



**WE LISTEN,
LEARN AND ACT**

Introduction



Each year we undertake an assessment of our performance and the difference we're making in our communities. We assess our performance under four themes which were jointly developed by our customers and staff. These are:

- ▶ **Creating Sustainable Communities**
- ▶ **Homes and Services**
- ▶ **Our Business**
- ▶ **Listen, Learn and Act**

Each theme has four local outcomes, they describe the impact we want our work to have.

This storyboard focuses on the four local outcomes that demonstrate that We Listen, Learn and Act, these are:



Our Academy, a group of our tenants and associate members, have worked with us to review the outcomes of this area of our work and have scored Listen, Learn and Act against each of our local outcomes.

Customers have a choice



Summary

We ensure our customers have a choice in a number of different ways, for example, through the ways in which they can contact us or the way in which they can apply for one of our homes. We ensure that there are a number of ways for tenants to pay their rent so that tenants are able choose a method that suits their needs.

Customers can contact us

Tai Tarian's head office is at Ty Gwyn, which provides a customer contact centre for all services to tenants and leaseholders. We also continue to deliver our services to tenants via our town centre offices in Neath and Port Talbot.

Neath
23 Windsor Road
Neath
SA11 1NB
9am - 4pm
Monday - Friday

Port Talbot
6 Forge Road
Port Talbot
SA13 1NU
9am - 4pm
Monday - Friday

There are a number of other ways that our customers can get in contact with us.



We have a general enquires telephone line which is open Monday to Friday (8.30am to 5pm)

Customers are able to report a repair to our dedicated repairs line - **0300 777 3000**

8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and a 24 hours emergency service is also in operation.

Applying for our properties

Prospective tenants can apply for a new home online by completing an expression of interest form. Those who do not have access to the internet, or require help, can either call into one of our offices to apply or contact us via the phone. Staff will then complete an Expression of interest form on their behalf.

2,408
Total Expressions of Interest submitted from 20th April 2018 – 5th November 2018

All applicants will have their needs assessment prior to being able to apply for one of our homes. These assessments are generally completed over the phone as this is the quickest and most convenient way for our customers but we also have the following options available to customers should they prefer:



