

RENT SETTING IN SCOTLAND



By [Regional Networks](#)
[Rent Affordability Working Group](#)

Date report completed – January 2024

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Regional Networks Rent Affordability group first met in March 2021 (online), it was set up at the request of the Regional Networks to investigate rent setting and tenant participation across Scotland.

The Regional Networks were set up in 2008 to enable tenants, residents, and the Scottish Government to work collaboratively on issues of national policy.

Their objective is to improve the housing and well-being of tenants and residents in Scotland predominately in the social rented sector.

They work to promote tenants' and residents' interests in housing, planning, community regeneration, the environment and community safety.

There are 4 Regional Networks which cover the whole of Scotland. Each Network covers a number of local authority areas, and their membership is drawn from representatives of Registered Tenants Organisations (RTOs) and recognised landlord Scrutiny groups. The four regions are as follows:

Region 1 – North of Scotland

Region 2 – South East Scotland

Region 3 – South West Scotland

Region 4 – Central Scotland

For more information go to <https://regionalnetworks.org/>

There were several key strands the group wanted to look at –

- i. Methods used to consult tenants and how successful they are.*
- ii. The use of affordability tools or other criteria used to set rents.*
- iii. At what point tenants were involved in the consultation process and what methods were used to consult*

Rent affordability was a topic the group considered and discussed at length but given the definitions already available regarding rent affordability and the establishment of a Scottish Government working group to look at an agreed understanding of affordability, the decision was made not to focus on affordability in the research the group was going to undertake.

The group focussed only on the Social rented sector, one question was included on local Private Sector rents (PRS)

2 THE GROUP

The Membership of the group was comprised of members of each Regional Network. The group was supported initially by the Scottish Government's Tenant Priorities team. TPAS Scotland then provided support to the group through their Scottish Government Grant allowance.

3 THE GROUP MEMBERSHIP

All participants (by region):

- **North of Scotland Regional Network (Region 1)**

Colin Stewart – Chair

Tom O'Brien

- **South East Scotland Regional Network (Region 2)**

Lillias Reid

Terry Kirby

- **South West Scotland Regional Network (Region 3)**

Anne Cameron – Chair

Bruce Cuthbertson – Vice-Chair

Norma Ferguson

- **Central Scotland Regional Network (Region 4)**

June Anderson – Vice-Chair

Geoff Morgan

The group first met in March 2021, all the meetings were online, they met every 4 – 6 weeks.

4 THE JOURNEY

The group were keen to gain as much knowledge as possible about rents, rent setting, tenant involvement and related areas. The group undertook research and considered a range of relevant articles and reports including:

- ALACHO – report on average weekly rent rises for Local Authorities
Average Weekly Rent Levels 2021/22 - Local Authority Landlords as reported March 2021
- UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence
Rent control: principles, practicalities and international experience
Briefing paper ay 2022
- FEANTSA report on Ethical renting in Europe
Ethical Renting - Mobilise the Private Rental Market To Provide
Social Solutions In Europe DEC 2018
- SFHA paper
Rent setting and affordability during the coronavirus pandemic and
beyond Spring 21
- Scottish Government
Rent affordability in the affordable housing sector. A Literature
Review June 2019
- Scottish Housing Regulator
National Panel of Tenants and Service Users 2019/20 Report –
March 2020
- International Union of Tenants
Presentation from Berliner Mieterverien Strategies against
skyrocketing rents – rent control systems vs market rents 2019

Along with gathering knowledge, the group were keen to speak to experts on rents and rent setting (see list below) and invited a range of people to attend a group meeting to share their knowledge and information. There were many lively and interesting discussions.

Speakers and topics included:

- Erik Elmgren – Chief Negotiator/Head of Housing division the Swedish Tenants Union – The rental market (in Sweden) – a model in constant evaluation.
- Kirsty Wells – Director of Consultancy and Partnerships Housemark– Rent affordability tools.
- Tony Cain – Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers (ALACHO) - rent rises and affordability.
- Callum Chomczuk – Chartered Institute of Housing CIH/Shelter Scotland, 'Shared Understanding of Affordability' 2021.
- Craig Sanderson, Commissioner of Edinburgh Poverty Alliance – report on Poverty in Edinburgh.
- Ashley Campbell CIH – CIH research into rent in the Private Rented Sector (PRS). The research began in the summer of 2023 and is ongoing.
- Andrew Weild and Janine Kellet, Scottish Government – Housing to 2040 - Shared understanding of affordability November 2021.

5 THE SURVEY AND THE FOCUS GROUPS

The group discussed the best approach to encourage landlords and tenants to get involved and decided to undertake a survey of tenants and landlords and to follow it with focus groups. A survey was developed and then the questions were amended to make them appropriate depending on whether for tenants or landlords. Finally, after considerable development, the survey questions were tested by the group with other members of regional networks.

This survey of landlords & tenants was to identify:

- Best practice in setting rents - the process.
 - Tenant involvement in the process of agreeing what potential rise tenants are to be consulted on & on the information & methods used to consult.
 - Affordability tools used if any.
- Rent consultation exercise.
 - Quality of information for tenants.
 - Methods used to consult tenants.
 - Outcomes of the consultation.
 - Other emerging issues

The group agreed that timing of the survey was important to attract as many responses as possible. The group were keen to avoid busy times and significant events for tenants and landlords such as the Annual Return against the Scottish Social Housing Charter (the ARC) and school holidays.

Events totally outside of the control of the group such as the emergency legislation freezing rents, and the cost-of-living crisis had an impact on the on the number of landlords who responded to the survey. Some landlords said they were too focussed on the emergency legislation and supporting tenants impacted by the Cost of Living crisis to take part.

Mr Harvie, the Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Tenants Rights and Active Travel is very supportive of the work being done by the group, he

gave a quote to include in the survey introduction, in addition his speech to the TPAS conference 2022 encouraged people to take part. The quote that was included in the survey said: -

"This is a very important piece of work being carried out by the Regional Network Rent Affordability Group on behalf of the of the Scottish Government. The group, supported by TPAS have been researching rents and affordability for the past year, including researching how other countries including Sweden set their rents. I would urge you to take part in this research, the survey and the follow up focus groups."

The surveys for tenants and landlords were very similar, however additional questions that were unique to either a tenant or landlord perspective were included in the survey.

TPAS worked in partnership with CX Feedback. CX feedback support landlords and other organisations to design and analyse online surveys. CX feedback reported to the group on the results of the survey, to develop the online survey and produce the results. The survey was also available in other formats on request, such as paper, by email or big print. Two tenants and one landlord completed the survey by email.

The survey was open for four weeks, it opened on 31st of August and closed on the 28th September 2022. Following the closure of the survey, focus groups were held. Three focus groups were held for tenants and two for landlords. The focus groups allowed a deeper look at some of the areas in the survey. All the focus groups were lively and productive, there was lots of discussions and debates which added valuable qualitative information and examples of good and not so good practice to add to the information received from the survey.

Each focus group was facilitated by a TPAS team member and two Rent affordability group members, Colin Stewart and Norma Ferguson.

6 SURVEY ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The Survey was created with questions arranged by key thematic areas -

- Lived experience around value for money (tenants only)
- Rent setting – how the proposed rent levels were agreed, and at what stage tenants were involved in the process
- The consultation information and options for tenants to have their say
- Additional issues

The surveys were issued to every local authority, registered social landlord, Regional Network and approximately 200 tenants and residents' groups from the Scottish Governments tenants group data base.

This table shows the number of participants that took part.

Category	Completed Surveys	Took part in focus groups
Tenants	67	25
Landlords	30	20
Total	97	50

Total participants 147

Tenants and Landlords from all across Scotland completed the survey, from Rural, Urban, remote Rural Rural and Islands. Landlords who took part were wide ranging – local authorities and small, large, National and specialist housing associations.

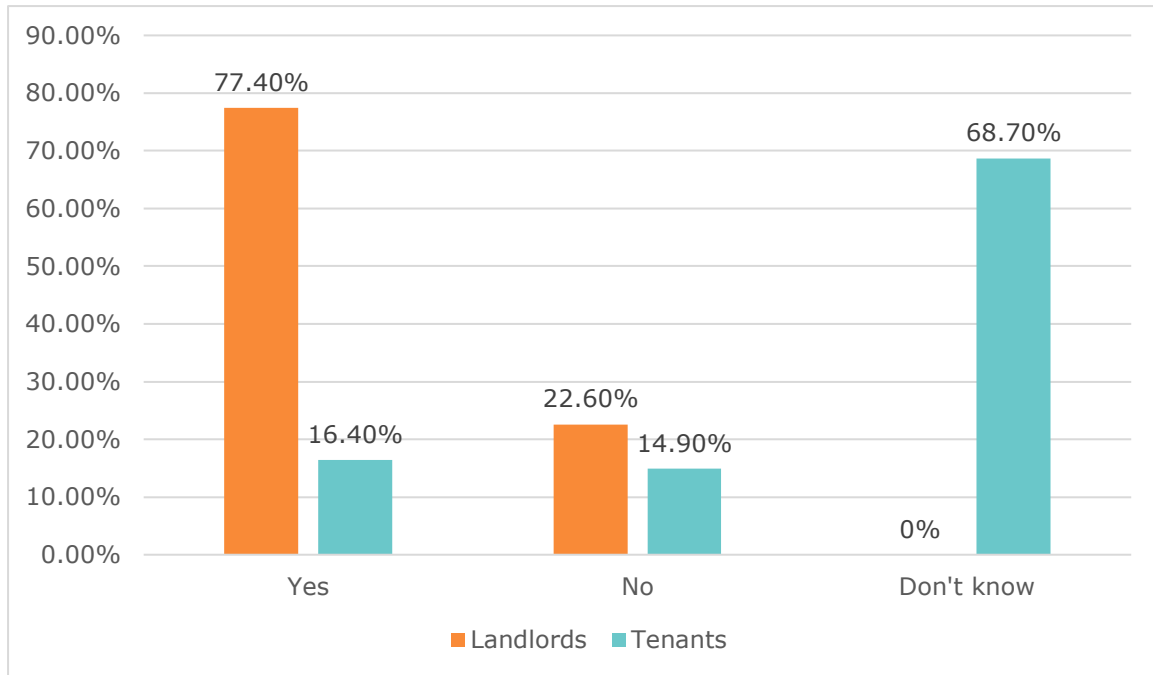
	Registered social landlord	local authority
Rural		
Urban	14	
Urban/Rural	8	
Island		4
National	4	2

% is as number of respondents 67 tenants and 30 landlords

7 RESPONSES

7.1 Rent Setting

Q. Does the landlord use an affordability tool to set rents?



Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	24	77.4%
No	7	22.6%
Don't know	0	0.0%

