

Age Friendly Business Recognition Programme Survey Results 2023



Introduction

In July 2022 Tuath Housing launched its Tenant Engagement Strategy 2022-2025 called 'Your Voice, Your Home, Your Community'. A key aim of the strategy is to widen resident involvement in our service design and delivery.

We have created seven key objectives that will help us deliver our strategy action plan. They are to Involve, Enable, Communicate, Build, Integrate, Embed and Empower our residents that will help us achieve our vision of Tuath Housing being a leader in tenant engagement, delivering first class services to our residents and leading the way in governance and accountability through tenant engagement and participation.

Within the strategy older persons have a key role to play in working towards achieving the strategies objectives and action plan. We want to ensure we are hearing feedback from a wide range of views. We will listen to the feedback we receive from older persons and be able to demonstrate that we have acted on it so that our residents know they are listened to, that their feedback makes a difference, and they are empowered to get involved.

At the end of 2022 staff from our Tenant Engagement team carried out the 'Age Friendly Business Recognition Programme' training provided by Age Friendly Ireland. Signing up to the Age Friendly Business Recognition Programme is one of many commitments from Tuath Housing to our older person residents over the age of 55. The training involved four stages to achieve the programme award:

Stage 1: Identifying a member of staff to act as a champion for age friendliness and older persons within Tuath Housing.

Stage 2: The champion participates in the Age Friendly Business workshop and starts to develop ideas to create a charter of commitments.

Stage 3: Ask older persons what they like and what can be improved? The Age Friendly Business Recognition programme ask for a short survey to be carried out. Tuath Housing wanted to expand on this and developed a survey of 26 questions that looked at a variety of areas such as Social Engagement, Communication, Accessibility to Outdoor Areas, Mobility and Transportation, Housing, Technology & Digital Accessibility and Health and community support services.

Stage 4: Develop actions and achieve recognition as an 'Age Friendly Business'. Following the survey of the eight older person schemes. Recommendations and key actions are outlined on page 9. Following the survey recommendations Tuath Housing have committed to the Age Friendly charter.

This charter lists the first three actions that Tuath Housing are taking towards our commitment to Age Friendly services which are:

1. Provide Age Friendly awareness training to Tuath Housing staff.
2. Develop clear and easy to read communication methods for older persons where possible.
3. Support and provide opportunities for older persons to get involved in resident engagement.

Tuath Housing will continue to find ways of improving services and listening to our resident's feedback. Engaging with residents in developing, scrutinising, and improving services has had many positive impacts on the work we do, and we recognise the valuable contribution our residents have made. We would like to thank residents who took part in working in partnership with us for the 'Age Friendly Business Recognition programme' survey and taking part in the consultation process.

Survey consultation and findings

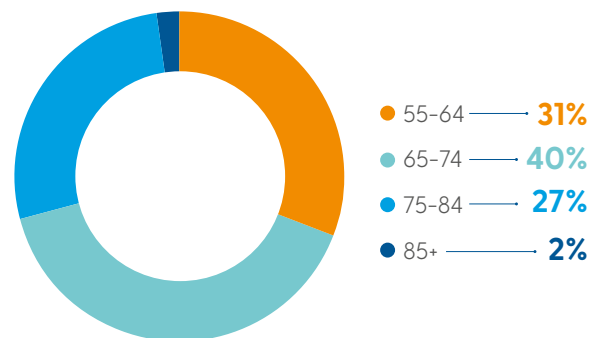
To enable our residents to have a say in the development of the Age Friendly Business Recognition Programme Tuath Housings, Tenant Engagement and Research and Policy teams developed a survey. The draft questions were shared for discussion and approval by residents at in person coffee morning tenant engagement events. Following approval by residents the survey was circulated in person by Tuath staff to eight pilot schemes of 213 households between July and August 2023. In total 101 households returned completed surveys with an overall response rate of 47%. The survey contained 26 questions about Tuath Housing services and asked how we can make Tuath Housing homes and communities more age friendly. Residents were asked about their experiences in relation to social engagement, communication preferences, accessibility to outdoor areas, mobility transportation and housing, technology and digital accessibility and health and community support services.



