



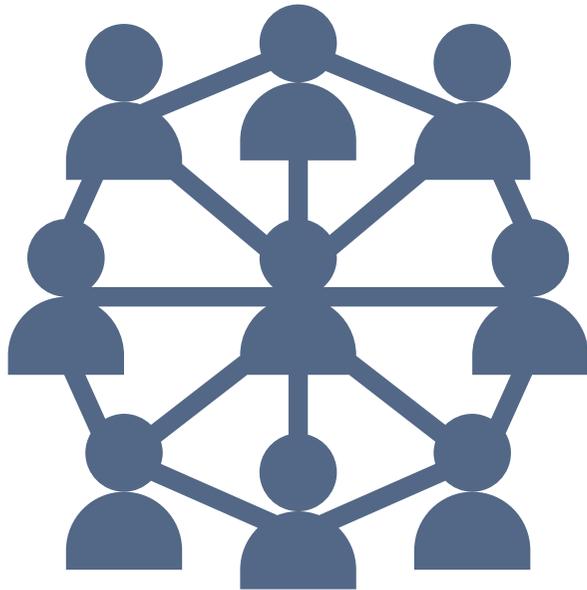
Tenant Participation Strategy 2021-2024



Contents



1 Introduction	3
2. About NB Housing	3
3. What is a Tenant Participation Strategy?	4
4. Outcomes of the 2017-2020 Strategy	6
5. Aims of the Tenant Participation Strategy 2021-2024	8
6. Measuring the Success of the Strategy	9
7. Encouraging Tenant Participation	10
8. Resources	12
9. Action Plan 2021-2024	13



Introduction

NB Housing is delighted to present its second Tenant Participation Strategy 2021-2024.

We continue to be an organisation where tenants can influence the decision-making process through a range of involvement opportunities and work in partnership with the association to deliver a housing service that not only meets their needs but exceeds their expectations.

We aim, with tenant input, to deliver on our mission to provide homes with affordable rents that build vibrant neighborhoods and communities. Tenant Participation has a major role to play in the successful achievement of this mission.



About NB Housing

NB Housing was formed in May 2014 following a merger of both the former Filor Housing Association and Flax Housing Association.

NB Housing has expanded its areas of operation over the past 6 years to include Coalisland, Ballygowan, Newtownards, Ballymena, Carrickfergus as well as other areas of Belfast.

The association continues to look for opportunities across the province to increase its housing stock and at present we are looking at other areas such as Donaghadee. We have increased the number of homes we offer to 1049 at the beginning of the 20/21 financial year.

We have a team of 40 staff across two offices based in Flax Street and the Crumlin Road Belfast, and our supported schemes located in the heart of the communities we serve.

What is a Tenant Participation Strategy?

Tenant Participation is a plan to increase tenant involvement in the delivery of social housing services and the decisions that are made about these services.

It aims to improve the quality of social housing services for tenants and landlords, by encouraging partnership and discussion between the organisation, tenants, service users, local communities and authorities. This plan will also build on our previous strategy to ensure that Tenant Participation becomes an integral part of all the work of the association.

We will strive to ensure that all tenants are involved in consultation whilst respecting that each tenant has a choice of whether to participate or not. Furthermore, we will provide a menu of involvement that is intended to explore all areas of potential involvement. We will ensure all levels of participation adhere to equal opportunity policy.

Everyone is involved in Tenant Participation, housing association staff, management, Board members, tenants and the wider community. For the strategy to work everyone must have a clear understanding of what it is trying to achieve.





The 10 principles of Tenant Participation set the context:



1. Tenant Participation comes from and promotes a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership between tenants, board members and staff at all levels. It exists when all these interests work together towards a common goal of better housing conditions and housing services.



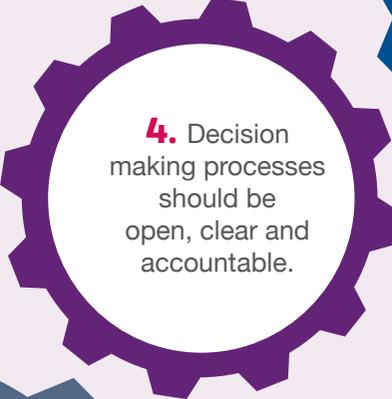
6. The landlord must recognise the independence of tenants' organisations.



