



Tenant Engagement Report

2024/2025



Foreword

Welcome to the Tenant Engagement and Participation for 2024/25.

Over the past year, we have continued to strengthen tenant engagement and participation, ensuring that tenants remain at the heart of our decisions and services.

With key resources in place from last year, we have focused on how best to work with and support our tenants. A key milestone was the promotion of Kalli Fox, our Customer Standards Administrator to the newly created Community Connections Officer role. This position will support Local Managers and tenants in building connections within the wider community.

- **TIS Excellence Awards** - Housing Association of the Year
- **CIH Scotland Awards** - Marion Gibbs Award for Equality in Housing.

These recognitions highlight our dedication to tenant engagement and equality within housing.

This report reflects on the activities undertaken over the past financial year in relation to tenant engagement and participation. It also outlines our strategic direction, aligning with our new strategy, and reinforcing our commitment to enhancing tenant involvement and shaping our services based on their valuable insights.

Zhan McIntyre | Head of Policy and Customer Standards



We are incredibly proud to have won two prestigious awards this year:



Connect

Our tenant engagement and participation strategy, Connect, is tracked through an Action Plan, structured around the following key areas:

- Formal tenant groups
- Increase participants
- Small grant fund
- Establishing new groups
- Regional forums
- Tenant insight programme
- Community inspections

Over the past year, the team has engaged with 461 tenants over the year, over nearly 50 separate occasions, including through the formal groups, tenant meetings, assistance with surveys, consultations and development visits.

Formal tenant groups

Partnership Forum

The Partnership Forum serves as Bield's representative tenant body. This year, we saw a significant transition as our longstanding chair, Willie Smalley, stepped down. We were delighted that John Thomson stepped up to take on the role, ensuring continuity and strong leadership. Additionally, Gillian Merrett, a member of the forum, joined the Board, reinforcing tenant representation at the governance level.

This year, the forum also moved to a new venue, transitioning from the Stirling Court Hotel to the Tech Hub in Linlithgow. Following a successful trial meeting, tenants agreed this was a suitable venue and cost effective location, ensuring more resources are better spent on achieving outcomes for tenants.

Throughout the year, the Partnership Forum has actively engaged with key members of staff, including Head of Finance and Head of Property, contributing to discussions on important policies such as:

- Rent setting process
- Rent policy
- Domestic abuse policy

Communication Champions

The Communication Champions group consists of four dedicated members who actively contribute their insights and perspectives to help enhance Bield communications, including shaping the Bield Bulletin and other key publications. In the past year, four of publications had the Tenant Checked logo.



Compliments and Complaint group

The Compliment and Complaint Collective remains active, meeting twice a year to review compliments and complaints, playing a crucial role in identifying areas for service improvements and making informed recommendations.

Bield Equality Network

The Bield Equality Network has continued to grow and now includes staff members, fostering a more inclusive dialogue. The group has actively participated in responding to relevant consultations and is exploring ways to raise issues with policy makers, ensuring that people with protected characteristics receive appropriate representation. We have agreed on a topic for the forthcoming year, which is mental health. This was selected because it is a cross-cutting issue that impacts on both tenants and staff members, and in many cases can be connected with protected characteristics.

Increase participants

Through the tenant satisfaction survey and Tenant Insight Network (TIN) around 200 tenants indicated that they would be interested in getting more involved. We have updated our standard operating procedures to ensure we are making the most of these leads, and encouraging more tenants to get involved in a way that suits them.

Small grant fund

As part of our ongoing commitment to tenant engagement and participatory decision-making, this year, we piloted a revised approach to our **Small Grants Fund**, designed to support localised initiatives that enhance tenants' quality of life across our developments.

Historically, grants were allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. While administratively straightforward, this method offered limited transparency and did not actively involve tenants in determining how resources should be prioritised.

In 2024/25, we implemented a participatory scoring mechanism, inviting representatives from the Partnership Forum and Tenant Insight Network to take an active role in the evaluation and selection of applications. This shift gave tenants greater control and influence over how funds were awarded, aligning with our strategic objective to embed co-production principles across our organisation.

