



YOUR VOICE, YOUR HOME, YOUR COMMUNITY

Involve, Enable, Communicate, Build, Integrate, Embed, Empower

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Tuath
Housing

Your Voice

1. Tuath Housing Voluntary Board of Directors Foreword



Prof. Paddy Gray, Chair

Since the introduction of tenant engagement in 2018 Tuath Housing have taken great steps in developing a service that involves and consults residents in a range of different ways. We believe that by listening to, working in partnership with, and providing valuable information for our residents, we can offer excellent tenancy services.

This tenant engagement strategy covers the period 2022-2025. It forms part of the Tuath Housing Strategic Plan 2021-2025 Resilience, Recovery, Rejuvenation Building a Better Future, which is designed to overarch Tuath Housing's approach to delivering excellent services across our association. Tenant engagement is a new area to the social housing sector in Ireland and, in line with the new Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority (AHBRA) standards we are pleased to publish our first bespoke resident centred engagement strategy.

Following the launch of a research paper commissioned by the board of Tuath Housing in March 2022 called "Embedding a Culture of Tenant Engagement: Recommendations for Social Housing in the Irish Context". One of the recommendations from the research paper was for residents who choose to

engage, it is vital that opportunities are provided so that residents can influence the decision-making process in a meaningful way.

This strategy sets out seven key objectives that will help us achieve our vision of Tuath Housing being a leader in tenant engagement, delivering first class services to our residents and leading the way in governance and accountability through tenant engagement and participation. This strategy will be a live, active, working document that we hope will develop and evolve over the next four years. We are at the beginning of our journey of working in partnership with our residents, but we are proud of the progress we have made so far, and we will continue to grow and develop our resident-led approach which is fundamental to creating sustainable communities.





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2. Tenant Engagement Working Group Foreword

In March 2020, the first meeting of the tenant engagement working group took place. This consultation group is made up of Tuath Housing residents and Tuath Housing staff. Its purpose is to enable residents and staff to work together to improve Tuath Housing's services and communication with residents. The working group is a key part of Tuath's tenant engagement initiative and has had a positive impact, enabling Tuath Housing to learn more about how residents can be meaningfully engaged in decision-making processes.

With the insight of the working group a national survey was developed to inform the tenant engagement strategy. This approach has given residents a unique opportunity to develop a strategy that truly reflects their views and aspirations. The working group and housing team discussed, reviewed, and gave feedback on the draft strategy to create this final document.

"Understanding the changing needs of our residents is vital if we are to deliver a truly great housing service. We recognise that informing and listening to residents' views is essential to help us deliver a housing service to meet our customers' needs. We want to work with residents to provide more opportunities to get involved and to share their knowledge and experiences with us." Louise Thompson, Tuath Housing Manager and Chair of the Tenant Engagement Working Group.

The process of residents and staff working together has been a rewarding one. In the words of one of the resident representatives on the working group

"I found being on the working group very easy and it is rewarding knowing that my opinion matters." Another member says "As a Tuath resident I wanted to give something back. I appreciate the ethos and aims of the association and want to support the development of tenant engagement. Getting involved is a great step towards having a say in your community. It recognises the shared responsibility we have in making our communities work well."

The working group are delighted to have been able to play a part in the development of this strategy. It's core value of respect and vision to create community are close to heart. The group want to continue to grow, improve and innovate when it comes to engaging and working closely in partnership with Tuath residents and staff. We would like to thank all residents for giving their feedback. This strategy has been resident-driven and resident-led, and this is the principle that will guide all our tenant engagement work over the next four years.



"Understanding the changing needs of our residents is vital if we are to deliver a truly great housing service. We recognise that informing and listening to residents' views is essential to help us deliver a housing service to meet our customers' needs."

Louise Thompson, Tuath Housing Manager and Chair of the Tenant Engagement Working Group.





Your Home



3. Introduction

In 2020 Tuath Housing published our Strategic Plan 2021 - 2025 *Resilience, Recovery, Rejuvenation Building a Better Future*. Tuath's aim is to deliver effective services to residents, to listen to their feedback and to understand what they value, so that we can design our tenancy services accordingly. To deliver on this objective we aim to widen resident involvement in our service design and delivery. Tenant engagement has a key role to play in achieving many of the strategic plan's objectives and key outcomes. Within Tuath Housing's strategic plan we have adopted seven strategic objectives:

Our 7 Strategic Objectives

- 1 First Class Services
- 2 Health & Safety for All
- 3 Effective Asset Management
- 4 Exemplary Governance & Standards of Regulatory Compliance
- 5 Organisational Efficiency & Productivity
- 6 Working in Partnership/ Delivering More New Homes & Tenures
- 7 Value for Money, Financial Planning & Financial Strength

3.1 Our Vision for the Tenant Engagement Strategy

Our vision is for Tuath Housing to be a leader in tenant engagement in the Irish voluntary and cooperative sector, delivering first class services to our residents and leading the way in governance and accountability through tenant engagement and participation. Our vision is for our residents to become an integral part of our business, influencing how services are provided, how decisions are made and how money is spent. We want to implement best practice to ensure that consultation and engagement is meaningful and transformative both for Tuath and our residents. The purpose of this strategy is to set out how tenant engagement will support the achievement of Tuath Housing's strategic objectives as set out in this strategic plan over the next four years.



“Getting involved as a resident is a great step towards having a say in your community. It recognises the shared responsibility we have in making our communities work well.”

**Annette, Co. Galway, Tuath resident and resident representative,
Tenant Engagement Working Group.**



3. Introduction

3.2 Resident Consultation

Resident consultation and participation have been central to the development of this strategy. Our tenant engagement working group, a consultation group of Tuath Housing residents and Tuath Housing staff, including management and other staff from within housing services, was established in early 2020. The purpose of the working group is to enable staff and residents to work together to improve the services Tuath Housing provides and give residents an opportunity to have an input into the services they receive and decisions that affect them.

To enable our residents to have a say in the development of the tenant engagement strategy a survey was developed by the tenant engagement working group that was sent out to every Tuath household. In total 1770 responses were received. Residents were asked about their preferences and experiences in relation to communicating with Tuath Housing. They were also asked for their opinions on the Tuath Housing website, residents' magazine, about different aspects of tenant engagement including its benefits and the barriers to getting involved. The key findings of the tenant engagement survey are available in the Appendix at the end of this document.

3.3 Social Impact

Social impact is the change that happens to people, the community, or the environment as a direct result of the activities or services provided by an

organisation. Social impact includes social, economic, environmental, and wider community changes. The tenant engagement strategy does this by encouraging the social engagement, empowerment, and economic growth of our residents. "At Tuath Housing our goal is to have a positive social impact through the services we provide and one of the ways we do this is through tenant engagement. We aim to provide homes to our residents, not just 'bricks and mortar'. We want to empower residents and staff to work together to build strong, supportive, and vibrant communities." Sean O' Connor, CEO, Tuath Housing. Our action plan (Section 9) gives more detail about how we will do this over the next four years.

3.4 Regulation

As an Approved Housing Body (AHB) Tuath Housing complies with The Housing Agency's *Performance Standard and Assessment Framework for the Regulation of Approved Housing Bodies in Ireland*. AHBs must be able to demonstrate to residents, the board, and key stakeholders that they have considered all the matters that apply to the operation of an AHB.

The Housing (Regulation of Approved Housing Bodies) Bill 2019 establishes a statutory regulator for Approved Housing Bodies who will enforce performance standards, including those relating to tenant involvement, governance, decision-making, planning, monitoring performance, tenancy management and communications.



"At Tuath Housing our goal is to have a positive social impact through the services we provide and one of the ways we do this is through tenant engagement. We aim to provide homes to our residents, not just 'bricks and mortar'. We want to empower residents and staff to work together to build strong, supportive, and vibrant communities."

Sean O' Connor, CEO, Tuath Housing.



3. Introduction

3.5 Tenant Engagement Research

In March 2022 Tuath Housing launched a tenant engagement research report which was commissioned by the Tuath board called *“Embedding a Culture of Tenant Engagement: Recommendations for Social Housing in the Irish Context”*. This research adds to the knowledge of what works in tenant engagement, gives insights into best practice, and provides recommendations that we hope will help to implement a resident-centred approach and embed tenant engagement in the culture of our organisation. The full report is available on the Tuath Housing website www.tuathhousing.ie

3.6 Equal Opportunities

Tuath Housing recognises the importance of providing equal opportunities to all our residents to get involved and participate, both in their communities and in having a say in the housing services they receive. Tuath Housing

acknowledges our role in helping to end discrimination, promote equality and protect the human rights of our residents. In delivering our programme for tenant engagement, we are committed to ensuring that all residents are given an equal opportunity to take part. We recognise that in our society it can be harder for some people to have their voices heard, such as people with disabilities and people from underrepresented backgrounds, and we commit to removing those barriers to involvement as far as possible.

3.7 Data Protection

Tuath Housing abides by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This means we have a number of responsibilities in relation to how we use residents’ data, such as their contact information. These responsibilities include being transparent about what we use the data for, informing residents about the purpose the data is being collected for and ensuring the data is kept confidential.



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4. What is Tenant Engagement?

Tenant engagement, which is also known as tenant participation or tenant involvement, relates to how Tuath Housing connects, communicates, consults with our residents, and supports communities where our residents live.

Connects: Building trust and good relationships between our staff and residents.

Communicates: Having good quality, effective and timely communications with residents. Providing them with relevant and accessible information. Having a range of methods by which residents can easily communicate with us.

Consults: Providing our residents with the opportunity to have a say in the services we provide. Listening to what our residents say and acting on what they tell us. This enables us to deliver better services and increase resident satisfaction.

