

Tenant Futures Programme 2014-15

External evaluation of the National Communities Resource
Centre's Tenant Training Programme for the Financial
Year 2014-15

CASereport 93

Alice Belotti

LSE Housing and Communities, London School of Economics

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About LSE Housing and Communities

LSE Housing and Communities is a research unit within the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) at the London School of Economics led by Professor Anne Power. CASE is a multi-disciplinary research centre which focuses on the exploration of different dimensions of social disadvantage, particularly from longitudinal and neighbourhood perspectives, examining the impact of public policy. We aim to understand the social dynamics of disadvantaged neighbourhoods; promote models of housing and neighbourhood management; develop ways to support communities and resident self-help action, especially in social housing areas; and shape government policy.

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1. Summary

The National Communities Resource Centre (NCRC) at Trafford Hall commissioned LSE Housing and Communities to carry out an external evaluation of the Tenant Futures programme for the financial year April 2014 to March 2015.

Between May and July 2015, LSE carried out secondary analysis of administrative data and evaluation material provided by Trafford Hall, five in-depth interviews with key informants, and semi-structured interviews with **57 participants**. The aim was to uncover the personal, as well as the wider group and community benefits, of the Tenant Futures programme, and to identify what works and what does not work in its implementation.

The evaluation shows that:

Evidence of implementation

- **All but one Government targets were met. Two targets were exceeded**, namely the number of courses run (39, instead of 36), and the number of tenants undertaking accreditation (269, instead of 170). The only target which was not met was the percentage of tenants new to Trafford Hall - 36% of all delegates, as opposed to a Government target of 45%.

Participant characteristics

- The majority of the delegates attending Trafford Hall training are **White British**, are aged **over 50**, come from the **North West and the Midlands**, and are **housing association tenants**. According to the last English Housing Survey, 15% of all household reference persons in social housing are BME, a **mismatch of 6%**. According to these figures, tenants from **ethnic minority background** are **underrepresented** at Trafford Hall. Tenants from the North West are overrepresented (37%, as opposed to a concentration of social housing in the region of 14%), while those from the **South East and London, the East and the South West** are **underrepresented**. **Local Authority tenants** are **also overrepresented** over Housing Association tenants.

Trafford Hall as a training venue

- Evidence from Trafford Hall data and LSE interviews converge to show that Trafford Hall is **rated highly by participants as a training venue**. The overwhelming majority (96%) of delegates rate it as either good or excellent, while 91% rate the quality of the catering as either good or excellent. Interviewees like the **hospitable atmosphere**, and appreciate the **friendly staff** and the **good food**.

Quality of training

- The majority (85%) of the delegates think the level of the course is **about right**, especially those provided by Burkitt Vernelle, Engage and GOGY. The majority (88%) of the attendees are either **happy or very happy with the courses**; 91% of the delegates are happy with the way the course was taught; and the overwhelming majority (99%) feel the **trainers knew the subject** well. Delegates are generally very pleased with the trainers, who are considered to be knowledgeable, professional, helpful and able to keep people engaged by adopting a variety of teaching methods.

Outcomes for individual participants

- The majority of the interviewees went on the course because they were **interested in the content of the course**. All interviewees say that going on the course was worthwhile, helped them and greatly **contributed to their personal development**. Top four things they feel they got out of the training are: more **knowledge and information** (89%), the opportunity to **share experiences and ideas** with other tenants (84%), increased **confidence and self-esteem** (61%),

and useful **tools to improve group functioning** and project management. The trainers also state that delegates attending Tenant Futures hugely benefit from gaining more confidence and being able to network with other social housing tenants across England.

84% of the interviewees think the course helped them develop **new skills**, especially assertiveness, presentation skills, people skills, planning and budgeting skills, leadership skills, and research skills.

The majority (82%) of the interviewees say they left the course feeling more **confident about doing things in the community**.

Impacts on tenant-landlord relationship

- Half (51%) of those interviewed say the relationship with their landlord **changed for the better**, because they were able to challenge more constructively their landlords in meetings and gained more respect from them.

Group outcomes

- In terms of group outcomes, 88% of those interviewed say they have become **better group members** as a result of the training, and are better able to contribute to group functioning. 85% state that their attendance on the course has had a positive knock-on effect on their groups, which benefitted from knowledge sharing and individual contributions to improve group functioning. 51 out of 57 interviewees mention their groups having **ambitious plans** in their pipeline, such as planning a community event (16), getting more training (11), embarking on a new panel review (9), and setting up a new group (8) such as a Community Interest Company to take over the management of an existing community facility.

Community outcomes

- Around two-thirds (73%) of the interviewees feel that the **wider local or tenant community indirectly benefitted** from the training because: a) delegates were able to spread information to a wider audience involving other tenants and community groups; and b) delegates were able to contribute to build more efficient Tenant Panels and/or stronger Tenant and Resident Associations, which in turn can improve service provision and organise social events for the benefit of the wider community.

Suggestions for improvement

- Only 12% of the delegates report having been disappointed by not getting something they had expected from the training. Top three **unmet expectations** are better insight into topics, more practical exercises/learning through practice, and more time for Questions & Answers sessions.

184 delegates, and 33% (19 out of 57) interviewees, had suggestions on how to improve the delivery of the training. The top ones mentioned are:

- a) Offer **longer courses**, mentioned by 87 (47%) delegates and 12 (63%) interviewees;
- b) Encourage a **better mix of people**, mentioned by 7 (37%) interviewees;
- c) Arrange **smaller groups**, mentioned by two (11%) interviewees;
- d) Build in **more practical examples**, mentioned by 12 (11%) delegates;
- e) Provide **one to one support** for people with disabilities, mentioned by 2 (11%) interviewees;
- f) Provide attendees with **handouts**, mentioned by 11 (6%) delegates;
- g) Introduce more **practical exercises**, mentioned by 9 (5%) delegates.

Accredited training

- 269 tenants undertook accreditation in the financial year 2014-15 – **99 more than the Government target**. 18 people (6% of all delegates) decided not to complete the accreditation.

- Only one out of the 24 interviewees who attended accredited training says he went on the course because he wanted to undertake accreditation. The rest say they were mainly **interested in the content of the course**. Six out of 24 were not even aware that the course was accredited. Two attendees decided not to gain accreditation while on the course.
- Evidence shows that delegates who attended accredited course are **more likely** than those who have been on non-accredited training to:
 - a) Feel that the course has given them new ideas (96% versus 92%), or encouraged them to take forward an existing one (94% versus 92%);
 - b) Express more positive feelings about the way the course was taught (94% versus 88%);
 - c) Feel that the trainers knew the subject (100% versus 98%);
 - d) Be happier with the course (94% versus 85%).

Delegates attending accredited training indicate **less unmet expectations** from the courses than attendees of non-accredited courses (9% versus 13%). None of them mention not receiving handouts, not getting enough inspiration, and the level of the course not being advanced enough. However, 12% more attendees of accredited course than delegates attending non-accredited courses would have liked better insight into specific topics.

- Six interviewees mention specific benefits of doing the accreditation, namely that:
 - It can be **useful for job applications** (2);
 - It brings personal satisfaction and **sense of achievement** (1);
 - It gives tenants a **higher profile with their group** (1) and **with their landlord** (1);
 - It makes them **work harder** (1).

Evidence from interviews with trainers corroborates these findings.

- Delegates who attend accredited courses find them **more difficult** compared to tenants attending non-accredited training (17% versus 9%). The trainers acknowledge that the accreditation is particularly demanding both for tenants and for them, especially because of the difficulty in delivering the course at the right pace in the limited amount of time they have.

Based on the findings, the report concludes that:

- The Tenant Futures programme is **administered well** with all but one Government targets being met for the financial year 2014-15.
- Trafford Hall is a **remarkable residential venue**, providing **top quality training** delivered by experienced, knowledgeable and committed trainers and excellent catering.
- The Tenant Futures training is **successful** in achieving the following outcomes for individual tenants:
 - Equipping tenants with **know-how, better insight, in-depth information, useful tools** and **new skills** to refine their level of community involvement. Its **residential nature is invaluable** because it allows them to share ideas and experiences with other tenants from other parts of England and different landlords;
 - Increasing delegates' **confidence**, assertiveness and **self-esteem**;

- **Motivating** tenants to get more involved in their communities, take forward existing ideas, and set up community groups;
 - Inspiring tenants to **engage more confidently with their landlords**, and providing them with skills to shape decisions and have a say in local services.
- The Tenant Futures training programme has a **'double' ripple-effect**, with its benefits spreading from individual participants onto tenant groups and wider local communities. Individual attendance on the courses indirectly benefits a much larger number of tenants and estate residents across England, which means that the Tenant Futures training programme offers considerable **value for money**.
 - At present, accreditation does not seem to have any substantial bearing on why people decide to go on the course. Very rarely people go on courses to pursue accreditation, and a few seem to know about a course being accredited beforehand. Nonetheless, undertaking accreditation delivers **additional specific benefits** to tenants. Trainers also seem to deliver a slightly better product (although the content of the course does not vary between accredited and non-accredited).
 - There is a need to **encourage more new tenants** to attend the training, as well as more tenants from **BME background**, more tenants from **London and the South East, the East, and the South West**, and more **Local Authority** tenants.
 - The comment made by a high numbers of delegates that **Tenant Futures courses are too short** should not be understated. The amount of information provided in such a relatively short amount of time means that some topics will inevitably be given less relevance, and that there will be less time for practical exercises (role playing, table discussions etc.) and Question & Answer sessions. Delivering such intense courses over one and a half days or even two and a half days is proving **very demanding** for both attendees and trainers, especially if the course is accredited.
 - This report welcomes the fact that Trafford Hall is taking steps to set up a **new broadband**, and that the maximum number of attendees for non-accredited courses has been brought **down to 20**, instead of 25, for the financial year 2015-16.

We therefore recommend that:

1. The appropriate amount of **follow on funding** for the Tenant Futures training programme is secured to **sustain the high standard of training** provided, and implement the recommendations included in this report.
2. Trafford Hall builds **an independent database of social landlords** across England in the form of a mailing list. At present, Trafford Hall 'marketing' strategy is heavily reliant on word of mouth by tenants (and trainers). Trafford Hall purchases access to a database of tenant involvement officers to publicise the programme, but they are only allowed to email them once. Although time consuming, the effort to set up a landlord mailing list cleared of data protection concerns would pay off in the long term, and it would allow **reaching out to a wider variety of landlords and tenants communities**.

3. Trafford Hall sets up a **blog/forum** as a platform to increase its online presence, and **publicise the benefits and value for money of tenant involvement** amongst landlords. High travel expenses not fully covered by Trafford Hall travel bursaries can discourage tenants from attending the courses in the absence of support from their landlords. It is of the utmost importance to **get more landlords on board**. The blog/forum could be monitored and supervised by tenant volunteers.

It would be worth considering setting up an **alumni online network**, for example through Facebook, to facilitate networking after the training.

4. There needs to be more effort to **make tenants aware** of which courses are accredited, what is expected from them and what the **benefits of accreditation** are. **Landlords can play an important role** in doing this as the gatekeepers. The above recommended **online platform** can also be used for this purpose.
5. Trafford Hall considers the feasibility of extending the second and third day by an extra couple of hours, **finishing at 3.30pm** instead of 1.30pm. This would give trainers extra time to deliver the course at a slower pace, build in more practical exercises, and allow for Q&A sessions. Finishing at 3.30pm would not add substantial extra costs to the delivery of the training, and would not interfere with tenants' travel costs.
6. Trainers are invited to read this report, and encouraged to produce **delegate packs** with handouts of power point presentations for each course.

2. Introduction to Trafford Hall training

Tenant Futures programme

Since 2000, the National Communities Resource Centre (NCRC) has been running a series of community training and tenant empowerment programmes at Trafford Hall, a residential training and conference centre in Wimbolds Trafford, near Chester. These programmes have been funded by different sources, included the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), for the benefit of local authority and housing association tenants across the UK.

The Tenant Futures programme has been delivered since October 2011, and it is fully funded by DCLG. The courses reach out to social housing tenants living in low income communities in England, and offer them low-cost residential training delivered by experienced trainers on different housing-related topics.

The purpose of the Tenant Futures training programme is to allow members of community groups and tenant panels to build their confidence, learn new skills, and gain up-to-date knowledge. This empowers tenants to better understand housing, neighbourhood and policy issues, and to act upon them for the benefit of their communities and the wider society.

Grant programme

A grant programme is attached to the Tenant Futures programme. Tenant groups who attend Trafford Hall training are given the opportunity to apply for a grant of up to £1,000 to capitalise on what they have learnt during the courses, and to put follow-on projects into practice. These could be anything from organising training days to purchasing IT equipment, as long as they are linked to the aims of tenant empowerment, and based on the topic covered in the course attended.

Accredited training

Some of the Tenant Futures courses are accredited up to Level 2. Courses are designed by trainers and content does not vary between accredited and non-accredited courses. While non-accredited courses last for one and a half days, accredited courses are run over two and a half days to allow more time to complete the worksheets, which are critical to achieving the accreditation. Worksheets are not completed under standard testing conditions. This allows attendees the flexibility to work together and support each other. Accredited courses have always had a maximum of 20 people, compared to 25 for the non-accredited courses.

In September 2013 Trafford Hall became a recognised assessment centre part of the Open College Network London (OCN). This was prompted by the funding requirements to deliver accredited training by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). At that time a post was created to set up and supervise the process of accreditation, to decide whether courses are going to be accredited or not, to develop assessment criteria, and to write the questions on the worksheets.

Trafford Hall has recently been granted by OCN the approved verify status. This means they were able to appoint an in-house External Independent Evaluator in charge of checking a random sample of worksheets (which are marked by the trainers). Worksheets are then sent to the OCN to be awarded a final mark.

Although today they are an assessment centre under the OCN, there is a potential in the future for Trafford Hall to become an awarding body on its own.

3. Methodology

Research framework

The Tenant Futures training and grant programme has been subject to three external evaluations, one carried out in 2011, a second one in 2013, and a third one in 2014. This research has drawn on these previous studies for background information.

This study has a qualitative focus on the impacts and benefits of the Tenant Futures training programme. The Grant programme attached to the training has been subject to a separate independent evaluation, carried out by LSE Housing & Communities in May-June 2015, and it is not included in this report.¹

Research methods

This study draws on three main sources of data or datasets:

1. **Administrative data and course evaluation summaries** provided by Trafford Hall. At the end of each course, delegates are invited to complete a course evaluation form, in which they are asked a series of closed and open-ended questions about their experience of the course. Trafford Hall staff then process individual forms, and produce 'evaluation summaries' for each course. We carried out statistical and thematic analysis of 39 course evaluation summaries provided by Trafford Hall.
2. **Semi-structured interviews with delegates** who attended the Tenant Futures training in the course of the financial year 2014-15. We conducted a total of 57 semi-structured interviews with delegates, randomly selected across England. We interviewed 24 tenants who attended accredited courses, and 33 tenants who attended non accredited course. Their contact numbers were provided by Trafford Hall after they were warned beforehand (via email or letter) that we would get in touch. Interviews were carried out over the phone and were not recorded. They all lasted between half an hour and one hour. A list of interviewees, and charts showing their overall demographic characteristics, are to be found in Annexes II (at page 62) and III (at page 66).
3. Five **in-depth interviews with key informants**, namely the Course & Grant Programme Coordinator at Trafford Hall, the External Evaluator, and three trainers delivering Tenant Futures training. The interviews were either face to face or over the phone, and were all between one and two hours long. They were not recorded.

¹ The Grant programme evaluation report can be found on Trafford Hall website at the following link: <http://www.traffordhall.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Tenant-Futures-Grants-Programme-evaluation-draft-29-07-2015-final-with-grant-stories.pdf>.

4. Tenant Futures 2014-2015 – an overview

Evidence of implementation

A total of **39 training courses** were run in the financial year April 2014 to March 2015, of which 16 (41%) were accredited, and 23 (59%) were not accredited.

Figure 1: Courses 2014-15

Non accredited	23	59%
Accredited	16	41%
TOTAL	39	100%

Most courses were run by Engage Associates (14), followed by Burkitt Vernelle (9), Choosing Change (8), Make it Happen (3), GOGY (2), TPAS (2), and Fresh Team (1). 11 out of 39 courses were run twice, while 17 were run once. The full list of accredited and non-accredited courses run between April 2014 and March 2015, with dates and details of training providers, is in Annex I (at page 60).

Figure 2: Trainers

Trainer	Courses run	No tenants trained
Engage	14 courses	270
Burkitt Vernelle	9 courses	190
Choosing Change	8 courses	165
Make it Happen	3 courses	55
GOGY	2 courses	25
TPAS	2 courses	30
Fresh Team	1 courses	15
TOTAL	39 courses	750

As shown in Figure 3, a total of **750 tenants** were trained between April 2014 and March 2015, an average of 19 per course. 900 reserved a place, but 146 dropped out. 269 (36%) of the 750 undertook accreditation. **36% were new** to Trafford Hall, as opposed to 64% who had already been on Trafford Hall courses before.

The actual figures exceeded Government targets for 2014-15 by 115% for the number of courses run (39, as opposed to a target of 34), and by 160% (269, as opposed to a target of 170) for numbers of tenants undertaking accreditation.

Figure 3: Outputs against Government targets for 2014-15

Performance Indicator	Target	Actual to March 2015	%
No Courses run	34	39	115%
No tenants to be trained	782	750 ²	96%
Proposed tenants new to TH	45%	36%	80%
No. small grants awarded	68	49 ³	72%

² Target not met because 146 applicants dropped out/cancelled due to illness or other personal reasons.

³ The actual number of grants awarded is less than the Government target for the financial year because the target was set taking into account a maximum of £500 per grant, while Trafford Hall decided throughout the financial year 2014-15 to increase the maximum award up to £1,000 to incentivise more groups to apply for the grant.

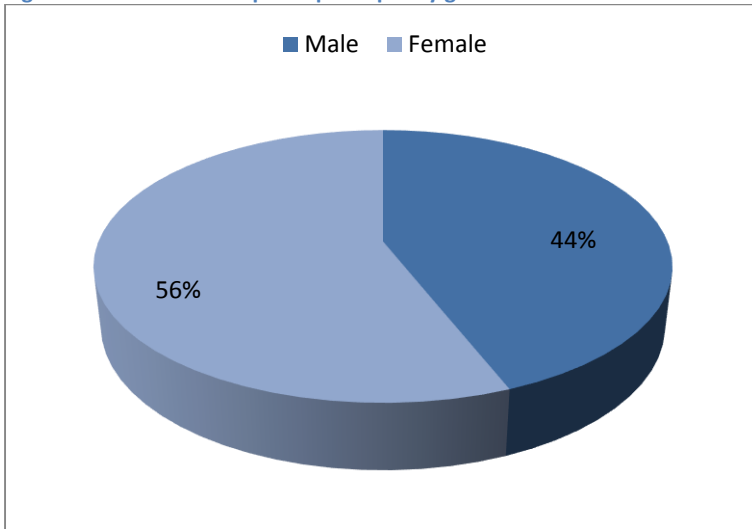
Number of accredited courses	17	16	94%
Number of tenants undertaking accreditation	170	269	160%

Participant characteristics

The following tables show the overall demographic characteristics of tenants attending Trafford Hall training in the financial year 2014-15.

Delegates were 56% female and 44% male (see Figure 4), which is the same percentage split as in the previous financial year.

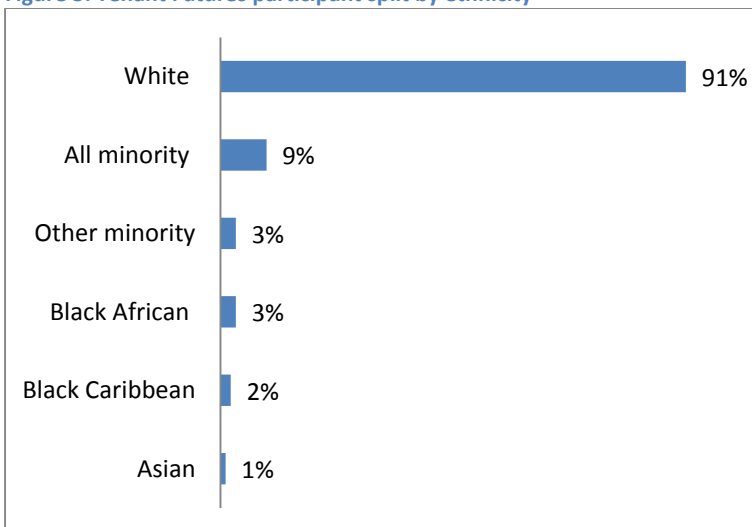
Figure 4: Tenant Futures participant split by gender



[Source: Trafford Hall administrative data]

Figure 5 shows that the overwhelming majority (91%) of delegates were **White**, while tenants from an ethnic minority background were accounting for 9% of the total. This is in line with the previous evaluation, where 89% of tenants attending Trafford Hall training in the financial year 2013-14 were White.