Home visit

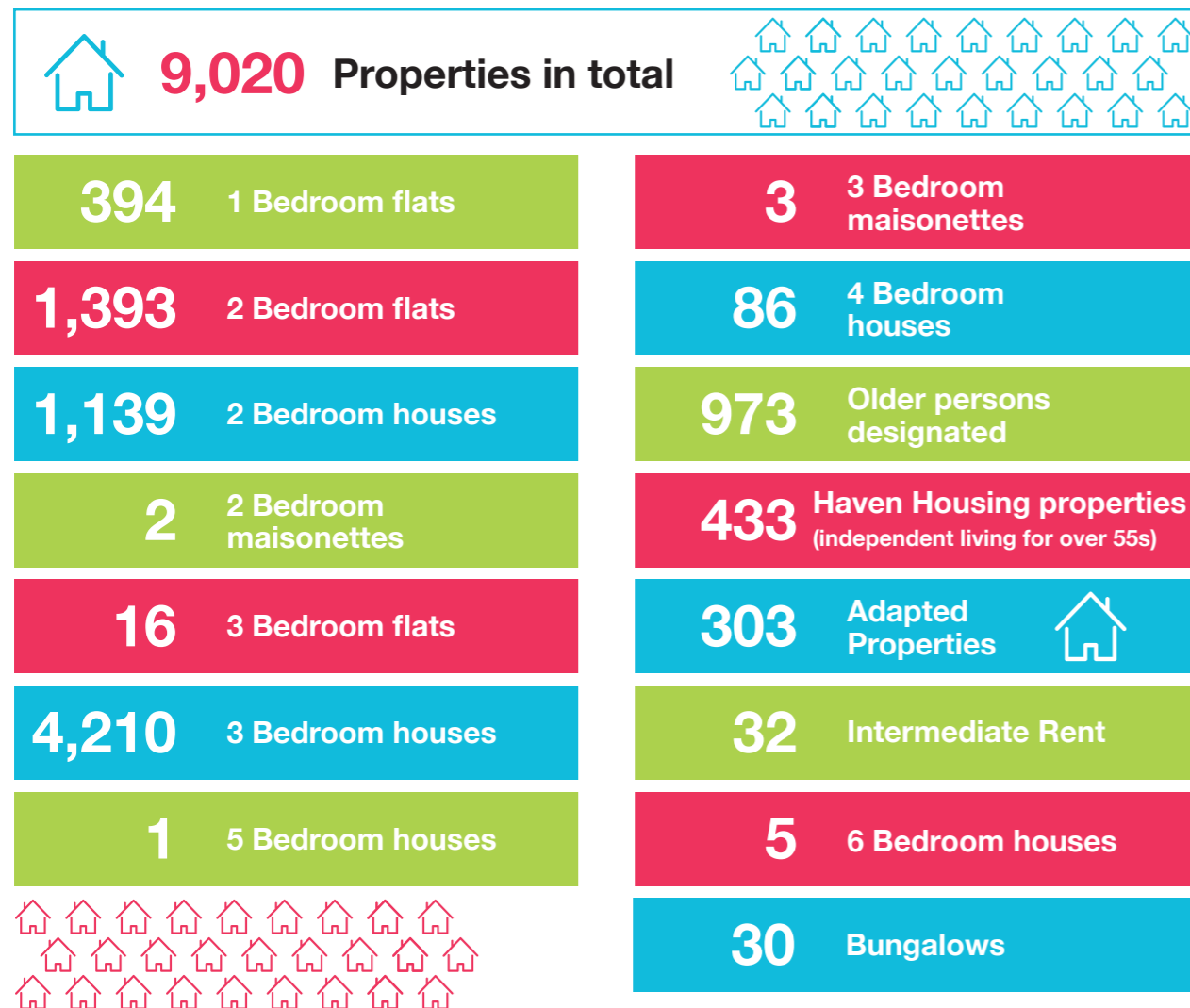


Office assessment

Help with bidding

Properties available for rent are advertised on a weekly basis on our website. We have a "choice based" lettings process and applicants are able to 'bid' on properties which suit their needs.

See below the choice of properties we currently provide:



We also have plans to build new homes and buy existing properties to provide prospective tenants with a larger choice of homes to suit their needs.

Making rent payments

To help make paying rent and service charges that little bit easier for our tenants, there are many different ways tenants can make a payment.

- ▶ Direct debit
- ▶ Online
- ▶ By Telephone
- ▶ Payment at our offices
- ▶ Payment at local shops
- ▶ Payment at any post office

Using their payment card tenants are able to make payments to their rent account 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Tenants can also make a payment at 82 shops across Neath Port Talbot offering the PayPoint service.

These shops are easily identified with the PayPoint symbol:



Tai Tarian has made paying by direct debit more flexible for tenants. Historically there was only one payment date offered on the same day of the month for all of our tenants. This was not very flexible for people who were paid on different days of the month or were paid on a weekly basis.

Over the last few years we've increased the options available for tenants and currently offer direct debit frequencies with a view to providing a suitable option to all those who wish to pay by this method:

- ▶ Weekly
- ▶ Monthly
- ▶ Fortnightly
- ▶ Four Weekly

Monthly direct debits are now offered on any day of the month depending on what best suits the needs of tenants.

There are currently **2,241** tenants paying their rent via direct debit, of which:

1,499 pay monthly

73 pay 4 weekly

165 pay fortnightly

504 pay weekly

Since April 2018

30% increase in tenants wishing to pay weekly

42% increase in tenants paying fortnightly

16% increase in tenants paying 4 weekly



Accessing Financial Inclusion and Universal Credit services

In order to provide tenants with money advice or help with benefits we have a financial inclusion and universal credit team. We give tenants the option on how they access the service and the chart below shows the breakdown of the different ways tenants may access the service.

In the past year we have completed:

1,186 Home visits 

703 Office Appointments

1,505 Telephone appointments 

Providing tenants with a choice in how they contact the teams is essential to ensure we can provide the help and support they require.

Major Works - kitchens, bathrooms

Through our major works programme tenants are able to choose which kitchen and bathrooms they would like in their home.



Customers have a choice of:

5 different kitchen styles

4 different bathroom tile choices

3 different types of bathroom flooring



We act on our customer's feedback and are committed to continuously improving our services

Summary

The feedback we receive is essential to understanding how we are performing and where we need to improve. We have a number of different survey methods in order to capture feedback from our tenants, around services in general as well as specific service areas, for example, repairs, anti-social behaviour etc.

Surveys are undertaken to actively seek honest feedback from all our tenants, valuing their opinion and striving to change and improve service delivery.

Our repairs and maintenance surveys ask a series of questions:

- ▶ How well did we communicate with you before and during our visit to your home?
- ▶ Did we treat you with respect at all times?
- ▶ Were we clean and tidy?
- ▶ Did we meet your individual needs?
- ▶ Did we listen to you?
- ▶ Were you happy with the work we completed?

