

TENANT COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2025/2027



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TENANT COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

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FOREWORD

“Together, we can continue to build on the momentum of our past successes and look forward to the positive impact we will create through our ongoing commitment to our tenants and tenant engagement.”

CEO STATEMENT - JOHN HANNIGAN

I am incredibly proud to reflect on the successes of our previous Tenant Communication and Engagement Strategy, which has paved the way for meaningful partnerships and positive outcomes within our community. Through the dedication and collective effort of our tenants and staff, we have fostered a culture of collaboration, innovation, and inclusivity. Together, we have made significant strides in creating vibrant and supportive environments where every voice is heard and valued.

As we launch our new Tenant Communication and Engagement Strategy, we are building upon these successes with renewed commitment and ambition, bringing our values of WE HEAR in support of our tenants and our staff teams. This strategy aligns seamlessly with our overall business strategy, reinforcing our shared goals of sustainability, growth, culture and communication and continuous improvement. We believe that engaged tenants are key to our long-term success, and through this renewed focus, we will continue to strengthen relationships, enhance services, and empower tenants to play an active role in shaping their communities and Circle Voluntary Housing Association (VHA).

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate the incredible hard work of both our tenants and our staff. Your dedication and contributions are what make these achievements possible, and I am excited

about the continued collaboration and progress we will make together. This strategy represents not just a set of goals, but a shared commitment to ensuring that every tenant feels supported, valued, and empowered.

Together, we can continue to build on the momentum of our past successes and look forward to the positive impact we will create through our ongoing commitment to our tenants and tenant engagement.”

John Hannigan, CEO, Circle VHA

CHAIRPERSON STATEMENT - GEMMA KAVANAGH

I am proud to highlight the vital role that tenant voices play in shaping our community. Tenants’ perspectives are integral to our decision-making process, ensuring that our housing and services reflect the needs and aspirations of those we serve.

The success of the previous Tenant Communication and Engagement Strategy stands as a testament to the dedication and involvement of our tenants. Congratulations on these achievements! I am excited about the continued opportunity for tenants to be actively involved and work towards becoming Circle VHA Board members. Your input remains invaluable as we continue to work together to create a more inclusive and responsive environment for all. Let’s keep building on these successes together.

Gemma Kavanagh, Chairperson, Circle VHA



INTRODUCTION FROM THE WORKING GROUP

Welcome to our second Tenant Communication and Engagement Strategy (TCES). This document was created by tenants and staff together over the last few months. We have come a long way since we launched our first strategy in November 2021.

This document aims to:

- tell you what we have learned along the way;
- reflect your ideas and views on how we continue to work together;
- map and guide us on our future journey.

As always, we invite you to get involved in a way that suits you best. You can:

- take part in a survey;
- attend events; or
- join the Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) or tenant-led groups.


It is only by working together that we can make changes and adapt services to best meet the needs of all tenants.

OUR THANKS

We would like to thank all the tenants and staff who took part in feedback surveys. We’d also like to thank the Tenant Advisory Group, the Tenant First Link committee and our board, who provided feedback and approval throughout the development of this strategy.


In the words of the famous activist Helen Keller, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

Image 1: TAG members and TAG Chairperson pictured at Dublin Castle following a TAG meeting.



85%
OVERALL QUALITY OF OUR HOME

TENANT SURVEY
85% satisfaction rate with the overall quality of the home provided by Circle.



92%
CIRCLE REPAIRS SERVICE

TENANT SURVEY
92% satisfaction rate with the overall quality of repairs provided by Circle.

