

## 2.3 Monitoring and evaluating tenant participation

Tenant participation is an ongoing and evolving process that will lead to benefits for tenants, landlords and local communities. Monitoring and evaluating tenant participation is important to find out if agreed objectives have been met, to recognise which activities are working well and those which are not so effective and to adapt participation structures to meet changing circumstances and priorities.

Monitoring and evaluation is however the least developed area of tenant participation. This section of the guide therefore provides the basis of an approach that landlords and tenants can use to develop their monitoring and evaluation processes. It is important that landlords and tenants experiment to find ways of evaluating participation that are realistic, practical and focus on the outcomes that matter the most to those involved.

### What is monitoring and evaluation?

**Monitoring** enables landlords and tenants to check progress in implementing their tenant participation strategy as it develops and evolves.

**Evaluation** enables landlords and tenants to measure the effectiveness of the tenant participation strategy by assessing the success of the outcomes of tenant participation.

Although the nature of monitoring and evaluation may itself change over time it is important that there is sufficient consistency to enable progress to be measured.

### Planning for monitoring and evaluation

Landlords and tenants should be involved in developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks and this should be detailed in the tenant participation strategy. Development should involve tenants' representatives, other tenants, staff at all levels, elected and committee members and in some cases local agencies and organisations.

It is important to focus monitoring and evaluation on issues that are important to the participants involved and to be realistic about the time and resources that are required for monitoring and evaluation.

A checklist to help you plan for monitoring and evaluation is provided in section 3.2.

## What do you monitor and evaluate?

The evaluation of tenant participation can be complex, as many of the outcomes cannot be measured simply in terms of numbers or financial figures. The views, opinions and perceptions of tenants and staff all need to be taken into account to assess the level of influence tenants have had, and whether this has resulted in an improvement in housing policy and standards.

Before jumping into monitoring and evaluation be clear what the aims and objectives of tenant participation for your organisation and local area are.

For example they could be:

- an improvement in housing services and standards;
- an increase in tenant involvement in decision making;
- increased tenant satisfaction with housing services, standards and living conditions;
- promoting tenant participation among equalities groups;
- improved communication and better working relationships between tenants, staff, elected members and committee members.

## Options for measuring tenant participation

In evaluating tenant participation, local performance indicators should be developed and examined under the following categories: inputs, outputs and outcomes.

Measure inputs by examining:

- staff time;
- budget to support tenant participation;
- premises available to tenant groups and representatives;
- office facilities available to tenant groups, for instance, photocopying, mail, IT;
- support to attend meetings, for instance, transport, crèches, out of pocket expenses;
- provision of information, including leaflets and newsletters;
- training for staff, tenants and governing body;
- type of training available to tenants, staff and governing body;
- access to independent advice.

Measure outputs by examining:

- areas that tenants have influenced, such as policy development;
- range of decisions in which tenants are involved;
- variety of tenant participation structures and mechanisms;
- actual and committed expenditure on tenant participation compared with budget provision;
- representation of tenant group membership, for instance, area coverage, age, gender, ethnicity, and how this has changed over time;
- number of registered and non-registered groups as a proportion of housing stock and how this has changed over time;
- number of individuals participating as a proportion of housing stock;

- number, variety and frequency of different methods of communication and engagement;
- number of tenants and staff receiving training;
- percentage of tenants responding to consultation.

Measure outcomes by examining:

- the influence tenants have had in decision-making;
- increase in tenants' ability to get involved;
- improvements in housing services due to more effective contribution by tenants;
- increases in representation of tenants in the local community;
- views of tenants, staff and governing body members about the difference tenant participation has made; and
- success in reaching new people.

These measures should not be viewed in isolation but as part of a package for assessing the impact and effectiveness of tenant participation. Tenant participation develops differently in different areas and depends on local circumstances, and practices will change over time. Before trying to measure the success of tenant participation in your area be clear about what success would look like in your area and base your evaluation on that model.

