were held to gather tenants’ views on a range of different house types and options for layout and design. The focus group participants were selected by an independent research company who also facilitated the discussions. The groups were made up of tenants over 50, young tenants, and tenants with children.
Landlord/tenant relationships

5.8.8 A number of tenants and staff put forward ideas for improving tenant and landlord relationships. These included:

- building good relationships of trust and ensuring that the landlord follows through and responds to requests and issues;
- landlord and tenant representatives being open, talking to people and keeping people informed;
- landlord and tenant representatives developing links with community groups;
- landlords ensuring that all new tenants have a contact meeting with a housing officer after moving in, to iron out any problems and check whether any improvements can be made;
- landlords sending out more service evaluation forms to tenants with incentives to return them, e.g. raffle prizes; and
- landlords holding more road shows and drop-in surgeries to gather the views of the majority of tenants.

Welsh Assembly Government procedures

5.8.9 One group of local authority tenants pointed out that consultation papers received from the Welsh Assembly Government arrived at the landlord with a very short response time, which did not allow the authority to consult tenants properly. They suggested that consultation times should be extended to ensure that

An information day was held for all residents on the estate at which the contractors, local authority and housing association staff were present. On display were examples of options for house types, samples of different types of kitchen units, tiles, floor coverings, colours, and special needs equipment for those with physical disabilities. A virtual reality computer package was available to enable tenants to ‘walk through’ houses, and ‘fly over’ the new estate.

Residents were given choices of:

- Plot allocations
- Special Needs adaptations
- Types and colours of kitchen units and tops
- Flooring
- Doors
- Brick colours
- Patio doors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plot allocations</th>
<th>House types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Needs adaptations</td>
<td>Colour of bathroom suite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types and colours of kitchen units and tops</td>
<td>Layout of kitchens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flooring</td>
<td>Wall tiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors</td>
<td>Wall colours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick colours</td>
<td>Garden size</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“We were given a choice of colour of bathroom suite, flooring, doors, brick colour, garden size, patio doors, everything really.” (Tenant)

Tenants were given a shopping list of extras available that they could choose if they wanted to pay for these. These included outside taps, and bigger garden sheds.
tenant organisations could receive the information and give their views.

5.8.10 Another group of tenants said they would like the Welsh Assembly Government to produce clear information for tenant organisations on the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.

5.8.11 A number of landlords said that they would like the Welsh Assembly Government to take a key role in piloting and disseminating best practice on tenant involvement.

Key points: ideas for improving tenant involvement
- Staff and tenants had a wide range of ideas for improving tenant involvement. these included the following:
  - developing a range of ways to involve tenants which included non formal, innovative and sometimes consumer based approaches;
  - more frequent use of information technology to develop tenant involvement and improve communication and information for tenants;
  - encourage more involvement at local levels by empowering housing officers to make more decisions and by providing budgets for tenants and staff to spend on improvements;
  - improving tenant involvement in design by undertaking research to gather the views of tenants living in Pattern Book homes, and revising the Pattern Book to make it less prescriptive and restrictive;
  - extending Welsh Assembly Government consultation periods to ensure that tenant organisations have time to receive information and give their views;
  - improving relationships between tenants and landlords by developing more links and undertaking joint activities.
6. Summary and conclusions

Introduction
6.1 This section provides a summary of key points, and some conclusions of the research findings set out in Sections 2 to 5. The summary and conclusions lead on to Chapter 7, which includes a number of recommendations for the Welsh Assembly Government, social landlords, tenant organisations and national organisations.

Evaluation of other studies and good practice guidance
6.2 All the previous research reviewed as part of the project, agreed that there is a need for a wide range of different opportunities for participation which legitimise informal as well as formal structures for involving tenants. A recent ODPM study looking at the involvement of black and minority ethnic tenants and communities in the stock options process (ODPM 2004), found that black and minority ethnic groups were underrepresented in tenant participation activities but that this under involvement was also experienced by many other groups and individuals. Both these points support the findings of the research carried out with tenants and landlords during this project.

6.3 While the review found no separate evaluation of informal methods, the use of such methods were considered as part of evaluations such as Communities Scotland 2004, ‘Analysis of the Baseline Study of Tenant Participation’. In addition, the ODPM study found examples of some successful informal methods of involving black and minority groups, for example, a surgery at a local supermarket, door knocking consultation exercises, and contacting tenants via English language classes for refugees.

6.4 Most previous studies reviewed found a wide variation in the level of resources landlords invested in tenant participation. Studies reached conflicting conclusions on whether there was a correlation between money spent and effective participation. Two studies found a link between organisations which performed well and the commitment they made to effective participation (TPAS Cymru/WTF, 1998 and Communities Scotland, op cit), while one study found no such correlation (Housing Corporation, 2000). These findings suggest that it is not resources alone which are needed to develop successful participation, but also number of other factors. These might include the culture of the organisation and staff’s general attitude to tenant participation, the organisation’s historical investment in tenant participation, and the extent to which the landlord has previously responded to tenants’ concerns.

6.5 The Scottish research also found that monitoring and measuring the outcomes of participation was the least well developed element of tenant participation practice. This supports the findings of the project, which show that monitoring and measuring procedures in Wales generally concentrate on the process rather than on the outcomes of participation.

Tenant participation frameworks
6.6 The research found that the frameworks for tenant participation and for core standards for developing compacts in
Wales and England are very similar. However Welsh core standards include an additional element, “Getting Tenants Involved”, which focuses on requirements for developing formal structures for participation.

6.7 In Scotland, the Scottish Executive has passed legislation which places a statutory duty on local authorities and housing associations to engage with tenants, and offers tenant organisations the opportunity to register as Registered Tenant organisations.

6.8 There is a statutory duty on the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to consult with tenants, and the Executive have established a voluntary framework for community involvement. In Northern Ireland, the level of tenant involvement in both housing and community development is impressive, and is extremely well resourced by the NIHE and the Northern Ireland Assembly compared with tenant participation in Wales.