Tenants Response		
	Number	%
Yes	11	16.4%
No	10	14.9%
Don't know	46	68.7%

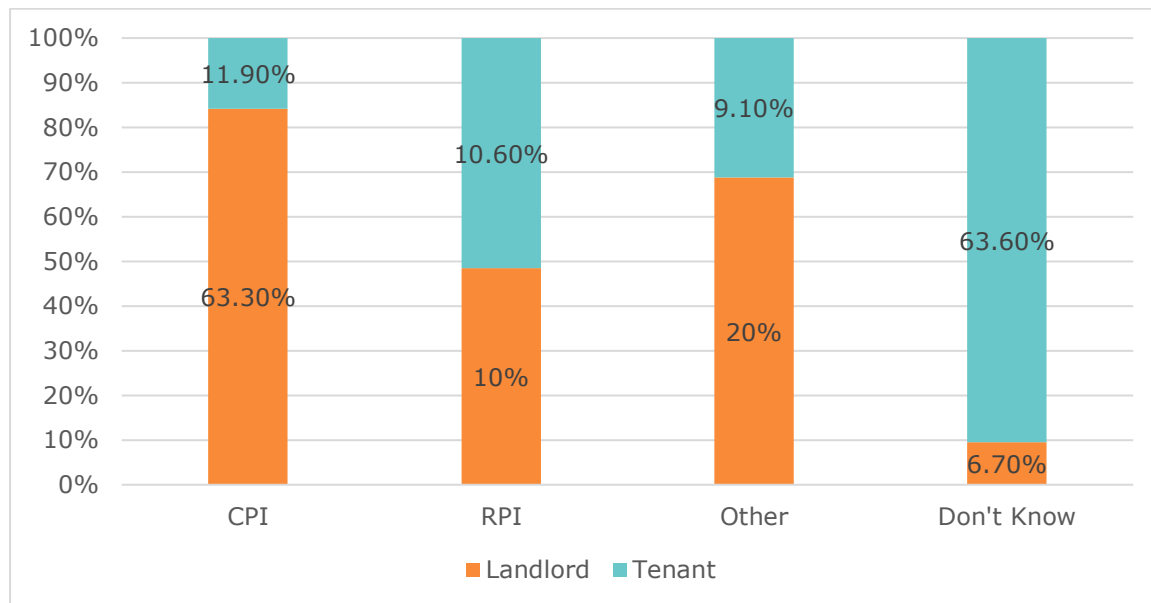
Note

Majority of RLS use an affordability tool, some local authorities calculate rents on the basis of the 30-year business plan and calculate what is needed to achieve the business plan.

What affordability tool do you use?

Tool	Number	%
SFHA	19	70.37%
Housemark	6	22.23%
Developed our own	1	3.70%
Arniel Johnston	1	3.70%

Q. Do landlords use CPI or RPI to calculate rent increases?



Landlords Response		
	Number	%
CPI	19	63.3%
RPI	3	10%
Other	6	20%
Don't know	2	6.7%

Tenants Response		
	Number	%
CPI	11	16.7%
RPI	7	10.6%
Other	6	9.1%
Don't know	42	63.6%

Note

77.8% of tenants said their landlord explained what this means. Some concerns around what month the rate was taken from. There was support for it to be aligned with the same month used to calculate the pension increases i.e. September.

What month do you take the CPI/RPI rate?

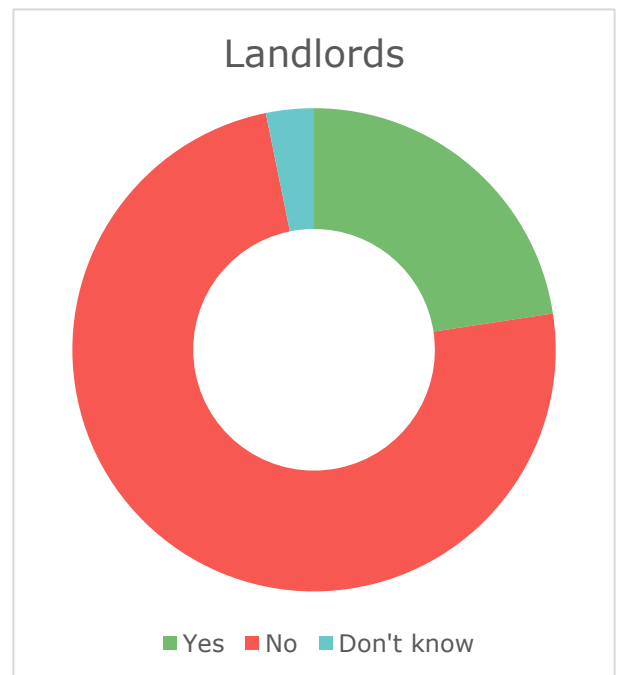
Landlords	
Month	Number
Jul	1
Aug	1
Sep	8
Oct	9
Nov	1
Dec	1

Does your Landlord explain what the CPI/RPI rates are?

Tenants		
Response	Number	%
Yes	14	77.8
No	3	16.7
Don't know	1	5.5

Q. It's common practice to increase rents by 1% on top of CPI or RPI – do you do this?

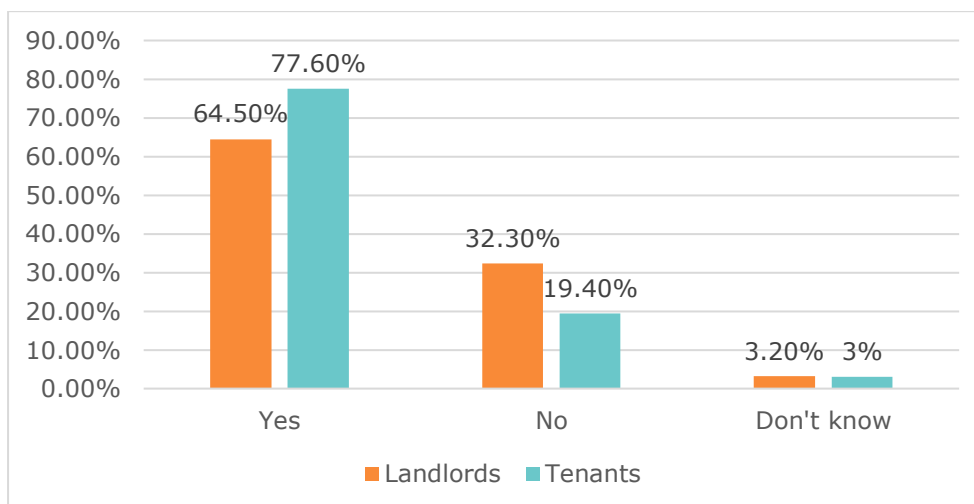
Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	7	22.6%
No	23	74.2%
Don't know	1	3.2%



Reasons given for adding 1%

- *Historic*
- *Part of Long term plan*
- *Deliver planned programs and invest in stock*
- *Building cost inflation is generally higher than CPI*

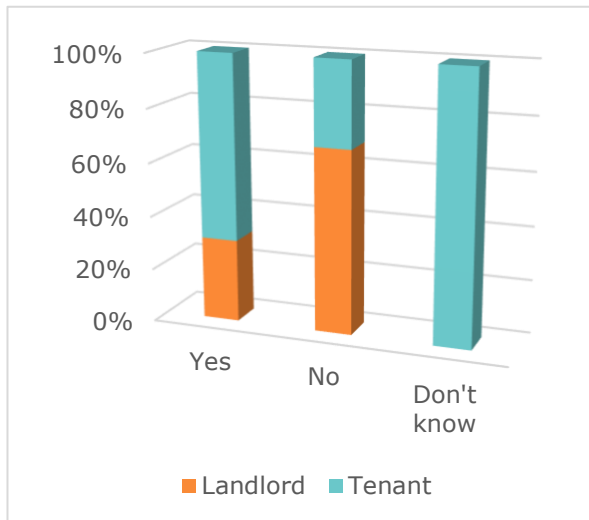
Q. Does the tenant get information on what additional services or investment are linked to each increase option?



Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	20	64.5%
No	10	32.3%
Don't know	1	3.2%

Tenants Response		
	Number	%
Yes	50	77.6%
No	15	19.4%
Don't know	2	3%

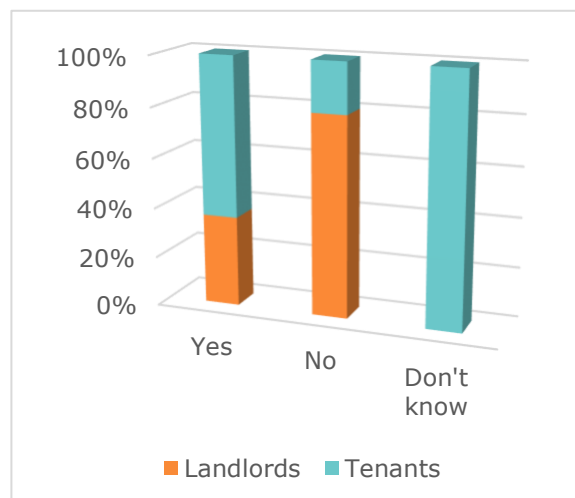
Q. Are local amenities or location included in the rent?



Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	7	22.6%
No	24	77.4%
Don't know	0	0.0%
Tenants Response		
	Number	%
Yes	34	50.7%
No	24	35.8%
Don't know	9	13.4%

Q. Is the rent charged on a rural property different from Urban property?

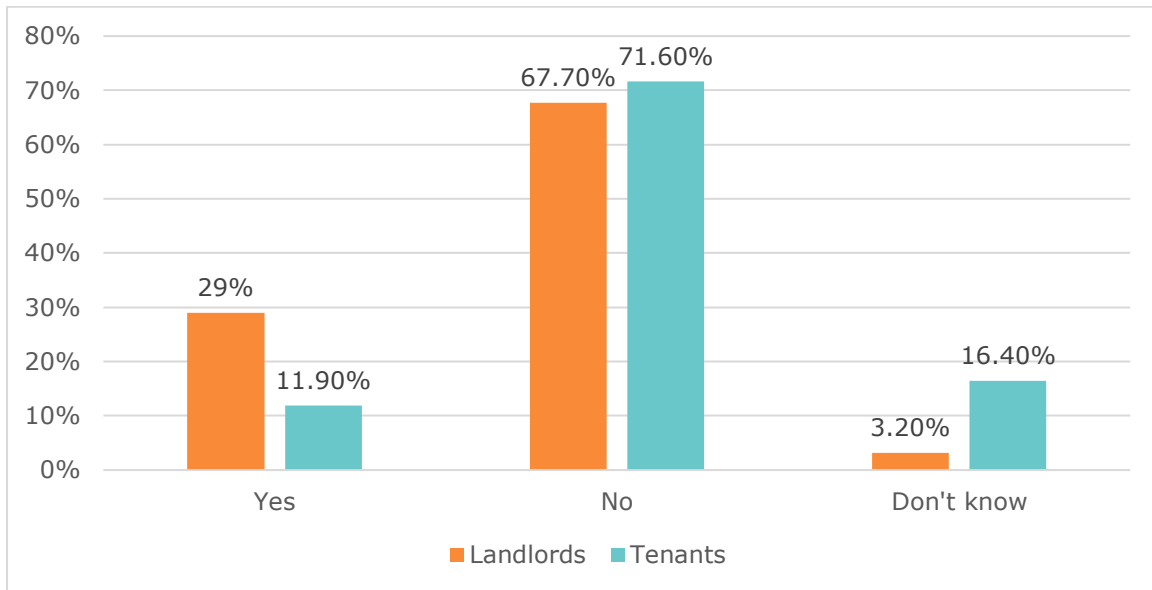
Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	5	16.1%
No	26	83.9%
Don't know	0	0.0%
Tenants Response		
	Number	%
Yes	19	28.4%
No	14	20.9%
Don't know	34	50.7%



Note

Majority of Tenants didn't know if urban/rural was taken into account but agreed that tenants should be consulted over this where there are differences.

