

# Resident Engagement in Building Safety

What can we learn by collaborating?

Authored by Anna O'Halloran  
and Emma Flynn





# Contents

|                                                      | Page |
|------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1. Introduction                                      | 4    |
| 2. Meet Our Participants                             | 7    |
| 3. Why Now?                                          | 10   |
| 4. Meaningful Engagement: generic vs building safety | 12   |
| 5. The Core Project                                  | 13   |
| 6. The Workshops                                     | 18   |
| 7. What We Learned                                   | 41   |
| 8. Tpas' View                                        | 48   |
| 9. Thanks                                            | 50   |

# Executive Summary

---

I am so pleased to be introducing this report to you. It is thought provoking, challenging and ambitious whilst also highly detailed and hugely practical. A powerful combination to ensure we are all doing the best we possibly can to have resident influence at the very heart of building safety.

Effectively and meaningfully engaging residents on building safety is not easy. Tpas recognised that from the outset, which is why bringing organisations together, as in this research, has made the findings so insightful. Sharing of ideas and concerns. Shared learning from mistakes. It helps us all as we navigate this incredibly important part of our businesses.

This is not just about keeping people safe – non-negotiable as that is. This work is about communication, trust, and respect and fundamentally it's about people and culture at its core. If we get those relationships working better, alongside our buildings working better, then we are on the right track.

Taken alongside the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) guidance for residents, we believe the themes and recommendations within this report act as a crucial foundation and roadmap on how the principles could work successfully for all housing providers and residents.

I hope this report will inspire you to not “do what you have always done.” But to be bold and curious to try new approaches to engagement and involvement that will ensure residents are not only actually living in safe homes, but crucially they feel safe in their homes too.



**Jenny Osbourne MBE**  
Tpas Chief Executive



# 1. Introduction

## TPAS COLLABORATE

This report is the second in a series designed to reflect the findings of multi-landlord participatory research programs led by Tpas.

The first report '[The Engagement Maximiser](#)' was published in 2021.

Tpas Collaborate programs broadly follow the same methodology with a cohort of participants from landlords experiencing challenging and thought provoking workshops led by experts from inside and outside the housing sector.



## Resident engagement in building safety: why now?

Never has the need for new approaches to securing engagement been so important.

The nine landlords collaborating in this project were motivated to join the project because:

- “ Engagement in building safety is a sticking point, and we want to:
- Hear examples from other organisations about resident engagement/building safety techniques.
  - To be at the leading edge of resident engagement in the sector.
  - To understand the thinking and processes behind meaningful engagement, and to incorporate this learning into our engagement and corporate strategies. ”



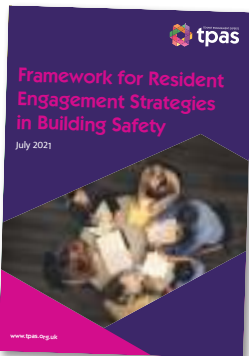
on why they joined the project

- “ Being leaders in the industry and, in advance of them being introduced here, embracing the early adoption of new regulations currently operating in England.
- Adopting a collaborative approach with our residents to place them at the heart of changes, and also with our colleagues across housing associations to provide ongoing learning and development. Sharing best practice through this Tpas Collaborate programme will enable us all to be innovative, collaborative and provide the best outcomes for our residents.
  - Producing results through innovative resident engagement strategies that are recognised by our colleagues/board and can influence our corporate strategy to ensure we are always resident focused. ”



on why they joined the project

Since the Grenfell tragedy it has been widely accepted by the housing sector that resident engagement is a fundamental ingredient of keeping people safe in the buildings they live in, and ensuring they feel safe too.



Tpas launched its Framework for **'Resident Engagement in Building Safety Strategies'** in 2021, in response to demand from Tpas members seeking clarification following guidance from the new Building Safety Regulator that Strategies were to be compulsory.

However it became clear to Tpas that many organisations needed more of an opportunity to create significant space and time to dedicate to their strategies, and therefore Tpas launched this project in 2023. The project was a collaborative approach into researching the most effective ways that resident engagement in building safety could be achieved.

The broad aims laid down at the outset were as follows:

- Understanding the context and background to the Building Safety Act and about the expectations for effective resident engagement
- Providing a supportive and creative environment for organisations to learn and develop ideas in a collaborative and collegiate way
- Leaving participants able to develop a tangible action plan based on their own contextual evidence, to deliver evidence-based engagement with residents living in high-risk buildings

More specifically, Tpas was keen to create an environment where the following could take place:

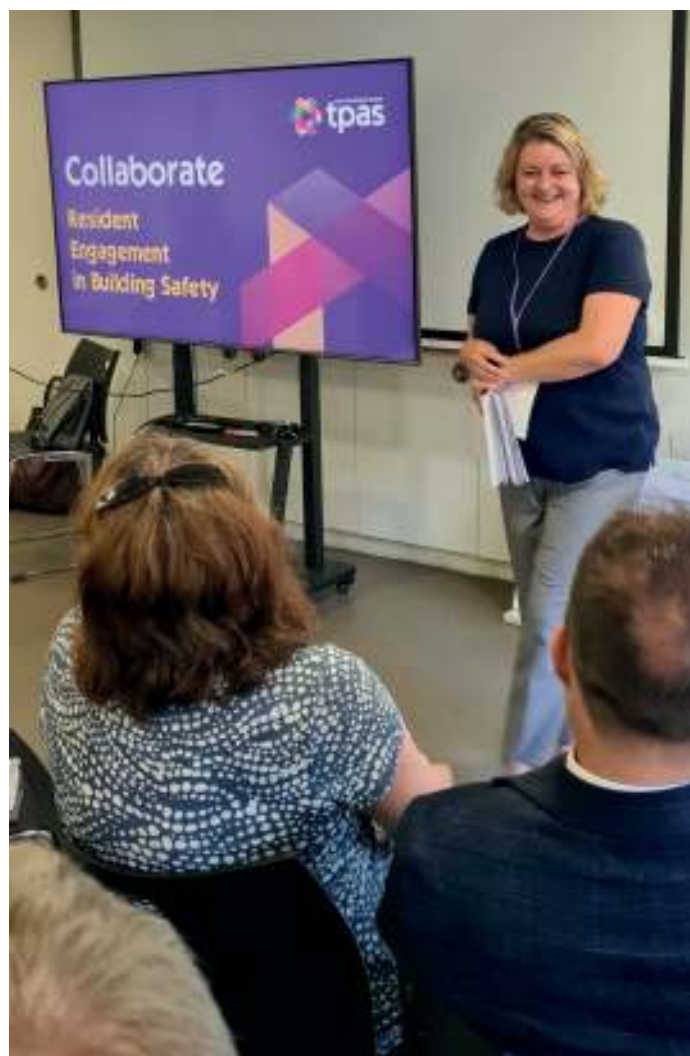
- To assist organisations with the obligations of the Building Safety Act, including the concepts of accountability and responsibility
- Provide organisations with a clear direction for delivering successful resident engagement, including the legal requirement of a Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy for each High-Risk Block (HRB)
- Hear from Tpas, sector stakeholders and other thought-leaders, including the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Building Safety Regulator (BSR) on expectations and proven techniques
- Help in the creation of solutions based on evidence, developed by working both with peers, but also through practical application of learning within organisations
- Deliver a real difference to residents
- Ensure that residents are more likely to feel safe, and be safe
- Develop a blue-print to overcome barriers to engagement across many services
- Develop future practice, supporting the sector to innovate
- Motivate colleagues and stakeholders to understand the importance of engaging with residents
- Create a sense of urgency within organisations to deliver results



Over a 6-month period, nine trailblazing landlords joined with Tpas, and each other, to work through the challenges posed in the workshops, to generate ideas that would eventually allow them to develop highly effective Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategies.

The project content and scope enabled the exploration of every dimension of resident engagement in building safety, in these five workshops:

1. Why resident engagement in building safety?
2. Understanding people and context
3. Bridging the gap between data and insight
4. Tackling internal challenges to create the power to listen
5. Putting in place the right culture



Tpas developed each workshop in preparation for the next.

This put landlords under pressure to develop their thinking and keep the topic in their mind beyond attending traditional training.

This report reflects the learning everyone experienced and some of the early outcomes achieved by the organisational participants. It will serve as a useful tool for other organisations when developing their own approaches to resident engagement in building safety.

## 2. Meet Our Participants



### Notting Hill Genesis

We're a not-for-profit organisation with a focus on providing quality homes at below-market rents for people who would otherwise struggle to afford them. We are both a landlord and a developer, with more than 60,000 existing homes and 10,000 more in our pipeline, and a well-established commercial business from which we reinvest surpluses to support the provision of below market-rent homes across the capital.

Founded in the 1960s to address slum conditions in West London, we're now one of London's largest charitable housing associations and a leading advocate and trusted partner to local councils and government, giving Londoners a base and community from which to achieve their potential.



### Wolverhampton Homes

We are Wolverhampton Homes. We're an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) which was set up in 2005. We manage and look after more than 21,000 homes on behalf of the City of Wolverhampton Council.

We love our city and we're here to help provide good quality homes and a great service, keeping customers at the heart of everything we do. We're passionate about serving our customers and we care about our city's future.



### Leathermarket JMB

Leathermarket JMB is a tenant managed organisation (TMO) based in central London. We manage approximately 1600 homes on behalf of Southwark Council, of which just under a third are leasehold properties. We have seven high-rise high risk buildings in our portfolio.

The JMB is Southwark's largest resident-managed housing organisation and the only fully self-financed TMO in the country. Founded in 1996 by a group of local residents, we continue to take direction from a board of tenants and maintain a daily physical presence in the community. Our vision is to provide excellent housing services. To do this, we aim to:

- Exercise sound financial decision-making
- Involve local people
- Be a good employer

We evidence our excellence through high tenant satisfaction rates and 5-yearly continuation ballots.

Residents are the reason we are here.



### Your Housing Group

Your Housing Group is a registered social housing landlord providing safe, affordable homes to people at every stage of life.

We own and manage more than 29,000 properties across the North, and offer homes for social and affordable rent, shared ownership, outright sale and private rent.



## Northern Ireland Housing Executive

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) is the Strategic Housing Authority for Northern Ireland.