Supports Communities: For Tuath Housing, tenant engagement is also about supporting our residents to create vibrant, welcoming, and safe communities where they live. Since 2018 our dedicated tenant engagement team has been supporting residents to set up residents' groups, run community events and take part in National and European initiatives.

4.1 Benefits of Tenant Engagement

We are committed to developing effective tenant engagement and empowering our residents to be involved in a way that suits them. We believe that tenant engagement has many benefits for Tuath as an organisation, for our residents and the wider community. Tenant engagement can:

- Empower residents to influence how housing services are delivered.
- Inform improvements to the services residents receive.
- Help residents and staff build confidence, skills, and knowledge.
- Increase resident satisfaction with housing services, standards and living conditions.
- Improve communications and relationships between residents and staff.
- Help to tackle social isolation, increase connections, support integration, and give a sense of purpose and achievement.

- Support people to make a positive contribution to their community and build community spirit where they live.
- Give people an opportunity to share their unique perspective based on their circumstances and experiences and have this reflected in how things are done.

4.2 Barriers to Tenant Engagement

We realise that people's lives, circumstances, and communities are all different, and that there is no single 'right' way of involving people. As such, our approach to tenant engagement is about making sure there are a variety of ways for people to get involved and that residents can get involved in ways they feel comfortable with. However, there can be some barriers to getting involved in tenant engagement, some of which include:

48% of people don't know how to get involved - listed by 48% of respondents to our tenant engagement survey

45% of people may lack the confidence and / or skills to get involved - listed by 45% of respondents to our tenant engagement survey

39% of people don't know what to expect if they join a residents' group - listed by 39% of respondents to our tenant engagement survey

36% of people don't see that their participation will make a difference - listed by 36% of respondents to our tenant engagement survey

34% of people don't have time to be part of a residents' group - listed by 34% of respondents to our tenant engagement survey

Your
Community



Tuath
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5. Current Methods of Consultation and Engagement

Tuath Housing uses a number of methods to consult with residents and keep them informed. These are:

Tenant Engagement 'Get Involved' Register of Interest

Some of our residents may not want to be involved in a residents' group or may not have a group in their area but still want to be able to have their say. For this reason, we have a 'Get Involved' register of interest available on the Tuath Housing website. Residents on the mailing list are given the same information shared with our residents and residents' groups and receive direct invites to get involved in consultations or other events.

Surveys/Questionnaires

We regularly conduct resident satisfaction surveys which ask residents for their views on the services they receive. The results of this survey are shared with the Tuath Housing board, management, and relevant departments to inform and improve service delivery. Resident feedback of this nature is important to us so that residents are actively involved in reviewing how our housing services are being delivered, and even more importantly, how they can be improved. Residents are informed about the results of these surveys through our different communication methods.

Consultation with Tuath Residents

Consultation and co-production with residents are a priority for Tuath Housing so we can develop and improve tenancy services. We want residents to find being involved rewarding and worthwhile. We want to continue to work collaboratively with residents to listen to and extract resident feedback, making sure views and experiences influence future policy and services. We will publicise the difference made by feedback to recognise its value and to show that we are listening.

Residents' Magazine

The Residents' Magazine contains information relating to the home, tenancy updates, repairs, community, tenant engagement, new housing developments and housing management performance statistics. It also includes resident stories and articles about residents' groups. For each edition residents are invited to contribute to the magazine. A residents' magazine digital archive is available to view on our website www.tuathhousing.ie

Tenant Engagement Working Group

The tenant engagement working group is a consultation group made up of Tuath Housing residents and housing staff. The working group ensures residents' priorities and views are at the heart of all that Tuath Housing does, advising and informing on key issues and policies affecting residents and ensuring that the interests of all residents are fully considered in all aspects of strategic decision making on tenancy services.

National Tenant Forum

The forum invites residents to meet to discuss housing initiatives and neighbourhood specific issues as well as give feedback on existing services or ideas for improvements, with a view to maintaining and improving the area or service for the benefit of all. The forum is also an opportunity for residents to network, share ideas and experiences from their own communities.

Responsive Repairs Feedback Panel

The responsive repairs feedback panel empowers residents to make a difference in how Tuath Housing conducts its repairs service with panel members representing and acting in the interest of all residents, identifying the key pressing issues of concern for others.

Tuath Housing Website

The Tuath Housing website www.tuathhousing.ie includes useful information for residents and provides opportunities to give feedback on our service through a live chat feature. Within the website there are sections relating to Housing, Repairs, Rent, Tuath Homes and Tuath Community. The Tuath website can be translated into over 100 languages at the touch of a button.

Tuath Housing Social Media

We have active social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter on which residents can access up-to-date tenancy information, join in discussions and online events, competitions, and initiatives. Facebook page facebook.com/TuathHousingAssociationLtd.

5. Current Methods of Consultation and Engagement

Tenants' Handbook

Our Tenants' Handbook is issued to every new resident and provides information on tenancy rights and responsibilities, housing management and repairs as well as wider community services. It is also available to view on our website www.tuathhousing.ie.

'Pre-Move in' video

The Pre-Move in video is an information video to complement the Tuath Housing tenancy handbook, highlighting some of the most important aspects of the handbook and outlining some common situations and tips for residents before moving into a new home. The Pre-Move in video has been developed in consultation with our National Tenant Forum members.

Tenant Engagement Bulletin

Our tenant engagement email bulletin gives updates on upcoming events organised as part of our tenant engagement initiative. This includes tenancy updates, workshops, training, events, competitions and other news and information relevant to Tuath residents.

Local area visits

Our housing team visit estates to inspect them and talk to residents about issues affecting them. Over the next four years we aim to include residents to take part in these visits where there is no formal residents' group in place.

Supporting Residents' Groups

We actively support residents to set up or join residents' groups to represent the views of residents and work together to build strong communities. We provide support and guidance to groups as well as training and access to funding. We attend meetings of residents' groups to discuss issues of shared interest and concern. We also attend and participate in community events as much as possible.

Residents' Group Handbook and Online Information

The Residents' Group Handbook is an easy guide designed to support new and existing residents' groups. It includes information on running a residents' group from setting up to running committee meetings, annual

general meetings, and community events. The guide is available in a printed or electronic copy. All the information within the guide is also available on the Tuath Housing website.

Community Fun Days

Informal fun day events arranged to encourage community cohesion, enable neighbours, and partner organisations to connect with each other as well as attract new residents to give information and gather feedback, but most of all to have fun! Many of the events we support are displayed on the Tuath Housing social media channels and website.

Environmental Awareness Initiatives

Our tenant engagement team organise and support many environmental awareness initiatives. We encourage and help residents and residents' groups to promote biodiversity, community development, social inclusion, and environmental awareness training. We organise and support an annual calendar of environmental events such as tree and flower planting, competitions, clean up days, biodiversity gardens and bee friendly projects.

Training and Capacity Building Workshops

We are fully committed to making sure our residents and staff receive appropriate training to help them participate effectively and work together positively. Resources are allocated every year from our annual budget for training. Free training and support are available to any resident who would like to get involved or develop a residents' group, to join the tenant engagement working group or to participate in the resident feedback panels.

Online Events

We regularly hold online events for residents including residents' group training, coffee mornings, virtual bingo, photo competitions, home and garden workshops, budgeting workshops, employment and skills training, mindfulness, and healthy eating webinars and many more. These have been hosted through Facebook and zoom.

5. Current Methods of Consultation and Engagement



“The consultation sessions with Tuath staff are a great way of having your say in how services are delivered. It gives you the opportunity to provide feedback on your personal experience, raise any concerns you may have and recommend changes that you feel would help improve the service for everyone.”

Emilia, Tuath resident, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

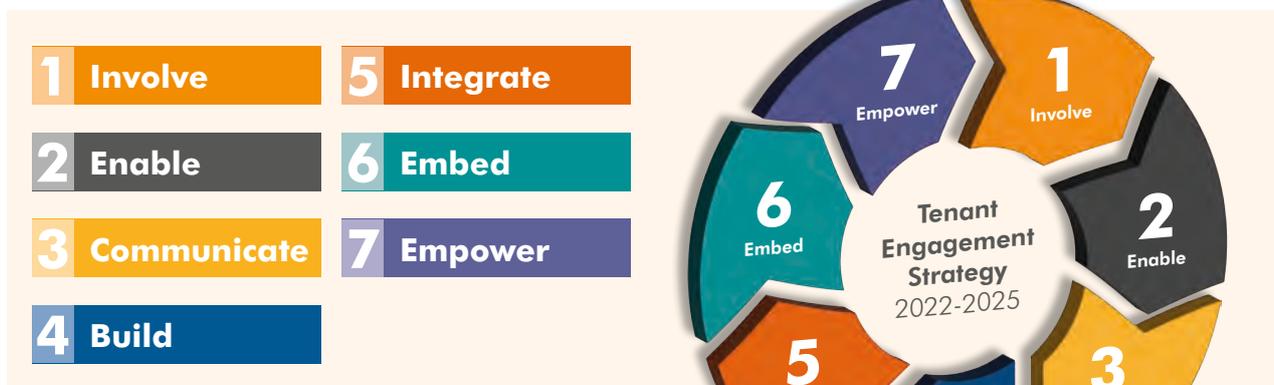




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6. Aims and Objectives of the Strategy

Over the next four years, our aim is to work in partnership with our residents to improve services and build sustainable communities. Together we will look at new ways to involve people in the work that we do. Engaging with residents in developing, scrutinising, and improving services has had many positive impacts on the work we do, and we recognise the valuable contribution our residents have made. We have created seven key objectives that will form our action plan for the next four years.



