

Together at Taff

Annual
Report
2023/2024

Taff



Why is Tenant Engagement important?

Tenants and communities are at the heart of Taff and it is important that they influence and shape how we provide our services and the decisions that we make.



Introduction

In 2022 we launched our new tenant engagement strategy.

“Together at Taff”

Together at Taff is all about our tenants and communities becoming involved in shaping decisions about the services they receive.

It set out what we want to achieve together over the next three years.



We know that by involving and listening to tenants we can deliver better services and...

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.



This report will focus on our progress during 2023/24 to meet these aims



Have Your Say Group

Our Have Your Say Group meet every other month at our Taff offices and online. Our Leadership Team, together with other colleagues present information to the group for consideration, challenge and comment.

The group is able to raise issues, suggest improvements and talk through concerns.

During 2023/24 the group have coproduced the following:



Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

Wrap around contractor procurement questions

Service Charge Policy

Digital Strategy

Damp and Mould Management Plan

Outcomes

One of our Have Your Say Group Members shared their experiences:



I got involved with the groups to have my voice heard and to help shape services. I value meeting like minded people and hearing other people's opinions

Have Your Say Group

The groups recommendations are fed back to the organisation to drive continuous improvement and ensure we are improving services for our tenants.

Digital Strategy

They said:	The group raised the issue of digital exclusion and digital poverty. Whether Taff should be able to provide support to tenants around digital literacy.
We did:	We have developed a “pulse survey” around digital skills and are committed to working with organisations to provide digital literacy support and training



Customer Service around repairs

They said:	The group felt that Taff do not perform well with their service on complex repairs. They identified that when triaging repairs it was important to understand the issue and the impact on the person and it was key for customers to get through to the right person when they called.
We did:	Restructured how we deliver customer services, with the introduction of a dedicated contact team to handle maintenance and repair queries.



Anti-social behaviour (ASB) policy and procedure

They said:	Colleagues investigating ASB issues should have appropriate training especially around hate crime. Weekly contact should be the default for ASB cases unless agreed with the complainant. Interviews with perpetrators and complainant can be dealt with over the phone unless it is a high risk case .
We did:	Incorporated their suggestions and feedback into the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and practice



Have Your Say Group

Workshop Sessions

This year we have completed **3** workshops with our Have Your Say Group



Complaints



Reviewing lessons learnt from complaints

Specific and dedicated training for Customer Service Teams around repairs diagnostics



Strategic Plan



Understanding key themes that will help the strategy

1. Suitable homes for people's needs.
2. Partnership working.
3. Good Communication
4. Trust & transparency.
5. Having the right data.



Asset Management Strategy



Establishing a tenant voice for the strategy



Outcomes



One of our Have Your Say Group Members shared their experiences:

I enjoyed feeding into the 4 year strategic plan and working alongside the teams.

Community Pop Ups

Our Community Pop up events are a critical part of the delivery of our strategy. It ensures we are providing inclusive opportunities reaching a wider audience by offering additional opportunities to engage.

Community issues and tenants' priorities constantly change so our pop ups allow us to involve tenants to understand and resolve community based issues.

We ask tenants:

How satisfied are they with Taff services?

Are there any improvements to Taff services you would like to see?

Are there any issues with the property or area you would like to make us aware of?

We've 'popped up' in Canton, Old St Mellons, Riverside and Grangetown

During 2023/24

We have delivered **8** pop ups

We spoke to **54** tenants

We addressed **30** issues

Top themes from pop up feedback

Damp & mould  **Parking issues** 



New Repair issues



Ventilation concerns



Anti-social behaviour

Estate Management and Cleaning



Community Pop Ups

What have we learnt this year?

To have a range of staff available to answer queries

To send out a pre pop up survey to get feedback from working tenants

Include additional activities for children during the half term pop ups to increase engagement with the community



Case Study 1

During one Community Pop Up Taff colleagues spoke to a tenant whilst completing their door knocking exercise.

The tenant advised the team that the kitchen light was not working and had been scheduled for a date the following week. The kitchen was also in need of updating.

Colleagues went into the property to review the repairs and maintenance issues and after further conversations the tenant explained they were a carer for their partner who was a wheelchair user. The team also noticed that the property condition was poor and there were a number of support needs.

Colleagues scheduled the kitchen light repair to be done the following day. They referred the case to the Community Inclusion Team who engaged with the tenant on what they could do to support. Through this they were able to arrange for a deep clean of the property which the tenant is now able to maintain and ongoing support is continuing.

Case Study 2

A tenant came out to speak to colleagues at a Community Pop Up they had a number of repair issues the tenant was concerned about. Their first language was Bengali and therefore communication had been difficult previously around the repair issues. However, at the pop up a colleague who spoke Bengali was able to translate for the Property Team colleagues and able to address the concerns and inspect the repair issues they raised.

