

Changing focus: a new model of resident involvement

Family Mosaic: an introduction

Family Mosaic is one of the largest housing providers in London and the South East.

We provide affordable homes to rent and buy as well as care and support services to thousands of people who need extra support.

We have around 23,000 homes for rent and serve more than 45,000 people.

We provide a range of opportunities for our customers such as training, employment and access to learning.

We partner local communities to make our neighbourhoods better places to live.

www.familymosaic.co.uk

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SUMMARY Changing focus

In June 2015, we published Changing Places: how can we make resident involvement relevant? In it, we didn't argue for the end of resident involvement. Nor did we say it wasn't worthwhile. Our argument was that resident involvement wasn't working: for us or, more importantly, for our residents. We argued that it was time for a new approach.

We proposed this new approach to resident involvement should have two strands:

- first, it should place residents at the centre of our service and business improvement, not by seeking the views of the few, but by using the input of the many;
- secondly, it should enable residents to be active local citizens.

To help us develop this new model, we've conducted four further pieces of research:

- focus groups and workshops with residents who are already involved with us;
- a survey conducted face-to-face and online with over 1,300 residents about involvement;
- a citizen science project with the University of Manchester, in which our residents acted as researchers in their local communities;
- a study into nudge theory with the universities of Manchester, Plymouth, Exeter and Southampton.

The research confirmed many of our hypotheses, notably that housing is not our residents' primary concern. Their focus is on their families, on their work, on their aspirations, and on their futures. When they need us to fix a broken door or a faulty lift, they want us to respond appropriately, effectively and at a time convenient to them.

For the majority, that's the level of involvement they want with us. Being asked to *get involved* baffles many of them. They wouldn't expect it from their electricity provider. So why should we be different?

The first strand of our new approach assumes every customer interaction with us equates to involvement. Using data from these interactions, we can identify trends and issues, and then involve the appropriate residents as experts, before making the necessary improvements to our services.

When we discussed our research findings with residents, staff and sector colleagues, it became clear there is no single structure of how this involvement might best work. So our future strategy for involving residents as experts is based on a flexible, adaptable and measurable approach, underpinned by six principles for successful collaboration which we co-designed with our existing involved residents.

What about our role in enabling our residents to become more active local citizens? The second strand of our new model for resident involvement proposes using nudge + information, based on the Behavioural Insight Teams' EAST model. We will pilot different nudges in different boroughs to test what works best and reveal our findings next year.

1 Introduction

In 2015, we published *Changing Places*: it asked “how can we make resident involvement more relevant?”. The report explained how, despite numerous attempts to involve residents in how we run our business and deliver better services, most residents are neither involved with us, nor do they seem interested in getting involved with us.

Resident involvement has long been one of the fundamentals of social housing. Like many other social landlords, we have attempted to make resident involvement work, through the use of resident associations, and a variety of panels, fora and representative bodies.

In reviewing our experience, however, some common themes emerged:

- these have not involved significant numbers of residents: less than 1% of our resident population have been actively involved with us;
- those involved tend to be unrepresentative of our resident population: typically, they are over 50 years old, with English as their first language;
- the outcomes from resident involvement have not matched its aspiration: there has been some impact, but it has been minimal, especially at a strategic level.

We argued resident involvement was an outdated model with minimal relevance to our residents and the society in which we operate. We proposed a new approach to resident involvement that would be more meaningful for residents and for us.

This new approach can be summarised as:

customer insight and empowerment

By this we mean:

- customer insight being at the heart of our business decision-making: using big data, social media, complaints, behaviour research and scrutiny, feedback and consultation to inform our service and business improvement;
- customers empowered to have their say about what matters to them most where they live, so, if they choose, they can be active community citizens.

Since the publication of *Changing Places*, we’ve conducted four further research projects to test these ideas, and to help us develop a new resident involvement model:

- using focus groups and workshops, we talked with residents currently involved with us to understand their experiences of involvement;
- we designed, tested and validated a questionnaire, which we used to survey over 1,300 residents about involvement;
- simultaneously, we conducted a citizen science project with the University of Manchester, in which our residents acted as researchers in their local communities;
- to discover how we might encourage residents to get involved, we ran a joint study into nudge theory with the University of Manchester, Plymouth University, the University of Exeter and the University of Southampton.

This report pulls together the findings from these four research projects. It explains how we have shared these findings with residents, staff and colleagues in the sector, co-designing with them a strategy that incorporates six key principles for the future of resident involvement.

2 Asking the experts

To test our argument about the inadequacies of the traditional model of resident involvement, we asked the experts: residents who are already involved with us. We invited residents from our Scrutiny Panel, regional forums and Panel Plus to take part in one of two workshops or a focus group and interview.

We asked them why they had become involved with us in the first place. Two key themes emerged:

- first, we invited them as they were already playing an active role in their community, or had reported an issue to us;
- secondly, they had a personal service issue that led them to get involved.

Other reasons included having the spare time, wanting to develop themselves or because they had a genuine interest in social housing. Most of our residents don't feel like this. And even if they do, they won't necessarily have the time or share the same traits that make people more actively involved with us.

Next, we asked our involved residents about how they perceived their role. Several said their role was to ensure residents remained central to our business. How this worked in practice, however, was less clear.

Others saw their role as reviewing policy and procedure, or holding us to account. Most said their role was to provide the resident perspective: after all, one stated, "we're the experts in our homes".

This is true. Beyond their personal or professional lives, all our residents share one trait: they're all experts at being our residents. They know what

it's like to live in one of our homes and what it's like to receive our services.

Yet our involved residents are only a few individuals. We expect them to be housing professionals, while simultaneously being representative of all our residents. It creates huge pressures on them, and because we know that they're not representative, it undermines the whole purpose and value of resident involvement, and fails to make the most of their commitment and contribution.

This question about expertise is indicative of how we've adopted the wrong approach towards how we involve our residents in the past. Previously, we would develop a new policy, or revise an existing one, and then take this to our involved residents and ask them to endorse it. In effect, they just ended up rubber stamping decisions we had already taken. And that was the extent of their involvement.

By doing so, we were failing to maximise the expertise they have at being a resident in one of our properties, the lived experience of being a tenant or leaseholder. Discussing this further with our involved residents, two issues emerged: we need to involve them in a timely and appropriate manner.

Timely in that we need to use this expertise earlier in the process, so we can use this expertise to help inform our decisions or set the context for them.

Appropriate in that we involve them when their expertise meets our specific business needs. So this might mean tapping into this expertise using a more flexible approach, through, for example, issue-based groups, with expertise in specific areas based on the type of home, location, or even type of utility.

3 The wider perspective

So how might we involve more of our residents and in a more meaningful way? To find out, we designed, tested and validated a questionnaire to discover what our residents thought about involvement.

We wanted to determine our residents’ priorities, to learn when involvement had worked for them, and to understand what might drive them to get involved. So rather than asking them leading questions along the lines of “would you like to be involved with x?”, the survey focused on:

- what issues and services had the biggest impact on their lives;
- what residents were involved with, or had been involved with beforehand;
- their attitudes towards getting involved;
- what they would change about local decision-making;
- how they would like to make these changes happen.