6.9 The framework in England and Wales does not have a statutory basis for the involvement of tenant organisations, leaving landlords in England and Wales to put in place structures and processes for tenant involvement as they see fit. The evaluation of tenant compacts across Wales would suggest that this approach produces a wide variety of practice and differing views from tenants on the effectiveness of tenant participation. The approach adopted by the Scottish Executive should create a greater consistency of approach amongst Scottish social landlords. However, the approach adopted in Scotland appears to focus on formal tenant involvement structures and on a narrower range of housing activities than in England and Wales. In Northern Ireland the level of tenant involvement is impressive, but requires significantly greater levels of central funding than elsewhere in the UK.

**Tenant participation compacts**

6.10 The research found that the term ‘tenant participation compact’ was not understood by the majority of non-involved tenants and that they did not know what a tenant participation compact was. A number of participants suggested that the term be amended to ‘tenant involvement agreement’ to more accurately describe the content and status of the document.

6.11 The research found that the majority of Welsh social landlords who provided tenant participation compacts, generally have fairly low levels of compliance with the guidance produced on tenant participation compacts by the Welsh Assembly Government. Of particular note is the fact that 21% of local authority landlords, and 24% of housing association landlords who provided compacts, appear not to have developed these in partnership with tenants. This finding suggests a variation in the commitment of social landlords to tenant participation, and links to the finding that 33% of tenant organisations responding to the questionnaire survey, do not think their involvement makes any difference to what their landlord does. Only 8% of the social landlords who provided copies of their tenant compacts, also provided copies of locally developed compacts and a further 13% of social landlords provided examples of specialist compacts.

6.12 The above conclusion suggests that the low levels of compliance with the guidance on compacts reflects not just on
some landlords’ lack of enthusiasm for developing compacts, but also on the practical relevance of the guidance itself. This interpretation is supported by the findings of the focus groups and telephone interviews, in which a significant number of tenants and landlords expressed the views that that the Welsh Assembly Government guidance on compacts is too prescriptive and inflexible, and that it leads to compacts being required to concentrate on the process of participation rather than on the outcomes of tenant involvement.

6.13 The research found that the guidance on tenant participation compacts encourages social landlords in the direction of following traditional routes of tenant participation, rather than validating the development of a range of ways to involve tenants. The research found that many tenant organisations and landlords identified problems in recruiting new members and sustaining involvement in tenant organisations, particularly from young people, black and minority ethnic tenants and those with support needs, and that landlords were increasingly adopting a range of ways to ensure the involvement of the majority of tenants.

6.14 The review of tenant participation compacts found that only 42% of local authority landlords and 40% of housing association landlords, complied with 6 of the 12 components of the Welsh Assembly Government’s core standards that relate to the provision of information to tenants. A pre-requisite for involving tenants in the process of decision-making is the provision of good quality, relevant, timely and understandable information to enable them to reach informed views on issues and participate effectively. This is particularly important for local authority landlords who are, or will be, consulting tenants on stock options.

Stakeholders’ views of tenant involvement

6.15 The research found that a significant number of participants in the focus groups understood the term ‘tenant participation’ to describe only involvement by tenants in tenant organisations, rather than to describe the whole range of methods currently used to gather tenants’ views on the service.

6.16 The research found that the majority of tenants said that they did want a say in the services provided by their landlord, and for their views to be taken notice of and to make a difference. The majority of non involved tenants taking part in the focus groups said they would prefer to have their say in ways other than through tenant organisations. The majority of landlords were positive about tenant participation. Tenant organisations and social landlords identified a wide range of issues that tenants were consulted on, and agreed on areas of the service where tenants had been involved.

6.17 A significant number of tenant organisations said either that they did not know what difference their contributions had made, or that their involvement made no difference to what their landlord did. This contrasted with the views of the majority of social landlords who were of the view that tenant participation always or sometimes resulted in positive outcomes. This contradiction would suggest that either many landlords do not take account of tenants’ views, or that they do not feedback effectively to tenants on how their involvement has influenced policies and procedures. The research found
specific instances of where tenants had not been involved in processes, including the development of tenant participation compacts. It also found some instances of where tenants’ views had contributed to major changes undertaken by landlords, but where the tenant organisations involved were not aware that they had influenced these changes.

How tenants are involved

6.18 Over a third of local authority tenants lived in areas covered by tenants groups, compared with under a fifth of housing association tenants. Both involved tenants, and landlords expressed concerns about the difficulties of attracting specific groups of tenants to take part in tenant organisations to ensure that groups were representative of all the landlord’s tenants.

6.19 Non-involved tenants taking part in the research included young people, black and minority ethnic tenants and those with support needs. The majority of these tenants clearly stated that they generally preferred to have their say individually, or in other informal ways, rather than through joining a group. The research found evidence that landlords were addressing this concern by undertaking a range of initiatives to encourage the involvement of specific groups of tenants. However, representatives of a national tenant support organisation expressed unease at landlords developing different methods to involve tenants. There appeared to be concerns that involving tenants through alternative means undermined the role of those tenant organisations.

Successful outcomes of tenant involvement

6.20 The research found a wide range of successful outcomes of tenant involvement across the range of landlord activities, both at local and strategic levels. Housing associations were more likely than local authorities to involve tenants at strategic level, including through board membership.

6.21 The research found evidence that tenant organisations were active and achieving positive results in a wide range of areas, including non housing activities relating to the local community and local environment. However, landlords were significantly less likely to identify non housing activities as successful outcomes of tenant involvement, tending to focus on a narrower definition of the role of tenant involvement.

6.22 A number of tenants, landlords and support providers agreed that one of the successful outcomes of involvement in tenant organisations was the opportunity for tenant representatives to increase their personal development and to increase their confidence, knowledge and skills.

Resources and training

6.23 The research found evidence that landlords provided substantial resources to ensure the success of tenant involvement, being an estimated total of £1.5 million per year. Over half of overall resources went on training and direct support for tenant organisations, with most of the remainder going on staff costs and training.