Tenant Scrutiny

Our Tenant Scrutiny Panel acts as a 'critical friend' to assess the performance of our services and influence decisions that the Board makes.

This means that our tenants will measure, test and monitor the services they receive and feedback on the performance of a particular area of service.



What have they done this year?



Agreed to review the Estate Management Service based on tenant feedback and complaints data



Initial meetings with the teams to understand the service

Review financial, tenant and performance information to support scrutiny



Completed 8 site visits with the teams

Developed a survey to gather additional tenant feedback



The Scrutiny Panel will be presenting their findings to Board later this year

Tenant Satisfaction

Completing tenant satisfaction surveys allows us to:

- Gain Tenant feedback on our services and performance.
- Ensure that we have the tenant voice on our services and helping us to learn lessons.
- Drive continuous improvement for our tenants and communities.

Overall service satisfaction

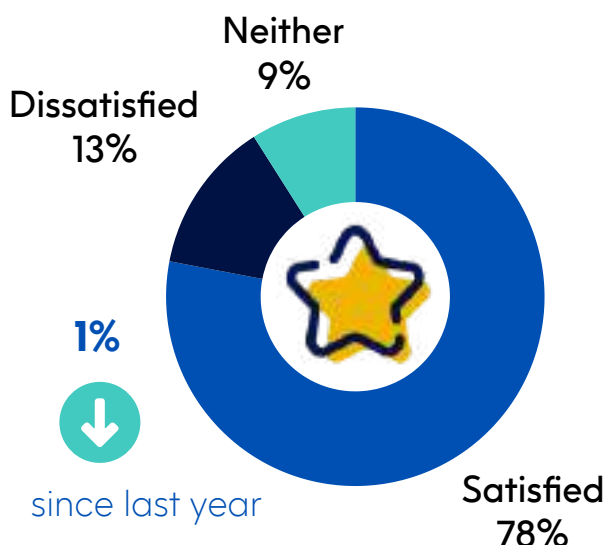
From November to February this year we completed our annual tenant satisfaction survey. All tenants were surveyed via text message, with follow up surveys completed in person and via phone calls.

The survey was available in English, Arabic and Somali.

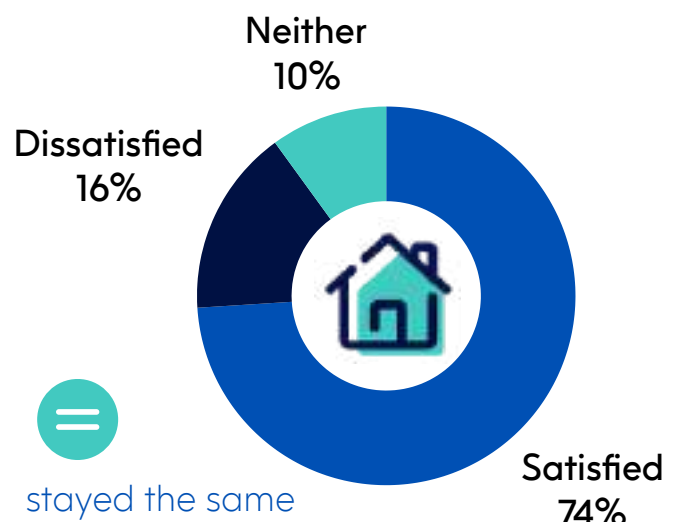
We had **452** survey responses
Over 20% of our tenants

The results were as follows:

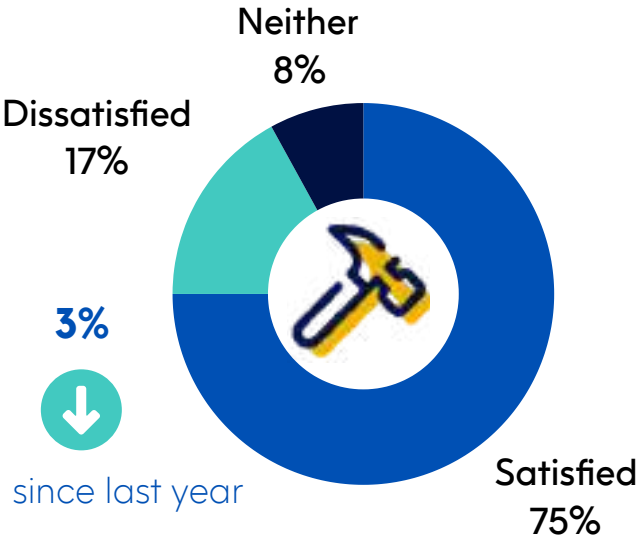
Satisfied with the service provided by Taff.