It is a non-departmental public body established, at the height of civil unrest, by the Housing Executive Act (NI) 1971 to assume the housing responsibilities of over 60 local councils and is Northern Ireland's single comprehensive regional housing authority.

The NIHE currently employs in excess of 3,000 staff to manage over 83,000 homes and also has responsibility for numerous commercial properties, leaseholds, garages and areas of land across Northern Ireland. It works with partners in local government, councils and housing associations to deliver new-build accommodation to an excellent, modern standard. It assists with housing adaptations for those living with a disability and funds community impact projects across Northern Ireland to improve local cohesion and foster vibrant communities. It works in partnership with over 500 community groups through the Housing Community Network and delivers social enterprise grant funding, to help build grassroots businesses which increases employment at the heart of communities.

In addition, the Housing Executive is the Northern Ireland's Home Energy Conservation Authority and also administers the Housing Benefit Scheme, which provides help with rent to people on low income.



## Stonewater

Stonewater Housing Association provide a range of housing options, so you can find a place to live that's right for you - from the cost to the location to the type and size of property.

We have homes for **affordable rent** and homes to **buy** through Shared Ownership and Rent to Buy schemes.

We also have **retirement schemes** for people over 55 and **supported living schemes** for vulnerable people. This includes LGBTQ+ Safe Spaces, young people's foyers, and refuges for survivors of domestic abuse. Our supported living schemes combine quality accommodation with specialist support, so you can continue living independently.



## Peabody

Peabody is one of the UK's oldest not-for-profit housing associations, but our focus is always on the future. We're committed to making sure our homes are affordable and comfortable for everyone. That's why we keep rents low and aim to provide our communities with services and support that give everyone a platform to succeed. We have 107,000 homes and 220,000 residents across London and the Home Counties.

We also provide care and support services for around 17,500 customers.



### Grand Union Housing Group

Grand Union Housing Group have been in business for almost 30 years and provide nearly 13,000 homes for more than 29,000 people across Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Hertfordshire. We're a £92 million turnover social housing business with almost 400 staff.

Our mission is **more homes, stronger communities, better lives**. We build affordable homes, provide personal support, and help people to learn, work and be healthy.

We're a financially stable and innovative not-for-profit organisation that believes in partnership and collaboration. We plan to build over 1,500 more new homes over the next five years to play our part in ending the housing crisis.



### Hyde

The Hyde Group has been operating for almost 60 years and we have over 48,000 homes across London and the south east.

As a group led not-for-profit organisation, we're here for the good of our customers. We do this by maintaining and investing in the homes we provide and are building genuinely affordable homes too. Making sure people have a safe, affordable, and comfortable home to be proud of is what drives us and underpins our vision of a great home for everyone.

Our homes and services support a huge range of people from all walks of life. We're proud of the diversity of the communities we serve; it's a strength that binds people together. We care, and that's why we're committed to playing a leading role in our communities.





## 3. Why Now?

It has been increasingly clear to Tpas that many social housing landlords were uncertain about how to create effective and meaningful engagement with residents about building safety.

This seemed to Tpas to be because:

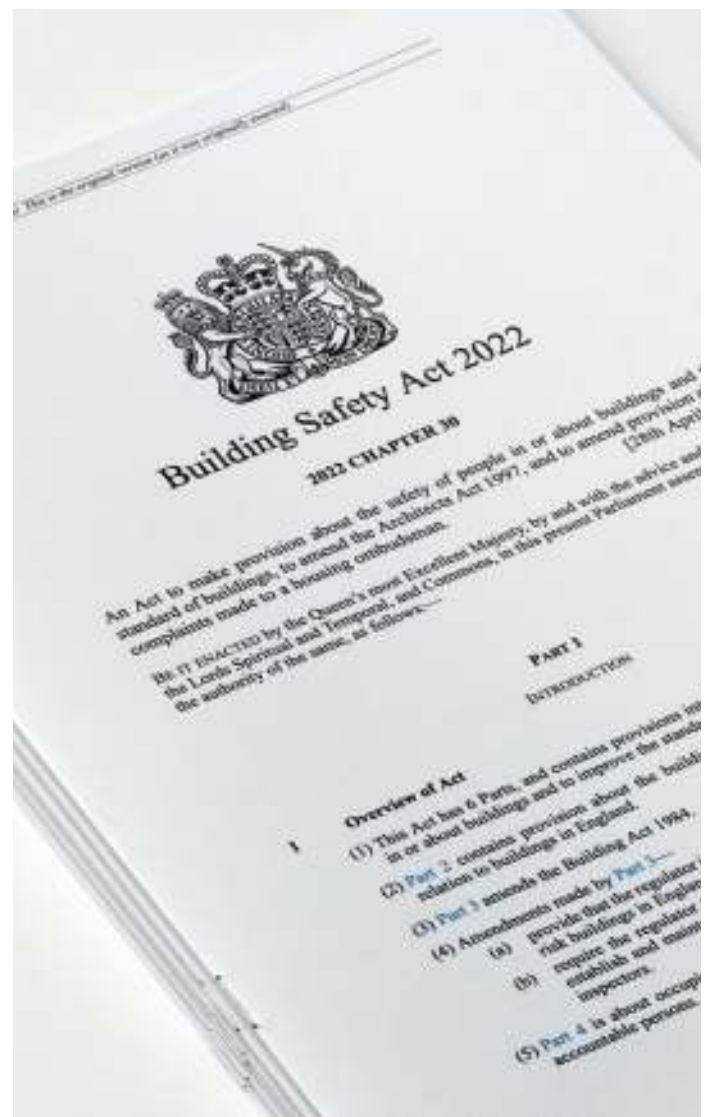
- There was little early guidance from the BSR.
- The building safety part of landlords' operation is largely staffed by technical experts, who have little or no experience in resident engagement.
- Perhaps understandably, landlords were directing resources towards building remediation.
- For some landlords, teams managing assets and building safety do not traditionally work closely with engagement teams.
- There was hesitation caused by lack of understanding whether resident engagement in building safety is different to more generic resident engagement.
- Some landlords had over time dismantled specialist engagement teams and therefore had little or no specialists within their organisations.

Tpas has a strong track record of bringing organisations together to research and consider solutions to critical issues and so the project Collaborate: Resident Engagement in Building Safety started to be constructed.

### The Hackitt Report

“A cultural change is required to rebuild trust and ensure that residents feel safe in their homes again. Providing reassurance, recourse and responsibility to residents is one part of a systemic overhaul designed to deliver buildings that are safe now and will be in the future.”

Source: Building a Safer Future Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety: Final Report 2018



Important factors to consider in developing the project were in particular to address themes highlighted by Dame Judith Hackitt's report: **'Building a Safer Future Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety: Final Report 2018'**, especially in Chapter 4 Residents' Voice.

The project also needed to take in to account guidance and legislation introduced since 2018, most notably the **Building Safety Act 2022** and the **Social Housing Regulation Act 2023** and to also think about some of the key principles around trust and stigmatisation discussed in **The Charter for Social Housing Residents: The Social Housing White Paper 2020**.



“The relationship between landlords and tenants, in whatever ownership model exists in a given building, needs to be one of partnership and collaboration to maintain the integrity of the system and keep people safe.”

Source: a personal view from Dame Judith Hackitt Building a Safer Future Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety: Final Report 2018



**The Guardian, April 2021**

### The Hackitt Report

“(We need to) assert the role of residents - a no risk route for redress will be created and greater reassurances about the safety of their home will be offered, as well as ensuring that residents understand their role and responsibilities for keeping their building safe for themselves and their neighbours.”

Source: Building a Safer Future Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety: Final Report 2018



## 4. Meaningful Engagement: generic vs building safety

In our previous Collaborate project, the Engagement Maximiser, we concluded that there is a 'pathway' to engagement.

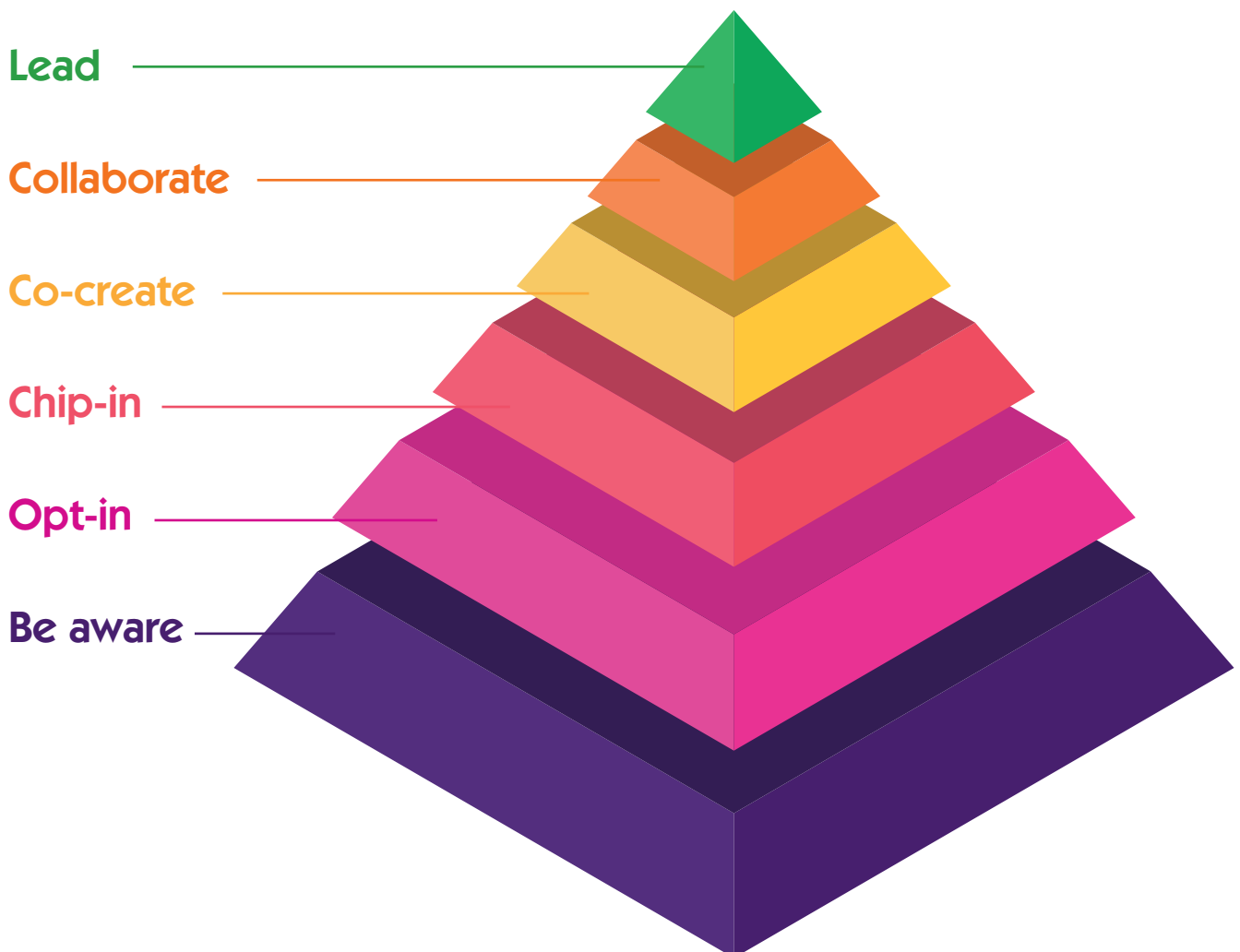
The 'path' concept also more faithfully represents the varied and dynamic nature of real human behaviour. Residents aren't simply engaged or not;

they are engaged to varying degrees, in different ways and at different times.