Each element of the service is rated with the following:

- ▶ Very Good
- ▶ Good
- ▶ Poor
- ▶ Unacceptable

The survey includes the option to give further comments and feedback



Tenant satisfaction is measure in all aspects of the repairs and maintenance works completed by our contractors:

- ▶ Kitchen Installation and improvements
- ▶ Bathroom installation and improvements
- ▶ Electrical Rewires
- ▶ Heating Installation and service
- ▶ Communal upgrades to flats
- ▶ All Haven Housing improvement work



We meet with our contractors and report on any issues and compliments that have been raised by tenants. The contractors use this information to consider improvements to their service. We monitor this whilst on site to ensure the improvements are being made.

The surveys are also carried out on all aspects of repairs and maintenance work that is carried out daily by our own trades staff.

3,000 repair jobs on average undertaken per month 

67% response rate from surveys 

99% tenant satisfaction with the most recent repair to their home 

Where a tenant has expressed dissatisfaction, a follow up call is made so we can fully understand what they were unhappy with:



Due to the valuable feedback we receive from the tenant satisfaction surveys, we are planning to use the survey for other services in the organisation, including; starting a tenancy, managing a tenancy and ending a tenancy.

Compliments and Complaints

Although we actively seek feedback to improve services, unfortunately there are still occasions when we get things wrong.

Our complaints service has been developed around the feedback we

received from our tenants on what is important to them when using the service. These are:

- ▶ Response within a reasonable time scale
- ▶ Easy to make a complaint/compliment
- ▶ Single point of contact
- ▶ Method of communication that suits them
- ▶ Provide an outcome and explain our decisions



Our dedicated Customer Liaison Officer ensures that all feedback is dealt with in a professional and timely manner and all staff are fully aware of the complaints process. We also have a designated page on our website which explains how tenants can raise their concerns with us through an interactive flowchart which provides a clear route for tenants to raise concerns including all stages of the complaints process.

From January to October 2018:

- 118** Informal Complaints
- 8** Stage One Complaints
- 5** Stage Two Complaints
- 2** Ombudsman Complaints

The information we collate from complaints is regularly reviewed by managers for the service area to ensure we are continuously improving on services for our tenants.

The number of complaints we receive is steadily going down.




From January to December 2018 our compliments have outnumbered our complaints.



We also learn from the compliments we receive as it shows what good practice looks like.

Our Board member, Sam, has been contacting tenants who have used our complaints service to see how we have been doing.

On 2018 an independent audit was carried out on the complaints service and it was given a 'substantial assurance' rating, this is the highest rating that can be given. 

We understand our customers and deliver services that meet their needs



Summary

Understanding our customers and delivering services that meet their needs is part of our culture. Our approach to reviewing processes and driving continuous improvement is based on what matters to our tenants. We have a Change Management team who embed this ethos across the organisation.

Our Change Management team review our current processes based on four elements:

- 1 **Act on Demand** - by understanding the service the customer requires
- 2 **Define a Purpose** - for our services based on “what matters” to customers
- 3 **Measuring** - the ability to respond to customer requirements
- 4 **Map the whole process** - to identify the work which directly helps us achieve purpose from the customers’ point of view

The team has completed a number of reviews within the organisation including:

- ▶ Repair service
- ▶ Rent arrears
- ▶ Contact centre
- ▶ Housing applications
- ▶ Universal credit

Our Change Management team and Housing Department worked together to look at two key areas, the way we collect rent arrears and how to introduce the new Universal Credit system.

Previously, Housing Officers found that the majority of their time was focused on dealing with cases that had the highest level of arrears. This meant that the process was reactive and Housing Officers were dealing with complex issues.

Working with Change Management, the team applied the four elements, mentioned previously, to review the process and found that working with the cases with lower arrears allowed them to deal with issues whilst they were still at a manageable level. This ensured our tenants received the right support at the right time.

The same approach was taken with the introduction of Universal Credit cases where help and support is provided from the early stages of their Universal Credit claim, as tenants can wait several weeks to receive their first Universal Credit payment.

This proactive approach to tenancy management ensures that tenants have the help they need to remain in their homes.

Property Adaptations

Our housing adaptations team provide adaptations for tenants who have health issues and require additional support in their home. They meet with tenants in their home to discuss and understand their needs and provide adaptations where possible to ensure that our tenants are able to remain in their home as long as possible.

