



**TAI CANOLBARTH CYMRU
MID-WALES HOUSING**

Yn barod amdani Equal to the challenge

Tenant Engagement Strategy

Strategic Aim:	Through openness and accountability we will ensure that all tenants and residents have the opportunity to be involved in the decisions that affect their homes and are encouraged to improve the communities in which they live.
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Departments Affected:	All Departments
Approved By/Date:	Board of Management
Lead Officer:	Alisa Cakebread, Community Participation Officer.
Statutory Compliance:	Welsh Government Delivery Outcomes: Engaging with others to enhance and maximise outcomes for service users and the community. Placing the people who want to use our services at the heart of our work – putting the citizen first. Welsh Government National Tenant Participation Strategy for Wales.

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1. Introduction

Policy Statement

“Through openness and accountability we will ensure that all tenants and residents have the opportunity to be involved in the decisions that affect their homes and are encouraged to improve the communities in which they live.”

2. The Strategy (overarching aim)

In essence, this document needs to be a plan that improves things. By involving tenants and residents in all areas of the Association’s business, we shall aim to facilitate the following:

- Shape and improve services offered and service delivery and thereby deliver a more efficient housing service.
- Seek to improve quality of life.
- Support individual communities.
- Be accountable to our customers.
- Enhance and promote the ways in which residents can become involved digitally, as a way of negating the geographical challenges of the Mid-Wales region.
- Empower residents to become involved.
- Place tenants at the heart of everything we do.

We will commit to always consult with our residents on matters materially affecting their homes and we will always consult on policy changes.

3. The context

Mid-Wales Housing Association

Our Communities

The Association's geographical area includes the whole of Powys and Ceredigion, along with a handful of properties in Shropshire. We provide affordable housing in response to local need. The Association manages approx. 1,670 homes spread over a large geographical area, which brings its own challenges.

Our Tenants and Residents

The Association offers a range of accommodation providing homes for single people, families, older people and those with specific needs.

From the 2017 Tenant Survey, the following have been identified as the key drivers for tenants and residents:

1. Listen to views and act upon them.
2. Repairs and maintenance.
3. Quality of home.
4. Service charges.
5. Open and honest.
6. Rent.
7. Neighbourhood.
8. Anti-social behaviour.

Tenant Satisfaction

	2012	2013	2015	2016	2017	Benchmark Club	Housemark Upper Quartile
Overall Tenant Satisfaction	84%	81%	84%	93%	92%	89%	91%

Mid-Wales Housing Association has high levels of tenant satisfaction as evidenced in the table above (Annual Tenant Survey results). However, these high levels of overall satisfaction may go some way to account for why the Association struggles to get tenants and residents involved, and/or keep them involved. Acknowledgement should also be given to the fact that we are all living increasingly busier lives. Further, it is recognised that unless tenants and residents can see how an activity improved a situation or issue, it will be difficult to motivate their involvement again.

Tenant Participation at Mid-Wales Housing Association

Mid-Wales Housing's 2015-2018 Tenant Engagement Strategy is due for renewal. This revised strategy outlines the aims and objectives as well as an action plan for carrying out good tenant participation during this time. We recognise that not all tenants and residents wish to take part, (or if they do wish to take part, then not necessarily in the same way) and we therefore have a range of ways to encourage tenants and residents to join in, and become involved.

4. Vision and Values

Mid-Wales Housing Association is committed to placing tenants and residents at the core of our housing management service (in its widest sense).

The Association has four values, which define its operating culture and guide how it delivers its objectives. The core values are an integral part of delivering effective community and tenant engagement:



- Equality – aiming to involve all tenants and residents regardless of location, age, disability, race or gender by providing methods best suited to their needs.
- Caring – ensure that all teams within the Association understand the importance of involving tenants and residents to improve the service provided.
- Excellence – looking for continuous improvement of housing services and estate regeneration.
- Community – looking to improve communities by working with local tenants, residents and other organisations in the local area.

5. The Objectives

The key objectives in the Mid-Wales Housing Business Plan for 2018-2023 relating to this area of work are:

- **Improve Tenant satisfaction**
- **Increase Tenant participation**

The Tenant Participation Strategy will address these through the following six objectives:

- To increase tenant influence and involvement in helping the Association shape, improve and extend its range of services.
- To develop a culture and acceptance of tenant involvement at all levels throughout the Association.
- To encourage, support and enable under-represented groups of tenants to participate in the Association's activities.
- To refine methods of actively listening to and capturing tenants' satisfaction with the services we provide and which will help encourage and sustain an open and honest dialogue between us.
- To support initiatives and projects in the wider community that may directly or indirectly improve the quality of life of our tenants. Prioritising activities which will resolve issues and problems identified by local groups of tenants and/or the community.
- To work in conjunction with Community Housing Officers and residents to find solutions to estate-based problems, issues and anti-social behaviour.