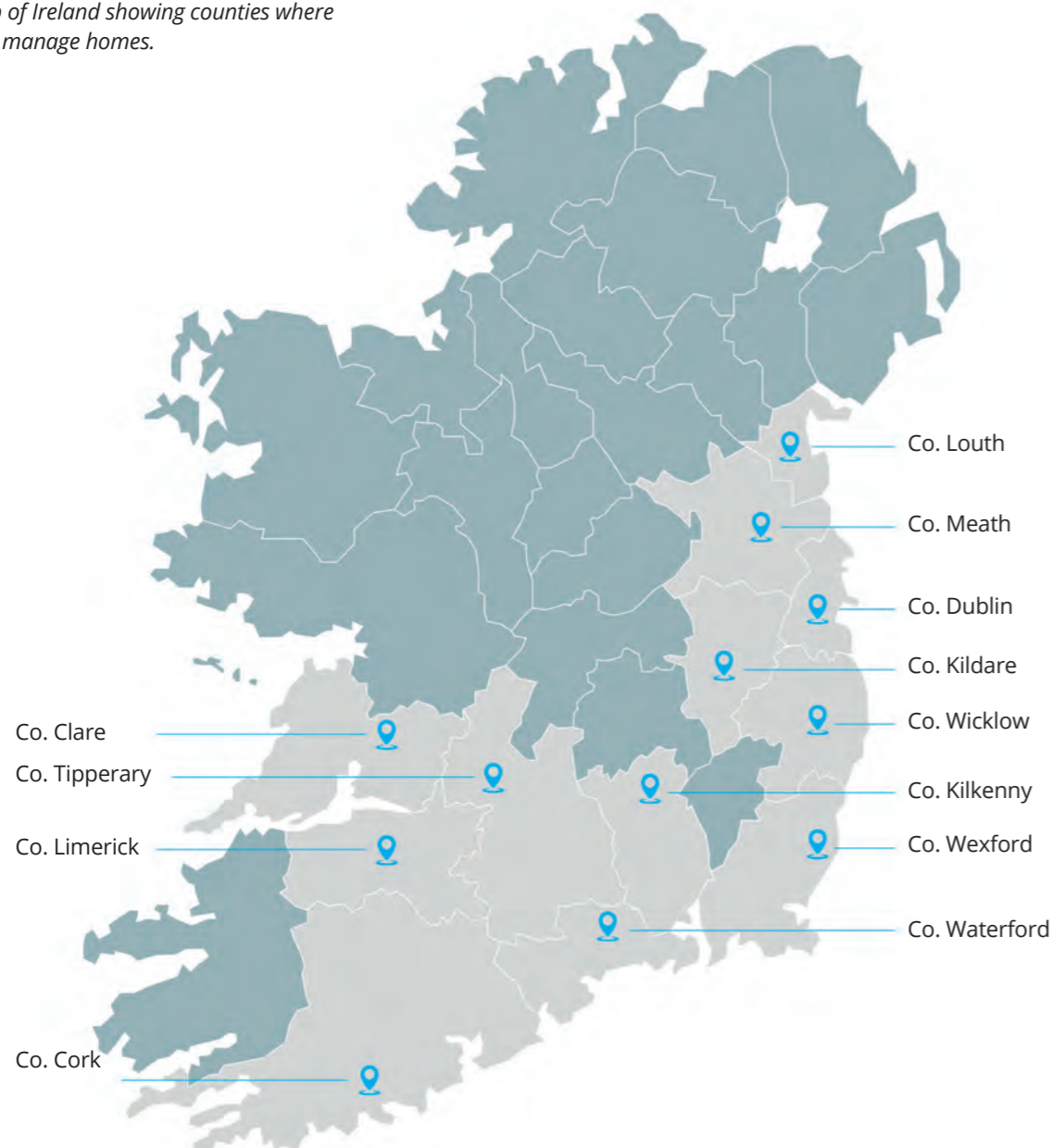
SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT CIRCLE VOLUNTARY HOUSING ASSOCIATION (VHA)

Circle VHA owns and manages 1,825 homes nationally across Ireland. We also provide estate management services to 1,902 homes. These services include grass cutting of green areas in estates, the cleaning of shared spaces and waste collection.

Image 2: Map of Ireland showing counties where Circle own or manage homes.



Below we show you the numbers of homes by county managed by Circle VHA. You can see most homes are in Co. Dublin and we manage the fewest homes in Co Kilkenny (4 homes).

Most of the homes we let are social housing. However, we do provide 86 homes though cost rental in Limerick (57) and in Dublin (29).

COUNTY	NUMBERS OF HOMES BY COUNTY MANAGED BY CIRCLE VHA
Co. Dublin	1,345
Co. Limerick	132
Co. Waterford	116
Co. Cork	50
Co. Wicklow	49
Co. Kildare	48
Co. Wexford	36
Co. Clare	16
Co. Louth	16
Co. Meath	8
Co. Tipperary	5
Co. Kilkenny	4

Image 3: Number of homes by county managed by Circle VHA.

Circle	YEAR	2021	2022	2023	2024
Homes Owned And Leased		1,429	1,472	1,812	1,825
Homes Provided With Estate Management Services		1,289	1,275	1,580	1,902
Number Of Staff		53	60	61	68

Image 4: Growth in homes and staffing since the last strategy report in 2021.



“Our purpose is to deliver quality homes and innovative integrated housing solutions to both individuals and families throughout Ireland.”

John Hannigan, CEO, Circle VHA

SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

HOW WE MEET APPROVED HOUSING BODY REGULATIONS

There are several laws and government bodies that guide us in our work: The Housing (Regulation of Approved Housing Bodies) Act 2019 allows for the regulation of Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs).

The Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority (AHBRA) regulates AHBs.

The aim of the regulations is to protect housing assets provided or managed by AHBs like Circle VHA.

AHBRA has four standards that AHBs must meet. One of these standards is about Tenancy Management.

As an AHB, we comply with the Tenancy Management Standards. This means, we must:

- show that we have effective tenant services and tenancy management policies and procedures in place;
- provide clear, accessible information which covers:
 - tenants' responsibilities
 - service provision
 - rent collection
 - reporting of landlord performance; and
- provide opportunities for tenant engagement, consultation and feedback.

This Tenant Communication and Engagement Strategy helps us to make sure that we meet the core aspects of the Tenancy Management Standards when we provide homes and services to all tenants.