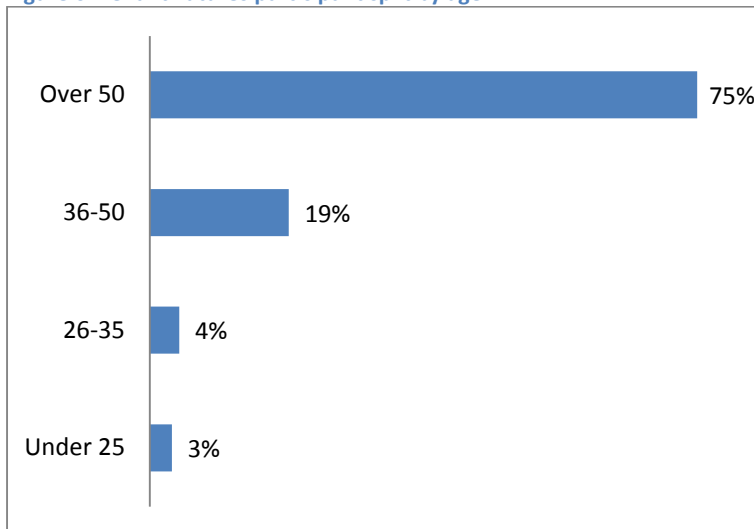
Figure 5: Tenant Futures participant split by ethnicity



[Source: Trafford Hall administrative data]

The majority (75%) of social housing tenants attending Tenant Futures training were **over 50** (see Figure 6); 19% were aged 36-50, 4% were aged 26-35, and only 3% were under 25. These percentages are close to the figures in the previous evaluation.

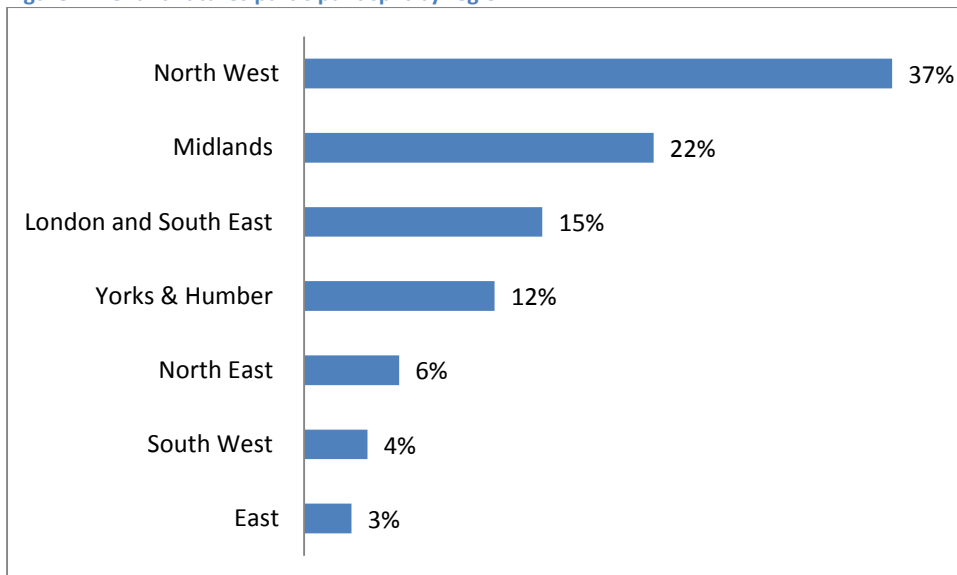
Figure 6: Tenant Futures participant split by age



[Source: Trafford Hall administrative data]

Figure 7 shows that tenants from the North West, which is the region where Trafford Hall is situated, were more likely to attend the Tenant Futures training, making up for 37% of the participants, followed by tenants from the East and West Midlands (22%), London and South East (15%), and Yorks & Humber (12%). Tenants from the North East, South West and East were less represented at 6%, 4% and 3% respectively. There was a slight increase from the previous financial year in the number of attendees from Yorks and Humber (+5%), London and South East (+3%), and the East (+3%).

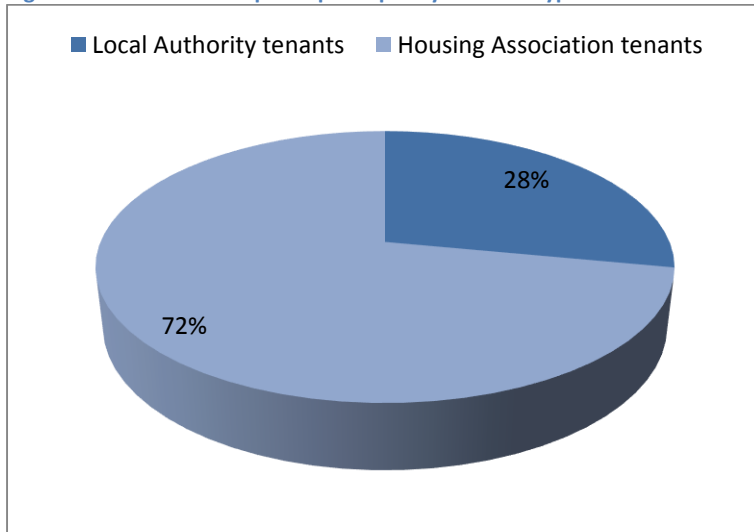
Figure 7: Tenant Futures participant split by region



[Source: Trafford Hall administrative data]

Housing association tenants accounted for almost two-thirds (72%) of the attendees, with 28% local authority tenant participants (see Figure 8). This is in line with the previous financial year.

Figure 8: Tenant Futures participant split by landlord type



[Source: Trafford Hall administrative data]

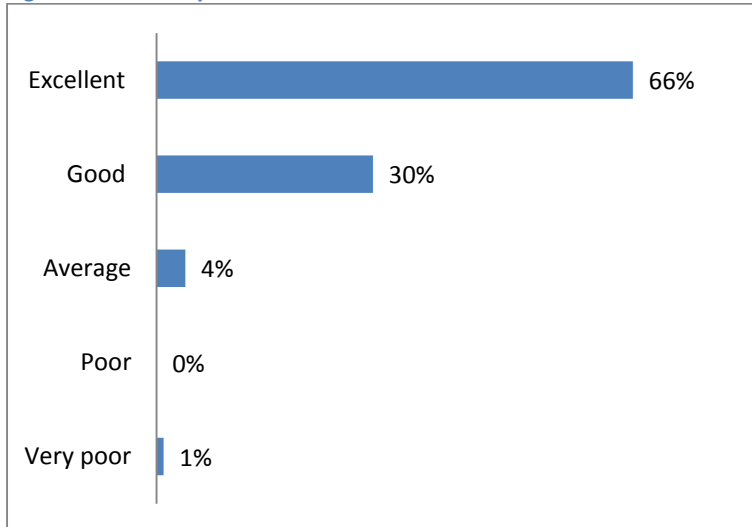
5. Tenant Futures evaluation – main findings

a. Trafford Hall as a training venue

Evidence from course evaluation summaries

Delegates were invited to rate the quality of Trafford Hall as a training place on a scale from ‘very poor’ to ‘excellent’. As Figure 9 shows, 96% of the delegates rated Trafford Hall as either a **good or excellent residential venue**.

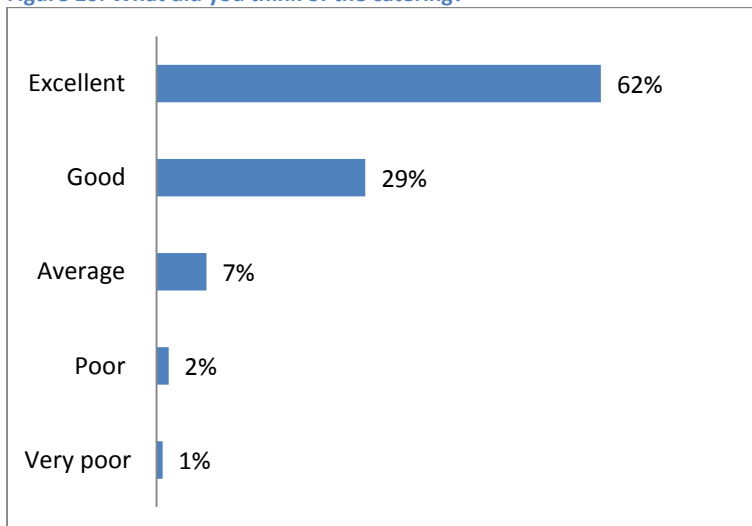
Figure 9: What did you think of the venue?



[Source: Course evaluation summaries; base 715, excluding ‘Did not answer’]

Delegates were also asked to feedback on the quality of the catering, rating it on the same scale from ‘very poor’ to ‘excellent’. Figure 10 shows that 91% of the attendees rated the quality of the **catering as either good or excellent**.

Figure 10: What did you think of the catering?



[Source: Course evaluation summaries; base 708, excluding ‘Did not answer’]

Evidence from phone interviews with delegates

Questions about Trafford Hall as a training venue (accommodation, food, and staff) were not included in the LSE questionnaire. Nonetheless, tenants touched on these topics throughout the interviews, usually in the form of concluding comments on their overall Trafford Hall 'experience'.

22 interviewees mentioned that they liked Trafford Hall as a venue, and they appreciated the level of **hospitality** provided. Only five raised some criticism about the accommodation being too basic.

It such a nice atmosphere! People no matter how disabled, how low in self-esteem they are, they can feel at home there.

It's a marvellous place, they deal with disability, grounds are beautiful and you can wander around – there is no television in the bedrooms but you are only there for a couple of days.

The first time I went I was petrified, it was a mansion, I thought everyone was going to be so stuck up. We are from a poor estate, but they treated us like royalty, like you were an old friend for years. That makes one hell of a difference.

14 of those interviewed commented on the staff being **friendly, approachable and helpful**.

Lovely staff, very helpful - if you had a problem, they would do their best to solve it.

Very friendly, if you had special things they were very helpful and accommodating.

11 of those interviewed praised the quality of the food served at Trafford Hall.

The food is absolutely excellent!

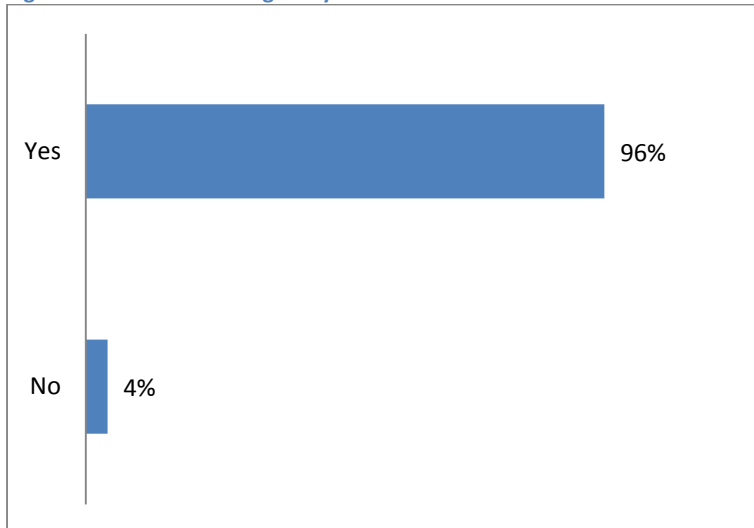
The food is super, the meat is local, they only use local stuff and keep local people employed, and the money goes straight back into the farming system.

b. Quality of training

Evidence from course evaluation summaries

Delegates were asked whether the course had given them new ideas. As Figure 11 shows, 96% of the attendees stated that the courses had taught them something **new and inspirational**.

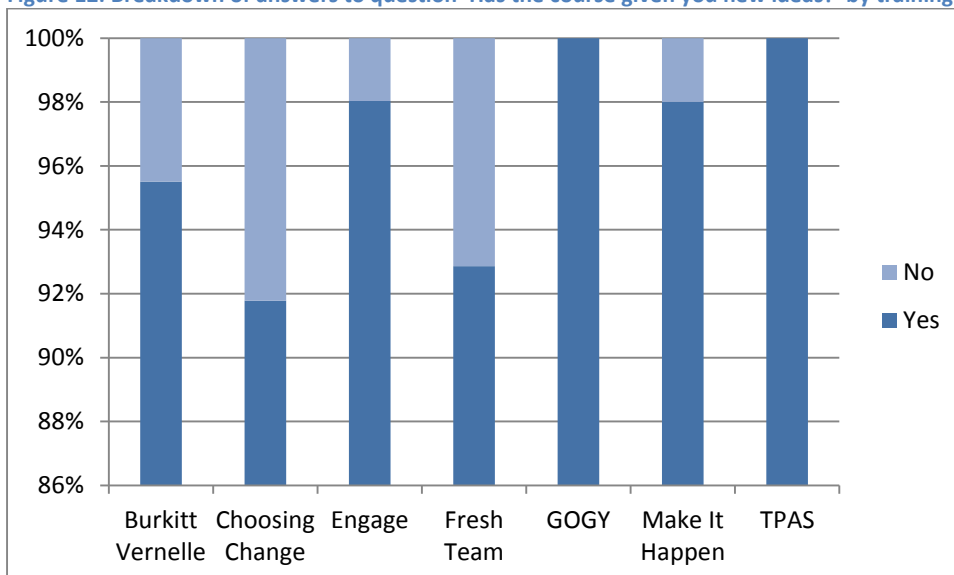
Figure 11: Has the course given you new ideas?



[Source: Course evaluation summaries; base 695, excluding 'Did not answer']

Figure 12 shows that the most 'inspiring' trainers were considered by delegates to be GOGY, TPAS, Make it Happen.

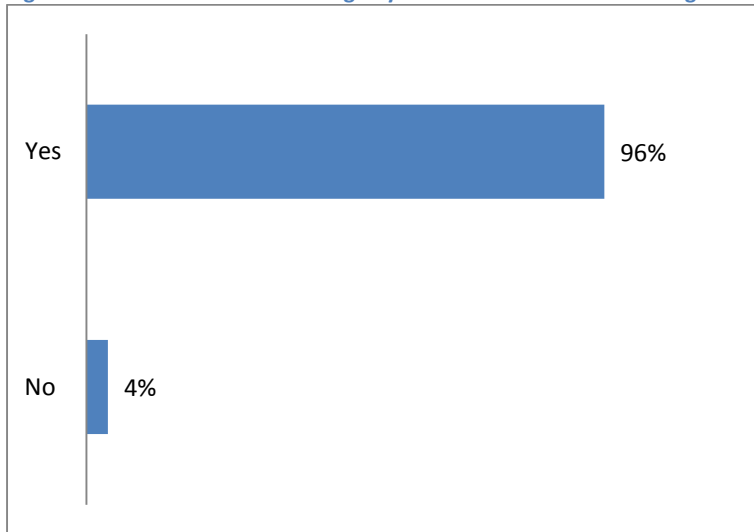
Figure 12: Breakdown of answers to question 'Has the course given you new ideas?' by training provider



[Source: Course evaluation summaries]

As Figure 13 shows, 96% of the delegates said they left the course feeling **motivated** to take forward an idea they previously had in mind.

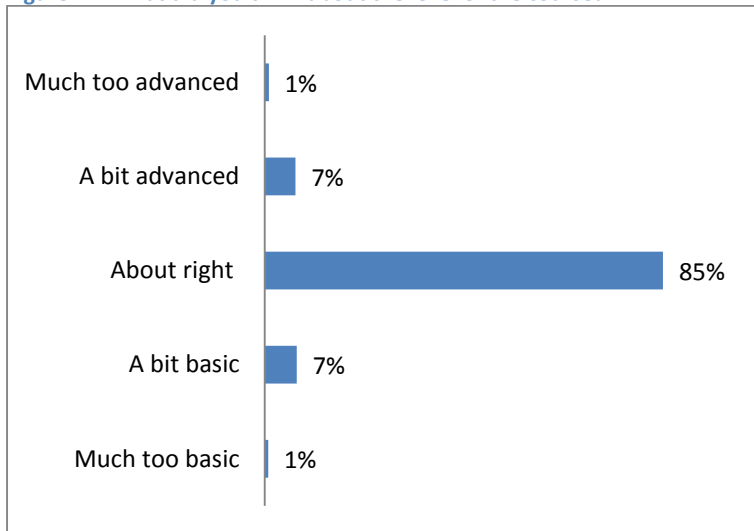
Figure 13: Has the course encouraged you to take forward an existing idea?



[Source: Course evaluation summaries; base 693, excluding 'Did not answer']

Figure 14 shows that the majority of the tenants attending Tenant Futures training thought the level of the course was **'about right'**, neither too basic nor too advanced.

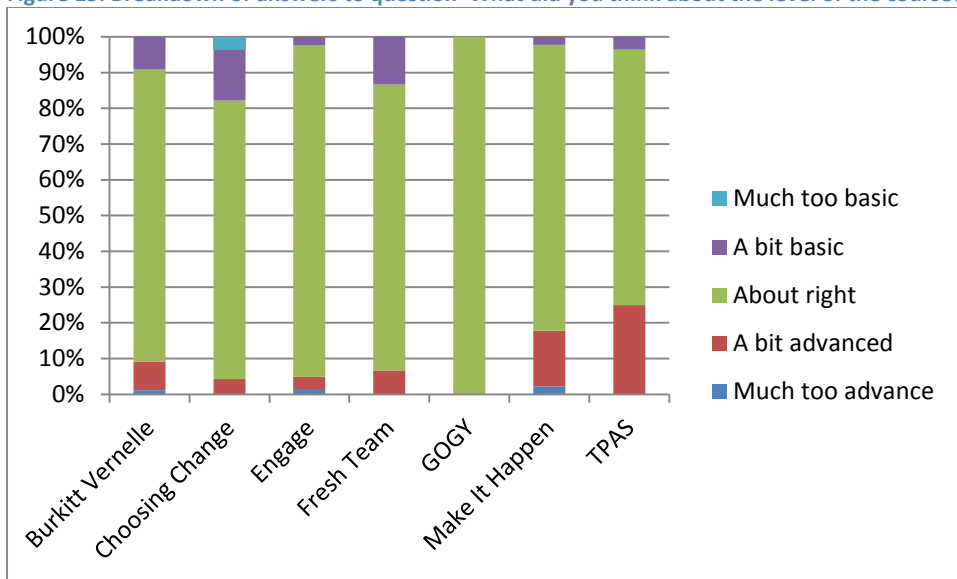
Figure 14: What did you think about the level of the course?



[Source: Course evaluation summaries; base 670, excluding 'Did not answer']

Figure 15 provides a breakdown of answers about the level of the course by training provider. It shows that TPAS and Make it Happen provided courses perceived by attendees as being 'a bit advanced' or 'much too advanced'; Choosing Change and Fresh Team courses were considered to be 'a bit basic' or 'much too basic'; while Burkitt Vernelle, Engage & GOGY were most likely to design courses that were perceived by delegates as being at the right level.

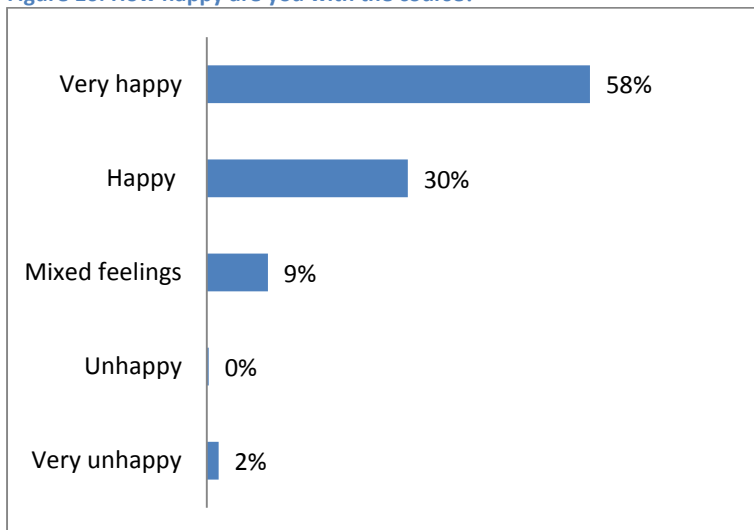
Figure 15: Breakdown of answers to question 'What did you think about the level of the course?' by training provider



[Source: Course evaluation summaries]

As Figure 16 shows, the majority (88%) of delegates were **either happy or very happy** with the course. 9% had mixed feelings, and only 2% were very unhappy.