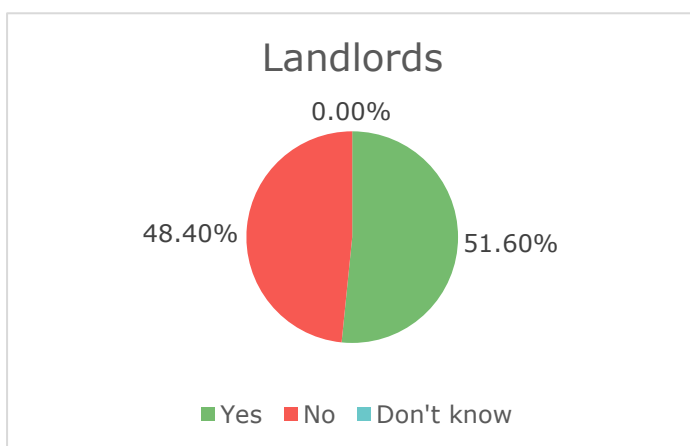
Q. Is the rent calculated on whole house costs?



Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	9	29%
No	21	67.7%
Don't know	1	3.2%

Tenants Response		
	Number	%
Yes	8	11.9%
No	48	71.6%
Don't know	11	16.4%

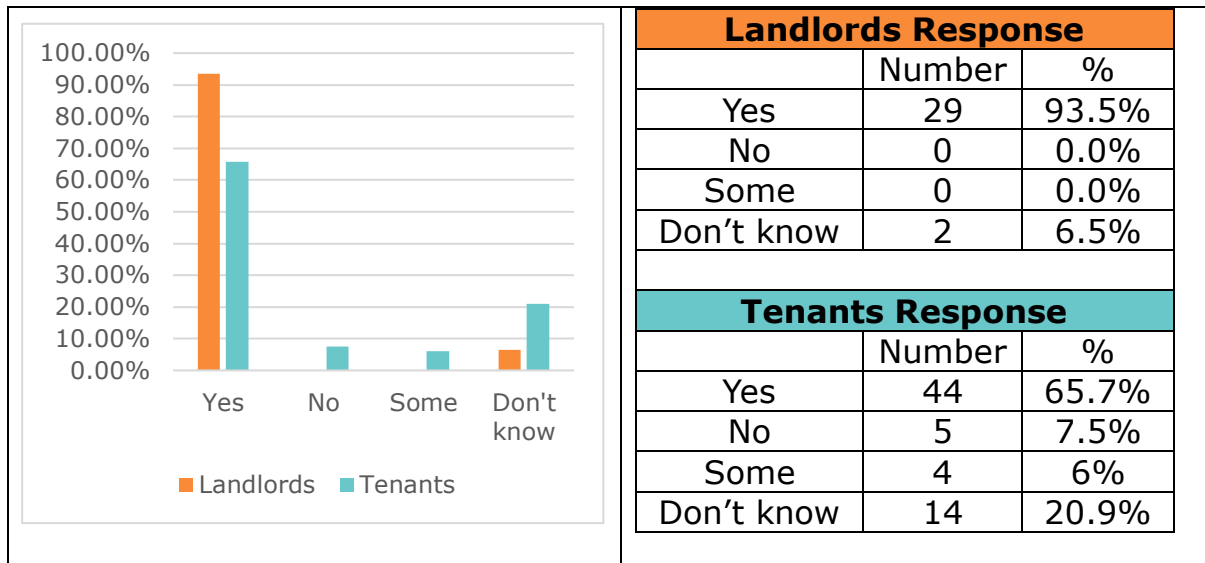
Q. Are all service charges included in rent?



Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	16	51.6%
No	15	48.4%
Don't know	0	0.0%

Service charges noted as an issue by tenants where they were not itemised, tenants would prefer to see them itemised. Itemising service charges would highlight services tenants are paying for but do not receive.

Q. Are your rents cheaper on average than local private sector rents?



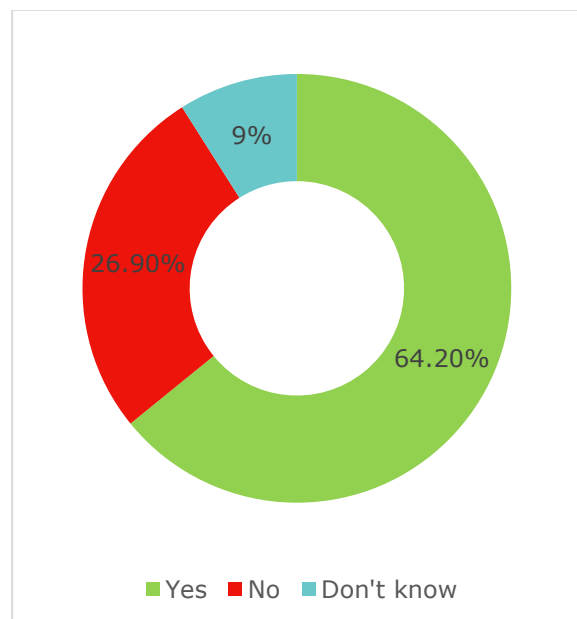
Both groups noted that the gap in Aberdeen is now closed with PRS being cheaper in some cases

Q. Do you think your rent is affordable?

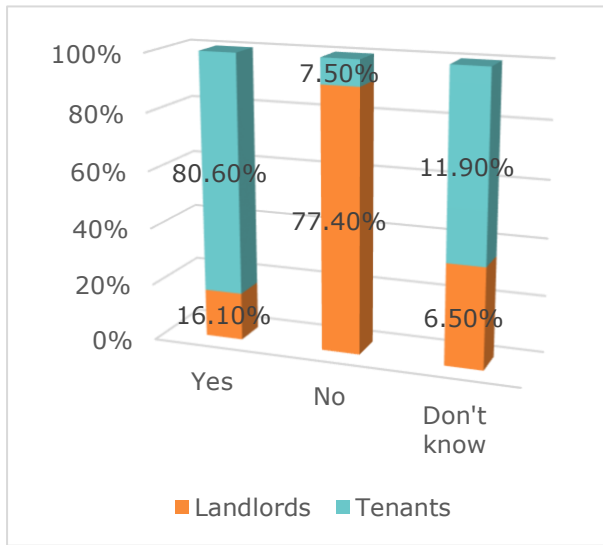
Tenants Response		
	Number	%
Yes	43	64.2%
No	18	26.9%
Don't know	6	9%

Note

The survey was held just as the economy was in crisis. If this survey was done 6 months later the results may have been quite different.



Q. Do you think Scotland’s RSL’s and Council’s should have rent controls/rent cap?



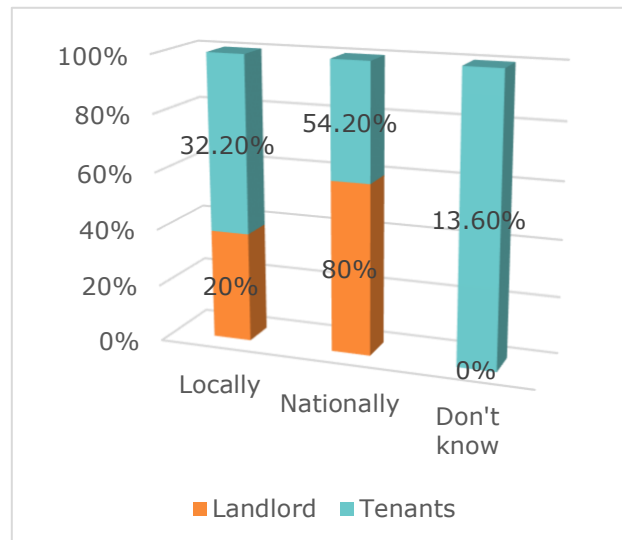
Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	5	16.1%
No	24	77.4%
Don't know	2	6.5%

Tenants Response		
	Number	%
Yes	54	80.6%
No	5	7.5%
Don't know	8	11.9%

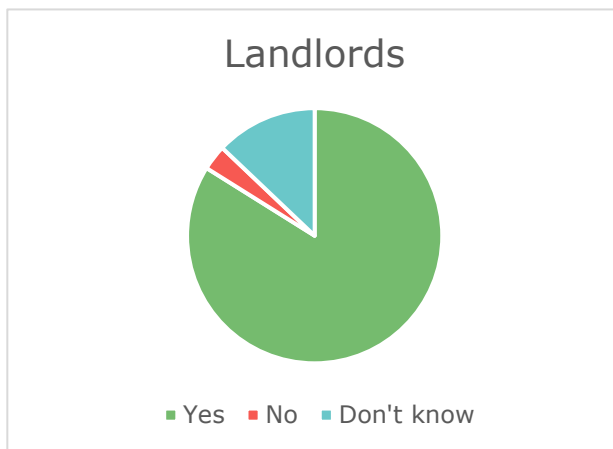
Q. Do you think this should apply to all of Scotland or broken down into local authority areas?

Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Locally	1	20%
Nationally	4	80%

Tenants Response		
	Number	%
Locally	19	32.2%
Nationally	32	54.2%
Don't know	8	13.6%

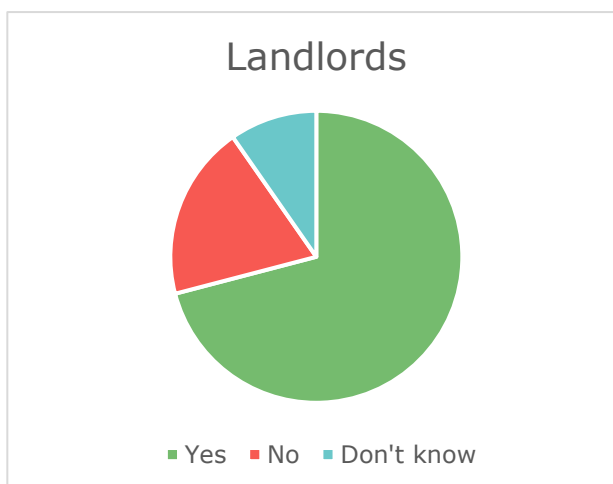


Q. Housing to 2040 is suggesting an agreed statement and shared understanding of affordability. Do you agree with this proposal?



Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	26	83.9%
No	1	3.2%
Don't know	4	12.9%

Q. Do you still increase rents if you have high reserves?



Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	22	71%
No	6	19.4%
Don't know	3	9.7%

Note

It was explained that this can fund e.g., new builds, lower rent rises etc. Tenants were concerned over reserves – many landlords said reserves were accounting practice and did not reflect money in the bank – tenants would welcome an explanation of this.

Q. Do you think the rents for newbuilds should be calculated differently?

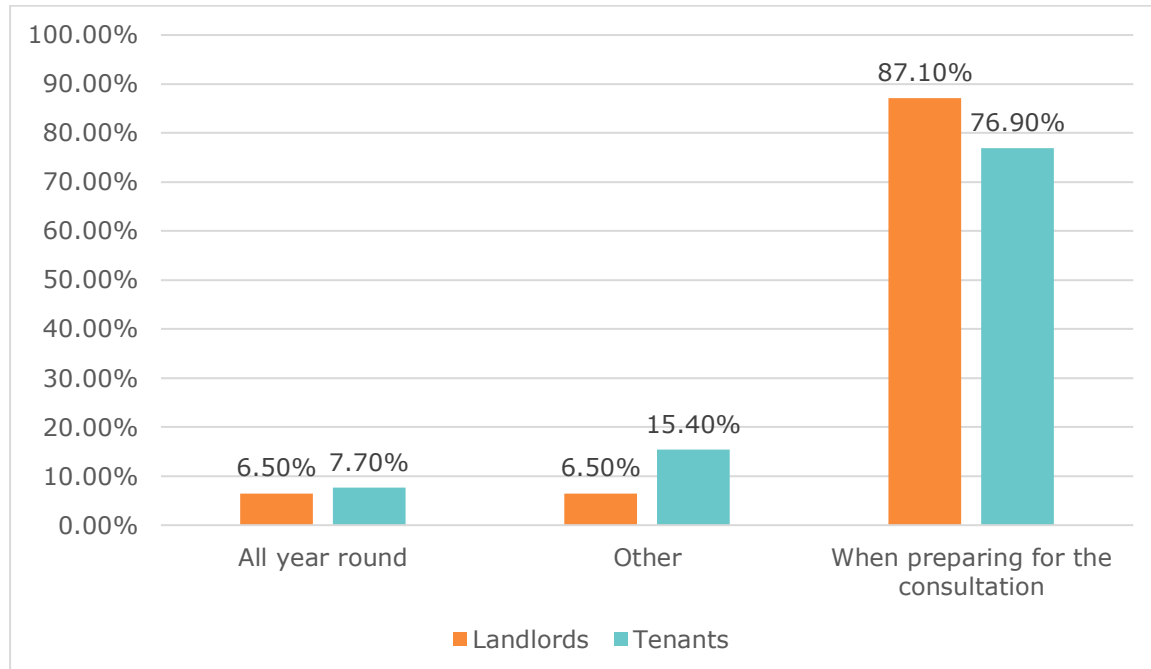


Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	13	41.9%
No	14	45.2%
Don't know	4	12.9%

Tenants Response		
	Number	%
Yes	27	40.3%
No	25	37.3%
Don't know	15	22.4%

7.2 Tenant Involvement

Q. At what stage of preparing for rent setting are tenants involved?

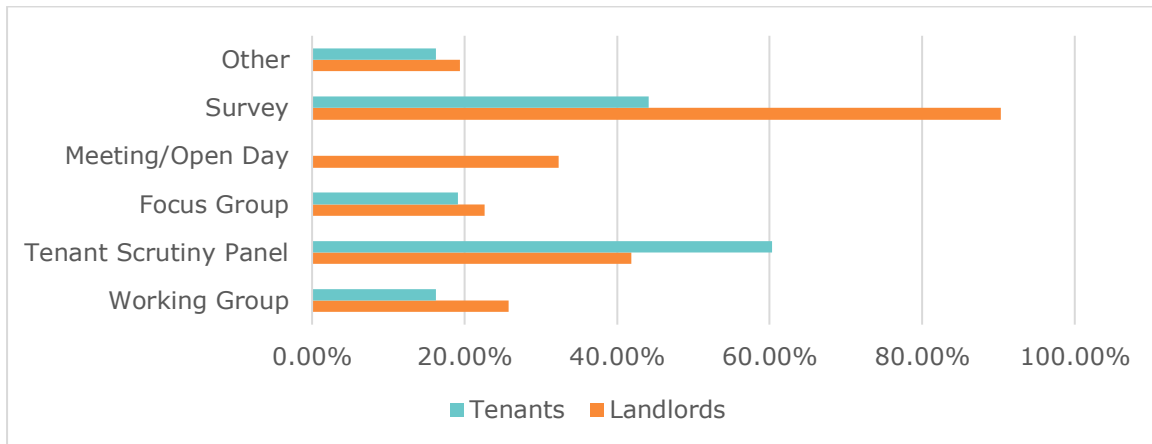


	Landlords		Tenants	
	Number	%	Number	%
All year round	2	6.5%	3	7.7%
Other	2	6.5%	6	15.4%
When preparing for the consultation	27	87.1%	30	76.9%

Note

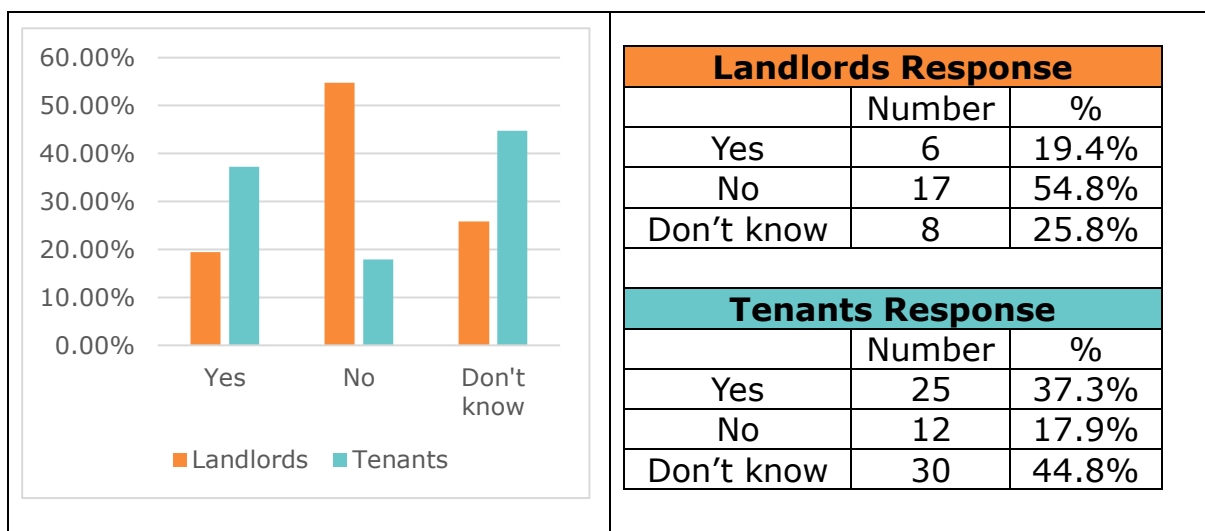
The majority of respondents said when the decisions are made on options - preparing for the consultation – some examples of all year round and linked to business plans, Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP).

Q. What form does your tenant involvement take in the actual rent levels which tenants will be consulted on?



	Landlords		Tenants	
	Number	%	Number	%
Working Group	8	25.8%	11	16.2%
Tenant Scrutiny Panel	13	41.9%	41	60.3%
Focus Group	7	22.6%	13	19.1%
Meetings/Open Days	10	32.3%	0	0.0%
Survey	28	90.3%	30	44.1%
Other	6	19.4%	11	16.2%

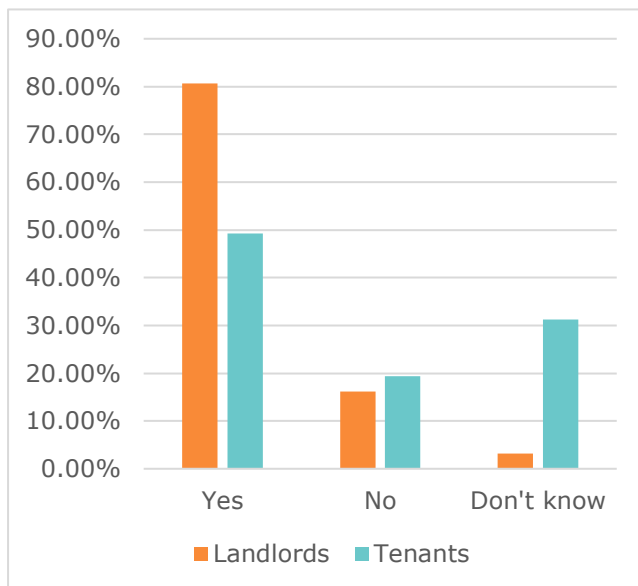
Q. Other European countries have controls/caps in place for rent setting. Do you think a similar system would work in Scotland?



Note

Tenants keen to find out a bit more how this works in other areas.

Q. Has the Landlord changed the involvement methods to encourage tenants to be more involved?



Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	25	80.6%
No	5	16.1%
Don't know	1	3.2%

Tenants Response		
	Number	%
Yes	33	49.3%
No	13	19.4%
Don't know	21	31.3%

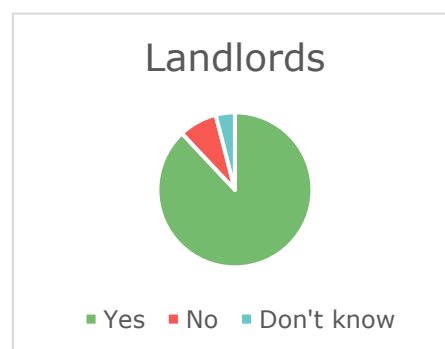
Note

More use of face to face, digital and social media – both tenants and landlords worried about low turn outs and feel discussions should take place about increasing uptake. Those who did change methods and saw increased involvement would still prefer to have more uptake.

Tenants want their landlord to use other methods - more face-to-face consultation and improved promotion of the consultation and the importance and impacts of tenant involvement- common theme it has to be more than digital – use a range of options.

