

Consultation and Engagement Report Resident Engagement Strategy 2024-2029 Consultation

August 23

The Resident Engagement Strategy 2024-2029

The Resident Engagement Strategy 2024-2029 has been co-designed with residents and staff. In 2023, Croydon approached Tpas (England's leading tenant engagement experts) for the following:

- to support in reviewing and refreshing existing engagement arrangements against the principles set out in the Resident Charter
- to assist residents and staff in co-creating a new consultation framework
- to support implementation of the Resident Engagement Delivery Plan
- to ensure that Croydon comply with the new Consumer Standards and the requirements of the Social Housing (Regulation) act.

Tpas 's work supported Croydon Council in developing a strategic framework and action plan for resident engagement, enabling Croydon to build on the principles set in the Resident's Charter. As a result of the work the following session were held;

- Two Discovery Sessions with staff (17 & 18 July) with 25 people in attendance
- One Discovery Session with uninvolved residents (3 August) with seven people in attendance
- One Session with the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel (1 August) with five people in attendance.

In total, 45 people contributed to the co-design of the Resident Engagement Strategy 2024-2029 including 25 tenants and leaseholders and 20 staff. The process which also involved Councillors, committed the Council to a vision in which tenants and leaseholders have a holistic influence in decisions, strategies, policies, and services thus embedding an ethos across our services which prioritises the concerns of residents.

1. Providing a variety of formal and informal ways for residents to engage with Croydon and to influence services which encourage a wide range of residents to engage in a way that works for them.
2. Supporting staff to be confident in understanding and implementing what is expected of them in relation to engaging with residents.
3. Leaders set and drive a culture that reflects the value of hearing residents' voices, listening to staff and residents and using what they learn to improve services.
4. There is a stable leadership team and wherever possible, permanent staff are in post (rather than interims) to bring continuity and consistency to service delivery

1. Residents know what their opportunities and options are for engaging with Croydon.
2. Residents have evidence that their voice has been heard and know how they have influenced services.
3. It is easy to contact Croydon and residents know what to expect (*response times, service levels*).
4. Leaders set and model the behaviours and standards for high-quality, effective communication between residents and staff.

1. Staff understand what is expected of them and are held accountable to deliver services to agreed standards.
2. Leaders develop a culture and working practices that embed trust and accountability between staff and also between staff and residents.

1. A robust and comprehensive resident engagement and influencing structure is in place at Croydon.
2. Leaders ensure that resident engagement and influencing activities are approached strategically and are properly resourced.
3. Resources are made available to ensure that IT/digital services underpin service delivery.

Resident and Partner Engagement session

Tenant and Leaseholder Panel

- *The Panel were given a presentation outlining the progress of the Design Group and agreed with the following findings.*
 - Experience NOT opinion should drive resident influence in the service provided- These experiences should be heard, listened to, and acted upon.
 - Currently the service was reliant on too few customers. More residents needed to be engaged to achieve a better consensus of resident opinion.
 - Lack of communication between teams needs to be tackled.
 - Many existing 'involvement' mechanisms serve no purpose, are unwieldy to manage and do not represent customers.
 - New arrangements need to systemically resolve these challenges.

Comments about resident involvement obtained during the Housing Strategy Consultation

In the summer of 2023, the Council carried out a significant consultation regarding its 2023-2028 Housing Strategy. Given the mismanagement identified at Regina Road and the intervention of the Regulator for Social Housing, the survey drew many negative comments regarding performance.

There was a large response to the survey with 440 responses. Below is a sample of comments made about resident engagement which underline the Council's need to communicate effectively with residents in order to improve service delivery.

<i>Comments received about resident involvement</i>
"You need to do more than listen! You need to make informed decisions based on feedback from Residents and the Community"
"The Council has a great deal to do to completely change the culture of housing management and maintenance following the Regina Road and the Housing Regulation damning report on Council and Social Housing contempt for tenants"
"Regina Road says it all. Housing built in totally inappropriate places... no resident consultation"
"Tenancy Officers are meant to be working with residents but they are not accessible"
"Listening and really hearing what residents have to say is key"
"Engaging with residents to both understand their needs and help shape service delivery should be a priority"
"There is little communication between the Council and Community"
"Residents are rarely listened to"
"I do not think that there is much collaborative work being done with residents to get their views on this housing issue"

Resident Survey

A survey was commissioned in late Autumn 2023 to find out which service areas are of the most importance to our tenants for the coming year. The results from this would help decision making around spending in 2024/25 and improving the services tenants deemed to be the highest priority.