Critically, the questions weren’t framed around us: we wanted to find out about our resident’s lives and their local communities, to identify where – and how – they wanted their voices to be heard, whether with us, or with other organisations in their local communities.

We sent an email to residents with a link to the questionnaire and received 527 responses. We then closed down our main office for the day, and our staff went out to meet and interview residents in their homes. By the end of the day, another 855 residents had completed the questionnaire. In total, we had 1,382 responses to analyse.

The sample was largely representative of our broader resident population. None of the discrepancies identified were statistically significant: the most notable area of under-representation was for the 18-25 age group.

Figure 1: Research sample, by gender, compared to Family Mosaic resident population

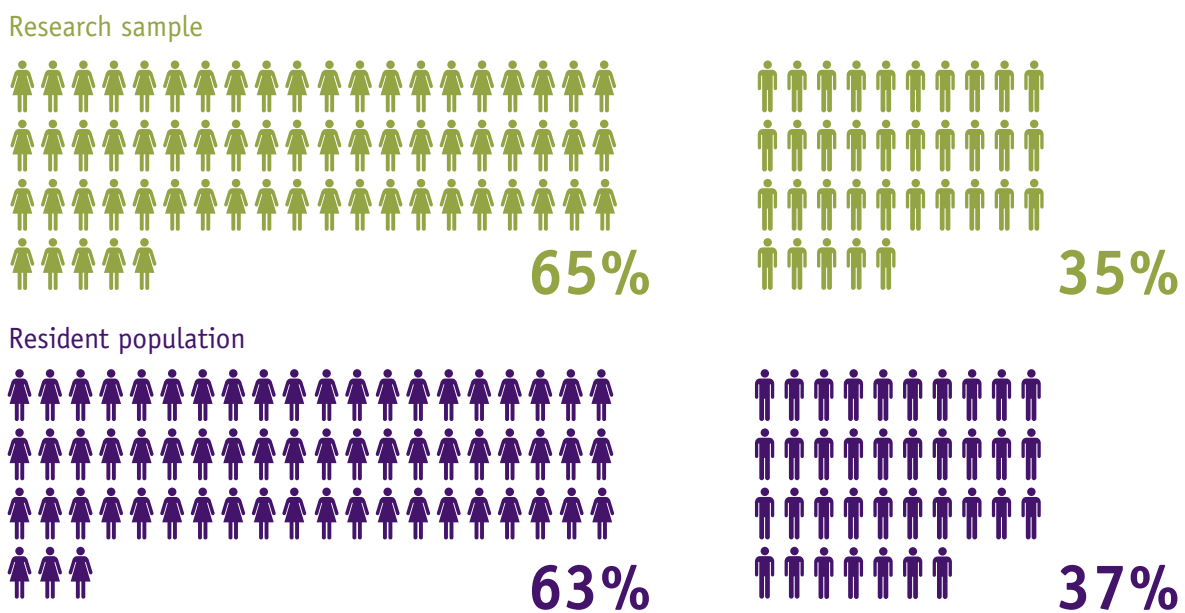


Figure 2: Research sample by age, compared to our resident population

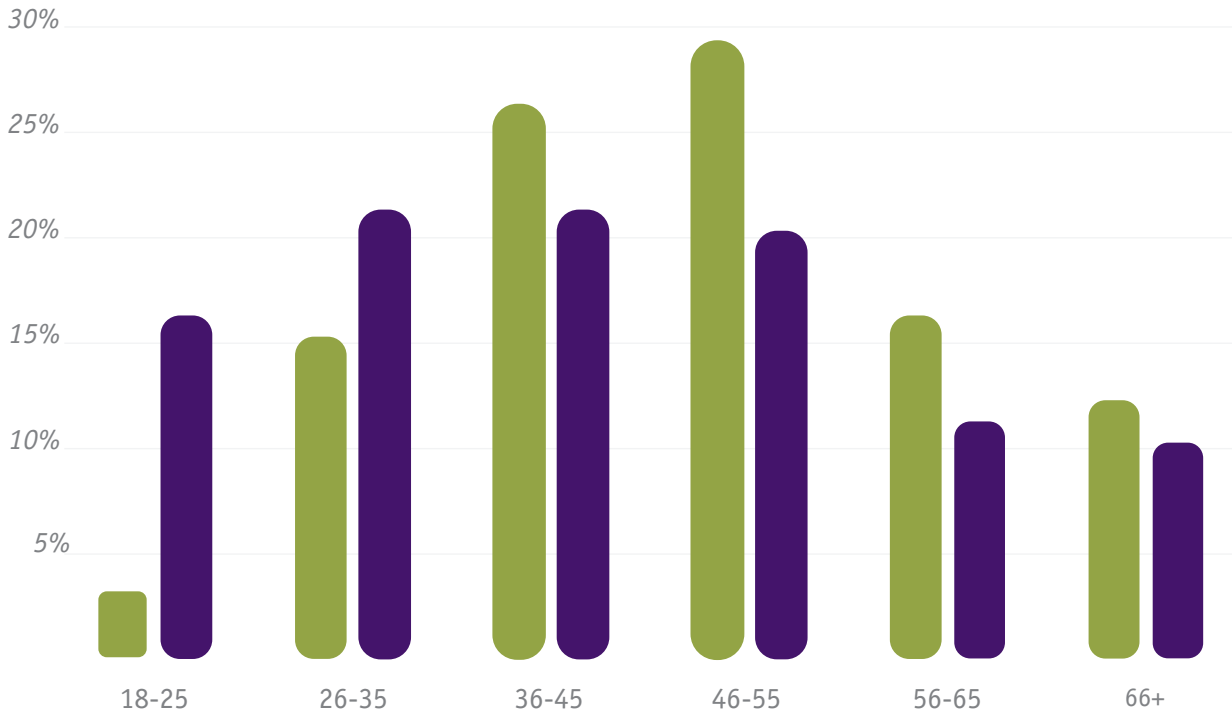


Figure 3: Research sample by ethnicity, compared to our resident population