CIRCLE'S VISION

Circle's vision "is to make a difference by providing quality homes for people in housing need." We firmly believe that how we interact with our tenants, communities, colleagues, and stakeholders is of fundamental importance.

WE HEAR

Our passionate commitment to caring about our tenants and the services we provide has helped us develop our six values. We call our core values WE HEAR.

1. WILLINGNESS

Willingness to embody all our values in a driven manner.

2. EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment of our staff and our tenants.

3. HONESTY

Honesty in everything we do and the information we present.

4. EXCELLENCE

Excellence in the delivery of services and the homes we provide.

5. ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability for all matters relating to excellent governance and delivery of services.

6. RESPECT

Respect towards all those connected to circle in any element of our work.

This new strategy explains how we will continue to invite, listen, learn, act and deliver. We want our tenants' voices and lived experiences to shape the services and future of housing in a constructive way.



SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

NITI-PLAN 27

Niti-Plan 27 is the overall business strategy. It follows from our earlier strategy called Strategy 24.

'Niti' means 'strategy' or 'guiding principle' in Hindi and Sanskrit. Staff suggested names for our strategy. Our management team decided on Niti-Plan 27.

We will continue using names like this for future strategies such as Straitéis-Plan or Стратегія-Plan with 'Straitéis' and 'Стратегія' meaning 'strategy' in Irish and Ukranian, respectively.

Niti-Plan 27 focuses on three core pillars:

Sustainable Growth

To expand our housing stock and to make sure we remain financially stable.

Culture and Communication

To continue to encourage a positive organisational culture and clear communication.

Quality Processes and Systems

To improve how we operate and deliver service.

Tenant focus is not a standalone pillar, but it is evident in all pillars. This makes sure that tenants' voices are heard and acted on in all areas of our services.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The Tenant Engagement team will work with the Communications team to make sure tenant communications are aligned within both the Tenant Communication and Engagement Strategy (TCES) and Communications Strategy.

CELEBRATING THE SUCCESSES

It has been an eventful journey to get to where we are now. The Tenant Advisory Group (TAG), together with the Editorial Panel, IT Focus Group, the Shadow Group and Tenant First Link (TFL) Committee, are very proud of what has been achieved.

We list below some of our many successes:

- Our tenant-approved logo was designed and approved by tenants
- Our tenant handbook and 18 policies were reviewed and approved by tenants
- Training was provided to tenants
- Educational visits
- Documents such as summary guides were approved by TAG
- Our newsletter was revitalised
- Our website was redesigned and we received an award for its accessibility
- The tenant-to-board member process was developed, agreed and put in place
- The TFL committee was developed
- TAG members presented at the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) awards, CIH Conference, All-Ireland Tenant Engagement Conference and staff days
- Tenants were shortlisted for all-Ireland awards
- We appointed dedicated tenant engagement staff
- We presented to Circle's Board of Directors
- We took part in a panel discussion about social impact research

CIRCLE | MORE THAN HOUSING



1,825

TOTAL NUMBER OF HOMES OWNED & LEASED



20+

YEARS STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE



1,902

TOTAL NUMBER OF HOMES PROVIDED WITH ESTATE MANAGEMENT SERVICES



396

NUMBER OF NEW HOMES ACROSS COST RENTAL AND SOCIAL RENTED TENURES



17,429

NUMBER OF CALLS TO CIRCLE SERVICES TEAMS IN 2024



10%

PERCENTAGE OF TENANTS ENGAGED IN OPPORTUNITIES



GALLERY ONE:

TENANT ENGAGEMENT

Below: Thornton Heights Community Clean-up Fun Day. The purpose of the event was to bring staff and tenants together with lots of activities and treats for the children.

Opposite: Tenants and staff at Circle's staff conference at the Islamic Cultural Centre in Clonskeagh.



SECTION TWO

NEW STRATEGY

TENANT ENGAGEMENT STRUCTURE



Our previous tenant engagement structure offered tenants 14 ways to get involved. We continue to review and develop new opportunities based on tenant feedback. All of these opportunities will allow tenants' voices to be heard and their lived experiences to be acted on.

The new structure we propose in this strategy recommends continuing some of the existing groups. We will also:

- create groups for tenants to support each department of the organisation;
- invite tenants to provide insight into how services are provided; and
- make sure that tenants and staff can work together to co-create our services, bringing together their experiences, knowledge and skills.

These groups can also advise on policies and procedures within departments that impact on tenants. Our proposed structures may also offer mentoring opportunities for tenants and support their own development or interests.

Our Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) and Tenant First Link (TFL) Committee will continue their role in leading and overseeing this strategy.

Image 5: Circle tenant pictured in her home in Dunlavin Co. Waterford.



THE TENANT ADVISORY GROUP

The Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) was formed in 2021. Members meet a minimum of six times a year.

They work with Circle to improve how we provide services to tenants. It has always been our aim for a tenant to have a seat at the board table. Making this possible is a huge task and comes with great responsibility.

The TAG has started that journey by providing training and creating our Tenant First Link Committee. We are very close to having a tenant become a board director.