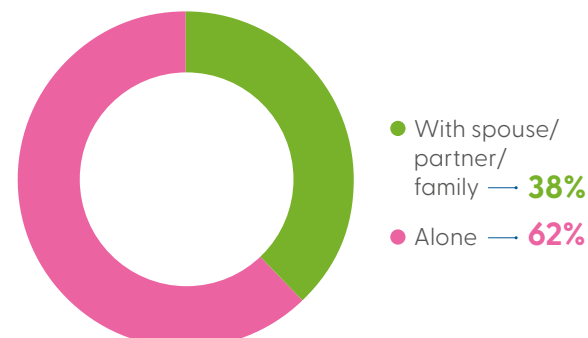
Key findings of the survey

Participant Information

Q Age

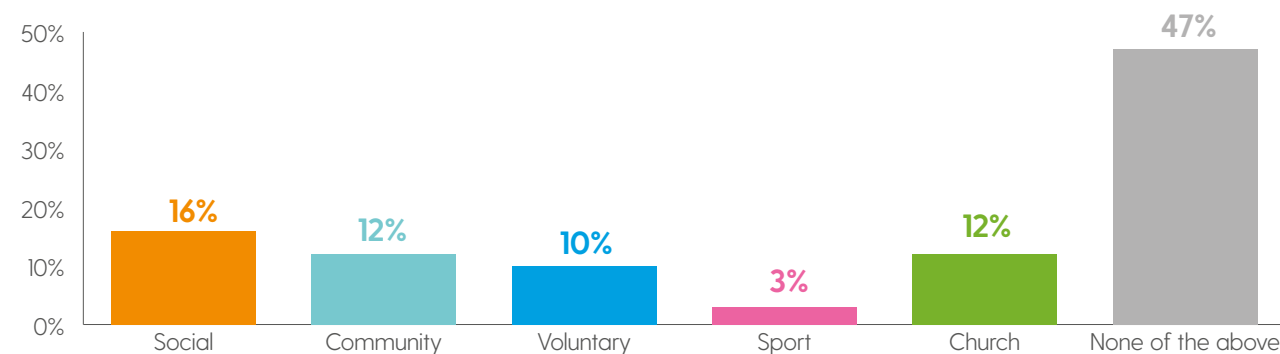


Q Do you currently live



Social Engagement

Q Tuath Housing is interested in hearing what activities older persons participate in within their area and the larger community, as well as the reasons why they choose not to engage in activities



More than 30% of the participants indicated that taking part in social and community activities was important to them. 47% of participants stated they did not take part in events. In the feedback that we received, residents showed interest in on-site tenant engagement events including planting days and educational sessions.

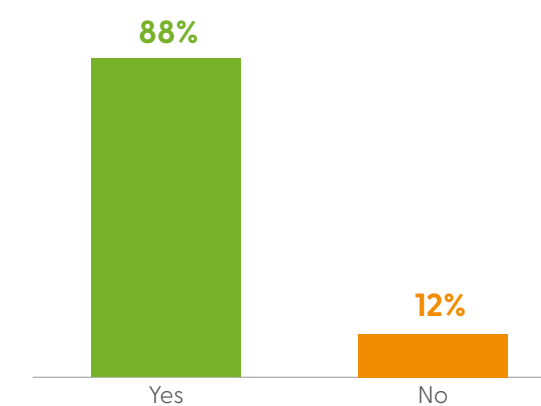
Q What would be the main reasons for you not to be able/not interested in joining a group/activity in your area?

- Some participants shared they had no time, while others said they were hesitant to join a new group because they lacked confidence.
- Other obstacles to engagement included financial constraints and care commitments.
- Some residents said they were unable to get involved because of health issues.

