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FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure to introduce the latest Tenant Participation Strategy 2025 – 2028.

This strategy outlines our commitment to involving tenants in how we shape our services, how we hope to work in partnership with tenants, taking tenants views into account to ensure our services are the best possible. Learning from tenants is fundamental to providing quality front line services

We want to continue to develop participation opportunities with a focus on increasing levels of participation, especially from our under-represented groups.

The development of this new Strategy also takes account of the ever-changing environment we are working in and the opportunities that we now have to modernise and enhance our approach through the use of digital engagement. We are open to new ways of working.

Involving tenants is not seen in isolation but is an important part of our day-to-day work. Our tenants need the information, support and confidence to participate and see there are real benefits to it. Tenant participation benefits tenants, staff and NB Housing as a landlord.

We offer support to tenants who would like to develop their skills and confidence so that they can effectively influence decisions about housing services. We offer a range of opportunities to get involved at a level that suits you.

I am confident that this Strategy will help us to make sure that tenants remain central to our determination to provide the highest quality of housing services to include:

- Improved service delivery and better outcomes for tenants
- Working together with respect and understanding, sharing the same goals
- Tenants gaining knowledge, new skills and confidence to influence housing decisions.

I would like to thank the tenants who have given up their time to give us their feedback by attending meetings or events, reviewing our services or filling in surveys. Your feedback is essential in helping us to improve our performance and services.

Donal Conway
CEO
NB Housing



Background

North Belfast Housing Association (NB Housing) is a registered non-profit making housing association established in 2014 with the merger of Flax and Filor Housing Associations and is celebrating it's 10th Anniversary.

At 31st December 2024 NB Housing has 1197 properties and remains pro-active in identifying opportunities to increase our housing provision across the province. We have expanded our areas of operation over the last decade and are now delivering housing in 6 of the Northern Ireland Council Areas, providing general needs accommodation and supported housing solutions for those in need.

NB Housing places our tenants at the heart of service delivery, by listening to their views and feedback. We ensure that policies and services reflect these changing needs and aspirations. We are committed to providing our tenants with opportunities to get involved and help shape, influence and improve our services.

Our vision is

“To provide quality, affordable, sustainable homes and support to all NB Housing tenants.”

Tenant participation is at the heart of that vision and our commitment to delivering high quality-housing services, creating places that people are proud to call home and meet the needs and aspirations of our communities.

The purpose of our Tenant Participation Strategy 2025 - 2028 is to set out our plans for improved tenant participation, to ensure our services continue to meet the needs of our customers and to support them to have a meaningful role in shaping the policies and decisions that affect their homes and communities.

This involves tenants and NB Housing as a landlord sharing ideas and information in order to shape and improve our housing policies, housing services and the standard of our housing stock. From experience we recognise that when tenants are empowered and involved, they receive better outcomes and we as a landlord perform better.

We will continue to champion best practice and innovation of the vibrant and committed tenants already participating in various ways. This strategy aims to promote participation and ensure there is an appropriate menu of engagement opportunities that :-

- reflect the resident profile
- respond to the different needs in relation to equality strands
- facilitate tenants to get involved with us on whatever level best suits their lifestyle
- deliver any additional support, which helps in the delivery of their services, engagement activities and communications to our customers.
- promote acceptable standards of behaviour

NB Housing recognises that the dispersed nature of our stock across Northern Ireland, and the diverse nature of our services and clients, involving all our tenants in meaningful engagement is always going to be challenging.

What is Tenant Participation?

Tenant participation is an essential part of NB Housing's work. This means that all tenants have a range of opportunities to have a say about how their housing services are delivered. It is a two-way process, whereby we value tenant engagement and recognise it as a vital component to improving our business.

Tenant Participation has different levels which range from operational to strategic and are broadly represented as:



We are very mindful that one size does not fit all. The engagement at each of these levels depends very much on the individual tenant's interests, capacity, and availability.

Some tenants may be quite happy to complete surveys and provide feedback on literature from the comfort of their own homes, whilst others may want to scrutinise services or, indeed, sit on your Board.

All levels of engagement are equally important in the effective delivery of quality services and offer a number of benefits, for both tenants and NB Housing.

These include:

- Better service delivery and improved outcomes for tenants, which improve value for money.
- Working together with our tenants and communities for common goals with respect and understanding.
- Developing knowledgeable and Informed tenants who have the skills and confidence to influence decisions.
- Identifying actions for service and performance improvements and community
- Working together to implement these recommended improvements



Outcomes of the 2021-2024 Strategy

NB Housing Tenant Satisfaction Survey was circulated to all tenants in March 2024. A total of 91 tenants responded to the survey which represents an 8% return.

