



# RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT 2013/14

# FOREWORD

2013/14 has been an extremely successful year for resident involvement at Octavia. This Impact Assessment highlights the ways that residents have had a positive impact in helping to improve Octavia's services.

Residents, through a range of involvement options, have given valuable feedback and have influenced decision making. Highlights include:

- ▶ Our highest ever attendance at YourSpace, Octavia's annual resident event.
- ▶ Over 400 residents sharing their views by completing surveys online, contributing on service improvements panels or participating at local events.
- ▶ Three residents are members on our Board and influenced decisions to retain 'life-time' tenancies and not to limit current succession rights to tenancies.
- ▶ The Tenant Steering Group (our main on-going resident involvement group) influenced policy decisions including keeping incentive payments at the same level for downsizing and compensating residents who are decanted depending on individual circumstances.
- ▶ Resident Inspectors checked the quality of voids before they are re-let to ensure we work to consistent standards and listened in to live calls to our Customer Services Team in order to make suggestions on how our telephone service can be improved.
- ▶ The Services Scrutiny Panel looked into our response to noise nuisance reports and our service charge service, both topics were voted by residents as priorities at our YourSpace event.

One of Octavia's newest involved residents

shared her experiences of being involved:

*"As a new member of the Services Scrutiny Panel over the last year I have found it a very rewarding experience. Not only has it been an opportunity to gain an overview of the general administration of Octavia in all its various aspects it has been a pleasure to be more involved and of course to meet new people. I have not only attended Octavia SSP meetings, joint SSP/TSG meeting but events with other Housing Providers from across London and the Home Counties all of which have been positive and informative. This year I have specifically worked on the Service Charges project looking to ensure that the information given to Tenants, Shared Owners and Leaseholders is clear and easily understandable. The aim of this project is also to assist Octavia Officers in their handling of this very important subject. I would encourage anyone who would like to be involved not to hesitate to volunteer their time and energy as I believe anyone would find it very worthwhile."*

## **Patricia, Services Scrutiny Panel Resident Member**

We look forward to working with more residents in 2014/15 to ensure we learn from their feedback, provide meaningful involvement opportunities, and work together on service improvements that have a real impact.



**Anna de Souza,  
Resident  
Involvement  
Manager**

## What is this report about?

Octavia believes that good homes make for better lives. To help us achieve this, we involve residents and want them to genuinely influence what we do. This report looks at the different ways residents have been involved over the past year, and what has changed as a result.

## How do I use this report?

Each activity has been assessed to see what impact it has had on our services, and whether the activity was value for money. In other words, has your involvement changed the way our services are provided for the better, and how much has it approximately cost (where it is possible to measure the cost).

## Level of impact

To measure the level of impact, we have rated the activity either low, medium or high:



**High** This is where changes have been made to our policies and procedures, affected our business plan, or will affect the way services are provided to a large number of our residents.



**Medium** This is where changes may be local, but will have a large impact on the way services are provided.



**Low** This means that services have been affected at a local level, or will only have an impact for a small number of residents.

## Value for money

For each activity we display the number of staff hours, approximate total cost, and cost per home. These are displayed in the following way:



The number of staff hours (including preparation and follow up time).



The total cost of the activity (including staffing costs).



The cost per home.

To assess whether the activity provided value for money, we calculate the cost per home to give us a rating of low, average or high cost:



The equivalent cost per property is under £1.



The equivalent cost per property is between £1-3



High cost: The equivalent cost per property is over £3.

## Overall rating

After assessing the level of impact of each activity, and whether it was value for money, we have given each activity an overall rating.



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# TSG

The Tenant Steering Group (TSG) are a group of tenants, elected by tenants to represent the views of Octavia tenants. The TSG are committed to improving services to ensure that policies and procedures are fair and meet the needs of residents.



The TSG have been influential over the last year helping to shape our policies and improve services. Some key examples of their impact are:

- ▶ **Allocations Policy:** after consultation with the TSG, Octavia kept downsizing incentives at current levels (£3k per room released plus removal costs).
- ▶ **Complaints Policy:** TSG felt that the government's idea of a 'designated persons' complaints panel was a duplication as Octavia already has a complaints panel - Octavia agreed and have not set up such a panel.
- ▶ **Abandoned Properties Policy:** TSG wanted Octavia to include more checks in procedures before taking action (e.g. checking with other agencies and local hospitals) and these checks are included in the procedures.
- ▶ **Parking and Abandoned Vehicles Policy:** TSG recommended consideration is given to relatives dropping off elderly/disabled residents. The procedure now instructs contractors to wait ten minutes to take this into account.
- ▶ **Decant Policy:** TSG were not in favour of a fixed payment approach for disturbance, and Octavia



60 hours



£3990.90



£0.95



Impact



Cost



Rating overall

have continued with an approach based on the level of disturbance and individual circumstances.