THE TENANT FIRST LINK COMMITTEE

The Tenant First Link (TFL) Committee was proposed and approved by the TAG and the board in December 2023. The TFL comprises five tenant members and two board members, one of whom is the current Chair of the board. They held their first formal meeting in May 2024. They provide views, insight, opinions and recommendations to the board from a tenant's perspective. The committee works to:

- Influence the board's decision-making on key customer-centred issues relating to our responsibilities as a landlord and its commitment to communities.
- Assure the board of the performance of all services provided to our tenants, including asset management and maintenance of homes.
- Enable tenants' voices to shape and continuously improve our homes and services.


90%
 HELPFULNESS OF CIRCLE STAFF
 TENANT SURVEY
 90% of tenants are satisfied with the helpfulness of staff.


80%
 LISTENING AND ACTING
 80% of tenants are satisfied with Circle's ability to listen and act on tenant feedback.

NEW STRUCTURE

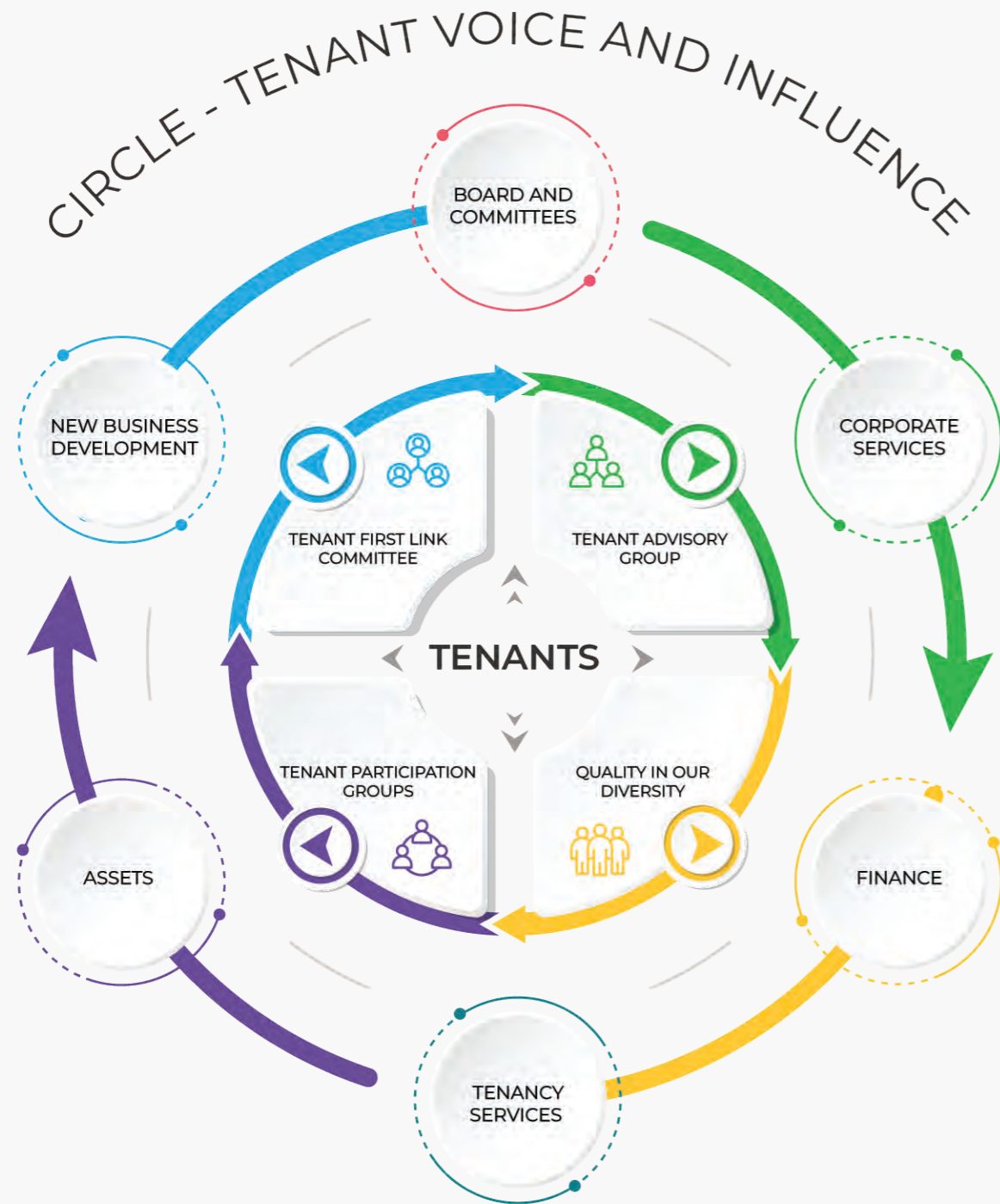


Image 6: Our new structure showing how tenants' voices are heard in each department:

“We have strived and been successful at building new partnerships, forging ahead in developing not only homes but communities. We have welcomed our tenants into the very heart of our business “

John Hannigan, CEO, Circle VHA

SECTION TWO

NEW STRATEGY

SHAPING OUR NEW STRATEGY



Image 7: Circle celebrated the official opening of 57 social homes at Butterfield, Mount Neil, Co. Waterford with Circle tenants receiving keys to their new home from Circle Tenancy Services Officer, Helena Crotty.