6.1 Involve

Our tenant engagement survey indicated that over 50% of our residents have not yet heard about Tuath’s tenant engagement initiative and a key barrier to getting involved was residents not knowing how. Therefore, an aim of this strategy is making sure that all residents are aware of and understand tenant engagement from the beginning of their tenancy so that they know how they can get involved. We will include information about tenant engagement in pre-move in materials and will follow up with residents within a set period after moving into their new home to ensure they are aware of the purpose of tenant engagement and opportunities in how to take part. Our tenant engagement team will continue to engage with residents through our social media channels and the Tuath Housing website.

Q10 Are you familiar with Tuath Housing’s Tenant Engagement initiative?

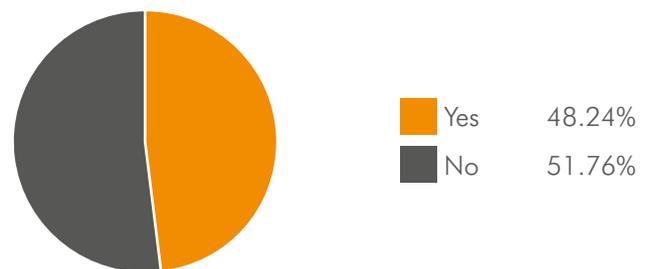


Figure 1: Result of Question 10, Tenant Engagement Survey, Sept 2020

Key outcomes:

- All Tuath Housing residents are aware of tenant engagement and know their options for getting involved.
- Residents understand the benefits of involvement in tenant engagement.

6. Aims and Objectives of the Strategy



6.2 Enable

We recognise that residents know better than anyone whether the properties and services we provide meet their needs and provides them with the tenancy services they would like to see. As a landlord, we want to give everyone a chance to help shape the experience Tuath residents receive. Enabling residents to influence how Tuath Housing provides services, makes decisions, and spends money helps us to provide increased housing services, standards and living conditions. While we hope that all residents want to participate, we also appreciate that many are happy in their homes and just want to get on with their day to day lives.

Our tenant engagement survey showed us that 87% of our residents are interested in giving feedback on the services they receive. We will provide a range of feedback methods with varying levels of commitment needed from our residents to enable them to have a say in ways that suit them.

We know that some people in our society find it harder to get their voice heard and so we will put actions in place to ensure we are hearing feedback from a wide range of views. This includes making sure we hear the views of younger residents, older residents, residents with disabilities and residents from underrepresented backgrounds.

We will listen to the feedback we receive from our residents and be able to demonstrate that we have acted on it so that our residents know they are listened to, that their feedback makes a difference, and they are empowered to get involved. Staff will receive training on the complaints handling process to ensure they recognise expressions of dissatisfaction and will take them seriously. They will be responsible for initiating a rapid, appropriate, and acceptable operational response to the issue. A digital copy of the Tuath Housing complaints policy is available to view on our website www.tuathhousing.ie

We will ensure adequate resources are provided, in terms of investment and staff, to make sure consultation processes can be carried out well. This includes ensuring that timescales for consultation processes are realistic, so that everyone taking part can do so to their best ability. We will expand our existing resident consultation and feedback structures, such as our tenant engagement working group, to include more residents and give more opportunities to get involved in different projects and areas of interest.

Q15 Which of the following tenant engagement activities shown below would you be more likely to get involved in?

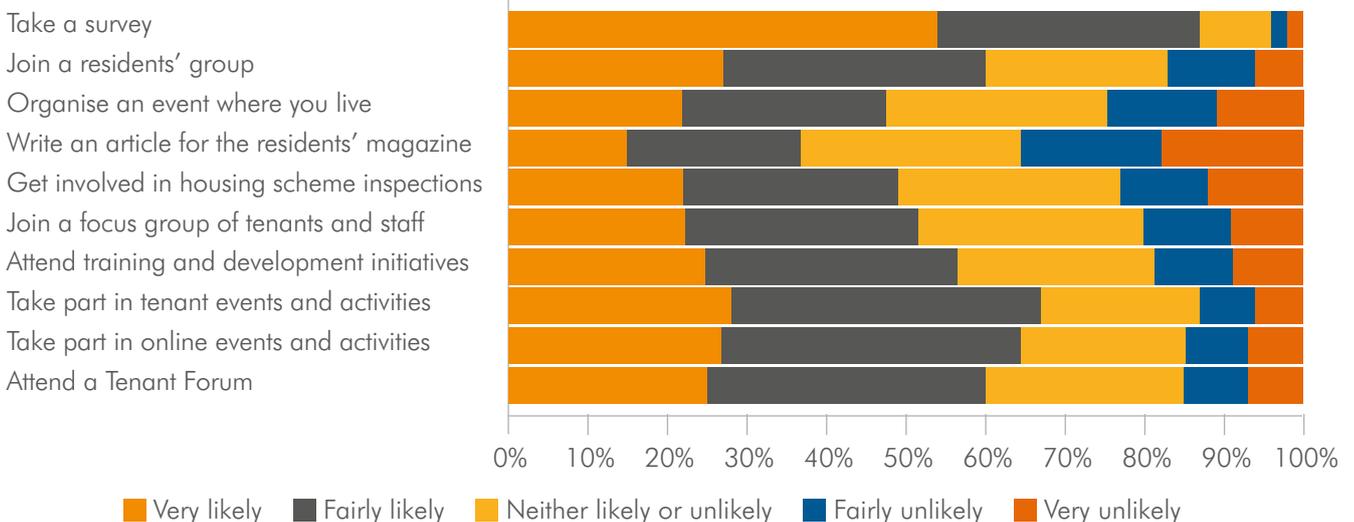


Figure 2: Outcome of Question 15, Tenant Engagement Survey, Sept 2020

6. Aims and Objectives of the Strategy

Our process for learning how to involve residents has started within the area of housing services but in the long term our intent is to involve residents with other areas such as scrutiny, budgeting, and governance. We will seek to implement best practice in consultation and partnership working methods to ensure that consultation and appraisal is meaningful and transformative both for Tuath and our residents.

Key outcomes:

- Increased and improved options for residents to give feedback.
- Increased numbers and diversity of residents giving feedback.
- Improved tenancy services resulting from consultation with residents.



6.3 Communicate

Our residents would like there to be effective communications between themselves and Tuath as their housing services provider. They want communications to be timely and relevant and to be able to communicate with us in ways that suit them. Our teams will ensure that residents can contact us and receive a quick response to their queries. This includes the implementation of a dedicated repairs team within Tuath Housing which will offer residents a one stop shop service on all their responsive repair needs. The new repairs service will mean that our Housing Services Coordinator's will be able to dedicate more time to communicating with residents.

Residents have indicated that they are looking for enhanced digital services and communications from us. We will implement new housing management software and improvements to our information systems and website that will enable us to provide this. We know that some of our residents are not regular internet users and

so we will continue to engage with them by letter and phone. We will support our older residents to access and learn digital technology methods, so that they have the option to access our services digitally if they wish as our services become more available online.

Tuath's residents' magazine is one of the key methods through which we communicate with residents about our performance in delivering key services and so we aim to have 100% of residents receive the magazine. We will continue to improve our residents' magazine by implementing input and improvements suggested by our residents and by making both digital and printed copies available to residents.

Q5 Do you receive the Tuath Housing residents' magazine, either a printed copy or by email?

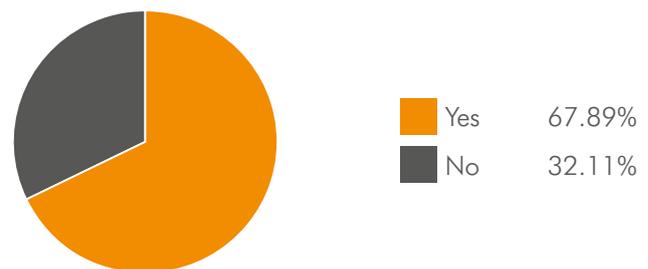


Figure 3: Outcome of Question 5, Tenant Engagement Survey, September 2020

When communicating with our residents we will avoid jargon and use simple language. We will provide resources and information in a variety of formats to cater for residents' different needs and abilities. We will work with residents to review existing guides and literature produced by Tuath for residents to ensure the content is useful and accessible. We recognise that English is not always our residents' first language and so we will endeavour to provide information to our residents in formats that can be translated using online tools.

Key outcomes:

- Improved experience for residents when communicating with us.
- Information that we provide is accessible for everyone and easy to understand.
- Clear communication ensures alignment to service delivery plans.

6. Aims and Objectives of the Strategy



6.4 Build

Engaging with our residents and supporting them to build a sense of community where they live is a top priority for Tuath. As a landlord we believe that our responsibilities go beyond the maintenance of our residents' homes. As well as ensuring safe physical surroundings, we want to make sure that residents feel connected to their communities and local support.

At Tuath we believe residents' groups are best placed to build strong, vibrant communities at a grassroots level. As well as helping residents to connect and get to know each other, residents' groups help to improve amenities for the community, combat social problems, work on environmental projects, increase cultural awareness and integration and reduce the stigma of social housing.

Residents' groups are an important connection between Tuath staff, residents and their local communities and their input helps us to provide a better housing

service. Residents' groups also provide a cohort of experience and informed residents play a part in Tuath's consultation and feedback structures.

We will continue to actively support our residents in setting up residents' groups or joining already existing groups. We will support these groups to be independent and self-governing. We will do this by continuing to provide dedicated tenant engagement staff, training and networking opportunities, funding, information, resources, and support to residents' groups. We will listen to what residents' groups say they need to be successful and help them to put in place the support they require. We will work to develop trusting relationships between residents' groups and housing services staff.