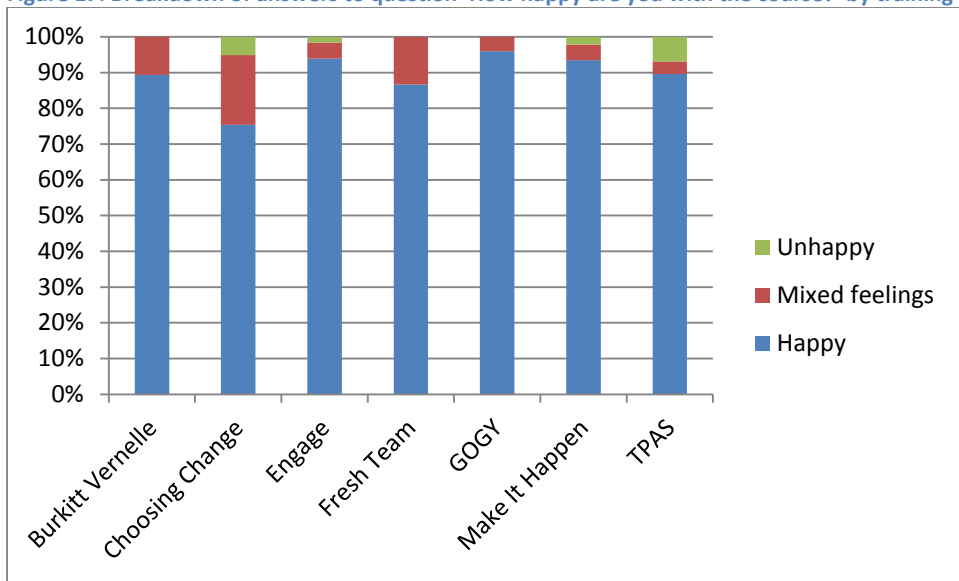
Figure 16: How happy are you with the course?



[Base: 679, excluding 'Did not answer']

Figure 17 shows that the most successful courses were run by GOGY, Engage, Make it Happen, and Burkitt Vernelle, while the courses delivered by Choosing Change were those who scored the highest percentage of attendees with either mixed or unhappy feelings.

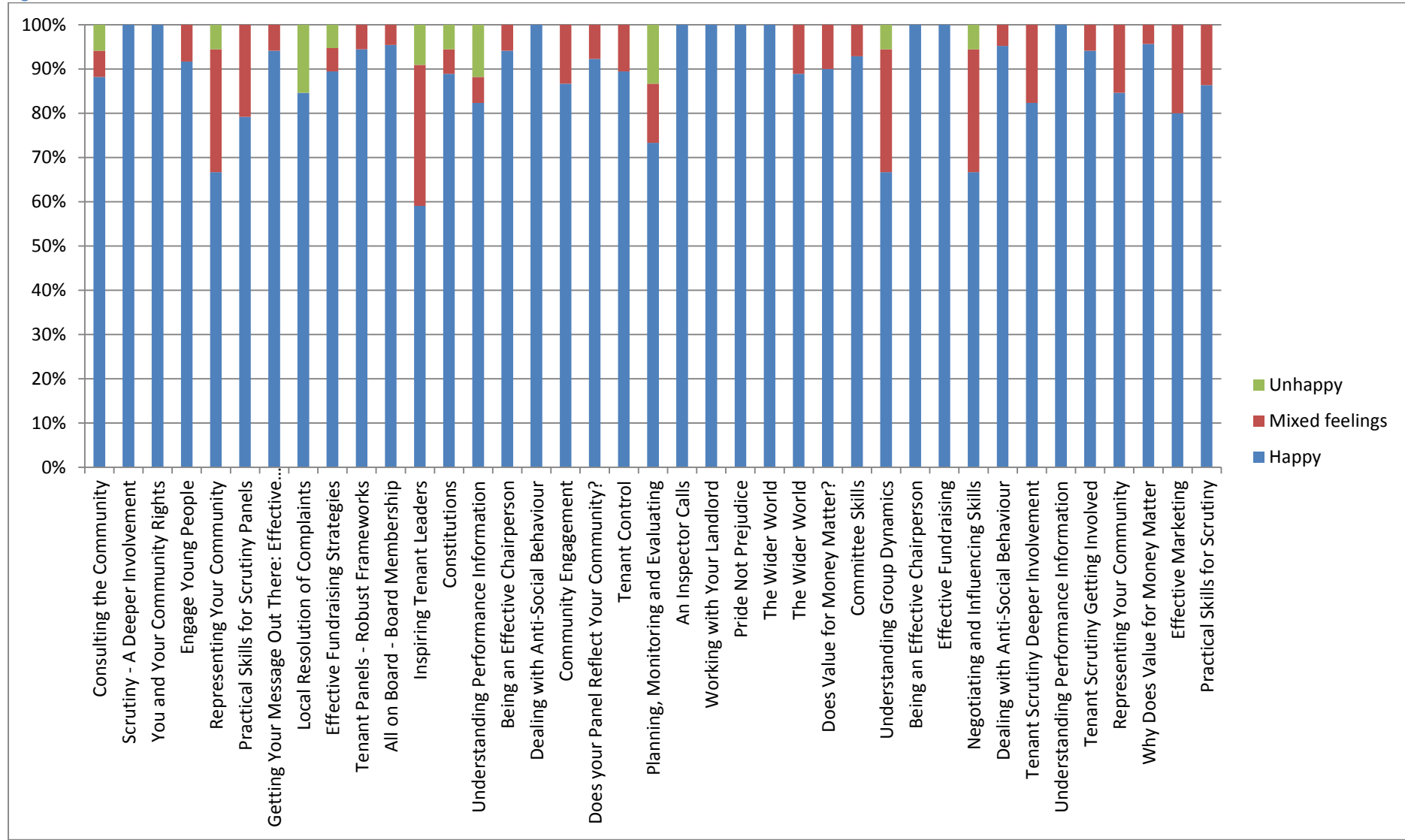
Figure 17: Breakdown of answers to question 'How happy are you with the course?' by training provider



[Source: Course evaluation summaries]

Figure 18 provides a breakdown of course satisfaction by course.

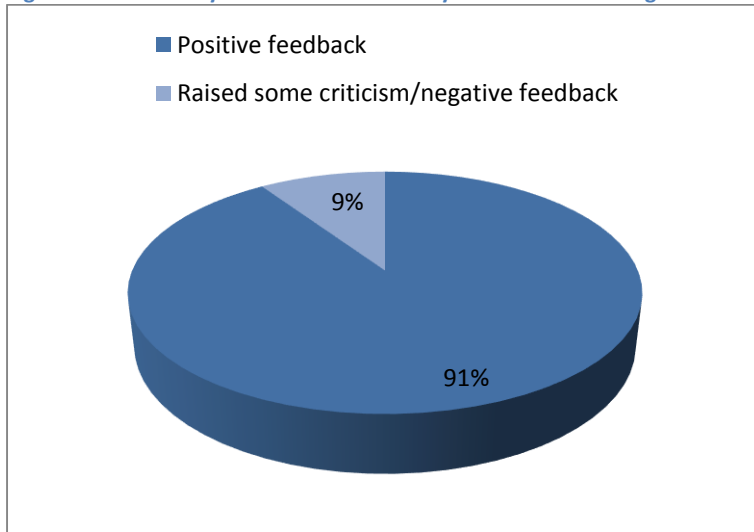
Figure 18: Overall course satisfaction



[Source: Course evaluation summaries]

Figure 19 shows that the majority (91%) of the attendees expressed **positive feedbacks** about the way the course was taught.

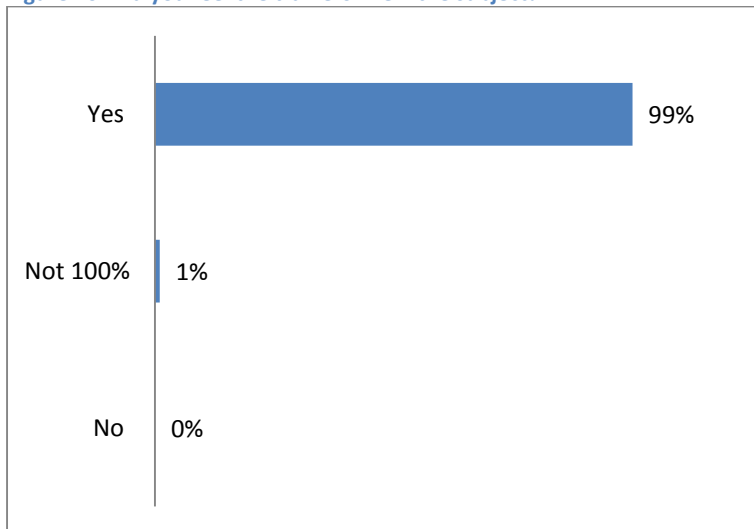
Figure 19: What did you think about the way the course was taught?



[Source: Course evaluation summaries; base 695, excluding 'Did not answer']

As Figure 20 shows, the overwhelming majority (99%) of the delegates felt that the trainers were **very knowledgeable** on the subject they were teaching.

Figure 20: Did you feel the trainers knew the subject?



[Source: Course evaluation summaries; base 694, excluding 'Did not answer']

Evidence from phone interviews with delegates

Specific questions about the quality of the training were not included in the LSE questionnaires. Nonetheless, 38 interviewees out of 57 mentioned how pleased they were with the trainers who provided the courses, even though they were not prompted to do so. They mentioned them being very **knowledgeable, professional and helpful**. They also stated they liked the variety of teaching methods, especially the mix between informative sessions, table discussions and practical exercises.

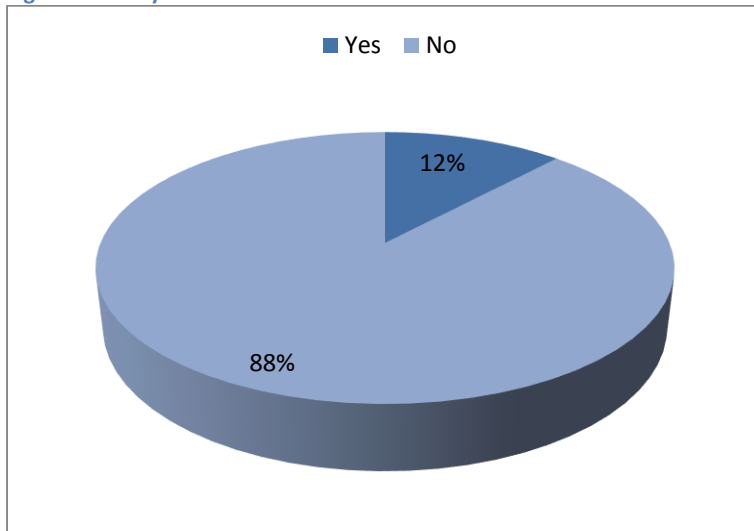
The course was run fantastically, the exercises were organised and good - trainers were very approachable and quite willing to help if you were struggling, they gave a lot of breaks and were very fair.

The trainers are knowledgeable and informative - they are fantastic.

Trainers were really good, they tried to be as helpful as possible, but they were also amusing at times which made it feel more informal.

The interviewees were asked whether they found the course difficult. The majority (88%, 50 out of 57) said it was **at the right level** (see Figure 21). Nine of them stated that they did not find it particularly difficult, despite the content being challenging and the course intense, because the trainers were helpful and supportive.

Figure 21: Did you find the course difficult?



[Source: LSE interviews]

I wouldn't say difficult even though as you get older you don't absorb as quickly as others. It was the right amount of challenge; it was at the level that everyone could understand.

There were little bits that I didn't understand, but you never felt that you couldn't question it - the tutors said that if there was anything you didn't understand they would make themselves available after class and it would be brought into the group the next day.

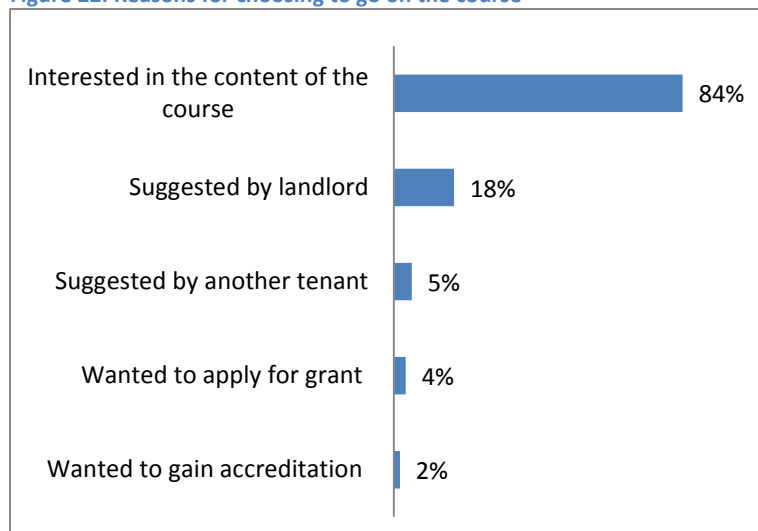
There are always times when you think you are not good enough, but the teachers support you, and encourage you to do what you think it's not possible.

c. Outcomes for individual participants

Evidence from phone interviews with delegates

Figure 22 shows that the top reason why interviewees chose to attend the course was their **interest in its content**, which was mentioned by 84% (48 out of 57) interviewees. 18% (10) said they went on the training because it was **suggested by their landlord**, 5% (3) because it was suggested by another tenant, 4% (2) because they wanted to apply for a **grant**, and only 2% (1) because they sought to gain accreditation.

Figure 22: Reasons for choosing to go on the course

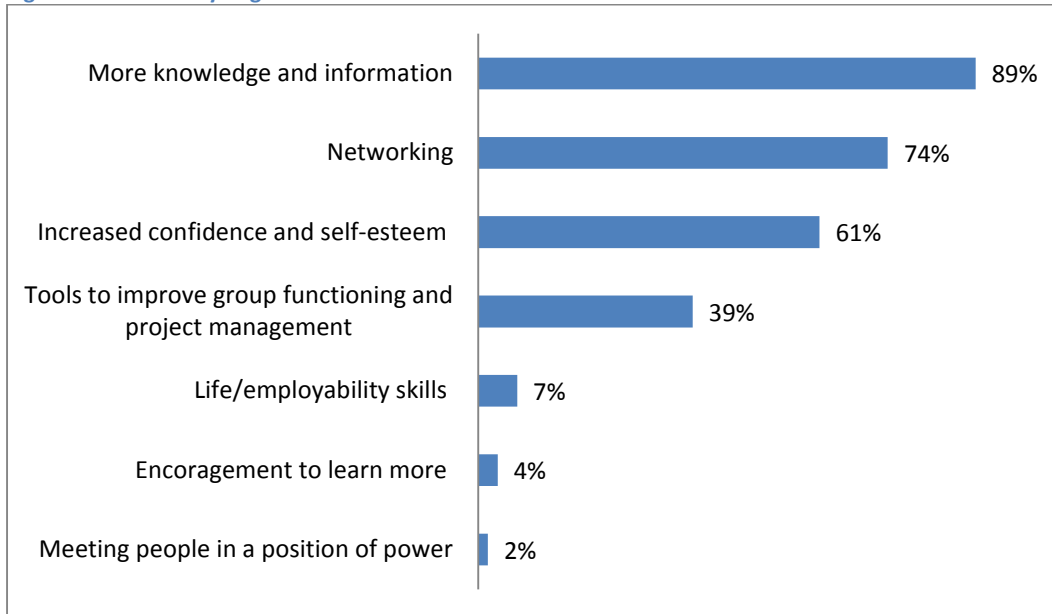


[Source: LSE interviews]

All interviewees (57) unanimously said the course helped them, and contributed to their **personal development**, in one way or another (see Figure 23):

- The majority (89%, 51 out of 57) mentioned that the course allowed them to gain more **knowledge**, in-depth information and better insight on the topics they were interested in;
- 74% (42) stated that they valued the **opportunity to network**, i.e. share experiences and ideas, and socialise with other tenants from different landlords and parts of England;
- 61% (35) mentioned the increase in **confidence and self-esteem** as something they got out of the course. Learning new things and being faced with challenging experiences, such as role-plays and presenting in public, was a big confidence booster for several delegates;
- 39% (22) mentioned how valuable was for them to learn different **tools** to improve group functioning and project management, allowing them to work more efficiently.

Figure 23: What did you get out of it?



[Source: LSE interviews]

Quotes: more knowledge and information

Knowledge, up to the very moments details of new procedures and even forecast changes - I've been involved in housing so deeply that I already knew a lot, there was little there that was new to me, but it clarified issues which were a bit foggy, and I came away with a refreshed and clear opinion of the whole subject – it's difficult not to come away with an excellent grounding.

Life is all about learning, and Trafford Hall has been a gift as it really built my knowledge. They can't pull the wool over my eyes now, because I'm an expert. That is the beauty of it! A lot of the information I have is from the course, how to ask the right questions and not to whistle blow.

Quotes: networking

Was really interesting meeting other people, sharing views. There were some people doing things successfully - their experience keeps me going and I still keep in touch with some of them.

The great thing of going there is meeting people from other organisations - in the evenings you get the chance to speak to people and you get insight on how they do things and may think 'that would work for us'!

What is most valuable is the opportunity to mix with other service users or tenant reps from other parts of the country, to get a feeling of what's happening in other parts of the country. It's an opportunity to talk and pick up ideas and suggestions.

Quotes: increased confidence and self-esteem

I've always been a shy person, I would say I didn't achieve a lot in life, I didn't work, I was a stay at home mum - the course made me realise it is possible to achieve something later on, that I'm not an old stick in the mud.

It has given me a lot of confidence, I would always think something and I wouldn't say it because I thought it was wrong, and now I feel a lot more confident to speak up.

The course has given me confidence. I used to be a very quiet person; it brought me out of my shell, even the staff they say that they can't believe the transformation.

Quotes: tools to improve group functioning and project management

We have learnt different ways to get information and better ways to manage data. We started implementing Gantt charts and doing planning, so that we are able to work more efficiently.

We learnt how to use the value for money template - using it I was able to figure out which groups would benefit most from the money, and give it out to them.

I used trainers as role models on how to handle our own meetings with our own group. I realised that setting ground rules is so important to avoid conflict, we now do housekeeping for the meeting.

Carole: Proving your Worth

Carole is 70 years old and chairs the tenant scrutiny panel for a housing association in the South East of England. Recently her housing regulator has been putting more emphasis on understanding the value for money regarding the work housing associations do. The housing associations now have to submit a report on value for money for the entire organization. The first report the association completed did not meet expectations, therefore they are looking for ways to improve and welcoming tenant input.

Carole and a couple of other tenants from her association attended the *Does Value for Money Matter* course at Trafford Hall to learn more about how tenants can have input into this report.

I wasn't quite sure about how tenants could contribute to that and whether it was possible.

Throughout the course Carole increased her understanding about the value of tenant work to the housing association and how to best communicate this information.

What we do helps to improve services and meets the needs of the tenants...Through our newsletters and our website, we are able to show other tenants what we are doing and what the results are. There is a better understanding in the community of our work.

These learnings have enabled Carole to better contribute to not only the association's value for money report, but also in her role as the chair of the Scrutiny panel.

The work that tenants do can feed into the value. I had to contribute to the report on the value for money from a tenant's perspective...I got a lot of information and more confidence in being able to approach my landlord about doing this...The landlord has responded very well...Due to the course I've been able to better contribute.

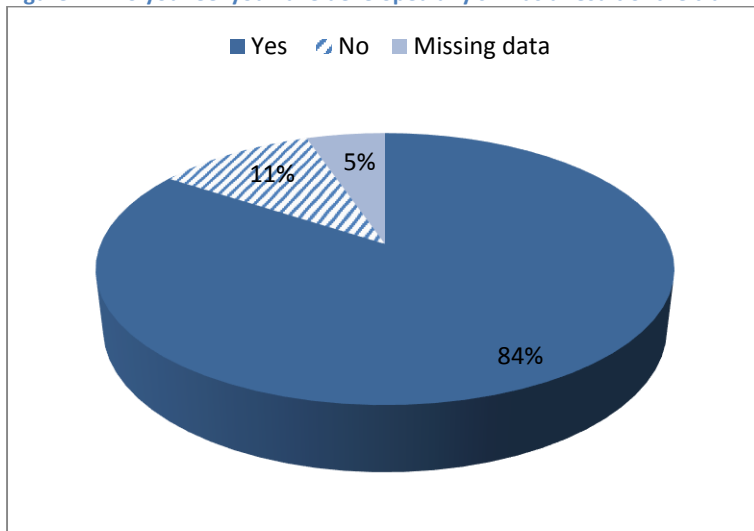
It helps me to plan the future and to present to the other members of the group, to get them on board and to buy in from the group on the work that needs to be done.