The survey was directed at council tenants only and was promoted in the following ways:

- Posters in blocks
- Door-knocking / flyers through doors
- Surgeries
- Open House (QR code and phone number)

Surveys could be completed online directly by the tenant or via a member of staff face to face or over the phone (using an online or paper survey).

A door knocking exercise was planned to ensure we achieved responses from across the borough, with certain officers focussing on sheltered blocks and others on general needs blocks and street properties.

Respondents were asked if they would like more information about getting involved and contact details were recorded separately if they were interested. (22% of respondents were interested and will be provided with further information)

The information below is provided to demonstrate that surveys have been received from a cross section of our tenant population. Comparison with the whole tenant population (May 23) is included, where known.

Housing are committed to reaching out to residents so that they are listened to, heard and able to influence the service they receive. In order to do this, we recognise the need to 'reach out' to the 'silent majority of residents many of whom might not involve themselves in commenting on our services. Key to the success of the strategy will be Croydon's ability to measure:

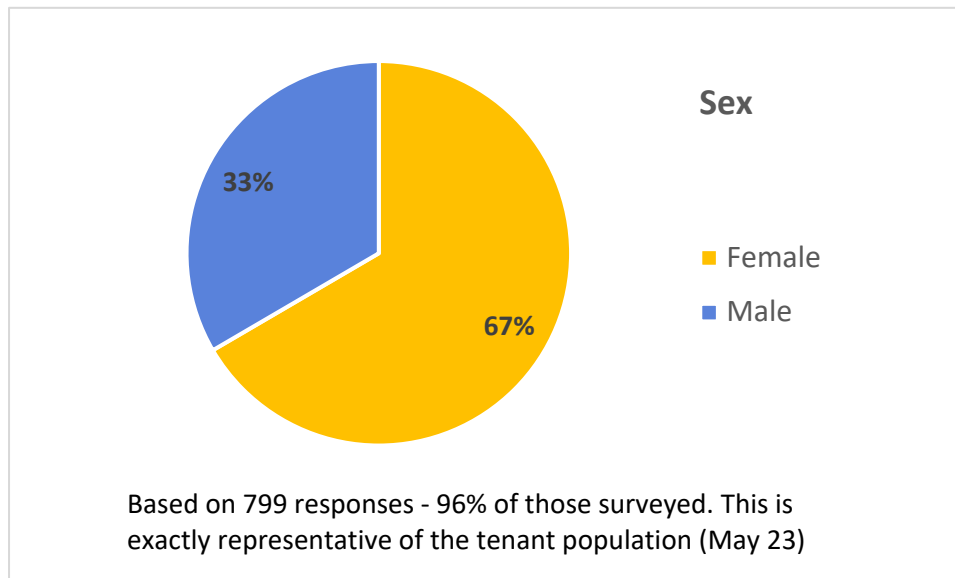
- How residents feel there are genuine opportunities to get involved
- How residents feel they are listened
- How residents feel they influence decisions

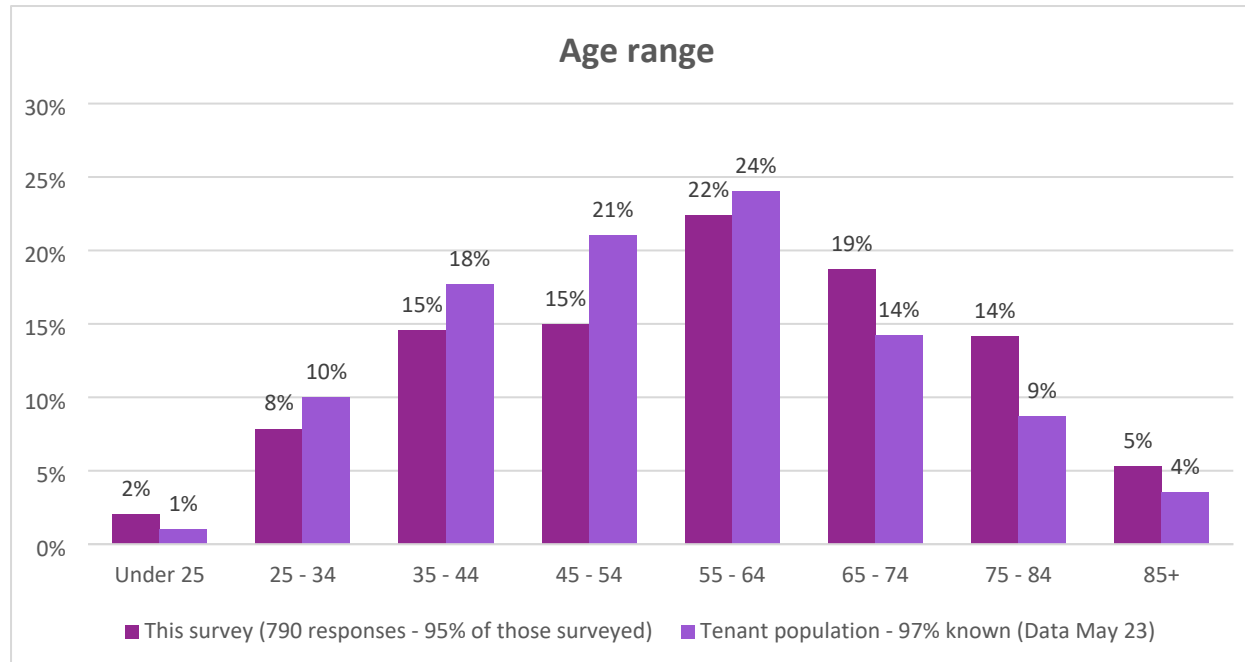
Key to achieving this, will be housing’s ability to use our data to reach out to as many residents as possible as well as tailoring the way we consult with residents to ensure they are able to make a contribution.

