

# TAFF

## Together at Taff

Tenant Engagement Strategy 2022 - 2025



## Welcome

Welcome to our Tenant Engagement Strategy which sets out what we hope to achieve together, in partnership with our tenants, over the next three years.

Taff was founded 45 years ago! Our founders were passionate about helping families in housing need – that commitment remains with us today. Our social purpose is stronger than ever.

We understand the importance of a safe, secure and affordable home. We develop places with people, not profit, in mind, building homes and communities where people can thrive. We own and manage over 1,500 homes across Cardiff, giving over 4,000 people somewhere to call home.

We reviewed our approach to involving our tenants to make sure we keep your priorities at the heart of everything we do to create our new Strategy - 'Together at Taff'.

This strategy has been shaped through consultation, feedback and suggestions from our tenants and I believe that sets the scene for the important role our tenants should have in Taff. We know that listening to what our tenants say and acting on it is the key to meeting our tenants needs and aspirations.

Over the next 3 years we will be talking to residents and working together to bring the strategy to life. This means you'll really notice the difference in the way we do things and how, together, we can enhance our services and the communities you live in.



**Helen White – CEO, Taff**

## What is tenant involvement at Taff?

Tenant involvement at Taff is all about our tenants and communities becoming involved in shaping decisions about our services that affect them. This includes us listening to our tenants, understanding what is important to them, as well as tenants being part of co-designing services, influencing what our priorities should be now and in the future.

We do this by providing a range of different ways for tenants to take part, so it is flexible and offers choice to meet our tenants needs and preferences. We also offer evolving ways for tenants to take part through using digital and online methods so we can be as inclusive as possible.

## Why we want our tenants to be involved in our work

We want our tenants and communities to be at the heart of Taff and to be a part of influencing how we provide our services and in helping us to review how we are doing. We know that through involving and listening to tenants we can better understand what sort of services and homes tenants need from Taff. It also helps us to understand what the local priorities and community issues are which Taff could focus on.

### **In summary here are the 3 big reasons why we want tenants to be part of Taff:**

We build and provide houses, but tenants make them a home. As a matter of principle, we believe it's right that tenants can shape services and major decisions that affect their home and their community.

Involving our tenants ensures we deliver services in a way that they really value. By understanding what residents really want and by focusing on these priorities, we can target our resources and secure better value for money.

We want our services to continually improve to meet evolving tenant and community expectations and changing needs. We can only do this effectively by working together.

## What difference will tenant involvement make?

We want to make sure that when tenants are involved with us in any way, from filling in a survey to influencing our future plans, that it has a real purpose and makes a positive difference.

With tenants we've identified the 5 aims of involvement at Taff.

1. Provide quality tenant focussed services.
2. Deliver services which provide value for money and rents which are affordable.
3. Provide services that are inclusive and accessible by all.
4. Build positive relationships, trust and understanding between Taff and our tenants.
5. Develop individual and community skills and resilience.



1 Allotment Group Meeting 2021

## What are our commitments to making Tenant Engagement work?

In delivering our tenant engagement work we'll:

1. **Provide inclusive opportunities** -- reaching a wider audience by offering a range of involvement opportunities and support, including using online and digital channels.
2. **Listen, Act & Learn** – actively listen and hear what a diverse range of tenants say and learn from this. After we've done the listening, we'll take action as a result of what we've learned from our tenants.
3. **Create the right organisational ethos** – developing a culture through the organisation which enables effective tenant involvement and where it's part of everyone's job.
4. **Recognise the value of lived experiences** – we believe that lived experience is as valuable as professional expertise in designing services. We'll involve those who use a service to get their insight and capture their voice.
5. **Collaborate with tenants** – tenant involvement is not something we'll do to people, but something we'll do with people.
6. **Provide feedback** – providing feedback to tenants on what we've learned and what action we've taken as a result.
7. **Commit resources** - devoting the time and resources necessary to make involvement a success. Including investing in digital technology and skills to develop opportunities for tenants to engage safely online.
8. **Be open and honest** – being open and honest about how we work to build trust with our tenants and to have a shared understanding of problems and constraints.
9. **Being open to innovation** - willing to experiment and try new ways of involving our tenants and able to adapt what we do for different individuals, groups and communities.



## What we will do to enable and support tenants to be involved.

In supporting our tenants we'll:

- **Provide practical Support** – this could include things such as paying expenses for attending tenant involvement activities, providing necessary equipment to take part, or arranging transport for example.
- **Meet specific needs of our diverse communities** - this could include providing translation services, meeting at convenient times or suitable places and being culturally sensitive.
- **Develop opportunities to engage with us safely online** – providing online involvement activities such as meetings via Zoom or short online surveys will help us meet the wider needs of our tenants.
- **Be kind and welcoming** – we will be helpful, welcoming and supportive when tenants get involved so that everyone feels comfortable and confident to take part.
- **Provide training or learning opportunities** – we can offer training to support tenants to be involved in ways that suit them.



2 Tenant Scrutiny Meeting 2021 online

## How we will be inclusive and support all tenants to be involved

We value involvement that reflects the whole of our tenant population and are committed to treating people respectfully, fairly and equally, tackling discrimination and harassment and ensuring our services are accessible irrespective of race, religious belief, disability, gender, age or sexual orientation.