6.24 Although housing associations spend almost twice as much per tenancy as local authorities on tenant participation, local authorities are more likely to employ a specialist tenant participation officer to support involvement. This can be a positive benefit as specific skills are required to effectively develop tenant involvement. However, there is also a need to ensure that tenant participation is supported by other staff and departments.
in the organisation, so that it is ‘mainstreamed’ rather than seen as the responsibility of one staff member or department. In addition, the research found that almost twice as many local authorities had managed to access external funding to support participation, which may suggest that having a designated officer responsible for participation makes it more likely that organisations have more resources available for preparing funding applications.

6.25 The research found a contradiction in perceptions of training opportunities between tenants and landlords organisations. While all housing associations and the vast majority of local authorities said that they provided some training for tenants, only just over half of tenant organisations said that they were aware of this. The overall majority of tenant organisations that did receive training said that it met their requirements. However, both staff and tenant representatives identified problems with persuading tenants to take up training opportunities. Some tenants commented on the difficulty of having to travel distances to access training, including sometimes to England.

Problems with tenant involvement
6.26 The research found consistent views from tenant organisations and staff that the most common problem to do with developing successful tenant involvement was a reluctance by the majority of tenants to take part in formal groups. Staff and tenant representatives alike were concerned about the lack of representation of a range of tenants in formal tenant participation structures, particularly citing young people, BME tenants, those with support needs, single parents and disabled tenants as least likely to get involved in tenant organisations. Non involved tenants from these groups confirmed the view that they would prefer to get involved in a variety of other ways, including giving their views individually, as part of social events, by attending one off discussions to give their views on a particular topic, or by taking part in a specific project such as producing a newsletter. This finding was supported by the results of tenant surveys undertaken by two landlords, which showed that the majority of their tenants did not want to get involved in groups.

6.27 The above finding reflects concerns expressed in other areas of society today. Generally, commitment to community activism and involvement has dwindled over the past twenty years. It is not just tenant organisations that are finding it difficult to recruit new members and to encourage people to participate collectively, but also political parties, voluntary organisations and community groups. Turnout of those eligible to vote in both general, local and European elections is consistently low. According to research compiled by MORI in 2002, 90% of young people express an interest in politics, but only 39% of young people turned out to vote in the 2001 general election. However, there is evidence that engaging people in voting by text, internet and telephone for TV reality game shows such as Big Brother and Pop Idol is consistently high, particularly amongst young people. This supports the findings of the research, that all tenants say they want to have a say in the service, but only a limited number are prepared to get involved through formal structures. It is also worth noting that the Government is currently investigating introducing alternative methods of voting by text messaging and
the internet, to encourage higher levels of participation in elections.

6.28 There is a need to recognise and acknowledge the imbalance within the Welsh Assembly Government’s regulations for housing associations and guidance for local authorities, which require social landlords to consult with their tenants and take into account their views when making decisions, but do not require tenants to participate in consultation processes. Current requirements on social landlords are based on the assumption that tenants are willing to give their time voluntarily to get involved and commit to groups. Forcing tenants to voluntarily engage in the process of participation is obviously not a realistic option, since it is unlikely that this would be positively received by the majority of tenants, and such a requirement would hardly encourage positive and trusting relationships between tenants and landlords.

6.29 The research found many examples of tenant organisations working effectively and in partnership with their landlord. There is no doubt that tenant organisations have a key role in delivering successful tenant participation. Whilst acknowledging that involvement in tenant organisations is the choice of the minority of tenants, it is important to recognise that tenants have the right to organise independently, and that many tenant organisations are working to develop ways of engaging with the wider community. The research shows that while landlords need to support and work with tenant organisations, they must also take account of the preferences expressed by the majority of tenants living in social housing, and develop additional ways of involving all tenants.

6.30 The research shows that it is the outcomes of tenant involvement as much as the process, that are important to tenants. A number of tenant representatives expressed concern that their involvement did not make any difference to what their landlord did. Several tenants said that they were consulted and listened to, but that their landlords took no notice of their views. The evidence is that current regulation, performance indicators, monitoring and evaluation all concentrate on the process of participation rather than on the outcomes. This can too easily lead to high levels of tenant involvement through impressive structures, which result in no positive outcomes. Shifting the emphasis by regulation for housing associations, and strengthening the guidance for local authorities, to place equal importance on evaluating the outcomes of the process as well as the process itself, would ensure that landlords have to take notice of and act on tenants’ views, and that tenants have to be informed of the action that has been taken as a result of their involvement.

6.31 A number of housing associations expressed concern that the Welsh Assembly Government Pattern Book for housing associations imposed restrictions which limited the ability of tenants to effectively participate in the design of their homes. The research also identified a number of difficulties with the detailed requirements of the Pattern Book which resulted in them being unable to design homes to take account of individual tenant’s needs.

Improving tenant involvement

6.32 The research found that one of the most frequent suggestions for improving tenant involvement was making more
frequent use of information technology to gather views and improve communication with and information to tenants. Several landlords had carried out research to establish tenants’ access to computers and the internet, and several were planning or already had introduced initiatives which involved communication via websites and mobile phones. This again reflects the growing trend in society, particularly among young people, to communicate via these means.

6.33 Another of the most frequent suggestions for improvement involved encouraging more tenant involvement and autonomy at local levels. It was suggested that this be done through empowering housing officers to make more decisions and so be able to deliver directly on tenant requests, and by providing budgets for area improvements which can be spent on priorities identified by the people living and working in the area.

6.34 It was also suggested by a number of housing associations that the Welsh Assembly Government undertake further research with tenants who have lived, or currently live in Pattern Book homes, to gather their views on the Pattern Book design. It was suggested that it would be helpful to loosen the requirements of the Pattern Book in order to allow landlords to take account of tenants’ views and to enable them to work with tenants to produce homes suited to individual needs.
7. Recommendations

Introduction
7.1 The summary and conclusions of the research lead to the following recommendations for the Welsh Assembly Government, local authority and housing association landlords, tenant organisations and national organisations to consider. The recommendations aim to bring about changes that should ensure that social landlords and tenants across Wales can best harness the benefits that tenant involvement can bring to housing management and design.