- ▶ TSG members formed a sub group panel to review Resident Board Member applications. Their input during the shortlisting process provided a valuable resident perspective.

*"To be involved as a resident or elected TSG member in an organisation as big as Octavia it can create a wealth of knowledge and social connections with in the company and the community. If you have an opinion join one of the many elected positions or attend a focus group as I have done over the past year. What is even better is that people actually care what you think and act upon it".*

**Christopher, new TSG Member**

# VIEWPOINT

Viewpoint is our resident consultative pool. Viewpoint members can provide their feedback online, by phone or by post and at a time which is convenient for them.



This is a quick and easy way for residents to be involved from home, and is a flexible way for us to obtain feedback on our services and address service delivery issues:

- ▶ Membership increased to 402. 101 new residents joined ViewPoint in 2013/14.
- ▶ 53 Viewpoint Members responded to a resident satisfaction survey with 82% residents being satisfied with the services provided by Octavia overall. One of the lower satisfaction scores was with service charges.
- ▶ Viewpoint members were invited to attend a Service Charge discussion group, led by Services Scrutiny Panel members. Residents provided their feedback which included: clearer information, ensuring accuracy in service charge statements, and wanting more evidence of value for money. The Services Scrutiny Panel will be making recommendations based on this feedback.
- ▶ Homeowners provided Octavia with feedback regarding how they would like to be consulted. 13 residents responded. They preferred to attend local events and mostly did not wish to be involved with Octavia via social media. Seven local events involving homeowners were held following this feedback.



**19 hours**



**£335.73**



**£0.08**



**Impact**



**Cost**



**Rating overall**

- ▶ Members were asked about their views on anti-social behaviour (ASB). 183 residents responded to the survey with 86% of residents advising they would report ASB to Octavia, however 44% of residents did not think Octavia was effective in dealing with ASB. The feedback has led to a number of improvements including recruiting 'tenant friends' to support those experiencing ASB, promoting mediation for neighbour disputes, and setting up a regular ASB and Neighbour Dispute Panel to give us on-going feedback.

*"ViewPoint is a great way to obtain views from residents, some of whom who may not otherwise get involved. Residents can choose to give their views from home through the web or over the phone so it is incredibly flexible. With over 400 members, Viewpoint also helps to ensure that we get feedback from a diverse and wide range of resident groups."*

**Kam Chung, Head of Service Development**

# RESIDENT ASSOCIATIONS

Octavia residents can have more influence when they work together and form a collective voice. One way to achieve this is by setting up a Resident Association. Residents may want to start a group or association for various reasons, such as to build safer neighbourhoods, organise a social event or to campaign for estate improvements in their local area. Octavia actively support these groups, and are able to provide financial support in the form of start-up grants and annual grants of £250 subject to being officially recognised.



This year we supported two Resident Associations and worked with two other resident groups.

- ▶ Peel House
- ▶ Waites Court
- ▶ Kenley Walk
- ▶ Brightwells and Lowlands
  
- ▶ Brightwells and Lowlands RA (pictured above), although not officially recognised, is a great example of local residents working together. Key concerns such as the parking gate and car park barrier were discussed and residents were kept updated regarding an anti-social behaviour and tenancy enforcement case.



36 hours



£1056.82



£0.25



Impact



Cost



Rating overall

- ▶ Peel House Resident Association discussed issues around anti-social behaviour, CCTV, communication with Octavia, service charges and proposals to lease out disused car park spaces. Residents were not in favour of proposals to sell spare parking spaces and this did not go ahead - an example of the Resident Association having real impact and gaining the confidence of residents.

- Waites Court Resident Association welcomed new residents to the Association as residents moved into the redeveloped Waites Houses. They can now use the new community room built as part of the redevelopment. They addressed a number of common issues in the year including resolving some communal repairs and defects and getting more information on service charges.
  
- The Kenley Walk Community Association (pictured below) do not receive direct funding from Octavia and members of the Community Association manage the Kenley Walk Community Hall. Octavia staff met with the Community Association to discuss the future of the hall which was coming up for a new lease. The group wanted access to the community hall as it plays a vital role as a 'community space' and getting local residents together (for their Christmas party and other resident events). It was agreed that the Kenley Walk Community Association will have access to the hall on weekday evenings and weekends and use of the community hall would be put out to advert for use during the week from 8am-6pm.



*"By meeting residents from the Peel House Resident Association and Kenley Walk Community Association we were able to understand residents' concerns about proposed changes and have taken these into account when we came to decision affecting their local areas".*

**Andy Warman, Assistant Director,  
Alternative Tenures**



# LOCAL RESIDENT EVENTS

Local events are a great way for residents to meet other residents and Octavia officers to discuss local issues and concerns. Octavia held regular resident events at a range of different sites, some were requested by residents, and others planned by patch officers or in response to consultations and scheme developments.