We will also continue to carry out online and face-to-face outreach activities to promote tenant engagement and develop trusting relationships with our residents. This will enable us to encourage and support residents to have a say in how services are delivered.

Key outcomes:

- Promote the establishment of community led residents' groups where there are Tuath residents.
- Residents have the information and skills that they need to help build strong, inclusive communities.



“We are a small community and it’s nice to see everyone working together to run events during the year for residents and children. I’m really enjoying being part of the residents’ committee and love to see the results of the work we are doing. As a Tuath resident it means I have more opportunities to be involved in making improvements, running seasonal events, planting and much more. The residents here appreciate all the support that Tuath have given us.”

Lucy, Tuath resident and Riverview residents' group committee member, Co. Cork.

6. Aims and Objectives of the Strategy



6.5 Integrate

Tuath Housing recognises it has a role in building sustainable communities by supporting social cohesion and integration where our residents live. Ireland is a multicultural society, and our residents should feel welcome and be able to take part in their communities.

We will support the development of cohesive, integrated communities by ensuring that our staff have the knowledge and skills they need to work with and help to sustain vibrant, multicultural communities. We recognise that residents can play a key part in this objective and so we aim to support residents to develop the skills and knowledge they need to be open and inclusive to people of all races and ethnicities. We will also support events and activities that promote integration, increase understanding of different cultures and celebrate diversity within the communities in which our residents live.

We will establish community demographics data to provide inclusive services. Where appropriate we will work in partnership with organisations supporting migrants and ethnic minorities to support tenant engagement objectives.

Key outcomes:

- Increase in residents from minority backgrounds participating in tenant engagement.
- Promote the inclusion of residents from underrepresented backgrounds as defined in legislation.



6.6 Embed

We aim to make tenant engagement an integral part of our business, influencing how services are provided and how decisions are made. We will embed a culture of tenant engagement in our approach to the policy and practice of housing management. What this means is that involving residents in the planning, delivery, decision-making and review processes of our housing services becomes the default process and culture within our organisation.

We will proactively seek to identify and implement best practice in tenant engagement so that resident involvement can be implemented in meaningful ways that benefit both Tuath and residents. We will continue to invest in best practice research to improve tenant engagement.

Through the implementation of our tenant engagement strategy our aim is to be recognised by regulators and strategic partners as delivering excellent performance in tenant engagement.

Key outcomes:

- Resident engagement integrated across all aspects of planning, delivery, decision-making and review processes of services.

6. Aims and Objectives of the Strategy



6.7 Empower

Meaningful resident participation in community development and consultation processes can require new knowledge and skills, as well as confidence. Tuath Housing's tenant engagement survey identified that 45% of people said that they may lack the confidence and / or skills to get involved. We will support residents to develop the confidence and skills they need by providing relevant support, training, and development opportunities.

Added value to this aim could include enabling personal development and potential employment and voluntary opportunities for residents.

We also aim to build the capacity of our staff around tenant engagement, increasing their ability to support residents to take part, building relationships between residents, staff and the Tuath board furthering the aim of embedding a culture of tenant engagement into our organisation.

Key outcomes:

- Increased numbers of residents participating in decision making, consultation and community development.
- Provide opportunities to enhance residents confidence and skills.



"I saw the opportunity to apply to Tuath Housing for funding which would cover the cost of the exact course I wanted to do so I jumped at the chance. I was very emotional after it sunk in that I was the successful applicant and I realised that the opportunity for a career would now be within my reach."

**Leanne, Tuath resident,
Co. Cork.**







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7. Resourcing

Tuath Housing currently has three dedicated Tenant Engagement Officers (TEO's) who are responsible for developing and implementing tenant engagement activity. They will also lead on implementing the action plan within this strategy over the next four years to ensure that the aims of the tenant engagement strategy are met. Over the period of this strategy Tuath will also recruit additional tenant engagement staff to support this. A dedicated budget for tenant engagement will be allocated annually to ensure that involving our residents in housing services remains a top priority. Investment in this strategy will ensure the objectives within it are delivered.

We will resource tenant engagement in the following ways:

- Recruit dedicated tenant engagement staff.
- Provide funding for residents' group set up.
- Run online resident initiatives and training.
- Provide funding towards residents' community events.
- Assist with printing information such as information leaflets and flyers.
- Provide staff resources and resident training.
- Public transport travel expenses to Tenant Engagement Working Group, National Tenant Forum, and Responsive Repairs Panel meetings.
- Monitoring and achieving of the tenant engagement strategy action plan.

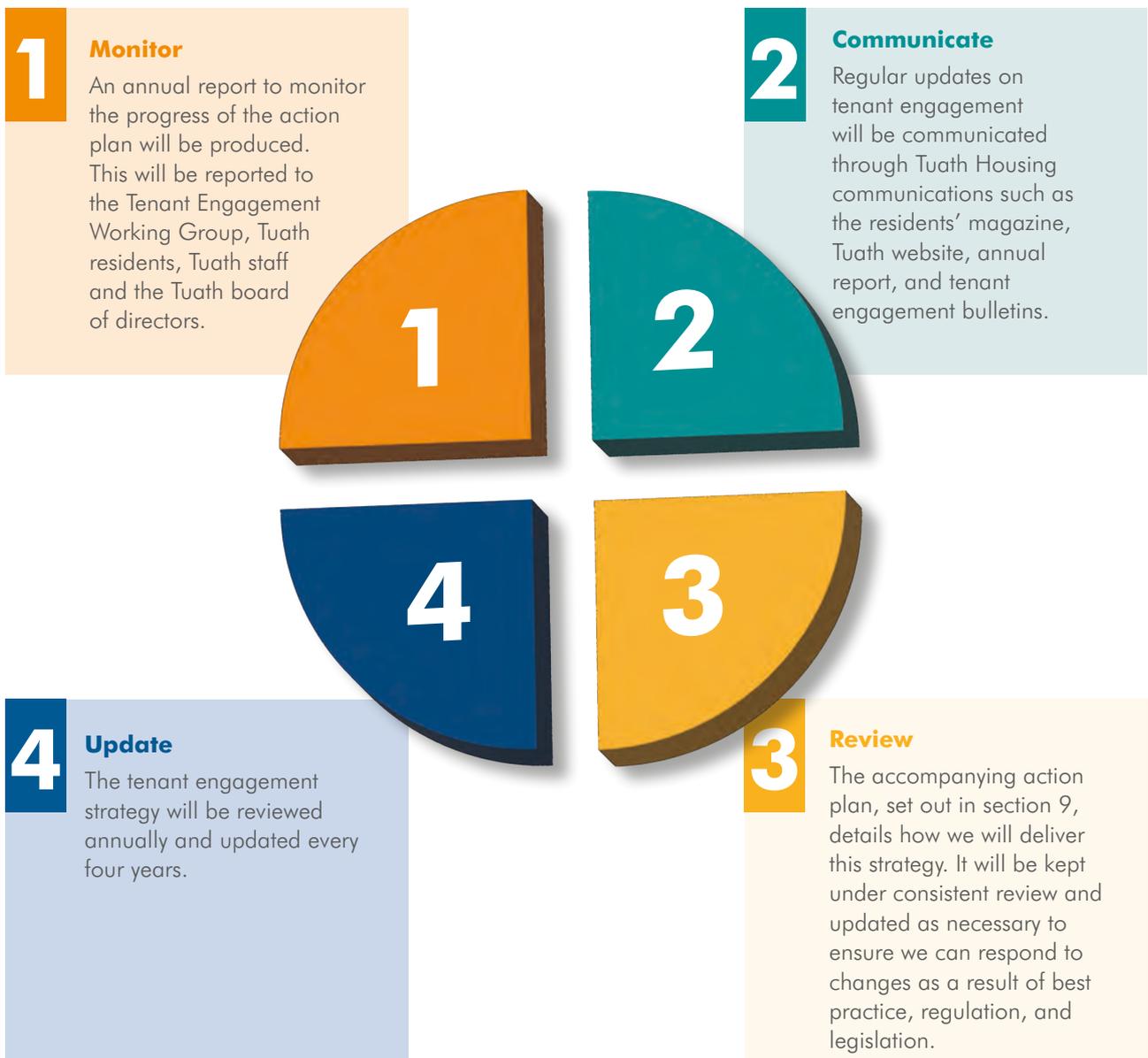




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8. Monitoring the Strategy

The tenant engagement strategy is an active working document which we will continue to review by regularly monitoring the action plan. We will ensure that we keep our residents and staff up to date with developments to this strategy. We will regularly report updates on tenant engagement through the residents' magazine, tenant engagement bulletin and on Tuath's social media channels. Residents involved in the development of this strategy will be included in the continuous monitoring and review process.