6. Digital Interaction and Armchair Engagement

Increasingly, there are more and more ways to become involved, via a digital platform of one form or another. Digital interaction is mainstream within our society and of great benefit to communities such as those living in the Mid-Wales region, given the large geographical area. Digital technologies and online services have changed how we live, and play a big part in our lives today. This revised Tenant Engagement Strategy needs to embrace this development and ensure we offer the widest involvement opportunities to both young and old.

7. Health and Safety

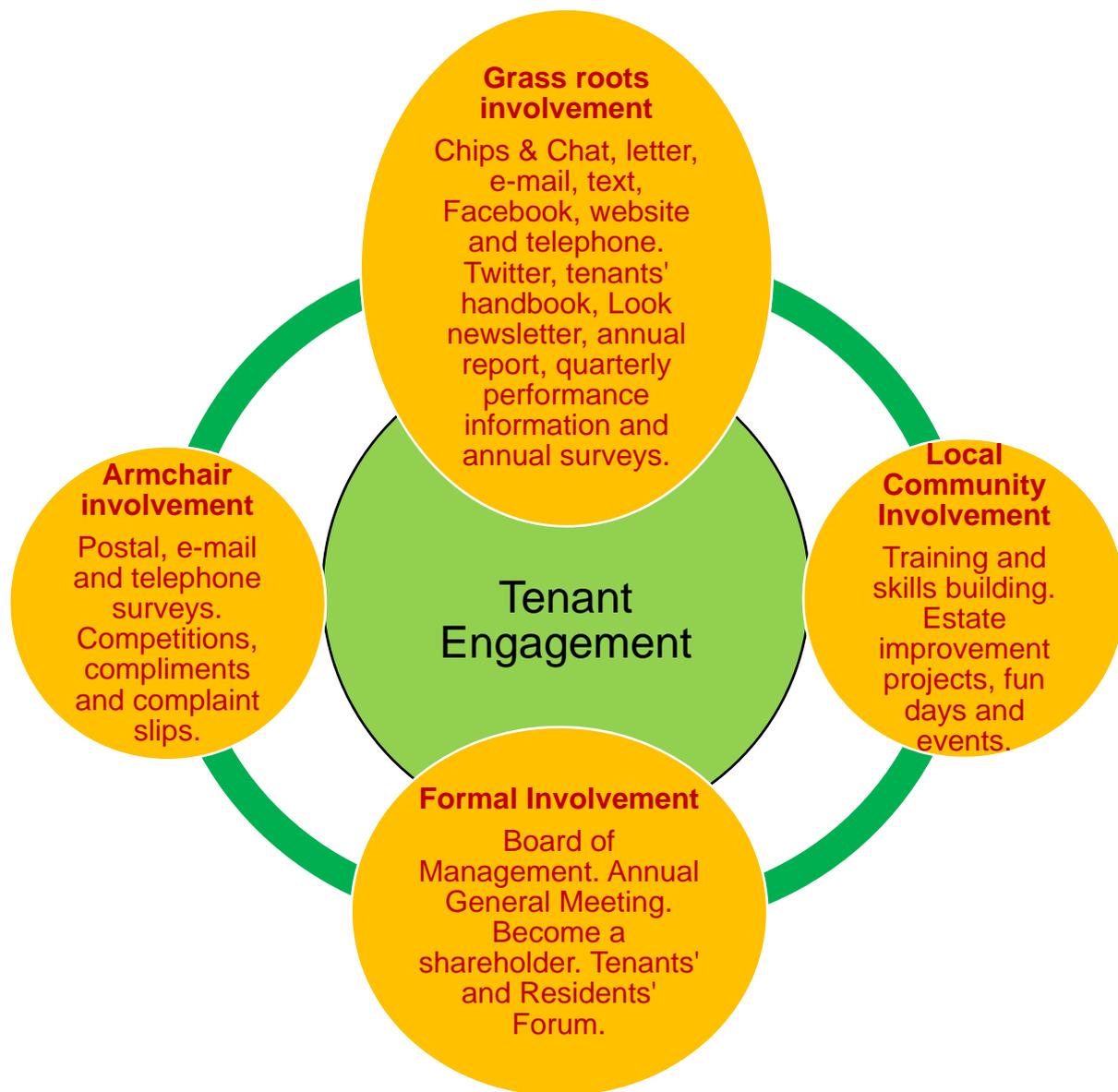
There is no prescriptive approach to involving tenants in health and safety, as no one-size fits all. Any approach needs to take account of the organisation's culture, stock profile and tenant profile. However, there are three approaches to consider:

- Transparency and accountability.
- Health and safety information and guidance.
- Involvement activities.