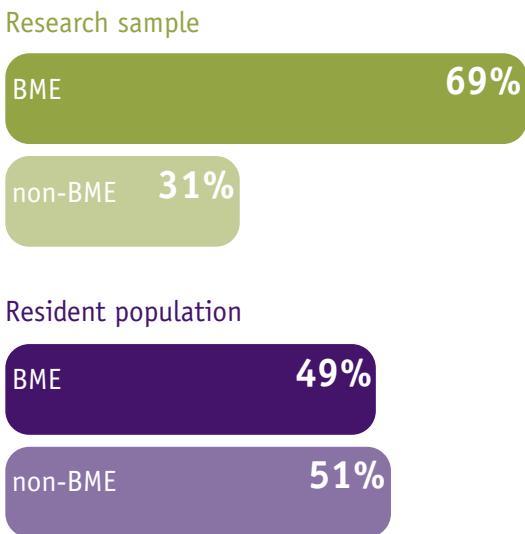
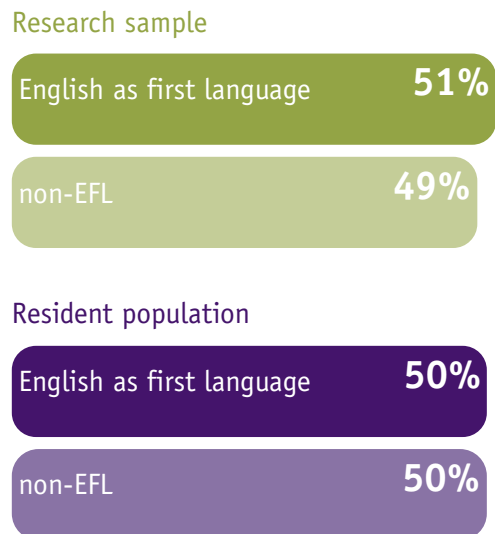
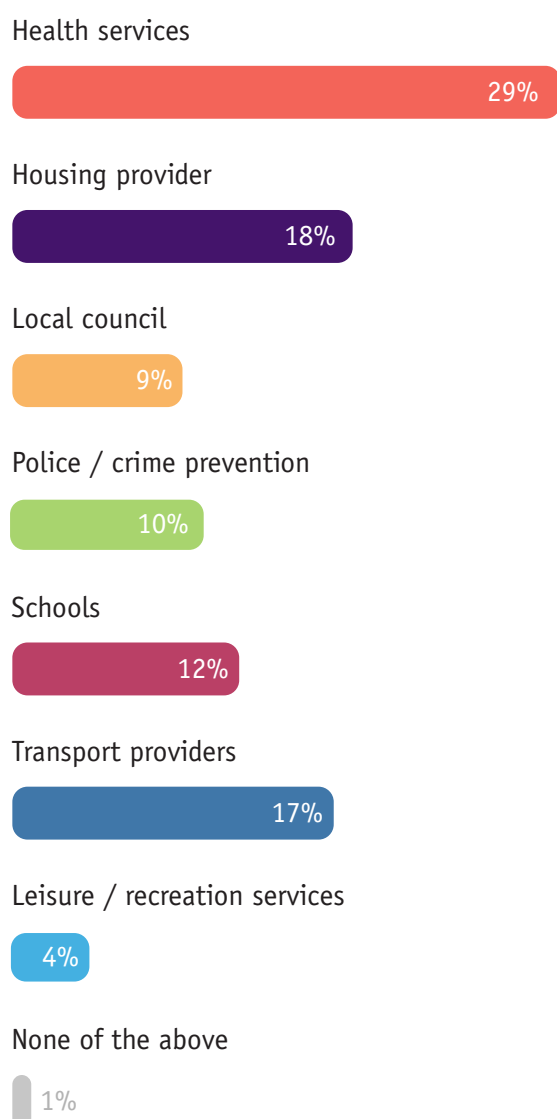


Figure 4: Research sample by English as first language, compared to our resident population



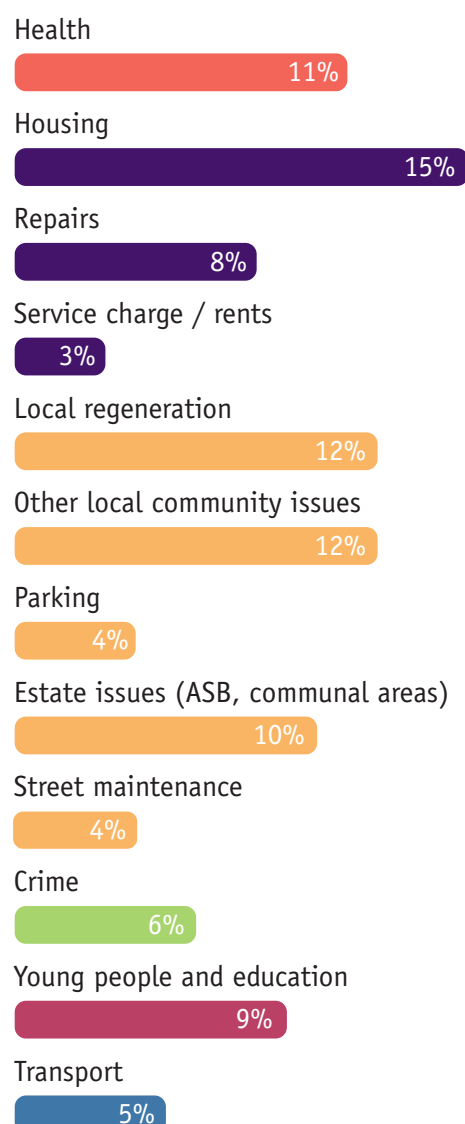
The first area we examined was what matters to our residents. We asked respondents which organisation they perceived having the biggest impact on their life and community. Almost a third identified health services, with 18% saying their housing provider had the biggest impact on them, and on their community.

Figure 5: What organisation has the biggest impact on your life and community?



We then asked respondents what issues they would be likely to get involved with. This was an open question, so respondents could answer how they liked. When we grouped their responses, 15% related to housing issues, 10% to their local estate, 8% to repairs and 3% to service charges or rents. While a notable proportion said they'd be interested in getting involved with housing-related issues, most would get involved with non-housing related issues

Figure 6: What issues would you get involved with?