In terms of how we managed complaints 82% were satisfied with 34% being very satisfied.

When asked about Communication with NB Housing 70% were either fairly or very satisfied that we took their views into account with 83% being satisfied with how we kept them informed.

69% were satisfied that NB Housing provided opportunities for participation in management and our decision making processes.

During the life of the last Strategy we promoted the ethos of Tenant participation through our day to day activities, tenant and community engagements which offered different ways to remove barriers between staff and tenants, consult with and make it possible for tenants to participate in a way suitable for them.

These included:-

- holding 40+ events ranging from wreath making, pamper days, community clean-ups to good relations and cultural awareness courses
- attending 112 community meetings
- attending 100+ inter-agency meetings
- delivering 150+ welfare interventions to tenants – including 19 home starter packs
- 1075 tenants receiving invites to participate in Tenant Satisfaction Survey



40+
events



112
community
meetings



100+
inter-agency
meetings



150+
welfare interventions



1075

tenants invited
for survey



NB Housing Tenant Participation Strategy 2025-28



Our Tenant Participation Strategy aims to put the tenants' views at the forefront of decision-making, promoting mutual trust and respect between ourselves, tenants and residents, and builds a foundation for many more benefits.



Resident views are influential and are acted upon



Providing a culture of respect where tenants are comfortable to share their views and know they are being heard

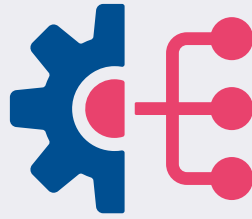


To encourage and support our diverse range of tenants to be part of the decision-making processes and provide feedback on NB services





Ensuring that barriers to tenant participation are reduced and tenants are given the skills to be fully involved in decision making processes



Delivering efficient, effective and targeted services to meet the changing needs and aspirations of our customers.



Ensuring that we provide a flexible Menu of Involvement which ensures we are responsive to change and remain accessible to all of our tenants



Supporting our tenants' to manage and maintain their tenancies, in line with tenancy agreement obligations



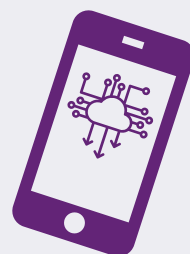
Providing Community Development and Tenant Support to ensure tenants have the advice and support needed to successfully sustain their homes.



Setting and achieving inspirational performance targets and to measure our service delivery performance across all activities



Using Review processes to fully evaluate and assess outcomes and impact of this Tenant Participation Strategy



Advancing the use of modern technologies to reach out to tenants, seek feedback and improve their experience



Improving tenant communication, streamlining processes to increase tenant satisfaction through improved outcomes

Our Commitment to Tenant Participation

At NB Housing we aim to maximise opportunities which ensure that our tenants and residents are at the heart of everything we do. We believe that tenants should be able to influence how their home and housing services are managed. The voice of the tenant matters.

We realise that good tenant engagement can bring benefits not only to our tenants and residents but also to the community and our organisation. Tenant engagement ensures that we develop policies and services that meet the needs and aspirations of our tenants and residents.

When tenants and residents know that they can genuinely make a difference, influence decisions and feel listened to they feel valued and more willing to be involved.

We want to create genuine opportunities for our tenants to influence decisions and have create working relationships between staff and tenants helping to promote positive two-way communication and respect between NB Housing, our tenants and residents.



Communication Methods

NB Housing uses a variety of communication methods to ensure our services and published information is fully accessible. These methods include:

- Writing to tenants
- Information leaflets
- Phone calls
- Home visits
- Scheme Noticeboards
- Email
- Text messaging service
- Social media including Facebook to provide regular updates to tenants
- Quarterly Tenant Newsletters detailing services and local news stories
- NB Housing website with a dedicated Tenant Section advising tenants what events are happening and how to they can become involved
- Tenants' Handbook
- Tenants' meetings
- Interagency meetings – held in partnership with outside agencies
- Community meetings

Complaints

Tenants are able to raise issues around service failures using our formal complaints processes which are in place to address these matters.

Tenants are given information about how to lodge a complaint (including verbal complaints wherever possible), information on who to speak to, including the ombudsman if appropriate, and what is involved.

NB Housing has a comprehensive system for recording, reviewing and acting upon tenants' complaints which include the tenant's rights of redress



Events

Throughout the year various events will provide tenants with the opportunity to learn about changes or improvements to services, such as rent levels, repairs or any other housing or environmental issue.