- ▶ Over 380 residents participated in local resident events including door knocking exercises, resident meetings and drop in surgeries at street properties. Events took place at Fernhead Road, Portobello Road, and Bravington Road, schemes at Winterbourne House, Bourbon Lane, King George Crescent, Riverains, Lampton Road and Barley Close amongst others.
- ▶ Local events in 2013/14 resulted in: subletting cases being investigated, better links with the local Police Safer Neighbourhood Team, improved updates for complainants regarding anti-social behaviour cases and supporting and assisting vulnerable residents to sustain their tenancies.
- ▶ A consultation meeting was held at Marshall House with residents about the sale of a part of the communal garden. Residents were provided with the detailed plans and time scales and Octavia will provide the residents with a small budget to make some improvements to the remaining communal garden space. Residents



125 hours



£6381.30



£1.52



Impact



Cost



Rating overall

really enjoy the communal garden and have agreed to the proposals.

- ▶ Fun Days at Pulton Place (organised jointly with Shepherds Bush Housing) and at St Michaels Road and Alan Coren Close, a new development, helped raise awareness of Octavia services, and provided residents with the opportunity to meet one another and strengthen local connections whilst enjoying some fun activities such as face painting, sports activities and smoothie making!



# SHARED AREA IMPROVEMENTS



Every year we put money aside to improve the shared areas at some of our homes. We use this money to carry out works that go beyond our normal responsibilities as a landlord. If residents live in a rented property or a mixed tenure development residents can bid on behalf of themselves or their neighbours for a grant of up to £25,000.

Shared areas are spaces inside or outside of our properties that are used by all residents, for example lobbies, shared gardens and recycling areas.

Examples of improvements works can include, cycle storage, upgrading footpaths and walkways, improving rubbish and recycling

areas, landscaping shared gardens, or improving security.

The bidding process is resident led, and bids are approved by a residents' panel.

In May 2013, we invited residents who wished to make a bid to an introductory session to explain the process in more detail, including the criteria against which bids would be assessed.

In September 2013, the residents' panel agreed which bids would be awarded a grant, and the lead residents for each bid were able to put their cases forward for receiving a grant. Successful bids included security improvements, a new gate to a shared front garden, and additional CCTV.

*"As the process is resident led from the initial application stage, to the awarding of grants, this scheme really involves residents in thinking about how they can proactively improve where they live, for the benefit of themselves, their neighbours and the wider community".*

**Andy Carlisle, Estate Services Manager**

# COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

The Communications Group are a group of involved residents who meet at least four times throughout the year to review key Octavia publications such as the annual report, newsletters and other key resident documents, our website, and overall approach to communication.



29 hours



£430.07



£0.10



Impact



Cost



Rating overall

- ▶ In 2013/14, the group looked at a proposal and draft structure for the new Octavia Housing website and on the proposed 'Welcome to your new home' booklet for new tenants.
- ▶ An interactive workshop looked at the proposed design of the Annual Resident Report for 2012/13. Residents suggested keeping the text of the report simple and clear, using a softer font, good use of pictures, and avoiding acronyms. All their feedback was reflected in the final report.
- ▶ Group members gave feedback on Octavia's plans to streamline communications by grouping services into categories and introducing an icon and colour coding both on our website and our hardcopy literature to make information clearer and easier for residents.
- ▶ The new resident website was discussed including residents' top three searches and

hints on how to make the website more attractive and accessible. Key suggestions included creating a separate tab for residents, including specific information on resident's tenancy, local events and having a dashboard.

*"The Communications Group continue to run successfully. The diverse group became more confident in sharing their views and ideas. More recently, it was one of our residents, who provided great comments and suggestions on how to improve the resident's website in a way that residents can creatively engage with Octavia. The Communications Group has enabled us to get instant feedback, allowing us to produce the best possible newsletter and website content for residents".*

**Neha Bhatt, Communications and PR Officer**



# YOUR SPACE! 2013

YourSpace! our annual resident involvement fun day aims to engage with as many Octavia residents as possible. It is also an opportunity to promote our wide range of services to residents.



This year YourSpace! attracted approximately 204 residents from 110 households. This was our highest ever turnout.

The event included a 'dot democracy' session with residents voting on their top priorities. The top issues included service charges and taking action against anti-social behaviour cases. Both issues were subsequently looked at by our Services Scrutiny Panel (as detailed below).

The 'digital inclusion' theme of the event was a popular feature of the day, promoted by use of the iPads, demonstrating our website and capturing residents priorities using a virtual pin board. Residents enjoyed a delicious Caribbean lunch and fun activities including smoothie making, a digital inclusion themed mural, sports activities, exercise dance mats, magic entertainment and face painting as well as a one stop shop for Octavia queries.