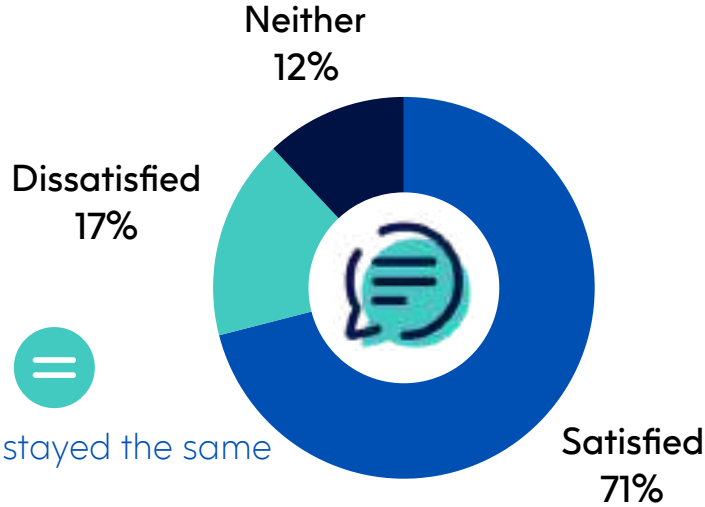
Satisfied with overall quality of your home.



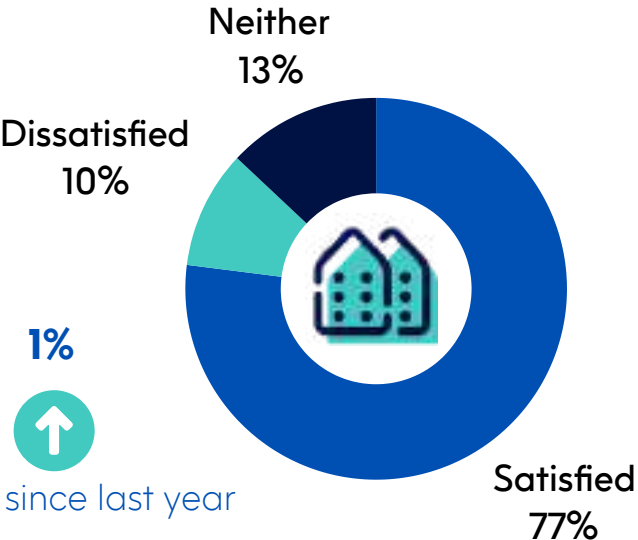
Satisfied with how Taff deals with repairs and maintenance



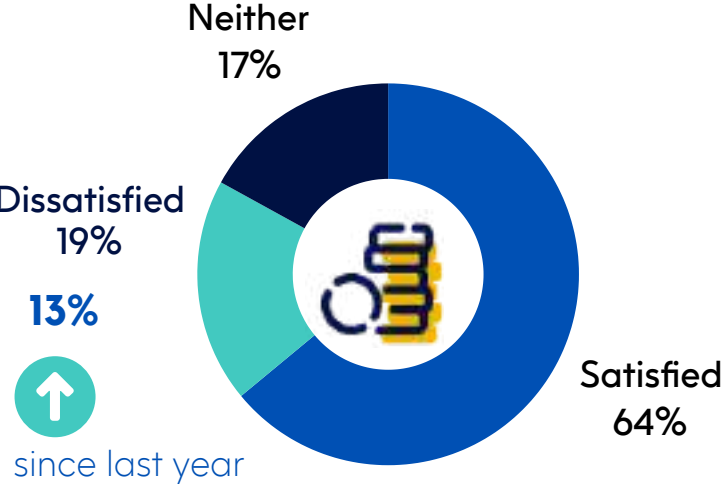
Satisfied that Taff listens to their views and acts upon them.



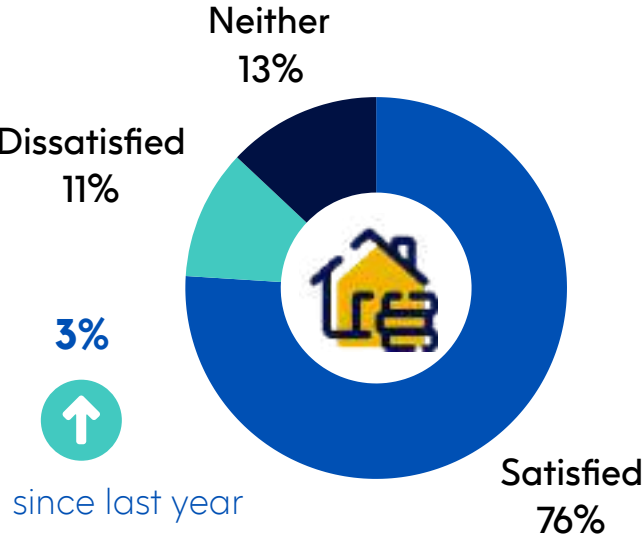
Satisfied with their neighbourhood as a safe place to live