Communication

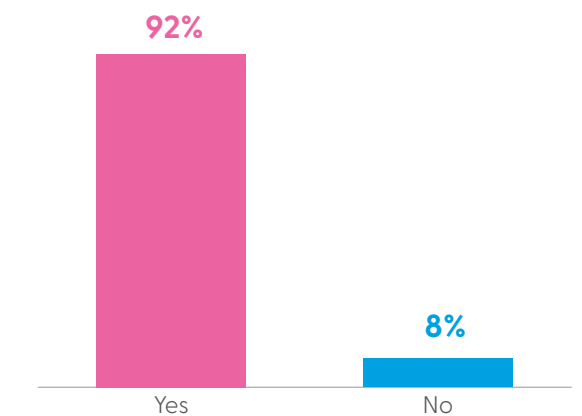
The following questions were created to gain feedback on how the residents felt in relation to the variety of communication methods used by Tuath housing to communicate and engage with residents.

Q Are you kept up to date with what's happening in Tuath Housing?



88% of those surveyed said they were informed of what's happening in Tuath Housing.

Q Are the communications you receive from Tuath Housing easy to read and understand?



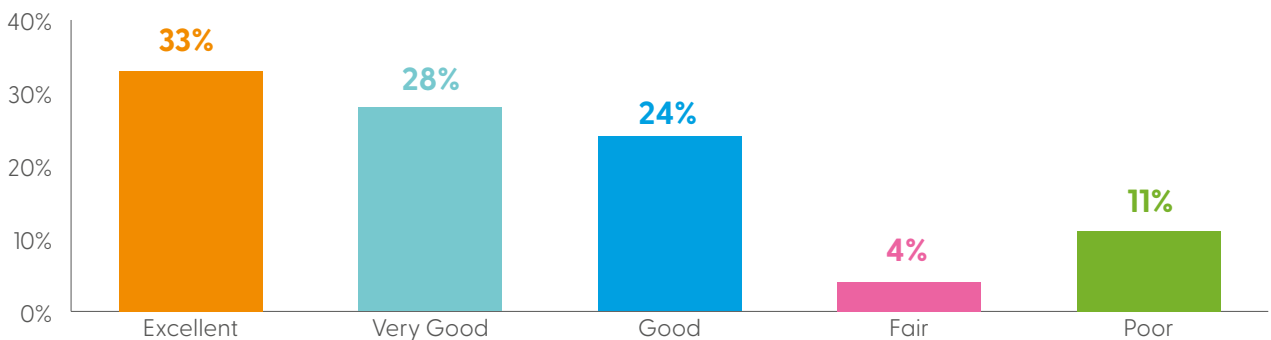
92% of participants said that the communications they received from Tuath Housing were easy to read and comprehend.

Some residents indicated they struggled with literacy, some experienced language challenges and others lacked the confidence to access internet content. Residents have expressed a desire in the future to take part in digital training to advance their digital literacy.

