



Cheshire West & Chester Council

Together with Tenants Charter Consultation Feedback



Building futures, opening doors



Cheshire West
and Chester

Background to the survey

The government has published its Social Housing White Paper which looks to realign the relationship between landlord and tenant, through greater transparency and accountability, and drive a more consumer-focused social housing regulatory regime. The White Paper also includes a new Charter setting out what every social housing resident should expect from their landlord:

- 1. To be safe in your home.** The government will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.
- 2. To know how your landlord is performing,** including on repairs, complaints and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.
- 3. To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly,** with access to a strong Ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.
- 4. To be treated with respect,** backed by a strong consumer regulator and improved consumer standards for tenants.
- 5. To have your voice heard by your landlord,** for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its Board. The government will provide help, if you want it, to give you the tools to ensure your landlord listens.
- 6. To have a good quality home and neighborhood to live in,** with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.
- 7. To be supported to take your first step to ownership,** so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.

In response to the Social Housing White Paper, the council and its strategic housing partner Forhousing have worked with a sample group of tenants to develop a draft tenants charter – Together with Tenants. The draft tenants charter aims to build on the above social housing regulatory regime and

ensure that our tenants: have a meaningful way of engaging with us; can play an active role in challenging policy and budgetary decisions; monitor performance and thus help shape the services they receive. A consultation was carried out to better understand tenant views on the draft tenant's charter with feedback being used to help inform its development.

How the survey was carried out

The survey was open for 12 weeks, from 12 September to 4 December 2022.

As the consultation was asking for comments in relation to a draft council tenant charter, feedback from council tenants and leaseholders were being sought. There are approximately 5,500 council tenants and leaseholders. Those tenants and leaseholders which had an email address were sent an email containing a copy of the draft tenant's charter and a hyperlink to the online survey. The 1,800 tenants and leaseholders with no email address were provided with a hard copy of the draft tenant's charter and a covering letter which provided details of how a hard copy of the survey could be provided. In addition to the online survey, tenants were also able to attend two drop-in sessions held in Ellesmere Port and Neston with staff from both Forhousing and the council being available to answer any questions. Communication methods to ensure that key stakeholders were made aware of the consultation and given the opportunity to have their say included a press release, Member Briefing, social media and presence of the consultation on the Council website.

The survey received a total of 74 responses, made up of 49 respondents who identified themselves from the main target cohort and the drop-in sessions were attended by five tenants. In addition to the drop-in sessions a workshop was held with 13 tenants presenting their views and opinions.

Key messages – a summary of the main findings

The key messages to emerge from the consultation, were as follows:

- In the survey, there was broad agreement with the aims of the Together with Tenants Charter, as well as the five pledges and the commitments for the pledges.
- Some respondents said they are looking forward to the Charter starting/being put into practice and also that tenant's views were being considered.
- Some respondents said that they hoped that the five new pledges would ensure that a better service was provided to tenants going forward.
- Communication was mentioned by a lot of respondents in terms of general improvement is required and staff are not easily accessible.
- Some people commented that they had experienced delays in receiving an answer to their enquiry and that response times could be improved.
- Some respondents felt that in relation to repairs, waiting times to make the repairs could be improved and there was a need to "get it right first-time" rather than repeat visits needing to be undertaken.
- Some respondents also commented how tenants had their role to play in ensuring the quality of their home was maintained.
- A number of comments were received around making sure that when letting properties that more care was taken to ensure the property was handed to the new tenant in a good condition.
- Some respondents commented on the importance of undertaking safety checks in the home.

Headline findings







The Together with Tenants Charter consultation took place from Monday 12 September up to and including Sunday 4 December 2022. The total number of 74 formal responses were received.

1. 71% either agreed or strongly agreed with the aims of the Together with Tenants Charter.
2. 65% either agreed or strongly agreed with the five pledges outlined in the Together with Tenants Charter.
3. 67% either agreed or strongly agreed with the communication pledge commitments.
4. 66% either agreed or strongly agreed with the acting responsibly commitments.
5. 64% either agreed or strongly agreed with the community commitments.
6. 58% either agreed or strongly agreed with the home maintenance commitments.
7. 68% either agreed or strongly agreed with the safety commitments.

Detailed findings from the survey

The following pages detail the specific responses to the consultation questions as well as any key messages arising from respondent feedback.

