



# Tenant Engagement Review 2024

## Consultation responses

### 1. Introduction

Consultation on Canterbury City Council's (CCC) Tenant Engagement Review took place between Monday 14 October 2024 and Monday 6 January 2025.

This review aimed to gather tenant feedback on their experiences with our tenant engagement initiatives and identify opportunities for improvement. Over the past few years, CCC have offered various engagement opportunities, including the Resident Engagement Panel, Independent Living Forum, Disability Forum, Community Champion roles, annual garden competition, tenant surveys and newsletters. These initiatives were designed to provide platforms for tenants to voice their opinions and influence decision-making.

In April 2024, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) introduced the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard (TIAS), replacing the previous Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.

The TIAS emphasises the importance of landlords being transparent, providing tenants with opportunities to influence decisions and holding landlords accountable for their actions. This consultation aligns with the Consumer Standards by seeking to review and enhance our engagement framework to ensure it effectively serves our tenants' needs.

A total of **32 responses** were received.

## 2. Executive summary

- This review aimed to gather feedback on tenant engagement and identify areas of improvement.
- A total of 32 responses were received out of approximately 5,000 tenants, indicating a low response rate and limited engagement with the consultation process.
- Most respondents (63%) reported that they had not participated in tenant engagement activities over the last three years.
- Lack of awareness of activities was the most significant barrier to participation, cited by 47% of respondents, followed by unclear purposes of engagement (22%) and issues with timing and location (16%).
- Half of respondents (50%) felt that current engagement opportunities did not enable them to influence or shape housing services effectively. Only 13% believed these opportunities worked very well.
- To improve accessibility, 69% of respondents suggested better communication about upcoming opportunities, while 53% recommended offering both online and in-person participation options. Flexible event timing was also highlighted by 34% of respondents.
- Respondents expressed a strong desire for more community events and visits (72%), more frequent communication and updates (66%), and increased opportunities for in-person meetings (50%). Virtual engagement options were also preferred by 44% of tenants.
- Most tenants (84%) expressed a preference for regular involvement in housing service decisions, such as monthly or quarterly updates.
- This feedback highlights key areas for improvement, including better communication, increased accessibility and more frequent engagement opportunities tailored to tenant needs.

### 3. Consultation methodology

Consultation took place between Monday 14 October 2024 and Monday 6 January 2025. The following methods were used to seek views:

- ∄ an online questionnaire, which received 32 responses
- ∄ a paper version of the questionnaire, none were returned
- ∄ Inviting written representations, none were received.

The consultation was promoted in the following ways:

- ∄ an article on the council's newsroom site
- ∄ posts on the council's social media channels
- ∄ email notification to involved tenants
- ∄ written notification to involved tenants, notably from the Independent Living Forum
- ∄ featured in other organisations' communications, including newsletters from Canterbury BID and community magazines covering the district.

## 4. Findings

*NB: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest decimal point*

### 4.1. Questionnaire responses

#### 4.1.1. Respondent profile

The overwhelming majority of respondents were Canterbury City Council tenants.

Respondent type	Percentage
A Canterbury City Council tenant	94% (30)
A Canterbury City Council leaseholder	-
A business, organisation or community group, please provide the name: <i>Home owner</i>	3% (1)
Other, please state: <i>No information provided</i>	3% (1)

Most respondents were broadly between the ages of 55 and 74.

Age	Percentage
Under 18	-
18 to 25	-
26 to 34	6% (2)
35 to 44	3% (1)
45 to 54	16% (5)
55 to 64	31% (10)
65 to 74	28% (9)
75 to 84	13% (4)
85 and above	-

*NB: 1 (3%) respondents did not give their age*

Over three quarters of respondents were female.

Gender	Percentage
Male	19% (6)
Female	78% (25)
Prefer to self-describe (for example, non-binary, gender fluid etc)	-

*NB: 1 (3%) respondent did not give their gender*

#### 4.1.2. Participation in tenant engagement

Overall, 38% of respondents reported participating in tenant engagement activities over the last three years, while the majority, 63%, indicated they had not.

This suggests a relatively low level of involvement, with potential to engage a larger portion of tenants.

Participation	Percentage
Yes	38% (12)
No	63% (20)

#### 4.1.3. Types of activities participated in

Among those who participated in tenant engagement activities, tenant meetings were the most common (75%), followed by the garden competition (58%), community events (50%) and surveys or consultations (50%).

This indicates a preference for structured meetings and competitions, while other options like tenant surveys were less commonly selected.

Tenant activity	Percentage
Tenant meetings (e.g. Resident Engagement Panel, Disability Forum, Independent Living Forum)	75% (9)
Community events	50% (6)
Garden competition	59% (7)
Survey or consultation	50% (6)
Other (please specify): <i>Annual Tenant Survey</i>	8% (1)

#### 4.1.4. Tenant engagement effectiveness

Half of respondents (50%) felt that current tenant engagement opportunities did not enable them to effectively influence and shape housing services.