Accessibility to Outdoor Areas

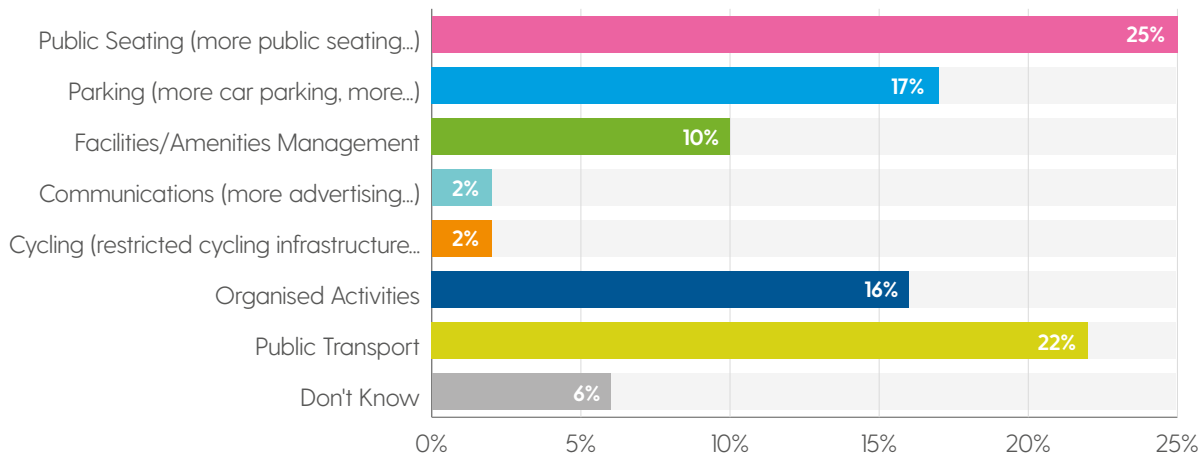
Accessibility is essential for the safety and enjoyment of our older persons. Tuath Housing wants to make sure that our older persons can fully enjoy their outdoor spaces and is interested in receiving feedback from residents so that we can continuously improve the enjoyment of outdoor shared spaces.

Q How would you rate the opportunities to access outdoor spaces?



85% enthusiastically acknowledged that accessibility to outside areas in Tuath Housing schemes was excellent, very good, or good. Participants' feedback indicated that they were pleased with the local infrastructure and scheme design. 15% of participants found access was fair to poor, they specified that they wanted the shared area's appearance to be improved.

Q Participants were asked how can access to outdoor spaces be improved and what actions could Tuath Housing take to improve opportunities for older persons to enjoy outdoor spaces.

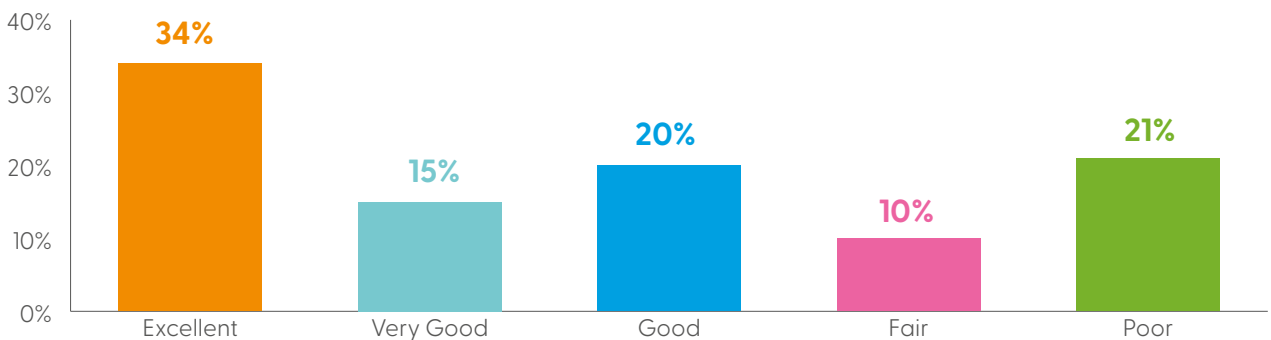


Participants made the following suggestions

-  Additional places to sit so they can enjoy shared green spaces and socialise with their neighbours, relatives, and friends.
-  A percentage of participants said that access to local services was difficult given that public transportation did not run through their neighbourhood, whilst others said there was no public bus service which is a barrier to accessing local services.
-  Parking was noted as a barrier to the scheme's accessibility for local service providers. Additionally, participants stated that they would like to see Age Friendly rates for older people and cheaper parking in the communities they live in.
-  Additional road signage to improve road safety in their schemes.
-  Participants would like wheelchair users and people with other mobility issues to have clear access to footpaths. Cutting down mature shrubs and trees that have overrun on pathways and pruning mature trees to provide more natural light was also suggested.
-  More access to communal spaces for tenant engagement activities, events, training, and social involvement was a further suggestion.