7. Good working relations evolve gradually so must be flexible to adapt to local circumstances.



2. Tenant Participation is a continuous process. Participants share information, ideas and influence. They work towards a common understanding of problems and a consensus on solutions.



4. Decision making processes should be open, clear and accountable.



5. Tenant representatives should have enough time to consider issues properly. They should have the opportunity to work out a common view before meeting landlord representatives.



8. Tenants' organisations need adequate resources for organisation, training and support.



3. Good Tenant Participation is about sharing information. All participants need to have all the information available to consider issues properly. That information needs to be clear, timely and accessible. Information must be in a format that all participants can understand.



9. Tenant Participation in rural areas must suit the particular circumstances and needs of rural tenants.



10. Tenant Participation must meet the requirements of legislation Equality and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

NB Housing aims to build on these guiding principles within the extended strategy for 2021-2024.

Further Tenant Participation will ensure that NB Housing has both opinion and input from tenants which will shape our policies and practices in terms of relevance for our tenants.

Tenant Participation facilitates tenants coming together and using their voice as a collective for change. This means that communities feel empowered and integrated into society as a whole. Not only will Tenant Participation give a voice to tenants in relation to their housing, it will also increase tenant confidence and knowledge which will assist them to achieve in all aspects of their lives.



Outcomes of NB Housing Tenant Participation 2017–2020

The NB Housing Tenant Participation Strategy 2017 -2020 was largely built upon the Department for Communities strategy *'A tenant participation strategy for Northern Ireland: 2015 to 2020*

The strategy suggested ways to engage with tenants for example questionnaires, forming tenant groups, tenant inspectors, becoming a board member to mention just a few. These have all been included in the NB Housing's approach to tenant participation. The main purpose of the departments strategy was to ensure that all social landlords were giving an opportunity to their tenants to have a voice and hence influence strategy, policy and future objectives.

Amongst the key components of the strategy were ensuring a two-way process between tenant and social landlord involving trust, sharing information, accountability of decision makers and tenant groups being supported and trained.

Thus, NB Housing devised its strategy with the main theme being tenant empowerment.

So where are we now and what did we achieve?

We are proud of the progress made in delivering our previous tenant participation strategy and achieved many of the goals. The positive outcomes achieved will follow onto our new strategy. We want to thank all of our tenants who became actively involved in meetings, consultations, surveys, etc and who offered suggestions, ideas and engagement. As a result, we have increased our tenant participation and engagement activities and forged new community partnerships. Some of the achievements are:



- ✓ Throughout the span of the 2017-2020 strategy we reviewed our action plan and put in place improvements that would aid the further participation. 24 of 33 outcomes with the strategy were achieved. Our Annual Satisfaction Survey showed increasing response rates with 14% of tenants involved the survey last year. Results have shown a high level of satisfaction with overall NB Housing performance at 93%.
- ✓ We measured how we communicate with tenants. Communication is a major element within the strategy. Again, 93% of tenants surveyed were satisfied their views were considered, this is central to our strategy.
- ✓ In the final year of the Tenant Participation Strategy 2017-2020 there were 25 Tenant Participation Meetings held and a total of 7 community events. This has been an increase on statistics in previous years.



2019/20	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Community events held	0	1	2	4	7
Tenant Participation meetings	4	7	8	6	25
Total No of residents attending	10	26	29	44	109

- ✓ Meeting attendance alone exceeded the target of 2% of tenants being involved in some method of participation. Throughout the year meeting attendance represented 10%.
- ✓ We are delighted to have a tenant representative on the Housing Policy Panel.
- ✓ Areas covered and discussed at the tenant meetings included;
 - Anti-social behaviour complaints, how tenants are impacted and solutions on how these incidents can be resolved. This in turn leads to changes in ASB management eg we employed a security service to give tenants assurances that issues are being dealt with promptly;
 - Maintenance/Repairs: Direct consultation with maintenance team to discuss refurbishment of a sheltered scheme, outstanding and suggested repairs;
 - Policy & Procedure: Review of complaints procedure was discussed with residents. Outcome was that tenants believed the policy was easy to understand and process was simple, resulting in no amendments to the policy.

