

When the government decided that landlords need to start listening to their tenants there was a sense of here we go again, more tick boxing and shouts of “tenants need to have their say”. As someone who has been involved in Tenant Participation for almost 20 years this felt like nothing new.

Any way, with a positive outlook that maybe this time tenants will have their voices heard we decided to pilot the draft questions. Why bother you ask? As a supported landlord where many of our tenants are not able to live their lives independently, they have never been approached to have their say in such depth. So, where do you begin when a tenant has no way of communicating and they rely on support for everything? Would staff or family have time to send a questionnaire back? Would they be truly honest and answer on behalf of our tenant? Faced with this dilemma we decided to do the survey in person. Not a major inconvenience as we only have 216 eligible properties between Lincoln and Dumfries! Throughout 2022 we managed to get through the door of them all. 21 tenants didn't want to take part so that gave us a 90% overall return rate.

During the visit we also weighed up whether our tenants were able to complete the survey themselves.

- Almost 34% would be able to complete their own survey alone, 26% with support.
- Slightly over 40% could take part in an activity alone, compared to 38% supported.
- 33% of our tenants could have a meaningful discussion about services.

We quickly realised that it is very difficult to re-phrase the questions into simple language so it is understood without turning it into a leading question with bias.

Last week we reported to board that 93% of our tenants are satisfied with the service we provide. 91% were satisfied with our repairs service with 92% satisfied that we listen to our tenants views and act upon them. 90% of those who took part knew how to make a complaint if they are not happy with the service they receive. Of all the data collected this is the one area where we felt like we needed to do a bit of work so we included an article in our Christmas newsletter and all properties will be given our complaints procedure at their Tenant Support Visit in 2023. Overall, we was obviously delighted with these figures, although a little bit nervous as they are high, with little wriggle room.

This pilot proved to be a vital exercise as we are now prepared for when this becomes legislation. Going forward, to avoid bias a couple of people will be carrying out the surveys to ensure that there is consistency and can stand up to scrutiny. We need to have clear data on who has completed the survey; either tenant on their own, tenant with support, by family member or their care provider. This is critical as people should be answering on behalf of the tenant, rather than expressing their own opinion. When we analyse the data we will be able to see who has provided the answers.

We also need to collect qualitative data so after every question, whoever is completing the form will be given the opportunity to tell us why they have given the answer they did. This will allow us to change our procedures, if necessary and show that we take feedback on board, whether positive or negative.

When the final questions were published, we were disappointed that the government decided to run with the question about landlords making a positive contribution to their neighbourhood. We have no estate management function and have no say or influence on the estates where we have houses so we will approach this question with a bit of trepidation, but generally it will be onwards and upwards.

Appendix 1 - Full data on draft Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Please note that the reference numbers and questions are from the draft publications, not the final approved versions

No. of properties in total	233
No. of properties with residential tenant	216
Number of properties who have had the opportunity to complete the survey	216
Number of tenants who have completed survey	195
Number of tenants who have declined to take part in the survey	21
Return rate	90%

		Percentage who gave 4 or 5 stars	Number of respondents	Actual reporting figure
TP01	Taking everything into account, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the service provided by Partners Foundation?	93.85%	195	93%
TP02	Has Partners Foundation carried out a repair to your home in the last 12 months? If yes, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the repairs service you have received	91.86%	172	91%
TP03	If yes, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the time taken to complete your most recent repair after you reported it?	80.23%	172	80%
TP04	Thinking specifically about the building you live in, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Partners Foundation provides a home that is well maintained and safe for you to live in?	93.33%	195	93%
TP05	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the extent to which Partners Foundation listens to your views and acts upon them?	92.31%	195	92%
TP06	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Partners Foundation keeps you informed about things that matter to you as a tenant?	96.92%	195	91%
TP07	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "My landlord treats me fairly and with respect."	98.46%	195	98%
TP08	Do you live in a building with communal areas, either inside or outside, that you share with other people who live in the building? If yes, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Partners Foundation keeps these communal areas clean (where applicable), safe and well-maintained?	87.40%	127	87%
TP09	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your neighbourhood as a place to live?	91.28%	195	91%
TP10	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with Partners Foundation's approach to handling anti-social behaviour?	93.33%	15	93%
TP11	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with Partners Foundation's approach to complaints handling?	88.89%	9	88%
TP12	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "I know how to make a complaint to Partners Foundation if I am not happy with the service I receive."	90.26%	195	90%