How does this play out in the world of resident engagement in building safety, can we conclude that generic engagement is somehow different to engagement about building safety?

If it is different, how do landlords need to respond?

This project sought to answer to this hypothesis.



# 5. The Core Project

The launch event kicked off the project with an introduction from Andy McGrory (Policy Lead, Resident Engagement) from the Building Safety Regulator.

Andy willingly shared the approach that the BSR intended to take, but that it was also very open to receiving good practice examples of Resident Engagement in Building Safety Strategies so that it could build up its expertise:

‘HRB residents are a new stakeholder for HSE and the HSE has very limited previous experience of resident engagement in relation to its work in regulating construction work, gas safety, asbestos and legionella’.

To make sure that Tpas could meet participants’ expectations, using breakout sessions, the following questions were debated:

- What has been your key motivator in achieving resident engagement in building safety?
- What has been the key barrier to achieving successful engagement?
- What is the one thing that would make the most difference?



Pictured: Core participants for the project with Julie Butterworth, Tpas Head of Consultancy, bottom left

“

- Best practice – sharing knowledge
- Innovative ways to engage with residents, making it meaningful and relevant
- Greater understanding of building safety for non ‘building safety’ specific staff
- How to best engage with other teams (internally)
- Networking opportunities. ”



on why they joined the project

“ Successful resident engagement forms a beneficial interaction that generates social capital. ”

Andy McGrory





## Key Motivators

The key motivators for achieving resident engagement in building safety were very clearly around three themes: **the process, safety and culture**:



### Process

- Understanding / education / insight
- Confidently speaking to residents about building safety
- Like damp and mould - “see it, report it”
- Understanding segments
- Checking residents understand
- We’ve been told to!
- To understand the issues of the ‘why’
- Social value - helps to improve other services



### Safety

- Avoiding fires
- Reducing impact of fires / building safety issues
- Keeping buildings safe
- To keep people safe
- Safety - Landlord, legal and moral duty to make residents feel safe and be safe
- Tenants are the weakest link - they understand their responsibilities



### Culture

- Changing cultural attitudes
- Organisational wide responsibility
- Cultural change - building first instead of customer first
- Looking for the magic button that will endanger a safety culture
- Want residents to be more influential
- Staff reach an understanding as well as residents
- Responsibility of privilege
- Overcome resistance in the business to talk to residents
- Remove silos - shared understanding

### Key Barriers

The three themes for barriers to successfully achieving resident engagement in building safety were: **resources and using them effectively, communication and behaviours.**

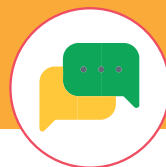
#### (Use of) Resources



- Organisational setup
- Targeting residents / segmentation
- Having the right resources
- Impact of austerity: complaints vs compensation vs engagement
- Budget
- Decisions taking too long
- Poor planning - reacting
- Not understanding our customers
- Representation amongst those who do not engage - are we missing those who can't / won't / don't know?

#### Communication

- Need a range of comms channels
- Finding the right motivator
- The language used needs to change
- Not to be stagnant with communication and how we engage
- Digital first approach - ambiguity in enforcement
- Lack of direct contact with residents to change behaviour
- Getting residents to engage and how they don't 'see' fire risks



#### Behaviours



- Preconceived ideas 'I've complained before'
- Acceptance that the landlords' mindset is unacceptable e.g. parental approach to removing sprinkler system
- Changing long-standing behaviours
- Getting staff to see safety as a healthy norm
- Being identified as an 'engaged' person

Continued on the next page



## Key Barriers continued

### Relationships



- Collaboration: coming together as landlord and tenant
- Develop a culture of saying what we will do and delivering it
- Sharing good news stories and positive engagement
- Breaking down barriers to build trust and communication
- People with influence / gravitas
- Increase in customer focus
- Acceptance that tenants are human and will do things irrationally - we have to get past that
- Build and strengthen relationships with residents
- Changed behaviours
- Buy-in from housing services
- Linked allocations with property services

### Process/Resources

- Experiencing different tangible outcomes
- More staff on the ground
- More specialist staff
- Greater resources - people out there
- Using the resources we have more effectively
- Using data better - towards predicatability
- Commonality in templates
- More time / money / people



### Governance



- Clarity from Regulator - secondary legislation, and to tell us what's good
- More certainty in the operating landscape
- More government flexibility on funding
- Seeing an impact and change due to accountable Regulator
- Buy-in from Board
- Show that the organisation means business
- Visible evidence that the organisation is doing what it should

When asked about the one thing that would make a difference, participants prioritised **relationships**, and **how the resources may affect the process**, and very importantly **governance**.

### Launch Event

The launch event left everyone motivated to explore many of these ideas and to spend dedicated time away from their organisations, with peers, to seek out solutions.





## 5. The Workshops

Each workshop was designed around a specific theme emerging from the launch event and pre-project research undertaken by Tpas.

The workshops were facilitated by expert partners of Tpas and were designed to be both challenging and interactive. The aim was to encourage participants to feel stretched and to be exposed to new ideas and concepts.



“ I really enjoyed the balance of listening and ‘doing’ – it was just right. So much to think about that questions everything we have done and everything that we’re planning to do. And great to come out of the session with a genuinely exciting idea to try out with colleagues. ”

Participant

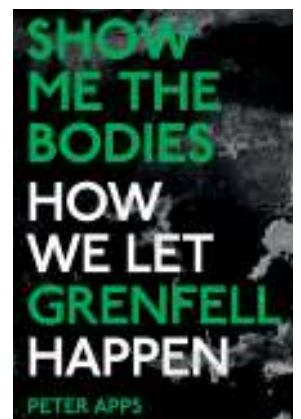
### Workshop 1 - Why resident engagement in building safety?

This workshop was led by Gill Kernick from consulting firm [Arup](#). Gill is an experienced strategic consultant and sought after author and speaker specialising in safety, culture and leadership. She is the author of ‘Catastrophe and Systemic Change’.



Gill lived on the 21st Floor of Grenfell Tower from 2011 to 2014. She saw first-hand the impact that the disaster had on individuals and the community and is a significant national voice in trying to influence change.

Later on in the workshop Pete Apps joined the discussion ([Linkedin profile](#)). Pete is a freelance journalist and former Deputy Editor at Inside Housing; his book ‘Show me the Bodies’, won the Orwell Prize for Political Writing in 2023.



Gill Kernick



Pete Apps

“The intent of the workshop is that we are clear on the critical and unique role of residents in creating building safety, and have access to fresh insights and ways of thinking and acting to lead a step change in how our organisations approach resident engagement.”

Gill Kernick

### Workshop Content

Gill took participants through a series of exercises designed to encourage new thinking and self-awareness.

“When we talk about resident safety and resident engagement, there is an ecosystem we could be considering that might make our approaches and responses more innovative and effective.

- How might you build on good relationships with the Emergency Services?
- How might you strengthen relationships between key stakeholders in a way that doesn't involve residents directly at all?

Adopting an ecosystem view of resident engagement and building safety will reveal different actions and paths to impacting change, that are not solely focussed on, or involving residents.”

**1. Stakeholders** – in addition to residents, who are the key stakeholders that impact on building safety? What perceptions do these stakeholders have of residents? What perceptions do residents have of the key stakeholders?

**2. Mapping interactions** – what are the interactions and interfaces between and amongst residents and key stakeholders?

**3. Status quo** – using what they had learned about stakeholders, participants were then encouraged to plot out what was working well and what was missing, using these themes:

- Relational
- Contextual
- Behavioural
- Foundational
- Leadership

**4. And to then think about a desired future state** - what a new world would look like across these themes? What would residents see, hear and feel. What systemic change would need to take place?

### Residents and building safety

What narratives inhibit resident engagement and building safety?

- What do people say?
- What are the phrases they use?



What stood out from this exercise was the desire from participants for their organisations to become trustworthy and to listen to residents' voices to tap into their knowledge and wisdom.

