

**Housing
Rights**

Celebrating
**Sixty
Years**
1964 - 2024

Invitation to Tender -
Renters' Voice Evaluation
September 2024

when everyone has a **home**

Invitation to tender Renters' Voice Evaluation -

To carry out a comprehensive evaluation of Housing Rights' Renters' Voice project since its formation in 2020.

This evaluation should be an independent review of the project's achievements, challenges and areas for improvement, ensuring that insights and recommendations can guide the future of the Renters' Voice project and future Housing Rights' participation work with private tenants.

We are Housing Rights.

We have been helping people in Northern Ireland deal with housing and homelessness problems since 1964.

We help people with their housing and homelessness problems through our helplines and advice work.

We use their experiences to bring change and improvements with our policy work. We educate and inform others working in the housing and advice sectors to help their clients.

We help people in Northern Ireland live in safe, suitable, and affordable homes. We provide service for the public and professionals working in housing and advice services.

Our vision is a society when everyone has a *home*

Our mission is to improve lives by helping people to find and keep a *home*

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 About Housing Rights

Housing Rights is a registered charity which has been helping people in Northern Ireland to deal with housing problems since it was established in 1964. It provides help to members of the public and other housing and advice professionals.

We are the leading provider of independent advice, training and information on housing and homelessness issues in NI. We also have an effective policy, practice and research team that helps influence and deliver positive change.

All our work is aimed at preventing homelessness, helping people access appropriate accommodation, and where possible, helping people sustain their existing accommodation. We recognise that this is not always possible, and we also provide advice and assistance to help alleviate homelessness for people who, for whatever reason, find themselves facing this crisis. Our aim in these circumstances is to ensure that the experience of homelessness is as least damaging as possible; that it is rare, brief and non-recurrent.

1.2 About our Participation Work

Housing Rights' believes that it is key that experts by experience (people with experience of poor housing and homelessness) are meaningfully involved in decisions made about preventing and ending homelessness. We are therefore committed to involving experts by experience in our work.

Renters' Voice is one of Housing Rights' key participation projects. Renters' Voice is a group of private renters in Northern Ireland (NI) who are campaigning for the changes they wish to see in the private rented sector. Housing Rights is seeking to commission an evaluation of this project.

2.0 Project Background

2.1. Renters' Voice

Housing Rights supported the formation of a Private Tenants Forum, which ran from 2012 to 2017. The forum was largely made up of Housing Rights' advice clients who were private renters. The Forum worked to influence private rented sector housing policy in NI, such as the Department for Communities' Private Rented Sector Proposals for Change.

Renters' Voice was formed to develop and continue the work of the Private Tenants Forum. The project began in 2020.

Renters' Voice describes the project as follows:

Renters' Voice is a group for people who rent from a private landlord or through a letting agent in Northern Ireland. Our experience of renting motivates us to create change by campaigning for improvements across the private rental sector:

- *we speak out to influence public and political discussions;*
- *we ask to be involved in relevant decision-making;*
- *we empower other renters to create change.*

As well as being a strong voice for renters in NI, we want to embed a culture of tenant participation among decision makers.

Renters' Voice is supported by Housing Rights and funded by the Nationwide Foundation, but our voice is our own.

The Nationwide Foundation has funded Renters' Voice since its formation in 2020 under the Foundation's Tenant Voice funding stream.¹ The Foundation commissioned an external evaluation of all projects funded under this stream as the first phase of the work closed in 2022². Housing Rights also completed an internal evaluation of the first phase of our funding at the same time.³ As we near the end of the current funding period, we wish to commission an independent external evaluation of Housing Rights' Renters' Voice project in line with funding requirements and to ensure that learning from the project to date is captured and utilised.

Housing Rights has issued this Invitation to Tender for a mixed methods independent evaluation of the project's achievements, challenges and areas for improvement, ensuring that insights and recommendations can guide the future of the Renters' Voice project and future Housing Rights' participation work.