Recommendations for the Welsh Assembly Government
7.2 The term “tenant participation” should be amended to become “tenant involvement” in order to encourage a creative and innovative approach to involving tenants and to recognise that both formal and informal ways of involving tenants are valid.

7.3 The term “tenant participation compact” should be amended to become “tenant involvement agreement” to reflect the content and status of the document.

7.4 The research found that the current guidance requiring housing associations to have in place both a tenant participation strategy and a tenant participation compact, is cumbersome. In addition, the research shows that tenant participation compacts are not being used as effectively as originally envisaged. It is therefore recommended that the Welsh Assembly Government removes the mandatory requirement on social landlords to put in place tenant participation compacts. The current compact guidance should be rewritten to develop a National Tenant Involvement Strategy.

The Strategy should loosen the current emphasis in requirements for landlords and tenants to follow traditional routes of tenant participation, and should validate a range of ways of involvement as outlined in this report, to ensure that the views of all tenants can be heard. The Strategy should emphasise the importance of achieving positive outcomes to tenant involvement as well as effective processes. New guidance should be issued to both local authorities and housing associations requiring that they put in place a tenant involvement strategy based on the Welsh Assembly Government model, together with a voluntary tenant involvement agreement (compact) if this is the wish of tenants and landlords.

It is recommended that the National Tenant Involvement Strategy:

- sets out specific minimum standards for involving tenants;
- recognises the validity and role of representative tenant organisations;
- contains a range of valid methods of tenant involvement to obtain the views of all tenants;
- requires that landlords consider these methods in consultation with all tenants when developing their strategy for tenant involvement;
- sets out procedures for ensuring that tenants receive accurate and accessible...
information under the ‘Right to Know’ requirements;

• includes processes for measuring the level of responses from tenants to each different tenant involvement method;

• sets out the ways in which landlords will record and use the information they receive as a result of tenant involvement activities;

• sets out the ways in which landlords will inform tenants of how their views have affected landlords’ decisions;

• identifies the level of resources and training that landlords will commit to developing and sustaining tenant involvement;

• allows for the development of overarching, local and specialist tenant involvement agreements, depending on the requirements of individual tenant organisations, landlords and the wider tenant community; and

• includes an action plan which allows for regular evaluation of the outcomes and process of tenant involvement.

A visual guide showing this approach in a Wheel of Involvement, is set out below:
7.5 The Welsh Assembly Government should advise and support local authorities who are consulting their tenants about stock options to ensure that all tenants receive accurate, adequate and accessible information in accordance with the ‘Right to Know’ about:

- the Welsh Housing Quality Standard;
- its impact on landlords;
- the options available to their particular landlord;
- the options that they can support; and
- the consequences of supporting each option.

7.6 The Welsh Assembly Government regulation and related guidance should be amended to require that all social landlords support tenant organisations and help to ensure that such groups are independent and tenant led, by providing them with information to enable them to access services, such as those provided by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Cymru, the Welsh Tenants’ Federation (WTF), the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), and Cymorth.

7.7 The Welsh Assembly Government should set out information for tenants and landlord organisations on appropriate sources of independent funding for supporting and developing tenant involvement both in housing, community and environmental issues. This should include amendments to current regulation and guidance to require that all social landlords provide information to tenant organisations on potential sources of funding for tenant involvement, and assist tenant organisations in drawing up applications for independent funding such as Tenant Empowerment Grants, Social Housing Management Grant, Communities First Trust Fund, Princes Trust, National Lottery, Children in Need, Comic Relief, etc.

7.8 The Welsh Assembly Government audit and inspection framework for social landlords should include the testing of tenant involvement strategies and outcomes. The focus of testing should be on identifying the outcomes of tenant involvement as well as the process. It is recommended that the following are assessed:

- The accuracy, adequacy and accessibility of information provided to tenants;
- The different methods by which the organisation gathers the views of tenants on its service;
- What areas of the organisation’s services have been affected or influenced by tenants’ views;
- How information on changes made as a result of tenants’ views is reported to tenants; and
- Tenants’ views of the ways in which they have been involved and the impact this has had.

7.9 The Welsh Assembly Government should review the Pattern Book for housing associations in consultation with landlords and with tenants who live, or have lived, in Pattern Book homes. It is recommended that the Pattern Book requirements be revised to made them less prescriptive and restrictive, to enable landlords to effectively involve tenants in the design of their
homes and to take account of the needs of individual tenants.

7.10 The Welsh Assembly Government should develop a dissemination, support and training strategy for tenant organisations and landlords which includes maintaining:

- an up to date database of good practice in tenant involvement which can be available to tenants and landlords;
- a database of training and support opportunities for tenants and landlords wishing to develop effective tenant involvement; and
- up to date information on potential sources of funding for tenant involvement and training.

**Recommendations for tenant organisations**

7.11 Tenant organisations should explore ways of extending and encouraging the involvement of a range of members, and ensure that they share successes, and make use of good practice examples of other groups. This could be achieved through:

- study visits to other organisations;
- regular use of the proposed Welsh Assembly Government’s database of good practice; and
- exploring new initiatives with the help of external funding sources such as the Tenant Empowerment Grant and Social Housing Management Grant scheme.

7.12 Tenant organisations should seek clarification from their landlords about:

- what training and conference activities tenant organisations are expected to fund from their budgets;
- whether tenant organisations have access to funding from the landlord’s other budgets for training and conferences; and
- whether the tenant organisation’s budget is sufficient to cover members’ training needs.

7.13 Tenant organisations should recognise that it is acceptable for their organisations to ‘staircase’ up and down in activity and numbers according to current needs and circumstances, and to build into their constitutions provision for resting periods and reviewing mechanisms to take account of this fact.

**Recommendations for social landlords**

7.14 Social landlords should develop tenant involvement strategies in line with the Welsh Assembly Government National Tenant Involvement Strategy, (see recommendation 7.4), and explore ways of extending and encouraging the involvement of all tenants through utilising the processes set out for tenant organisations in recommendation 7.11.