184 hours



£10,000 Approximately



£2.38



Impact



Cost



Rating overall



*"Everything is there for tenants who need help and to meet their officers" and "Very happy with the energy saving help and several other services, particularly the Foundations help with finding employment".*

Octavia tenant



# RESIDENT SCRUTINY

2013/14 has been a busy year for residents engaged in scrutiny. The Services Scrutiny Panel (SSP) consists of residents and independent members. The Panel looks in depth into two or more services each year to identify improvements:

The SSP carried out two main scrutiny projects in 2013/14:

- ▶ How do we respond to reports about noise nuisance. This was a priority identified by residents at YourSpace. SSP members checked our performance and compared this to other Associations, interviewed staff, and visited a number of residents who had reported noise problems. The made a number of recommendations that were implemented including: new fact sheets about neighbour disputes; setting up a 'tenants' friend' scheme to support residents experiencing ASB; and promoting use of mediation where helpful.
- ▶ Service charges, another priority from YourSpace. The SSP held a resident focus group, looked at performance and a range of related documents including service charge statements and our procedures, carried out a satisfaction survey, and interviewed staff. They will be reporting on the findings and making their recommendations later this year.

The SSP report and make their recommendations directly to the Board giving them real influence. Once recommendations are agreed, the lead Octavia senior manager is tasked to come up with an improvement plan which is tracked by the SSP until completion.

One of the outcomes of the noise nuisance scrutiny was the creation of a Noise Nuisance

and Neighbour Dispute Resident Panel. This Panel now meets quarterly to quality check the service: reviewing the consistency of Anti-Social Behaviour and Neighbour Dispute classifications, compliance with policy and procedures, and checking the decision to close a case. One resident said the panel provided a

*"Good insight into noise nuisance. Gained valuable information and a better understanding of procedures implemented by Octavia. Felt more assured that Octavia is focusing on problems".*

Networking with other residents in the field of scrutiny is important and SSP resident members attended the London Tenant Scrutiny Network conference and met residents from over 40 housing providers who are actively involved in scrutiny. Members also attended a West London Resident Involvement and Scrutiny workshop held in partnership with Octavia A2Dominion, Shepherds Bush Housing, Notting Hill Housing and Network Housing, which was facilitated by Campbell Tickell. These events are great opportunities for residents to exchange experiences and identify best practice. Feedback from residents about these events is very positive, one said:

*"Fantastic event. Meaningful. Informative. Wonderful to share experiences with other tenants and resident involvement officers. Full of ideas, left feeling empowered. Energised"!*



# RESIDENT INSPECTORS

Our Resident Inspectors are a group of trained residents who check on specific services and provide feedback to improve services. Three Resident Inspector projects were completed in 2013/14:

- ▶ Voids project- Inspectors completed the final round of void property inspections. Key findings included; window keys were missing, window frames had been painted 'shut', some external communal gardens and paths required attention, and some toilets were blocked. The overall feedback from over fifteen inspections was positive and the Inspectors worked well with our contractors to rectify any problems that were identified. Generally Inspectors felt that the properties met service standards and were happy to give them their resident seal of approval.
- ▶ Customer Service Officer calls project- The aim of the project was for Resident Inspectors to identify areas where they felt calls could be handled differently to improve the experience of callers. Four resident inspectors carried out checks on service standards by listening into live incoming calls to the main switchboard and the transfer of the call. The feedback from the team was promising and found that the overall quality of call handling by CSOs was high with the highest scores referring to the initial pick up stage and the call handling stage. They identified a few improvements in terms of consistency when asking for information about the caller before transferring the call, and this has been fed back to the team.

- ▶ Development project- The aim of the project was for the Resident Inspectors to carry out inspections of the communal areas of new build blocks. Resident Inspectors carried out an inspection at four relatively new build schemes. Some of the key learning points identified by the Inspectors were: positioning of communal bin areas to deter a build-up of bulk waste, positioning of communal lighting (particularly when on a sensor) to improve safety and the positioning of bike sheds which needed tighter security to avoid being used to store personal items or bulk waste which could be a health and safety fire hazard.

*"As all the call monitoring was through live listening this was not the easiest of exercises to complete and I am very grateful to the inspectors for their flexible approach to 'hunt down' the incoming calls. Having a residents listening ear has helped us to see some of the things we do well but it has also given us some food for thought about wider issues on the response customers should expect, something we need to progress in the year ahead".*

Liz Riches, Customer Service and Rehousing Manager.



# RESIDENT DIVERSITY GROUP



Equality and Diversity affects all of us and is an important involvement area.

The Resident Diversity Group, a small group of residents who meet quarterly and monitor Octavia's Equality and Diversity strategy action plan, received a number of reports including:

- ▶ changes to the care sector and provided useful feedback on how to promote care services and attendance at day centres for older residents;
- ▶ Estate improvement bid process. The group discussed how this valuable resource can be better advertised in future.