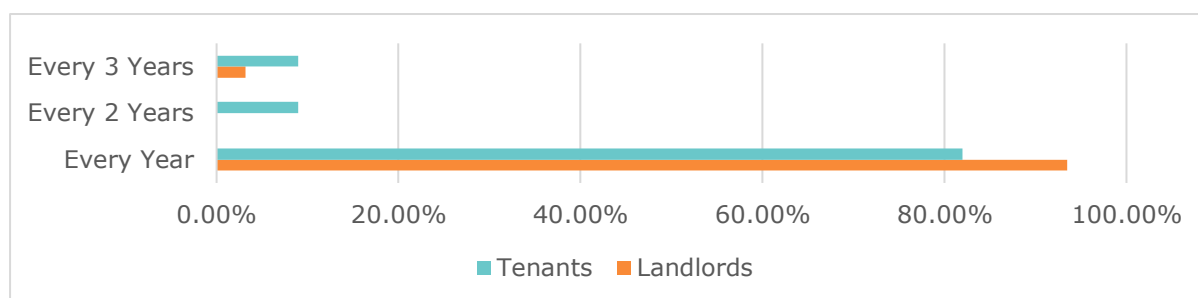
Q. Was this new approach more successful?

Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	22	88%
No	2	8%
Don't know	1	4%



7.3 The Consultation Process

Q. How often do you consult tenants on rents?

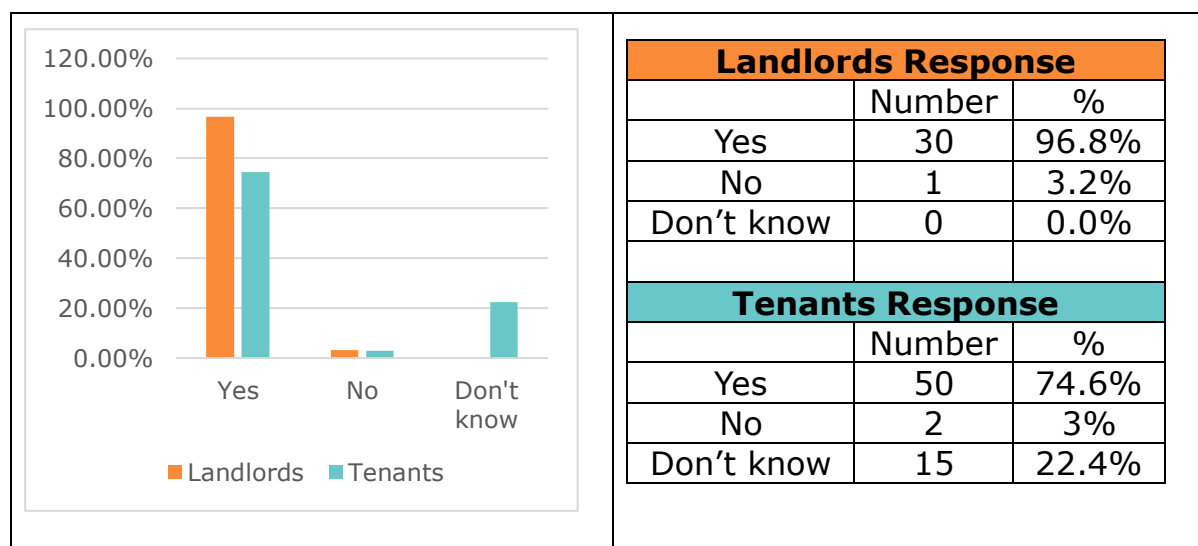


	Landlords		Tenants	
	Number	%	Number	%
Every year	30	93.6%	55	79.1%
Every 2 years	0	0.0%	6	9%
Every 3 years	1	3.2%	6	9%

Note

Some landlords have agreed with tenants 3–5-year programme of rent setting linked to investment.

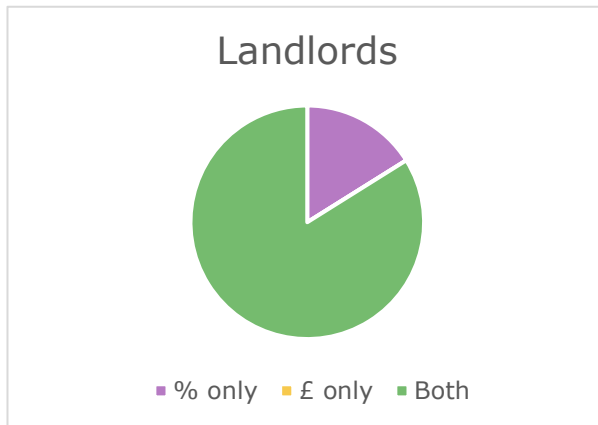
Q. Do you ensure you include ALL your tenants, for example options to provide information in different formats, languages?



Note

Good quality information jointly produced between tenants and landlords with signposting to support or other formats or languages

Q. Do you consult on rent rise options using:-

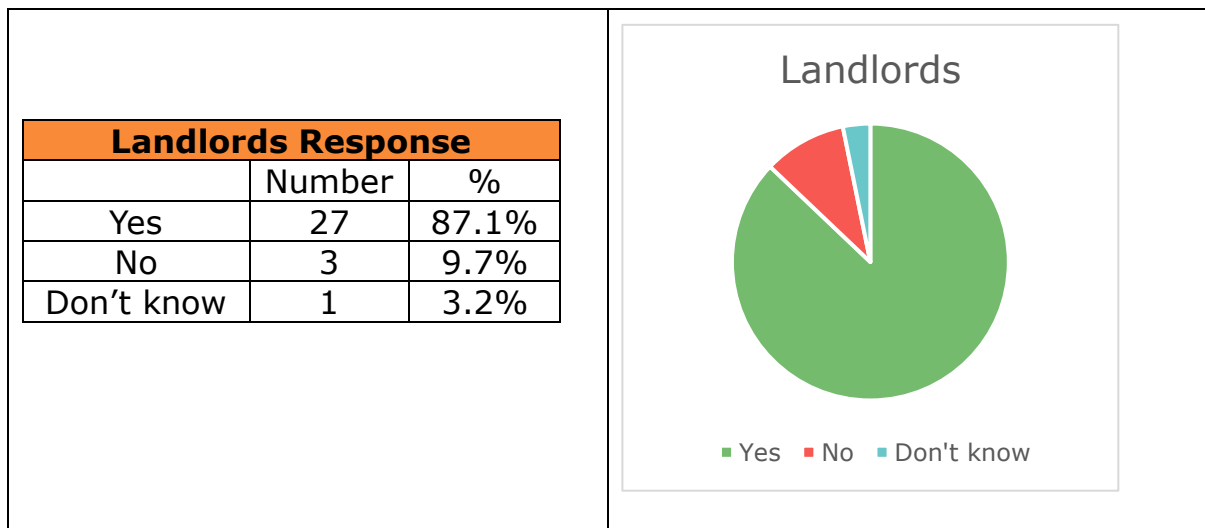


Landlords Response		
	Number	%
% Only	5	16.1%
£ only	0	0.0%
Both	26	83.9%

Note

Tenants' preference is for amounts to be shown as monetary value with examples rises for different house types. Acknowledged this may be challenging for landlords with complex rent tables

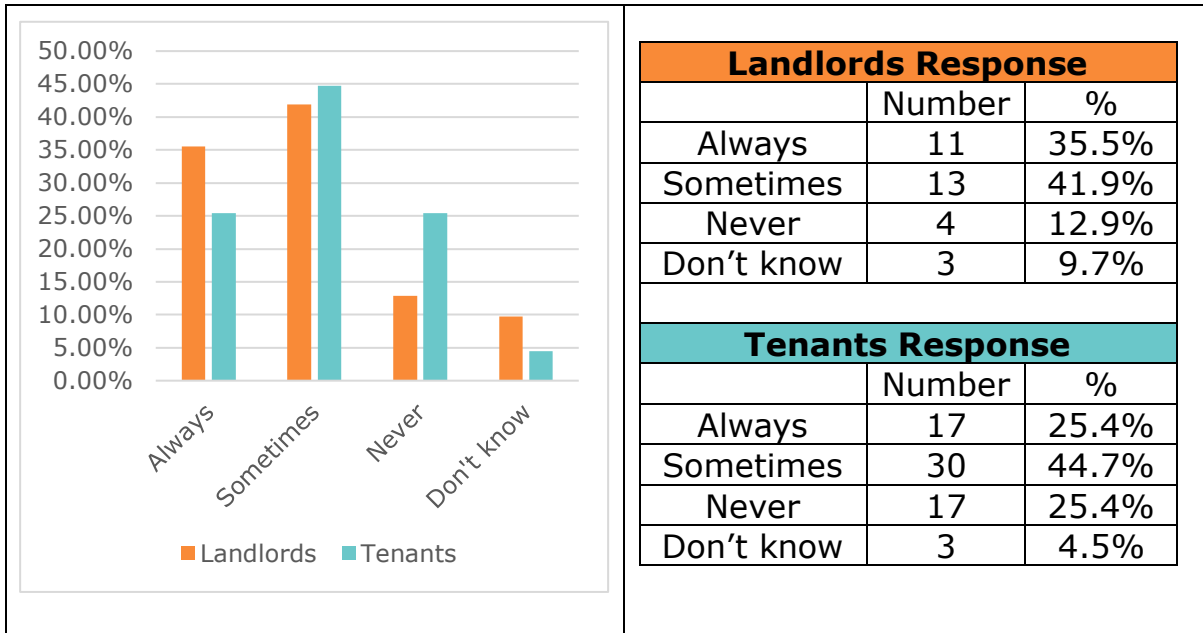
Q. Do you offer support for tenants to take part?