Only 13% felt engagement opportunities worked very well, while 38% said they worked somewhat well.

This highlights a significant gap in tenant perceptions of the impact of engagement efforts.

Level of effectiveness	Percentage
Very well	13% (4)
Somewhat well	38% (12)
Not well	50% (16)

#### 4.1.5. Barriers to participation

The most significant barrier to participation was a lack of awareness of activities (47%), followed by unclear purposes of engagement (22%) and timing/location of events (16% each).

Other barriers included disabilities or individual preferences not to engage.

This suggests that improving promotion and clarifying objectives could reduce participation barriers.

Barriers to participation	Percentage
Timing of events	16% (5)
Lack of awareness of activities	47% (15)
Location of events	16% (5)
Unclear purpose of engagement	22% (7)
Prefer not to engage	3% (1)
Other (please specify): <i>Disabilities</i> <i>None</i> <i>No barrier for me</i>	9% (3)

*NB: 3 (9%) respondents did not respond to this question*

#### 4.1.6. Improving accessibility

Respondents overwhelmingly suggested improving communication about upcoming opportunities (69%) and offering a variety of participation methods (53%), such as online and in-person options.

Flexible timing was also noted by 34%, indicating a need for more adaptable scheduling.

These responses emphasise the importance of accessibility and proactive outreach.

Improvements	Percentage
Provide more flexible time options	34% (11)
Offer a variety of ways to participate (online, in-person)	53% (17)
Improve communication about upcoming opportunities	69% (22)
Provide incentives (children activities, vouchers)	13% (4)
Other (please specify): <i>Make engagement more local</i>	3% (1)

*NB: 1 (3%) respondent did not respond to this question*

#### 4.1.7. Support or resources needed

The majority of respondents (66%) wanted opportunities to collaborate directly with staff and 56% requested clearer information on how decisions are made.

Training on involvement was desired by 25%, while 16% felt adequately supported.

This suggests that clearer decision-making processes and increased collaboration could empower tenants.

Support or resources needed	Percentage
Training on how to get involved	25% (8)
Clearer information on how decisions are made	56% (18)
Opportunities to collaborate directly with staff	66% (21)
None needed, I feel adequately supported	16% (5)

#### 4.1.8. Preferred engagement activities

The most desired future activities included more community events or visits (72%) and more frequent communication/updates (66%).

In-person meetings and panels (50%) and virtual options (44%) were also popular.

Surveys and feedback opportunities (47%) ranked slightly lower, highlighting the value of direct, face-to-face engagement.

Tenant activity	Percentage
More in-person meetings and panels	50% (16)
More events or visits in the community	72% (23)
Virtual/online engagement options	44% (14)
More frequent communication/updates	66% (21)
Surveys and feedback opportunities	47% (15)
Other (please specify): <i>Need more activities for young children</i> <i>Positive engagement from estate managers</i>	6% (2)

*NB: 1 (3%) respondent did not respond to this question*

#### 4.1.9. Frequency of tenant involvement

A large majority of respondents (84%) expressed a preference for regular involvement in decisions (monthly or quarterly).

Only a small number preferred occasional involvement (6%) or engagement limited to major decisions (3%).

This indicates that tenants are eager for consistent and ongoing involvement in shaping housing services.

Frequency	Percentage
Regularly (monthly or quarterly)	84% (27)
Occasionally (annually or biannually)	6% (2)
Only for major decisions or changes	3% (1)
I prefer not to be involved	3% (1)

*NB: 1 (3%) respondent did not respond to this question*

#### 4.1.10. Other suggestions

Respondents were asked for any other suggestions or comments about how the council can improve tenant engagement.

The following comments were received:

- Communication issues: 8 comments
- Visibility and accessibility of housing officers: 6 comments
- Listening to tenants and acting on feedback: 5 comments
- Property maintenance and repairs: 4 comments
- Tenant engagement and social events: 4 comments
- ASB and estate management: 3 comments
- Transparency and information sharing: 3 comments
- Training for staff: 2 comments

## 4.2. Written representations

No written representations were received.

## 5. Conclusions

The Tenant Engagement Review consultation has provided valuable insight into tenants' views on current engagement practices, highlighting areas for improvement.

While participation in the consultation was low, the feedback reveals key barriers such as lack of awareness, insufficient communication and unclear engagement purposes.

These issues align with themes identified in the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) Consumer Standards, which emphasise tenant empowerment, effective communication and responsiveness.

With limited resources, we must prioritise actions that address the most significant feedback from tenants. Improving communication about upcoming opportunities, offering a mix of online and in-person engagement methods and ensuring tenants feel heard through regular updates are achievable first steps. These align with the RSH's expectations for tenant involvement and transparency while remaining mindful of resource constraints.

By acting on this feedback, we can strengthen our approach to tenant engagement, ensuring compliance with regulatory standards while fostering a more collaborative relationship with our tenants.