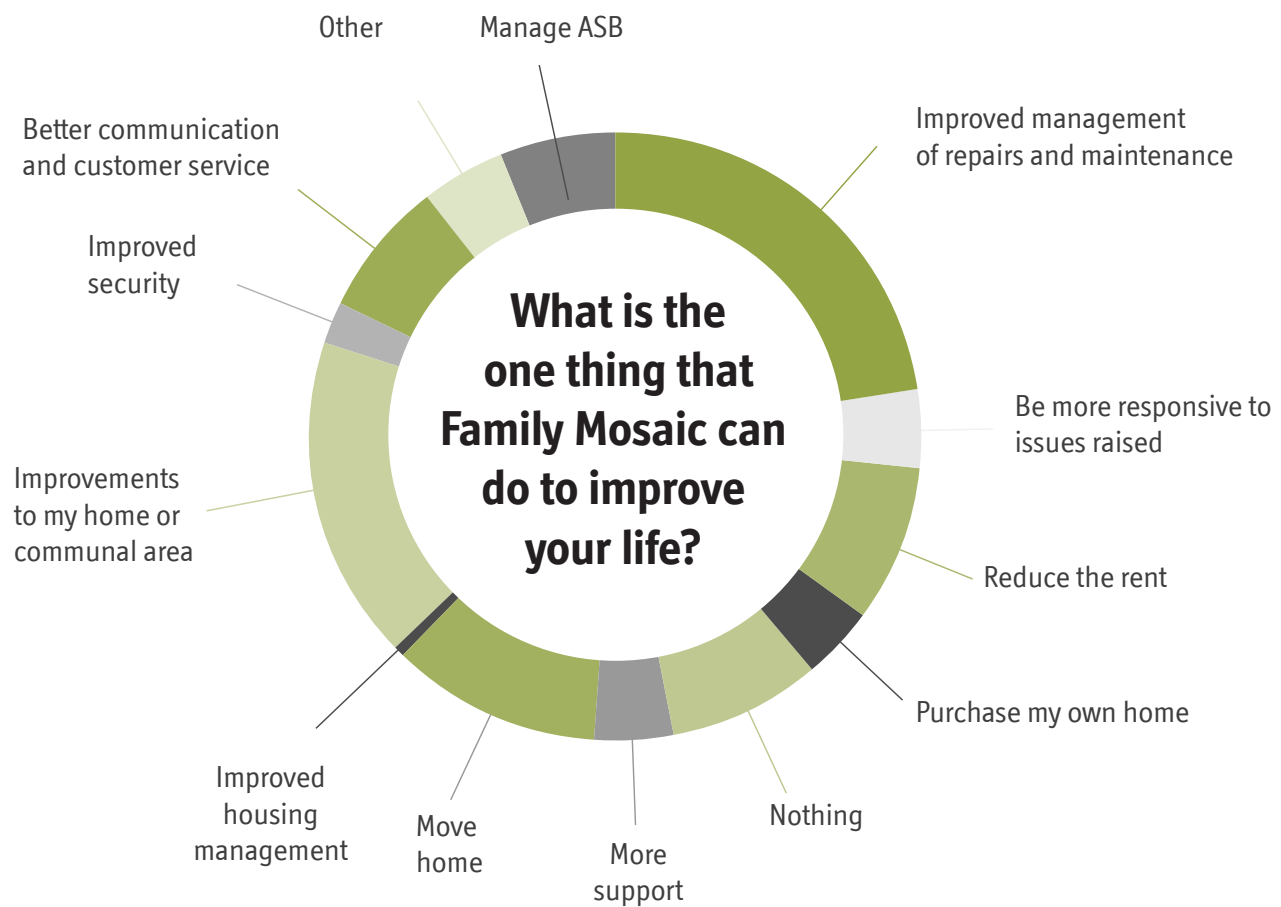
For those who did have an interest in getting involved with housing, most were interested in specific issues that affected them directly such as repairs. But what did those who just said *housing* mean? When we did some further research, we found for most respondents, *housing* related to practical issues such as repairs. Only a very small minority referred to housing policy or more generic housing issues.

This confirms that practical issues, based on personal experience, would be the trigger for residents to get involved. Residents get involved to

solve a specific issue, rather than getting involved because it is part of a broader area of general interest to them.

We then asked what changes respondents would like us to make. As with previous research, the most common response was repairs and maintenance, followed closely by improvements to the infrastructure of the home and communal areas. None of the suggestions were surprising: more notable were the range of themes that emerged. We could identify eleven broad areas of concern, each with varied drivers and specifics.

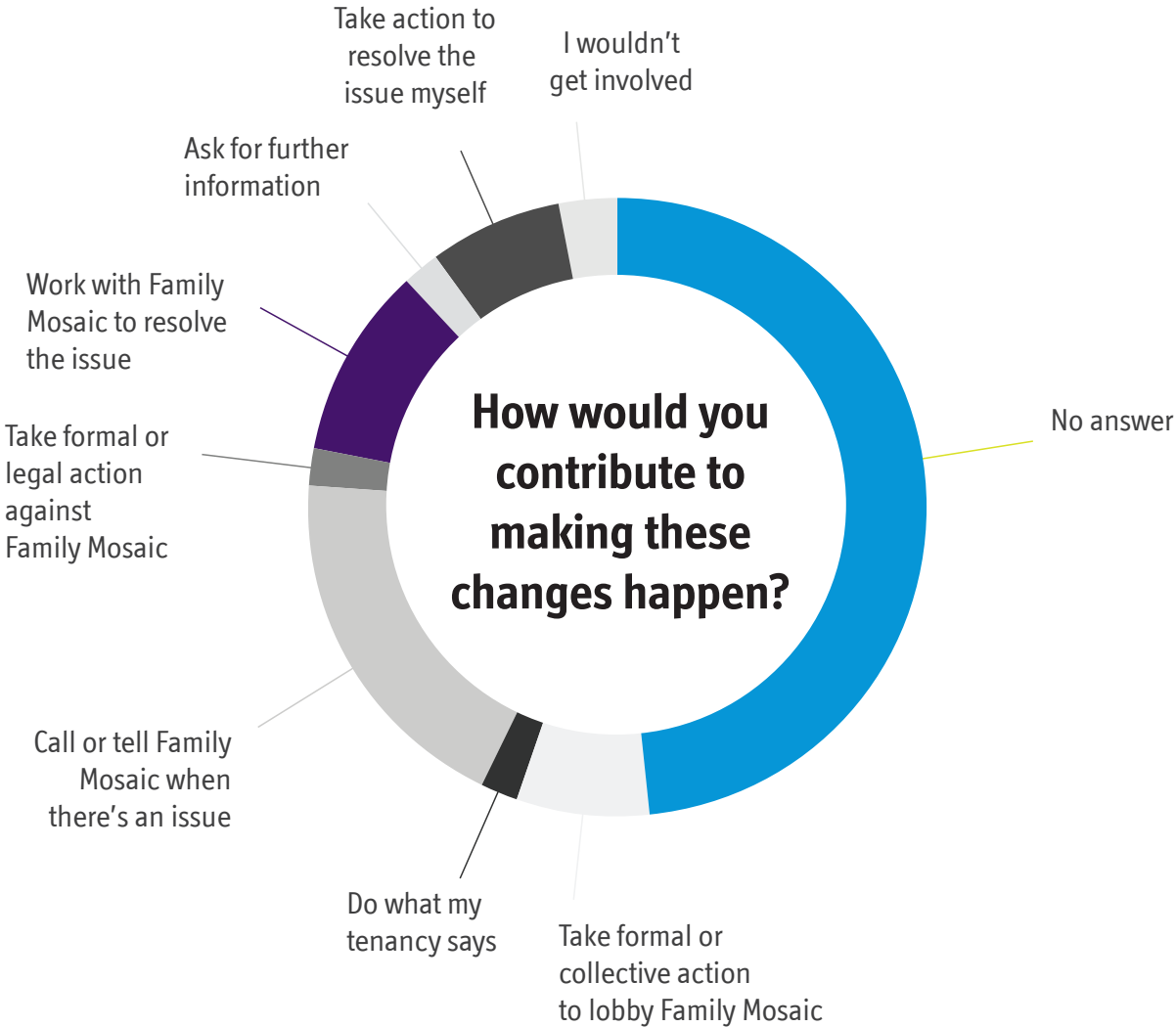
Figure 7: What changes would residents like to see at Family Mosaic?