Graph 1: Agreement with the aims of the Together with Tenants Charter

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the aims of the Together with Tenants Charter? (Please select one option only)				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		26%	19
2	Agree		45%	33
3	Neither agree nor disagree		21%	15
4	Disagree		6%	4
5	Strongly disagree		3%	2
6	Don't know		1%	1
<p>74 responses</p> <p>(Strongly agree 26%; Agree 45%; Neither agree nor disagree 21%; Disagree 6%; Strongly disagree 3%; Don't know 1%)</p>				






The above chart shows that the majority of respondents (71%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the aims of the Charter.

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the aims of the Charter. 20 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

- Some people welcomed the aims of the Charter and were glad that tenants' views are being considered.
- A small number of respondents commented on some of the difficulties they've experienced contacting Housing Officers
- It was important to a small number of people to have a good relationship with their landlord

- Although not directly related to the question, some respondents expressed concern about the length of time it takes for issues to be dealt with and resolved.

Graph 2: Agreement with the five pledges






To what extent do you agree or disagree with the five new pledges? (Please select one option only)				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		34%	25
2	Agree		31%	23
3	Neither agree nor disagree		15%	11
4	Disagree		9%	7
5	Strongly disagree		11%	8
6	Don't know		0%	0
<p>74 responses</p> <p>(Strongly agree 34%; Agree 31%; Neither agree nor disagree 15%; Disagree 9%; Strongly disagree 11%; Don't know 0%)</p>				

The above chart shows that two-thirds of respondents (65%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the five new pledges.

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the five new pledges. 25 comments were received and the key messages from the comments in relation to each of the pledges were:

- Communication - Some respondents felt that communication from the service could be improved, in terms of unanswered emails or phone calls, or delays in receiving a response to their enquiry.
- Responsibility - there was a suggestion that the complaints process needs to be easy to access.
- Your community - A few respondents felt that maintenance of communal areas could be improved.
- Quality of your home - Some respondents commented that the repairs and maintenance service could generally be improved.
- Your safety - there was a suggestion that properties shouldn't be available to anti-social tenants.

Graph 3: Agreement with the communication commitments




To what extent do you agree or disagree with the communication commitments? (Please select one option only)				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		27%	20
2	Agree		40%	30
3	Neither agree nor disagree		15%	11
4	Disagree		4%	3
5	Strongly disagree		15%	11
6	Don't know		0%	0
<p>74 responses</p> <p>(Strongly agree 27%; Agree 40%; Neither agree nor disagree 15%; Disagree 4%; Strongly disagree 15%; Don't know 0%)</p>				




The above chart shows that two-thirds of respondents (67%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the communication commitments.

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the communication commitments. 22 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

- Some respondents felt that there could be a general improvement in communication from the service.
- Some people requested a faster response time to enquiries and complaints they have submitted.
- Other comments received from a small number of people included:
 - the need for a variety of communication methods which don't result in over-reliance on the use of technology
 - Regular updates should be provided on the progress of enquiries and complaints.
 - A named contact would be helpful to have to get in touch with.

Graph 4: Agreement with the commitments to act responsibly

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the commitments to act responsibly? (Please select one option only)				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		27%	20
2	Agree		39%	29
3	Neither agree nor disagree		15%	11







To what extent do you agree or disagree with the commitments to act responsibly? (Please select one option only)				
4	Disagree		4%	3
5	Strongly disagree		15%	11
6	Don't know		1%	1
<p>74 responses</p> <p>(Strongly agree 27%; Agree 39%; Neither agree nor disagree 15%; Disagree 4%; Strongly disagree 15%; Don't know 1%)</p>				

The above chart shows that two-thirds of respondents (66%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the commitments to act responsibly.

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the commitments to act responsibly. 18 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

- Some respondents felt that comments or complaints they have submitted have either not been resolved yet or took a long time to resolve.
- It was mentioned by a small number that these commitments should already be happening.

Graph 5: Agreement with the community commitments

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the community commitments? (Please select one option only)				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		28%	21
2	Agree		35%	26
3	Neither agree nor disagree		26%	19
4	Disagree		5%	4
5	Strongly disagree		4%	3
6	Don't know		1%	1
74 responses (Strongly agree 28%; Agree 35%; Neither agree nor disagree 26%; Disagree 5%; Strongly disagree 4%; Don't know 1%)				







The above chart shows that almost two-thirds of respondents (63%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the community commitments.

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the community commitments. 17 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

- Some respondents mentioned that there are some anti-social behaviour issues in their area.
- A few respondents felt that tenants should take responsibility for maintaining their own property and the area around it.
- A small number of respondents requested more activities and things to do in their local area.