Assessments for smaller adaptation requests are carried out by our own staff who are ‘trusted assessors’. They have been specifically trained to assess customers’ requirements and arrange for adaptations to be completed.

Assessments for larger adaptations are carried out by the community occupational therapist to ensure that we have a full understanding of our customers’ needs. They make recommendations for the type of adaptations required which are carried out by us.

Since April 2018 we have carried out:

248 Trusted Assessor inspections and provided the adaptations the tenant required

121 Adaptations that were requested via the community occupational therapist

One tenant's story:

We were contacted by a 45 year old tenant who was struggling to get up and down the staircase to get access to their bedroom and shower room which are on the first floor.

One of our Trusted Assessors visited the property and noted that the tenant had a health condition which made it difficult for them to go up and down the stairs unaided.

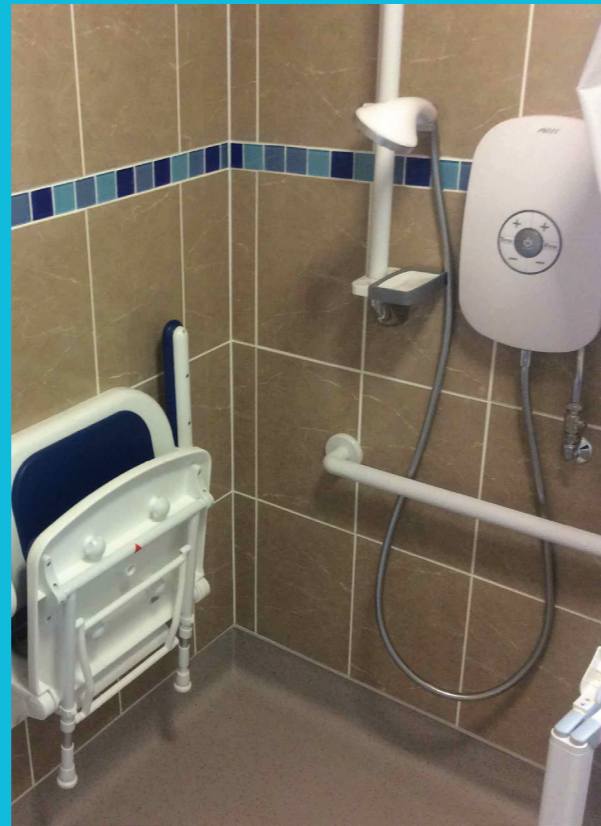
We arranged to install an additional specialist handrail to the staircase which has given the tenant additional support when getting up and down the staircase.



One tenant's story:

A disabled tenant contacted the Gateway (NPTCBC access to adult services) to inform them that, due to their medical condition, they were struggling to get to the first floor bathroom and also to get into the bath.

Following an assessment we received recommendations from the local authority for a ground floor shower room which would allow the tenant to continue sleeping on the ground floor without having to go up the stairs to get to bathing facilities. We converted the existing external outhouse and toilet to enable the tenant to access the shower room via the internal hallway. This enabled the tenant to be safe and independent at home.



“ ”

Because both my husband and I are disabled, we were both so pleased with the kind attitude of the workmen. Also, they were very patient with me.

The standard of work was very good and they were sure to clean where they had worked. We would not hesitate to contact Tai Tarian should we need further help. Thank you

“ ”

I am extremely grateful to Tai Tarian for carrying out this adaptation and also the others I applied for.

It helps me immensely and also eases the burden for my family who had deep concerns for my safety with regards to falling. THANK YOU



Feedback from tenants



Financial Inclusion and Universal Credit team

The Financial Inclusion and Universal Credit team supports tenants who are struggling with their finances and managing their rent accounts under Universal Credit. During the past 12 months the needs of our tenants have changed because of the impact of the changes to benefits and the affect of Universal credit. We have adapted the service the financial inclusion and universal credit team provide to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of our customers.

Financial Inclusion

The Financial Inclusion team supports tenants to maximise their income, claiming benefits and appeal decisions, support and advice on budgeting, providing digital support and signposting for debt advice, where appropriate.

Tenants may access this service through self-referrals, from other partner agencies or from referrals from colleagues across the organisation.

From January to November 2018 our financial inclusion and universal credit teams have supported tenants with the following:

766 tenants with benefit awards

£2,212,428.39 money raised

154 tenants with digital support

214 food bank vouchers issued

27 Discretionary Assistant Fund emergency payments

Universal Credit (UC)

The Universal Credit team offer an initial contact service where every new or existing tenant needing to claim Universal Credit as a result of a change of circumstances is offered support, where needed.