Mobility & Transportation

Q How would you rate access to public transport in your area?



Access to public transportation was rated excellent, very good, or good by 69% of participants. According to 31% of those surveyed, transportation was either fair or poor, and their neighbourhood wasn't accessible by any travel links. According to participant comments, covered bus shelters with seating are preferred where there are bus stops.

Housing

Q What are the most important factors for you in your home/area?

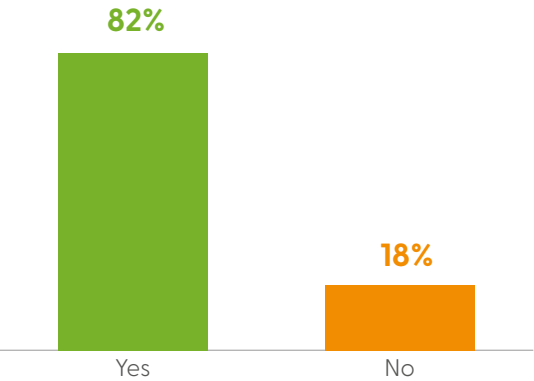
Residents were asked to rank the factors that were significant to them in their community as part of the survey. Those who replied listed the following, starting with the most important to decreasing order of priority:



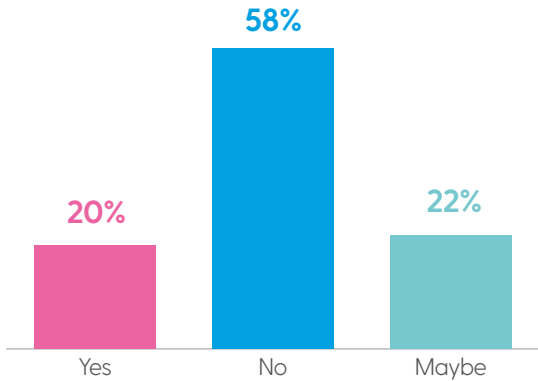
Technology & Digital Accessibility

Technology and digital access is important for older persons. Tuath Housing are interested in ways that they can support older residents in accessing and using digital technology.

Q Do you have access to the internet in your home?



Q Would you like to take part in training on accessing the internet and using the digital technology?

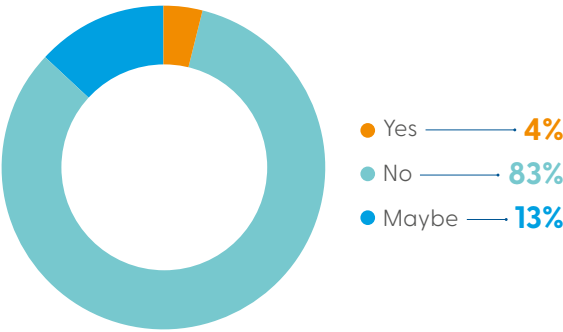


Participants said they would like to get training to improve their confidence in using digital technology indicated in 42% of the surveys conducted. This also included training on smartphones technology. 47% of participants said they had previously attended training in the past, a percentage of the participants explained that challenges with literacy issues prevented them from enrolling in digital technology training.

Health and Community Support Services

In the following questions participants were asked about health and community support services in their area however, the opening question focused on how participants felt personally, asking if they felt lonely or isolated.

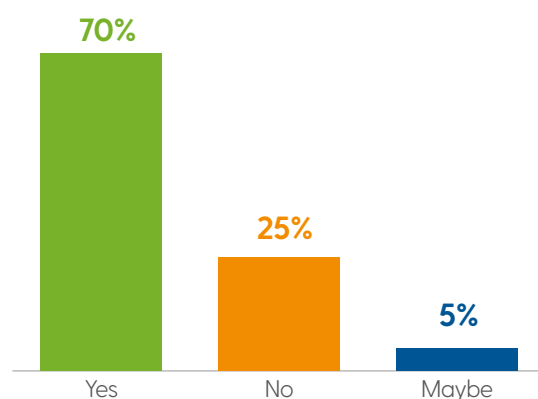
Q Do you feel lonely or isolated?