7.15 Social landlords should keep an up to date database of contact details for all tenants to enable them to effectively communicate with tenants and to gather their views. These should include where applicable, land and mobile phone numbers and e mail addresses. It is suggested that landlords combine the tenant contact information held by different departments of the organisation, to ensure that comprehensive information is held by all.
7.16 Social landlords should carry out surveys with their tenants to establish tenants’ access to the internet, make training available for tenants on information technology, and explore ways of developing the organisation’s communication with tenants through these means.

7.17 Social landlords should ensure that tenant involvement activities become a core activity for all departments of their organisation, and that all information provided for tenants is clear, accurate and accessible and timely, to enable them to reach informed views on issues and participate effectively.

7.18 Social landlords should ensure that they develop systems to feedback effectively to tenants on the outcomes of their involvement, how tenants’ views have been taken into account and the action that has been taken as a result of their involvement.

7.19 Social landlords should support representative tenant organisations and help to ensure that such groups are independent and tenant led, by providing them with information and resources to enable them to access services such as those provided by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Cymru, the Welsh Tenants Federation (WTF), the Welsh Federation of Housing Associations (WFHA), the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), and Cymorth

7.20 Social landlords should ensure that they clarify to tenant organisations:

- what training and conference activities tenant organisations are expected to fund from their budgets;
- whether tenant organisations have access to funding from the landlord’s other budgets for training and conferences; and
- whether the tenant organisation’s budget is sufficient to cover members’ training needs.

7.21 Social landlords should develop strategies which recognise and respond to the fact that tenant involvement will often include community development issues, and ensure that they can respond positively when such issues are raised by tenants, for example by:

- building up effective networks with relevant organisations to develop a multi agency approach;
- providing tenant organisations with information on funding opportunities, and signposting them to relevant organisations; and
- assisting tenant organisations with funding applications for community initiatives.

7.22 Social landlords should explore ways of encouraging more tenant involvement and autonomy at local levels, through:

- empowering housing officers to make more decisions and deliver directly on tenant requests; and
- providing budgets for area improvements which can be spent on priorities identified by the people living and working in the area.
Recommendations for national organisations

7.23 The two national tenant support organisations, WTF and TPAS Cymru should acknowledge that the preferences of the majority of tenants are to have their say in other ways than through formal tenant participation structures. The organisations should take this into account when:

• planning their future strategies; and

• developing their services to ensure that the involvement preferences of the majority of tenants are taken into account.

7.24 National organisations should disperse information effectively on good practice in tenant involvement, both through their websites, information provided to members and by regular contributions to the Welsh Assembly Government’s database as outlined in recommendation 7.10.

7.25 The two national tenant support organisations, WTF and TPAS Cymru, should work together to establish and maintain fully comprehensive, accurate and up to date information on contact details for all tenant organisations in Wales. The process should include:

• carrying out an initial joint ‘health check’ of current database information held by both organisations on tenant organisations; and

• informing all tenant organisations contributing information to both databases that their details will be shared by the two organisations unless they lodge an objection.

7.26 National housing association and tenant support organisations, WFHA and TPAS Cymru should ensure that they provide adequate and effective support both for existing tenant Board members, and for potential tenant Board members where new stock transfer organisations are being set up. This support should include an annual audit of Board members’ training needs.
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE RESEARCH
A total of 130 organisations participated in the research and contributed information and their views. A detailed breakdown of organisations is set out below:

1 Questionnaires completed (108)

Housing Associations (20)
Aelwyd
Bro Myrddin
Cadwyn
Clwyd Alyn
Cantref
Clwyd
Cynon Taf
Dewi Sant
Family
First Choice
Glamorgan and Gwent
Gwalia
Gwerin
Hafod
Mid Wales
Pembrokeshire
Rhondda
United Welsh
Valleys to Coast
Wales and West

Local Authorities (14)
Bridgend
Caerphilly
Carmarthenshire
Conwy
Denbighshire
Flintshire
Monmouthshire
Neath Port Talbot
Pembrokeshire
Powys
Rhondda Cynon Taf
Swansea
Vale of Glamorgan
Wrexham

Support Providers (2)
Foundation Housing
Innovate Trust

Tenants and Residents Organisations (72)
Aberystwyth and North Ceredigion Tenants and Residents Association
Barracks Field Tenants Association
Barry Hafod Tenants Association
Blackmill and Glynogwr Tenants and Residents Association
Bilton Park Tenants and Residents Association
Bridgend County Residents Federation
Bridgend Tenants Federation
Bronhau Residents Association
Bruton Park Residents Association
Bryntirion Tenants and Residents Association
Cadwyr Tenants Panel
Cefn Llan Rhydaraf Fro Residents Association
Coedcae Tenants and Residents Association
Colcot Residents Association
Croesern Residents Association
Cwmbran Southville and Tower Residents Association
Cwmceilyn Tenants and Residents Association
Cwrt Severn RA
Cwrt WM Hughes Tenants Committee
Cynon Taf Tenants Consultative Forum
Darren Las & Bryntawel Residents Group
Eastern Valley Tenants Panel
Eastside Tenants and Residents Association
Elis Fisher Tenants Association
Family Housing Tenants Association
Ffodd Seign Tenants Association
Fir Tree Drive Tenants and Residents Association
Glamorgan and Gwent St Mellons Tenants and Residents Association (2)
Garden City Tenants and Residents Association
Garth Owen, Maes y Rhandir & Maes y Dail Tenants and Residents Association
Gilfach Fargoed Tenants and Residents Association
Golden Hill Community Group (2)
Graig Community Association
Hanover Court Residents Association
Harbour View and Royal Clase Residents Board
Hill Top (South Side) Tenants and Residents Association
INTACT
Isgraig Tenants and Residents Association
Llansawel Residents
Llys Ednyfed Residents Association
M aerdy/Ferndale Tenants and Residents Board
Maes y Deri Tenants and Residents Association
Marsh Community Association
Moriah Tenants and Residents Rhymney
Mornington Meadow Tenants Association
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Resident Participation Forum
Newton and District Tenant and Resident Forum
Old Gurnos Tenants Association
Old Hereford Residents Association
Pant Tenants and Residents
Penplas Tenants Panel
Petit Goffa Residents Association
Powys and District Partnership Board
Rassau Garnwydden Tenants and Residents Association
Residents Panel (South) Wales & West Housing Association
Sealand Manoror Residents Association
Selwyn Morris Court Association
Shakespeare Residents Association
St Mellons Tenants Association
Tan y Lan Tenants Association
The Hill
Thompson Street Estate Residents
Thornhill Tenants and Residents Association
Top Gwaun Helyg Tenants and Residents Association
TPAS Gwynedd
TRAC
Trem yr Wyddfa
Treowen Village Tenants and Residents Association
Twmbarlwm View Residents Association and Tenant Consultative Committee
Vale Housing Federation
West Mill Community Association
Wildmill Area Tenants and Residents Association