The 2017-2020 strategy outcomes has highlighted further steps we can take to ensure Tenant Participation is at the centre of everything we do.

- ✓ Our menu of involvement and Tenant Participation structure needs to be regularly reviewed to take account of the changing tenant base and changing tenant need as well as legislative requirements.
- ✓ The creation of the Community Development & Tenant Support Officer position in April 2019 has driven Tenant Participation and created a necessary focus within the organisation on Tenant Participation.



Aims of the Tenant Participation Strategy 2021- 2024

To provide a culture of respect and participation between the association, our tenants and the community.



Ensuring that tenants feel comfortable and able to provide feedback to the association and that this feedback is considered by the association

To encourage tenants to influence decisions made by the association and to provide feedback on our services.



Ensuring that policies and procedures within the organisation are reviewed by tenants on a regular basis so that tenants feel part of the association and its direction

To deliver efficient, effective and targeted services to meet the ever-increasing diverse needs of our customers.



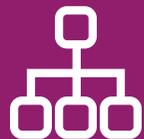
Ensuring our tenants can access our services and options from our Menu of Involvement

To develop our work in supporting tenants maintain and manage their tenancies and fulfil their obligations contained within the tenancy agreement through partnerships with other agencies and providers.



Ensuring that our tenants can have access to support and advice when required including access to personal input from the Community Development and Tenant Support Officer

To achieve challenging key performance targets and to measure our service delivery performance over all activities.



Ensuring assessment and evaluation of our Tenant Participation Strategy within our Annual Review Process

To invest in modern innovative technologies that improve tenant experience of our service and enable more efficient use of resources.



Ensuring the use of modern technology to capture the views of all our tenants

Measuring the Success of the Strategy

It is important that we review our **Tenant Participation Strategy** to ensure the objectives we set out to achieve are accomplished.

We plan on reviewing the strategy on an annual basis. This will involve an evaluation of each item within the action plan and where areas of improvement are necessary this can be reviewed and incorporated as a new action. We will set out to measure the success of the plan as laid out opposite.



Encouraging Tenant Participation

NB Housing recognises the need to offer a variety of methods to encourage tenant involvement. Moreover, we are interested in hearing how you, our tenants, would like to participate and engage with us. Whilst there are a number of options below, please let us know about your suggestions. Contact our Community Development and Tenant Support Officer on 028 9059 2110. We look forward to hearing from you.



Tenants Forum

A tenant can represent their community on a wide range of issues by being part of a Tenant Forum. This is a formally constituted group with a Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary and encourages tenants to have formal input into how their homes and neighbourhoods are managed. Members are consulted on areas such as policy and procedures, services, development plans and information provision. Training and administrative resources are available to assist tenants to participate.



Tenant Groups

This is an informal tenant group and meets monthly for approximately 1.5 hours. It consists of tenants from all areas, apartment buildings, schemes and properties across the association. It provides a platform to discuss housing related issues and shares best practice ideas.



Tenant Champion

Where no formal Tenant Forum Association exists in an area, a tenant can become a Tenant Champion to represent their local community. They will work alongside NB Housing staff to address any issues in their area. Requires approximately 30 minutes to one hour per week and is flexible.



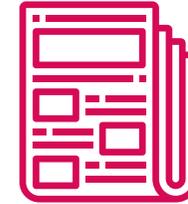
Tenant Inspectors

Tenants can carry out an inspection of our services alongside housing staff and maintenance staff to identify areas for improvement. They will tour their building/ estate with the Housing and Maintenance Officer to identify areas of concern and agree priorities for the local community. Any findings can be built into community clean up days, carried out by cyclical or response maintenance or raised with the local council.