Developing this second strategy has given us an opportunity to reflect on and learn from the work we have done to date. We developed a survey to seek the views of tenants. We also put together a working group of tenants and staff members to work together to develop our new strategy.

This strategy sets out how both parties (tenants and Circle) will reach our goals together. The strategy has been designed as a map to guide tenants and Circle staff in supporting and putting in place ways to engage and communicate that will benefit everyone.

We have incorporated your suggestions from the satisfaction surveys conducted for the past 3 years. We have also included the tenant communication survey of March 2024, which identified the need to improve communication with and feedback to tenants. The findings of the review will help to improve services for tenants and Circle.

We want to make sure that when tenants engage with us, it is meaningful, effective and enjoyable. Feedback from tenant surveys and focus groups has highlighted how important it is for everyone to work together to improve the homes and services we provide.

We have found that we need to make getting involved accessible and meaningful. We discovered this from:

- feedback;
- our own learnings; and
- learnings of the Tenant Advisory Group and Tenant First Link Committee.

Tenants who wish to get involved will have an opportunity to do so and can make a difference while also developing their own skills and experience.

To make sure that we do this, we commit to the following:





COMMITMENT TO TENANT ENGAGEMENT



Image 8: Our commitment to tenant engagement.

KEY PRIORITIES

Based on feedback from our tenant satisfaction surveys, the main priorities for tenants are:

-  01 - To receive an excellent repairs and maintenance service.
-  02 - That tenants' voices are listened to.
-  03 - That tenants' feedback and insights are welcomed and heard throughout the organisation.
-  04 - That there is an effective response to anti-social behaviour.

This strategy focuses on engaging with tenants in relation to these key areas. It was agreed to focus equally on the following:

-  01 - Communication
-  02 - Work Together
-  03 - Inclusivity, Equality and Diversity
-  04 - Learning and Development

SECTION TWO NEW STRATEGY KEY PRIORITIES

COMMUNICATION

We will welcome communications from all tenants in ways that work best for them. We will aim to ensure access to information, opportunities and resources for everyone.

Goal 1: Promote opportunities and encourage tenant involvement at all levels of the organisation

Objectives:

- Create and promote an annual schedule of opportunities that supports engagement individually, at community and estate level and at national level.
- Train and support Tenant Representatives to encourage more tenants to join groups.

Goal 2: Collect, update and act on tenants' communication preferences

Objectives:

- Seek feedback on all of our communications systems.
- Update tenant preferences and details. These will tell us what resources we need to use to communicate effectively.

Goal 3: Commit resources to provide support, training and systems development to improve communications

Objectives:

- Develop and deliver an improvement plan that includes better systems, and tenant and staff training needs.
- Make sure a budget is in place to deliver improvements.

Goal 4: We will clearly communicate Circle's performance and plans for improvement

Objectives:

- Publish our Tenant Engagement Performance Reports and our Satisfaction Reports on our website quarterly (every three months).
- Develop an Annual Tenant Report.

WORK TOGETHER

We aim to build on and strengthen the existing foundation and widen the opportunities for tenant influence across the organisation.

Goal 1: Invite tenants to share their insights into how our services are provided and what impact they have within each department

Objectives:

- Embed the tenant engagement culture across Circle by creating the opportunity for tenants to offer insight and support within each department.
- Provide mentoring, support and development opportunities for tenants involved in the groups.

Goal 2: Invite, Listen, Act, Deliver

Objectives:

- Work in a way that focuses on learning and problem-solving by helping tenants to build skills.
- Take actions that are influenced by tenants' experiences.

Goal 3: Review and provide meaningful opportunities for tenants and staff to work together

Objectives:

- Evaluate on a continuous basis the menu of opportunities for tenant engagement and adapt opportunities in line with findings.

INCLUSIVITY, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We will aim to strengthen tenants’ voices by understanding and responding to the needs of our diverse communities.

Goal 1: Promote and embrace the Quality In our Diversity project*

Objectives:

- Build awareness and offer appropriate or tailored training on intercultural diversity to tenants and staff.
- Promote and empower tenants and staff to understand and respond to discrimination.

*We explain this project on page 23.

Goal 2: Use demographic data* to inform and tailor our services

Objectives:

- Actively seek to learn about the needs of tenants from diverse communities.
- Alongside tenants, adapt how we provide our homes and services.

*By demographic data, we mean information about who our tenants are such as their age, language, housing needs.

Goal 3: Support the development of groups that reflect the diversity of our tenants

Objectives:

- Understand if the people in our current groups reflect the diversity of our tenants.
- Engage under-represented groups to make sure their voices are heard.
- Develop ways a voice for young people living in Circle homes can be heard.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

We will aim to promote a learning culture in Circle that empowers everyone to achieve their potential in all aspects of life.