Breakdown of those responding to the Resident Survey

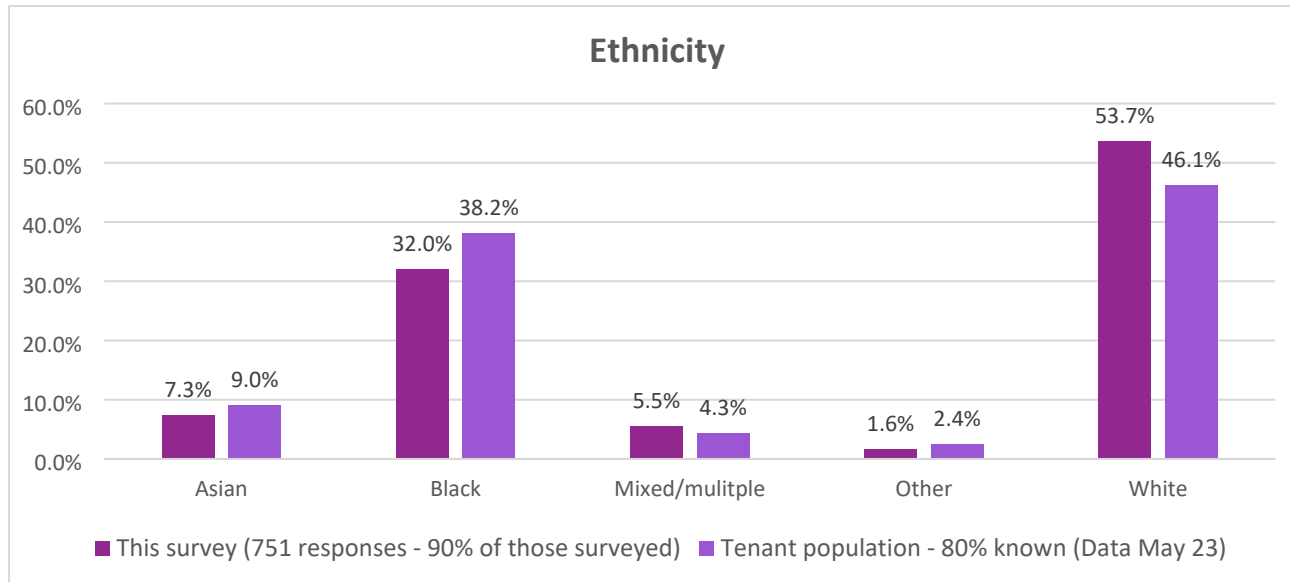
Breakdown by Gender

The table illustrates that man are less likely to be involved in commenting on the service although the table below suggests that the likelihood of participation increases with age.