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9. Action Plan

The following is an action plan for how we will implement the seven key objectives of this strategy over the next four years.

| Priority 1: Involve | | | |
|---|--|---|----------------------------|
| Objective | What we will do? | How we will do it? | When will we do it? |
| Residents are aware of the purpose of tenant engagement and know how they can get involved. | <p>Include information about tenant engagement in pre-move in materials.</p> <p>Include information about tenant engagement in the residents' magazine, annual report, and the tenant engagement bulletin.</p> <p>Direct communication from Tuath staff about tenant engagement.</p> | <p>Review current information in pre-move in materials with residents and make improvements.</p> <p>Have a section on tenant engagement in the residents' magazine and annual report.</p> <p>Tenant Engagement bulletin to direct readers towards tenant engagement social media platforms.</p> | Year 1-4 |
| | <p>Follow up with residents within a set period of moving into their new home to ensure they are aware of the purpose of tenant engagement and provide information on opportunities to take part.</p> | <p>Send correspondence to residents after move-in.</p> <p>Develop a tenant engagement promotional video to inform residents about tenant engagement.</p> | Year 2-4 |
| Priority 2: Enable | | | |
| Objective | What we will do? | How we will do it? | When will we do it? |
| Residents are able to influence how Tuath Housing provides services, makes decisions, and are empowered to do so. | <p>Provide a range of feedback methods for our residents to enable them to have a say in ways that suit them.</p> | <p>Review current ways of consultation and identify gaps.</p> <p>Evaluate existing methods to see how they can be improved.</p> | Year 1-4 |
| | <p>Collect relevant data to measure outcomes.</p> | <p>Create and support residents to give feedback and engage through surveys, opinion polls, workshops, and service delivery feedback sessions.</p> | Year 1-4 |
| | <p>Provide communication that we have acted on feedback so that our residents know they are listened to.</p> | <p>Staff will receive training on the complaints handling process to ensure they recognise expressions of dissatisfaction. They will be responsible for initiating a rapid, appropriate, and acceptable operational response to the issue, including negotiating the remedy and timescale for delivery.</p> | Year 1 |
| | | <p>Report how feedback has been acted upon to our residents.</p> <p>Directly feedback to participants on working groups, feedback sessions and forums.</p> | Year 1-4 |

* Indicates an outcome with social impact.

9. Action Plan

| Priority 3: Communicate | | | |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| Objective | What we will do? | How we will do it? | When will we do it? |
| Residents receive timely, relevant, and clear communications from us. | Ensure that residents can contact us and receive a quick response to their queries. | Identify where services need to be improved. Consult with residents on their experience of the service we provide to identify how touchpoints and systems can be improved. | Year 1-4 |
| | Implement housing management software that records how individual residents want to be communicated with. | Tuath Community section on the Tuath Housing website. | Year 1 |
| | | Explore using other social media channels to expand communications with residents. | Year 2-4 |
| | Support older residents to access and learn to use digital technology.* | Measure and evaluate outcomes of existing projects and use to leverage more funding to scale up. Link in with service providers and signpost to community support organisations.* | Year 1-4 |
| | Produce a residents' magazine based on resident feedback and input. | Include relevant information for residents, including performance statistics, tenancy updates, and consultation outcomes. | Year 1-4 |
| Ensure content of existing guides, resources and information produced by Tuath Housing for residents is understandable and accessible. | Provide training to all resident-facing staff to enable them to do this. Look for 'Plain English' certification on publications where appropriate. | Year 2-4 | |
| Priority 4: Build | | | |
| Objective | What we will do? | How we will do it? | When will we do it? |
| Residents are supported to build strong, vibrant communities where they live. | Support the development of trusting relationships between residents and housing services staff. | Increase opportunities for residents and HSCOs to work together. | Year 1-4 |
| | Promote residents to set up or join already existing residents' groups.* | Ensure information about residents' groups is available to our residents. Identify schemes where there is an interest in setting up a residents' group. | Year 1-4 |
| | Support residents' groups to be independent and self-governing. | Put in place a Tenant Engagement Officer for each regional office. Ensure an adequate annual budget for supporting residents' groups. Provide groups with good quality, accessible information relating to running a residents' group. | Year 1-2 |

* Indicates an outcome with social impact.

9. Action Plan

| | | | |
|--|---|--|----------|
| | Run a wide range of face-to-face and online activities for residents to promote tenant engagement and encourage residents to get involved.* | Tell participants about tenant engagement at each activity and signpost them to further opportunities and information. | Year 1-4 |
| | Expand existing resident consultation and feedback structures. Identify specific projects that will benefit from resident input. | Recruit more resident representatives to the Tenant Engagement Working Group, Responsive Repairs Feedback Panel. | Year 1-4 |
| | | Carry out community-based surveys to identify specific projects that will benefit residents. | Year 2-4 |

Priority 5: Integrate

| Objective | What we will do? | How we will do it? | When will we do it? |
|--|--|--|---------------------|
| Support the development of cohesive, integrated communities. | Ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills they need to work with residents from under-represented backgrounds and support multicultural communities. | Provide relevant training to staff. | Year 2-4 |
| | Support residents' groups to develop the skills and knowledge they need to be open and inclusive to diversity in communities.* | Provide relevant training to residents' groups. | Year 2-4 |
| | Support events and activities that promote integration, increase understanding of different cultures and celebrate diversity.* | Encourage and incentivise residents' groups to hold events and activities that support this. | Year 2-4 |

Priority 6: Embed

| Objective | What we will do? | How we will do it? | When will we do it? |
|---|--|---|---------------------|
| Create a culture of tenant engagement that is integrated across all Tuath Housing so that involving residents becomes part of our business. | Identify opportunities to involve residents in how we do business. | Assess and map where residents interact with the organisation and where resident input could help improve services and processes. | Year 2-4 |
| | Be recognised stakeholders in delivering best practice in tenant engagement. | Commence tenant participation accreditation process. | Year 3-4 |

* Indicates an outcome with social impact.

9. Action Plan

Priority 7: Empower

| Objective | What we will do? | How we will do it? | When will we do it? |
|--|--|--|---------------------|
| Build the capacity of residents for meaningful participation in community development, consultation and partnership working. | Identify knowledge gaps and training needs of residents in relation to tenant engagement.* | Consult with residents and action identified training needs. Support residents to develop the confidence and skills they need to become resident representatives and support them to attend resident working groups/ forums together with members from the Tuath board. | Year 2-4 |
| | Provide training and development opportunities. | Work with other community organisations to provide training and employment support programmes. | Year 2-4 |
| | Establish an educational bursary for Tuath residents.* | Fund and provide opportunities to education and apprenticeship programmes. | Year 2 |
| | Work with community-based business support groups to support/facilitate residents.* | Promote employment opportunities for our residents within Tuath Housing. | Year 2-4 |

Interested in getting involved?

We hope this tenant engagement strategy has given you useful information about the ways you can influence tenancy services in Tuath Housing. For more information about tenant engagement email the team at getinvolved@tuathhousing.ie or visit our Tuath Community section on the Tuath Housing website at www.tuathhousing.ie.

We also have an active Facebook page providing information about the excellent work tenant engagement is doing in our communities. Why not **'Like'** our page at facebook.com/TuathHousingAssociationLtd



“The tenant engagement team listen to my views and concerns. I am secretary of my local residents’ group and I enjoy being part of this community. I help organise events, provide feedback online, get involved in consultations and workshops. I recommend all residents get involved as there are many positive benefits to taking part in tenant engagement”
Siun, Tuath resident and The Borough residents’ group committee member, Co. Cork.

* Indicates an outcome with social impact.



Involve, Enable, Communicate, Build, Integrate, Embed, Empower



10. Appendix: Findings of the Tenant Engagement Survey

To enable our residents to have a say in the development of the tenant engagement strategy a survey was developed by the tenant engagement working group that was sent out to every Tuath household (5648 households) between August and September 2020. In total 1770 responses were received to the survey. Residents were asked about their preferences and experiences in relation to communicating with Tuath, their opinions on Tuath Housing’s website and residents’ magazine and on various aspects of tenant engagement including its benefits and the barriers to getting involved.

The key findings of the tenant engagement survey were as follows:

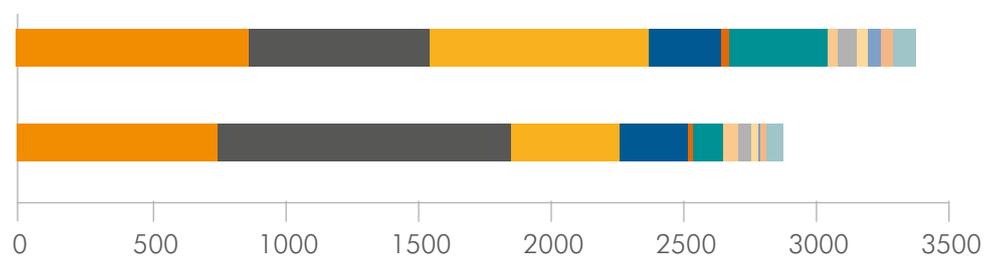
Communications:

- Of the residents who had contacted Tuath Housing in the previous year, over half of these contacts had been in relation to repairs and nearly one fifth in relation to rents.
- In relation to how our residents preferred to receive information from us, email was the preferred method, followed by SMS text, and then phone.
- In relation to how our residents preferred to contact us, by far the preferred method was by phone, followed by email.

Q4 Which communication methods would you prefer when dealing with Tuath Housing (tick all that apply)

I would prefer to receive information from Tuath Housing by...

I would prefer to contact Tuath Housing by...