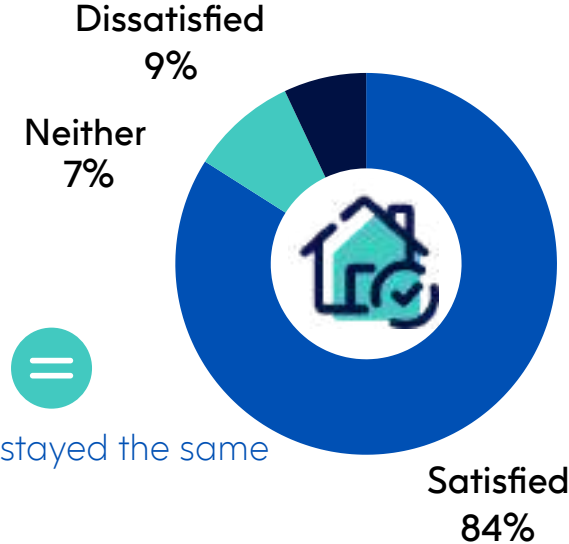
Satisfied their service charge provides value for money



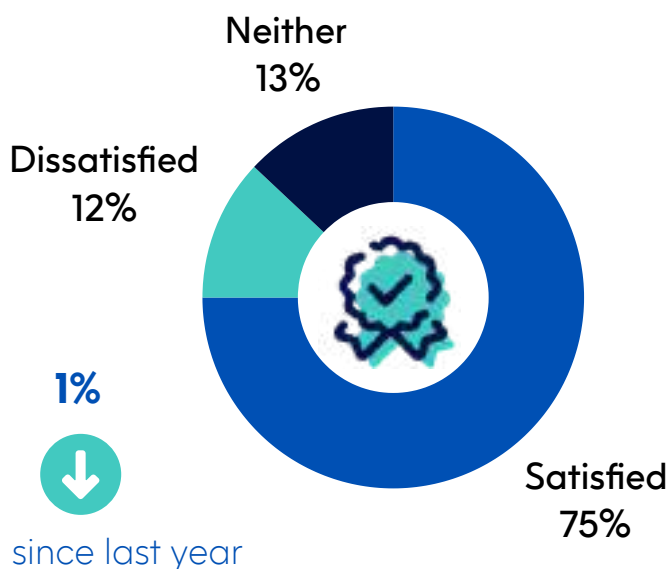
Satisfied their rent provides value for money



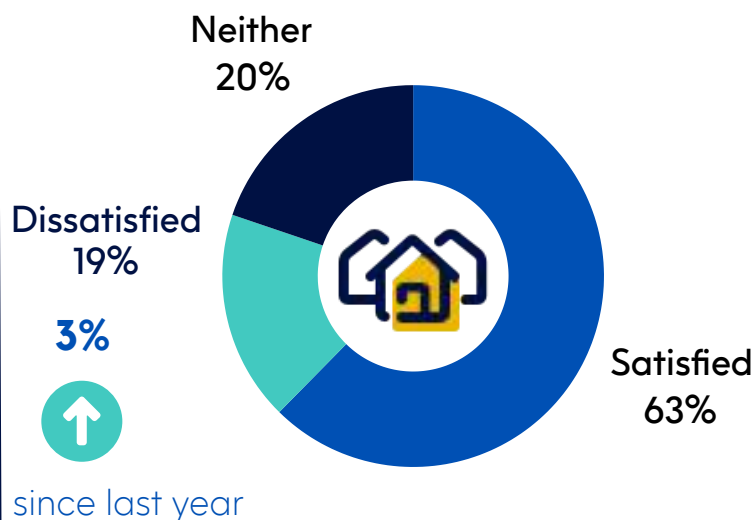
Satisfied that Taff provides a home that is safe and secure