¹ [Tenant Voice Programme - Nationwide Foundation](#)

² Available at: <https://nationwidefoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Tenant-Voice-Programme-Report-FINAL.pdf>

³ Available on request

2.3. The Focus of this Evaluation

This evaluation of Housing Rights' Renters' Voice project is needed to gain an understanding of the effectiveness and impact of the project since its inception in 2020.

The evaluation should address the following areas:

- **Project Implementation:** How effectively the project was implemented according to the original plan and application for funding, including plans regarding tenant engagement, tenant participation and tenant capacity building
- **Impact and Outcomes:** Including the measurable impact on participants, the broader impact on policy and practice in the private rented sector, and wider culture of tenant participation;
- **Challenges and Solutions:** The challenges that were encountered, and how these were addressed, including challenges in relation to:
 - Lack of government in NI during the funding period,
 - Challenges engaging private renters whose circumstances make them vulnerable to poor housing
 - Challenges in persuading external stakeholders of the value of tenant participation
- **Sustainability:** The likelihood of the project's continued impact after the current funding period ends; and
- **Recommendations:** The improvements or changes which are recommended for the future of the Renters' Voice project and Housing Rights' participation work more broadly.

3.0 Project Aims and Objectives

The aim of this project is to commission a comprehensive mixed methods independent evaluation of Renters' Voice's achievements, challenges and areas for improvement, ensuring that insights and recommendations can guide the future of the Renters' Voice project and future Housing Rights' participation work.

Objectives

- To assess the effectiveness and impact of the Renter's Voice project on its target audiences. This should specifically consider the role of Renters' Voice in:

- Increasing the value placed on the ‘tenant voice’ by key stakeholders and decision-makers (including the Department for Communities and elected representatives);
 - Recruiting other private renters as Renters’ Voice members; and
 - The experience of the Renters’ Voice members in the project
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the project in achieving its stated goals and objectives. This should specifically consider the role of Renters’ Voice in meeting the objectives, aims and outcomes outlined in the funding applications for phases 1 and 2 as detailed below:

Objectives outlined in phase 1 application:

- Build capacity and confidence of those involved by developing their skills and knowledge and encouraging group participation;
- Help create a culture that is committed to the principles of tenant involvement in the future development of the sector;
- Actively influence improvements in legislation, policy and practice in areas relevant to private tenants.

Aims outlined in phase 2 application:

- Deepening our work to strengthen the voice of private tenants in Northern Ireland
- Influencing Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 Regulations
- Gathering views and experiences of private renters on the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and sharing these with government and sector stakeholders
- Engaging more private renters who are vulnerable to harm

Outcomes from 2022 application:

- Renters’ Voice members have increased knowledge of the private rented sector, and rights and responsibilities of private tenants
- Renters’ Voice members have increased opportunities to speak out about experiences and issues in the private rented sector
- Increased recognition of value of contribution of tenant voice by key stakeholders
- Renters’ Voice recommendations / input influence changes in policy & practice

- To identify lessons learned and best practices for the future of the Renters' Voice project.
- To provide actionable recommendations for enhancing Housing Rights' future participation work and initiatives with private renters.

3.1 Project Guidance

An Evaluation Advisory Group will be established in order to advise on this work. Representatives from relevant bodies will be invited to be involved along with key staff from Housing Rights. It is expected that the researcher will meet with the advisory group at the project outset and share a draft report for feedback / comments as per the timetable outlined in 4.0.

3.2 Project Management

Our team is led by Housing Rights' Participation and Policy Coordinator Kerry Logan, with senior involvement from the Head of Policy and Development as appropriate.

We will accept consortium bids, as long as:

- You can provide evidence of previous successful partnership working, including testimonials from customers.
- You elect one agency to act as senior partner and this agency accepts responsibility for the successful delivery of all component parts.