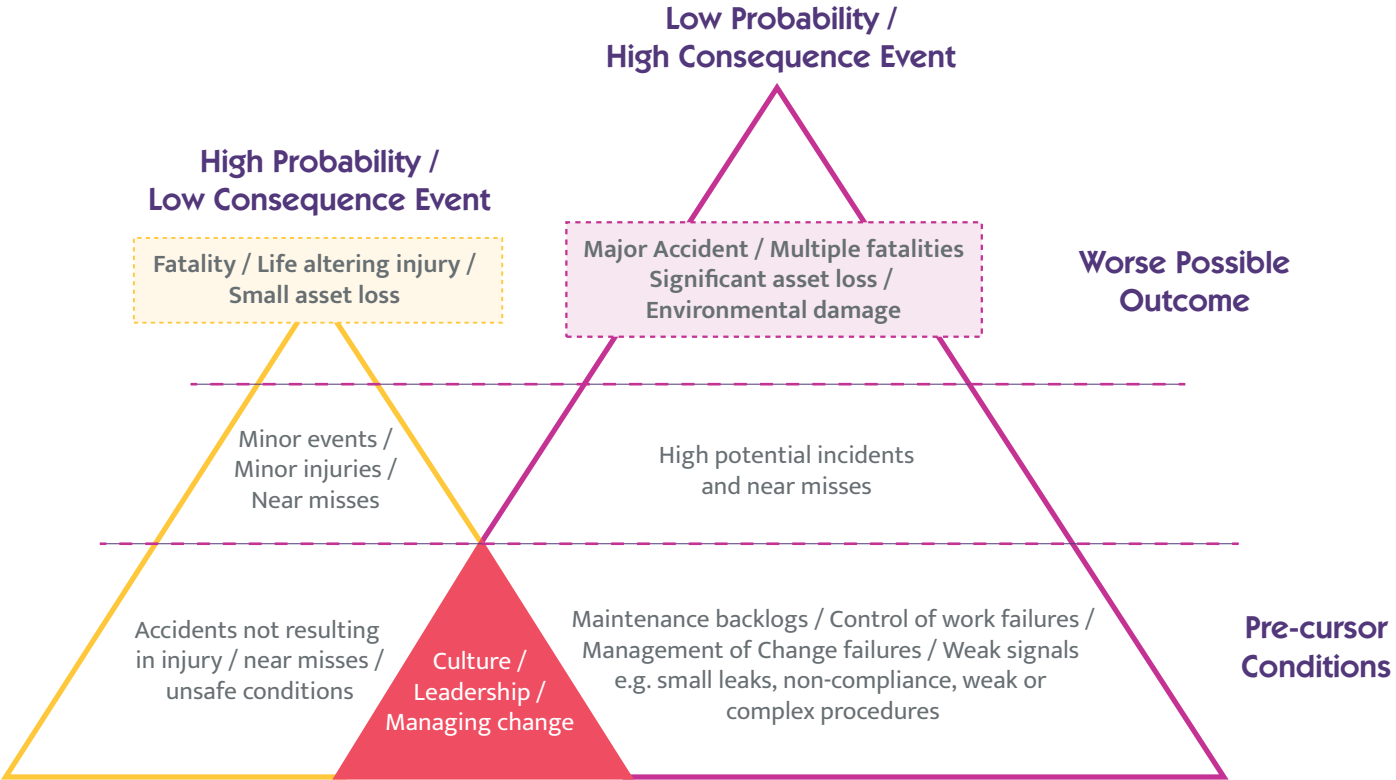


This future state was undoubtedly influenced by what participants heard from Pete Apps in his workshop presentation. The key message was that residents of Grenfell Tower felt that their concerns about safety were not heard or acted on by their landlord.

Participants were also introduced to 'Two Triangle Thinking' by Gill. This approach has been used in high hazard industries to differentiate between minor (high probability / low consequence) and major (low probability / high consequence) events.

This concept shows how culture, leadership and managing change are foundational components essential to promoting safety outcomes.

This concept was exceptionally compelling and led the project on to focusing on culture in depth in later months.



Reference: Adapted from Hopkins, A., 'Failure to learn: The BP Texas City Refinery Disaster; 2008, Chapter 6.

### The participants:

- Understood why resident voices are critical to building safety
- Reflected on and challenged current narratives and perceptions of residents and other key stakeholders and interrogated the impact of these narratives
- Gained a systemic perspective of the current state of resident engagement and building safety within their organisations
- Explored the nature of complex change and considered the importance of relationships, experimentation and different ways of measuring impact
- Had the space to reflect deeply about their own leadership and how they can enable change.

### Participant key insights:

- ✓ Training staff about the stigma relating to social housing
- ✓ Understand and embrace the complexities of change and understand individual differences
- ✓ Train staff on the dynamics of power / authority and the impact on all of us

Many of these outcomes were expanded on as the project progressed over the following months.

## Workshop 2 - Understanding people and context

This workshop was led by Anna O'Halloran, MSc. behavioural science practitioner and joint programme lead. Anna has worked in social housing since 1984 and as well as stints with the Chartered Institute of Housing as Director of Consultancy, as a regulator at the Audit Commission and as a Director at Capita she has worked for seven different landlords. Anna works regularly with Tpas and is a staunch advocate for incorporating tenants' experiences into organisational decision-making.

Latterly, Anna has focused on using behavioural science to understand why people do what they do and was one of the first housing consultants to bring the concepts to social housing. She was also



Anna O'Halloran joint programme lead and report author

the joint programme lead of the first Tpas Collaborate, 'The Engagement Maximiser'.

This workshop was designed to introduce participants to behavioural science and to very practically explore how we could learn from it to improve engagement in building safety.



The workshop was themed around understanding why people do what they do, and how understanding this will support organisations to design better systems and processes. In advance of the workshop, participants were set homework that they would use during the session:

## Pre-workshop tasks for Workshop 2

1. Examples of how your organisation is currently inadvertently inhibiting resident engagement in building safety
2. Evidence that your current approach to resident engagement is / isn't working

The homework was structured to encourage participants to start to think about evidence, and how they could be certain that what they were currently doing was working (or not) and, building on workshop 1 what they may be doing that is mistakenly damaging relationships.

## Workshop Content

Participants experienced a brief overview of behavioural science and how it has been used in social housing.

Taking a behavioural approach to change involves viewing organisational challenges through the lens of human behaviour. At heart, most organisational challenges can be distilled down to challenges of human behaviour. It involves actively translating those organisational challenges into specific behavioural challenges, thereby unlocking a wealth of evidence and research from behavioural science disciplines and a fertile new seam of innovation potential.

Key to the concept was the acceptance of the participants acknowledging that people don't necessarily make logical decisions but that we all

are influenced by the context we find ourselves in, which can lead to seemingly irrational decisions.

Noticing this in others and in ourselves helps to shine a light on what, as organisations, we might need to do to create change.

Drawing on what was found in the Engagement Maximiser programme we agreed that there are frequently three types of barriers that prevent (or at least inhibit) residents engaging with their landlord:

### Landlord factors (for example)

- Unsuitable engagement methods
- Overly harsh rent
- Collection process
- Unreliable
- Communication
- Disorganised
- Repairs completion

### Resident factors (for example)

- Lack of trust
- Lack of time
- Lack of knowledge
- Previous poor experience
- Fear and stigma

### External factors (for example)

- Negative reports in the media
- Low incomes
- Feeling 'mistreated'

Many of these barriers echoed some of the themes exposed in Workshop 1.

Participants set out assessing their own engagement methods against some of the concepts, how are they inadvertently inhibiting engagement?

## What is behavioural science?

The last decade has seen the rapid rise of behavioural approaches to innovation. From its beginnings as a niche discipline within government policy circles, its methods and principles have since become mainstream practice and entered popular consciousness.

The approach was popularised in the UK by the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) - initially a discrete unit within the Cabinet Office. Early work from what became known as the 'Nudge Unit' reported demonstrable impacts in policy areas as diverse as tax collection, fraud, retirement and savings, health and wellbeing and unemployment. These early proof points served as a catalyst for wider application of these behavioural approaches to UK government policy and the launch of similar government units across the world.

A wide range of accessible management literature popularising the principles of behavioural economics, prospect theory and social psychology has further accelerated this trend.

Whilst not a categorised methodology in itself, work carried under a 'behavioural' umbrella is generally characterised by the use of principles drawn from the behavioural sciences, combined with a rigorous, experimental approach to evidence gathering, normally through randomised controlled trials (RCTs).

Source: Tpas Engagement Maximiser



By realising the barriers to successful engagement, participants were then able to think about what steps could be taken to address these barriers and create effective ways to engage with residents.

Some of this involved learning from the Engagement Maximiser, and how different messaging could create more successful responses. It also helped everyone to understand that developing a system of collecting evidence is critical – **is what organisations are doing working, or not?**



Workshop image



## Opt-in Response Rates

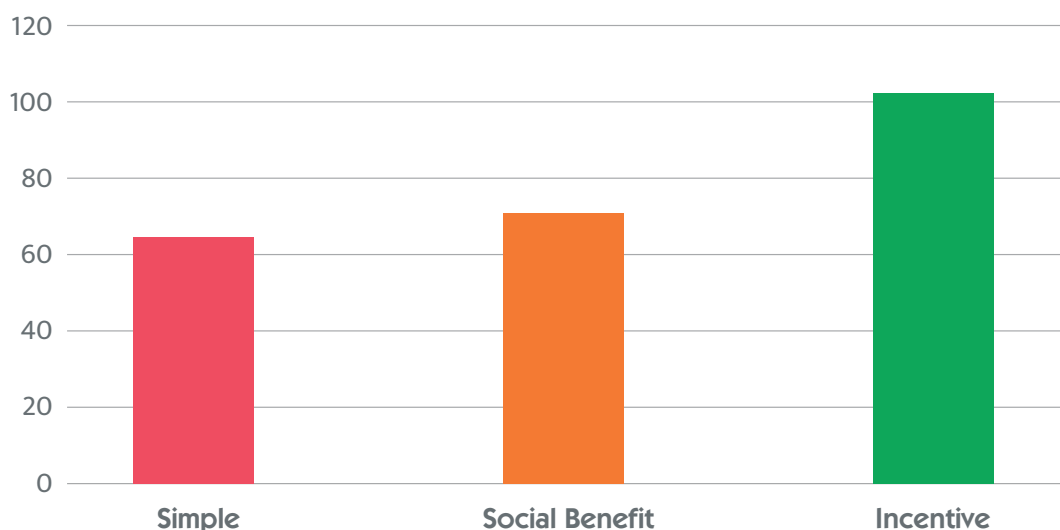


Table: findings from one of the trials run as part of the Engagement Maximiser illustrating that different messaging can have different impacts on residents likelihood of opting in to be involved. In this instance, the most effective message was the one offering payment

Using this insight, participants were able to discuss whether their own attempts at engaging residents in building safety were working, or not.

Working in organisational groups, participants used a Tpas case study to develop some ideas that could improve engagement. The case study revealed useful insights that helped participants to understand why residents were not engaging:

### Confidence

“If they do not care about our repairs, the standard of communal cleaning, repairs staff rather do ‘bodged work’ how can we have any confidence in them as a landlord in keeping us safe.”