If the participant replied “yes” or “maybe” to the question above. We asked for suggestions of services and supports that might be helpful to them in feeling less lonely or isolated.

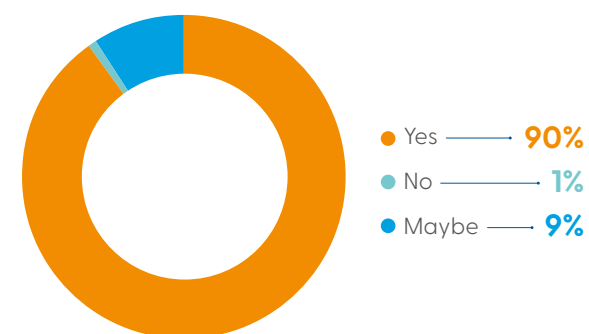
- Information & communications & library services identified as an even percentage to prevent loneliness and isolation.
- Health and home support were rated highly significant to the participants to prevent loneliness and isolation.
- Social support and a phone line to talk to someone identified as same value of importance to the participants to prevent loneliness and isolation.
- Support from family and neighbours equals that of digital support to combat loneliness and isolation.

Q Do you know who to contact should you need to avail of local health services in your area e.g., home support, Meals on Wheels, day care centres etc?



A significant portion of participants said they were familiar with the procedure for using local services. A total of 30% of the participants responded “no” or “maybe,” saying that even if they didn’t fully grasp the procedure, they felt confident in asking a neighbour or a member of one of the neighbourhood local health services who regularly visits their scheme’s neighbours.

Q Do you feel safe in your home?



90% of the participants felt exceptionally safe in their homes. 10% of participants said “maybe” and “no.” According to the survey, one scheme indicated they would feel more secure if there were additional security cameras at the back of the scheme in addition to those that are already there. Other suggestions included the removal or pruning of large mature trees which would give people better nighttime vision of their surroundings.

Recommendations

Based on the results and findings from the ‘Age Friendly Business Recognition Programme’ survey with Tuath Housing residents’ recommendations have been set out to help us meet our charter commitments for the Age Friendly Business recognition programme and improve services to Tuath Housing residents.

- ✓ Set up an Age Friendly feedback panel with residents and Tuath staff who will work to achieve the recommendations from this survey and work towards achieving the ‘Age Friendly Business Recognition’ charter.
- ✓ Provide Age Friendly awareness training to Tuath Housing staff.
- ✓ Develop clear and easy to read communication methods for older persons where possible.
- ✓ Support and provide opportunities for older persons to get involved in resident engagement.
- ✓ Involve residents where possible in consultation with cross departmental teams in Tuath Housing in discussions around older persons living circumstances.
- ✓ Create and maintain Age-Friendly outdoor areas with features like benches and gardens to promote outdoor activities and relaxation.
- ✓ Provide where necessary training and resources for older persons to use technology including smartphones and computers so they can stay connected and access online services.
- ✓ Promote social inclusion activities such as workshops and education classes to prevent social isolation and encourage social interaction and engagement among older persons.
- ✓ The tenant engagement team will apply for funding through Tuath Housing’s Community fund and HSE Lottery Fund for the purpose of outdoor furnishings and environmental equipment for environmental projects.
- ✓ Tuath Housing’s Tenant engagement team will promote the establishment of community led residents’ groups in older persons schemes.

Acknowledgments

Tuath Housing would like to thank residents who took part and helped with the consultation and design process of the survey. We would also like to thank Age Friendly Ireland and Tuath Housing staff who worked with the Age Friendly Business Recognition programme to achieve the Age Friendly Business Recognition Award.



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