



Member Newsletter

November 2022

Welcome to the latest National Panel members' newsletter. It includes a summary of the most recent Panel results, and an update what's coming next for Panel members.

The Panel in 2021

Last year's work with the Panel was developed as the Covid-19 pandemic continued to affect landlords, tenants and service users during 2021. We asked members about their current financial circumstances and whether these had been affected by the pandemic, their views on rents as good value for money, their experience of heating the home, their views on accessing landlord services digitally, and how members feel the pandemic has continued to affect their landlord's services during 2021.

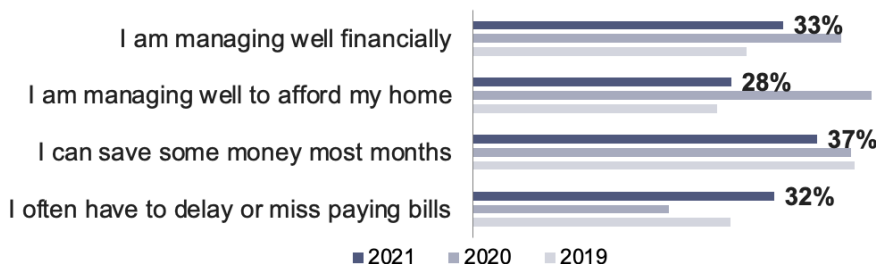
Panel members shared their views via a survey, and more detailed discussions. We really appreciate the input from everyone who made our ninth year such a success. Results are already informing our work.

The National Panel 2021 survey report is available at our website: www.housingregulator.gov.scot

Financial circumstances and rents

Most of you told us that you feel worse off financially now than before the pandemic. Rising living costs and rent increases were seen as the biggest contributors to financial difficulties.

A quarter of you are not currently managing well financially, and a similar proportion are not managing well with your housing costs. Most of you struggle with unexpected expenses and a third of you often have to delay or miss paying a bill. All of these measures have worsened since the 2020 survey.



Around half of you feel that your rent is good value for money and more than a quarter feel your rent is poor value. There has been an increase in the number of members who have had difficulties affording their rent in the last year. Your feedback told us that rent levels, heating costs and other living costs had added to difficulties affording your rent.

More than two thirds of you were concerned about affording your rent in the future. These concerns were most commonly related to future rent increases.

Call for members

Do you know anyone who would like to get involved?

The National Panel continues to grow - but we are always open to new members. To join or find out more...

**Call Freephone
0800 433 7212**

or

**Go online at:
bit.ly/nat-pan**

What's next?

We're currently refreshing the Panel – saying goodbye to our longest standing members and welcoming new members.

After this process, the next Panel survey will be issued to members in January 2023. This will be followed by discussions with a sample of members to explore experiences in more detail.

Let us know if your contact details have changed to make sure you get the survey!

Heating your home

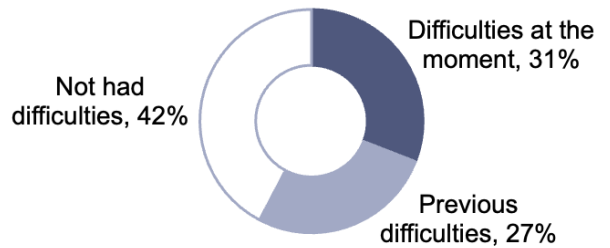
More than half of you have had difficulty heating your home.

Those who had struggled to afford their rent were much more likely to also have difficulty heating their home.

The cost of energy was the main factor contributing to difficulties heating homes – more than twice as many of you mentioned this than in 2020.

A quarter of you have had energy efficiency improvements to your home in the last 2 years, most commonly heating system or insulation upgrades.

Have you had difficulty heating your home?



Digital access to services

You told us that how you get in touch with your landlord has changed during the pandemic, usually through increased use of telephone and online contact.

There was wide interest in making more use of digital options to access landlord services, especially contacting services via website or email. Most of you were also interested in 'live chat', SMS/WhatsApp or video chat.

Landlord services during 2021

Around half of you felt that your landlord's response to the pandemic during 2021 had been good, and nearly a third felt their response had been poor.

Your feedback told us that the pandemic has continued to affect landlord services during 2021 – more than half of you felt that services had been 'significantly' affected. The most common impacts were stopping some services temporarily, longer service timescales, and not being able to use your preferred contact methods.

Most of you told us that your landlord had continued to provide at least some key services. Less than half felt that your landlord had kept you well informed about services during 2021.

Our complaints process

If you are dissatisfied with your experience of the Panel or the service we provide, please tell us. You can do this by phone, via email or in writing by contacting Engage Scotland (who manage the National Panel) on **0800 433 7212**, natpan@engagescotland.co.uk or at **PO Box 21634, Stirling FK7 1ET**. Engage Scotland will share the details of your complaint with SHR and agree how to respond - we aim to provide a response within five working days unless there are exceptional circumstances. The SHR website provides more information about how complaints are handled: <https://bit.ly/shr-complaints>

Need to get in touch about the Panel?

Contact Engage Scotland on **0800 433 7212** or email natpan@engagescotland.co.uk