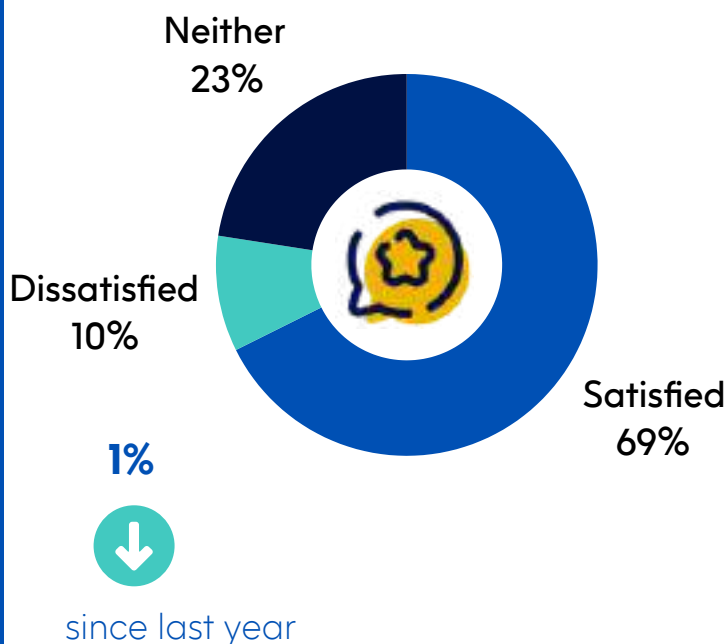
Said they Trust Taff



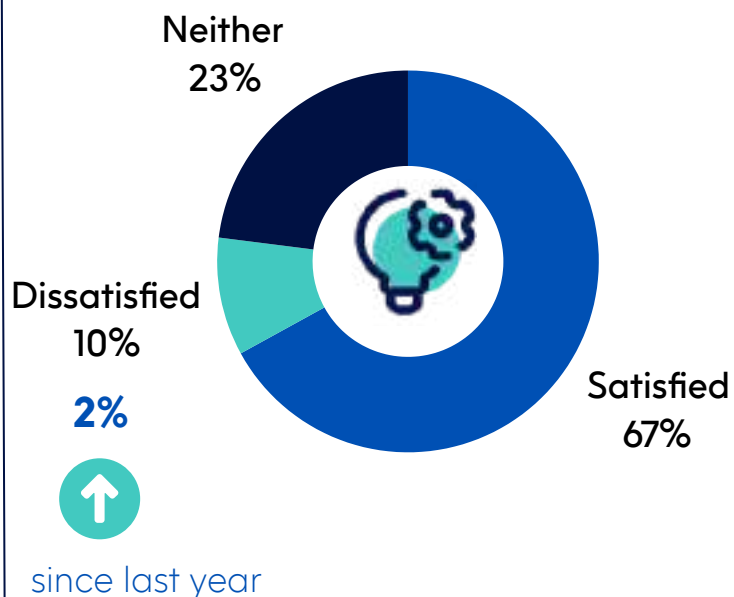
Satisfied with the way Taff deals with anti social behaviour



Were satisfied that Taff gives us a say in how services are managed



Satisfied with the opportunities given for them to participate in Taff's decision making processes



Tenant Satisfaction Surveys

As part of this survey, we asked all respondents to leave a comment explaining their responses.

We received some valuable feedback which demonstrates the colleagues are living and delivering services based on our values.

65

left compliments regarding Taff's services and colleagues



“

Satisfied with everything overall been with Taff Housing nearly 50 years.

“

We haven't long lived in our Taff property only just coming up to a month so far so good . We have not lived in a Taff housing before but are pleasantly surprised at how quick the response to repairs has been , There were a few little issues we have found since moving in but Taff have been great in their response to our repairs and the staff we have dealt with either face to face or over the phone have been really pleasant

”

”

However, we recognise that we don't always get it right.

The most important thing for Taff is that we understand feedback when we get things wrong for us to learn.

108

left comments that included areas where we can improve services.



“

Some repairs are hard to get completed. I need a new kitchen due to condition but I am still waiting.

“

Multiple issues with property over the years and lack of communication with jobs and jobs being pushed forward.

”

”

Tenant Satisfaction Surveys

After reviewing tenant responses and speaking to tenants who expressed concerns, it was clear there were key themes driving dissatisfaction:

Communication

Tenants Feedback:	Taff's Response:
I spend a lot of time chasing repairs and waiting for the right person to contact me to discuss issues	We have restructured the Customer Service Team to introduce a dedicated repairs customer service team that will be able to provide more support to tenants around repairs, diagnose repairs but also have more information to give tenants first time and reduce call backs.

Taff
Operational
change

Condition of property

Tenants Feedback:	Taff's Response:
The condition of my property is poor and needs updating	We increased our planned maintenance spend by 20% over 2023/24. Taff will be spending £20 million over the next 5 years on approving homes for our tenants.

Taff
Strategic
change

Estate Management Service

Tenants Feedback:	Taff's Response:
The communal areas never seem to be cleaned enough	We have increased the number of Estates Assistants within our Estates Team which should allow more time for cleaning within the blocks.