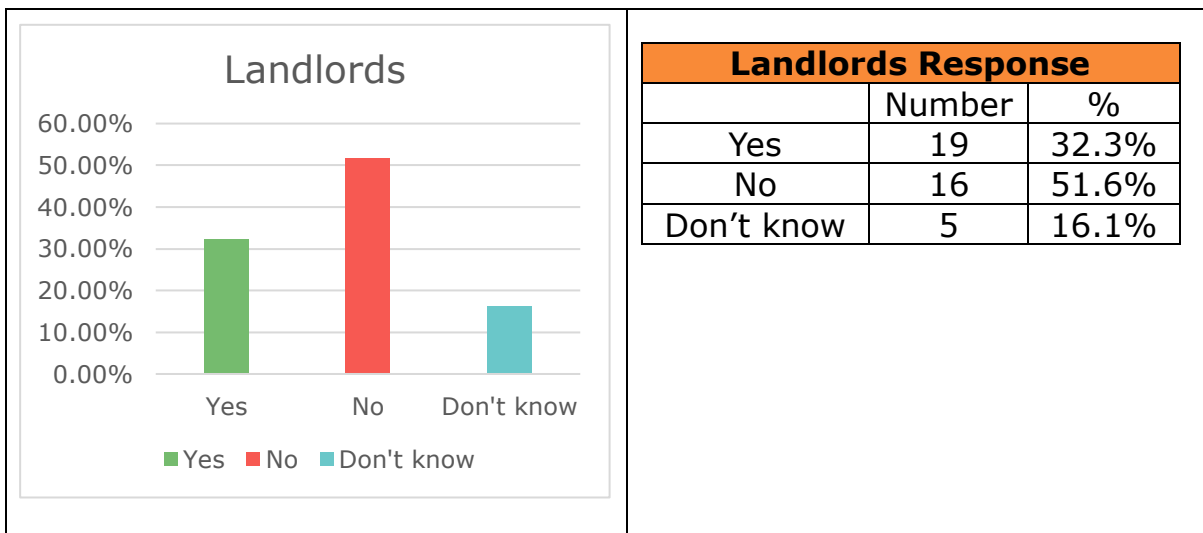
Note

Good range of support methods mentioned

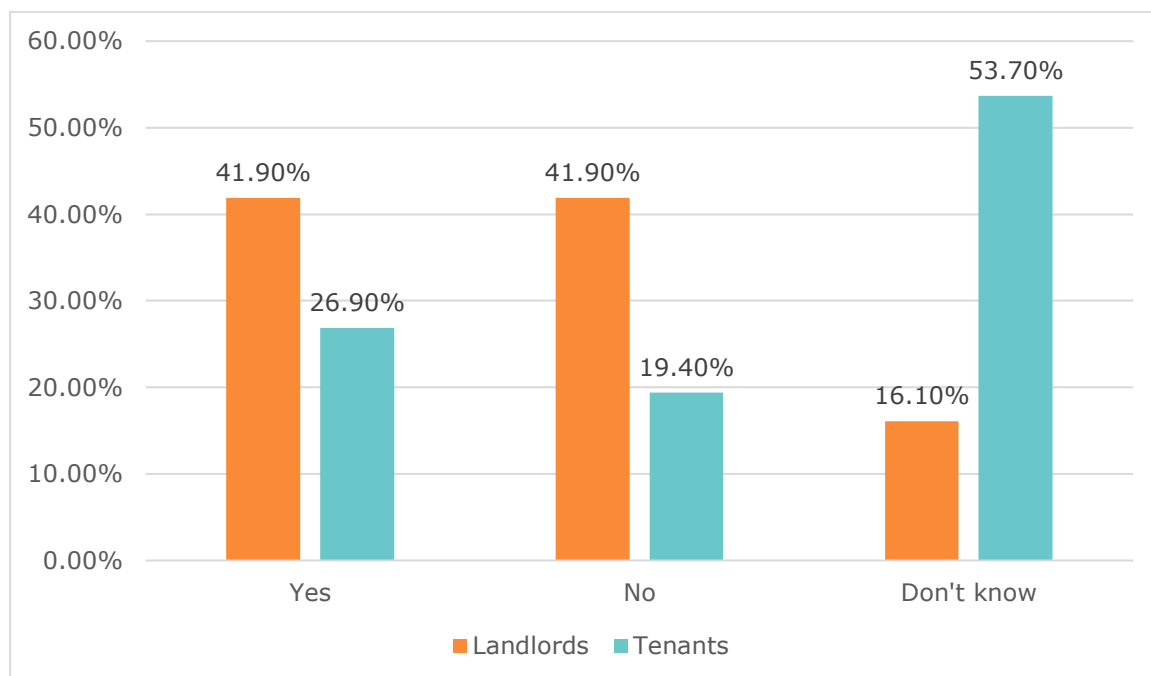
Q. Landlords often suggest that the majority of tenants views will set the rent. Do you use the majority view of tenants to set rents?



Q. Does it depend on number of respondents?



Q. Has the governing body/landlord ever overturned the tenants majority views?



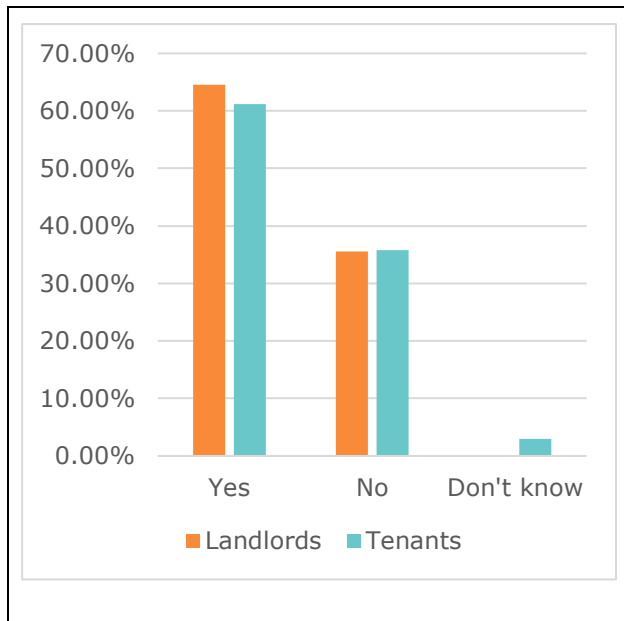
Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	13	41.9%
No	13	41.9%
Don't know	5	16.1%

Tenants Response		
	Number	%
Yes	18	26.9%
No	13	19.4%
Don't know	36	53.7%

Note

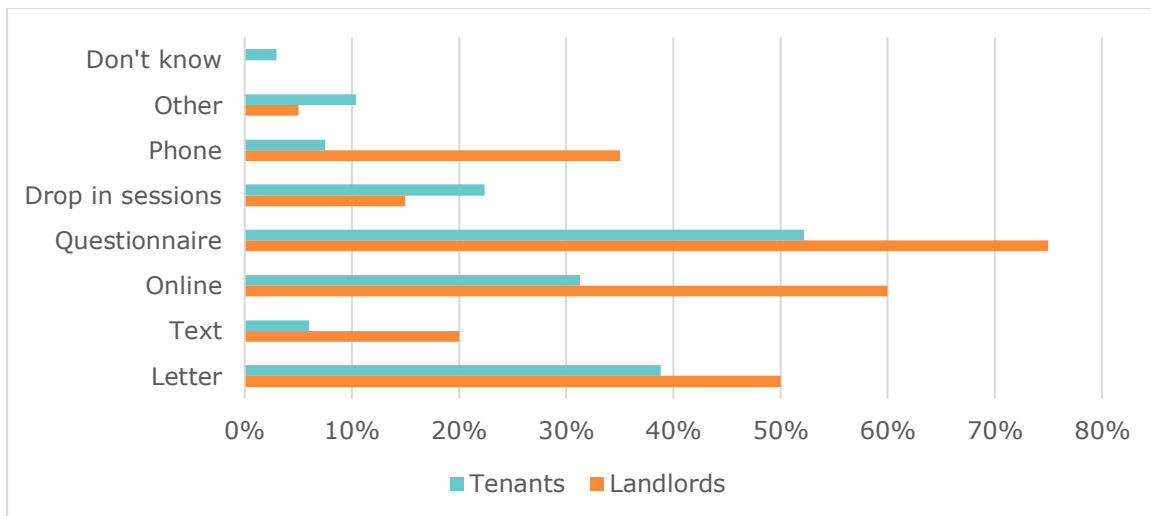
Concerning that tenants' views are being ignored in 50% of decisions. Also concern that tenants didn't know if their views were taken on board, perhaps this was not communicated to tenants? Ignoring tenants view could stop tenants from taking part in the future – why bother if ignored. Tenants concerned that some of the options are not affordable, don't give options if they are not realistic.

Q. Were tenants able to vote on options?



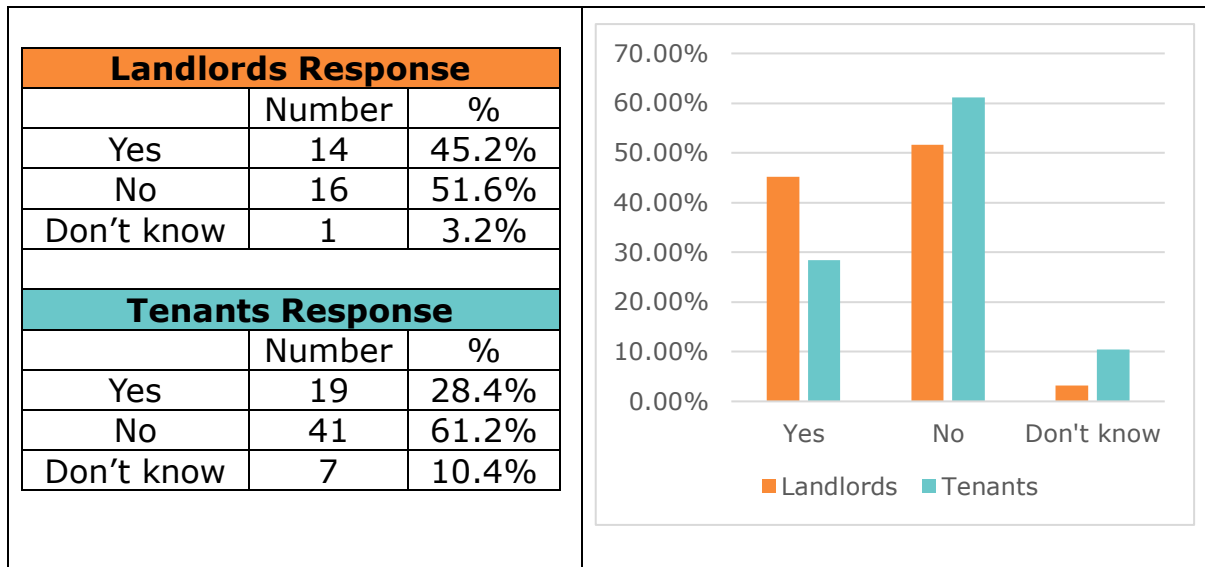
Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	20	64.5%
No	11	35.5%
Don't know	0	0.0%
Tenants Response		
	Number	%
Yes	41	61.2%
No	24	35.8%
Don't know	2	3.0%