- ▶ Celebrating diversity - The group were instrumental in ensuring that diversity was celebrated by suggesting the theme for the annual Diversity day which was held in December 2013, promoting Human Rights Day. On the day, a lunch and learn session consisted of a thought provoking myth buster presentation from the Refugee Council and one ex-Octavia residents account of how she had fled Iran to Britain and the support she received from the Octavia Foundation.

After consultation with residents and staff, the separate Diversity Groups for residents and staff will join together for all meetings in future as one Octavia Diversity Group. Together we hope to have more impact on checking on the diversity aspects of Octavia's main projects in work plans. Residents will also have more input into organising events such as the next annual Diversity day, and YourSpace.

*"The Resident Diversity Group have continued to have a real impact in terms of helping us to deliver our diversity strategy this year and keeping us focused on the important issues which affect our residents on a day to day basis".*

**Maeve MacAvock, Director of Housing and Care**



# TRAINING FOR RESIDENTS



Octavia is committed to developing residents potential so they can play a greater role as involved residents. Offering residents training can help to encourage residents to get involved and provide them with learning which can benefit them in other areas of their lives. One resident told us following a training activity that they felt it was a

*“Supportive environment, enjoying being involved. Learning and developing in the activity”.*

TSG members attended a TSG Induction session which included learning more about Octavia as a landlord, where our properties are and the history of our organisation. This was followed by a skills based learning exercise using Myers Briggs and other interactive learning tools to identify different strengths within the group and encourage residents to work together in a more cohesive way.

Two residents attended the LSE Welfare Reform Think Tank Conference in Chester. The roundtable event was a great opportunity for residents to meet other residents from across

the country and share personal experiences of the impact of welfare reform and how different landlords are responding and supporting affected residents.

A Committee Skills and Chairing Meeting training session was aimed at building residents confidence, providing residents with effective skills during meetings and assisting Resident Association leads when dealing with difficult situations or when chairing meetings. Residents benefited from group and role play exercises, improve their communication skills, and learn problem solving techniques. The feedback from residents was very positive:

*“This training is really useful and important to refresh the core of my role and strengthen my skills”.*



# REPAIRS PANEL

The Repairs Panel are a group of six residents who meet every three months to monitor the performance of our repairs contractors.



The Repairs Panel have made significant changes to improve the customer experience. Residents were invited to attend a focus group to share their experiences of the repairs service and to obtain their specific recommendations for improvement.

- ▶ In 2013/14 residents agreed that inviting the contractors, Mears and Village Heating to attend every other Repairs Panel meeting would help build a rapport between residents and the contractors and help share the 'resident experience'.
- ▶ It was agreed that the Repairs Panel would hold two focus groups inviting residents who have made a complaint or expressed dissatisfaction with the repairs service, to share their experiences so that lessons can be learnt.



72 hours



£1616.76



£0.17



Impact



Cost



Rating overall

- ▶ 17 residents attended the first focus group, which included nine previously uninvolved residents. The group discussed their experiences of the repairs service and key concerns included repairs not being completed during the first visit, issues around the accurate diagnosis of repairs and problems with repairs operatives when parking their cars on site. The issues identified then formed the basis of agenda items at future Panel meetings.

*"A great response from an enthusiastic group of tenants wishing to become involved with a newly revamped repairs panel intent on bringing about positive change to an already accomplished repairs service".*

**Steve, Chair of the Repairs Panel**

# OCTAVIA FOUNDATION



## Octavia Foundation

Our community charity - the Octavia Foundation run a range of community projects that help to build local community life and support people in disadvantaged situations. During 2013/14 they helped 1,258 local people (including many Octavia residents) through their various initiatives. The detail of their valuable work is already set out elsewhere so is not duplicated here. A few examples of the Octavia Foundation's work that has overlaps with resident involvement include:

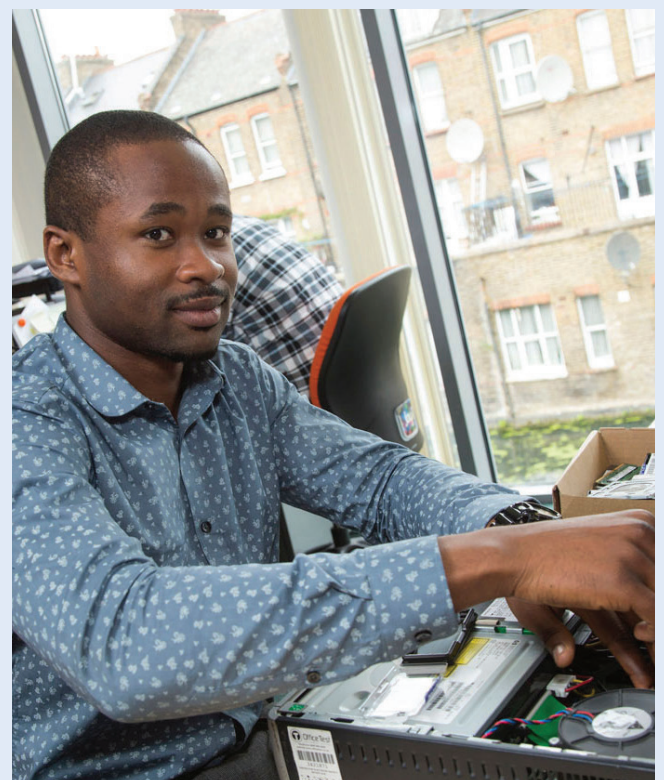
### Youth Work Apprentice

The Foundation recruited the first ever Youth Work Apprentice, Zakia an Octavia resident who had been involved with the Foundation's youth programmes since 2008. Her journey with Octavia started with attending BASE, the free cultural and creative club for young people, and then volunteering with the Octavia Foundation before the Apprenticeship opportunity came up.

The Octavia Foundation Employment and Training programme is a supportive and flexible employment and training programme, tailored to resident's personal circumstances. The Employment and Training programme helps residents identify employment opportunities, write a professional C.V, identify their skills with professional mentors, and arrange voluntary experience whilst receiving 1-1 support. In 2013/14, 113 Octavia residents were engaged with, 17 residents were helped into volunteering

projects and 21 residents were helped to secure employment.

An Octavia resident Abdul had been unemployed for two years when he approached the Foundation to gain experience within IT. Having recently graduated from Queen Mary University with an MSc in IT, Abdul experienced difficulty in securing job interviews owing to his lack of work experience. The Foundation's employment advisor Kyrsha helped Abdul update his CV and improve his interview technique before he gained a volunteer placement with Octavia's IT team.



This was exactly what Abdul was looking for and the efficient manner in which Abdul attended to colleague's IT queries meant that many did not initially realise that he was a volunteer. After 4 months of volunteering, Abdul successfully applied for a job within Octavia's IT department in May, and is now a paid intern. He is highly valued by the IT team and will study further IT certificates over the next 2 years to continue to enhance his knowledge. Abdul says of his success *"This is a great opportunity for my future career in IT"*.

Another Octavia resident, Rita volunteered as an administrator with the Estates Services team during which she also spent time with Customer Service and Housing teams to gain an overview of the departments at Octavia. She also spoke at the Employment & Training team's briefing to Octavia staff about the service, and she said:

*"I am currently in voluntary employment with Octavia (Estate Services Team). I feel I have been encouraged and supported well in my pursuit to finding paid employment. This support has given me confidence and get used to a working environment routine. I have been able to use and build on my dormant skills. The staff have not seen my disability as a barrier in any way and have been proactive in assisting me"*.

# OTHER METHODS OF RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

During the year there have been many ways residents have been involved using other forms of engagement.



▶ In order to prepare our residents for the Welfare Reform change, we worked with the Octavia Foundation, local Job Centre Plus and the National Careers Service and hosted an Employment Opportunities pilot event. The event targeted the Wilcove estate and surrounding areas in NW8, providing residents with money management and welfare benefit sessions and the National Careers Service and Job Centre Plus attended offering practical support such as skills based learning, CV writing support, interview tips and showcasing job vacancies. As one resident said *"I got five jobs to apply for :) Universal tax credit worries sorted out also, thanks"*

- ▶ In October 2013, a Mutual Exchange event was held with representatives from Home Swapper, Citizens Advice Bureau and Octavia staff to help residents experiencing overcrowding to share details so residents could view each other's properties. The Lettings Team used the event to try and match households who were overcrowded with those who were under-occupying and had requested assistance with moving.
- ▶ Octavia are part of the West London Resident Engagement Group which was established in September 2012. WLREG brings together housing associations and councils in West London to share good practice and work together to provide training opportunities for their residents and to identify opportunities for joint working initiatives. Octavia have committed to offering a wider range of training to their residents and by working with WLREG. A training brochure has been designed that highlights training opportunities which can be provided to residents from all the landlords who are part of the group.



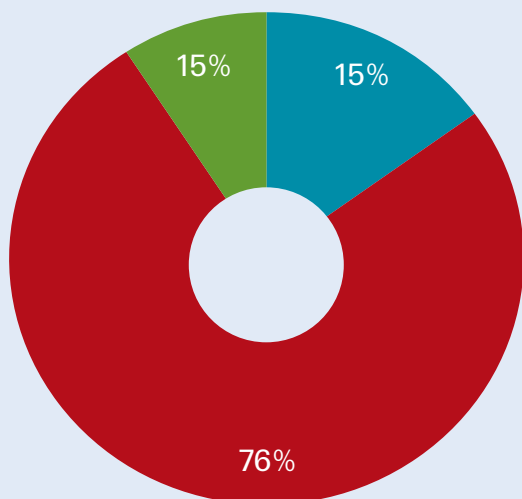
# WHO WAS INVOLVED?