### Trust

“If they can’t do a simple repair how can we trust them to keep the building safe and thus everyone living there.”

### Communication

“We don’t get any regular information about keeping safe, and this creates mixed messages.”

### Collective Responsibility

“If we are not given clear information, then how do we know what the landlord responsibility is and what our responsibility is.”

This case study, using real-life residents’ experiences was part of a larger piece of work undertaken by Tpas to support an organisation develop it’s approach to engagement in building safety.

The quotes are from residents during qualitative research sessions held to understand their experiences of their landlord, and how perceptions have affected whether they feel safe in their homes.

Residents were introduced to [MINDSPACE](#) to help them to design effective messages.

MINDSPACE is a very useful and successful way of designing communication as it has been designed as a way of:

‘Condensing the relevant evidence into a manageable “checklist”, to ensure policymakers take account of the most robust effects on our behaviour.’

Source: MINDSPACE: Influencing behaviour through public policy, Institute for Government 2010



Workshop image

Tpas used MINDSPACE during the Engagement Maximiser and it has been successfully used to influence behaviour in a range of other issues the social housing landlords may experience, including managing rent arrears, appointment-keeping, channel shift and ASB.

Alongside designing new messages, participants also worked through ideas on how to measure whether the ideas were working, or not, and were very keen to use randomised controlled trials wherever possible; but to also think about tracking website hits where relevant. Types of communication materials were also considered, with postcards and text messages being very popular.

### Participant key insights:

- ✓ Engagement is not simply about participation or consultation; it can be every interaction between resident and landlord
- ✓ Engagement methods are not assessed for effectiveness
- ✓ Messaging is not tested for effectiveness
- ✓ Organisations are generally unaware of the impact they have on residents and how they are therefore unlikely to engage





## Workshop 3 - Implementing the ‘how’ by bridging the gap between data and insight

This workshop was led by Dr Simon Williams from [Service Insights Ltd](#). Simon has worked in social housing for over 20 years and has been a leading force in the sector in encouraging more effective use of data to inform decisions – particularly data about residents. The workshop directly led on from workshop 2, where some concepts around using data to track impacts were discussed.

The workshop was designed to encourage participants to move from mostly thinking about building data to thinking about how to use resident data. In particular how this data may enable organisations to develop bespoke approaches to engaging with residents depending on their circumstances.

The BSR is clearly expecting that strategies may need to be adapted for each HRB, and resident data will be a key influence in how strategies may differ from HRB to HRB. For example, a HRB mainly occupied by older people may have a different engagement strategy than one occupied by younger people – due to different attitudes, beliefs and preferences.

### Pre-workshop tasks for Workshop 3

1. What data would have helped you in Workshop 2?
2. What difference would that have made?

### Workshop Content

To introduce the power of resident data, the workshop was kicked off by Phil Hardy. Phil is the Executive Director of Operations at [Grand Union Housing Group \(GUHG\)](#) and has led a ground-breaking exploration of using segmentation to understand residents’ experiences, putting GUHG

in an evidence-based position of knowing how to therefore respond.

Similar to work using a behavioural science approach, the work revealed differences in experiences and attitudes, influencing residents’ behaviour:

Individual needs:

- Capability and resilience
- Anxiety & worry
- Change & fear of unknown
- Mental health
- Support systems
- Physical disability
- Development disorder & learning disability
- Illness

Daily lives:

- Full lives
- Exhausted & erratic
- Loneliness
- Isolation
- ‘Just getting through the day’
- Stuck in a rut
- Life on hold
- Fear
- Happiness

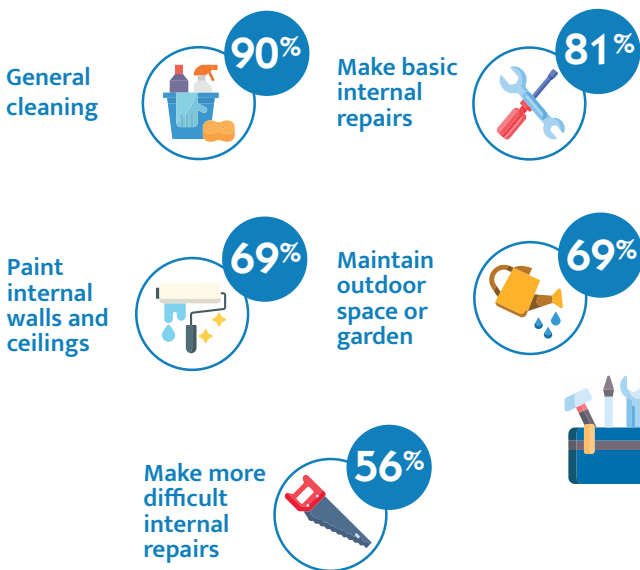
Further exploration revealed that these experiences translated into some serious situations that GUHG needed to respond to (see opposite).



Dr Simon Williams

## Identifying common themes

Our customers and home maintenance  
(% able to do)



Around **a third** of customers don't feel able to maintain outdoor space or decorate



Nearly **60%** struggle with DIY



**27%** have an issue with damp and mould

To help GUHG translate these situations into support (or other ways of intervening), six segmentations were developed, enabling as far as possible a tailored and personalised service to be provided:

This example from GUHG of how collecting and using resident data, **beyond the narrow confines of simple demographic data**, can provide detailed insights and evidence that should support service development and delivery.

For participants, this illustration showed that they all had much more to do to truly understand what it might be like to live in a home managed by their organisation and the impact it undoubtedly has on the quality of the relationship between landlord and resident.





## Customer Segmentation at GUHG

Segmentation is an important strategic tool which will enable us to really understand our customers. Each segment is a group of customers who are different to other customer segments with distinct and identifiable needs, attitudes, strengths and feelings.

Knowing who our customers are will enable us to use our corporate resources more effectively and direct strategic decisions - ultimately driving improvements for our customers, ensuring improved customer experience and improved business performance.

More than ever, we need to ensure we listen to our customers' views and opinions. Our segmentation will enable us to evidence representative customer voice in the delivery of our strategy and regulatory requirements.

Our research and subsequent analysis identified six different customer segments. The segment names reflect the approach that we should take to best meet the needs of the individual segments.



Simon worked with participants to help them to understand research techniques and issues with data collection and usage.

The participants started with exploring the range of more general data challenges, looking at some recent research with 600 employees of housing organisations undertaken by Simon and his team at Service Insights Ltd.

The surveys covered - **The organisational perception of the data, satisfaction with data quality, understanding the data challenges, the impact of poor data and the Barriers and Enablers.**

**“ Lack of building plans, design and fire strategies for schemes, due to loss of information. Need to reverse engineer solutions at great expense and time, makes simple projects and tasks difficult, expensive and time consuming to ensure compliance with new legislation. ”**

Service Insights Ltd survey respondent

| The Organisational Context (High to Low Agreement)                                 | Percent Agree | Count |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------|
| Data quality is essential for achieving my organisation's long-term strategic aims | 99.6%         | 224   |
| I believe data quality is essential for delivering service quality                 | 98.6%         | 220   |
| Data quality is essential for achieving my day-to-day operational aims             | 97.8%         | 224   |
| I believe data quality is essential for delivering a great customer experience     | 97.3%         | 221   |
| My organisation is gathering increasing amounts of data over time                  | 91.4%         | 221   |
| I have confidence that data quality in my organisation will improve in future      | 81.7%         | 219   |
| I'm aware of all the data sources required to undertake my job role well           | 79.4%         | 223   |
| I am able to trust that the data I access is accurate                              | 45.5%         | 220   |
| I find it easy to access all the data sources I need                               | 38.6%         | 220   |

Surveyed were 7 HAs and 1 council, 600 staff, 224 responses, including 30 in-depth interviews. Drawing perspectives from - responsive repairs, customer services, lettings, supported housing, income management and ASB.

It was starkly obvious the degree to which respondents had little confidence in the data, especially in relation to trusting it (45.5% agreed), with further questions exploring satisfaction with data more specifically.

One survey respondent explicitly connected this with fire safety.

Workshop participants worked through how data challenges affect building safety before moving on to research methods more generally.

In thinking about research, and how it helps to create effective engagement in building safety, organisations need to foreground resident data and

insights, as debated in Workshop 2. Using data and research helps to understand residents' experiences to inform successful strategies and processes.

Workshop participants worked through how data challenges affect building safety before moving on to research methods more generally.

In thinking about research, and how it helps to create effective engagement in building safety, organisations need to foreground resident data and insights, as debated in workshop 2. Using data and research helps to understand residents' experiences to inform successful strategies and processes.



Research methodology was defined as:  
**‘a combination of techniques used to inquire into a specific situation’** (Easterby-Smith 2012), with typically two main approaches based on positivist and interpretivist ways of seeing the world:

- Quantitative Research (positivist philosophy)
- Qualitative Research (interpretivist philosophy)
- ...and more recently, mixed methods research designs

When undertaking any qualitative research, the discussion guide or questions used must be prepared thoughtfully, with the research question being the question around which the research is centred. It should be:

- **Clear:** it provides enough specifics that the participants can easily understand its purpose without needing additional explanation.
- **Focused:** it is narrow enough that it can be answered thoroughly in the space the writing task allows (if it is a survey).
- **Concise:** it is expressed in the fewest possible words.
- **Complex:** it is not answerable with a simple “yes” or “no,” but rather requires synthesis and analysis of ideas and sources prior to composition of an answer.
- **Arguable:** its potential answers are open to debate rather than accepted facts.

| How Qualitative and Quantitative Data Differ             | Qualitative | Quantitative |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Best for hearing tenants in their own words              | ✓           | ✗            |
| Statistical and numerical                                | ✗           | ✓            |
| Can determine correlation or a cause-effect relationship | ✗           | ✓            |
| Easy to collect en-masse                                 | ✗           | ✓            |
| Can numerically measure trends over time                 | ✗           | ✓            |
| Best for understanding customer opinion nuances          | ✓           | ✗            |

### Why do research?

“...as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we don’t know. But there are also unknown unknowns - the ones we don’t know we don’t know.”