769 tenants new to UC were contacted

429 had initial support and requested further support

7 required no support

333 had no initial support

The type of support offered ranges from a clear understanding of rent obligations to benefit advice and support depending on what the tenant needs and this support is available to tenants at any time of the UC claim.

Part of the initial support provided by Universal Credit team involves advising tenants of the ability to take an advanced payment of their first UC award. The advance payment includes housing costs and would enable tenants to make payments towards their rent and prevent them from falling in to debt whilst they waiting for their first universal credit payment.

73%

Of the tenants that took the full advanced payment paid their rent in full.

13%

Of the tenants that only took the partial advanced payment paid their rent in full.

One tenant's story:

Following a move to one of our properties, one tenant had mental health problems and was in receipt of Personal Independence Payment (PIP). To get help with their rent they claimed Universal Credit (UC).

Due to the tenant's vulnerabilities Tai Tarian applied to have the housing costs paid directly to the tenant's rent account. However, the first payment received was only £35 for the entire month which did not cover the full rental payment. This meant the tenant's rent arrears rose significantly. We contacted the UC service centre immediately to find out about the delay in payments and they advised that they were waiting for confirmation of the tenant's income and would then be able to pay the extra element.

During the next few weeks the arrears rose rapidly and were approaching £1,000. The tenant was at risk of losing their home, they were aware of this and



their mental health deteriorated. The tenant contacted us and said they could not cope with being in debt and needed help. A member of the Universal Credit team visited the tenant and phoned the UC Service Centre. Initially they advised that the tenant would have to undergo a new assessment and that the tenant would not receive the full entitlement. We queried this and were then advised that the tenant would have the full entitlement back dated to the start of the claim!

Within a few weeks the full housing costs were received by Tai Tarian, clearing the rent arrears.

Without the help and support of the Universal Credit team the outcome for the tenant could have been very different.

The Financial Inclusion and Universal Credit team proactively seek feedback from tenants who have received a service.

An average score of **9/10**

53 feedback surveys completed during the period Jan to Nov 2018



“

100% satisfied, the whole team couldn't do better, the whole time I've been burying my head in the sand but when I got a call from your team you made me feel valued and that you could help me and get my-life back on track.

”

“

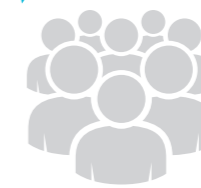
Brilliant, excellent, fantastic. If it wasn't for you guys I wouldn't be here now.

”

“

another credit to Tai Tarian, she was nice and kind to me, anything she did and said was good, she explained all very clearly to me fully

”



Feedback from tenants

“

both are an asset to Tai Tarian and you should hold on to them both and I want to commend them and give them a pat on the back

”

“

He's always been absolutely marvellous when I speak with him on the phone, even sending me a foodbank voucher, he is a credit to Tai Tarian, helpful, compassionate – just amazing

”

Pre-tenancy work Affordability checks

To ensure homes we allocate meet the needs of our new tenants we also work closely with our applicants. Prior to being offered a tenancy all applicants undertake an affordability assessment by the Lettings team. Applicants who require a more detailed affordability check are referred to the Financial Inclusion team for specialist benefit and budgeting assessments. This part of pre-tenancy work has increased over the last year which highlights the needs of our tenants.

In 2017/2018 the monthly average was **21 assessments a month**

In 2018/2019 the monthly average is **52 assessments a month.**

During the application assessment further referrals are completed depending on the needs of the customers.

In the last 12 months we have completed: 312 Occupational Therapist referrals. These were completed to ensure that the property which we are allocating met the needs of the applicant.

298 Intensive Housing Management referrals

18 referrals were for resettlement support when a customer moves in to a new property.

123 cases are still receiving ongoing support



The intensive housing management team provides support to tenants where there are serious or multiple tenancy breaches, where there are concerns around hoarding which would affect the tenant's safety or where there is limited ability to complete tasks required to maintain the tenancy.

Our Members are able to influence decisions and shape our services

Summary

There are many ways that individuals can become involved with Tai Tarian and these opportunities pave the way for volunteers to become members. Different levels of involvement are available to help members decide what level of engagement they feel happy with.



Our volunteers make use of their hobbies and skills with Tai Tarian, for example, craft items for our Annual General Members Meeting (AGM), gardening competitions and cake baking.



Our tenant assessors monitor and improve standards of the services we deliver.