Today Carole is able to have more impact on her local and broader community due to the confidence she has gained to work better with her Landlord and apply her knowledge and skills in her community work.

The work that I have done with Trafford Hall has really changed my confidence and my ability to talk to other people. I am now speaking at conferences, I wouldn't have done this before I became an involved tenant. I was much too reserved. I have been able to impact other tenants from other organizations.

As Figure 24 shows, the majority (84%) of the interviewees said the course helped them gain and develop **new skills**. Confidence was mentioned by 20 delegates, followed by presentation skills (14), people skills (14), planning and budgeting skills (9), leadership skills (8), and research skills (6).

Figure 24: Do you feel you have developed any skill as a result of the training?



[Source: LSE interviews]

Box 1: Top six skills mentioned

1. Confidence (20) – ability to express oneself with assertiveness
2. Presentations skills (14) – ability to explain a topic to a group of people
3. People skills (14) – ability to communicate, listen and negotiate
4. Planning and budgeting skills (9) – ability to follow through a project timetable and manage budgets
5. Leadership skills (8) – ability to motivate people and manage group dynamics
6. Research skills (6) – ability to interpret and use data

Quotes – confidence

Confidence to interview contractors and project managers.

Having the confidence to ask questions.

Confidence to challenge and speak in front of people.

Confidence in speaking on a one to one basis.

Quotes – presentation skills

Being able to do a presentation which I didn't know how to do before.

Presentation skills because you have the chance to present findings at Trafford Hall, and the more you practice the better you become at it.

I had to stand up and make a presentations - had to learn that skill again.

Quotes – people skills

I have learnt to be a better communicator – I've learnt a lot of tolerance of other people.

Listening to people.

How to communicate to people and the group and how to understand different personalities

Quotes – planning and budgeting skills

Using Gantt charts, better timing and planning, working smart.

Budgeting skills.

Quotes – leadership skills

Manage the dynamics within the group and ability to consult people in a way that feels supportive and non-judgemental, removing people's defence.

Leadership skills - keeping order and stopping conflict.

Quotes – research skills

Analytical skills, looking at the evidence means more, so when we get a report from various people we can look at it and I would understand it better.

Learning to research facts and figures.

Nicolette: The Sky is the Limit

Nicolette began volunteering as a member on the Tenant Panel in her local council in January 2015. Because she has been unable to work due to a physical condition, she decided to attend the *Wider World* training course to refresh her knowledge and keep her brain working. She went along with four other panel members.

Prior to attending the course, Nicolette was shy and introverted, and although she did not have a negative relationship with her landlord, tended not to speak up or get too involved in the community.

During the training, Nicolette not only expanded her awareness of what was going on in her community and learnt new presentation and research skills, but also gained confidence and became inspired to help others.

It helped me to understand things [in my community] a bit better, it gave me confidence and made me want to help others and diversify my group. It made me eager to put my point across.

Following the training, Nicolette and the other members of her group went back and shared their learnings from the course with the rest of the group and the wider community.

We did a report back to the rest of the housing team and put it on our website, and we also submitted an article for the local newsletter.

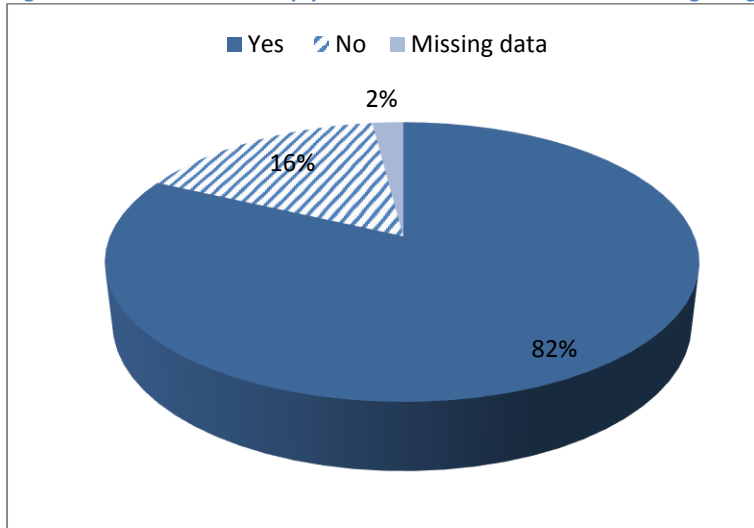
As a result of the training, Nicolette has significantly expanded her role in her community. In May 2015 she took on the role of a local councillor.

The training boosted my confidence and pushed me to try something new by becoming a councillor, something I had never thought of before. It changed my life.

In four years Nicolette is considering running for Mayor.

The majority (82%) of the interviewees left the course feeling **more confident about doing things** in their communities (see Figure 25). Gaining new knowledge, ideas and skills motivated them to get more involved, assured them about the value of their contribution, and inspired them to try out new things.

Figure 25: Did the course help you to feel more confident about doing things in your community?



[Source: LSE interviews]

Linda: Building a Diverse Housing Community

Linda is a social housing tenant in the Midlands. There she serves as the secretary of the Local Resident association, as well as being a tenant representative for the council's Tenant Panel. She is 52 years old and has lived in council housing her entire life. She is proud of where she lives, proud of her community, and feels fortunate for the support her housing association provides to her family. She attended the *Pride not Prejudice: Changing the image of social housing* course in order to improve her ability to instil this pride in others.

Linda's local resident association is made up of a cross section of private owners, private tenants, and social housing tenants. There had always been an 'us versus them' mentality, with prejudice attitudes towards social housing tenants.

During the course Linda was able to increase her own self-awareness of her own generalizations.

It slightly changed my own ideas. I'm more understanding: everyone has their own problems whether it's private or council. We all need to learn to live with each other and help each other. I learnt a lot of tolerance of other people, whereas before I just felt that

other people couldn't understand my own situation...I'm able to see so much more diversity, and better understand this diversity.

She also learnt skills and strategies to increase her community's self-awareness and perspectives of social housing tenants.

I learnt how to approach people differently, how to politely change people's perception, and how to allow people to listen and understand the information better. The strategies to do this have been very effective.

As a result of the course, Linda was empowered to share her learnings with other local groups in the district.

Because I have been given an education, it has made me think that because I have been taught I have a duty to pass this on.

She became involved in publishing a local area newsletter that has shifted the perspectives of people in the community and is breaking down barriers between private and social housing residents and even council staff.

The response to the newsletter was great... It helped to take away the misconceptions about the value of social housing to an area...Some people came around and apologized to the social housing tenants about being prejudice. It is lovely now. I haven't had to berate anybody for quite a while. Everyone is really embracing bringing all the groups together and treating them equally.

Now they are letting tenants come in and associate more with the officers. It is brilliant.

Linda is already looking forward to her next community initiative.

We are in the process of setting up a Facebook page, and a twitter account...hoping to celebrate more as an entire committee. We are trying to plan a harvest festival for the whole community.

Evidence from interviews with key informants

The trainers we interviewed reported **confidence building** as a big bonus for tenants attending the Tenant Futures training.

I certainly see people develop confidence at the end of the course. [...] We give them information that what they say to their landlords is right. [...] Their educational attainments might be low and they have issues in their lives. But even just coming away, people can just flourish and blossom. Even those who find it stressful can come away and tangibly blossom with confidence (Trainer 1 – 14 years' involvement in Trafford Hall training programmes)

The trainers also stressed the value for delegates of networking and **sharing experiences and ideas** with other social housing tenants from across England. This is something unique about the training provided at Trafford Hall because of its residential nature, and a huge plus compared to in-house training.

I think the advantages of the residential training are huge. The residential nature of the training allows them to network. I love watching them sharing experiences. Just being able to

come away and immerse themselves in what we are giving them in that atmosphere is unique. (Trainer 1)

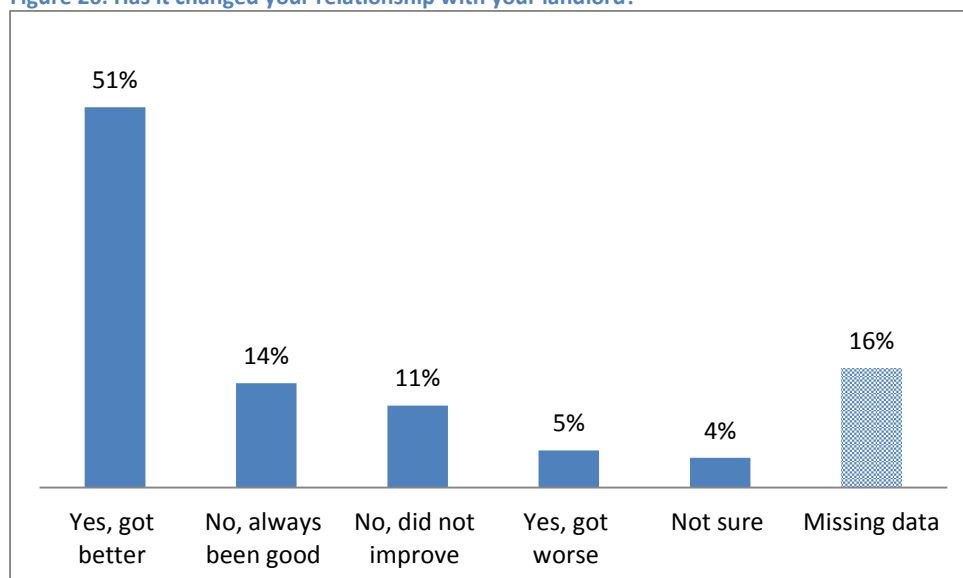
They get to meet other people whose landlords do things differently; they can go back to their own landlords with that example and say why haven't we done that, why don't we try it. It's very much about compare and contrast. (Trainer 2)

d. Impacts on tenant-landlord relationship

As Figure 26 shows, half of those interviewed (51%, 29 out of 57) stated that the relationship with their landlord **changed for the better** in the months following the training, as opposed to 11% who said the relationship was not affected either in positive or in negative terms. These who said it got better felt that, as a result of them gaining more confidence, knowledge and skills, they were **more respected** by their landlords. They also reported marked improvement in terms of being better able to **constructively challenge** their landlord in meetings, which from their point of view represented a huge step forward.

14% (8) said the relationship with their landlord had always been a positive one, while 5% of those interviewed said it got worse. Two delegates expressed **resentment** because their landlord, a big housing association recently born from the merging of several smaller ones, decided to dismantle all tenant involvement groups within its governance structure, including the Tenant Panel. The tenants voiced concerns for their hard work being lost, and their skills and knowledge being wasted.

Figure 26: Has it changed your relationship with your landlord?



[Source: LSE interviews]

Quotes – Yes, got better

At first they were iffy about letting us go, but after being on the course at Trafford Hall we did our first report and they showed appreciation, they even put us forward for the 'Kent Housing Award', from which we got a certificate of achievement.

They now refer to me as a housing expert, they worry that I know more than them! I often contradict them or ask them questions they have not even dreamt of, now they know they need to be careful what they say.

I actually became more confident to express myself to the council. Gaining a bit of confidence made a big difference as I was able to challenge them more, and achieve some results.

Chris: Advocating for Tenants

Chris is 58 years old and has been a tenant of his housing association for 21 years. He is a member of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel and completed the *Scrutiny- A deeper involvement* accredited training course as a follow up to the TPAS Level 3 course completed earlier.

Throughout the course Chris had the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of Scrutiny through discussing different case studies presented by different tenant groups from across the country and through the accreditation assessment work. He felt able to openly participate in constructive debates without feeling intimidated.

After the completion of the course, Chris felt more qualified and confident to ask questions and challenge the members of the housing association officers.

We felt that we could challenge the housing association in different ways since we went on the training. [...] Really I found that when I came back from the training, I felt more comfortable asking questions challenging members of the association... It has given me more confidence - I used to be a very quiet person, it brought me out of my shell.

This resulted in improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of the scrutiny process and procedures.

We changed the complaints procedure. There used to be three stages in the procedures, this went down to two after a scrutiny was completed. We found different ways that they wasted time and money. Complaints were dealt with quicker, and a lot of people were happier. They used to just give money to people who make complaints, so people were just complaining to get money. But we stopped this so that people weren't just complaining for money.

Chris' expertise and the group's achievements were recognized and praised by the landlord.

Our housing officer said to me, 'you know more about how housing should run than people in the association'. You should get a job as a housing officer.

They were so proud of us for getting accreditation. They put us up for the TPAS north regional award for Scrutiny. They were so happy about what we had done for the company. But now that the partnership has taken over there is none of that.

Very soon after Chris gained the accreditation, the housing association was taken over by a larger partnership group which closed down the tenant scrutiny group. However, the confidence Chris gained from completing the accredited course has enabled him to continue to engage with the community and advocate for their rights, despite the challenges they are currently facing.

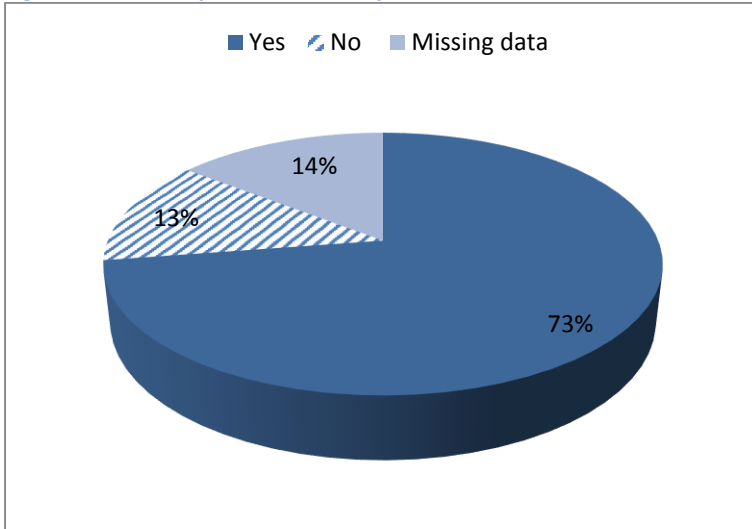
I still help around the community, I do the estate walkabouts and challenge staff to make sure things get done...We will still have tenant association meetings, and because of the knowledge that I have got I can take that to it...Needs are no different, and I know that I can push back because of going on these courses.

e. Group outcomes

Evidence from phone interviews with delegates

85% of the interviewees stated that the training helped them to **improve as a group member**, and better contribute to group functioning (see Figure 27).

Figure 27: Did it help in relation with your role?



[Source: LSE interviews; base 55 because two delegates had no formal role within a group]

As far as I am a more informed chair, I am able to do the job better.

It strengthens me, because now people respect me and what I say - if people say you don't know what you are talking about, I bring up that I have done the course and people will listen to me.

I have a lot more information, we do things more focused and better planned, we understand a lot of the housing regulation and know what we are entitled to ask for.

The majority (85%) of the interviewees stated that the fact that they attended the course had a **positive impact** on their group. In a few instances there was more than one delegate from the same group attending the course. The evidence shows that the wider tenant groups indirectly benefitted from individual members going on the course because:

- attendees were able to **pass the knowledge and information** they gained onto other group members who did not attend the course;
- The new skills/tools they gained allowed them to find ways to **improve group functioning** for the benefit of the whole group.

Allan: Chairing with Confidence

Allan is a 73 year old social housing tenant from a county in Yorkshire and the Humber. He has been serving as the chair of a Tenant Forum since September 2015. Prior to Allan taking over as chair, meetings were unstructured, unfocused and issues would be dragged out too long. The Forum not only had many disagreements amongst themselves, but was over reliant on the Council to guide their work.

When I took over, the council chose all the venues and would tell them what to discuss, and write the agendas...the last Chair just did what the councillors told them.

After taking on his new role as chair in September, Allan completed the *Being and Effective Chairperson* accredited training course at Trafford Hall. While on the course, Allan not only learned the skills and knowledge needed to be an effective chairperson, but he was given the opportunity to participate and role play various situations that a chairperson would have to deal with.

After returning home from the course, Allen was able to apply the skills he had learned to improve the effectiveness of Forum meetings.

I was able to advocate more efficiently, and detect undercurrents and keep everyone on track and set time limits for various topics to keep them focused.

The confidence he gained from the course allowed him to handle difficult situations with more confidence.

Had I not been on the course I would have been wavering and having doubts. But now I am more confident.

The Forum has noticed the change and responded positively to Allan's ability as Chair.

The group has commented on how I keep the meeting controlled...They like how the meetings are structured now...They feel the decisions this year have been really good and I always made them feel welcome...I was told they are some of the best meetings they have ever had.

In addition to improving the effectiveness of meetings, Allan's relationship with his landlord has improved since taking the course.

The landlord does listen more to what I say. They respond quite well, which is different than how things worked before. Now I understand more where they are coming from which is important.

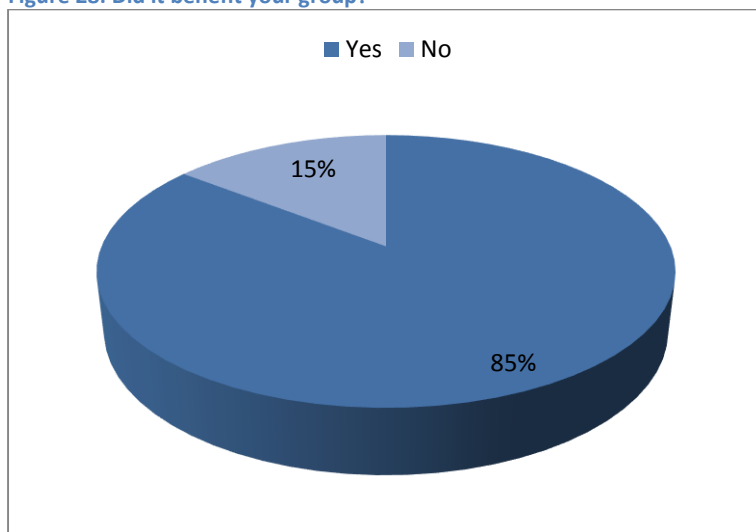
As a result, the Tenant forum has become more independent from the council, reclaiming more control from the council and improving their ability to represent the tenants.

The change in control has been felt by the tenants... Officials are now treating the tenants more respectfully.

Further to improving his abilities as a Chair, the course gave Allan the confidence to get more involved in the community, and he has recently become the tenant representative for his area. He wants people who are not able to attend the Forum to still have a say in what happens.

If any of them have problems that they can't sort out, I can act on their behalf and speak to the Council and sort it out. I have had a few issues sorted out for them already.

Figure 28: Did it benefit your group?



[Source: LSE interviews; base 55 because two were individual tenants not part of any constituted group]

After the training we come back and shared our learning with the group - when we do our job now, we know what we are looking for because the course showed us how to gather all the information and do interviews.

The course made us more cohesive, we all got to know each other much better - now people want to speak and listen to others. We will get better outcomes from the meetings, we stay focused on what we are supposed to be doing.

The panel went on the course, it gave the team a real sense of independence, and increased our personal skills in the various areas of scrutiny that we were involved; certainly the information we took back helped greatly, it has built better team work, helped everyone feel the relevance of what we are doing; we have a whole new drive and purpose, we are determined to put the report together ourselves now in plain English, we have definitely taken more control in the community than the housing officers than before the course.

Catherine: Scrutiny with a Plan

Catherine serves as the vice chair of a scrutiny panel in the Midlands. She is 41 years old and has been a member of the panel for two years. Catherine and two other members of her group completed the *Practical Skills for Scrutiny* course at Trafford Hall to improve their group's scrutiny skills, as scrutiny is still a fairly new area for them.

Prior to attending the course, the group's scrutiny activities were unplanned, unstructured, challenging and very time consuming.

The last report we did went on and on and on, and we kept going back to get more and more information. The report should have been finished last December, but it was only submitted in July, because we would forget we needed this and we didn't know that.

Throughout the course, not only did Catherine and her group improve their scrutiny and planning skills, but also they had the opportunity to bond with each other and improve their group dynamics.

The training allowed the newest member to bond with the group. He was difficult to work with...But after the training I bonded with him and began to understand him... The group was able to be more patient with him and it allowed him to understand how the group worked.