Donald Rumsfeld (former US Secretary of Defence)

In thinking about data and how that would assist organisations in creating effective engagement about building safety, participants felt that good data would enable:

- A good starting point / accuracy
- A more tailored / personalised approach
- Respect individual differences

A key challenge is that for most, assets data is traditionally held within the 'housing system' and day to day transactions with residents are now held in dynamics (or similar) and it can be difficult to share cross differing systems - which is why such systems as Plentific and Salesforce are gathering pace, as they bring this all together - data under one roof.

From the participants:

Capacity - there's always deemed to be something more important.

## Skills - we don't hire for data skills!

Years of neglect - the scale of the challenge is significant.

(Data is) not seen as (enough of) a priority by senior leaders. Lack of resource for doing data management and data governance properly.

Culture: data viewed as 'something we don't do' or 'something we're not good at' by many front line and admin roles.

Everyone felt that there was a very long way to go in their organisations in order to achieve easy access to the type of data ideally required, with numerous ‘unknown unknowns’.



### Participant key insights:

- ✓ What data is available to us to support effective resident engagement in building safety?
- ✓ How easy is it to access the data?
- ✓ What resources do we have available to analyse it?

- ◀ Word cloud of participants comments about what data they would like, and why.



Brent O'Halloran

## Workshop 4 - Tackling internal challenges with teams and peers to create internal power to listen

This workshop was led by Brent O'Halloran, MBA MCIOB, a national expert in building safety. Brent has worked in social housing for a number of decades and is a consultant specialising in social housing, a board member for a housing association, a Chartered Builder, and has over 25 years' experience working at director level for several large housing organisations. Since the Grenfell tragedy Brent has supported many organisations to improve their approach to building safety and has a reputation for creating powerful internal change. He is currently also Course Director on the CIOB Level 6 Diploma in Building Safety Management.

The workshop was designed to support participants to think about what steps they may need to implement inside their organisations to be certain that resident engagement in building safety is seen as a priority and the right resources are made available.

### Pre-workshop tasks for Workshop 4

1. How you'd get other teams in your organisation to respond positively to your requests
2. How you'd get buy-in from the Executive team

### Workshop Content

Brent started off by asking participants to think about where they could see themselves on this spectrum, and by doing this everyone would have a better understanding of their own roles and responsibilities. It was particularly relevant as most participants were in technical roles and may not have seen themselves as having any connection with resident engagement.

Understanding our own positions helps us to understand and have empathy for peers and teams who may need to adapt too.

#### 1. Curious

"I need to be more aware of resident engagement in building safety principles."

#### 2. Theorist

"I need to have a good understanding of resident engagement in building safety principles."

#### 3. Interested

"I have a role to play in resident engagement in building safety."

#### 4. Worried

"I'm worried about resident engagement in building safety readiness."

#### 5. Involved

"Much of my role involves resident engagement in building safety."

#### 6. Strategist

"I make resource decisions based on information regarding resident engagement in building safety."

Most participants recognised that they had a role to play in resident engagement in building safety, some leaning more towards decision-making or towards being more involved. To build on that understanding, participants were asked to think about other peoples' perception of the building safety team. Could it be that:

- Staff have either been parachuted in and teams hastily formed, or the obligations have been added to existing staff roles
- The legislation is still not fully baked in
- The service has had to evolve in the absence of consistent and coherent guidance
- Building safety is often seen just as a drain on existing resources
- The team is often seen as duplicating roles and activities that already exist – checking the checkers
- The service is often seen as a temporary diversion before we all get back to business as usual
- Building safety is often seen as a money pit
- The team is often seen as the 'safety police' or even worse - auditors!

How many of these are legitimate perceptions that colleagues may have, and to what degree could these perceptions hamper effective internal relationships, that in turn hamper resident engagement?

Building on this, participants started to explore what messages they need to share internally, to ensure resident engagement in building safety receives the attention it needs. To help them to do, they were prompted to think about:

### Effective building safety encourages:

- A localised presence
- Engagement via real people
- Doorstep visits
- Proactive diligence
- Investment in training
- Competence
- Practising chronic unease
- Calling it out
- Looking for failure

Much of this is in direct opposition to what some organisations are doing, or have plans to do:

- Moving services online
- Reducing face to face contact and localised presence
- Looking for success, rather than failure

- Where does building safety sit within their organisation?
- How is the governance of building safety structured in their organisation?
- How is the change management process structured in their organisation?
- How to get their executive team to prioritise building safety?



## Ideas from the participants

The development of resident engagement in building safety strategies should include consideration of these challenges:

### How could we make HRBs even safer?

- Sterile or managed communal areas?
- Door entry? ID access on the entrance door?
- No unauthorised works?
- Access for essential works?
- Permit to work?
- No BBQs on balconies?
- No chip-pans?
- No candles
- No smoking?
- No hoarding?



### How do we get the balance right?

The BSR expects that organisations will provide a summary of your resident engagement strategy for your building in the **safety case report**, and it should demonstrate:

- How you have determined the best way of communicating building safety information
- How you tailor your communication to meet your residents' needs
- The safety case report should provide an overview of how you communicate and consult with residents of your building

To fulfil these requirements co-operation from many teams will be essential and it was clear that many participants are struggling to achieve the level of support that they need.



Information that may help some people in organisations understand the importance of resident engagement in building safety is to recognise the difference between it and generic resident engagement.

The table opposite demonstrates the differences, and in particular the major difference in outcomes – that residents feel safe and are safe. Both ‘versions’ of resident engagement are subjected to regulation.

### Key drivers for organisations include:

- It is a legal requirement
- It is a bureaucratic hurdle
- It can help you reveal your weaknesses
- It can make things better
- You can demonstrate your competence
- You can build trust
- Your residents can feel reassured
- You can build a great news story
- It hands you the agenda

| Scope    | Generic Resident Engagement       | Building Safety Resident Engagement |
|----------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Range    | Corporate / Geographical area     | Micro / Ultra Local                 |
| Dynamic  | Generic / Operational / Strategic | Practical / Tangible                |
| Reach    | General / Representative          | Personal / Neighbours / Block       |
| Context  | Conceptual / Theoretical          | Salient / Relevant                  |
| Mind-set | Affect perception                 | Affect behaviour                    |
| Currency | Satisfaction                      | Trust                               |
| Outcome  | Greater understanding             | Greater assurance                   |

Source: Brent O'Halloran, O'Halloran Consultants Ltd.

## Improving understanding about building safety in organisations

- ✓ Building safety team pages on your intranet
- ✓ Attending other team meetings
- ✓ Articles in staff publications
- ✓ Show and tell sessions
- ✓ Cross functional working
- ✓ Regular progress reporting – include building safety as a standard item on report templates
- ✓ Building safety readiness campaign
- ✓ Raise your profile (make a commitment in staff objectives)
- ✓ Inviting other teams to join in programmes
- ✓ Multi-service days on site – Housing, Repairs, Estates, and BSMs holding a blitz event on each HRB
- ✓ Invite other stakeholders in to discuss their roles and get involved (e.g. contractors, fire and rescue service)
- ✓ Create a guiding coalition (governance)
- ✓ Representation at Executive and Board meetings

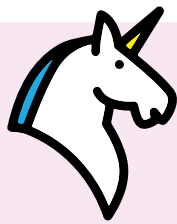




The value of the Building Safety Manager must not be under-estimated in creating an environment where resident engagement can succeed or fail.

The Building Safety Manager must be able to act like a GP:

- With a local area of operation
- Be patient orientated
- Employs evidence-based diagnosis
- Considers contextual factors
- Has a high level of competence
- Is respected, has authority and independence
- Can instigate an intervention
- Uses referrals to consultant experts



The Building  
Safety Manager?

#### Participant key insights:

- ✓ Understanding which internal stakeholders have the most power
- ✓ Create a compelling 'story' about the purpose and power of resident engagement in building safety and that it's different to generic engagement
- ✓ Understand that the Building Safety Manager potentially holds the keys to successful resident engagement





Jenny Danson



Matthew Gardiner

### Workshop 5 - Putting in place the right culture

Workshop 5 was facilitated by Jenny Danson and Matthew Gardiner both Associate Directors at [Disruptive Innovators Network \(DIN\)](#). Both Jenny and Matthew have worked within, and outside, the social housing sector for decades, latterly with DIN and focusing on creating a catalyst for change through innovation.

It followed closely on the heels of Workshop 4 and was designed to expand participants' thinking and challenge them to define the right culture that would deliver successful resident engagement in building safety.

#### Homework for Workshop 5:

Write up, briefly, in the context of resident engagement in building safety two examples and come to the next session willing to share them

- One where failing to listen was at the root of an action in your organisation that was culturally unhelpful, and
- One where listening well had a positive effect on the culture of your organisation

In either case it could be listening to a tenant, a colleague, a stakeholder or somebody in the supply chain. Even somebody from entirely outside your organisation.

further learning. It creates a state of openness and wonder allowing a person to approach life unfettered by preconceptions, biases or habits associated with knowledge and experience.

For the purpose of the workshop that means:

- Actively seeking out opposing views
- Having an eagerness to learn
- Upholding a lack of preconceptions
- Being a true beginner – with a mind that is empty and open
- Noticing that even feeling like an expert also breeds closed-mindedness

This state of mind is what the whole project has been trying to encourage the participants to achieve – to truly be open-minded as to how to achieve effective engagement about building safety, without necessarily defaulting to methods that are familiar yet may not be the most successful.

The heritage of social housing was discussed, and to what extent organisations may or may not be 'faithful' to it.

Matthew asked whether the customer is getting lost, and could it be the case that businesses are not driven by customers – asking whether its 'because they are totally substitutable, as there is an infinite supply of them'. And therefore, if true, how does this affect organisations' cultures and the likelihood of there being a substantial and genuine desire for engagement with those customers.

### Workshop Content

Matthew asked all participants to think about a concept from Zen Buddhism known as Shoshin.

Shoshin translates as 'beginner's mind' and refers to a paradox: the more you know about a subject, the more likely you are to close your mind to



There are numerous examples of how organisations get it wrong, helping to define the wrong culture. It is more awkward to identify a great culture – this illustration showed a range of organisations who have made recent mistakes, with far-reaching consequences. The exception being Timpson.

All participants knew what Timpson represented, the challenge is why are many social housing organisations unable to create such a positive culture.