Having established what changes they'd like us to make, we then asked respondents how they would like to contribute to making these changes happen. Significantly, just under half of the respondents didn't know how to answer the question. They couldn't suggest how they would like to get involved. The notion of them actively contributing baffled them.

Of those who answered the question, 33% (10% of the total) said they would just tell us when they had an issue – that was the extent of their desired involvement. Notably, 19% (7% of the total) expressed a willingness to work with Family Mosaic on the issue, equating to almost 1,750 of our residents, a significant number of people wanting to be involved. How, though, can we best involve them?

Figure 8: How would you like to contribute to making these changes happen?



Our traditional approach has been to use a variety of mechanisms to ask residents about how a specific service can be improved or to get their views on a business decision using. We then make improvements to the service, taking on board these suggestions, but counterbalancing them with our professional expertise.

This, though, isn't what most of our residents want. To them, it's more intuitive: involvement equates

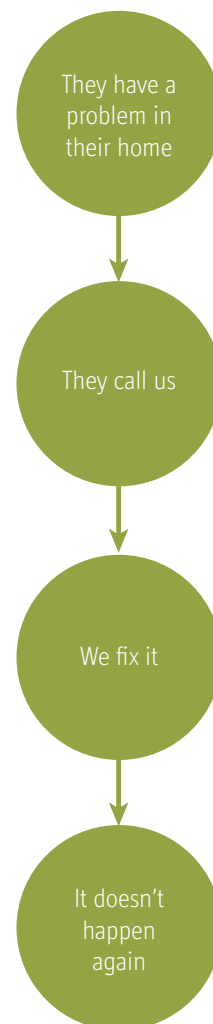
to contacting us when they have a problem or issue at home. Our responsibility is to respond to them, fix the issue, and then make sure it doesn't occur again. It's as simple as that.

This indicates that we need a more flexible approach to resident involvement, one that can meet the expectations of these residents, while simultaneously engaging the 7% who want to work with us.

Figure 9: Traditional response framework



Figure 10: How residents want it to work



4 Getting active

The research indicated that we need to take a more active, flexible approach towards the first strand of our new resident involvement model. The second strand centres around how we can empower residents to have their say about what matters to them where they live, so they can – if they choose – be active community citizens.

Our third piece of research provided some useful insights around our residents becoming active community citizens. It also ensured we didn't just focus on a top-down approach to our research.

The project was an exercise in citizen science in conjunction with Liz Richardson from the University of Manchester.² The project's aim was to use our residents as researchers in their local communities, asking their neighbours about community and involvement issues.

We recruited 13 residents, and provided them with instructions, ID badges, questionnaires and the necessary stationery – as well as a voucher to cover their travel. They were asked to interview at least three people from their local community. By the end of the research, they had exceeded this requirement, interviewing 50 people between them.

The resulting data was then uploaded to an online survey tool and five of the citizen scientists joined us and spent a day analysing the data. The morning was spent number crunching, while the afternoon focused on qualitative responses, deliberating

interpretations and coding responses. By the end of the day, we had developed a full coding framework that we then used in the final analysis of the qualitative data we gathered from our research.

The process was hugely beneficial for us, and for those residents involved. By treating them as our peers, we were able to use their skills, benefit from their generosity with their time and generate data that provides an insight into our residents' lives.

These are some of the key findings from the citizen science exercise:

- nearly all of the respondents saw getting involved as a positive activity, but many struggled to find the time;
- getting involved was not just seen as an end in itself: usually, it had to be for a specific purpose or benefit – *“I'm up for doing it if it's something I'm interested or passionate about”*;
- some respondents focused on the personal benefits of getting involved – *“I personally enjoy getting involved when I have the time”*;
- several others recognised the benefits for the wider community, and not just for the individual – *“Improve community relations. Reduce crime. Develop the area. Help those who are deprived”*;
- those who didn't feel involvement was important tended to say this was because it lacked relevance, either because of their age, interests or conflicting priorities, such as paid work or childcare.

These findings reinforced those from our wider survey and our focus groups. For most people, involvement needs to have a direct benefit and be about something of direct relevance for it to happen.

2: As well as being a senior lecturer in politics at the University of Manchester, Professor Liz Richardson is also a visiting fellow in the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).

5 Getting local

Enabling our residents to become citizen scientists is one route towards active local engagement, but, as with traditional resident involvement, it only worked for a minority of our residents. So how involved are our residents in their local communities?

As well as using our main, questionnaire-based survey to ask our residents about their involvement with us, we also used it to find out about their involvement in their local communities. We started by asking them to define their local community. This was an open-ended question, which meant some responses included more than one category.

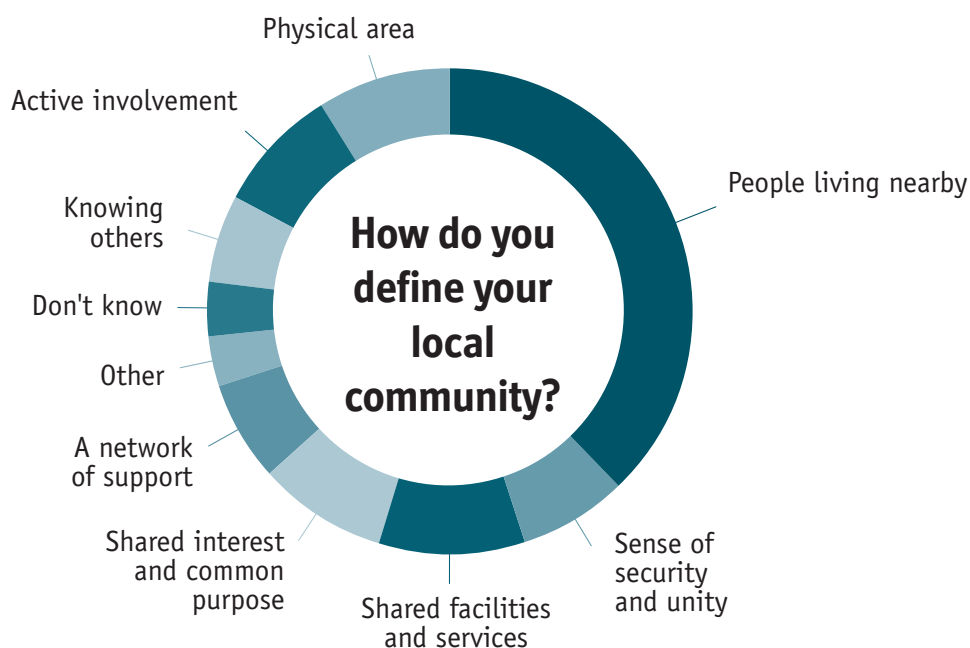
Almost half defined their local community as the people living nearby. Of these, 62% said this was the sole defining feature: community was just people. The remaining 38% included other elements within

their responses, for example, shared facilities or support networks.

Other popular responses included a sense of unity and security, a physical area and a shared interest or common purpose. There's clearly a range of definitions that our residents use when they talk about their local community.