The Association acknowledges and is grateful for the benefits that can be gained from tenant involvement in this area:

- Residents' "lived" knowledge and experience.
- Residents' practical insight.
- Increased awareness and understanding.
- Drives transparency and accountability.
- Builds trust.
- Provides reassurance.

8. Ways to be involved



Digital means of engagement

Formal involvement

Grass Roots Involvement

Chips & Chat

Dates advertised on Facebook, information is shared with tenants who attend on how to get involved digitally; i-pads are used at the meeting to access information for tenants and to search on our system for jobs; rent queries they may have; planned maintenance programme.

Text

Employees at MWHHA use text/messenger and [WhatsApp](#) to communicate with tenants and residents if it is a method that they prefer. This can sometimes be free of charge to use.

Facebook

Tenants actively use Facebook to post both negative and positive feedback, ask questions, chase repairs etc. Negative feedback is not always good but it enables MWHHA to improve its service and share with the wider group of tenants that it will respond, take ownership of any errors and ensure that they are rectified. Positive feedback includes tenants sharing when they have received great service from MWHHA and individual employees. Tenants responding to other tenants to answer queries and share information. [To also contact tenants for feedback via polls.](#) Sharing information relevant to their communities. [Posting short videos for information and "how to" videos that are produced by staff; also making short video stories starring tenants sharing their particular stories.](#)

Local Community Involvement

Training & skills

Enabling tenants to access training online. Hosting computer training for tenants at Ty Canol House.

Investigating the possibility of providing free Wi-Fi for tenants throughout our stock. Also providing free recycled computers for tenants to enable them to study/access the internet etc. Tenants' resource room with free access to computers available.

Estate Improvement

Sharing pictures and results on Facebook and on the website, of community events.

Fun Days and Events

Taking photos/videos and sharing on social media while the event is happening to encourage tenants and residents to come along.

Formal Involvement

Board of Management

Minutes of non-confidential meetings are available on the website.

Information regarding the Annual General Meeting is on the website and can be shared on Facebook.

Tenants' and Residents' Forum.

Skype is available to tenants who are unable to attend the meeting but want to participate. Dates of meetings and minutes are shared on the website. Dates of meetings are shared on Facebook.

Armchair Involvement

E-mail surveys

Tenants contacted by e-mail and Facebook to carry out surveys/complete questionnaires. **E-mail blaster being finalised to enable MWAHA to contact tenants directly with information relevant to them.**

Competitions/Incentives

Information on competitions shared on Facebook. **Looking to re-start similar group to the Mid-Wales 50 where tenants are asked to get involved and contacted via e-mail for feedback. Could also utilise e-mail blaster for this.**

Traditional means of engagement

Formal Involvement

Grass roots involvement

Chips and Chat

Invitations are sent to tenants in the post, dates advertised in the newsletter. Information is shared with tenants who attend about events, etc. in their local communities. Various external speakers are invited to attend meetings.

Local Community Involvement

Training & skills

Enabling tenants to access training resources locally or organising training via MWAHA.

Estate Improvement

Led by members of Community Housing Team to identify areas/estates that require improvement. Speaking and working with tenants and residents directly for ideas where things can be improved.

Fun Days & Events

Holding events in communities, speaking to people face to face and also handing out leaflets with information.

Formal Involvement

Annual General Meeting

Tenants and residents are informed of the date of the AGM and invited to attend.

Shareholder

Information on how to become a shareholder is shared with tenants.

Tenants' and Residents' Forum

Attending meetings, looking at policies, being kept informed. Being involved in the interview process for positions at MWA where the role is front facing – e.g. setting questions to be asked at interview and interviewing applicants where relevant.

Armchair Involvement

Postal & telephone

Tenants contacted by post and telephone to carry out surveys/complete questionnaires.

Competitions/Incentives

Information on competitions in newsletter.

Chips & Chat

Invitations are sent to tenants in the post, dates advertised in the newsletter. Information is shared with tenants who attend about events, etc. in their local communities. Various external speakers are invited to attend the meetings.



9. Monitoring and Review

This strategy will be reviewed at a quarterly period, on a performance management basis between the Community Participation Officer and the Community Housing Team Leader. The strategy will also be a standing agenda item for each and every meeting of the Tenants' and Residents' Forum. The Association's Executive team will review the strategy on an annual basis, to ensure the expected progress, at that point in time, has been achieved, and if not, to discuss why not, and what needs to be done to continue as originally planned.

A quarterly report will be presented to Board, which will include a precis of all tenant engagement and involvement that has taken place within the previous quarter. A summary of the report will be included within each tenant newsletter. This will bring everything that has taken place in the previous quarter together, in one document. It will make it easier for all to understand the activity that has happened, and more importantly, what has been achieved because of that activity.