In addition, Catherine was able to improve her skills and confidence in public speaking and as a result was appointed as the panel's vice chair.

On the course at the end, we had to stand up and do a five minute presentation, which terrified me. But because of that I was then given the vice chair position. I still don't find it easy to stand in front of people, but it gets easier every time you do it.

After completing the training Catherine was able to share her learnings with the rest of the group and begin to apply the skills and knowledge to improve the effectiveness of their Scrutiny Panel activities.

After the course, we were able to finish the report more quickly because we had a plan, and we were able to get information out to tenants faster due to better timing and planning. We are on our third or fourth report now...We have the skills to be able to do it and confidence to do it, to plan and look for specific information.

In addition, the Panel has been able to work more effectively with the landlord, and has been given more autonomy to plan and carry out scrutiny activities.

We now have a plan, with dates, and a very clear outline on what we want them to provide. They sit with us to develop the plan and we discuss things, 'if this is what we need this is the information we need from you'.

We want to make the council proud and do a good job. It is a fairly new area, the council hasn't done it before...We have a complete free reign to do anything and be supported.

51 out of 57 interviewees mentioned their groups having **ambitious plans in the pipeline**, such as planning a community event or starting a community project (16), getting more training (11), embarking on a new panel review (9), setting up a new group (8), and applying for a new voluntary role (5).

Box 2: Planning to do next - Top five

1. Plan a community event/start a community project (16)
2. Get more training (11)
3. Embark on new panel review (9)
4. Set up a new group (8)
5. Apply for new position within the group (5)

Quotes – plan a community event/start a community project

We are about to organise a Christmas dinner for residents.

I'm helping to set up a housing solidarity picnic for the homeless community.

We are organising a Blackpool trip for senior residents in September.

Quotes – get more training

I want to do a course in mentoring. I can't afford it now but I am going to save up for it, if you want to do it professionally you have to have some training.

I want to bring people down to Trafford Hall with me to do courses on agriculture - we want to get a green space, there were some really good courses to develop a green space and start a cooperative.

Future plans for the group include the scrutiny revamp and getting the whole group out to Trafford Hall. We were also talking about applying for the grant to get in-house training as an alternative.

Quotes – embark on new panel review

We will start a new investigation on 'why tenants leave the housing association and where they go'.

We will be looking at repairs - how they are dealt with by the call centre.

We've just come to the end of writing a scrutiny report, we will be planning for the next year.

Quote – set up a new group

We might set up a group for this area for people who don't come to the forum to still have a say in what happens, to act on their behalf and speak to the council and sort problems out.

I together with two fellow members have registered as non for profit company, a Community Interest Company bringing in an affordable handy-man service.

Quote – apply for new position within the group/put oneself forward for a new role

I'm going to apply for the chair position on the board.

f. Community outcomes

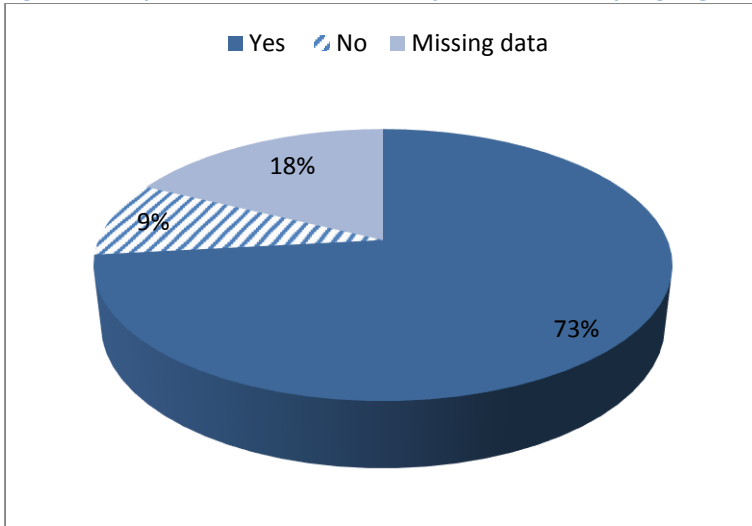
Evidence from phone interviews with delegates

Interviewees were asked whether they felt the wider community or public had benefited somehow from them attending the Tenant Futures training. As Figure 29 shows, 73% (42 out of 57) of them stated that their communities indirectly benefitted because they were able to **spread the information** they gained on different topics amongst a wide audience, equipping other tenants and community groups with valuable knowledge they would be otherwise lacking. Also, as a result of them going on the course, they were able to better contribute to **group functioning and project management**, which in turns meant that:

- More efficient and assertive scrutiny panels and tenant involvement groups can potentially indirectly benefit all tenants of the landlord's housing stock by **increasing the standard of the services** that they receive.

- More established, stronger and influential Tenant and Resident Associations have the potential to indirectly benefit all tenants of an estate or in a geographical area. This can be done by setting up events to **engage people in the community** and to **overcome social isolation**.

Figure 29: Do you feel the wider community benefitted from you going on the course?



[Source: LSE interviews]

Quotes – sharing info and knowledge with wider community

Will be doing a road show on Thursday, I will be going out and speaking to residents, hopefully engaging new members and gaining new members; it is going to help a wider circle of groups and resident inspectors.

Indirectly yet, because what was passed to me I was then able to tell other people locally – there was no other info at the time about universal credit, just lots of rumours.

When I do a course that needs or is good to be passed onto people, we have a formal meeting and I do as much passing as possible, then I get feedback on how the training I have done has helped them.

Quotes – community benefits due to more efficient Scrutiny Panels

Community benefits by the fact that we get improved services from the landlord - I think because we are sticking more to the issues in question the community will get a quicker response, things will get tackled quicker...we've seen things happening faster because we are sticking to a short report and finishing it up really quickly.

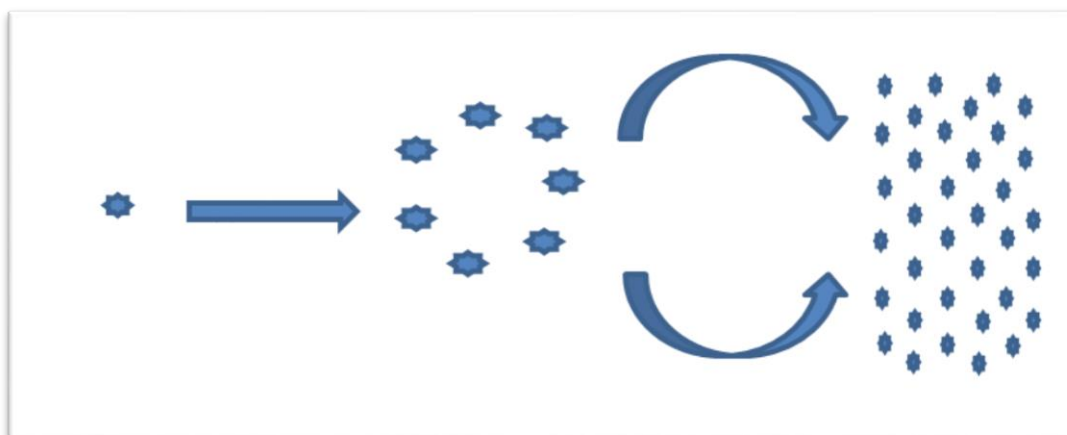
I think my knowledge of scrutiny will enable me to be a better scrutiny panel member, and when we will have done a report, hopefully it will help residents and benefit them in that they will have a better service, better value for money, and better inclusion.

Quotes – community benefits due to stronger TARAs

I have seen a lot more engagement from people from all different backgrounds - it means that the association can reach out to a wider range of residents and is representative of who actually lives here, alongside getting more people engaged in decision making.

They benefit because we know now how to run meetings and AGMs, we do more stuff, instead of problems going on for ages now things get sorted sooner.

Figure 30: Figure: 'Double' ripple-effect of Tenant Futures training



Robert: Building Partnerships

Robert is a 73 year old social housing tenant. He is a tenant inspector, sits on the council's environment and refurbishment group, and is also the secretary of his Tenants and Residents Association.

Given the recent and upcoming changes to Universal Credit, there was a lot of uncertainty developing in the local community. In order to make sure the community had a good understanding of the changes, Robert attended *The Wider World* course on behalf of the community to get a clearer explanation of the impacts of welfare reform.

Thanks to the detailed and clear explanations on Universal Credit that were given on the course, along with a grant awarded to cover the Trafford Hall trainer to come to the community, Robert was able to organize a full day event to spread knowledge about Universal Credit.

We spread the knowledge from the course to the community. The people we aim for are secretaries and treasuries of the Tenants and Resident associations. All those little subgroups, they are the people who benefit.

Robert has been able to use the knowledge and confidence he gained from the course to continue to provide tenants with the right information on how change might impact them.

Because of the courses, I have done days with other members of the group and I have done presentations... People have been coming to me after and asking 'does that affect me?'. For the younger people, it does and I go through the details with them so they know what they need to have in place.

As a result, Robert's efforts are not only recognized by the association, but valued and reciprocated.

When we get those certificates, I take mine to the resident involvement officer, they photocopy them and put them in their folders.

The CEO of the [...] group came down for one of our events... I have telephone contacts with all the departments, I have the mobile and landline for the head of repairs, and contacts for the call centres. We always ask them to appear at our meetings and they will.

We have respect for them and they have for us too. We make their life easier. We can do things that members of staff can't do.

Angela: Inspiring a National Dialogue

Angela is a 68 year old tenant inspector from a housing association in the South East. Angela has been concerned about the negative public opinion of social housing tenants and decided to attend the *Pride not Prejudice: Changing the image of social housing* course to improve her knowledge of social housing, raise her community's self-esteem, and enable them to speak up for themselves.

Throughout the training, Angela was not only able to meet tenants from other housing associations who were living in very similar situations but was exposed to real government statistics on unemployment, pensions, and welfare budgets. This not only highlighted the fact that she is not alone in the issues she deals with in her own housing association, but provided her with a wider knowledge of the national picture of social housing, and gave her more confidence to speak about it.

The biggest eye opener was actually learning some real government statistics, rather than what media and newspapers shout about it. Looking for the facts rather than the image... [It] has encouraged me to sign up to receive the government statistics rather than looking at this information through second hand reports.

I learnt that social housing is not just a home, it is a community. It has now become part of my thinking, a shift in my perspective.

The course helped Angela to improve her ability to serve as a tenant inspector.

Following the course I was involved in an inspection. The confidence I gained improved my self-esteem and gave me confidence to present to the board... [The presentation we did] made the board think so much that they needed days to think about what was said. It was influential.

But more importantly, the course enabled Angela to increase her local community's knowledge of social housing and engagement in their community. This led to the creation of a national event that extended the conversation to a wider range of social housing tenants across the country.

I was able to get the speaker [from the course] to come to the association to spread the information. As a result of this and the inspections that we did, one of our people ended up organizing a national event called 'scrutiny live', which is a national event that brought tenants from across housing associations together. It helped many involved tenants to be able to articulate their situation and their needs with pride and without prejudice.

Since attending the course, Angela's relationship with her landlord has continued to improve, and so has her involvement and positive impact on her community.

The course has impacted the relation positively, because they were able to have a successful event, as a result of me going on the course.

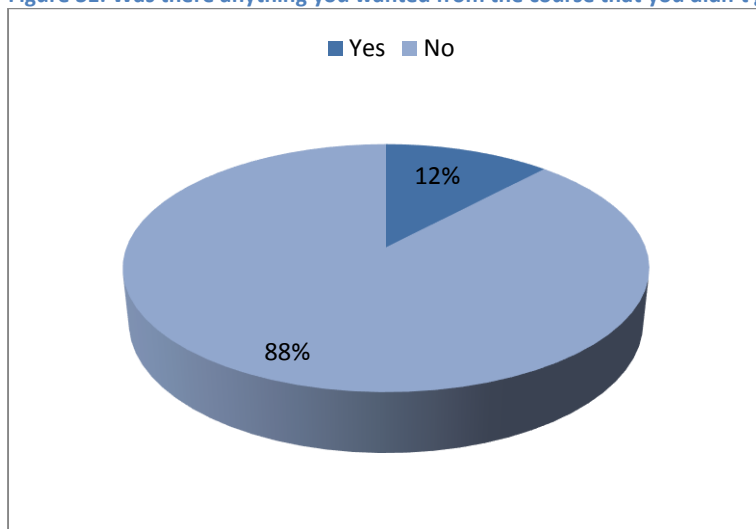
Three of us have decided to work out how tenants can consult tenants in a more meaningful way... with hopes to have a project in 2016 where tenants can consult tenants. We want to build the right skills to consult the community, to make sure we know what is good for the community.

g. Suggestions for improvement

Evidence from course evaluation summaries

All delegates who attended the courses were asked to state whether there was anything they wanted from the course that they did not get. As Figure 31 shows, only 12% (81) of the interviewees answered 'yes' to this question, as opposed to 88% who were happy with what they got from the course. Top three unmet expectations were gaining **better insight on subject** or specific topics (mentioned by 37 delegates), more time devoted to practical exercise and **learning through practice** (mentioned by 12), and more time for **Question & Answers sessions** (mentioned by 8).

Figure 31: Was there anything you wanted from the course that you didn't get?



[Source: Course evaluation summaries; base 657, excluding 'Did not answer']

Box 3: Top three unmet expectations

1. Better insight on subject or specific topics (37)
2. More practical exercises/learning through practice (12)
3. More time for Q&A and to look further into things (8)

Delegates were prompted to give their feedback suggestions on how to improve the Tenant Futures training. 184 tenants suggested improvements with the top answers being offering **longer courses** (87); providing attendees with delegate with **handouts of power point presentations** before the start of the course (11); providing more **practical examples** (12); and introducing more **practical exercises** (9).

Box 4: Top four tenant suggestions on how to improve Tenant Futures training

1. Offer longer courses (87). Quite a few tenants felt they were given too much information in a short period of time, and complained about the courses being too intense. Tenants suggested that keeping the days shorter and spreading the courses over more days would

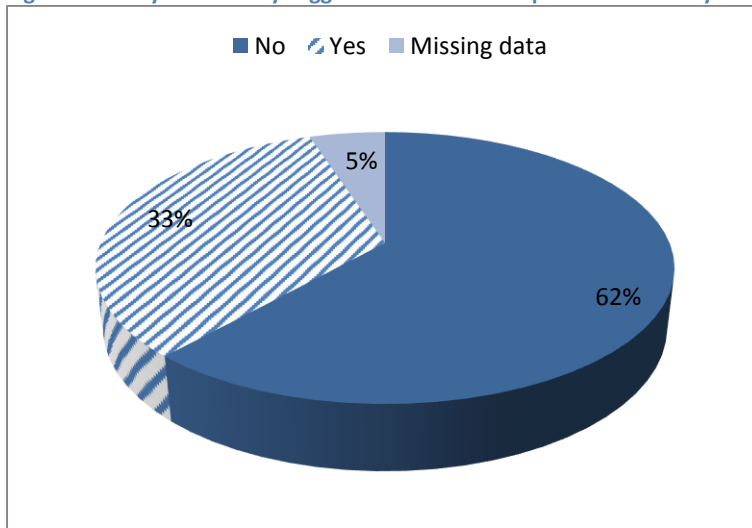
keep attention level high, allow for more in-depth discussion of topics, and give them more time to 'digest' the information provided.

2. Provide attendees with handouts of power point presentations before the start of the course (11).
3. Provide more practical examples (12). Some tenants felt that they would benefit from spending more time discussing best practice examples.
4. Introduce more practical exercises (9). Some tenants felt that they would benefit from having the time to learn by doing.

Evidence from phone interviews with delegates

Interviewees were asked whether they wanted to provide feedback on how to improve the delivery of the training. As Figure 32 shows, 62% (35 out of 57) of those interviewed stated that they could not think of anything as it was already **excellent as it was**. 33% (19 out of 57) of the interviewees did have some suggestions for improvement.

Figure 32: Do you have any suggestion on how to improve the delivery of the TH training?



[Source: LSE interviewees]

The top suggestions were that courses should be **longer** (12). Seven wanted to see a **better mix of people**, i.e. people from different parts of the country/younger people, and suggested different ways of doing this such as providing higher travel bursaries for tenants whose landlords are not prepared to contribute towards their expenses, opening a satellite centre and promoting Trafford Hall amongst different landlords. Two noted that having **too many people** on a course can be distracting, while another two mentioned the need for **one-to one-support** for people with physical or mental disabilities who are not accompanied by carers. One interviewee complained about a lack of a diversity and equality plan to effectively deal with racist episodes.

Box 5: Tenant suggestions for improvement

1. Offer longer courses (12)
2. Encourage a better mix of people (7)
3. Arrange smaller groups (2)
4. Provide one to one support for people with disabilities (2)
5. Implement a diversity and equality plan (1)

Quotes – longer courses

The course was a bit brainy, very heavy content – I would have preferred if it was over three days, would have had a bit more time to take it in.

There was too much information crammed in the second day - they should either try to extend the course or better balance out the time, it can physically and emotionally get you.

It opened up whole new avenues of thinking, it was a shame that it was only over two days, I think an additional day to explore some of the things that were brought to us would have been great.

Quotes – better mix of people

I would like to have a younger mix, and they should have a more geographical spread, and not have too many people from one group.

You tend to see the same people on each course; if they could expand the people who attend their courses....it would be more useful if more people attended.

Would be nice that they were financed properly because costs can be prohibitive, it cost me money, around £100, if I drive there from London - my landlord is not willing to pay and less so in current climate of budget cuts, many people get put off by the travel costs involved.

Quotes – smaller groups

Sometimes you have a big response to the course, so many people, maybe it would be a good idea to split it into two different sessions - there are so many of us, you struggle to pay attention, the room is not big enough.

Lots of people were on the course and we were required to move around a lot, it was very distracting.

Quotes – one to one support for people with disabilities

They are getting a lot more people with physical and mental conditions that need more support throughout the course.

I have ADHD and bipolar, maybe they could have provided a little more one to one support for this to get through the course - I am not quite sure if they read these things.

Quotes – diversity and equality plan

Diversity is not very good at TH - they usually live in Chester and they are all friends, some of these people don't meet people from other backgrounds, the majority of the people are White British, there is very little diversity, they can do better at diversity.

Finally, 30 interviewees were asked to brainstorm on which courses they thought should be provided by Trafford Hall that were not on offer. While the majority stated that there was nothing they could think of as Trafford Hall was already offering a wide enough spectrum of courses, 8 offered feedback on topics they would like to see courses on.

Box 6: Suggested courses not on offer

- Mentorship
- How to be a member
- How to prepare and run a business plan
- How to run a social enterprise
- How to be a secretary
- Facility management

Evidence from interviews with key informants

The trainers made some comments on how to improve the delivery of the training, especially to do with **improving IT facilities**, and encouraging **better mix of people** by promoting Trafford Hall amongst more landlords.

They need to sort out their IT. It is monstrously frustrating. I know they have been working on their signal. They have a bunch of laptops that nobody maintains and are filled with viruses. It is horrific. For example, I am going next week, on Monday afternoon people need access to internet to do research. Apparently what can happen if you have a number of people getting on internet at the same time is that it crashes. If they are using TH laptops, there are apps coming up all the time. (Trainer 1)

I wish more people can benefit from it. There are many landlords who just don't want to send tenants to Trafford Hall. When I work with specific associations I try to get landlords to do this. Landlords are gatekeepers. Sometimes my in-house work will come from Trafford Hall. In my other work I am always promoting Trafford Hall and the courses there. A lot of the time tenants haven't heard of it, because their landlords haven't told them. (Trainer 1)

6. Detailed review on accredited training

a. Evidence of implementation

Sixteen accredited courses were run in the financial year 2014-15, as opposed to 23 non accredited courses. 269 (94%) out of the 287 tenants attending the accredited courses completed the accreditation. Accreditation is voluntary, and 18 (6%) delegates chose not to do it. Yet, the number of delegates undertaking accreditation **greatly exceeded** the Government target of 170.

If it's an accredited course, they don't have to do the accreditation. We do tell people that the accreditation is voluntary, and that it is not an end in itself. At the beginning of the course we tell them how the accreditation works, and given that it is voluntary we give reasons why they would want to do it. Because other people are doing it they usually do it, very rarely do people say no. (Trainer 1)

b. Experience of delegates doing accredited courses

We interviewed 24 delegates who attended accredited training. Only one of them said he went on the course because of the accreditation. The remaining 23 signed up for the course mainly because they were **interested in its content**, and to a less extent because it was suggested to them by their landlord or another tenant, or because they wanted to apply for a grant.