When we dig deeper into the data, some interesting trends appear. Whilst people was the most popular response, residents living on estates tended to include support networks, common interests and a sense of unity in their definitions. Residents living in street properties tended to report shared facilities and the physical area as defining their community. This suggests a greater sense of community spirit and greater ties with their fellow residents amongst people living on estates.

Figure 11: How do you define your local community?



What, though, about how involved our residents are in their local communities? Only half of our respondents said that they felt a part of their local community. Yet 41% saw themselves as being involved with their local community – those who we spoke with face-to-face reported higher levels of involvement than those who responded by email. This is probably due to information bias where people said face-to-face what they thought they should say, rather than what they actually felt.

When it came to more active involvement, the numbers fell: 22% said they had taken part in local decision-making, or public consultations in the previous 12 months, while 18% had volunteered.

When we examined the data in more detail, we found that 9% of the total sample had taken part in both a consultation and volunteered. By contrast, 69% had done neither, reflecting a common trend that only a minority of any community tend to be very active.

Figure 12: Feelings towards my local community

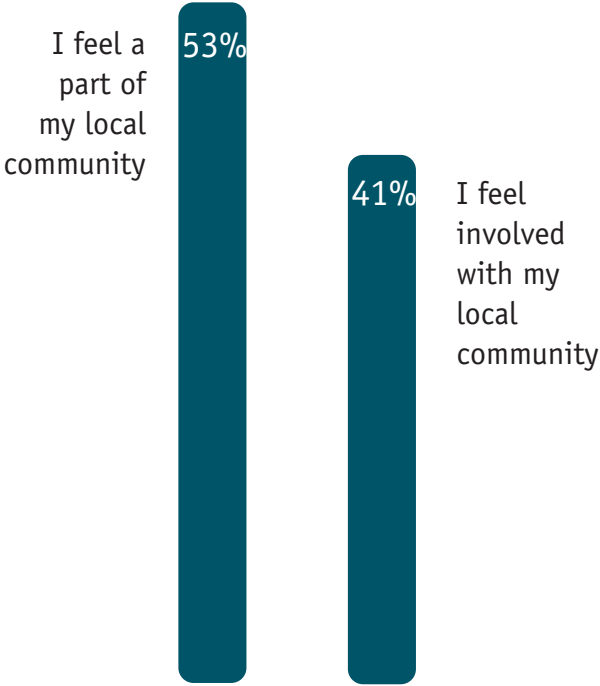
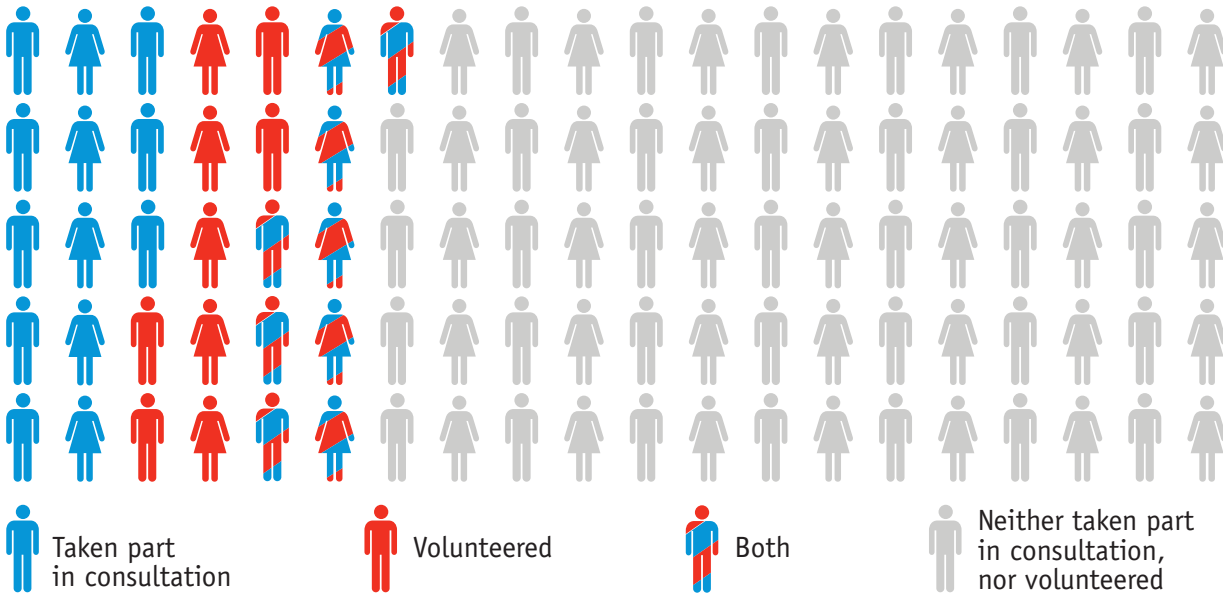


Figure 13: Involvement in my local community



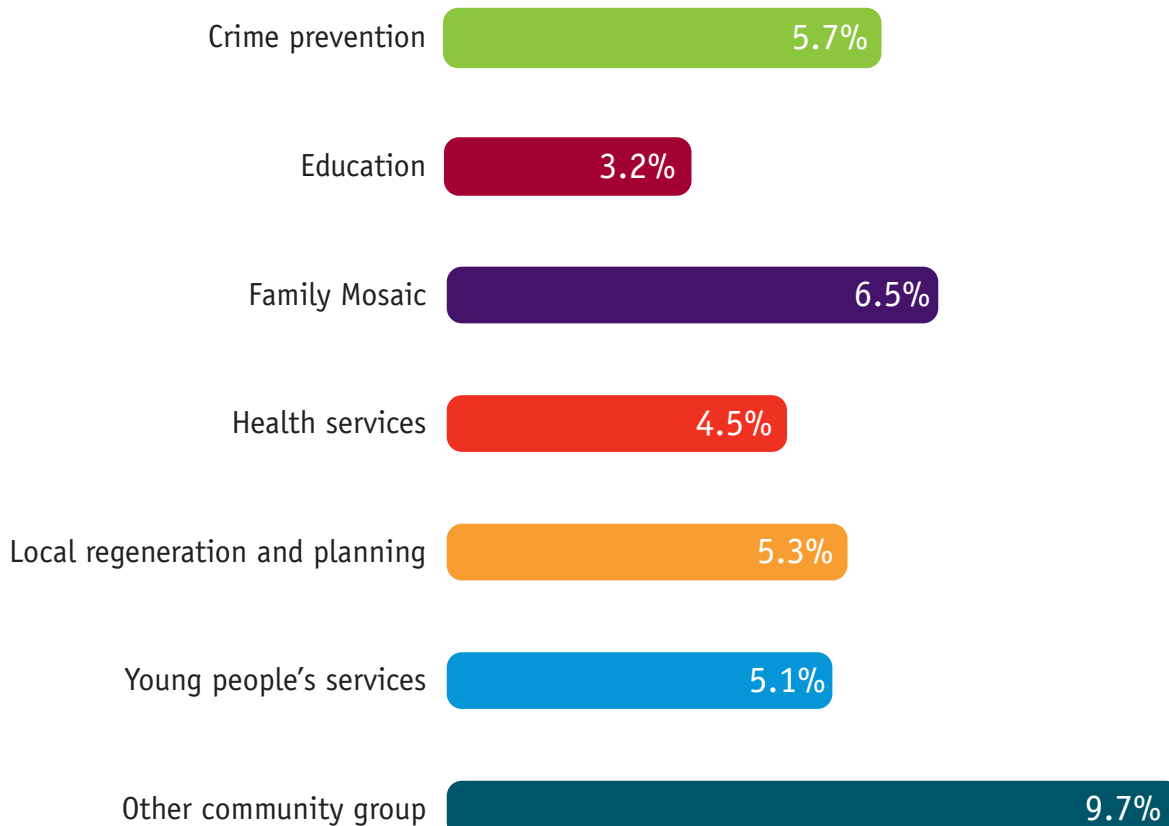
In addition, those who took part in consultations or volunteered were more likely to feel like a part of their local community, and more likely to feel involved with their local community.