Task and Finish groups

These are groups where tenants and members can be involved in specific areas of work usually for policy consultations or short term projects, ideal for those interested in a specific topic. These provide great opportunities for tenants to have a more in depth understanding of Tai Tarian and lead to becoming members of our Academy.

Tenant Empowerment Team

Our Tenant Empowerment Team engage with many of our members at various events.

An example of this can be seen with the Community Challenges which follow the external programme of works with the aim of facilitating the development of habitats and encouraging the migration of bees through the plantation of native plants and other environmental initiatives along identified 'bee-lines'.

A co-design approach is undertaken to each 'challenge' and takes place on land that is owned by Tai Tarian and is, perhaps, problematic (e.g. focus of anti-social behaviour, littering etc.) and would

benefit from being returned to nature. In Croeserw, all stakeholders met with a view to identifying which parcel(s) of land were suitable and to develop a creative solution. The co-design events are an opportunity to find out what tenants like and don't like about their open spaces.

One of our members who lived in the area was integral to the feasibility of the projects and fully understood what would work and what would not. Their involvement, along with other key stakeholders, influenced how this challenge progressed.

The Tenant Empowerment Team worked closely with the community by getting

involved in community litter picks, delivering bee hotel making workshops to Croeserw Primary school and working with individuals and community groups to set up projects for land.

Volunteer Celebration Event 18

National Volunteers week was held in June. The celebration event recognised volunteers who have contributed to their community and were awarded a certificate of recognition for their time, over afternoon tea. Two of our more involved groups, the Academy and Haven Social group, were nominated for a recognition award at the CVS Volunteer event.





Rent Increase Workshop

The Rent Increase Task and Finish group met to edit and approve the service charge leaflet before they were issued to tenants.



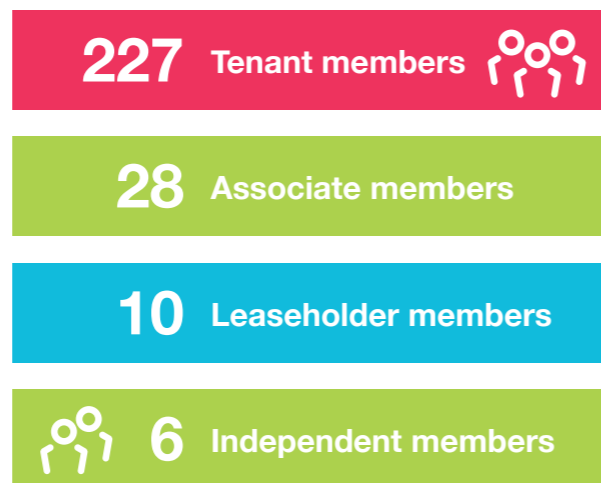
All of our tenant participation events create opportunities and build relationships leading to tenants becoming members of Tai Tarian. Of the above events, 3 tenants have since become members of the organisation.

Benefits to membership:

- ▶ Vote on key decisions at the AGM
- ▶ Regular feedback
- ▶ Range of opportunities to get involved in their local area
- ▶ Take part in Member Surveys
- ▶ Meet other members
- ▶ Join the Board



Currently we have:



Academy

Our Academy are an experienced group of members who meet throughout the year to assess the evidence for our Making a Difference Storyboards. They score us on how we are performing and analyse potential gaps in our performance in each of the local outcomes. The work they undertake is invaluable in providing feedback on where we need to improve.

Together we develop an Action Plan which is included in every Storyboard and the Storyboards are reported to our Board for approval, before being added to our website for all tenants to see.

Annual General Meeting

All members are invited to attend our Annual General Meetings (AGM) when they have the opportunity to express their views and to vote on key decisions. The AGM is also an opportunity to learn more about the different business areas and to speak with members of staff.

Special General Meeting

Special General Meetings (SGM) are called for a specific reason where a decision is required from our members. A SGM was called in November to change our Rules following recent legislation. All members were sent a pack to explain why the meeting was called and included information detailing the item they were asked to vote on. For those who were not able to attend the SGM, a voting slip was included in the pack, so they could have their say.

44 Members voted at the November 2018 Special General Meeting

We also have on our Board tenants who make strategic decisions and guide the overall strategic direction of the organisation.



Denise Davies
Board member



Sam Jones
Board member



Action Plan

Ensure that tenants are given time to complete the tenant satisfaction survey without staff members being present.

Communication to tenants on services we provide and also other services within their communities.

Explore feasibility of involving members in key decisions.





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