In order to provide effective and engaging involvement opportunities to our residents, we regularly monitor their profile to ensure we are getting a broad and representative range of views and our activities are accessible to all. We rely on residents completing our feedback forms after an involvement opportunity so we can learn more about the demographics of our involved residents. Thanks to those who completed the feedback forms.

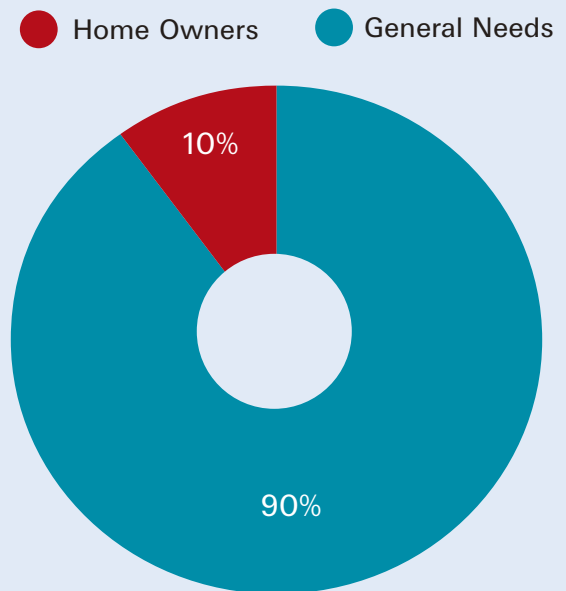
The following information shows who has been involved over the last year:

## Involved Residents with a Disability

- Yes
- No
- RNS

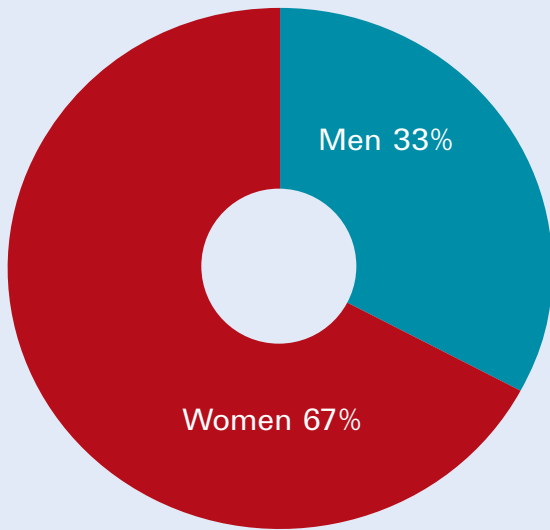


We want all of our involvement opportunities to be accessible for our residents. We can offer a range of options such as hearing aid loops, sign language, BSL Interpreters and wheelchair accessible venues to ensure residents can fully participate. We monitor the data received from our residents to ensure that their needs are being met and ask for their recommendations on how to improve. Our Care and Support team staff are also able to provide advice and guidance and offer practical assistance if needed.



We want to ensure that residents from all tenures have the opportunity to be involved, particularly on our mixed tenures schemes. Over 2013/14 the majority of involved residents are living in general needs properties however we have seen an increase in homeowners being involved, particularly on our Resident Associations committees, at focus groups and at our annual YourSpace event. We aim to increase homeowners involvement to increase homeowner's involvement. We work very closely with our Neighbourhood Team and ask them to identify schemes which would welcome resident involvement whether it be a resident meeting, drop in surgery, fun day or other type of involvement.