Participants were tasked to draw the culture that they wanted their organisations to have:



Workshop images

**Our heritage...**

**Housing**  
Ombudsman Service

Regulator of Social Housing | Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Private Finance vs Public Finance

Disruptive Innovators Network

chatham action housing

Tai AELWYD Housing

**Calling it out**  
Showing us how not to do it!

Uber amazon TIMPSON

BREWDOG CBI P&O FERRIES NHS

NHS The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust

NHS North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust

And to think about:

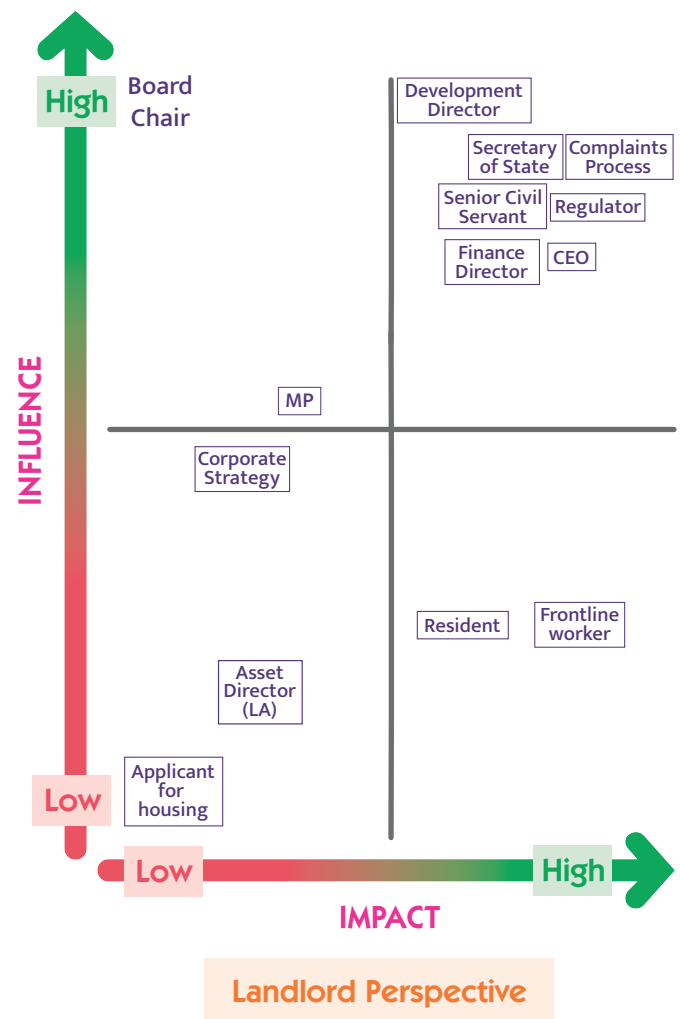
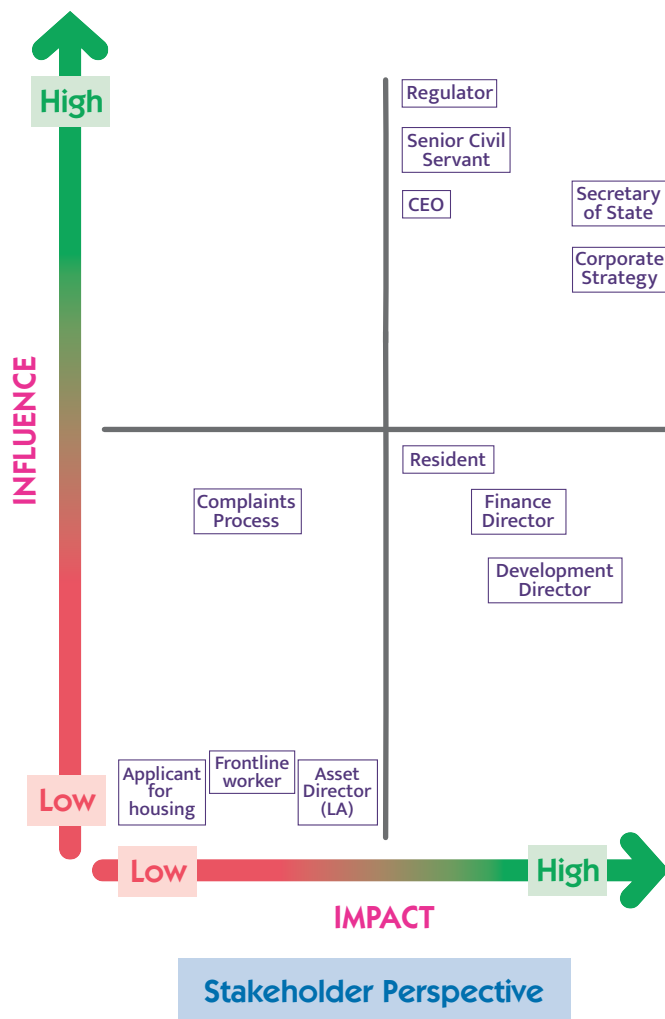
- What are the stories, symbols, ritual and routines that reinforce the existing culture?
- What are the power structures, organisational structures, control systems that get in the way of shifting the current culture?

For many participants it was easy to identify the barriers to achieving the culture that they desired as they had spent time in the previous workshops focusing on these issues. What was much more difficult was to work out how to achieve the change.

The next exercise was helpful in identifying where the real influencing power lies within social housing landlords.

Participants were allocated into two teams and asked to complete a matrix based on high and low influence and high and low impact, and to plot people associated with the sector according to their status and influence. One team to work from the perspective of the landlord and one from the stakeholder (which was interpreted as customer):

What is obvious from both is that there is a real mix of influence and impact, but that both teams concluded that residents have little influence, which affects their ability to influence; those we'd expect to have the greatest influence and impact are predominantly as expected.





Participants were tasked with a final challenge – to project ahead five years, where the culture is exactly as they would want it to be. What happened now (i.e five years ago) to create it?

Ideas from participants included:

- Effective managed use of buildings: what organisations can and cannot do, and this should create dialogue.
- Deciding what needs to come first: what's the most important thing?
- Intrinsic bias has been challenged and eliminated.
- Focusing back on the core business to increase resources – leaving space to improve the culture as staff have time to think.

Time has been factored into roles to ensure all staff work on something resident focussed, to assist in creating understanding.

Some really quick 'wins' included creating a dialogue with colleagues and regularly publishing articles to show the results of engagement.



The Intrapreneur's Ten Commandments summed it up:

1. Come to work each day willing to be fired.
2. Circumvent any orders aimed at stopping your dream.
3. Do any job needed to make your project work, regardless of your job description.
4. Find people to help you.
5. Follow your intuition about the people you choose and work only with the best.
6. Work underground as long as you can – publicity triggers the corporate immune mechanism.
7. Never bet on a race unless you are running in it.
8. Remember it is easier to ask for forgiveness than for permission.
9. Be true to your goals but be realistic about the ways to achieve them.
10. Honour your sponsors.

Participant key insights:

- ✓ Go fast = go alone
- ✓ Go far = go together

# 7. What We Learned

Many of the participating organisations were able to develop some of their ideas very quickly, everyone, however, was asked to present their final thoughts and ideas from the project at a finale event.

Each organisation was asked to prepare a presentation on the following:

- Key findings from the project
- What was most surprising
- Plans for idea implementation



“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

(George Bernard Shaw)

Wolverhampton Homes, Resident Engagement in Building Safety, Finale Event

Some of the presenting participants strayed from the brief! But what we learned from everyone was:

## Your Housing Group

1. Strive to be successful, with enthusiasm and ambition
2. Do we really have the right data – Grand Union approach?
3. Do we have the correct systems?
4. How do we forge better relationships with our customers around the use of data?
5. Who's Behind the Door!
6. How far away are we to what's needed / expected?
7. How far should we go?





## Wolverhampton Homes

1. Realising that the lack of engagement is due to lack of trust (not apathy)
2. Disrupting organisational culture and norms, influence CEO and then organisation...if needs be, putting people in uncomfortable positions
3. Use the tools to create meaningful communication and engagement
4. We are willing to be brave (“Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results”)



Wolverhampton Homes has commissioned an interactive virtual tour, produced by Pedestal TV as a proof of concept to provide a digital self-serve function for most residents able to make use of digital platforms.

It will then also provide increased opportunity for fire safety and tenant leasehold teams to show on their laptops and iPad to those people who need face-to-face communication.

This is the link to the virtual fire safety tour:

[Fire Safety Tour](#)

## Northern Ireland Housing Executive

1. Reciprocal trust
2. Integrity
3. Open communication
4. Positive experiences

Northern Ireland  
**Housing  
Executive**



## Grand Union Housing Group

Pilot trial on a building to tailor fire safety using the segmentation data

1. Speaking to customers via Voice (online communication tool) and other methods to make sure all are heard
2. Customer roadshow
3. YouTube video on fire safety for the building
4. Deliver fire safety information to the customer in the way they want it



### Notting Hill Genesis



1. Respect residents' time
2. Building safety is organisation wide and would benefit from a top-down approach - aiding/encouraging engagement
3. We can better capture and make use of data e.g. vulnerabilities
4. Successful engagement is not one size fits all - we need to consider our demographics
5. Being aware of our own perception of and bias of residents
6. We need to think of ways to make 'engagement' interesting to those who want it



**Free chocolate bars** - meet our safety manager



Come along to an informal drop-in session with our building safety manager - they'll be chocolate bars and other snack (including vegan options)

**Saturday 4th November at 12.00 noon**



Initiative from Notting Hill Genesis, using what they had learned from the workshop on behavioural science!