This finding is confirmed by one trainer, who states that in her experience it is **only a minority** of tenants that go on the course because of the accreditation itself.

Some will choose to gain accreditation, and most will just like the topic of the course. It is not very often that people come for the accreditation. [...] What you do get is that when tenants have been on a course that has been accredited, they go back to their group and show off their accreditation and others want to come and get the accreditation. Some will go on a non-accredited course and will be disappointed they are not going to get the accreditation. It is kind of a peer group thing. (Trainer 1)

Six out of 24 said they were **not aware that the course was accredited** until they got there. According to the External Evaluator, this is mainly because tenant involvement officers sometimes **do not inform** tenants that they will be attending an accredited course.

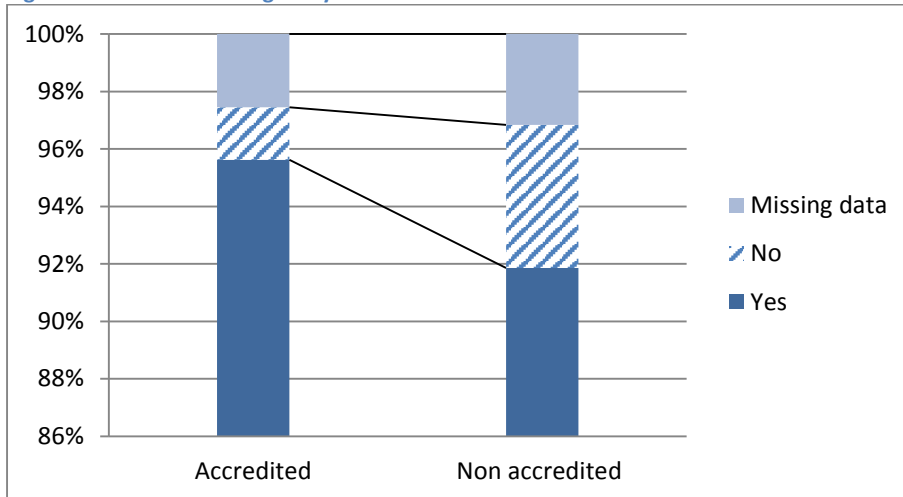
Some people come into the course and don't know it's accredited. There has been a change in admin at Trafford Hall, so there were gaps in the information that was being sent out. Tenants freak out once they learn it's accredited. Or sometimes the email content is to the housing provider, so people don't know about it. (External Evaluator)

When presented with the option whether to undertake accreditation or not, only two (8%) of them decided not to undertake the accreditation, as opposed to 22 who went for it, including most of those who did not know about the accreditation beforehand.

Evidence from course evaluation summaries

Delegates who went on accredited course were slightly more likely to say that they had **gained new ideas** by going on the course - 96% as opposed to 92% (see Figure 33).

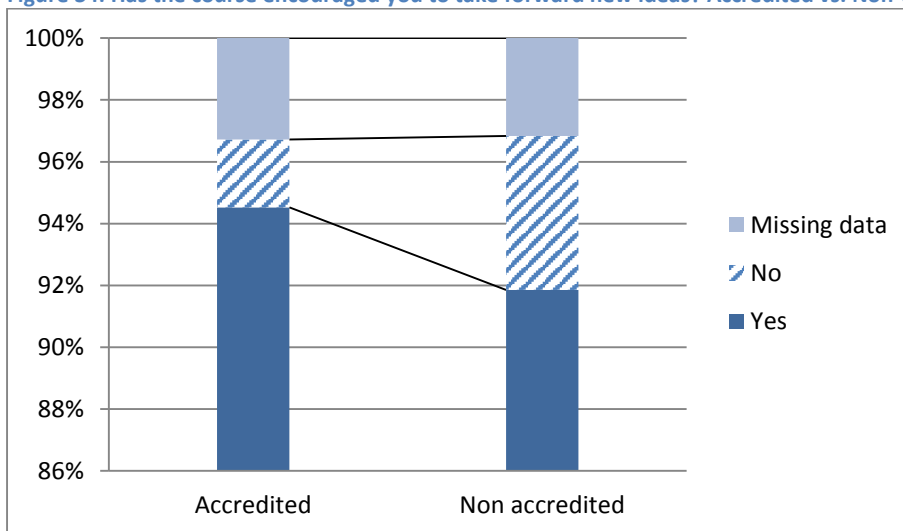
Figure 33: Has the course given you new ideas? Accredited vs. Non-accredited courses



[Source: Course evaluation summaries]

Figure 34 shows that 94% of the delegates attending accredited felt **encouraged to take forward new ideas** when they left the course, compared to 92% of those attending non-accredited training.

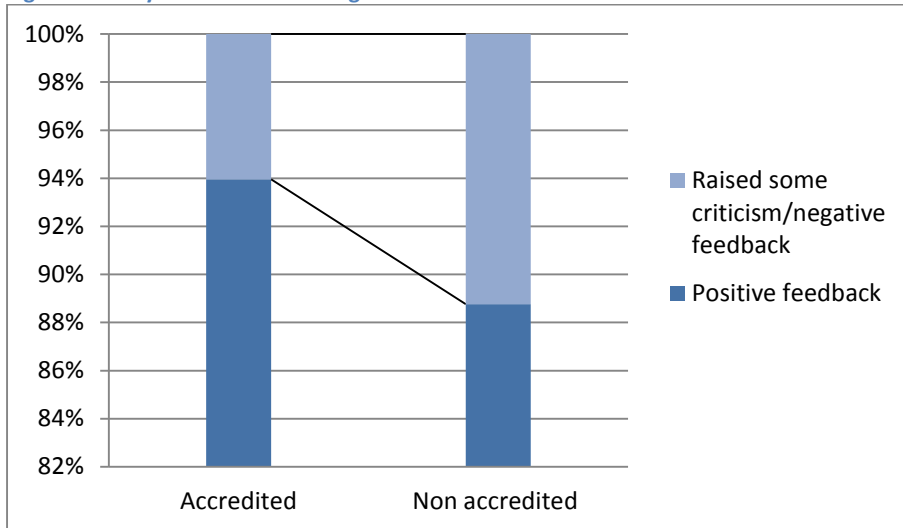
Figure 34: Has the course encouraged you to take forward new ideas? Accredited vs. Non-accredited courses



[Source: Course evaluation summaries]

As Figure 35 shows, delegates who attended accredited courses were more likely to express **positive feedback** about the way the course was taught – 94% as opposed to 88% of those who went on non-accredited courses.

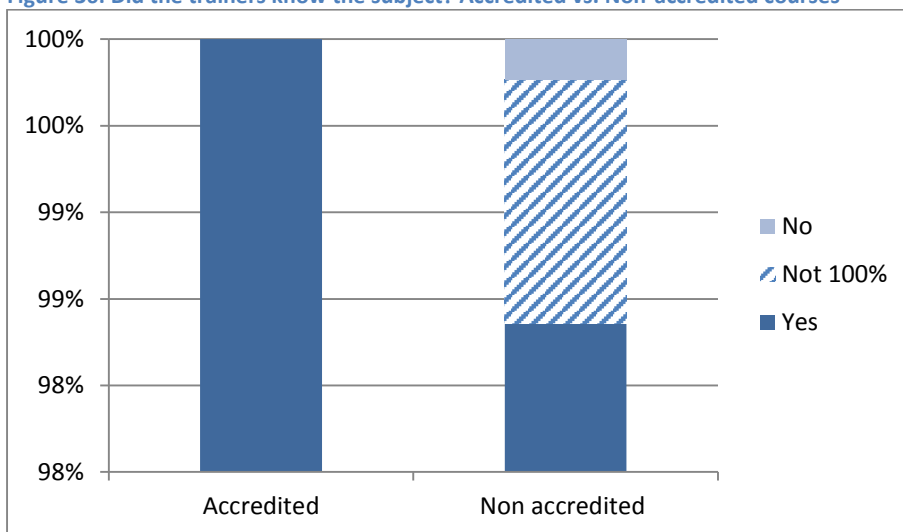
Figure 35: Way the course was taught - Accredited vs. Non-accredited courses



[Source: Course evaluation summaries]

Interestingly, all delegates attending accredited training unanimously stated that the **trainers knew the subject**, while some (even though admittedly a tiny 2%) of those who went on non-accredited courses answered either 'No' or 'Not 100%' to this question (see Figure 36).

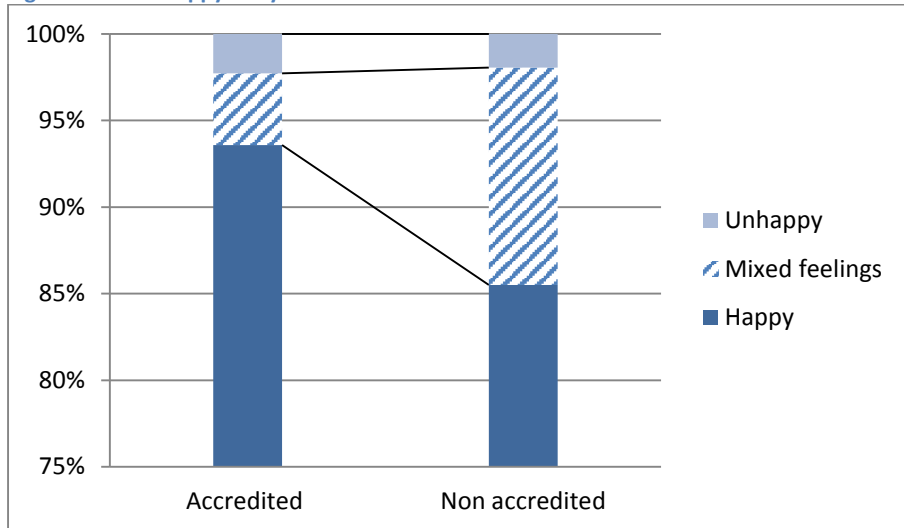
Figure 36: Did the trainers know the subject? Accredited vs. Non-accredited courses



[Source: Course evaluation summaries]

Figure 37 shows that delegates attending accredited courses were **happier with the course** than those who went on non-accredited courses – 94% versus 85%. They were around 9% less likely to express mixed feelings or unhappiness with the course.

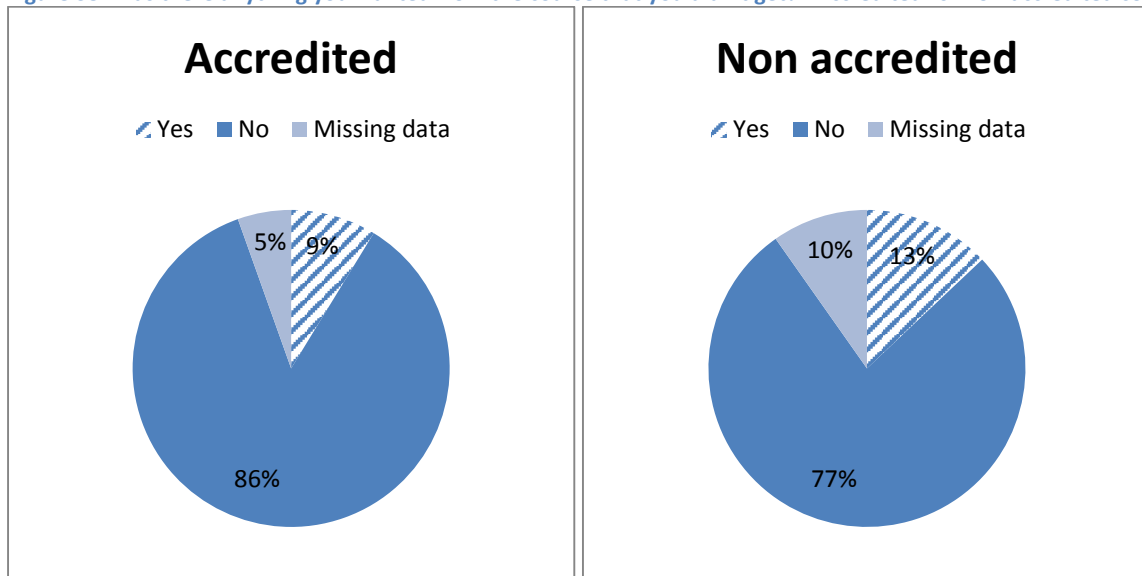
Figure 37: How happy are you with the course? Accredited vs. Non-accredited courses



[Source: Course evaluation summaries]

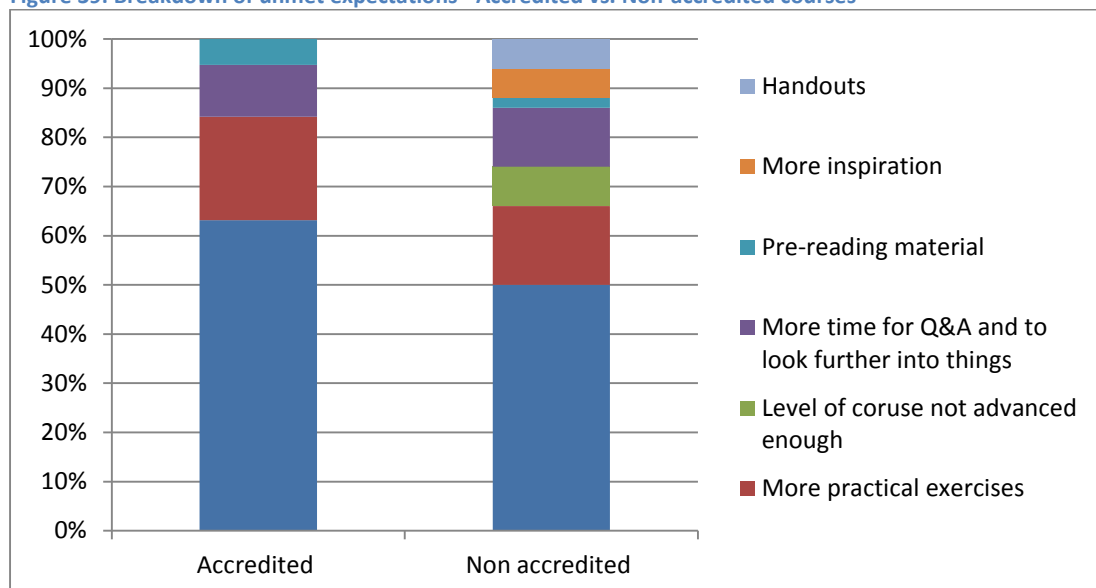
As Figure 38 shows, delegates attending accredited courses were **less likely** to state that there was something from the course that they did not get – 9% as opposed to 13% of those attending non-accredited training. Figure 39 shows that none of the delegates attending accredited training mentioned unmet expectations such as not receiving handouts, not getting enough inspiration, and the level of course not being advanced enough. On the contrary, 12% more delegates attending accredited training rather than non-accredited courses were disappointed that they did not get better insight on specific topics.

Figure 38: Was there anything you wanted from the course that you didn't get? - Accredited vs. Non-accredited courses



[Source: Course evaluation summaries]

Figure 39: Breakdown of unmet expectations - Accredited vs. Non-accredited courses



[Source: Course evaluation summaries]

c. Benefits of accreditation

Evidence from phone interviews with delegates

Six interviewees mentioned specific benefits of doing the accreditation (see Box 7). Three stated it was a bonus of going on the course, although it did not bring them any specific benefit. The remaining 15 interviewees did not mention the benefits of accreditation as being any different from the individual, group and community benefits brought by the course itself.

Box 7: Specific benefits of accreditation

- Useful for job applications (2)
- Personal satisfaction and sense of achievement (1)
- Higher profile within the group (1)
- Higher profile with landlord (1)
- Makes you work harder (1)

I'm going to apply for jobs soon and I will probably mention it in my job interview.

Having an accreditation is good because it validates that you went on a learning course - if you want to go further and do consultancy you can provide that information, and builds your resume to get some contracts.

The accreditation makes you feel you've gained something worthwhile, does mean something - makes you feel proud.

Now I think the group respect us more because we have the accreditation. I brought the certificate to the meeting and explained exactly how it worked - they respect us more, now more people are coming to me for advice, I am speaking up more in meetings and asking more questions than before.

With being an accredited chair I've been asked to sit on the more senior board, which is well recognised by the landlord – the accreditation brought a higher profile to the group, more professionalism. We are now highly regarded by other TRAs.

It made me work harder.

Graham: Expanding your Influence

Graham is 57 and serves as the chair of a tenant involvement group within a council in the Midlands. He completed the accreditation for the *Being an Effective Chairperson* course at Trafford Hall.

The accreditation course provided Graham with the skills to improve the productivity and professionalism of the meetings.

Now that I have done this, I have a set mind-set. We go through the agenda as it is, we keep the meeting to set times, and resolution comes at those times. We get positive feedback now because they can see a structured team doing positive things. [...] I think because of the accreditation, [we] now have professionalism within the committee.

In addition, he has been able to improve his effectiveness as a leader and has the tools and strategies to resolve difficult situation.

I think they look at me more now as a leader, as a guiding figure of the group, with a more positive attitude. If they have any queries they will certainly come to me now.

The dealing with the problematic people - I have put this into use, very recently in fact. What happened was we got a committee member who is a very outspoken and unruly person. I had a private one to one meeting with him, and now she would listen...I have become a little bit more diplomatic in responding to various things.

Furthermore, the accreditation has opened up more challenging opportunities for him within the organization.

With being an accredited chair, I have now been asked to sit on a higher group, which is one below the board group... I get to liaise with the [leaders] of the company, get to share personal opinions and feedback. It is well recognized by the landlord.

As a result, he has been able to make a positive impact in the community to ensure the tenant's needs are effectively addressed by the landlord.

We had a situation where the landlord pushed to us an incentive scheme but it seemed to be all one sided. We sent it back giving our point of view. It was like a ping pong being sent back and forth. [...] At the end of the year they came back with a nice incentive scheme. It is nice to know that they listened to us.

Evidence from interviews with key informants

We asked trainers what they thought the benefits of accreditation were. Their answers mirror what the interviewees reported as perceived benefits of accreditation, namely that:

- Younger tenants can find it **useful for job applications**;
- It brings tenants a higher **sense of personal satisfaction** and achievement;

- It helps them to gain more respect from and build a **higher profile with their landlord**;
- It makes them **work harder**, and by doing so it reinforces the learning process;
- It can be used as evidence to **apply for funding**, as it certifies that they have the skills they need to effectively run community projects.

The younger ones who can put it on their CV, they see the value. (Trainer 1)

[Doing the training enhances] their own personal confidence and achievement, especially if they have done an accreditation. (Trainer 1)

The people now have the confidence and can go back to their landlord and say 'you need to treat me as an expert in this area'. For tenant scrutiny, if the landlord isn't playing ball they can bring up the accreditation. It is credibility to the tenants. (Trainer 1)

Really the accreditation is recognizing the learning by an established awarding body. People really value the recognition and the work that they have done to get through. They know the process they have to go through, it isn't a micky mouse kind of recognition. [...] For some tenants it could be the first certificate that says: here are the learning outcomes and criteria you have met. For loads of tenants this is the first qualification they have ever had. They work hard. [...] People have used it for funding applications, to say they had attended the accredited course and achieved this level of skills. People get a real kick that they are being recognized. (External Evaluator)

If [the course] is not accredited, some [delegates] can coast through a course and not really think through why they are here, and what they have done and why. It really does focus peoples understanding. (Trainer 2)

Some organizations will send three of them as a group, because using the evidence of the accreditation they can apply for funding. It shows that they have the skills to run community programs. (External Evaluator)

June: Building a Fundraising Community

June is 51 years old and chairs a group in charge of organising event in a community centre in the South East of England. Herself, and other tenants who sit on other groups in the community, were looking to improve their fundraising skills and identify some strategies to be more effective. To do this they attended the *Effective Fundraising Strategies* accredited training course at Trafford Hall.

Throughout the course, Jane developed the skills and learned the value of budgeting, planning, negotiating, monitoring and evaluating. In addition, Jane was exposed to the variety of funding opportunities that exists and gained the confidence to apply her knowledge to take advantage of these different avenues.

We went through places we hadn't heard of that we can go for funding...For the small events I always get grants, I have no problem at all applying and getting funding because of the course.

Following the course, June was able to apply her new skills to her work on the Community Events panel immediately.

I have helped to organize many trips - negotiating prices, coordinating, managing a budget and tweaking the budget where necessary. I would have never done this before the course because I wouldn't have the confidence. I have also been able to negotiate a bigger budget: for example, the budget didn't include the lunch, but I managed to negotiate a budget increase to get kids to have lunches so that everyone had lunch, instead of only kids whose parents had money.