Goal 1: Explore and set up a fund to support tenants to access opportunities for education, training and employment

Objectives:

- Establish an annual budget for the fund.
- Develop a needs-informed application and qualification criteria.
- Set up an awarding panel.

Goal 2: Research and raise awareness of services to promote personal development

Objectives:

- Create a database of national and local service contacts.
- Develop a way to update and share services.

Goal 3: Explore ways to train tenants and staff to become coaches or mentors to support each other

Objectives:

- Identify tenants and staff to become coaches or mentors.
- Create or participate in a coaching or mentoring programme for tenants and staff.

SECTION TWO

NEW STRATEGY

REPORTING OUR PROGRESS AND IMPACT



We will report on the completion rate of an annual action plan. We will also report on key performance indicators (KPIs) – signs of progress. These signs will be based on both numbers and percentages and other qualitative signs (non-numbers’ based) such as the impact of being part of a tenant group, on a tenant’s life. These help us track the progress and impact of the Tenant Communication and Engagement Strategy (TCES).

- Percentage of tenants engaged in:
 - once-off engagement events between 2025-2027
 - tenant participation groups between 2025-2027

- Tenant engagement impact:
 - Tracking and reporting the qualitative impact of tenant engagement on our tenants’ lives
 - Tracking and reporting tenants trust in Circle
 - Percentage of tenants satisfied with Circle’s ability to listen and act on feedback
 - Percentage of tenants satisfied with the helpfulness of staff
 - Percentage completion of the TCES action plan

Image 9: Sr Breda Burke and Sr Agnes Coll from Inchicore pictured at the breaking of ground celebrations at Richmond Place. Celebrating the kickstart to the first development of the ‘Housing with Support’ demonstrator model under Housing for All and Circle’s first direct construction project, in conjunction with ALONE.

GALLERY TWO:

TENANT ENGAGEMENT

Below: Tenants and staff pictured at Sean Treacy House for a fun-day event.

Opposite: Woolly Farm travel to see our tenants in Fairgreen Manor, Dunlavin, Co. Wicklow to take part in our summer Tenant Engagement Events.



SECTION THREE

TENANT ENGAGEMENT CULTURE

SUPPORTING A TENANT ENGAGEMENT CULTURE



Tenant engagement comes from and promotes a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership between our tenants and Circle. It exists when we work together towards a common goal of continuously improving our services and homes. Tenant engagement will not be the task of one or two members of staff. It will be a core responsibility and aligned to Circle's values. It will be a factor in all our teams, departments, management, leadership team and board. It is an essential part of the work we do.

We will:

- build on the good initiatives and work methods already in place
- keep tenant engagement matters on meeting agendas for all teams
- create as many opportunities as possible for tenants' voices to be heard
- celebrate our successes

- work with tenants to overcome barriers to engagement, for example, training, childcare costs, travel
- aim to identify hard-to-reach tenants and engage with them on a level that suits them
- actively engage and recruit tenants who reflect the diversity of our communities
- include training on tenant engagement as part of the induction process for all tenants, staff and board members
- make sure our teams have the resources to co-ordinate and ensure the delivery of this strategy
- regularly reflect on and learn from the work we do
- continuously learn and benchmark our approach to tenant engagement with other approved housing bodies
- review the current options for tenants to get involved

Image 10: Circle VHA celebrates the final handover to all 40 families of their new homes at Fairgreen Manor, Co Wicklow.

EQUALITY VERSUS EQUITY



VALUING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Quality In our Diversity project aims to set up and use a framework that will allow for true equity and inclusion for all our tenants. This means we are committed to providing the necessary resources and supports to enable and empower tenants in a meaningful way, so they can access services and homes that meet their needs.

In delivering this strategy, we will show our commitment to inclusivity and look to engage people from diverse backgrounds to be part of all areas of our tenant groups and organisation.

TRAINING FOR TENANTS AND STAFF

We want to support tenants and staff to develop their confidence, capacity and skills so they can be involved and work together to deliver this strategy. We are committed to being proactive and investing

in appropriate needs-based training for all tenants and staff.

This can include training for both individuals and/or groups and can involve:

- Developing or improving IT skills
- Facilitation skills such as chairing a group meeting
- Educational visits and interactions with other housing bodies
- Knowledge-based courses, for example committee skills, developing policies, preparing funding applications

We intend to develop a fund to support our tenants to access educational opportunities. The terms and conditions of this fund will be determined as part of this strategy's action plan.

Image 11: An illustration showing the difference between equality and equity.