- A small number of comments were received in relation to prioritising street cleaning and litter picking.

Graph 6: Agreement with the home maintenance commitments

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the home maintenance commitments? (Please select one option only)				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		33%	25
2	Agree		24%	18
3	Neither agree nor disagree		19%	14
4	Disagree		9%	7
5	Strongly disagree		13%	10
6	Don't know		1%	1
<p>74 responses</p> <p>(Strongly agree 33%; Agree 24%; Neither agree nor disagree 19%; Disagree 9%; Strongly disagree 13%; Don't know 1%)</p>				







The above chart shows that over half of respondents (57%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the maintenance commitments.

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the maintenance commitments. 24 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

- Some respondents felt that waiting times to make repairs to their home could be improved.

- A few people commented that their issue hadn't been resolved after the first visit so subsequent visits were required.
- A small number of people mentioned that a contractor should be employed based on quality of work rather than to the lowest bidder.
- A small number of respondents mentioned that properties could be in a better condition when people move in.
- A small number of people said they have had repairs to their home completed promptly and to a good standard.

Graph 7: Agreement with the home maintenance commitments

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the safety commitments? (Please select one option only)				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		32%	23
2	Agree		36%	26
3	Neither agree nor disagree		22%	16
4	Disagree		3%	2
5	Strongly disagree		5%	4
6	Don't know		3%	2
<p>73 responses</p> <p>(Strongly agree 32%; Agree 36%; Neither agree nor disagree 22%; Disagree 3%; Strongly disagree 5%; Don't know 3%)</p>				

The above chart shows that over two-thirds of respondents (68%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the safety commitments.

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the safety commitments. 16 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

- A few respondents commented on the importance of ensuring safety checks are undertaken and no home is missed.
- Some people commented on some safety issues with their properties, such as stairs being a trip hazard and unsafe doors.
- A small number of respondents felt it was important to work closely with tenants of high-rise blocks to understand their concerns/problems.

Tenant workshop and drop-in sessions feedback

In addition to the online survey, a tenant workshop and two drop-in sessions were also delivered which provided an opportunity for tenants to give their feedback on the charter as follows:

- There was overall agreement with both the aims and pledges set out in the draft Together with Tenants Charter however, some tenants felt that this was long overdue whilst one tenant was sceptical that it would make any difference.
- A number of attendees commented that whilst the commitments made sense, the achievement of them could have budget implications for example repair/maintenance commitments.
- Most tenants thought that when things went wrong there was a need to communicate with tenants and explain why things had gone wrong as well as providing a solution.
- Some tenants also felt that their environment wasn't maintained to the levels they would expect and more needed to be done to address anti-social behaviour.
- A number of tenants welcomed that more was being done around safety with two tenants commenting how they had been visited by fire safety inspectors.

Action to be taken because of the survey

The feedback from the consultation will form part of a report to be presented to Cabinet in spring 2023. A tenant and leaseholders focus group will then agree how the pledges will be measured and a summary provided for each of the pledges in the final version of the Tenant Charter.

Profile of respondents

In what respect are you completing this questionnaire?		Response Percent	Response Total
1	I am a Social Housing tenant in Cheshire West and Chester	67%	49
2	I am a Social Housing landlord in Cheshire West and Chester	1%	1
3	I am a resident of Cheshire West and Chester	40%	29
4	I am an elected Member of Cheshire West and Chester Council	0%	0
5	I am a local Town or Parish Councillor	1%	1
6	I am an employee of Cheshire West and Chester Council	1%	1
7	I am a representative of a community or voluntary organisation	2%	2