She has also become more confident dealing with her landlord.

[The course] gives people confidence, and teaches them what they can do. It gives you a sense of purpose again...it gives me the back up for what I am saying. When I get "oh, you're just a tenant, you don't know what you were talking about" I can say, "yeah, I do."

As a result, she has established a reputation as an expert in fundraising within her community, and works to build the fundraising skills and confidence of other groups in her community using the tools provided to her through the course.

I have become a bit of an advice person for other people. I have told loads of people about Funding Central, because I had never heard of it...We have set up so many groups...and they are now fundraising for themselves. So I will get calls [where people ask me] 'can you go and talk to this person about fundraising?'. Without the funds they weren't even operating as a group. I think all this is empowering people.

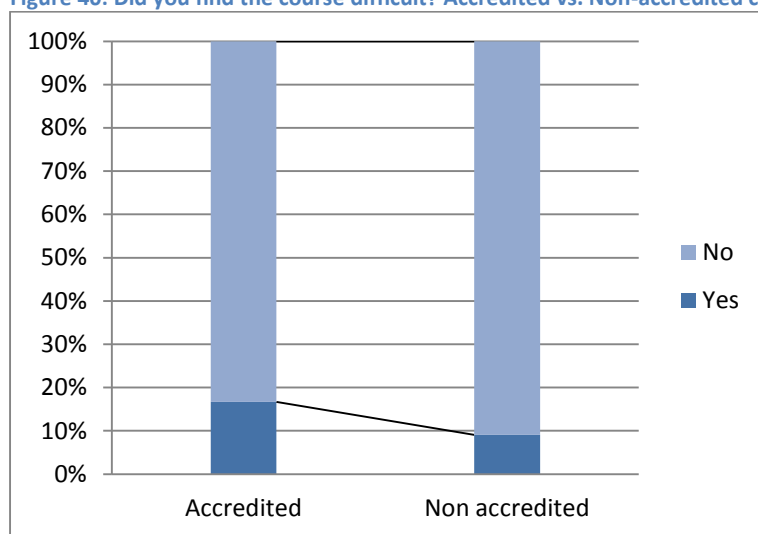
It is fantastic to be able to come back and refer to [the course handouts]. They also give you blank ones to practice, and I have given those out to the community to help teaching them.

d. Problems with the accreditation

Evidence from phone interviews with delegates

As Figure 40 shows, delegates who attended accredited courses found them **more difficult** compared to tenants attending non-accredited training – 17% (4 out of 24) as opposed to 9% (3 out of 33). Two tenants said the accreditation worksheets were particularly difficult.

Figure 40: Did you find the course difficult? Accredited vs. Non-accredited courses



[Source: LSE interviewees]

The accreditation test was difficult - I was tired and it was quite a long day. I found difficult the way they worded the exam questions.

I had a meltdown on the first day, we had an exam at the end of first day and I couldn't get my head around what they were asking me. I spoke to the tutor who put the questions in a way that I could understand, they were written in a scholarly manner - once she had given me the questions on words I could understand it, it was fine.

Evidence from interviews with key informants

The trainers acknowledge that the accreditation is **demanding** both for tenants undertaking it, and for them delivering it. The main problem for trainers is that they have to work longer hours to provide support to tenants while they complete their worksheets. It is also more **challenging for them to deliver the course at the right pace**, making sure that delegates have the time to finish their tasks.

Tenants can freak out a bit. They have not much experience in education, they are not used to having to sit down and do an exam. The biggest thing is to reassure them that the course is really no different, that they just have to demonstrate what they have learnt. (External Evaluator)

Certainly it's harder work. You have to go back to some people several times [...]. It is harder work. [...] it is more demanding. (Trainer 2)

Accredited training is demanding both for the learner and for us. On a non-accredited course we have an hour and a half off before dinner, and then we are relaxing with people. On an accredited course [in the evenings] we are double checking, having a word with this person and that person... (Trainer 2)

Delivering accredited training is more challenging. Regularly you will have 20 people in a group with a co trainer, but even with that, delivering the accredited course and giving people time to complete the worksheets is a real juggling act. It's mostly the logistical challenge: you have to pace and deliver the course, and we are up until pretty late at night as they need help on the worksheets [...]. When it is not accredited, you can go at an easier pace. (Trainer 1)

e. Tenant suggestions for improvement

Only two tenants raised suggestions for improvement specifically to do with the delivery of accredited training. One thought that the questions on the worksheets should be worded in a less scholarly manner. Another made the point that it would be good to introduce a more advanced accredited course Level 3 for experienced and skilled tenants wishing to gain deeper understanding on specific subjects.

Only thing I could think of is if they worded the questions on the exams better.

Some courses are quite basic - more advanced courses would be great for more advanced people. Courses of this type but at a higher level, they are accredited level 2, there is no depth, my wish is to see things at level 3 - this would allow more for deeper learning.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

- All Government targets (but one) were met or exceeded. The Tenant Futures programme is **administered well**, especially in terms of number of courses run (both accredited and non-accredited), and number of people undertaking accreditation.
- Trafford Hall scored highly amongst tenants as a **remarkable residential venue**, providing **top quality training** delivered by experienced, knowledgeable and committed trainers, and an excellent catering service.
- The programme performed well against Government expected outcomes (see Box 8). The Tenant Futures training was **successful** in achieving the following outcomes for individual tenants:
 - Equipping tenants with **know-how, better insight, in-depth information, useful tools and new skills** to refine and upgrade their level of community involvement. Its **residential nature is invaluable** because it allows them to share ideas and experiences with other tenants from other parts of England and different landlords;
 - Increasing delegates’ **confidence**, assertiveness and **self-esteem**;
 - **Motivating** tenants to get more involved in their communities, take forward existing ideas, and set up community groups;
 - Inspiring tenants to **engage more confidently with their landlords**, and providing them with skills to shape decisions and have a say in local services.

Box 8: Findings against desired outcomes

Desired Government outcomes	Actual outcomes based on evidence
More tenants across England inspired to engage more confidently with their landlord, and having the skills to challenge and have a say on local services	The evidence shows that the Tenant Futures training is a big confidence booster, changes the way tenants relate with their landlords, and equips them with the skills to become more effectively involved in influencing the way their local services are run
More tenants are inspired to set up tenant panels (or equivalent bodies) as a result of training at NCRC	The evidence shows that, following Tenant Futures training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing tenant panels greatly improve their structure and functioning; and • Tenants feel inspired to set up Community Interest Companies, or other resident involvement groups.
Trained tenants who can act as local advocates for encouraging community engagement	The evidence shows that tenants leave Tenant Futures training feeling more confident to do things in their communities. They are equipped with the necessary motivation, knowledge and skills to become tenant involvement champions. With better planning and project management skills, they are able to run successful projects to engage the community and foster community spirit.

Encouraging a wider variety of tenants to get involved in their local communities and share learning, helping to build stronger, more engaged communities	Delegates routinely share knowledge and information they get on the training with other group members, as well as with the wider local or tenant community.
Delivering greater awareness and know-how to tenants that will generate better landlord-tenant-community relations e.g. localism, Community Rights and welfare reform	Tenant Futures is successful in giving tenants better knowledge and insight on housing-related topics. They are given up-to-date information about the impacts of welfare reforms, and the community rights available to them under the Localism Act 2011.
Improving tenants' skills and confidence, e.g. scrutiny, community engagement, fundraising, IT literacy, presentation, report writing, chairing meetings	Tenant Futures improves tenants' skills on many levels, including confidence, leadership skills, fundraising, presentation skills, writing skills, people skills etc.

- The Tenant Futures training programme had a '**double**' ripple-effect, with its benefits spreading from individual participants on to tenant groups and wider local communities.

Delegates imparted what they learnt on to other group members, which meant that the whole group benefited from the Trafford Hall experience through **shared learning**. Thanks to the new knowledge and skills they gained at Trafford Hall, individual tenants contributed to **improve group functioning and project management**. By doing this, they promoted more efficient tenant scrutiny panels, more influential tenant involvement groups, and stronger Tenants and Residents Associations, which indirectly benefited wider tenant communities.

Individual attendance to the courses therefore indirectly benefited a much larger number of tenants and estate residents across England, which meant that the Tenant Futures training programme offered considerable **value for money**.

- At present, accreditation does not seem to have any substantial bearing on why people decide to go on the course. Very rarely people go on course to pursue accreditation, and a few seem to know about a course being accredited beforehand. Nonetheless, undertaking accreditation delivers **additional specific benefits** to tenants. Findings suggest that accreditation makes delegates work harder. Trainers also seem to deliver a slightly better product (although the content of the course does not vary between accredited and non-accredited).
- The only Government target which was not met in the financial year 2014-15 is the number of new tenants (36% actual as opposed to 45% target).

Only 9% of the delegates attending Tenant Futures training were from BME background, while according to the last English Housing Survey⁴, 15% of all household reference persons in social housing were BME, a **mismatch of 6%**. According to these figures, tenants from ethnic minority background were **underrepresented** at Trafford Hall.

The majority of tenants attending training were aged over 50. This is likely to be because tenant activists are usually older people who are either retired or in a better position to volunteer their time, as opposed to younger working-age tenants with dependent children⁵. In the past, Trafford Hall has trialled running courses over the weekend to make it easier for

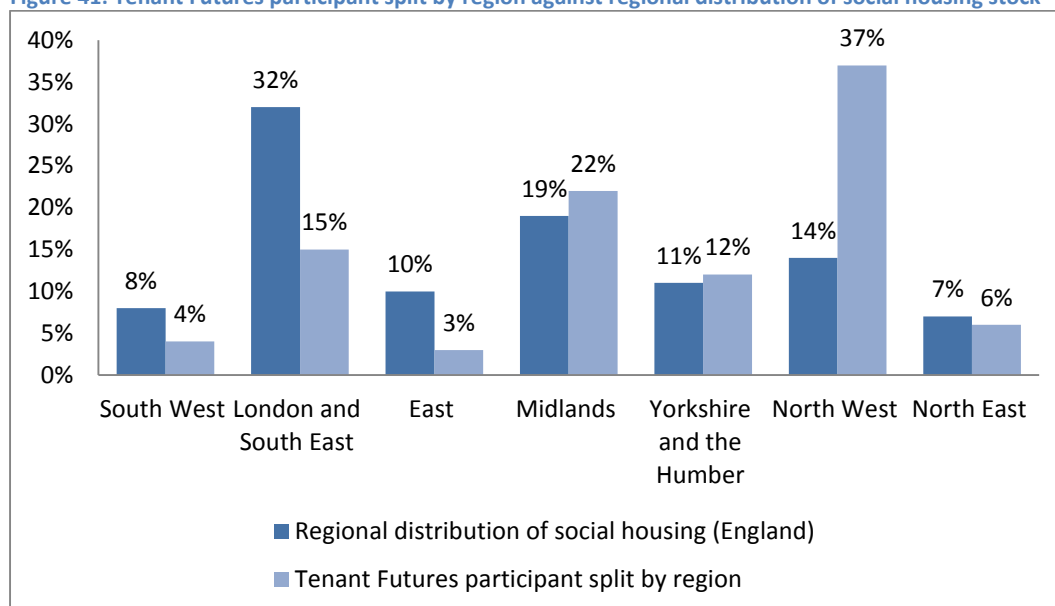
⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/406740/English_Housing_Survey_Headline_Report_2013-14.pdf.

⁵ This conclusion is based on LSE data. There is no evidence available from larger national datasets to be able to validate this assumption beyond the present research findings.

working-age tenants to attend. However, each time they have failed to secure the minimum number for running the course⁶.

As Figure 41 shows, there is an overrepresentation of tenants from the North West of England attending Tenant Futures training (37%, as opposed to a concentration of social housing in the region of 14%). They are more likely to attend Trafford Hall because of its convenient location, and the lower travel costs involved. Tenants from London and the South East, on the contrary, are underrepresented: only 15% attending Tenant Futures training - against the highest regional distribution of social housing in England at 32%.

Figure 41: Tenant Futures participant split by region against regional distribution of social housing stock – England (2011)

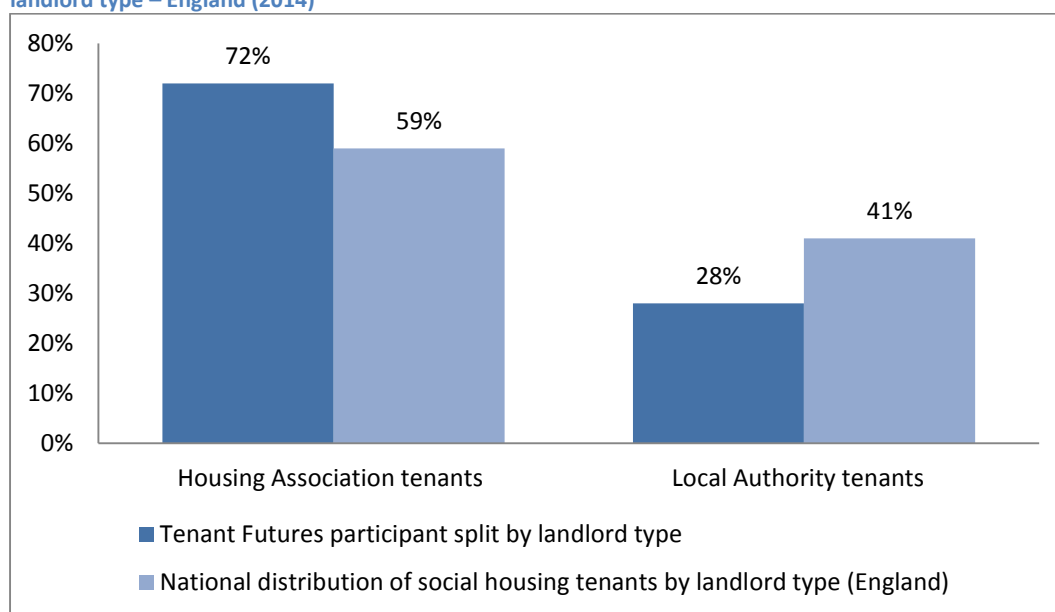


[Source: Department for Communities and Local Government, Live tables on dwelling stock (including vacants), Table 115 Dwelling stock: PRP stock, by district, from 1997, and Table 116 Dwelling stock: local authority stock, by district: England 1994 - 2014]

As Figure 41 shows, Housing Association tenants attending Tenant Futures training are overrepresented (72% as opposed to a national distribution of 59%), while Local Authority tenants are underrepresented (28% as opposed to a 41% presence nationwide).

⁶ Another possible reason why younger tenants do not tend to attend is that childcare bursaries provided for the Tenant futures training are only £30 per child per day. This is due to budget restrictions. Trafford Hall considered doing a crèche in the past, but then came to the conclusion that it would not be worth doing it because the number of children they would normally get on a course would not warrant it.

Figure 42: Tenant Futures participant split by landlord type against national distribution of social housing tenants by landlord type – England (2014)



[Source: Department for Communities and Local Government, Live tables on dwelling stock (including vacants), Table 109 Dwelling stock: by tenure and region, from 1991. This table has been discontinued in 2011 and is no longer updated]

There is a need to **encourage more new tenants** to attend the training, as well as more tenants from **BME background**, more tenants from **London and the South East, the East, and the South West**, and more **Local Authority** tenants.

- The comment made by so many delegates that **Tenant Futures courses are too short** should not be understated. The amount of information provided in such a relatively short amount of time means that some topics will inevitably be given less relevance, and that there will be less time for practical exercises (role playing, table discussions etc.) and Question & Answer sessions. Delivering such intense courses over one and a half days, or even two and a half days, proves **very demanding** for both attendees and trainers, especially if the course is accredited.
- This report welcomes the fact that Trafford Hall is taking steps to set up a **new broadband**, and that the maximum number of attendees for non-accredited courses has been brought down to 20, instead of 25, for the financial year 2015-16.

We therefore recommend that:

1. The appropriate amount of **follow on funding** for the Tenant Futures training programme is secured to **sustain the high standard of training** provided, and implement the recommendations included in this report.
2. Trafford Hall builds **an independent database of social landlords** across England in the form of a mailing list. At present, Trafford Hall 'marketing' strategy is heavily reliant on word of mouth by tenants (and trainers). Trafford Hall purchases access to a database of tenant involvement officers to publicise the programme, but they are only allowed to email them once. Although time consuming, the effort to set up a landlord mailing list cleared of data protection concerns would pay off in the long term, and it would allow **reaching out to a wider variety of landlords and tenants communities**.

3. Trafford Hall sets up a **blog/forum** as a platform to increase its online presence, and **publicise the benefits and value for money of tenant involvement** amongst landlords. High travel expenses not fully covered by Trafford Hall travel bursaries can discourage tenants from attending the courses in the absence of support from their landlords. It is of the utmost importance to **get more landlords on board**. The blog/forum could be monitored and supervised by tenant volunteers.

It would be worth considering setting up an **alumni online network**, for example through Facebook, to facilitate networking after the training.

4. There needs to be more effort to **make tenants aware** of which courses are accredited, what is expected from them and what the **benefits of accreditation** are. **Landlords can play an important role** in doing this as the gatekeepers. The above recommended **online platform** can also be used for this purpose.
5. Trafford Hall considers the feasibility of extending the second and third day by an extra couple of hours, **finishing at 3.30pm** instead of 1.30pm. This would give trainers extra time to deliver the course at a slower pace, build in more practical exercises, and allow for Q&A sessions. Finishing at 3.30pm would not add substantial extra costs to the delivery of the training, and would not interfere with tenants' travel costs.
6. Trainers are invited to read this report, and encouraged to produce **delegate packs** with slides of PowerPoint presentations for each course.