3.3 Contract Requirements

The successful provider will oversee:

1. Data Collection. This will include:
 - a) A thorough review of all project documentation and ongoing outcome monitoring data;
 - b) Designing and agreeing a semi-structured interview topic guide in partnership with the Housing Rights' and overseen by the Evaluation Advisory Group;
 - c) Carrying out and transcribing interviews with approximately 15 key stakeholders identified by the Evaluation Advisory Group;
 - d) Designing and agreeing a survey for participants. This will include agreeing, reviewing and coding (if required) of survey questions. The survey should be

- developed in collaboration with Housing Rights to ensure the suitability of questions, inclusivity of language and relevant potential respondents;
- e) Using of further mechanisms for additional input from renters, such as focus groups or interviews.
 - f) Using an accessible platform to pilot and run the survey;
 - g) Maximising response rates and quality assuring survey responses;
 - h) Submitting a final clean dataset with data tables, and a short technical report, submitted as an Excel file; and
 - i) Ensuring data is managed in line with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) requirements.
2. Analysis. This will include:
- a) Analysis of qualitative data collected through interviews and quantitative data collected through a survey; and
 - b) A comparative analysis of the project outcomes against the initial objectives and expected outcomes of the Renters’ Voice Project. (See 3.0 above for initial objectives and expected outcomes).
3. Reporting. The production of a comprehensive evaluation report in a format agreed with Housing Rights, based on the data collected detailing findings, conclusions and recommendations to guide the future of the Renters’ Voice project and future Housing Rights’ participation work.

4.0 Timescale

Tender issue	6 th September 2024
Deadline for receipt of clarification questions	4pm on 18 th September 2024
Deadline for receipt of proposals	4pm on 27 th September 2024
Evaluation of proposals	3 rd October 2024
Evaluation Advisory Group established by	September 2024
Formal contract awarded	7 th October 2024
Meeting with Advisory Group	Either:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16th October between 2pm and 4pm, or - 18th October between 10am and 4pm (Date to be confirmed with successful researcher)
Contract start date	8th October 2024
Draft report completed	13 th December 2024
Final Report	17 th January 2025
Presentation of report to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Advisory Group; and b) Housing Rights and Nationwide 	Dates TBC

5.0 Contract Value and Payment

The full cost of the project is anticipated to be up to a maximum of £12,000 (inclusive of VAT). A detailed breakdown of project costs should be included in the tender (see 6.0).

Tender costs must provide a fixed cost for the completed assignment to include person-days and person-day rates to complete the research; expenses incurred including travel if necessary; VAT; production and presentation of an appropriate format final report.

Only costs included in the tender will be accepted.

Fees are typically paid on successful completion of a project. Please provide a payment schedule with your submission if you would prefer to receive payment in stages. This should indicate the milestones and deliverables covered by each payment interval and payment will normally be made on successful completion of these milestones/deliverables..

6.0 Written Information to be Provided

Your submission must contain:

Key Personnel

Tenders must propose a Lead Researcher for this contract who will manage the project from first contact with the Housing Rights through to the submission of the final report.

- It is expected the lead researcher should have a minimum of two years evaluation experience (housing experience is desirable, but not essential).

Tenders should include evidence of a minimum of two relevant evaluation projects within the past five years (calculated from the closing date of this tender) that the Lead Researcher has carried out. Tenders must provide the following details for each of the projects given:

- Contract Title and Client Name;
- The role and level of involvement of the proposed Lead Researcher for each project and a confirmation that the role played was as a Lead Researcher;
- Contract description and explanation as to why the example is relevant to this research bid;
- Contract start and end date (Month and Year for each).

Methodology

Tenders must include proposals detailing the methodological approach to be adopted, the reasoning for proposing the specific methodology and the benefits to Housing Rights of choosing this approach. This must include proposals on:

- The approach to undertaking the evaluation, including how you propose to meet the requirements detailed at points 1-3, Section 3.0 Project Aims and Objectives above;
- Undertaking the qualitative and quantitative data collection for the evaluation, including how you propose to carry this out and how you intend analyse the data collected; and
- Reporting, including the proposed structure of the report and how findings will be reported and recommendations made.