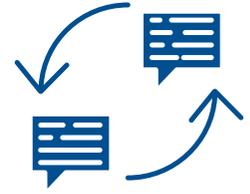
Mystery Shopper

Tenants can test services and provide feedback as a mystery shopper by carrying out a series of pre-agreed tasks, such as telephone calls or reception visits.



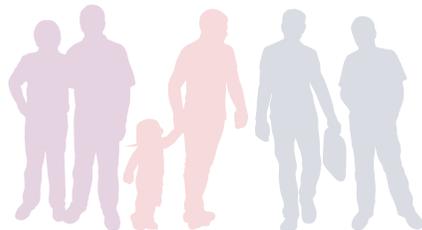
Editorial Team

Tenants can write and review articles for the Tenant Newsletter and website as well as report on Tenant Participation progress within NB Housing.



Translator

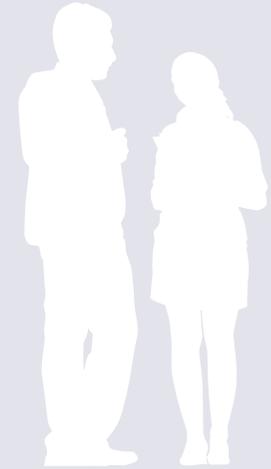
Tenants who have second languages can engage with other tenants to explain services and policies of the housing association.





Armchair Reviews

Tenants can respond to surveys from the comfort of their own home. Tenants can be contacted by text, post, email or telephone call.



Tenant Satisfaction Surveys



Annual Tenants Survey

Survey is completed by post by all tenants and highlights the association's strengths, weaknesses and areas of opportunity for improvement. Results are published in newsletters and our annual report.



Maintenance satisfaction survey

Tenants complete a maintenance satisfaction survey following each repair to their property. This informs us of how satisfied tenants are with the quality of repairs.

Resources

NB Housing shall create a budget specifically for tenants' participation. This budget will cover costs such as:



**Hiring
meeting rooms**



**Providing lunches,
teas and coffee**



**Special requirements
for tenants needs**



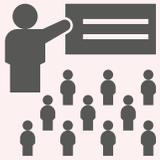
**Tenants
travelling expenses**



**Postage and printing of
newsletters, questionnaires
and other information.**



**Access to IT for tenants in
delivery of the strategy**



**Training
costs**



**Tenant
incentives**



**Tenant
conferences**

NB Housing employs a Community Development & Tenant Support Officer to drive strategy and as a direct point of contact for tenants who wish to participate in the opportunities above.

By encouraging as many tenants as possible to participate in the menu of involvement options we will ensure our tenants have input into everything we do within NB Housing. A key principle is to ensure that any tenant feedback is not only heard but acted upon. We look forward to assessing and measuring this strategy going forward on an annual basis with the aid of the action plan as detailed opposite.

Tenant Participation Action Plan 2021-2024

Aims	Action	Outcome	By Who	By When
1. To provide a culture of respect and participation between the Association, our tenants and the community				
1.1 Update training for staff in Tenant Participation where appropriate.	Source relevant courses for staff.	All staff aware of importance of Tenant Participation on holistic level.	Corporate Services/ Housing Manager	Ongoing
1.2 Develop and promote community and tenant engagement opportunities.	Source relevant courses and information sessions.	Tenants have knowledge and are empowered.	CDTSO	Review October annually
1.3 Build strong working partnerships with both statutory and voluntary organisations relevant to Tenant Participation and Community Development.	Attend all relevant multi agency meetings.	Tenants interests are represented in their local communities.	Housing Team	Ongoing and review in September annually
1.4 Provide opportunities for tenants to come together in their communities with staff of the association.	Continue with events that bring tenants and staff together such as coffee mornings.	Build a culture of respect and participation between tenants and staff.	All staff	Ongoing and review in September annually
2. To encourage tenants to influence decisions made by the Association and to provide feedback on our services.				
2.1 Establish database of individual Tenant Participation including Menu of Involvement. Register of tenants who wish to participate.	Build database through mail shot, tenant meetings etc. Increase numbers through ballots, lunches etc.	List of tenants who wish to participate in differing ways, thereby influencing policy.	CDTSO Housing Manager	Aug 2021
2.2 Continue to develop current tenants' groups with a view to encouraging a Tenants Forum.	Hold regular tenants' meetings with support offered in regard to personal development.	A tenants' forum organised and courses offered to tenants in relation to running forum.	Housing Team/ All depts	Ongoing
2.3 Encourage tenants who wish to participate in reviewing policy and policies through tenant consultation panel.	Encourage tenants at tenants' meetings to review policy or through mail shots/newsletter. Develop register of consultation procedures and results.	Build a tenant consultation panel for reviewing policy including this Strategy. From this a register will be developed in relation to consultation and results.	CDTSO / Corporate Services/ Housing Team	Ongoing with year end review
2.4 Consideration to be given to Tenant representation on the NB Housing Board.	Offer courses for tenants on tenants' groups to build their skills.	Tenant joins the Board.	All staff	Ongoing