We will make sure all groups and individuals have equal access and opportunity to engage in activities.

We will actively seek to remove barriers to tenant engagement by aiming to ensure that our involvement opportunities are accessible, that our written material is clear and easy to understand, and that we do not present any other barriers to involvement. We will provide information for tenants in other languages and formats such as audio or large print where tenants need it. We will provide information in ways that are easy to understand for tenants with limited or no reading skills where tenants need it.

We also require all groups and individuals involved with tenant participation to act to promote equality and welcome participation from all of our communities.



*3 Tenants Learning at Bakehouse in Cardiff, 2019*

## How our tenants can get involved in our work

We want to offer every tenant an equal opportunity to share their views and use their influence in whatever ways suit them best - we welcome everyone's contribution.

We will offer our tried and tested methods like joint estate inspections, face-to-face focus groups, our 'Have your Say' group, as well as introducing new methods including online and digital opportunities, using online methods like Zoom for focus groups, Social Media platforms and online surveys.

We will work to build our digital approach, so we have a broad range of engagement methods, using knowledge and data, together with further engagement activities in communities to really understand what is important to our tenants. We will ensure we adhere to the relevant Data Protection and online safety legislation and guidance.

Below is a summary of the range of ways our tenants can get involved.





## How we will promote and communicate our tenant involvement opportunities and give feedback.

How and how well we communicate with tenants about tenant engagement is really important to us – from our very first contact with people as applicants and then tenants, to the ongoing everyday service experience and making everyone feel part of what we do.

We want to enable all tenants to understand our approach to tenant engagement, how they can get involved and how the organisation will listen to and act on tenants' feedback and learn from complaints.

We will use the full range of communication methods to inform, assist and listen to tenants – keeping everyone up to date, inviting opinions and showing how positive engagement makes a difference to the lives of people and communities.

Whenever possible, we aim to use residents' preferred method(s) of communication, be it face-to-face, email, web, text, phone, post or social media.

## How we will focus on what is important

Community issues and tenants' priorities change so we'll keep listening to tenants about what they want to be involved with, what is important to them and what services they want to see changed and improved.

We will also involve our tenants in changes we know we will need to make that will affect homes and services, such as when we need to meet requirements of the Welsh Government who decide on housing policy in Wales.

Over the next few years there are several important areas where we will involve our tenants, these include:

- Improving tenant facilities and addressing areas of concern
- Investing in our existing homes so they are warm, well maintained and safe
- Rent & Service charge setting
- Decarbonisation of existing homes
- Landlord Health & Safety – keeping homes and tenants safe

## How our tenants influence our big strategic decisions

In addition to wanting our tenants to be involved in shaping our services and their communities, we also want tenants to have opportunities to influence the big strategic decisions we need to make about our long-term plans and priorities.

As an organisation we need to make strategic decisions – these often involve deciding on a change of a major kind or deciding on long-term plans and priorities. Our Board at Taff has the responsibility and skills to make these decisions, but we want to ensure our tenants influence those decisions which could affect their homes and/or services we offer.

When making key strategic decisions Taff are committed to the following:

- Ensuring the Board receives regular insight from tenants – this will include seeing relevant information such as tenant satisfaction survey results and an overview of complaints and comments received from tenants
- Providing opportunities for the board to meet with tenants to listen and hear their views and perceptions of Taff
- Understanding the impact of strategic decisions and proposals through tenant ‘case-studies’ and stories
- Being assured that insight from tenants has shaped strategic plans and proposals
- Committing to creating an environment that values and promotes tenant involvement
- Being accountable to tenants about relevant strategic decisions made



4 Tenant Scrutiny Panel win Pat Chown Award, 2019

## How we are meeting national tenant engagement expectations

This strategy has been designed with insight from our tenants and staff in order that it meets local needs and tenants' priorities. However, it's also important that we can demonstrate we are meeting national tenant engagement expectations and the latest good practice.

In developing this strategy, we have also considered the following:

- The Right Stuff: Hearing the Tenants Voice report – produced by the Regulatory Board for Wales (RBW) [Tenants at the heart review \(gov.wales\)](#)
- Welsh Government – The Regulatory Framework for Housing Associations Registered in Wales

## How we will measure success

Tenant engagement is a continuous process, and this strategy reflects our ongoing ambitions and plans. Our approach must constantly be reviewed and developed to ensure we have the correct plans and resources in place.

This is a three year strategy and will be reviewed in 2025 by the Head of Housing & Communities.

We will involve our tenants in reviewing tenant engagement at Taff to find out if they are satisfied with what we offer and how we are doing. This will include providing tenants with information about what difference tenant engagement has made.

As part of the review of our Tenant Engagement activities, as well as looking at what difference they have made, we will also consider if they provide value for money.



## How will we respond when tenants tell us things aren't going right with our services?

Taff Housing Association is committed to welcoming all feedback and dealing effectively with any complaints you may have about our services. We always aim to build and maintain good relationships with our tenants and service users. This approach sees us focus on meeting your needs and if something has gone wrong to not cause further harm and put things right.

Whenever possible, we will:

- put right any mistakes we may have made
- seek to repair the relationship between the parties involved
- provide any service you're entitled to which we have failed to deliver

When we get something wrong, we will:

- apologise
- try to put things right for you
- learn from our mistakes and use the information to improve our services