Taff
Operational
change

Strategic Influence Group

In response to clear feedback from our Have Your Say Group last year we presented information to Board around a restructure to our Tenant Engagement Groups. This included an introduction of a new tenant group which will work more closely with our Board to ensure tenants influence the strategic decisions of the organisation.



Developed a Terms of Reference which sets out their aim to provide tenant voice at a strategic level



Developed a new way of working which will utilise the IT equipment the members have been issued with to work on reviewing and influencing matters reserved for tenants



Reviewed and discussed the Asset Management Strategy

Feedback from the group:

“

It is positive to see the tenant voice within the Asset Management Strategy and it's focus on increasing spend on improving properties which we know is the priority for the majority of tenants

”



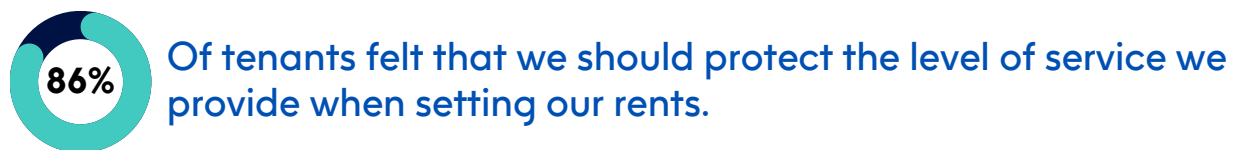
**Deliver Services
which provide value
for money and rents
which are affordable**



Affordability and Cost of living survey

We consult with tenants annually around rent affordability, to ensure that our rents are fair and affordable. Following the introduction of a wider survey in response to the cost of living crisis in 2022, we took the decision to continue this wider survey for 2023.

230 Tenants responded to the survey



Tenants that responded to the survey were clear that they want protect service levels. However, it was also that there was concern that the impact of any rent rise could be unmanageable for some.

We engaged with the Have Your Say Group on the survey results and rent setting for this year. They were in agreement that continuing to deliver the level of service was important and therefore felt that an increase was needed. However, they were overwhelmingly supportive of Taff continuing to provide Cost of living support and as a result we have strengthened our support for 2023/24



Money advice
/ budgeting
for tenants



Wellbeing &
Food poverty
Winter Wellbeing



Taff
Community
Allotment



Energy Saving -
Keep warm and
save money



Gifts for
children
Christmas/Eid



Hardship Fund
- Financial
Support



Ethical savings
and loans -
Cardiff & Vale



Mental health
support -
Samaritans

Service Charge Consultation

Our Service Charge consultation for 2023/24 was led by our Income Team. The consultation aimed to ensure service charges are fair and reasonable for our tenants and we are transparent in how they are set.



We sent letters of the proposed service charges



Tenants could contact via a QR code or request a call back later



Any queries or feedback were recorded to ensure we could learn and improve.

13 tenants responded to the consultation



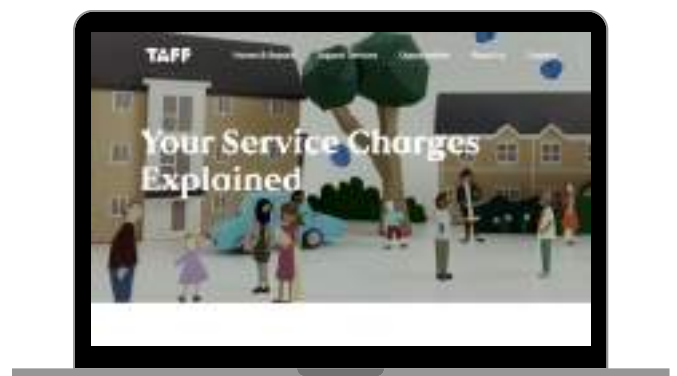
a reduction of 30 responses

One of the themes from last years feedback was around confusion and requiring transparency

As a result this year the breakdown of the service charges was improved to ensure that tenants have clarity during the initial consultation on services charges and what they mean.



We will also be updating our website to have service charge information for tenants which should further improve transparency and support what tenants want to see.





Disability Awareness Group



The Disability Awareness Group aims to represent tenants and residents who consider themselves to be disabled, through promoting their rights and working to eliminate discrimination.

This year the group have reviewed transport issues for people with a disability (specifically those who use wheelchairs) and how they are affected by the lack of suitable transport in the area.

The group have had visits from representatives of Cardiff council licencing agency and Disability Wales

One of the group shared their experiences with the organisations to influence reviewing and changing services:



“Through all these experiences I have had to adjust my life and no longer do things I enjoy. As a result, I am staying in. I am constantly relying on others and feel I have lost my independence. I feel isolated and it is having a detrimental effect on my wellbeing.”

Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Group

The Group aims are:

To be a consultative group providing feedback and recommendations on Equality, Housing issues and Policies to the Association and other Organisations.

To Raise Awareness to the Association of the barriers faced by BME Groups in Cardiff and the Vale when trying to access Housing and other services



This year the group have:

Reviewed Taff's progress around their Deeds not words plan and their Tenant equality report

Welcomed new members

Worked jointly with CCHA and reviewed their services and policies.



Build positive
relationships, trust
and understanding
between Taff and
our tenants



Eid Mubarak

Our Tenant and Resident Association organised two fantastic Eid celebration at the Taff offices.

The events were filled with joy, laughter, and a range of exciting activities for children to enjoy, including crafts, henna designs and face painting.

We were also joined by other organisations including the Police and Cardiff Council's Get into Work team. This celebration provided a wonderful opportunity for the community to come together, connect and celebrate Eid.



“

Thank you so much for always supporting us and for organising this to make sure our children enjoy celebrating Eid.

”

“

I really enjoyed the event. I met friends and spoke to new people who are also tenants. The Eid event was well organised and amazing. The staff at Taff were very friendly and helpful.

”

Communications

Taff Talks

Last year we relaunched our tenant magazine “Taff Talks”, based on feedback from our Have Your Say group and to help improve engagement and communication between tenants and Taff.



During 2023/24 we published **4** digital magazines.

Each has been created with input from our Have Your Say group, who help us review and finalise the content before we send it out. This allows us to make sure that we include information that matters most to our tenants.

Through "Taff Talks," we share important updates, good news stories, and other useful information from across Taff. We've also created a "Tenant Corner" in the newsletter, where tenants have the opportunity to work with our Communications team and share their own stories, recipes, and other contributions.

Over **250** tenant accessed “Taff Talks”

For 2024/25, we will continue to involve tenants and aim to increase readership and encourage more tenant contributions.

Reception Area

We have also introduced a digital screen in our reception area to engage more proactively.

It allows us to share quick updates with our tenants who visit our office.

The screen is much more engaging than print materials and can share important information quickly and easily



Winter Wellbeing Club

In response to the success of the club in 2022 and feedback from tenants in October 2023 we relaunched our:

‘Winter Wellbeing Club’



Over a series of 8 fortnightly lunch clubs, we:

Served

180

Cardiff Third Sector
Council grant funded
hot meals

Welcomed

6

External speakers
offering advice /
support

Distributed

200

Grant funded fruit
bags

- We had a range of talks from external speakers offering advice and support, not just with the cost of living crisis.
- We welcomed local MPs and the First Minister Mark Drakeford
- Provided wellbeing activities through workshops including art therapy, beauty treatments by local students needing community experience and advice from health professionals including a pharmacist.
- Provided one to one advice and support including access to grants and vouchers.



Tenant Xena and MS Mark Drakeford

Complaints

We acknowledge that complaints offer us an opportunity to learn and improve our services.

Complaints 23/24

We had 168 complaints

55

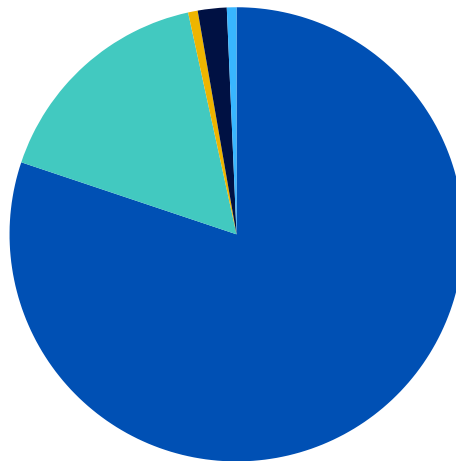
Formal
Complaints

109

Informal
Complaints

4

Ombudsman



117 Upheld (agreed with complainant)

24 Not Upheld (disagreed with complainant)

1 Discontinued

3 Ombudsman (investigation wasn't merited by ombudsman)

1 Ombudsman (settled complaint before investigation)

82% complaints were resolved within the timescale
the timescales set out in our policy

2022/23: **72%**

↑ 10% increase from last year

Complaints

Themes

We welcome complaints about our service. The complaints we receive are reviewed from a thematic view point. This allows us to pull out common areas or trends and act upon them to deliver improvement in our services. The most common themes are:



Lessons Learnt

Learning from complaints is important and we value the opportunity which it gives us to improve:

Damp and mould issues have featured prominently in our complaints. Tenants feel more comfortable reporting issues to us and rightly expect us to act quickly to eliminate the hazard it can pose. As a result of the number of complaints related to damp and mould we recognised we needed to review our approach.