Events are publicised in a number of ways which include

- NB Housing Website – Events Page
- Notices in our Offices and Common Areas
- NB Housing Quarterly Newsletter
- By Staff
- Local Press and Community Newsletters or
- You can follow us on Facebook

We will host an annual event where the achievements of the year are highlighted and members of our Customer Experience Panel have an opportunity to network and communicate with each other and staff members from various departments of the organisation.

“NB Housing has provided me with the opportunity to become involved in a range of activities which encouraged me to get out of the house and meet people from different communities and perspectives.

At times I felt isolated, these programmes have given me the opportunity to get out and socialise with others from the NB housing ‘family’. I look forward to engaging in the Customer Experience Panel and appreciate the support given by NB Housing staff.”

PR (NB Housing Tenant)

Equality and Barriers to Participation

NB Housing has a diverse tenant profile, these range from families and single tenants in our general needs' accommodation to people in our independent living schemes and homelessness provision.

It is, therefore, essential that our Tenant Participation Strategy is inclusive and enabling. We will continually aim to encourage and support tenants who are under-represented to become involved in various engagement opportunities.

We

- are committed to treating people equally and fairly.
- work to promote equality of opportunity, to eliminate discrimination and harassment; irrespective of a person's disability, gender, age, race, religious or political belief or sexual orientation.
- nurture opportunities for working together to create more cohesive and inclusive communities and inclusive workplaces.

Barriers to Participation

We have come a long way in acknowledging that including tenants and community engagement creates better outcomes, but not everyone is always given or can find a seat at the table.

NB Housing is committed to offering practical solutions to make tenant participation a workable option for as many tenants as possible. We recognise that Tenant Participation requires a commitment of time and resources from both ourselves and our tenants and that there are many barriers which prevent tenants from getting involved, including:

- Lack of training
- Confidence
- Understanding published information and complex language
- Time constraints
- Transport
- Caring responsibilities
- Travel and other expenses

NB Housing is therefore committed to removing the barriers and offering practical solutions to make tenant participation a feasible option for as many tenants as possible.



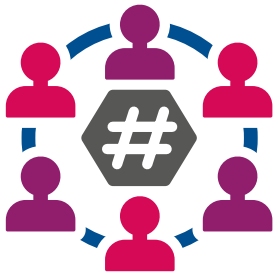
These solutions include, but are not limited to:



Meetings and events will be at venues and times which facilitate tenant attendance



Providing information in alternative formats to ensure it can be understood by as many tenants as possible



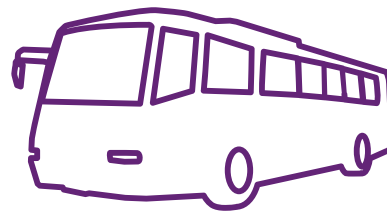
Supporting the creation of new resident groups and assist with start ups and small grants where appropriate



Providing training to support tenants and information in different formats



Developing Community Champions to provide support to tenants and their and work closely with NB staff on the ground



Assisting with transport costs and arrangements for travel to meetings and events



Arrange joint events for tenants and staff to develop relations

Investing in Tenant Participation

NB Housing will promote Tenant Participation by creating a dedicated budget to be used specifically to develop and support groups and individuals to participate. Eligible expenses will cover (but is not restricted to) the following:-

- Hiring of meeting rooms / venues
- Tenants' travel expenses where necessary
- Training Costs
- Lunch, tea, coffee
- Postage, stationary, printing of materials e.g. newsletter / questionnaires etc
- Tenant incentives
- Special requirements to meet specific tenant needs
- Access to IT to support delivery of the Tenants' Participation Strategy
- Tenant Conferences and seminars

Our Community Development and Tenant Support Officer is employed as a direct point of contact for tenants who wish to participate in the delivery of our Participation Strategy.

We want to encourage as many tenants as possible to become involved using which ever option from the menu best suits them to have an input into the work and services of NB Housing.

The driving principle of this strategy is to ensure that tenant feedback is not only heard but given real consideration and where appropriate actioned upon.



Measuring Success

To ensure that we deliver on the objectives of the Tenant Participation Strategy it will be reviewed and monitored on an annual basis through:-

- Customer Experience Panel Meetings
- Senior Management Meetings
- Housing Management Meetings
- Tenant feedback via surveys and questionnaires

The review will consider the overall effectiveness of the strategy and indicate future requirements having considered strategic and output targets such as:-

- Tenant feedback and issues being raised
- The level of tenant participation
- The number of new groups established
- Profile of participants and under-represented groups
- The number of community events in the year
- Compliance with regulatory standards published by the Department for Communities



How Can Tenants Become Involved?