So what groups were our residents involved with over the previous 12 months? The most frequently cited were general community groups (9%), followed by involvement with Family Mosaic (6%) – this is unsurprising, given that all our respondents were our own residents. Yet 6% is a lot higher than our previous findings that only 1% of our residents were actively involved with us.

This might be partly because those who are involved with us are more likely to respond to our emails or visits. Or it might be a discrepancy over definition of involvement: we define active involvement as a sustained and proactive contribution to our forums or panels. Respondents answering this survey might have thought that being involved ranged from a one-off response to a consultation, to attending a residents meeting or being a long-standing member of a resident body.

One trend that did emerge related to how actively involved respondents were in local decision-making.

Figure 14: Which groups or committees have you been involved with in the last 12 months?



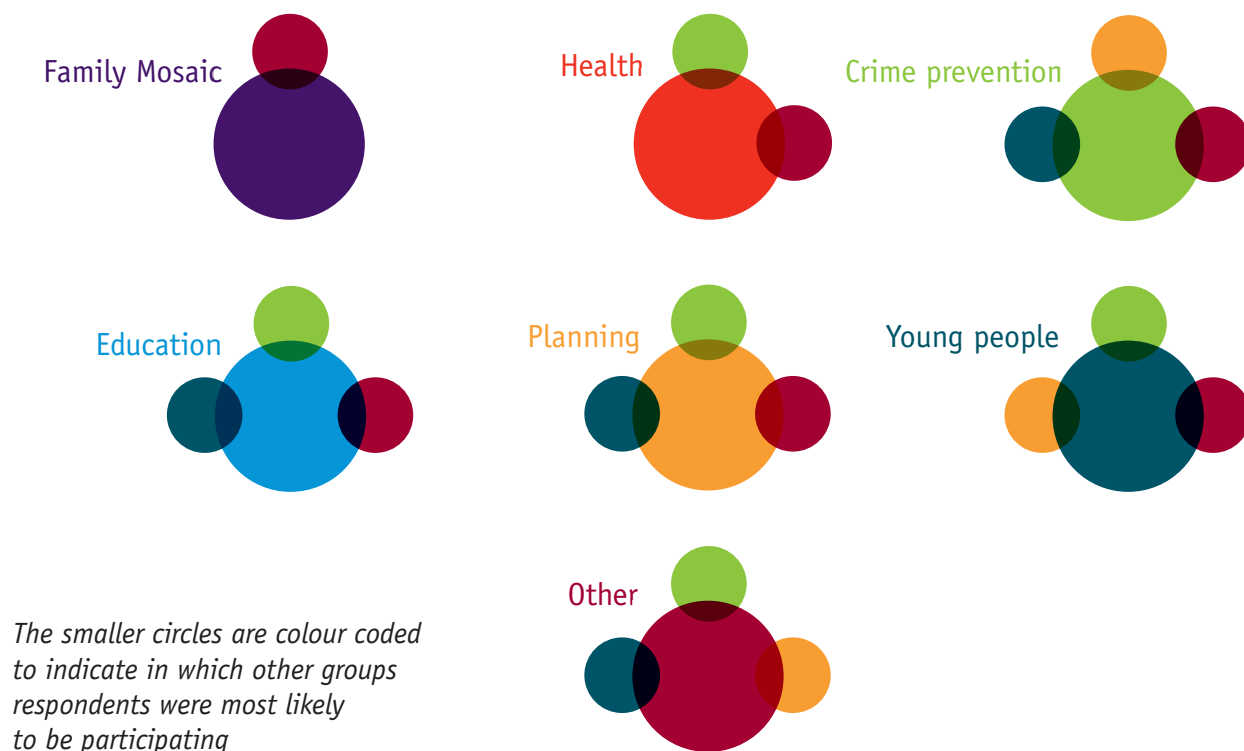
We looked at the responses from those respondents who said they had taken part in local groups. Those who were involved in groups relating to crime, education, planning, young people and health services tended to be more active: on average, they had participated in four groups. And the other groups they were most likely to have been involved in were crime, education, planning, young people or other community groups.

Those who had participated in a Family Mosaic group were the least active, suggesting that people involved with us are less involved in their local communities.

In other words, does this mean that different types of people get involved with us as compared with those who get involved other community groups? Is it an indicator of the fact that involvement with us is generally driven by a particular personal issue or experience? Is it a distinction between *us* and their communities?

By making our resident involvement model more appropriate to the way residents interact with us, can we reverse this trend, so that residents have more time to focus on local community issues? And is there anything more we can do to support them in becoming active local citizens?

Figure 15: Average number of local groups respondents were involved in, by type of group



6 To nudge or not to nudge

We've established, then, that a small minority of our residents are actively involved in their local communities, just as a small minority are actively involved with us. What, though, about the silent majority? Before we invest too much time into developing initiatives to enable them to become active citizens, we need to check whether they want to be involved.

We asked the respondents to our main survey to reflect on a local decision that had recently had a significant impact on their life. We asked them a simple question: is there anything that you would have changed about that decision?

Over half said yes.

So then we asked them whether they took part in the initial decision making.

Almost nine out of ten said they hadn't.

This suggests most people want to, or at least have a reason to, get involved in local decision-making, but they don't. We know there are a range of local issues people consider important to them – from housing and health, to young people and local regeneration. So is there anything more we can be doing to encourage or enable them to be active citizens?

Our fourth research study was focused on this area. In conjunction with the University of Manchester, the University of Southampton, the University of Exeter and Plymouth University, we carried out an experiment to explore the use of nudge theory.

Figure 16: Thinking of a recent local decision that had a significant impact on you, is there anything about it that you would have changed?