Aims	Action	Outcome	By Who	By When
3. To deliver efficient, effective and targeted services to meet the ever-increasing diverse needs of our customers				
3.1 Continue to produce quarterly newsletters with relevant information and advice for tenants.	Ensure newsletters have relevant advice and in relation to tenants. Ask for input from tenants.	Tenants feel informed and empowered.	All staff	Quarterly
3.2 Continually update information and advice on website.	Update website regularly, ask tenants for their input.	Concise and accurate information for tenants.	All staff	Ongoing
3.3 Continual review of Tenants Information in handbook and all leaflets.	Look to see if and when updates are needed.	Tenants are aware of the support of the association and their responsibilities in relation to their tenancies.	All staff	Review before end of 2021 and annually
4. To develop our work in supporting tenants maintain and manage their tenancies and fulfil obligations contained in the tenancy agreement through partnerships with other agencies and providers.				
4.1 Continue with Estate Inspection and Community Clean up Days.	Organise at least 2 clean up days per year and ongoing estate inspections. Encourage tenants to take responsibility for their areas especially in apartment buildings.	Our tenants value their communities.	CDTSO/ Maintenance Team	Summer/ Autumn annually
4.2 Staff to continue to seek and encourage involvement when in contact with tenants.	Build good working relationships with tenants. Training course on customer service. All departments to have Tenant Participation on their staff meetings agendas.	Tenants and staff build excellent relationships.	All staff	Ongoing and review in January annually
5. To achieve challenging key performance targets to measure our service delivery performance over all activities.				
5.1 Review previous strategy outcomes.	Incorporate outcomes into new strategies moving forward.	Road map for ongoing Tenant Participation.	Housing Manager/ CDTSO All staff	September annually
5.2 Continue to collect feedback. Review the feedback and evaluate the success of Tenant Participation.	Assess feedback questions in Tenant Satisfaction Survey for Tenant Participation.	Increased level of cooperation between tenants and staff.	Corporate Services/ CDTSO	Yearly
5.3 Continue with annual tenant satisfaction survey and look to other methods to establish tenant satisfaction.	Redesign questionnaires, look to online questionnaire on website.	Increase in numbers participating.	All staff	Annually
6. To invest in modern innovative technologies that improve tenant experience of our service and enable more efficient use of resources.				
6.1 Participation in tenants' groups is barrier free by using technology to overcome difficulties.	Offer Zoom or use alternative technology for tenants who cannot come in person to meetings.	Tenants from all communities able to access tenants' meetings.	All staff	Ongoing

Feedback

We welcome
any questions or feedback
on our Tenant Participation
Strategy 2021-2024. If any tenant
wishes to become involved please
contact us on 028 9059 2110,
text us on 074 9820 2221
or email:
info@nb-housing.org





Gatelodge
8 Flax Street
Belfast
BT14 7EQ
T: 028 9059 2110 T: 028 9035 1131

282-290 Crumlin Road
Belfast
BT14 7ED

E: info@nb-housing.org
@NBHousing
www.nb-housing.org

Department for Communities Reg No R55
Financial Conduct Authority Reg No IP406