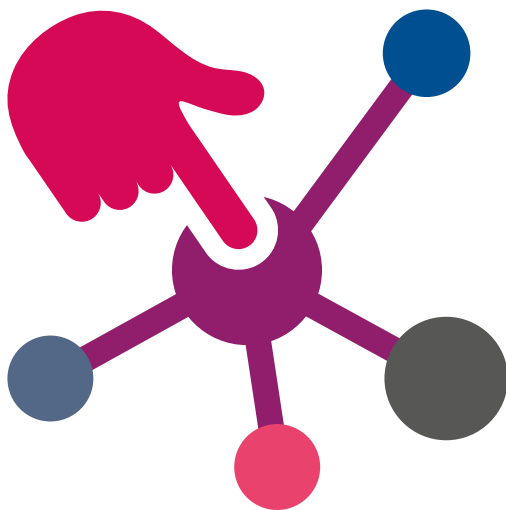
Menu of Involvement

We want to encourage as many tenants as possible to become engaged and participate in our business. We recognise that it is important to offer a range of ways to get involved with us on whatever level best suits individuals and their lifestyle.

To support this and fulfil the aims of this Strategy we have developed a range of options in our “Menu of Involvement” for tenants to influence decisions at whatever level suits them to engage either ‘formally’ or ‘informally’.

Formal methods of participation may include attendance at meetings, writing reports, chairing the Customer Experience Panel or becoming a Community Champion.

Informal methods of participation include: Environmental Walkabouts, Mystery Shopping, attendance at residents meetings, responding to surveys etc; these methods require less commitment and would be seen as low level.



How do tenants get involved?

You can choose how to get involved and when by selecting the type and level of involvement that suits your lifestyle.

NB Housing would be delighted to hear from you.

Please complete the Menu of Involvement (included) and return to NB Housing

or

Hand it to a member of NB staff.

Alternatively, you can let any member of staff know that you are interested in getting involved and we will get in contact with you.

We welcome all feedback



Please respond to us in writing, by telephone, by email or on our website.

Office Address:

NB Housing
Gatelodge,
8 Flax Street,
Belfast,
BT14 7EQ

Tel: 028 90 592110

Email: info@nb-housing.org

Website: www.nb-housing.org

TENANT PARTICIPATION ACTION PLAN 2025-2028

To promote a culture of respect and participation between NB Housing, our tenants and the community

	Action	Outcome	By who	By when
Ensure staff training in Tenant Participation is provided as appropriate	Identify staff training needs and source relevant Tenant Participation as required	All NB Housing staff are aware of the importance of meaningful tenant participation and engagement	Corporate Services / Housing Manager All staff	June 2025
Development and promotion of tenant and community participation opportunities	Identify opportunities for community and tenant engagement, providing information and meeting identified training needs	Ensure tenants have appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to develop scrutinise and monitor NB Housing services	Community Development / Tenant Support Officer	April 2025 and ongoing
Maintain strong partnership working with relevant statutory, voluntary and community organisations	Identify relevant working groups and ensure representation / input at appropriate meetings	Tenants interests and views are considered in their community	Community Development / Tenant Support Officer / Housing Team	June 2025
Present opportunities for tenant engagement with NB Housing	Staff to attend events which promote their interaction with tenants and the community	Improved communication, understanding and respect between staff and tenants	All staff	September 2025
Create opportunities for tenant participation in their community	Support / deliver events which bring staff, tenants and the community together	Promotion of a culture of respect and participation between staff, tenants and their community	Community Development / Tenant Support Officer	September 2025

TENANT PARTICIPATION ACTION PLAN 2025-2028

To support and encourage NB Housing tenants to become involved in decision making processed and provide service feedback

	Action	Outcome	By who	By when
To provide all tenants access to information on NB Housing's Tenant Participation opportunities and menu of participation	To publicise tenant participation opportunities through our publications, social media and website	Increased tenant participation in the decision making processes and improved feedback on services	Community Development / Tenant Support Officer Housing Manager	September 2025
To maintain a data base of individual tenants involved and a register of interested parties	Ensure all registered and interested tenants' data is captured	Tenants opting from different menu choices are having their needs met and their opportunity to influence policy and decisions maximised	Community Development / Tenant Support Officer	April 2025
To further develop existing tenants' groups and establish a Customer Experience Panel	Hold and support regular tenants' meetings, providing opportunities for greater engagement through training and development opportunities	An established tenants' panel with participants trained to manage and facilitate panel business	Housing Dept / Community Development / Tenant Support Officer	June 2025 and ongoing
To develop a tenant consultation panel to encourage tenant participation in the review of NB Housing policies.	Use tenant meetings, mail shots, newsletter, digital resources as opportunities to review policies. Register and report on consultation results.	Build a tenant consultation panel for reviewing policies (to include the Tenant Participation Strategy), a register to be maintained recording consultation and results / outcomes	Community Development / Tenant Support Officer Corporate Services Housing Team	Sept 2025 + ongoing
Consideration of tenant representation on NB Housing Board	Identify tenants interested in becoming a board member and provide the necessary training and support to facilitate the same	Tenant membership on NB Housing Board	All staff	December 2025