SECTION THREE

TENANT ENGAGEMENT CULTURE

MONITORING OUR PERFORMANCE




Our approach to delivering this strategy is outlined in our action plan. To make sure the focus remains on delivering the action plan, we will monitor and assess it on a regular basis during its lifetime. This will be carried out in the following ways:

- Present an update on tenant engagement twice a year at board meetings
- Report on how we are delivering against strategy objectives at the Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) and Tenant First Link (TFL) committee meetings
- Report our insights every three months to TFL and the board
- Provide an annual progress report to tenants
- Report on the impact of tenants' voices in service improvement

At the end of this strategy, we will carry out a full evaluation. This will focus on the impact and effectiveness of the strategy and provide a final report, including:

- How we communicated with our tenants and provided feedback on our progress
- Number of estate and community events that took place
- Number of people who took part in the events
- Number of estate walkabouts that took place and outcomes from these
- Areas of work influenced by tenants
- Reports from the various groups, for example TAG and TFL

Image 12: Pictured at the launch of the Tenant Communication and Engagement Strategy, are Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) members and Circle VHA tenants April Gregg and Gerry Fleming.


100%
 TENANT ACTION PLAN
 100% percent completion rate of the Circle Tenant Engagement Action Plan.

10%
 TENANT ENGAGEMENT
 10% of tenants participated in engagement opportunities between 2021-2024



TAG members, tenants and Circle staff pictured at schemes in Mount Neil, Scholarstown and Peadar Kearney House.

SECTION FOUR

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE – TENANT ADVISORY GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

REVISED AND APPROVED BY THE TAG (AUGUST 2024)

Circle Voluntary Housing Association is committed to ensuring tenants' needs are at the heart of everything it does. Board, committee and staff members are committed to taking on board the tenants' views to improve service delivery continually.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) will be to work in partnership with Circle Voluntary Housing Association to:

- Improve service delivery by providing feedback to Circle Voluntary Housing Association
- Keep tenants informed and
- Oversee the implementation of the action plan

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To ensure that Circle Voluntary Housing Association provides high-quality services that retain tenants at the heart of the organisation and
- To work on behalf of tenants to ensure that services are of the highest standard and meet tenants' needs.

MEMBERSHIP

- Membership is open to all tenants; however, there will be a maximum of 15 members on the TAG.
- If more than 15 tenants are interested, establishing regional/locality forums that will feed into the TAG may be considered.
- Members will, as far as reasonably possible, reflect the broad cross-section of Circle Voluntary Housing Association tenants in terms of age, gender, disability, economic and social status, race, and religious affiliations.

- For tenants to be elected to the TAG, the tenant will have a short online introduction with the Tenant Engagement Coordinator (TEC) and two or more TAG members. The members will propose, second and approve the membership, and it will be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting.
- Members must be a current tenant and are not employees, board members, or business partners of Circle Voluntary Housing Association.
- A maximum of two persons per household can be members of the TAG.
- Be willing to undergo training.
- All members are expected to attend 50% of meetings and not miss more than two meetings in a row without an explanation.
- The TAG may agree to long-term absence based on TAG members' individual circumstances.
- Members will receive travel expenses, i.e. casual user car allowance, bus fare/taxi fare – when receipts are provided.
- All members must comply with the Circle Voluntary Housing Association's Code of Conduct. Members who do not comply will be asked to resign by the TAG.
- TAG members will be realistic in their requests and not expect to receive any better or worse treatment/service from Circle Voluntary Housing Association or members of staff due to their membership of the TAG and
- Group members must not disclose confidential information to anyone outside the TAG.

MEETINGS

- The group will meet approximately six times a year. On occasions, it may be necessary to meet more frequently. Circle Voluntary Housing Association intends to maintain regular communication with the TAG and provide feedback.



Image 13: TAG members, TAG Chairperson, Circle staff and Circle mascot Stringer, pictured at Dublin Castle following a TAG meeting.

CHAIRING OF MEETINGS

- Meetings will be held in an agreed venue or online and should not last longer than two hours. The location may vary.
- The TAG will set its work programme in conjunction with Circle Voluntary Housing Association staff.
- Members will receive an update on all engagement opportunities at each meeting from the TEC; however, if there is a pressing issue, members will receive email correspondence at the time.
- Circle Voluntary Housing Association will provide the TAG with all information and staff expertise relevant to its project.
- Group members will be allowed to declare any interest in any activities the TAG will undertake. This will be recorded at the meeting. If there is an apparent conflict of interest, the member will be expected to withdraw from those discussions and
- The two-minute rule will be used to discuss your point at another time if it is taking too long.

- The TAG will appoint its own tenant chairperson and vice-chairperson when TAG members feel comfortable and confident to do so.
- No one person can hold the position of chair for more than two consecutive years, apart from exceptional circumstances
- In the chair's absence, the vice-chairperson will chair the meeting.
- If the TAG membership wishes to invite another person, e.g. a member of Circle Voluntary Housing Association staff, as a non-voting member to act as chairperson, it is free to do so.
- The chairperson will ensure an agenda is drawn up for each meeting in liaison with Circle Voluntary Housing Association's appointed staff member. It will have regard to matters arising from the previous meeting and
- The quorum for a formal meeting shall be 50% of the current membership of the TAG. A quorum must include either the chairperson or vice-chairperson. At least one Circle Voluntary Housing Association representative must be present.