Tenders must include information on how quality will be maintained throughout the project.

Project Plan

Tenders must include a project plan which clearly meets the needs of Housing Rights as detailed in this invitation to tender. It should also detail the networks and milestones, which together provide a realistic and robust project plan. It is expected a gantt chart should be submitted showing the timeline.

The project plan must include;

- All areas from project initiation right through to the completion of the final outputs covering all elements of the evaluation;
- The plan must also detail the resource(s) you will set aside to meet the requirements of the contract to ensure that you will provide the required service to Housing Rights. This must include the proposed number of staff working on the project and the number of hours and days these staff are committing to the various stages of the project; and
- Detail of key dependencies in your project plan in order to meet our requirements.

Timescale and Availability

Tenders must commit to the availability of key personnel and confirm team ability to deliver the evaluation within the timescale outlined in this invitation to tender.

7.0 Evaluation of Tenders

Please note that Housing Rights is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender.

Please ensure your proposal provides information in a format that allows assessment against the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Marks Available	Description
Quality / Non Price Criteria	65 marks	
KEY PERSONNEL Relevant experience of undertaking mixed methods research within a social justice context	15 marks	Proposed team experience of carrying out mixed methods or evaluation, including experience of designing, coding, delivering and analysing credible research surveys. Details of relevant past contracts should be included.
METHODOLOGY Soundness of proposed methodology/approach. Adoption of methodology most likely to yield results.	30 marks	Approach to co-ordination, management and proposed tools and processes to execute the project and encourage participation in both the

		<p>quantitative and qualitative aspects of the evaluation.</p> <p>Approach to client liaison and communication management with client/key stakeholders.</p> <p>Staff time and resources which you propose to allocate to the project at all stages, clearly identifying the individuals involved.</p> <p>Identification of key issues and risks and proposals to mitigate.</p>
<p>PROJECT PLAN Clear understanding of our needs, the work and approach to project planning.</p>	15 marks	Outline programme which clearly meets our needs as outlined in this invitation to tender, including milestones and frequency of client/stakeholder meetings.
<p>TIMESCALE AND AVAILABILITY</p>	5 marks	Availability of key personnel and team ability to deliver the research within the timescale outlined in this invitation to tender.
<p>Price</p>	35 marks	Quotes must not exceed £12,000 (including VAT).

Indicator		<i>Methodology</i>
		Available Marks for non-price criteria 65 points
5	<p>Excellent</p> <p>Thorough description of the proposed approach and methodology. It shows excellent experience in delivering similar projects. It is very likely to deliver the expected outputs for this project.</p>	5
4	<p>Good</p>	4

	Good description of the proposed approach and methodology. It shows good experience in delivering this type of projects. It is likely to deliver the expected outputs for this project. The description could have provided more specific and/or relevant examples.	
3	Acceptable Adequate description of the proposed approach and methodology. It shows some experience in delivering this type of projects. It is not immediately clear that it will deliver the expected outputs for this project.	3
2	Limited Limited description of the proposed approach and methodology. It shows limited experience in delivering this type of projects. It is not clear that it will deliver the expected outputs for this project.	2
1	Poor Poor description of the proposed approach and methodology. It shows no experience in delivering this type of project. It will not deliver the expected outputs for this project.	1
0	Failed Tender did not include information to assess this criterion.	0

8.0 Expressing an Interest in this Project

All contact and clarification questions on this project should be directed to:

Kerry Logan
 Participation and Policy Coordinator
 (e) kerry@housingrights.org.uk

Please e-mail submissions to kerry@housingrights.org.uk by **4.00 pm on 27th September 2024**.

For further information about Housing Rights please visit our website at:
www.housingrights.org.uk



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Housing Rights is a company limited by Guarantee in Northern Ireland - NI 21018

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