### Peabody



#### 1. Context

- Reminder of the importance of Building Safety, why we are doing it, motivation
- Pete Apps' book - "Show me the bodies" - was gifted to all Building Safety team members following the session
- Getting the basics right to increase trust with our residents

#### 2. Nudge

- Testing and trying different methods of engagement
- People respond best to a trusted messenger
- Put together our trial

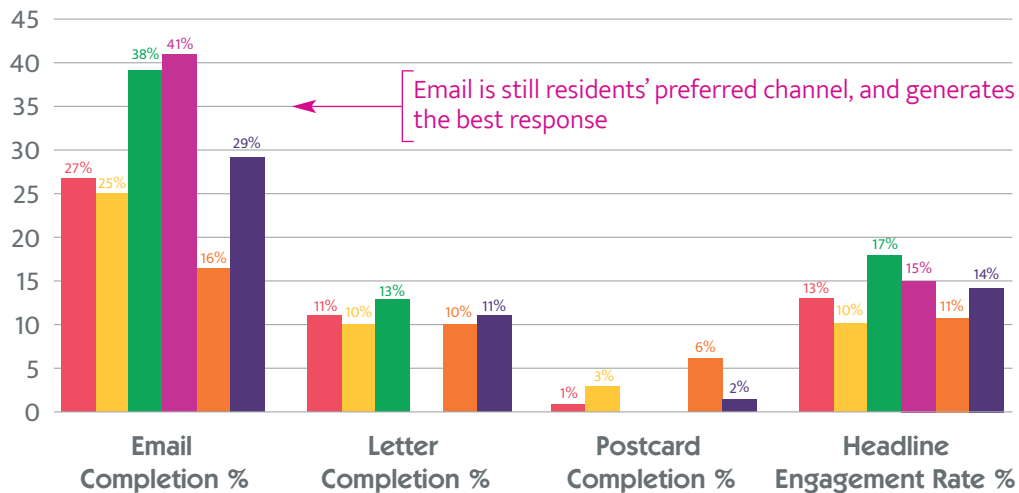
#### 3. Data

- Understand resident categories / segments, and how to use these
- Making changes to our business as usual to overcome the blockers





## A more personable style of communication leads to a higher level of engagement



Peabody used a randomised controlled trial to find out residents' preferences for communication about building safety.

### Stonewater



#### 1. Data

- Three-year project to bring accuracy and a single source of truth
- Reviewing what data we hold and if it supports us
- Repeating the census business wide
- Develop customer friendly dashboards for provision of information

#### 2. Culture:

- Gap analysis of training needs
- Implementing training e.g. PCFRA and PEEP's
- Communicating to the wider business to get buy in
- Developing a system of audit



### Hyde (unable to attend the finale)

1. Acknowledged that we need to be more visible as an organisation.
2. Pilot areas set up to test engagement, involvement and gain insight from residents.
3. Consultation and training with staff.

#### Things we're doing differently:

- We're moving to a more digital service but are very aware of the need to retain a more traditional method of communication and engagement.
- Pilot of 12 x areas (each very different demographically) to gain insight and bespoke communications.
- Working with our Building Safety Resident Panel to challenge and help us.
- Setting up site specific Action Plans and making these available to customers: feedback and intelligence gained from residents, topics of concern raised by staff, local information.
- Working with the Fire & Rescue Service in a couple of specific areas but also with specific customers.



### Leathermarket JMB

(unable to attend the finale)



#### 1. What we've learned:

There are sector-wide barriers to engagement, not least low levels of trust, that have to be overcome if we are to truly engage residents in managing their buildings.

Although we're resource-poor in comparison to some of the other organisations involved in the project, we have the advantage of being community based, which allows us to be nimble, reacting quickly to challenges.

Lack of engagement in previous initiatives may have stemmed from approaches that weren't appropriate for the community or that lacked grounding in research. Our data collection has been poor and much of what we think we know about the community is experiential and not based on solid evidence. We learned that collaboration requires consistent, persistent, and flexible input, in response to local specifics. Combining qualitative and quantitative analytics can help us to better 'nudge' people towards set goals.

#### 2. What we're doing about it:

Focus groups for each block are underway, shaped in some part by sessions that steered us towards engaging tenants in a fairly abstract conversation about the feeling of safety – what engenders it and what obstructs it. We're also working on improving our understanding of who occupies each building by collating additional data as this will help inform how we communicate.

We will develop an overarching building safety engagement strategy based on focus group feedback.



We will then develop building-specific communications, which will consider what we have learnt from data analysis and the focus groups.

We plan to establish a Building Safety Panel to meet quarterly with key staff. They will support us to keep our strategy under review, measure its impact, and ensure engagement with the community continues.

Learning from the project will inform our overall approach to engaging our community.



Leathermarket JMB experimented with different messaging on postcards to achieve engagement. Individualised postcards based on behavioural principles that were posted to residents received a 24% response rate, with 40 residents expressing an interest in joining a Building Safety Panel.



# 7. What We Learned

---

## What is resident engagement in building safety?

The purpose of successfully engaging with residents is to primarily ensure that they know what to do in the event of an emergency. During this project we found that it is much more about two-way effective communication than 'engagement' per se. Two-way communication is essential to enable residents to understand how to contribute to keeping the building safe, and for landlords to listen and act on to residents' concerns.

Language is important as for many organisations the phrase 'resident engagement' means panels, questionnaires, surveys and meetings. While these may be appropriate at times, they do not guarantee effective communication with everyone in the HRB.

**Key takeaway: understand that resident engagement in building safety is different to generic resident engagement, and therefore will need a different approach.**

## Achieve organisational buy-in

In many ways organisations may have been appropriately prioritising the technical safety of their buildings, before moving on to resident engagement. This may have led to some landlords not dedicating sufficient resources or expertise to ensuring that communication about building safety is effective.

The BSR and RSH will have an impact on this as inspections start to bite, but in the meantime, it is incumbent on senior teams and Boards / Elected Members to make sure that their organisations are truly hearing residents experiences, and can be certain that residents are doing what they should be doing to keep themselves and others safe.

**Key takeaway: tackle organisational culture to pivot towards it being a priority with systems in place to support it.**

## Navigate uniqueness: each situation holds its own truth

Each HRB will be different from the next one, and to assume that what works successfully to achieve effective two-way communication in one block will work in another is a high-risk strategy, as is duplicating good or best practice. This is because people are different and will have had different experiences of the landlord.

In the project the theme of landlords being trustworthy was discussed time and again, with vigorous agreement that a resident's experience of another part of the service will affect their likelihood of engaging (or communicating) about building safety. It's not enough to expect residents to implicitly trust their landlord, the landlord needs to be trustworthy.

**Key takeaway: understand the local context and listen to understand, not to reply.**

## Be aware of the attitude that colleagues may have

The project helped participants to think about the stigmatisation of people who live in social housing, and to what extent people who work in social housing contribute to its existence. It was a contributory factor in the Grenfell Tragedy, and everyone could point to examples in their own behaviours and could start to understand the impact on residents.

It was mooted that instead of spending time discussing whether 'they' are residents, tenants or customers, could we simply think that 'they' are people, just like us? To what degree would that help in behaving differently?

**Key takeaway: challenge the beliefs, attitudes and biases of yourself and of others.**



### Check whether what you are doing is working

Using data to design methods of communication is essential, not just demographic data, but other transactional data and qualitative insight to find out residents' experiences and to be aware of them when using communication methods and designing messages.

Being certain about the effectiveness of communication is something that organisations generally don't check, and therefore some of the project participants found this hard to grapple with. It is essential to check, otherwise resources may be wasted and more worryingly messages not heard.

The experiments undertaken by Peabody and Leathermarket highlight how using the same communication method (postcards) can have wildly different results.

**Key takeaway: use data more effectively.**

### What Tpas learned from the participants in this project

- Effectively and meaningfully engaging residents in building safety is not easy
- There has been a huge commitment from participating organisations to getting this right
- Definitive understanding that engaging with residents about building safety is different to generic engagement, less like a pathway and more about really effective two-way communication
- No 'one-size fits all' with organisations responding to local context
- Recognition that organisational culture will be a key determinant of success
- Willingness to embrace different ways of working, to be innovative and challenging and to test effectiveness



## 8. Tpas' View

### The Top 10 Non-Negotiables!

| Headline |                                                                                                                | Practical Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1        | Don't just do what you've always done                                                                          | To achieve successful engagement with residents about building safety may well require a different approach to what you've been doing in more general engagement and involvement.                                                      |
| 2        | Understand that it's different                                                                                 | This engagement is about being safe and feeling safe and so it's absolutely essential that it works, it's not the same as consulting residents about a new policy.                                                                     |
| 3        | Create an opportunity for mutual understanding and trust                                                       | Realise that unless residents trust you, they may well not feel safe and possibly won't report things to you or listen to your advice.                                                                                                 |
| 4        | Keep your promises                                                                                             | Work on areas of dissatisfaction.                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 5        | It really is everyone's responsibility to create the right environment for safety                              | Including residents themselves alongside ALL staff and organisational stakeholders. This means Assets, Repairs, Planned Works, Housing, Resident Engagement, Health and Safety, Compliance, and your Exec Board, all working together. |
| 6        | It's everyone's job to work on Resident Engagement                                                             | Do you have a Task Team to pull everyone together?                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 7        | Continuously work on who lives in the building                                                                 | Look at what apps, systems there are out there to make this easier for everyone involved, including the Fire Service.                                                                                                                  |
| 8        | Don't create template strategies and processes                                                                 | One size absolutely does not fit all, your data will give you insight into residents' communication preferences, behaviours, and likely relationship with you.                                                                         |
| 9        | Your multiple channels approach must all lead back to the same point for analysis                              | Having a full data set of the effectiveness of all channels will help you compare and then flex as necessary                                                                                                                           |
| 10       | Be creative with your data, switch up your approach, try out three different approaches and measure what works | You can then adapt what you need to do to create a positive two-way dialogue.                                                                                                                                                          |





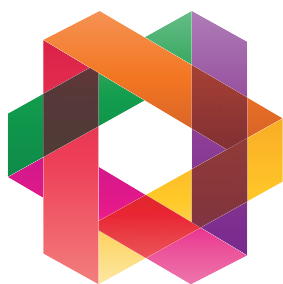
## 9. Thanks

---

This project would not have existed without the wonderful participants, the hard work they put in month after month, the openness and honesty with which they tackled the different themes, and the willingness to try new ideas and concepts.

**Thank you all.**

Tpas thanks also go to all our brilliant speakers and workshop facilitators and the time they spent on the project, and afterwards.



TENANT ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS  
**tpas**





T: 0161 868 3500  
E. [consultancy@tpas.org.uk](mailto:consultancy@tpas.org.uk)  
W. [www.tpas.org.uk](http://www.tpas.org.uk)



TENANT ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS  
**tpas**