This review culminated in a new Damp and Mould Management Plan, with a clear risk assessment process, with the outcome linked to timescales to remove any hazards identified. This provides clear guidance to colleagues on our approach and how we risk assess damp and mould cases.





Training for our Tenant Groups

Our Disability Awareness Group completed training on:

Dementia awareness from Dementia Cymru



Our Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Group completed training on:

Anti-racism and Hate Crime from Race Equality First



Feedback from the one of the group members was:

“The trainer was really knowledgeable about complex issues such as Hate Crime. It has supported my understanding and has given me confidence to support people in my community who may experience hate crime and help them through sign posting.”

Tenant Engagement Training

As part of the development of our new Tenant Engagement structure we had overwhelming feedback that tenant training was key to successful delivery.

Taff worked in partnership with TPAS to develop bespoke tenant training material focusing on:

Regulation of Housing Associations and professional conduct

Scrutiny, type of data and tenants can scrutinise information

Value for Money (VfM) and how tenants can assess VfM

Tenant Voice - how it influences community and housing association activity



Some of the group gave feedback on the training:

“

It was really valuable and was worth my time attending.

There was a lot of complicated information shared on regulation and the activities during the session really helped to bring to life the training and aid my understanding.

”

Future training is planned for 2024/25

Summer Community Fun Days

Our annual summer wellbeing event was held at Riverside Warehouse and this year we had an amazing turnout, welcoming over 400 tenants and local residents.

The event was packed full of excitement with a range of stall holders and fun activities. From animal experiences to circus skills, arts and crafts, face painting, and even yoga sessions, there was something for everyone to enjoy.

Summer Term Event Riverside SRCDC



over 400 tenants and local
community members

11 partner organisations

Christmas Activities

Children's Christmas Party

Our Tenant Resident Association supported us to organise The Children's Christmas Party.

The free event provided children with food and a present from Santa. There was also lots of activities including face painting and pass the parcel.

over **40** children
attended



Little Wish Christmas 2023 and Eid 2024

Our Little Wish project gives an opportunity for tenants struggling with the cost of Christmas and Eid to get free gifts for children and young people living in a Taff property. Christmas 2023 has been the busiest year so far for Little Wish! We received donations to the project from local businesses, contractors, members of the local community and staff members.



68 children received a gift at Christmas

60 children received a gift at Eid



This is a big help as a single mum of 2 kids and one due very soon money is very hard at the moment with cost of living so high as well but this means the world to me and my kids thank you so much everyone that helped gift items.



Affordable Warmth

We want to ensure that we focus on making our homes more energy efficient to minimise fuel bills for our tenants. Working with Welsh Government funding for Optimised Retrofit (ORP) we will deliver improvements to our home over the next 5 years.

We know that successful delivery of this programme relies on good tenant engagement which is why we have ensured that we have dedicated Tenant Engagement Officer to support tenants through this progress.

The key focuses will be on:

Keeping tenants informed

Gathering feedback

Learning from feedback

We have been gathering feedback tenants who previously had solar panels installed and will be using their feedback to learn for the future of the programme:

“The panels have had massive effect on my bills. My sister lives in the same size property but pays way more I do.”

“The panels have had a significant effect on my bills, on occasion the washer runs purely on the panels. I am very please they were installed.”

Partnership working

We have been working on developing our key communications. We have produced a video with TPAS Cymru to share information about Retrofit and Taff's work to our tenants.



Looking to the future

2024 - 25

Summary

During 2023/24 we have started to utilise more of the feedback we gather to learn lessons and improve our operational service. This is something which we will strengthen over 2024-25 as well.

However, we recognise that we can do more to ensure tenants influence more of our service delivery and decision making processes.

We Will:

Strengthen tenant influencing services and strategic decisions

- Utilise the Strategic Tenant Influence Group to provide more tenant voice at a strategic level and work closely with the Board presenting four tenant voice reports to Board a year.
- Ensure tenant engagement is embedded in all of our activities where all touch points are used to listen and understand what tenants value about the services we provide and what they think we could improve,.

We Will:

Engage with tenants as we improve the energy efficiency of our homes

- Deliver a programme of energy efficiency measures in our homes over the course of the next year.
- Engage with tenants prior to, during, and after work is completed on their home, ensuring tenants feel fully informed and we understand if it has made a positive difference.
- Create engaging communications to share information and support tenants understanding of retrofit and affordable warmth.

We Will:

Continue to improve our complaints process

- We will improve our communications around complaints. Keeping people informed throughout the process to support our openness and transparency. If we need to extend a timescale for a complaint we will ensure tenants are informed and agree the extension.

TAFF

www.taffhousing.co.uk

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