2 Telephone interviews
(33 interviews with sample of tenant/board/members, senior managers, front line staff and tenant and resident organisation representatives)

Housing associations
Clwyd
Eastern Valley
Glamorgan and Gwent
Gwerin
Hafod
Pembrokeshire
Rhondda
Taff

Local authorities
Blaenau Gwent
Monmouthshire
Powys
Torfaen
Cardiff
Merthyr Tydfil
Vale of Glamorgan
Wrexham

Support providers
Caer Las
Hafan
First Choice
Llamau
Trothwy
West Glamorgan Housing Consortium

3 Focus groups - Case study organisations
Cadwyn Housing Association
Charter Housing Association
Gwynedd County Borough Council
Mid Wales Housing Association
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
City and County of Swansea *
Swansea Housing Association *
* combined focus groups
4 Interviews with national organisations

Cymorth

Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Cymru

TPAS Cymru tenant participation officers network

TPAS Cymru tenant board members network

Welsh Federation of Housing Associations (WFHA)

Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)

Welsh Tenants Federation (WTF)

5 Presentations and discussions at conferences

WTF/TPAS Cymru annual conference 2003

Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru annual conference 2004
DETAILED METHODOLOGY

1 Evaluation of other studies and good practice guidance
The following represents a detailed description of each phase of the research. This part of the project was carried out in three stages.

• The first stage involved a review of recent studies carried out in England, Scotland and Wales to evaluate different elements of tenant participation. A summary of the main findings and recommendations from each study was identified. This led to an analysis of common themes to emerge from the studies.

• The second stage comprised a review of existing good practice guidance on tenant participation from the studies reviewed in the first stage, and from other sources such as the Chartered Institute of Housing Good Practice Briefing Innovation in Resident Involvement. Specific points of good practice guidance were summarised under the common themes identified from existing studies.

• The third stage identified good practice examples and examples of innovation from a variety of sources, including the studies reviewed in the first stage and validated sources of good practice such as the Chartered Institute of Housing Good Practice Unit, HouseMark and positive practice identified in Audit Commission inspection reports.

2 The questionnaire survey
The purpose of the survey was to gain a picture of tenant involvement in housing management and design throughout Wales. The questionnaire was circulated to:

• all 22 local authorities;

• the 29 major housing associations;

• a range of supported housing organisations / managing partners; and

• 333 tenants and resident groups.

The survey was the first stage in gathering information and views from organisations and individuals involved in TP across Wales.

Respondents were given an assurance that all information would treated as confidential to CIH Cymru and Rowan Associates and that individual responses would not be disclosed to other organisations without the consent of the organisation concerned.

Responses were received from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landlord</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No of Properties</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Authorities</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>107,084</td>
<td>7649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Associations</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>50,121</td>
<td>2506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td><strong>157,355</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
78 responses were received from Tenants & Residents Associations, which is 23% of those the researchers attempted to contact. 5 responses were received from support providers.

3 Evaluation of Tenant Participation Compacts
Each local authority and housing association landlord in Wales was asked to provide a copy of their organisation’s tenant participation compact for evaluation as part of the research. A total of 39 tenant participation compacts were received. Of these, 14 compacts were received from local authority landlords and 25 were received from housing associations, representing an overall response rate of 64%.

4 Telephone interviews
A total of 33 telephone interviews were carried out. The aim of the telephone interviews was to follow up issues identified from the questionnaire survey, to provide a more detailed snapshot of tenant participation across a range of organisations and stakeholders.

The breakdown of those interviewed is set out below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LA staff</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA chairs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSL staff</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSL Chairs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant board members</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported housing organisations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant representatives</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 The case study focus groups
28 focus groups were held, gathering the views of a total of 72 staff and 98 tenants.

The case study organisations were:

**Local authorities**
- Gwynedd
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Swansea
- Mid Wales

**Housing associations**
- Cadwyn
- Charter

4 focus groups were carried out within each case study organisation. Each focus group comprised different stakeholders as follows:

- **Group 1** Senior managers and some tenant board members
- **Group 2** Front line staff
- **Group 3** Tenants involved in formal tenant participation structures and some tenant board members (referred to in this report as “involved tenants”)
- **Group 4** Tenants who are not involved in formal tenant participation structures (referred to in this report as “non-involved tenants”)

This group included:
- people with learning disabilities;
- sheltered housing tenants;
- those with physical disabilities;
- young people;
- BME tenants; and
- people living in supported housing including ex offenders, those with mental health, drug and alcohol problems.
The breakdown of participants taking part in the focus groups was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
<th>Group 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing Associations</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authorities</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, the breakdown of stakeholders contributing to the research was as follows:

- **Questionnaires**
  - tenant organisations: 72
  - social landlords: 34
  - support providers: 5

- **Telephone interviews**
  - tenant organisations & tenant board members: 10
  - social landlords: 17
  - support providers: 6

- **Focus groups**
  - social landlord tenants: 98
  - social landlord staff: 72
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF OTHER STUDIES AND GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE


Communities Scotland (2003) *Analysis of the Baseline Study of Tenant Participation*. Edinburgh: Communities Scotland

Communities Scotland (2003) *Methodologies for Obtaining Customers’ Views of Service Quality*. Edinburgh: Communities Scotland