Feedback will be the main basis of evaluating this strategy. Feedback from all tenants and residents will be gathered at every event/meeting etc. For example, at "Chips & Chat" events, the Community Participation Officer will produce both a summary of the discussions, along the lines of "You said...we did...we didn't" and a summary of feedback from attendees. The summary of discussion is provided to everyone who attended, and that document, together with the summary of feedback, is discussed at a monthly meeting of the Executive Team.

Minutes of each Tenants' and Residents' Forum meeting are supplied to each member of Tenants' and Residents' Forum, along with anyone else who attended. The previous year's minutes are available to download from the Association's website, by anyone.

A trial session will be held with the Tenants' and Residents' Forum. A policy will be presented to the Forum and will be live-streamed to a selection of interested tenants, who will then be asked to provide their comments and feedback, via the medium of their choice. This feedback will enable the Forum to have a wider collection of views and comments to consider. This pilot will also be trialled at a Board meeting; a report will be presented by a Director to the meeting, but will also be live-streamed to a group of tenants. A planned break will then take place and tenants will comment on the topic presented. Those comments will then be presented to Board Members prior to their discussion.

All training and information sessions are monitored via evaluation sheets to ensure tenants and staff are receiving appropriate support, which is relevant and useful.

Satisfaction surveys for a number of services including repairs and maintenance, anti-social behaviour, the lettings process and new build properties are collated by the appropriate team leader and used to inform the key performance indicators and improve service delivery.

The annual tenant satisfaction survey will take place during 2019. As usual, this will include the standard question in relation to whether Mid-Wales Housing Association listens to the views of tenants, and acts upon them. In the annual survey, it may also

be appropriate to ask a number of specific questions, to test the success of any new activity or engagement method.



TERMS OF REFERENCE

TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' FORUM (TARF)

What is TaRF?

The aim of the Tenants' and Residents' Forum is to work with Mid-Wales Housing Association to promote tenants' rights and put forward recommendations in order to improve policies and services for the betterment of tenants and residents.

What happens at a TaRF meeting?

1. TaRF members will meet bimonthly on the first Friday of the month. The meetings are carried out in a relaxed manner but to keep matters on track the Chair or Vice Chair will conduct each meeting.
2. The Chair will be elected annually by a simple majority. No Tenant Board Member can Chair TaRF. In the absence of the Chair the Vice Chair will assume the role.
3. All notes will be taken by a member of TaRF or the Community Participation Officer who is responsible for printing and circulating documents to TaRF members.
4. TaRF is a representative panel for the wider body of Mid-Wales Housing's tenants and residents and should not represent themselves at the main meeting. Members should report personal or estate issues directly to the relevant Housing or Maintenance Officer to address.
5. If members are concerned that particular issues could be affecting Mid-Wales Housing Association tenants and residents, it should be raised during tenants' time, held prior to the main meeting.
6. Every year TaRF will work through an annual programme of topics, policies and issues which members and the Association believe to be important. Each meeting will concentrate on the programmed topic. Notes and information for the meeting will be sent to members no later than two weeks before the next meeting.

How do you become a member of TaRF?

All tenants and residents of Mid-Wales Housing Association, including those residents who have purchased their property from MWhA, are welcome to join TaRF at any stage during their tenancy.

Does it cost anything to be a member?

1. Mid-Wales Housing will pay all reasonable travel expenses to and from meetings or other events connected with TaRF.
2. Where applicable and subject to prior approval, the Association will pay reasonable expenses incurred in enabling tenants to attend meetings, such as care costs, child care or mileage/public transport.

Ending Membership

Membership of TaRF shall cease when a member:

1. Writes to TaRF or the Community Participation Officer (CPO) stating they no longer wish to attend meetings.
2. Fails to abide by the Code of Conduct which all members are requested to sign.

There will be a Right of Appeal against expulsion through the Association's normal Complaints Policy; however, the Chairperson will strive to resolve any and all problems that may arise within the Membership during meetings.

Voting Rights:

1. The Code of Conduct will be enforced at all times.
2. At all meetings, all decisions will be taken by a simple majority vote by the Members present.
3. There will be no more than one vote per Member.
4. A quorum for a meeting shall be four voting Members (three members plus the Chair).
5. The results of all votes cast at any time shall be recorded in the notes of the meeting.
6. All comments, statements etc. shall be made "through the Chair".

Equal Opportunities:

TaRF/MWHA shall uphold equal opportunities. Any conduct or activity which discriminates on the grounds of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, marital status, disability or religion shall be prohibited.

Review:

1. This constitution shall be reviewed regularly to reflect changes.
2. Any Member can ask for a review or an amendment.
3. All variations and/or amendments must be voted upon the majority decision will prevail.