The fund totalled **£2,000**, with **ten grants of £200 issued to developments**. Fund initiatives included:

- Provision of garden furniture to support outdoor social activity
- Creation of a 'quiet room' to provide sensory relief for tenants with additional support needs
- Purchase of plants and seeds to reinvigorate communal garden areas.



The response from tenants has been overwhelmingly positive, with feedback indicating increased satisfaction not only with the outcome of the funded projects, but also with the transparent and inclusive process by which decisions were made. This reinforces our broader organisational priority to enable tenant voice in a meaningful and constructive way.

Opportunities for development

While the pilot has demonstrated value, there is significant untapped demand. Several high-quality applications could not be funded due to the modest scale of the fund. Additionally, some developments proposed projects with costs exceeding the current £200 cap. EMT and Board are requested to consider allocating additional funds to this budget.

Establishing new groups

In line with our revised approach to tenant engagement and organisational improvement, we are currently progressing the establishment of two new tenant-led groups that will play a key role in supporting scrutiny, service improvement and alignment with our strategic priorities.

1. Scrutiny Group

Following the closure of the Bield Improvement Group (BIG) last year, we have undertaken a review of our scrutiny function. Learning from the previous success, we are now developing a refreshed Scrutiny Group model that promotes transparency, mutual respect and constructive challenge.

Recruitment is being managed via a staged engagement process, targeting tenants with a demonstrated interest in service standards and quality assurance. The new group will operate under a clearly defined code of conduct, with enhanced support from staff to ensure members are fully equipped to undertake evidence-based reviews of our services. This will include training commissioned from external partners.

2. Sustainability Group

In support of our commitment to environmental responsibility and the delivery of our Sustainability Strategy, we are establishing a new Sustainability Group comprised of tenants and staff.



Regional forums

As part of our tenant engagement strategy, we set out to pilot Regional Forums to strengthen local-level participation, facilitate peer learning among tenants, and provide a platform for regional issues to feed into wider conversations.

Over the past year, we attempted to establish forums in two distinct regions. However, despite some early interest, the forums were not successfully established. A key barrier was the interpersonal dynamic among tenants, which was marked with disagreement and an overall lack of cohesion. These tensions created an environment that was not conducive to constructive collaboration, undermining the forums' potential as a platform for shared decision-making and community-building.

Revised direction – integration with independent living hubs

In response to these issues, we are refining our approach and will now look to embed future forums within the structure of our Independent Living Hubs. These hubs offer a stronger foundation for tenant cooperation.

Tenant Insight programme

This year has seen significant progress in advancing our tenant engagement framework through the development of the Tenant Insight Programme, designed to strengthen our understanding of tenant needs and preferences while promoting transparency and accountability in service delivery.

Tenant Insight Network

The successful launch of the Tenant Insight Network (TIN) has replaced the previous Interested Parties List, representing a shift toward a more dynamic and inclusive model of communication and engagement. With **249 tenants now participating**, TIN allows for timely consultation on key developments, and decisions, while also creating a platform for ongoing dialogue between tenants and Bield.

Tenant satisfaction survey

We completed our first full cycle of annual Tenant Satisfaction Surveys, achieving a response rate of **1,845 returns**. This robust dataset provides a clear picture of tenant satisfaction levels, service priorities, and areas for improvement. This level of engagement ensures that tenant voices are heard and considered in shaping our services.

Community Inspections

Initial work has commenced on the development of tenant-led community inspections, a key component of our engagement strategy to support service scrutiny and local accountability. We have been actively exploring potential criteria and methodology for these inspections, including the scope of tenant participation, reporting mechanisms, and alignment with existing quality assurance processes. We anticipate piloting the model in selected developments over the coming year.



Looking Ahead

Our strategic focus for the year ahead will be on embedding and expanding our tenant engagement model, ensuring it remains fit for purpose as we continue to implement the Independent Living Model. Key priorities include:

- Introducing tenant-led inspections to enhance service scrutiny.
- Revisiting the regional forum model through a more targeted Hub-based approach
- Expanding the reach and impact of TIN, increasing tenant involvement in service reviews consultation, and improvements projects.

We remain committed to fostering a culture of working alongside tenants to ensure their voices shape the future of Bield. We would like to express our sincere thanks to all tenants who have contributed their time, insight, and ideas over the past year.