

# Tenant Voice in Wales



**TPAS Cymru is the tenant engagement organisation for Wales.**

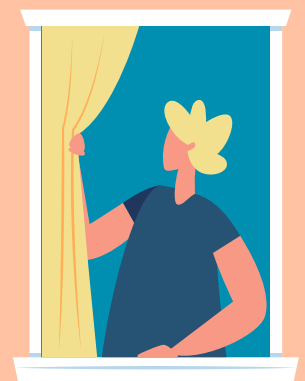
**We believe tenants from both the social and private housing sectors need their voices heard by their landlords, policymakers at all levels, and each other.**

Tenant-landlord engagement across Wales varies in its success. However, it is also vital that tenant voices are heard at a higher level within Welsh Government, with politicians, statutory bodies and policy makers.

We utilise various methods to enable tenants in Wales to be heard, shape and influence housing in Wales.

This guide offers an overview of how TPAS Cymru, together with tenants, ensures that voices from diverse cultures and backgrounds across Wales are heard.

TPAS Cymru offers a diverse range of ways for tenants to get their voice heard, and this means that it is open and inclusive of all tenants to engage in a way that suits them and that those who shout the loudest are not the only ones heard. We want our work and tenant voices to reflect the entire tenant community in Wales.



# Ways that your voice is heard at a national level



## 1. Tenant Pulse

Tenant Pulse is our national survey platform, allowing tenants across Wales, whether in social or private housing, to voice their opinions on important issues. We work with tenants, policy makers, Welsh Government etc. to explore topical issues and ensure that the tenant voice is heard. Tenant Pulse reports regularly influence decisions made by the Welsh Government and policymakers.

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## 2. Tenant shaping TPAS Cymru and Pulse

We want Tenant Pulse and our work to be shaped by tenants. To support us, we work with two advisory groups of diverse tenants with lived experience from across tenures.

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## 3. Tenant Voice Cymru Forum

The TPAS Cymru Tenant Voice Cymru Forum provides an opportunity for tenants to directly discuss and give their opinions to some of the leading housing decision-makers in Wales. These sessions have been very popular and successful.

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## 4. Tenant Networks

Monthly online Tenant Networks provide tenants from across Wales a platform to discuss with other tenants the issues of the day and provide a space to share good practice about tenant participation and the tenant voice. These networks are also an opportunity for tenants to give their views and engage directly with policymakers.

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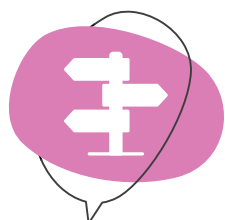


## 5. Online listening

TPAS Cymru is committed to capturing the voices of tenants from a wide range of backgrounds, not just those who are most vocal.

We have identified a range of forums, groups, and private spaces on social media platforms like Facebook, NextDoor, Reddit, Discord, etc. By connecting with online tenant influencers and communities, we gain valuable insights into tenant voices, allowing us to identify emerging themes and issues, which we promptly bring to the attention of relevant authorities in Wales.

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## 6. Case Work

We frequently receive calls from tenants seeking advice on a variety of issues within social housing and the private rental sector. Whilst we are unable to give legal advice or guidance, we do assist where we can, or signpost to more appropriate support organisations. This is tracked and fed into Welsh Government and other policymakers to inform their decisions.

# Tenant Voice within the Welsh Government:

## ✓ Influencing the system

Housing currently sits under the portfolio of a Cabinet Secretary (formerly a Minister), and they are supported by the civil service housing department.

Whilst the majority of collaboration we have is with the Housing Department, we also engage with other departments such as: Net Zero/Circular Economy, Communities, Equality, Education, Health and Local Government.

When it comes to influence, The Cabinet Secretary takes a lot of advice from civil servants. TPAS Cymru engages with civil servants either directly, or via the opportunities we create for these colleagues to meet tenants and hear their views. Through the relationships we have developed with civil servants, we have influenced legislation in Wales based on tenants' views.

In addition to TPAS Cymru hearing the tenant voice and taking that to influence Welsh Government, we create opportunities for tenants to meet and discuss issues with civil servants directly. We do this throughout the year, ensuring the tenant voice can reach Welsh Government and senior leaders.

## ✓ White & Green consultation papers

When the Welsh Government issues consultation exercises, TPAS Cymru is committed to setting up briefing events and listening opportunities for tenants to understand the issues being discussed and provide their views. We take pride in facilitating these opportunities for tenant input.