VOTING

Decisions should be by consensus. In the absence of a consensus, decisions shall be reached by a simple majority vote of those members present (50% + 1) and Only TAG members are entitled to vote.

SECRETARIAT

- Circle Voluntary Housing Association will keep documents clear, concise and keep housing terminology easy to understand.
- Papers will be circulated via email with day-to-day communication via WhatsApp.
- If you would like an item discussed, inform the chair before the agenda is circulated.
- The agenda and any appropriate accompanying papers aim to be distributed to members at least ten working days before each meeting.
- Minutes must be taken of all meetings and aim to be distributed to members within ten working days of the meeting and
- Minutes of meetings shall be prepared by a member of Circle Voluntary Housing Association staff

TAG RESOURCES

- The TAG will give due consideration to value for money, available resources and the corporate priorities of Circle Voluntary Housing Association and
- Circle Voluntary Housing Association and the TAG will agree on the support required as part of the process.

ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE TAG

- The TAG will give tenants and staff feedback on its work through Circle Voluntary Housing Association’s annual report, newsletter, website, etc. TAG members will attend other tenant involvement events, as appropriate, to discuss their work.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- An annual health check will be carried out on the effectiveness of the TAG to ensure it is performing its duties effectively and
- The terms of reference will be reviewed in August 2025 and annually after that.

“We believe in our people and support their right to have a say in how our organisation is run. Who are our people? Well they are our stakeholders, they are the humans behind the policy, the individuals who are in need of a suitable home.”

John Hannigan, CEO, Circle VHA



SECTION FOUR

APPENDICES

APPENDIX TWO – TENANT ADVISORY GROUP CODE OF CONDUCT

REVISED AND APPROVED BY THE TAG (AUGUST 2024)

This code of conduct is a list of agreed rules on how members of Circle’s Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) are expected to behave and how they should conduct themselves. It also helps set standards for how members should behave towards each other at meetings.

PERSONAL CONDUCT

Members are expected to:

- Be friendly, polite and courteous;
- Be positive, picking up on good points as well as highlighting areas for improvement;
- Appreciate and respect differences in knowledge, background, ability to speak in public etc.;
- Never discriminate on any ground against any other member of the TAG;
- Respect the role that staff play in providing support and administrative resources to meet the needs of members;
- Support a democratic decision taken by the TAG;
- Not speak or write on behalf of the TAG without the prior arrangement of the TAG;
- Use the normal reporting channels for raising personal housing-related issues that affect members;
- Observe any rules and health and safety guidelines given by Circle and take reasonable steps to ensure health, safety and welfare; and
- Ask for support if there are any aspects of the activity which you are unsure of.

CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

Members and visitors are expected to observe the following when taking part in the TAG meetings or any working groups established by the TAG:

- Arrive punctually to enable meetings to start promptly;

- Come prepared by reading all the relevant papers beforehand and bring them with you to the meeting;
- Be courteous to each other at all times and not use offensive, provocative, discriminatory or racist language;
- Follow the agenda and keep to time;
- Work with other members constructively to arrive at the best possible solution to the matter under discussion;
- Keep contributions brief and to the point;
- Accept the two-minute rule to discuss your point at another time if it is taking too long;
- Listen to each other, and allow each other the opportunity to speak and comment; and
- Remember that the meeting’s purpose is to benefit tenants generally, not specific individuals or personal issues.

DISCLOSING AND DECLARING INTERESTS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Members must:

- Disclose any interest, whether personal or on behalf of any other group they belong to, which might possibly affect or influence their approach to the matter under discussion;
- Offer to withdraw from the meeting where a conflict of interest is clear and substantial; and
- Stand down if any personal circumstances may bring their membership into disrepute; this includes rent arrears, complaints of anti-social behaviour, or any dispute with Circle. This will be on a case by case basis.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Members should respect the confidentiality of personal information about individuals, whether present or not, and refrain from mentioning specific individual cases which may cause embarrassment or identification of an individual; and



Members must not disclose any information or items of a confidential nature to anyone else apart from the TAG members to allow the meeting’s business to take place.

ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

If a member misses two consecutive meetings without apologies, the chair of the TAG will make contact. Upon missing a third meeting without apologies, the member will be deemed to have resigned.

BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

In the event of tense or heated discussion at the meeting, a five minute time out can be called at the chair’s discretion.

If a member of the TAG or visitor fails to abide by the code, the chair may warn that if they breach the code again during that meeting, they will not participate in the discussions and may remain in an observer capacity only.

If a member of the TAG or visitor, despite a warning, continues to breach this code, or the breach is more serious, they may be asked to leave the meeting.

Image14: Residents of Thornton Heights in Inchicore, Dublin 8 joined with Circle in a Tenant Engagement event with an afternoon of community fun and celebrations.

GALLERY THREE:

TENANT ENGAGEMENT

Below: Circle VHA has been a leading social housing provider in Ireland. We aim to deliver on our commitment to a 'Tenant First' approach. Below are Circle staff and tenants celebrating receiving the keys to their new homes on Tenancy Signing Days.



circle | more than housing

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