- Email
- Telephone
- Text/SMS
- WhatsApp
- Online video call or meeting
- Letter by post
- Visit to the office
- Visit to your home by staff
- Open meetings
- Residents' Magazine
- Social Media
- Tuath Housing website



10. Appendix: Findings of the Tenant Engagement Survey

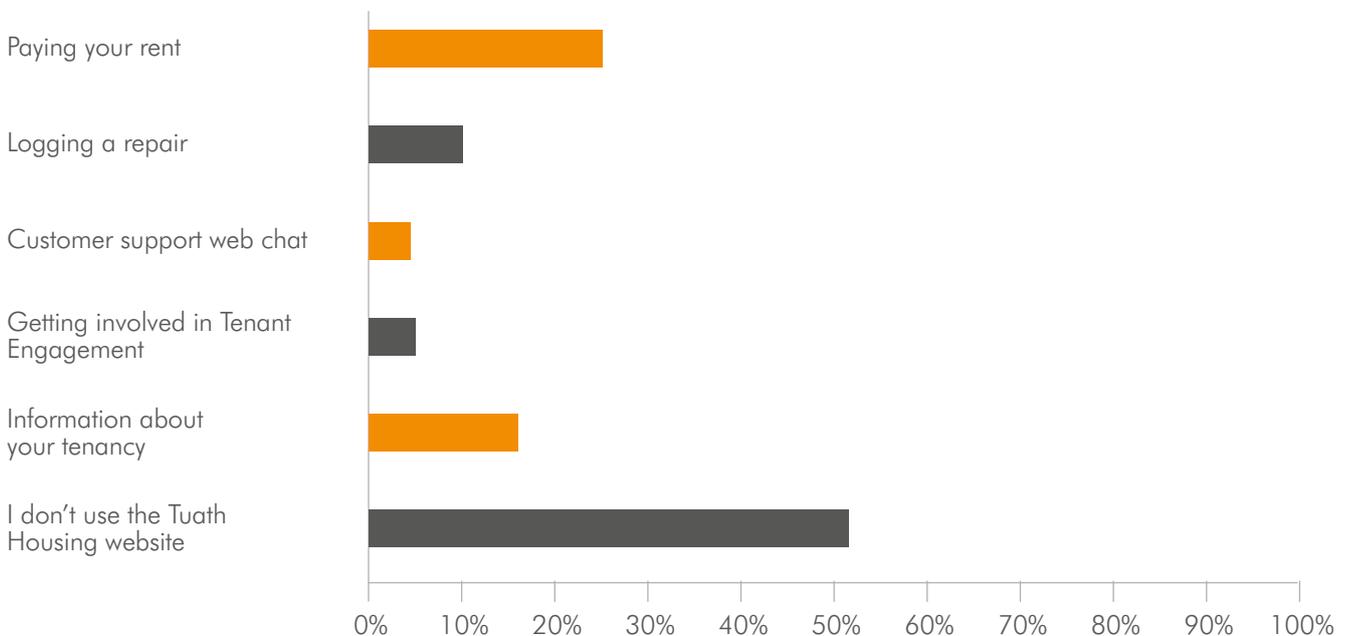
Residents' Magazine:

- 32% reported not receiving Tuath's residents' magazine.
- Suggestions for how the magazine could be improved included:
 - More community updates and local news.
 - More tenancy-related information.
 - Information about anti-social behaviour.
 - More stories about residents.
 - More information relevant to apartments.
 - More articles focussed towards older or younger readers.
 - More articles written by residents.

Tuath Housing website:

- 52% of respondents said they do not use Tuath Housing's website. Of those that do use it, the most common purpose is for paying rent, followed by finding out tenancy information.
- Residents indicated in the survey that they would like to have an online account that they could log in to through the website which would enable them to check their rent balance, submit a rent review, log repairs, see information in relation to their housing scheme, take a survey or suggest and get updates on the status of a request.
- Other suggestions for what residents would like to see on the Tuath Housing website included information about transfers and requesting a transfer, a better online repair reporting service, a facility to report anti-social behaviour and contact details for their housing services coordinator. Some residents also suggested that a Tuath Housing App would be useful.

Q7 Which of the following do you use Tuath Housing's website, www.tuathhousing.ie for?



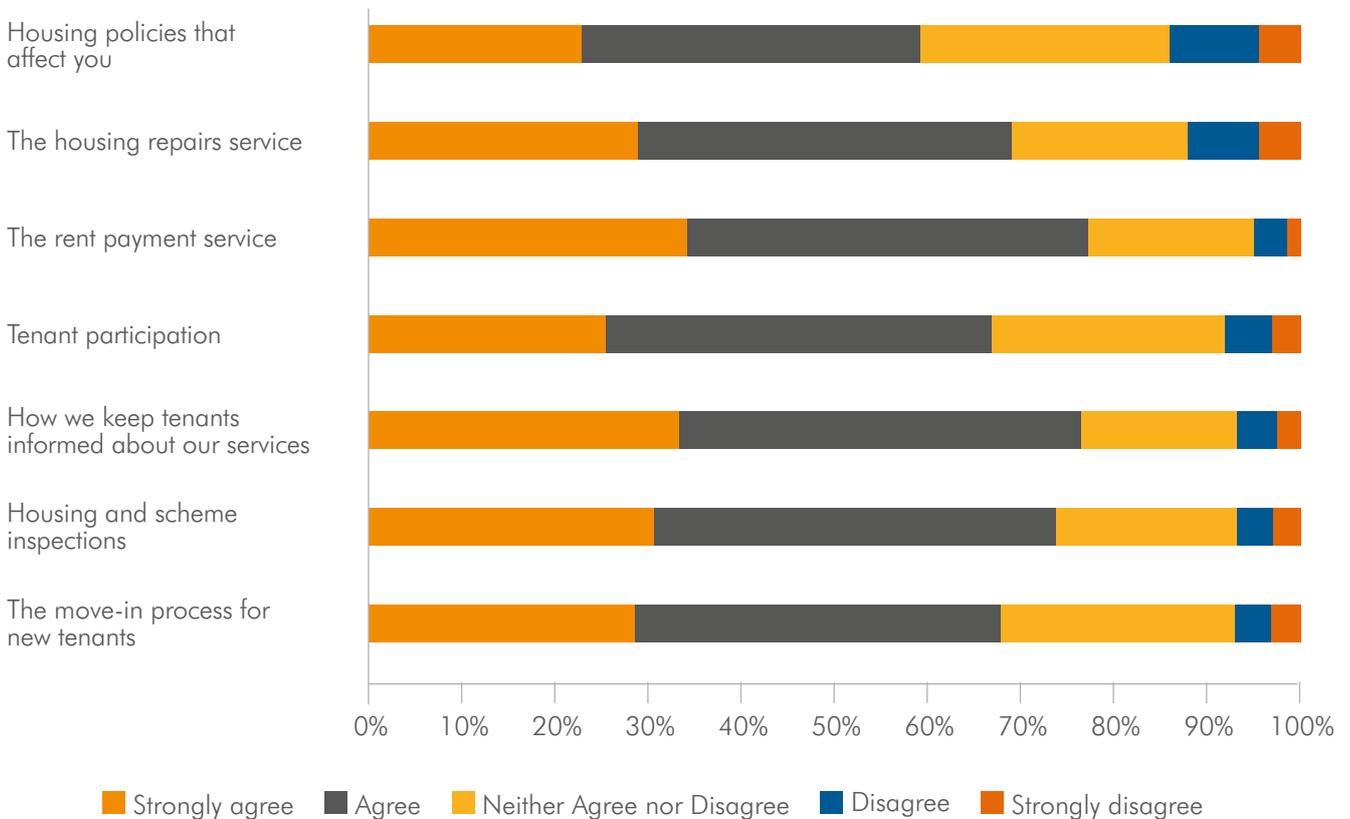
10. Appendix: Findings of the Tenant Engagement Survey

Having a say:

- Question 9 of the survey asked residents whether they agreed that they had a say in how the following are provided:
 - Housing policies that affect residents.
 - The housing repairs service.
 - The rent payment service.
 - Tenant participation.
 - How we keep residents informed about our services.
 - Housing and scheme inspections.
 - The move-in process for new residents.

Between 59% and 77% agreed or strongly agreed that they had a say in these. This was a surprising result considering that Tuath is only at the beginning of our journey to involve residents in how services are delivered. However, the number of those choosing 'neither agree or disagree' to this question was between 16% and 27%, which could indicate respondents were confused by or did not understand the question.

Q9 Do you agree that you have a say in how the following are provided?

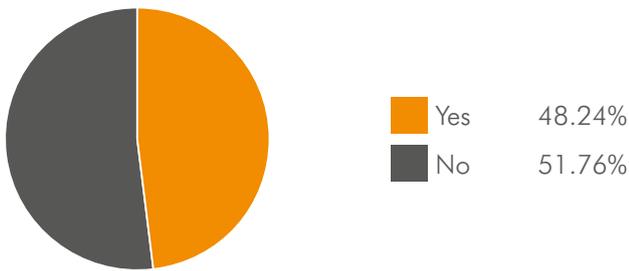


10. Appendix: Findings of the Tenant Engagement Survey

Tenant engagement:

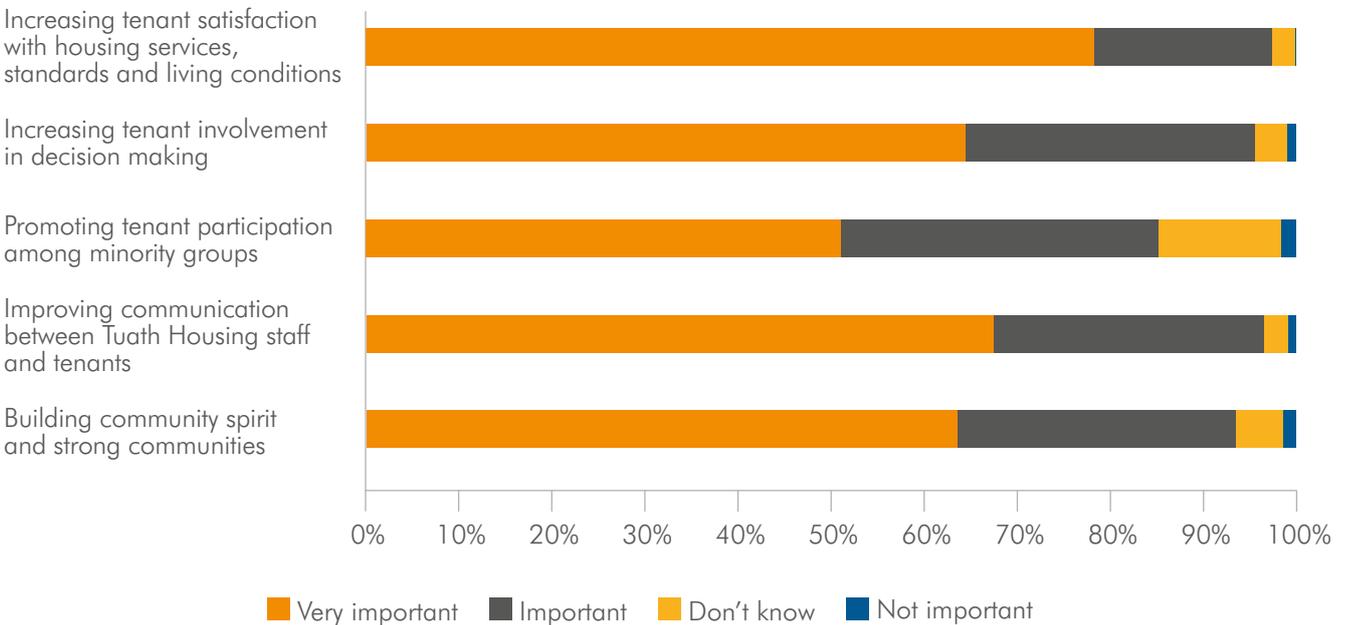
- Over 50% of respondents indicated they were not familiar with Tuath Housing’s tenant engagement initiative.

Q10 Are you familiar with Tuath Housing’s Tenant Engagement initiative?



- Those who responded to the survey felt that the most important aim of tenant engagement was to increase resident satisfaction with housing services, standards and living conditions. However, all the aims suggested in the survey question scored highly with little difference between them. These were:
 - Improving communication between Tuath Housing staff and residents.
 - Increasing resident involvement in decision making.
 - Building community spirit and strong communities.
 - Promoting resident participation among minority groups.

Q11 The following are some of the aims of tenant engagement. How important do you think each of these are?



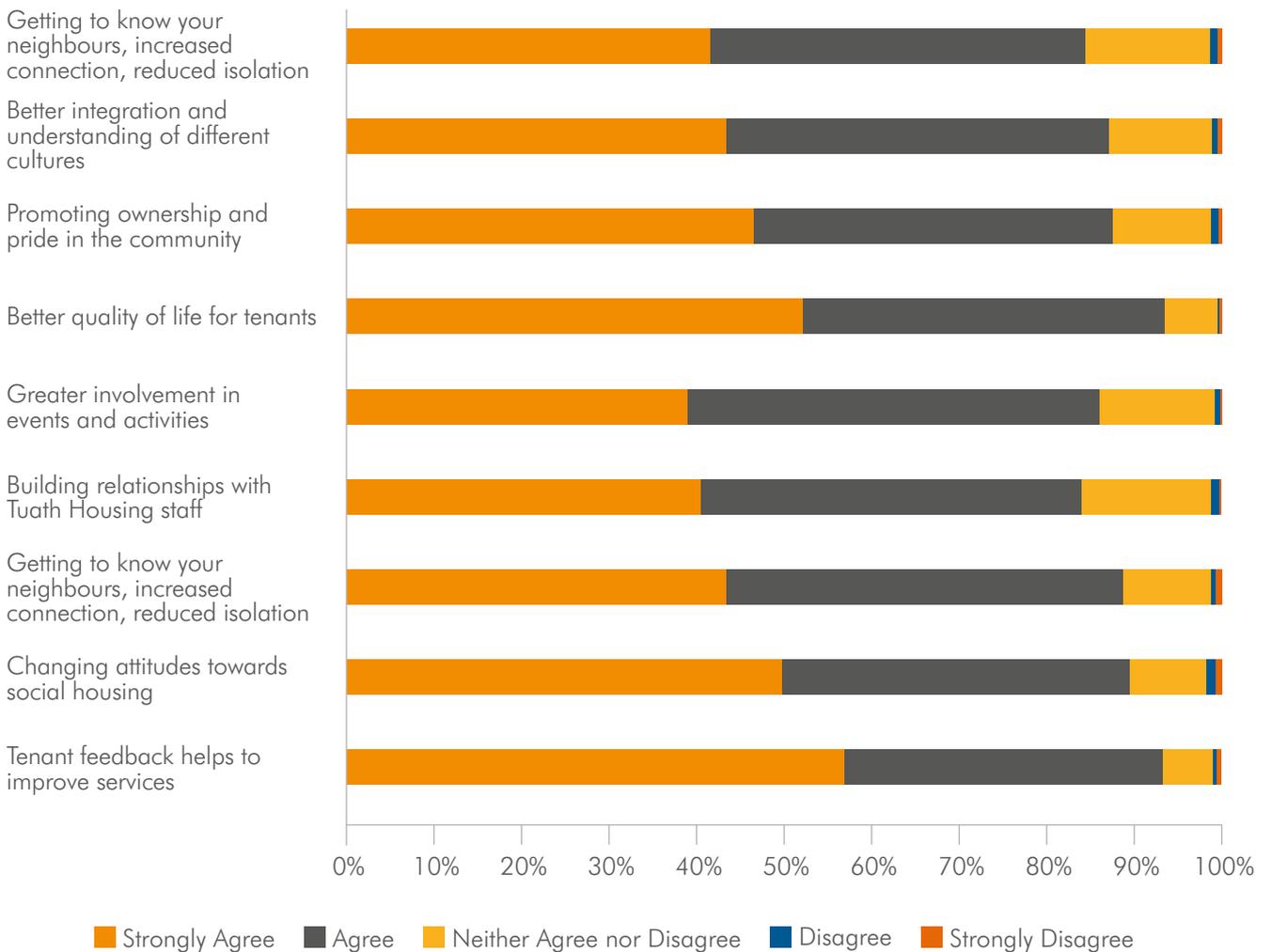
10. Appendix: Findings of the Tenant Engagement Survey

In the survey residents were invited to suggest what they thought other aims of tenant engagement should be. The most popular suggestions reiterated the importance of community spirit and improving communication with Tuath staff. Also suggested were improving play facilities and activities for children and young people, environmental care, cleanliness, community safety and anti-social behaviour.

- Those who responded to the survey felt the main benefits of tenant engagement, in order of importance from most important to least important, to be:

- 1: Better quality of life for residents.
- 2: Resident feedback helps to improve services.
- 3: Changing attitudes towards social housing.
- 4: Building relationships with Tuath Housing staff.
- 5: Promoting ownership and pride in the community.
- 6: Better integration and understanding of different cultures.
- 7: Greater involvement in events and activities.
- 8: Getting to know your neighbours, increased connection, reduced isolation.
- 9: Building confidence and skills.

Q13 What do you think are the benefits for tenants of getting involved in tenant engagement?



10. Appendix: Findings of the Tenant Engagement Survey

Other benefits of tenant engagement that respondents mentioned are building trust between neighbours and between residents and Tuath staff, the benefit to staff wellbeing, the opportunity for residents to have their voices heard in issues that affect them, sharing information and knowledge with other residents about how to improve their neighbourhood, a better understanding of other cultures and a more multicultural community, improving the environment and working together against anti-social behaviour.

- Respondents were asked what they felt are the top five biggest barriers to tenant engagement. The main barriers were:

- 1: People don't know how to get involved - listed by 48% of respondents.
- 2: People may lack the confidence and / or skills to get involved - listed by 45% of respondents.

- 3: People don't know what to expect if they join a residents' group - listed by 39% of respondents.
- 4: People don't see that their participation will make a difference - listed by 36% of respondents.
- 5: People don't have time to be part of a resident's group - listed by 34% of respondents.