Annexes

I. List of Tenant Futures Courses April 2014 - March 2015

Title	Date	Accredited/ Non accredited	No of attendees	Trainer
Consulting the Community	28-29 April	Accredited	17	Engage
Scrutiny - A Deeper Involvement	12-14 May	Accredited	20	Burkitt Vernelle
You and Your Community Rights	21-23 May	Non accredited	20	Engage
Working with Your Landlord to Engage Young People	28-30 May	Non accredited	12	GOGY
Representing Your Community	4-5 June	Non accredited	22	Choosing Change
Practical Skills for Scrutiny Panels	10-12 June	Non accredited	24	Burkitt Vernelle
Getting Your Message Out There: Effective Marketing	16-17 June	Non accredited	23	Engage
Local Resolution of Complaints	23-35 June	Accredited	14	Engage
Effective Fundraising Strategies	1-3 July	Accredited	20	Make It Happen
Tenant Panels - Robust Frameworks	7-9 July	Accredited	19	Engage
All on Board - Board Membership	21-23 July	Non accredited	25	Engage
Inspiring Tenant Leaders	24-25 July	Non accredited	23	Choosing Change
Constitutions	11-13 August	Non accredited	18	Engage
Understanding Performance Information	18-20 August	Accredited	17	TPAS
Being an Effective Chairperson	4-5 Sept	Accredited	20	Choosing Change
Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour	8-10 Sept	Accredited	19	Engage
Community Engagement	15-16 Sept	Non accredited	15	Fresh Team
Does your Panel Reflect Your Community?	22-23 Sept	Non accredited	14	Engage
Tenant Control	6-8 October	Non accredited	22	Engage
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating	16-17 October	Non accredited	18	Choosing Change
An Inspector Calls - The Role of Tenant Inspectors	20-22 October	Accredited	16	Burkitt Vernelle
Working with Your Landlord	28-30 October	Non accredited	13	GOGY
Pride Not Prejudice - Changing the Image of Social Housing	6-7 November	Non accredited	17	Engage
The Wider World	1-2 December	Non accredited	21	Engage
The Wider World	14-15 January	Non accredited	21	Engage
Does Value for Money Matter?	28-29 January	Non accredited	23	Burkitt Vernelle
Committee Skills	2-4 February	Accredited	19	Make It Happen

Title	Date	Accredited/ Non accredited	No of attendees	Trainer
Understanding Group Dynamics: How to turn a committee of individuals into a committed team	3-4 February	Non accredited	22	Choosing Change
Being an Effective Chairperson	5-6 February	Accredited	20	Choosing Change
Effective Fundraising	9-11 February	Accredited	16	Make it Happen
Negotiating and Influencing Skills	16-17 February	Non accredited	24	Choosing Change
Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour	18-20 February	Accredited	20	Engage
Tenant Scrutiny Deeper Involvement	23-25 February	Accredited	18	Burkitt Vernelle
Understanding Performance Information	24-26 February	Accredited	13	TPAS
Tenant Scrutiny - Getting Involved	2-4 March	Accredited	19	Burkitt Vernelle
Representing Your Community	3-4 March	Non accredited	16	Choosing Change
Why Does Value for Money Matter	16-17 March	Non accredited	24	Burkitt Vernelle
Effective Marketing	23-24 March	Non accredited	21	Burkitt Vernelle
Practical Skills for Scrutiny	25-27 March	Non accredited	25	Burkitt Vernelle

II. List of interviewees

	Role	Group	Where from	Ethnicity	Age	Course attended	Accredited/ Non accredited
1	Member/Tenant volunteer	Scrutiny Panel	Yorks & Humber	White	Over 50	Effective fundraising strategies	Accredited
2	Chair	Tenant involvement group/committee	North East	White	Over 50	Being an effective chairperson	Accredited
3	Member/Tenant volunteer	Tenant involvement group/committee	Yorks & Humber	White	Over 50	Does value for money matter?	Non accredited
4	Tenant/Resident inspector	Tenant Inspection Team	South East and London	White	Over 50	Pride not prejudice	Non accredited
5	Member/Tenant volunteer	Tenant involvement group/committee	South East and London	Black African	36-50	Does value for money matter?	Non accredited
6	Member/Tenant volunteer	Tenant involvement group/committee	Yorks & Humber	White	Over 50	Understanding group dynamics	Non accredited
7	Member/Tenant volunteer	Tenant involvement group/committee	East Midlands	White	Over 50	Understanding group dynamics	Non accredited
8	Chair	Tenant and Resident Association	South East and London	White	36-50	Being an effective chairperson	Accredited
9	Vice-chair	Scrutiny Panel	East Midlands	White	36-50	Practical Skills for Scrutiny Panels	Non accredited
10	Chair	Scrutiny Panel	East Midlands	White	Over 50	Tenant Panels - Robust Frameworks	Accredited
11	Member/Tenant volunteer	Tenant involvement group/committee	South East and London	White	Over 50	Local Resolution of Complaints	Accredited
12	Member/Tenant volunteer	Tenant and Resident Association	South West	White	Over 50	Negotiating and Influencing Skills	Non accredited
13	Member/Tenant volunteer	Tenant involvement group/committee	South East and London	White	36-50	Tenant Panels - Robust Framework	Accredited
14	Chair	Scrutiny Panel	South East and London	White	Over 50	Why does value for money matter	Non accredited
15	Tenant/Resident inspector	Tenant Inspection Team	North West	White	Over 50	Why does value for money matter	Non accredited

	Role	Group	Where from	Ethnicity	Age	Course attended	Accredited/ Non accredited
16	Secretary	Tenant and Resident Association	West Midlands	White	Over 50	Pride not Prejudice	Non accredited
17	Member/Tenant volunteer	Tenant involvement group/committee	North East	White	Over 50	Understanding performance information	Accredited
18	Chair	Scrutiny Panel	West Midlands	White	Over 50	Understanding performance information	Accredited
19	Treasurer	Tenant and Resident Association	South East and London	White	Over 50	Dealing with Antisocial Behaviour	Accredited
20	Member/Tenant volunteer	Scrutiny Panel	East Midlands	White	Over 50	Scrutiny A Deeper Involvement	Accredited
21	Chair	Scrutiny Panel	North East	White	Over 50	Scrutiny A Deeper Involvement	Accredited
22	Secretary	Tenant and Resident Association	North West	White	Over 50	Community Engagement	Non accredited
23	Individual tenant	Independent tenant	South East and London	Black Caribbean	36-50	The Wider World	Non accredited
24	Member/Tenant volunteer	Scrutiny Panel	East Midlands	White	Over 50	The Wider World	Non accredited
25	Member/Tenant volunteer	Scrutiny Panel	North West	White	Over 50	Being an effective chairperson	Accredited
26	Member/Tenant volunteer	Scrutiny Panel	South East and London	White	Over 50	The Wider World	Non accredited
27	Chair	Charitable organisation	South East and London	White	Over 50	The Wider World	Non accredited
28	Chair	Tenant involvement group/committee	East Midlands	White	Over 50	Tenant Scrutiny Deeper Involvement	Accredited
29	Member/Tenant volunteer	Tenant involvement group/committee	West Midlands	Black African	36-50	Representing your community	Non accredited
30	Tenant/Resident inspector	Tenant Inspection Team	West Midlands	White	Over 50	The Wider World	Non accredited
31	Chair	Tenant Inspection Team	North West	White	Over 50	Committee Skills	Accredited
32	Chair	Charitable organisation	South East and London	Black Caribbean	Over 50	Local Resolution of Complaints	Accredited

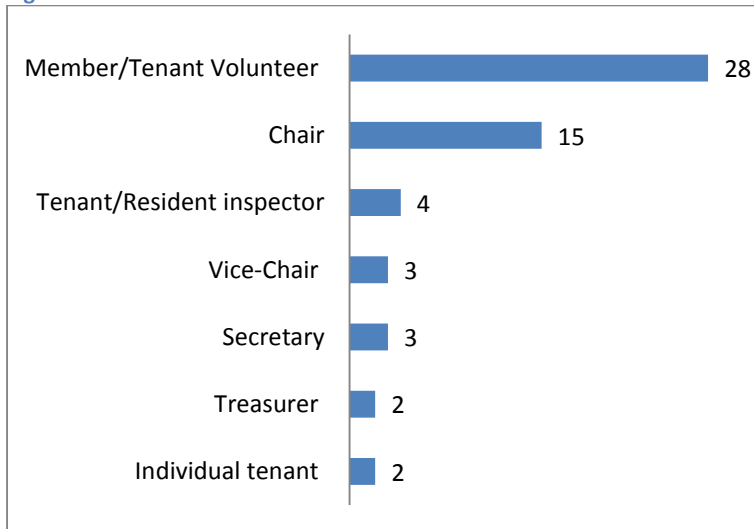
	Role	Group	Where from	Ethnicity	Age	Course attended	Accredited/ Non accredited
33	Member/Tenant volunteer	Scrutiny Panel	East Midlands	White	Over 50	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating	Non accredited
34	Chair	Tenant involvement group/committee	East Midlands	White	Over 50	Effective fundraising strategies	Accredited
35	Member/Tenant volunteer	Scrutiny Panel	Yorks & Humber	White	Over 50	An Inspector Calls: The Role of Tenant Inspectors	Accredited
36	Chair	Tenant involvement group/committee	South East and London	White	Over 50	Being an Effective Chairperson	Accredited
37	Member/Tenant volunteer	Scrutiny Panel	North West	White	Over 50	Practical Skills for Scrutiny Panels	Non accredited
38	Treasurer	Tenant and Resident Association	North West	White	Over 50	Effective fundraising strategies	Accredited
39	Member/Tenant volunteer	Scrutiny Panel	West Midlands	White	Over 50	Practical Skills for Scrutiny Panels	Non accredited
40	Member/Tenant volunteer	Scrutiny Panel	North West	White	Over 50	Scrutiny A Deeper Involvement	Accredited
41	Member/Tenant volunteer	Scrutiny Panel	East	White	Over 50	Practical Skills for Scrutiny Panels	Non accredited
42	Tenant/Resident inspector	Tenant Inspection Team	West Midlands	White	36-50	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating	Non accredited
43	Individual tenant	Independent tenant	North East	White	Over 50	Dealing with Antisocial Behaviour	Accredited
44	Vice-chair	Tenant involvement group/committee	South East and London	Black African	26-35	Being an effective chairperson	Accredited
45	Member/Tenant volunteer	Tenant and Resident Association	North West	White	Over 50	The Wider World	Non accredited
46	Member/Tenant volunteer	Tenant and Resident Association	Yorks & Humber	White	Over 50	The Wider World	Non accredited
47	Member/Tenant volunteer	Scrutiny Panel	North East	White	Over 50	Why does value for money matter	Non accredited
48	Vice-chair	Scrutiny Panel	East Midlands	White	Over 50	Tenant Control	Non accredited
49	Member/Tenant volunteer	Scrutiny Panel	South East and London	White	Over 50	Being an effective chairperson	Accredited

	Role	Group	Where from	Ethnicity	Age	Course attended	Accredited/ Non accredited
50	Member/Tenant volunteer	Scrutiny Panel	South East and London	Black Other	36-50	Effective Marketing	Non accredited
51	Member/Tenant volunteer	Tenant involvement group/committee	West Midlands	White	Over 50	Pride not prejudice	Non accredited
52	Member/Tenant volunteer	Scrutiny Panel	North West	White	Over 50	Practical Skills for Scrutiny Panels	Non accredited
53	Member/Tenant volunteer	Scrutiny Panel	South East and London	White	Over 50	The Wider World	Non accredited
54	Chair	Tenant and Resident Association	South East and London	White	Over 50	Working with you Landlord to Engage Young People	Non accredited
55	Chair	Scrutiny Panel	East Midlands	White	Over 50	You and Your Community Rights	Non accredited
56	Chair	Charitable organisation	West Midlands	White	Over 50	Committee Skills	Accredited
57	Member/Tenant volunteer	Scrutiny Panel	North West	White	Over 50	The Wider World	Non accredited

III. Interviewee characteristics

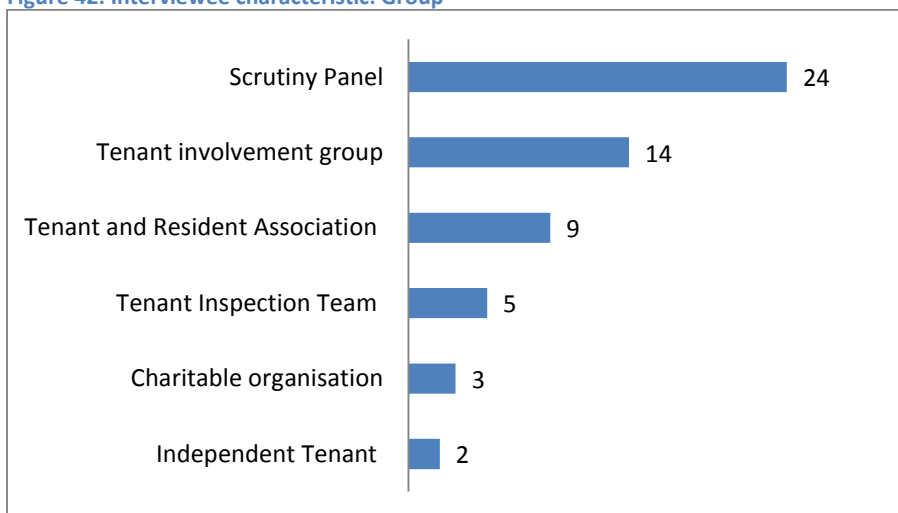
The following tables provide information on the 57 interviewees' characteristics.

Figure 41: Interviewee characteristic: Role



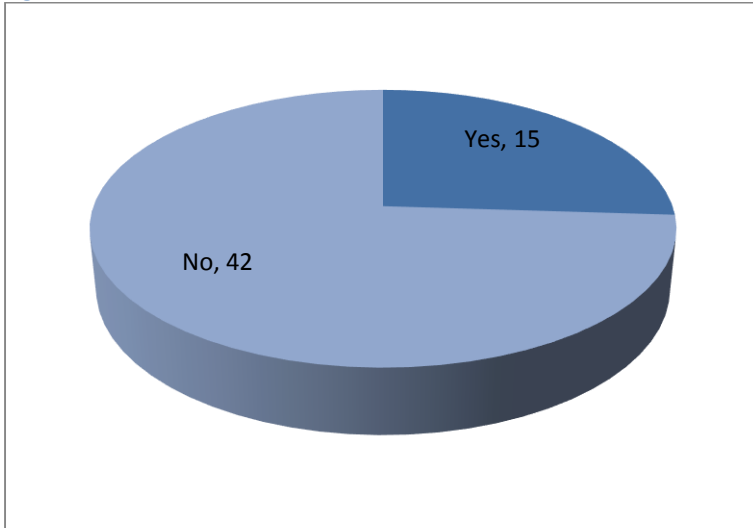
[Source: LSE interviews]

Figure 42: Interviewee characteristic: Group



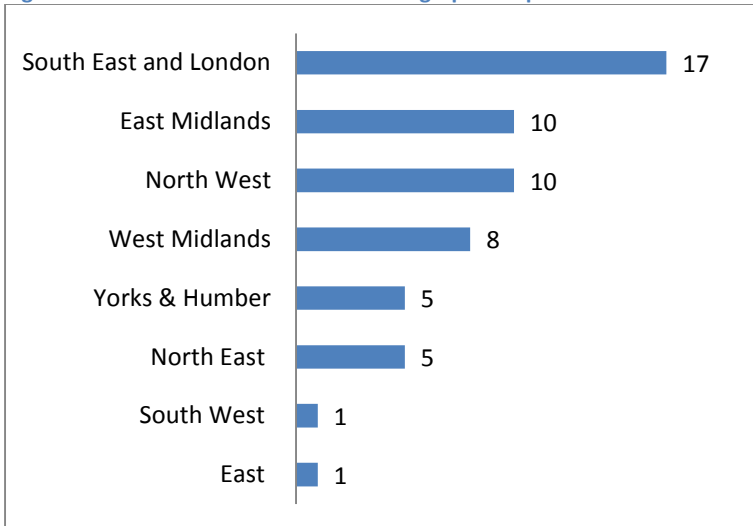
[Source: LSE interviews]

Figure 43: Interviewee characteristic: First time at Trafford Hall?



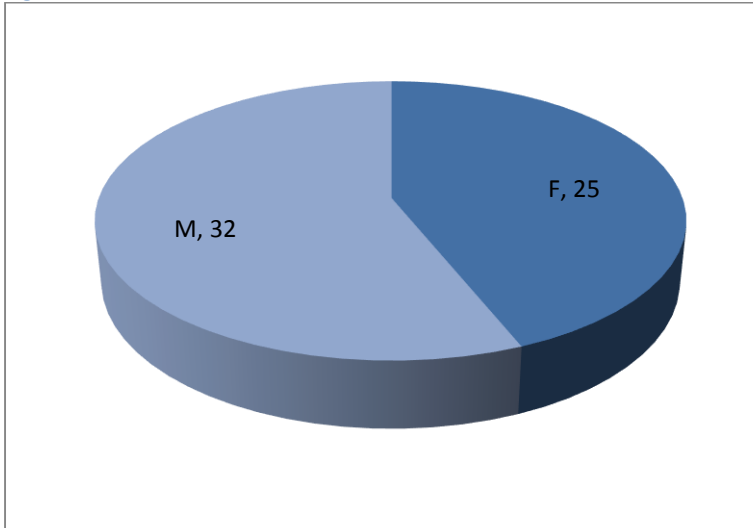
[Source: LSE interviews]

Figure 44: Interviewee characteristic: Geographical spread



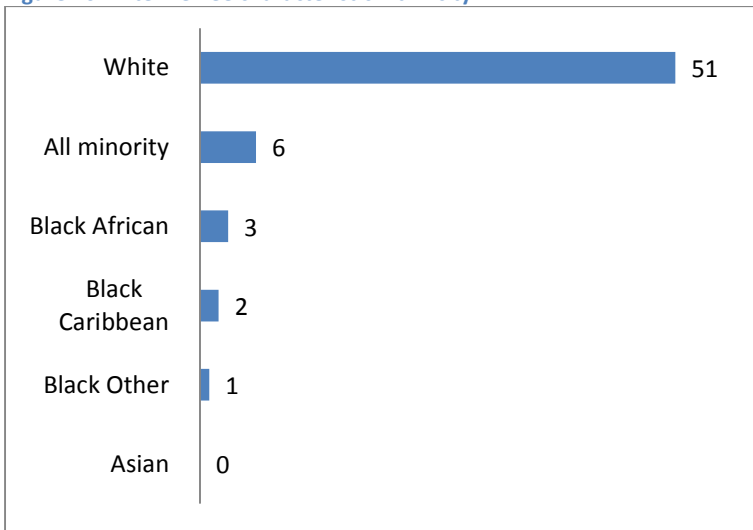
[Source: LSE interviews]

Figure 45: Interviewee characteristic: Gender



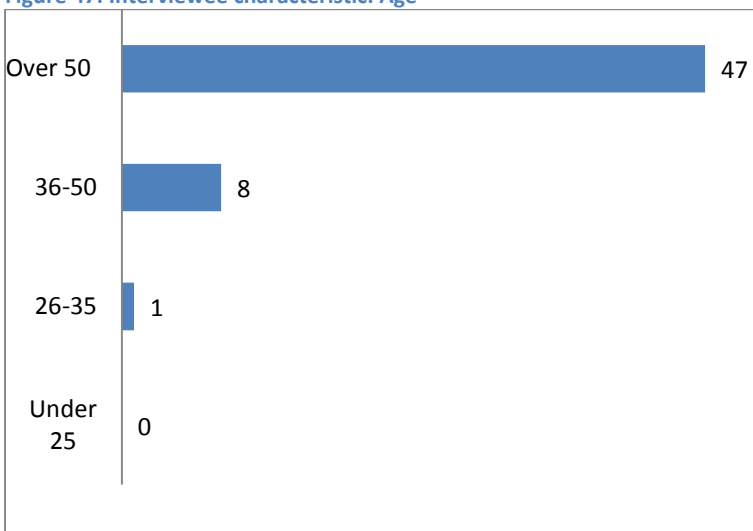
[Source: LSE interviews]

Figure 46: Interviewee characteristic: Ethnicity



[Source: LSE interviews]

Figure 47: Interviewee characteristic: Age



[Source: LSE interviews]

IV. Trafford Hall course evaluation form



NAME (Optional)

1. What did you think of the venue?	☹ Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent ☺
2. What did you think of the catering?	☹ Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent ☺











Please tell us what you thought about the course; there are no right or wrong answers

3. Has the course given you new ideas?	Yes / No <i>Please give an actual example of something that you have learnt</i>
4. Has the course encouraged you to take forward an existing idea?	Yes / No <i>(if yes, please tell us what)</i>
5. Summarise here <u>from your action plan</u> the three key actions you plan to take when you get back	1. 2. 3.
6. What did you think about the way the course was taught?	
7. Did you feel the trainers knew the subject?	

TF113 You and Your Community Rights – 21-23 May 2014 – Engage Associates
Please Turn over – just a few questions to go!

8. Was there anything you wanted from the course that you didn't get?	Yes / No <i>(if yes, please tell us what)</i>
9. Which parts of the course did you find most useful and why?	
10. Was any of the training something you didn't like, but which did you good?	
11. How could the course be improved?	

12. ANY OTHER COMMENT YOU WISH TO MAKE:

13. What did you think about the level of the course?	Much too basic 	A bit basic 	About right 	A bit advanced 	Much too advanced 
14. Overall, how happy are you with this event?	Very Unhappy 	Unhappy 	Mixed feelings 	Happy 	Very happy 

Thank You!!!

V. LSE questionnaires

Questionnaire for delegates who attended non accredited training

1. Which course did you attend?
2. Was it your first time at Trafford Hall?
3. Why did you choose to go on the course?
4. Did it help? If yes, in which ways?
What did you get out of it?
5. What about your group? How do you feel it helped your group?
6. How do you feel the wider community benefitted from you going on the course, either directly or indirectly?
7. Which skills do you feel you have developed as a result of the training?
8. Does having been on the course help in relation to your role?
9. Has your relationship with your landlord changed since you've been on the course? In what ways?
10. Has it helped you to feel more confident about doing things for your community?
11. What is that you found most valuable about it?
12. What are you planning to do next in your community? What are the next plans for your group?
13. Did you find the course difficult?
14. Did you experience any problems while on the training?
15. Have you got any suggestions on how to improve the delivery of Trafford Hall training?

Which courses they feel should be provided by Trafford Hall that are not on offer?

Questionnaire for delegates who attended accredited training

1. Which course did you attend?
2. Was it your first time at Trafford Hall?
3. Why did you choose the accredited training?
4. Did it help? If yes, in which ways?

What did you get out of it?

5. What about your group? How do you feel it helped your group?
6. How do you feel the wider community benefitted from you going on the course and gaining accreditation, either directly or indirectly?
7. Which skills do you feel you have developed as a result of the accredited training?
8. Does accreditation help in relation to your role?
9. Has your relationship with your landlord changed since you've been on the course? In what ways?
10. Has it helped you to feel more confident about doing things for your community?
11. What is that you found most valuable about it?
12. What are you planning to do next in your community? What are the next plans for your group?
13. Did you find the course difficult?
14. Did you experience any problems while on the training?
12. Have you got any suggestions on how to improve the delivery of accredited training?

Which courses they feel should be provided by Trafford Hall that are not on offer?