Community Housing Task Force (undated) *Communication and Consultation Strategies in Options Appraisal*. London: CHTF

Community Housing Task Force (undated) *Tenant Empowerment Strategies in Options Appraisal*. London: CHTF


Tai Cymru (1997) *Regulatory Requirements for Registered Social landlords in Wales* Cardiff: Tai Cymru


Housing Services
The first element of the core standards relates to the areas of housing services to which tenant participation compacts should apply. The framework states that these are the housing services to which tenant participation compacts should apply:

• Developing the local authority’s housing policy and strategy, including and reviewing investment options;

• Drawing up the authority’s spending programmes;

• Developing and putting in place regeneration and improvement programmes;

• Budgets, finance and rents;

• Policies for setting rents and service charges;

• Policies for allocation and letting homes;

• Managing housing services;

• Tenancy conditions and agreements;

• Leaseholder issues and charges;

• Anti social behaviour policies;

• Service and performance strategies and arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the authority’s performance and dealing with any problems;

Resources
The guidance sets out six components of resources to tenants to enable them to establish new structures and to maintain existing structures for participation. The six components of resources are set out in the framework, which states that support should include:

• reasonable financial support, for example start up grants, annual grants, loans and estate budgets;

• facilities, for example, access to premises and equipment, stationery, photocopying and help in sending out newsletters;
• advice, community development support, and support for local tenant networks;

• training to meet the needs of tenants representatives or tenants representative groups, including joint training with local authority staff and members, if this is appropriate;

• providing new approaches to encourage tenants to become involved and stay involved; and

• provision of information on level of resources available, the lead officers responsible for delivering specific goals in its strategy, and the resources available specifically to support training amongst tenants and tenant groups.

Meetings
The guidance sets out five components to ensure the effective conduct of meetings between landlord and tenants. The framework states that the landlord should:

• publicise meetings effectively with adequate notice. This may include, where appropriate, personal invitations to every service user, advertisements in local newspapers and public places, and information in community languages;

• provide allowances, transport or technical help for people who need special help, for example childminding allowances to allow people with children to attend relevant meetings, or arranging for interpreters, signers and induction loops as appropriate and practical;

• hold meetings at suitable times and in suitable places;

• make sure that meetings are run in a fair and democratic way, so that everyone gets the chance to have their say and is kept informed; and

• make sure that information on the outcomes of meetings and other feedback is provided to everyone who attended, and affected tenants.

Information
The guidance sets out twelve components to ensure that information is effectively provided to tenants. The framework states that information should:

• be expressed clearly, using plain language and avoiding jargon;

• be accessible (using large print, Braille, cassette, translations etc.);

• not use racist, sexist or other biased language; and

• be of good quality, timely and relevant to tenants needs.

Tenants should receive information on:

• housing strategies, policies and priorities;

• housing investment options and plans;

• arrangements for developing and putting in place best value, including monitoring and reviewing performance, and setting service standards and targets;

• housing management and other relevant local services;

• reports on the local authority’s performance in achieving housing management targets set;
• plans for spending and for future work which will affect tenants, their homes and their area;

• opportunities and support for tenant involvement, influence and control; and

• other local matters which tenants see as relevant.

**Getting tenants involved**
The framework states that successful structures for getting involved should make sure that:

• tenants are given a choice in how they are consulted and they are told how their views affect housing service delivery and targets;

• most tenants and residents are represented by recognised and active tenant and resident organisations, and that all tenants are represented in other ways;

• where appropriate, a tenants federation or other similar organisation is in place;

• other informal measures are in place, such as tenants panels or focus groups; and budgets are controlled by tenants where this is appropriate.

**Tenant organisations, a menu of options**
The framework states that if tenants take part in formal structures with a role in decision making, they should show that these structures are democratic and have:

• a model constitution;

• equal opportunities policies which they keep to;

• regular elections, and a minimum membership level;

• open financial records;

• regular meetings and minuted AGM with the minimum number of members present;

• a minimum number or set percentage of tenants in the membership;

• open membership;

• arrangements for making complaints and having matters put right; and

• arrangements for an annual review with access to independent help to carry this out.

**Monitoring and measuring performance**
The framework states:

In monitoring TP compacts, the local authority and tenants should:

• assess the benefits and outcomes of the TP compacts against their original expectations;

• set clear service standards and targets for tenants to be consulted and involved;

• monitor and evaluate the effect and value for money of different approaches to getting tenants involved, including the scope for changing and developing these to make sure they continue to be effective and efficient;

• monitor tenant representatives and groups to make sure there are equal opportunities; and
• check the authority’s procedures for tenant consultation and involvement are effective, kept to, and encourage tenants from all parts of the community to become involved.

Performance standards and targets should be set each year for the following:

• Whether tenants are satisfied with the arrangements;

• Keeping tenants informed;

• Taking tenants views into account in decisions;

• What tenants think of value for money;

• Tenants satisfaction with the area.
## Appendix 5

**FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

This appendix includes information on:

1) Websites and good practice services

2) Recent and relevant publications

### 1) Websites and good practice services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Where</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Housing Task Force</td>
<td>Assists local authorities, tenants and acquiring RSLs through the process of stock transfer, developing Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), and guides authorities through the Option Appraisal process</td>
<td><a href="http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_601949.hcsp">www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_601949.hcsp</a> <a href="mailto:chtf@odpm.gsi.gov.uk">chtf@odpm.gsi.gov.uk</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Practice Unit, Chartered Institute of Housing</td>
<td>Unit holding examples of good practice and able to answer practical and legal queries</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cih.org">www.cih.org</a> 024 7685 1767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Quality Network</td>
<td>HQN examines and evaluates measures which can lead to improvements to the performance, quality and value of housing services</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hqnetwork.org.uk">www.hqnetwork.org.uk</a> 01723 350099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant Participation and Advisory Service Cymru</td>
<td>TPAS Cymru works nationally to promote and support effective, sustainable partnerships between tenants and social landlords</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tpascymru.org.uk">www.tpascymru.org.uk</a> 029 2023 7303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Assembly Government</td>
<td>Website includes Assembly guidance</td>
<td><a href="http://www.housing.wales.gov.uk">www.housing.wales.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Tenants Federation</td>
<td>Assists tenants and residents throughout Wales to improve quality of life by empowering them to take a full part in relation to their homes and communities</td>
<td><a href="http://www.welshtenantsfed.com">www.welshtenantsfed.com</a> 029 2064 5168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Available from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Good Practice Framework for Tenant Participation in Scotland</td>
<td>Published in 2004</td>
<td>Communities Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/web/FILES/CSPrecis35.pdf">www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/web/FILES/CSPrecis35.pdf</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of the Baseline Study of Tenant Participation</td>
<td>Published in 2003</td>
<td>Communities Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and Consultation Strategies in Options Appraisal</td>
<td>Undated</td>
<td>Community Housing Task Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_025186.hcsp">www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_025186.hcsp</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting with Users and Citizens</td>
<td>Published in 2002</td>
<td>Audit Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[<a href="http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/Products/NATIONAL-REPO">www.audit-commission.gov.uk/Products/NATIONAL-REPO</a> RT/F1B75570-9AA7-469E-8BA6-3354AA457D61/Making%20Connections_FINAL.pdf](<a href="http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/Products/NATIONAL-REPO">http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/Products/NATIONAL-REPO</a> RT/F1B75570-9AA7-469E-8BA6-3354AA457D61/Making%20Connections_FINAL.pdf)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Involvement: Opportunities for Learning from the Private Sector?</td>
<td>Published in 2002</td>
<td>Housing Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.housingcorplibrary.org.uk/housingcorp.nsf/AllDocuments/C33610636D6E639980256D35003DE0AA">www.housingcorplibrary.org.uk/housingcorp.nsf/AllDocuments/C33610636D6E639980256D35003DE0AA</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering Communities, Improving Housing: Involving Black and Minority Tenants and Communities</td>
<td>Published in 2004</td>
<td>Office of Deputy Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Practice Briefing Innovation in Resident Involvement</td>
<td>Published in 2004</td>
<td>Chartered Institute of Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>024 7685 1752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing (Scotland) Act 2001: Guidance on Tenant Participation</td>
<td>Published in 2001</td>
<td>Scottish Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/housing/gotp-00.asp">www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/housing/gotp-00.asp</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Available from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Interim Evaluation of Tenant Participation Compacts                  | Published in 2004          | Office of Deputy Prime Minister  
www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_025264.hcsp |
| Interim Evaluation of the Innovation into Action Programme           | Published in 2003          | Office of Deputy Prime Minister  
www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_608530.hcsp |
| Just do it: a directory of examples of service user involvement in supported housing | Published in 2000          | Housing Corporation  
020 7393 2000                                                               |
| Methodologies for Obtaining Customers’ Views of Service Quality      | Published in 2003          | Communities Scotland  
| Open house? A study of tenant organisations in Scotland              | Published in 2003          | Scottish Consumer Council  
www.scotconsumer.org.uk/reps03/rp05open.pdf                               |
| Review of Tenant Participation in Wales: A Good Practice Note         | Published in 2001          | Welsh Assembly Government  
| Study of Tenant Participation in Registered Social Landlords         | Published in 2000          | Housing Corporation  
www.housingcorplibrary.org.uk/housingcorp.nsf/AllDocuments/6077F9D411E41EB980256AB9003E235A |
| Tenant Empowerment Strategies in Options Appraisal                   | Undated                    | Community Housing Task Force  
www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_025187.hcsp |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Available from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Involvement Business: The Business Imperative for Involving Consumers in the Work of Registered Social Landlords</td>
<td>Published in 2001</td>
<td>Housing Corporation <a href="http://www.housingcorplibrary.org.uk/housingcorp.nsf/AllDocuments/064CA54BF0F58A2F80256AB9003E2304">www.housingcorplibrary.org.uk/housingcorp.nsf/AllDocuments/064CA54BF0F58A2F80256AB9003E2304</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carr Gomm</td>
<td>Equalities: people with support needs</td>
<td><a href="http://www.carr-gomm.org.uk">www.carr-gomm.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clackmannanshire Council</td>
<td>Resources for participation</td>
<td><a href="http://www.clacksweb.org.uk/dyna/participstrategy">www.clacksweb.org.uk/dyna/participstrategy</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Northamptonshire Housing</td>
<td>Gathering and acting on users’ views</td>
<td><a href="http://www.longhurst-group.org.uk/infoForTenants-TenantInvolvement.html">www.longhurst-group.org.uk/infoForTenants-TenantInvolvement.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool Housing Action Trust</td>
<td>A community-led interactive TV channel</td>
<td><a href="http://www.superchannel.org">www.superchannel.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Borough of Southwark</td>
<td>Equalities: BME tenants</td>
<td><a href="http://www.southwark.gov.uk/OurServices/Councilhousing/YourCouncilTenancy/Consultation.html">www.southwark.gov.uk/OurServices/Councilhousing/YourCouncilTenancy/Consultation.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochdale Boroughwide Housing</td>
<td>Link between good performance and consulting with/involving service users</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/living/housing.asp?url=rbh">www.rochdale.gov.uk/living/housing.asp?url=rbh</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation</td>
<td>Mainstreaming participation</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tmo.org.uk">www.tmo.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Gloucestershire District Council</td>
<td>Measuring success</td>
<td><a href="http://www.southglos.gov.uk/Housing/NewHousing/Tenants.htm">www.southglos.gov.uk/Housing/NewHousing/Tenants.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southampton City Council</td>
<td>Tenant involvement in budget setting</td>
<td><a href="http://www.southampton.gov.uk/housing">www.southampton.gov.uk/housing</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaythling Housing Society</td>
<td>Options for participation</td>
<td><a href="http://www.swayhs.org.uk">www.swayhs.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPAS Cymru</td>
<td>Tenant participation award entries, 2004</td>
<td><a href="mailto:enquiries@tpascymru.demon.co.uk">enquiries@tpascymru.demon.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>