## ✓ Meeting The Cabinet Secretary

TPAS Cymru, along with other organisations, regularly collectively meets with the Cabinet Secretary to discuss specific policy matters. Such meetings create lots of debate and discussion, with TPAS Cymru always representing the voice of tenants and being requested to do so.

On occasion, TPAS Cymru will meet with the Cabinet Secretary on a one-to-one basis to discuss policy priorities such as rent settlement, regulation, and shared ownership.

Some tenants want to meet the Cabinet Secretary. While we currently organise events where the Minister is present and delivers a speech, we are exploring new ways to facilitate more open and interactive discussions with tenants.



# Tenant Voice in the Senedd:

**1** We actively attend and contribute to these The Senedd Cross Party Groups:

- **Housing Group**
- **Renting Housing and Leaseholder Property**
- **Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency**

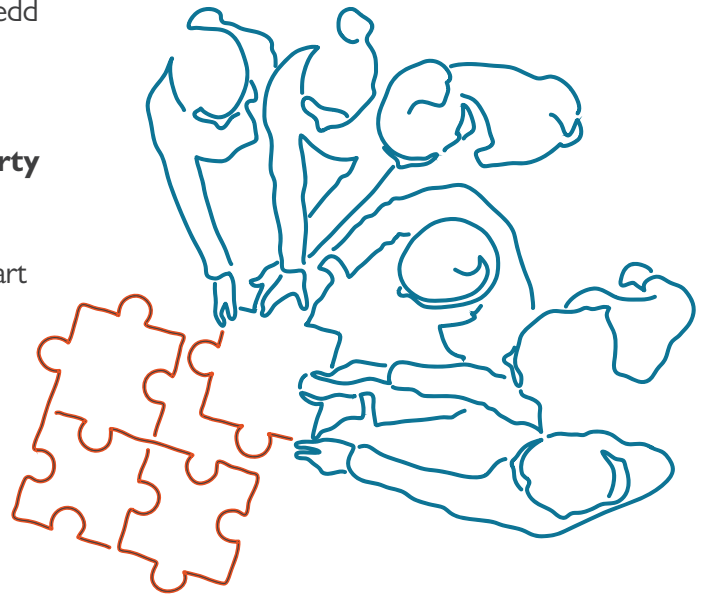
We present to Members of the Senedd (MS'), take part in debates and send them our research publications from our Tenant Pulse findings. We also share any issues we have identified through our online listening and any feedback we have from our events etc.

**2** During the stages of legislative change on housing issues, we engage with specific MS' to ensure that tenant concerns are raised and considered.

**3** When there is a White Paper or Green Paper released for consultations by Welsh Government, we sometimes forward our draft responses to various political party housing spokespeople and their policy officers to help influence their submissions.

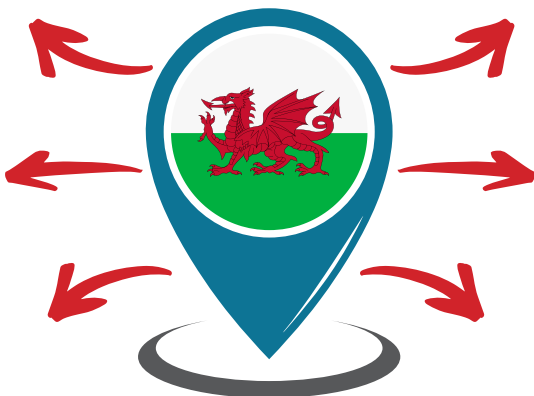
**4** We regularly give written and oral evidence to formal Senedd committees - depending on what subjects are going through the Senedd each year or what evidence they are gathering – or where we are requested to provide the tenant voice. This helps shape politicians and policy makers thinking and influence legislation.

**5** We have developed positive relationships with the Senedd committee staff and official clerks which has enabled us to arrange opportunities for tenants to meet with the Committees or the Committee staff when they have wanted tenant views on something being discussed in the Senedd. In more recent years, that has predominantly been within the private rental sector tenants due to specific legislation impacting them and the instance that they didn't have other opportunities to have their voice be heard.



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## In addition: Listening and influencing outside of Wales



TPAS Cymru has close connections with related bodies in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland. We regularly meet to share insights and look for best practices from other nations. We also organise joint events across the 4 nations for tenants and housing staff to learn from each other.

TPAS Cymru is also proud to be a member of International Union of Tenants where we share best practice and research on global rental issues.