Q. How was the voting conducted?

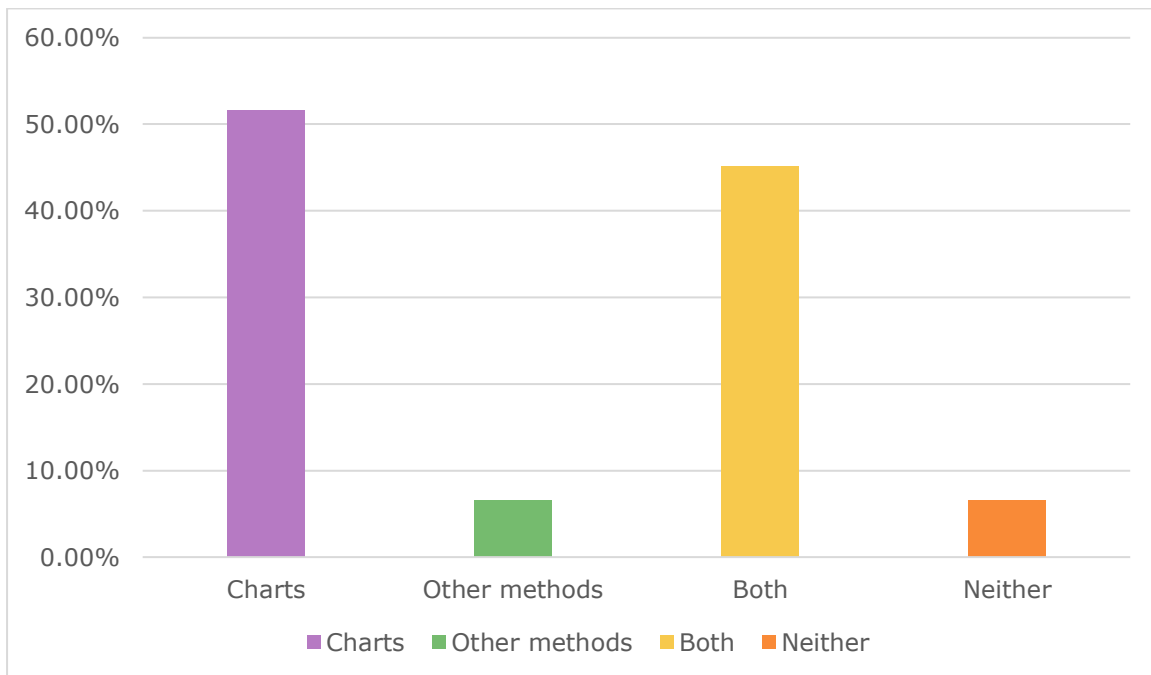


	Landlords		Tenants	
	Number	%	Number	%
Letter	10	50%	26	38.8%
Text	4	20%	4	6.0%
Online	12	60%	21	31.3%
Questionnaire	15	75%	35	52.2%
Drop in sessions	3	15%	15	22.4%
Phone	7	35%	5	7.5%
Other	1	5%	7	10.4%
Don't know	0	0.0%	2	3%

Q. Did you offer an incentive for tenants to take part?



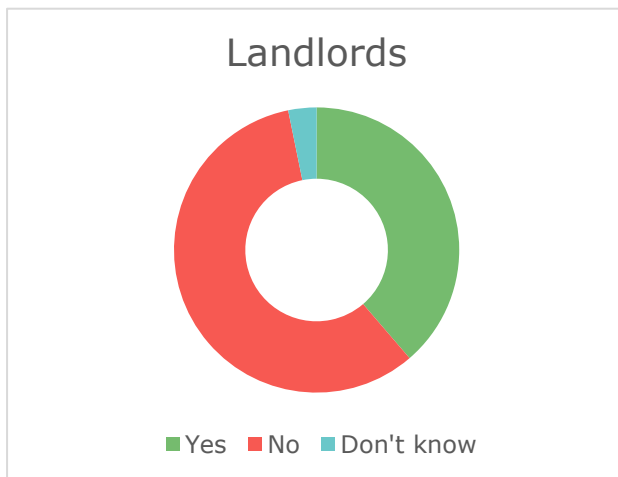
Q. Do you give information on how rent money is spent in chart forms or other means?



Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Charts	16	51.6%
Other methods	2	6.5%
Both	14	45.2%
Neither	2	6.5%

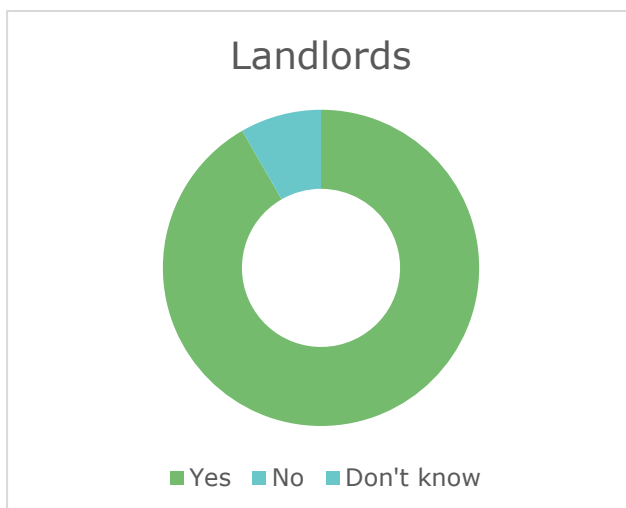
7.4 Harmonisation

Q. Have you carried out a rent harmonization programme in the past 5 years?



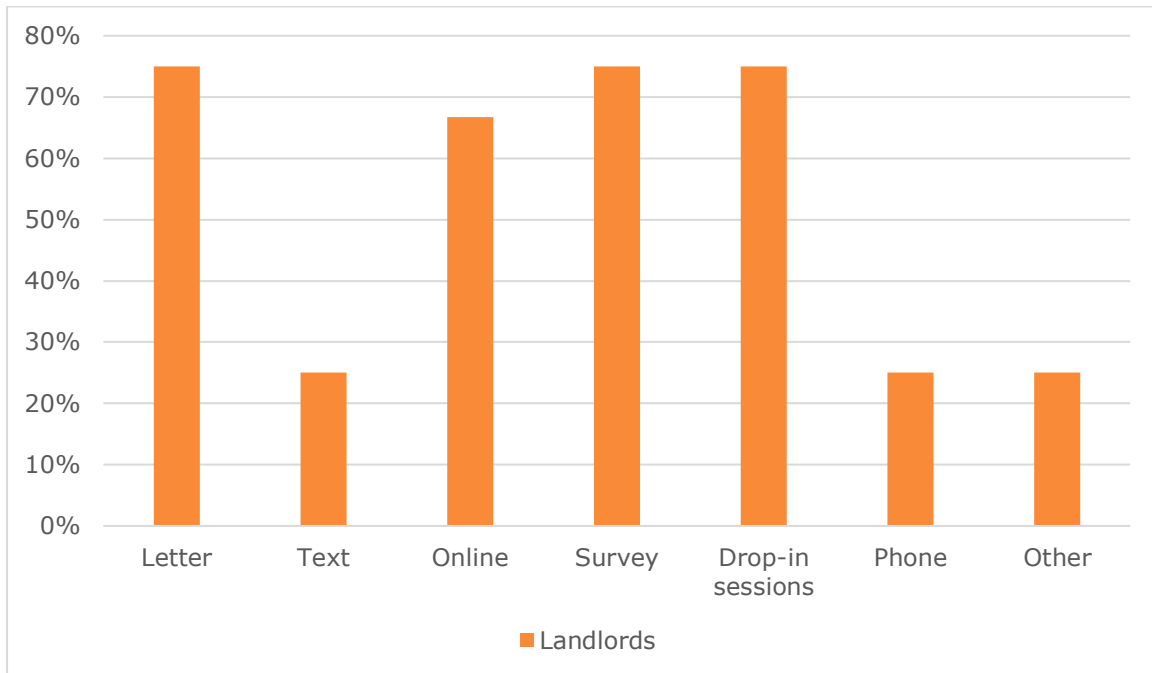
Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	12	38.7%
No	18	58.1%
Don't know	1	3.2%

Q. Were tenants involved in developing the harmonization proposals before consultation?



Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	11	91.7%
No	0	0%
Don't know	1	8.3%

Q. What methods did you use to consult tenants over the proposals?

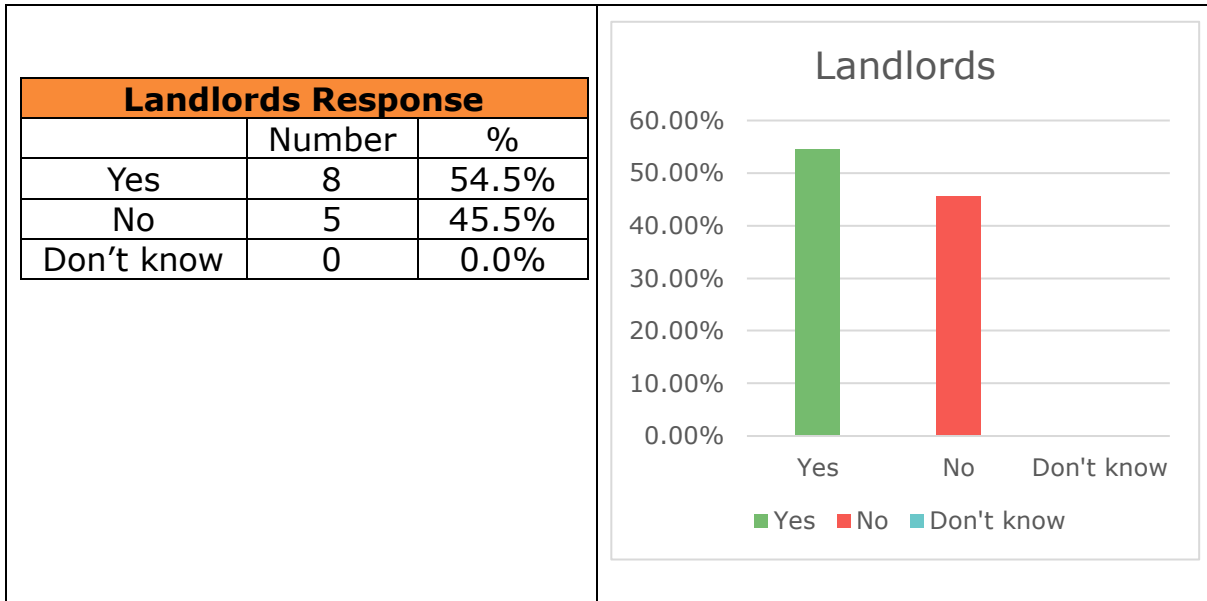


Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Letter	9	75%
Text	3	25%
Online	8	66.7%
Survey	9	75%
Drop-in sessions	9	75%
Phone	3	25%
Other	3	25%

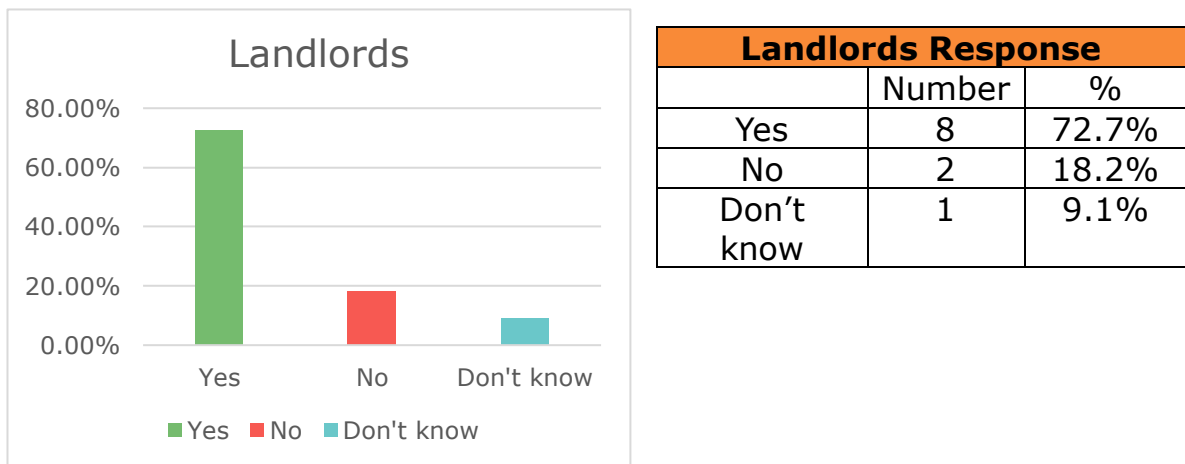
Q. Did you take the tenants preferred opinions into account?

Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	11	100%
No	0	

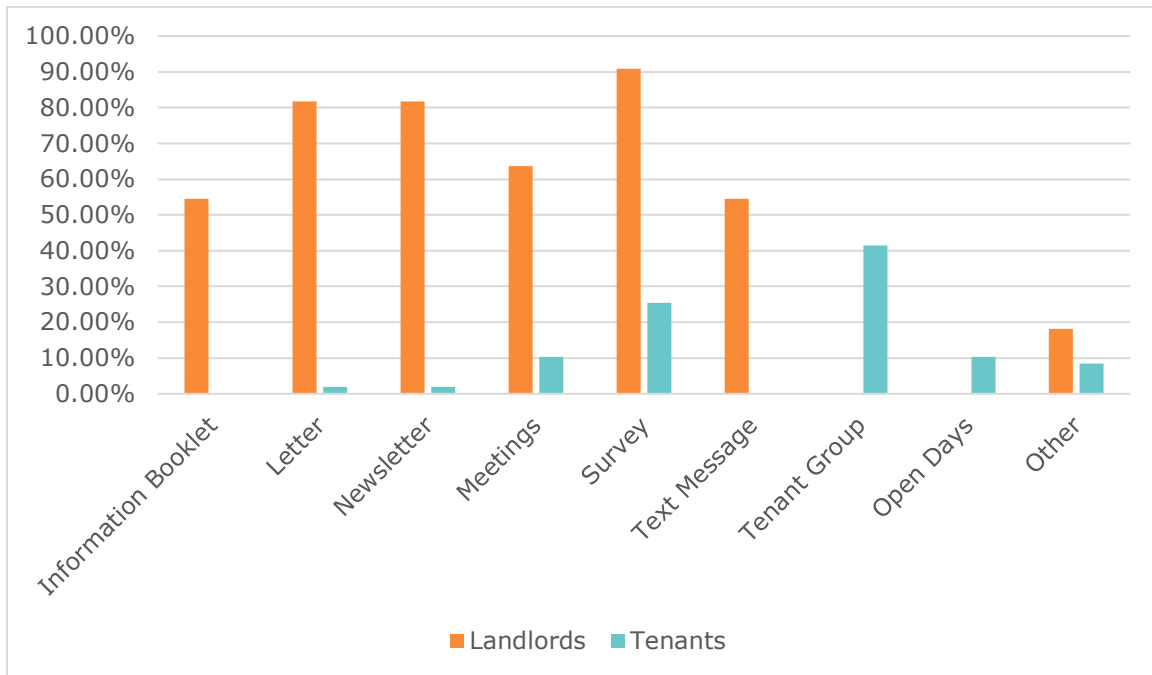
Q. Did your consultation have an upper limit cap on increases and decreases?



Q. Did you phase in increases/decreases?



Q. What information do your tenants get and in what format?



	Landlords		Tenants	
	Number	%	Number	%
Information Booklet	6	54.5%	0	0.0%
Letter	9	81.8%	2	1.9%
Newsletter	9	81.8%	2	1.9%
Meetings	7	63.6%	11	10.4%
Survey	10	90.9%	27	25.5%
Text Message	6	54.5%	0	0.0%
Tenant Group	0	0.0%	44	41.4%
Open Days	0	0.0%	11	10.4%
Other	2	18.2%	9	8.5%

Q. This research will be followed by focus groups. Are you interested in taking part in follow-up focus groups?



Landlords Response		
	Number	%
Yes	16	51.6%
No	15	48.4%

Tenants Response		
	Number	%
Yes	43	64.2%
No	24	35.8%

8 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Findings

While the questionnaire and focus groups represent a small sample size there are some key themes and good practice examples emerging. The findings and recommendations are grouped under the following headings

- *Lived experience around value for money (tenants only)*
- *Rent setting – how the proposed rent levels were agreed, and at what stage tenants were involved in the process*
- *The consultation information and options for tenants to have their say*
- *Other issues*

Value for money

The majority of tenants responding said their rent was affordable. This response could have been impacted by the timing; the questionnaire took place just before the current economic crisis really hit. A larger thematic study was carried out by the Scottish Housing Regulator in September 2022. It found that “Tenants and their families are facing an incredibly difficult and worrying period ahead. Our most recent findings from the survey of the [National Panel of Tenants and Service User](#) included that 28% of tenants that responded have experienced difficulties affording their rent and other housing costs in the last year, up from the previous year but down from the level in 2020. More than 9 in 10 respondents identified energy and food costs as key factors in terms of increased cost of living, and just over 7 in 10 were concerned about future affordability of their rent.”

Rent setting

Most landlords use an affordability tool from either Housemark Scotland or the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations. An affordability tool enables landlords to compare their rents with other local and national organisation and input other key information such as energy costs, the business plan to help with rent setting. many tenants were unaware of the use of such a tool.

Most landlords said they increased rents even if they have high reserves. Reserves are monies set aside for long term investment, they can be used for example – flood defence measures, fund new homes, lower future rent rises etc. Some landlords noted that the reserves were accounting practice and not money in the bank.

Landlords set the rent based on, for example, the number of bedrooms, the type of property, whether it's a house or a flat - this is known as the rent table. Some landlords differentiate between urban and rural properties with rural properties being cheaper, but in this survey, most landlords use the same rent table for the same size and type of property no matter where they are located.

The majority of landlords use CPI to calculate their rents. CPI is The Consumer Price Index it measures change over time in the prices paid by consumers for a representative basket of goods and services such as bread, fuel costs etc. If the Landlords policy is to raise rents by CPI and CPI goes up 2%, then the rent will also go up 2% in their rent calculation.

Most landlords do not include location or amenities in rent calculations, around half of tenants, mostly rural, thought this should be taken into account, but also strong argument around, if the landlord does not provide the amenities, why should tenants pay the landlords for them.

The majority of Tenants and Landlords noted that options for rent rises were included in the rent consultation with good information on each option. For example 1%, 2% or 3% rise and listed what each option would provide in terms of services and investment to homes.

Rent caps - Tenants were supportive of rent caps for the PRS as it offers protection, but concerned that there is no similar protection for the social sector.

Information and consultation

Tenants prefer monetary examples to be given in the rent setting consultation information rather than expressed as a percentage, most landlords said they used both.

Many tenants were concerned that some of the options for rent rises are not realistic and not affordable to maintain good quality services.

Tenants and landlords were both concerned over low numbers of tenants getting involved with the rent setting consultation. Most landlords have changed their methods of consultation which has improved involvement. Half of the tenants who responded thought their landlord should try new methods to encourage involvement. Many tenants were concerned that the only option for responding to the consultation was digitally, either online or through social media.

The information for tenants on the rent proposals was noted as good and easy to understand, particularly when tenants were involved in the design of the information. Information was available in other formats and languages and support is offered to help with the consultation.

There was around a 50/50 split of landlords who included service charges in the total rent and those who did not. Tenants strongly supported service charges being itemised to enable them to identify services they pay for but do not receive.

A majority of tenants and landlords noted that whilst tenants are involved in the rent setting process, this is only when the decision on proposed rent rise options was being made.

Other issues

- *Tenants were unsure of a National Board for rent setting, similar to the European models but were keen to find out more about how National Boards work.*
- *Unanimously, the emergency legislation was not popular with tenants or landlords as it created some confusion over any rent rises in 22/23 but it did offer some protection for the private rented sector.*

8.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1.

In the rent setting information Landlords provide for their tenants they should set out how rents are set, whether they use any affordability tools and how these are useful in setting rents, this could form part of a face-to-face consultation, or a simple explanation in the rent setting information with signposting to more information and tenants' views will be used and accounted for in the decision-making process.

Recommendation 2.

Strong argument to use Septembers CPI rates to calculate rent, this would then match with pensions increases. This was strongly supported in the focus groups. and was included in questionnaire and the analysis.

Recommendation 3.

Tenants should be consulted locally regarding taking local amenities into account when rent setting.

Recommendation 4.

As good practice tenants should be involved in the development of the information given to tenants for the rent setting consultation and in the methods used to consult.

Recommendation 5.

In the rent setting information landlords should use monetary values over percentages to demonstrate potential rent rises.

Where possible average rent rises should be demonstrated in monetary value and property type. This is difficult for landlords with complex rent tables, but signposting to other more detailed information in the website could be used.

Recommendation 6.

Service Charges - where they are not included as part of the rent (the group are aware that some service charges are included in the rent, this

means housing benefit or similar will cover the costs) then they should be clearly itemised in the rent notification letter.

Recommendation 7.

Reserves should be explained to tenants what they are used for, and any accounting practices related to reserves – this could be a signpost to additional information on the website and/or explained at a face-to-face event.

Recommendation 8.

Tenants and landlords should also work together to plan the consultation using a variety of methods, including traditional and newer methods, to capture the views of more tenants, and ultimately more robust data.

Recommendation 9.

Only realistic affordable options should be used in the consultation using a range of realistic increases and what each proposed increase means for existing service levels and planned improvements.

Recommendation 10.

Tenants and landlords should work together to plan the consultation using a variety of methods, including traditional and newer methods, to capture the views of more tenants, and ultimately more robust data.

Recommendation 11.

That the Rent affordability group create a toolkit or similar on good practice in rent setting learned from the survey and focus groups.

There is a "[Guide to Successful Tenant Participation](#)" which includes a section on "Involving Tenants in Rent Setting" on the Scottish Governments website. Click on the above link and go to page 53 (page 69 of pdf).

Recommendation 12.

After doing a consultation on rent increases where you ask tenants to choose their preferred option that you gave them, go with the majority.

The Rent affordability group wishes to thank all the tenants and landlords who took part in the survey and focus groups, all the guest speakers and the Scottish Government for their support.

Any questions or for any information about this report,
please email info@regionalnetworks.org