TENANT PARTICIPATION ACTION PLAN 2025-2028

To deliver efficient, effective and targeted services to meet the diverse needs of NB Housing Tenants

	Action	Outcome	By who	By when
To provide tenants with relevant information and advice	Deliver quarterly newsletters providing tenants with relevant information and advice.	Tenant empowerment through improved knowledge and access to information	Community Development / Tenant Support Officer / Business Improvement Manager	June 2025 and ongoing
To ensure tenants have a voice in what information they receive	Input from customer experience panel with individual input encouraged	Tenant participation encouraged and tenant empowerment through representation	Housing Dept / Community Development / Tenant Support Officer	June 2025 and ongoing
To ensure regular and timely information updates on NB Housing website	Regular review and update of website with tenant and community input encouraged	Timely and accurate information is available to tenants at a time of their choice	Community Development / Tenant Support Officer/ Business Improvement Manager/ Corporate Services	June 2025 and ongoing
Recurrent review of the Tenants' Handbook and information literature	Maintain a programme for ongoing / recurrent updates of tenant information and literature	Tenants are mindful of their responsibilities as an NB tenant and are informed of the support we can provide	Community Development / Tenant Support Officer / Corporate Services / Housing Team	March 2026

TENANT PARTICIPATION ACTION PLAN 2025-2028

To promote good community relations and support tenants to sustain their tenancies through community engagement

	Action	Outcome	By who	By when
To support grassroots community initiatives	Provide financial assistance for community events that improve Good Relations at schemes	Enhanced Good Relations and improved community cohesion	Community Development / Tenant Support Officer / Business Improvement Manager / Corporate Services	April 2025 + annual review
To build good relations between staff, tenants and the community through participation / leading on community initiatives	Continue with annual community clean ups, contribution to local inter-agency community and environmental meetings etc	Improved relations and respect between tenants and NB Housing staff	Community Development / Tenant Support Officer / Business Improvement Manager / Corporate Services	April 2025 and ongoing
To promote a positive schools and young peoples programme	Deliver joint community initiatives in partnership with local schools and youth groups	Create a sense of belonging among young people, parents and NB Housing	Community Development / Tenant Support Officer	April 2025 and ongoing

TENANT PARTICIPATION ACTION PLAN 2025-2028

To measure service delivery to ensure performance targets across the Tenant Participation Strategy are achieved

	Action	Outcome	By who	By when
Review previous Tenant Participation Strategy outcomes	Incorporation of positive outcomes / learning into future strategies	Continuous improvement in positive tenant participation	Director of Corporate Services / Housing Manager / Community Dev Support Worker	June 2025 and reviewed quarterly thereafter
Continuous collation and evaluation of feedback on the Strategy	Collate, assess and report on the feedback from regular Tenant Satisfaction Surveys and customer experience panels / individuals	Greater transparency and increased satisfaction that tenant opinions and views are being considered	Director of Corporate Services / Housing Manager / Business Improvement Manager	June 2025 and reviewed quarterly thereafter
Continuous pursuit of improved tenant satisfaction using innovative approaches to achieving the same	Greater use of technology to gauge tenant opinion, satisfaction and aspirations	Improved service delivery and tenant satisfaction resulting in better engagement	Director of Corporate Services/ Business Improvement Manager	June 2025 and reviewed q6 monthly thereafter

TENANT PARTICIPATION ACTION PLAN 2025-2028

Improved use of innovative technological advances to improve the tenant experience

	Action	Outcome	By who	By when
To achieve more efficient use of resources and improve outcomes for the tenant	Review current methods of service delivery using a dedicated resource	Improved tenant satisfaction through engagement	Business Improvement Manager	June 2025
To adopt innovative technological advances to improve communication and engagement with our tenants	Review of how and what we currently communicate with tenants giving	A greater tenant reach	Corporate Services	June 2025
To ensure tenants are prepared for digital and technological changes	Provide information and support to tenants to ensure they are able to optimise the use of technology	A reduction in barriers to engagement and improved communication	Corporate Services	June 2025



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