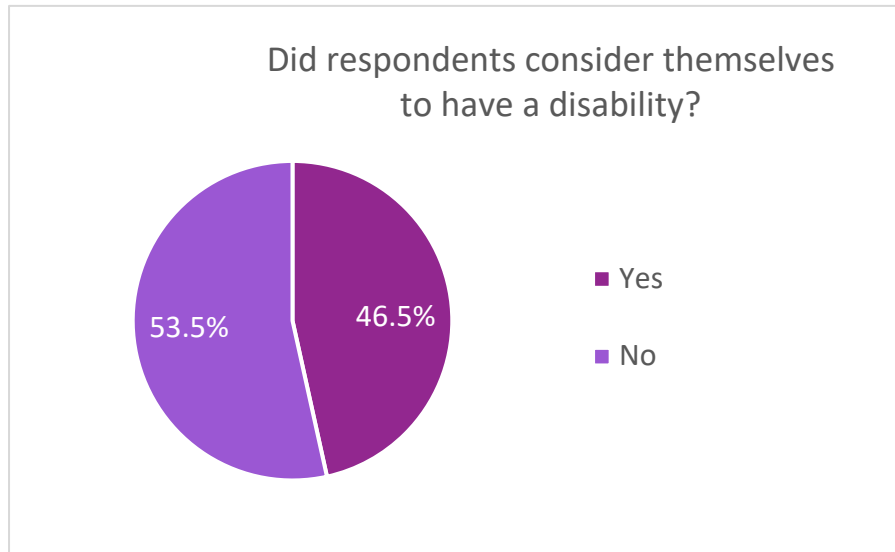
This confirms that participation in Resident Engagement tends to increase with age and that low participation amongst the young, a problem experienced across social housing is prevalent in Croydon. To engage the young and seek their views might necessitate alternative methodologies. The Council will work with Residents to develop ways in which we can involve young people



Detailed breakdown by ethnicity

How would you describe your ethnic origin?		
White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	364	48.5%
White Irish	18	2.4%
White Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	0.0%
Any other White background	21	2.8%
White and Black Caribbean	17	2.3%
White and Black African	6	0.8%
White and Asian	4	0.5%
Any other Mixed / multiple ethnic background	14	1.9%
Indian	18	2.4%
Pakistani	16	2.1%
Bangladeshi	4	0.5%
Chinese	1	0.1%
Any other Asian background	16	2.1%
Black African	94	12.5%
Black Caribbean	124	16.5%
Any other Black background	22	2.9%
Arab	1	0.1%
Other (please specify)	11	1.5%
	90%	751
		100.0%
Prefer not to say	81	
Grand Total	832	

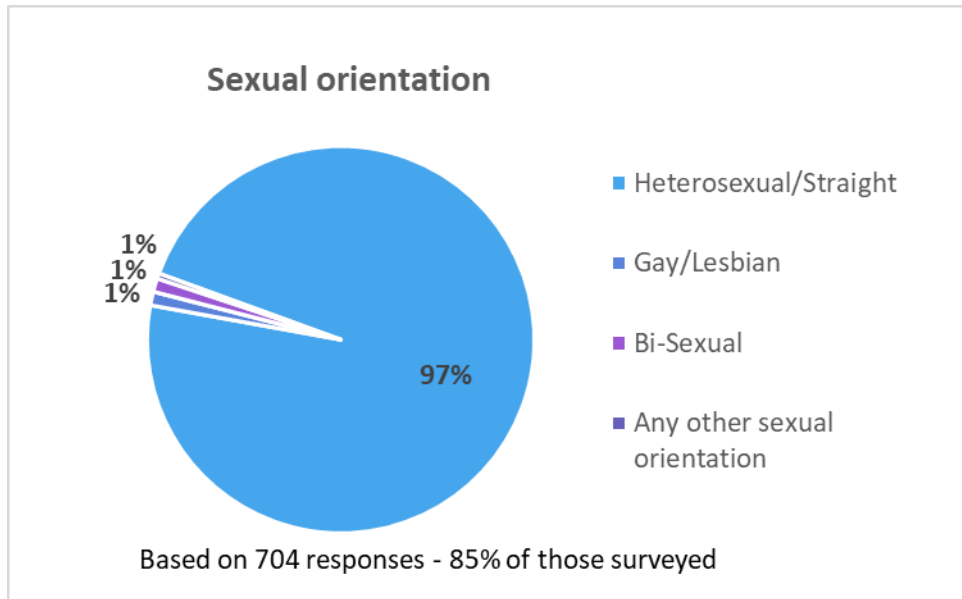
The table reveals that Black residents may be more disinclined to involve themselves in engagement activities. However, the BME profile in Croydon and across London is younger than the White ULK population. Thus, a pattern should emerge of greater participation amongst the Black and Asian community as the age profile rises.



This figure shows a high level of residents declaring a disability and is closely connected with age profile. The challenge for the Council is to tailor our services to the particular and differing needs of these communities and increasing the knowledge we hold of these groups. For instances, we need to be better informed about the following;

- What is the perception of our services held by residents with hearing or visual impairments.?*
- With regards to mobility, what do residents receiving adaptations think about our services?*
- What about the services we provide to those with mental health difficulties?*

The Councils accepts that the term disabled represents a wide diaspora and will work with residents to develop means of communicating that are suitable for each group.



4 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HOMES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.1 The Homes Sub-Committee recommends that ward members be invited to consultation events with residents.