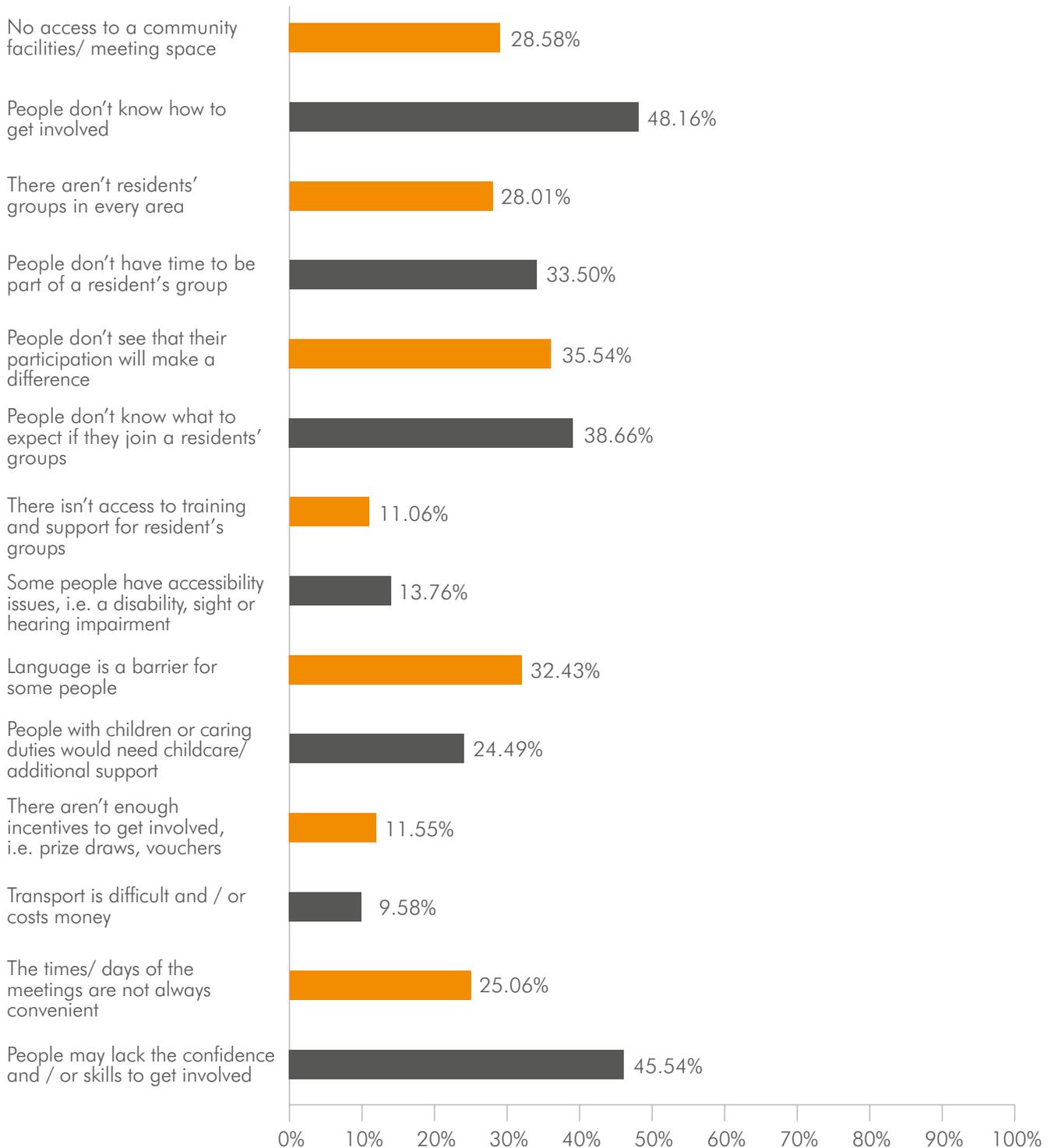
Lack of incentives to get involved, lack of access to training and support for residents' groups and difficulties with transport or transport costs were indicated to be the smallest barriers.

Other barriers identified included people just wanting to keep to themselves, feelings of powerlessness or apathy or feeling that you won't be listened to, the stigma of being a social housing resident, a lack of support from Tuath or lack of trust in Tuath and cultural divides.



10. Appendix: Findings of the Tenant Engagement Survey

Q14 Thinking about all tenants who may reside in your housing scheme or apartment block - young/old, male/female, Irish/other nationalities, single/families, suburban/rural - why do you think tenants may NOT get involved in tenant engagement? (tick the top 5 that you think are the biggest barriers)



10. Appendix: Findings of the Tenant Engagement Survey

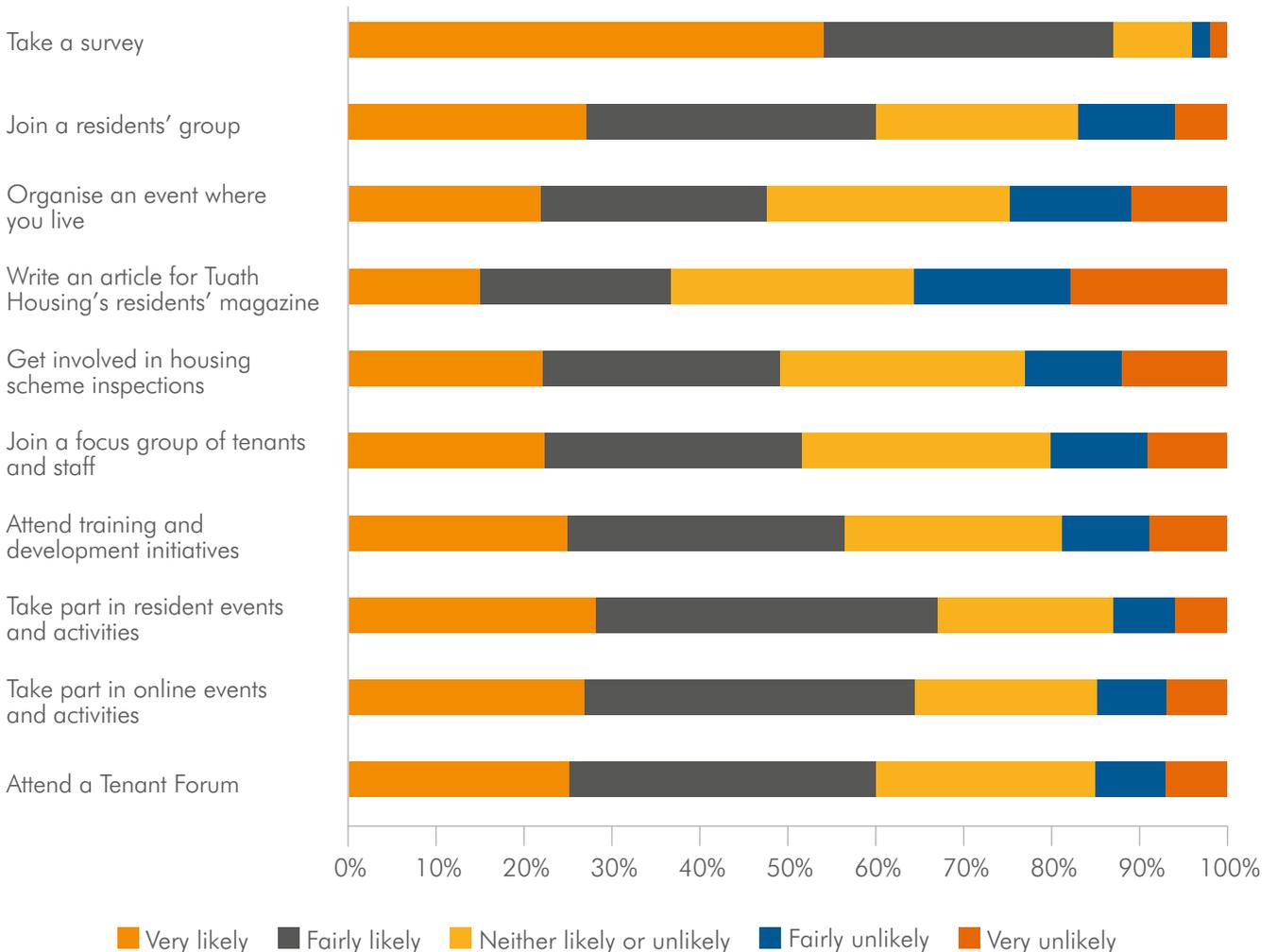
When asked to indicate which tenant engagement activities they would be more likely to get involved in respondents indicated the following:

1. Taking a survey - 87% very or fairly likely.
2. Take part in resident events and activities – 67% very or fairly likely.
3. Taking part in online activities – 64% very or fairly likely.
4. Join a residents’ group – 61% very or fairly likely.
5. Attend a tenant forum – 60% very or fairly likely.
6. Attend training and development initiatives – 57% very or fairly likely.

7. Join a focus group – 51% very or fairly likely.
8. Get involved in housing scheme inspections – 49% very or fairly likely.
9. Organise an event – 48% very or fairly likely.
10. Write an article for Tuath Housing’s Residents’ Magazine – 36% very or fairly likely.

In some responses ‘neither likely nor unlikely’ scored between 20 and 27%, suggesting that if residents had more information or support for these activities, they might be more inclined to get involved.

Q15 Which of the following tenant engagement activities shown below would you be more likely to get involved in?



10. Appendix: Findings of the Tenant Engagement Survey

In Question 6 of the survey respondents indicated that they wanted to see more articles written by residents in Tuath's Residents' Magazine. However, 36% of respondents indicated that they would be unwilling to write one. The implication is that we need to provide support and encouragement to people to write articles.

Popular suggestions for other tenant engagement services, activities events or ideas that people would be interested in getting involved in included activities for children and teens, gardening, sport, clean-ups, and cultural awareness activities.

Key issues that were flagged in the open comment sections of the survey were:

- Better response needed to repairs/maintenance.
- Better communications needed from staff.
- Better response needed to anti-social behaviour.

Tuath Housing would like to thank all our residents who took the time to participate in this survey and share their views with us. We would also like to thank the members of our tenant engagement working group for the time, effort and input they have put into creating and guiding the development of this tenant engagement strategy.



“I’m delighted to have received a tablet through the ‘Be-Connected’ project from Tuath. It has opened a whole new world for me and brought me into the digital age. I’m learning new things every day about how to use it and I never thought I’d be embracing new technology like this”.

David, Tuath resident, Co. Wicklow.





11. Glossary

Action Plan A list of things to do to meet aims and objectives.

Approved Housing Body (AHB) Independent, not-for-profit organisations, also known as housing associations or voluntary housing associations. They provide affordable rented housing for people who cannot afford to pay private sector rents or buy their own homes; or for groups, such as older people or homeless people.

AHBRA Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority.

Consultation Resident consultation means having a chance to comment on proposals prepared by the landlord before a decision is taken.

DHPLG Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government.

GDPR General Data Protection Regulation.

HSCO Housing Services Coordinator.

Residents' groups Local groups that are set up to represent the views of residents and to influence services in the area. They are made up of local people who are democratically elected at the group's Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Responsive Repairs Feedback Panel A group made up of Tuath residents and staff.

TEO Tenant Engagement Officer.

Tenant Engagement Working Group
A working group made up of housing staff from Tuath and residents.



YOUR VOICE, YOUR HOME, YOUR COMMUNITY



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