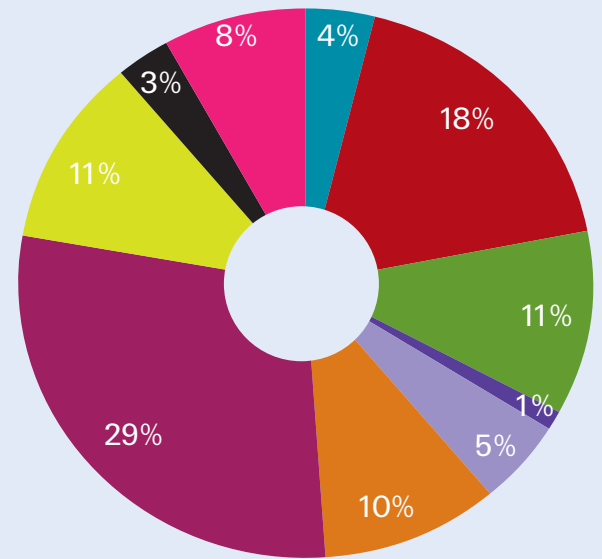
### Gender



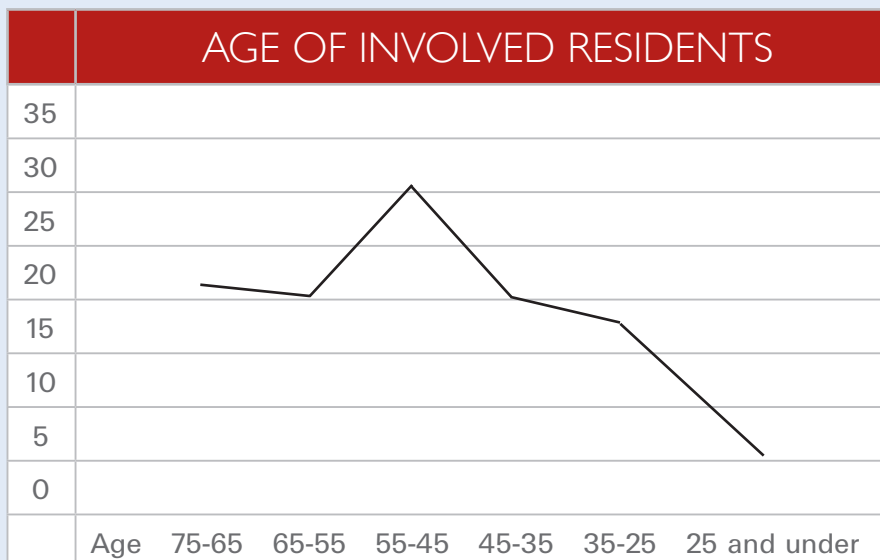
The percentage of men being involved has decreased slightly from last year by 2% and is now 33%. The percentage of women involved over the year has increased and is now 67%. Men are slightly under-represented amongst involved residents.

There has been a slight increase of 3% of Black Caribbean or Black African residents who have been involved this year compared to last year. 6% of involved Black or Black British residents and a 4% decrease of White British residents who have been involved over the year. White British residents are slightly under-represented amongst involved residents. The number of Asian involved residents has remained the same and there has been a 7% increase in residents who classify their ethnicity as 'other' and do not provide any further information.

### Ethnic background

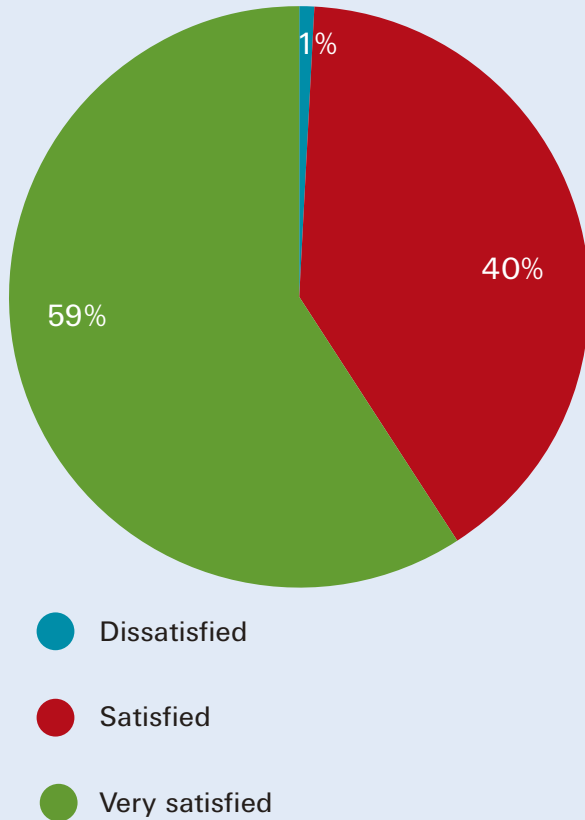


- Arab
- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Colombian
- Asian
- Mixed
- White British/Irish/Scottish/Welsh
- White other
- RNS
- Other



Residents aged between 55-45 account for the majority of involved residents but we have seen an increase in residents in their 30's who are getting involved. We are trying to engage with younger residents at sign ups, getting to know you visits and at involvement events in partnership with the Octavia Foundation's youth projects.

## Resident's satisfaction levels with being involved



## Resident satisfaction with involvement activities has gone one up 1% from last year to 99%!

An endorsement from one of our long standing involved residents:

**Laila, TSG member.**

*"At first I did door-knocking. It was hard at first. But I have spread my wings a little and I have got to know the residents. We all know each other well now. I have enjoyed finding out a little bit more about people. I've got a lady upstairs who is in her 80s - she is my adopted nanny now! I have got to know so many people here. They know my kids too.*

*I gained more experience, too - and that's how*

*I started my new job. It was a recommendation from someone who works for the neighbourhood office who knows me and my work with Octavia. I work for a regeneration charity. I really enjoy it.*

*So this has changed my life. I have become a more confident person. I used to have very low self-esteem, but doing this has boosted me up - and I want to do more. I like to be challenged".*



# THANK YOU TO ALL OUR RESIDENTS

We would like to say thank you to all our involved residents for their positive contribution over the last year. Your involvement has led to key service improvements and provided us with invaluable feedback to help us improve the way we work and the services we offer.

Please contact us if you need any part of this information in Braille, on audio tape or explained in a different language.

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