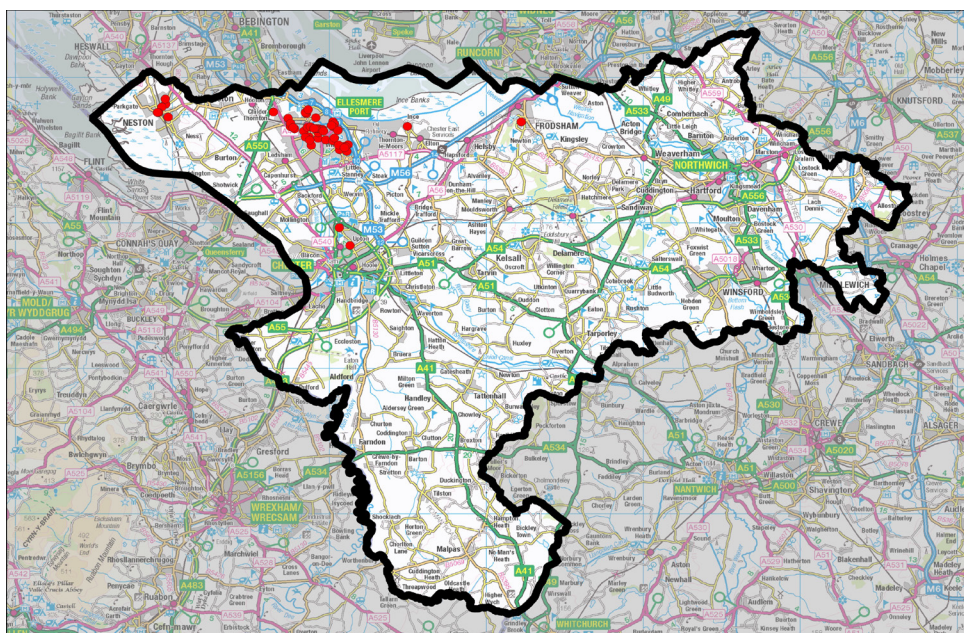
8	I am a local business	0%	0
9	Other (please specify):	7%	5

Gender

	Are you...?	Response Percent	Response Total
1	Male	44%	31
2	Female	54%	38
3	Prefer not to say	3%	2
4	Prefer to use own term:	0%	0

Postcodes of respondents

The map below shows all of the postcodes given by respondents that could be mapped (55 postcodes). Most respondents were from the area in and around Ellesmere Port as well as a few from other areas of Cheshire West and Chester.



Age

Which age group do you belong to?		Response Percent	Response Total
1	16 - 24	1%	1
2	25 - 34	7%	5
3	35 - 44	12%	9
4	45 - 54	22%	16
5	55 - 64	22%	16
6	65+	28%	20
7	Prefer not to say	7%	5

Long-term illness, health issue or disability

Do you have a long-term illness, health issue or disability that limits your daily activities or the work you can do? Please select one option only.	Response Percent	Response total
Yes	42%	30
No	50%	36
If you answered 'yes', please indicate which of the following applies to you? Please select all that apply		
1. Physical impairment that causes mobility issues, e.g. wheelchair user	37%	12
2. Visual impairment	12%	4

3. Hearing impairment	6%	2
4. Learning disability or difficulty	9%	3
5. Mental Health issue	30%	10
6. Long standing illness or health condition	70%	23
7. Prefer not to say	12%	4
8.Other	9%	3

Nationality

Which of these groups do you consider yourself to belong to?	Response Percent	Response total
1. White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	89%	64
2. White – Irish	0%	0
3. White - Any other White background (please type in box below)	3%	2
4. Black or Black British - Caribbean	1%	1
5. Black or Black British – African	1%	1
6. Black or Black British - Any other Black background (please type in the box below)	0%	0%
7. Asian or Asian British - Indian	0%	0
8. Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0%	0
9. Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0%	0
10. Asian or Asian British - Chinese	1%	1
11. Asian or Asian British - Any other Asian background (please type in the box below)	1%	1
12. Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	0%	0
13. Mixed - White and Black African	0%	0

Which of these groups do you consider yourself to belong to?	Response Percent	Response total
14. Mixed - White and Asian	0%	0
15. Mixed - Any other Mixed background (please type in the box below)	0%	0
16. Other ethnic group - Arab	0%	0
17. Other ethnic group - Other ethnic group (please type in the box below)	0%	0
18. Travelling community - Gypsy/Roma	0%	0
19. Travelling community - Traveller of Irish descent	0%	0
20. Travelling community - Other member of the Travelling community (please type in the box below)	0%	0
21. Prefer not to say	4%	3
22. Other	1%	1

Religious belief/faith

Which of these, best describes your religious belief/faith?	Response Percent	Response total
1. Buddhist	0%	0
2. Christian	52%	35
3. Hindu	0%	0
4. Jewish	0%	0
5. Muslim	1%	1
6. Sikh	0%	0
7. None	35%	24
8. Prefer not to say	9%	6
9. Other	3%	2

Sexual Orientation

Which of these, best describes your sexual orientation?	Response Percent	Response total
1. Heterosexual/Straight	87%	60
2. Bisexual	3%	2
3. Gay/Lesbian	0%	0
4. Prefer not to say	7%	5
5. Prefer to use own term	3%	2