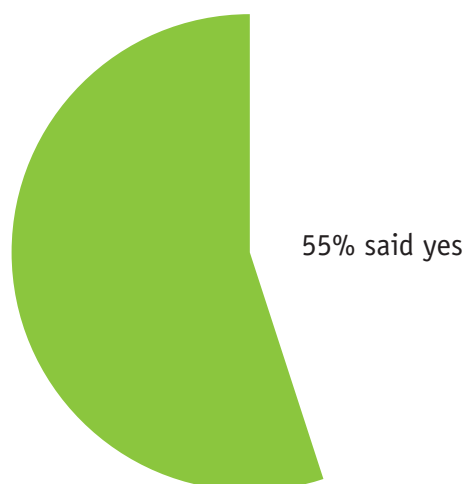
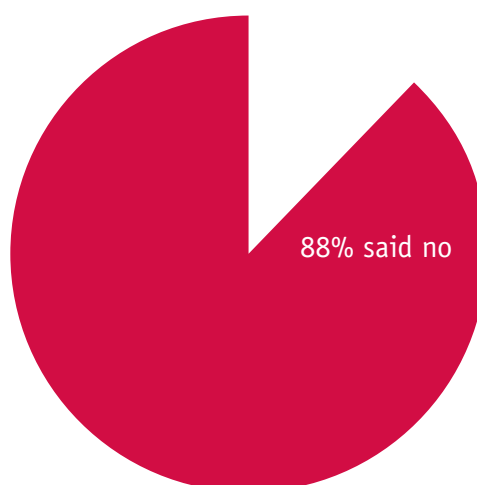


Figure 17: Did you take part in the decision-making?



Nudge theory is a strand of behavioural science looking at the instinctive nature of decision-making and how indirect means of encouragement can change the way people behave. The theory uses a range of techniques, from defaults to incentives to information provision. Our experiment tested the impact of social information – information about what other people think or do.

We sent an email to over 8,000 residents outlining a series of volunteering opportunities we had on offer. Each resident randomly received one of three types of email, inviting them to complete a short survey indicating the level of volunteering they'd like to take up:

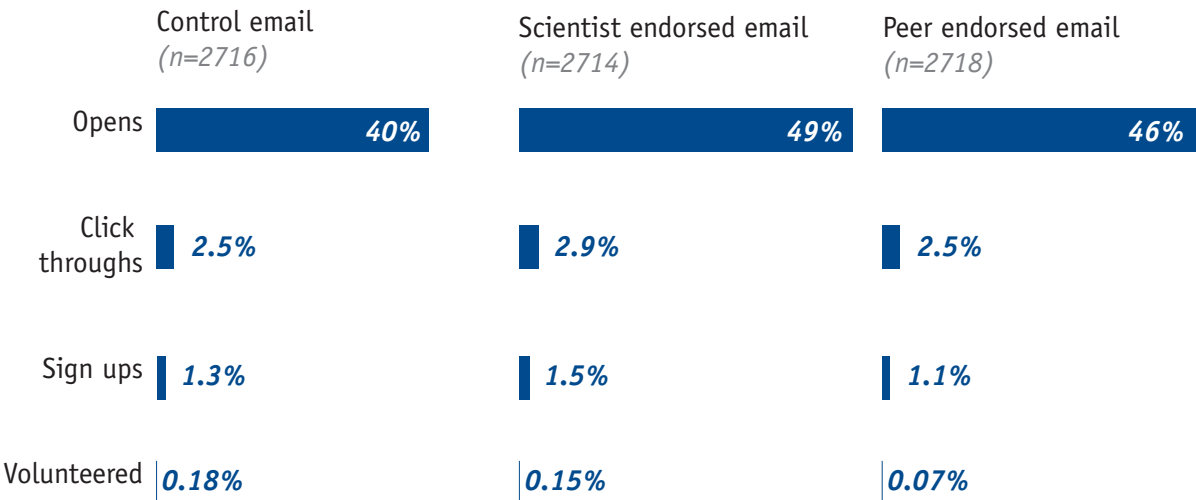
- a control email, with no endorsements;
- an email with an endorsement from a respected scientist;
- an email with an endorsement from a peer (a fellow Family Mosaic resident).

So what impact did the endorsements have? The figures appear to show they influenced the number of people who opened the email. We're wary of saying this for definite, as data on email opening is not always reliable due to technical difficulties.

The scientist-endorsed email did generate the most interest, but neither this email, nor the one endorsed by a peer, had a significant impact on interest or action. There were no significant differences between the numbers who actually signed up and volunteered as a result of either of the two endorsed emails.

So where does this leave us? One suggestion is we need to do more than just nudge people if we want to change their behaviour. We need nudge plus something else. Nudge can generate interest but to translate this into action we need to employ *think* tactics, for example, having informed discussions or

Figure 18: Responses to email invitation to become a volunteer



deliberations. We need to support our residents to think and deliberate over issues that are important to them before we can nudge them into actively engaging in these matters.

Looking back at the main survey, we asked respondents why they hadn't got involved in local decision making. Almost a third said it was because of a lack of information; 24% said because of a lack of time; and a further 19% said because of the lack of opportunities to get involved (many of whom probably didn't know about the opportunities).

We can't help people make more time in their lives. When it comes to information, though, might

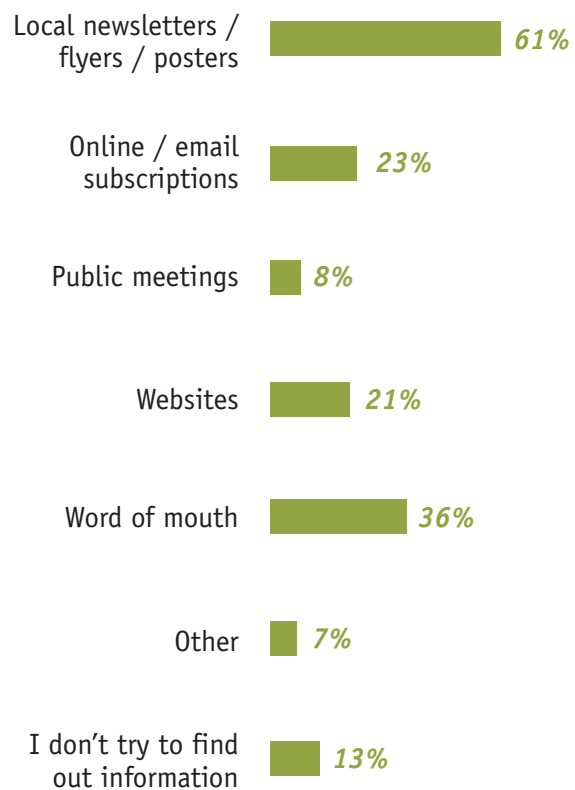
there be a role for us here? Can we tell people about the opportunities to get involved? Can we encourage them to think about issues which are important to them?

Information, then, is critical. So how best to communicate that information? We asked our respondents how they kept informed about local decision-making: the most common ways were informal, through newsletters, flyers, word of mouth and digital channels. If we are going to play a role in enabling our residents to get involved locally by signposting them to information, then we'll need to use multiple modes of communication.

Figure 19: Why didn't you get involved in local decision-making?



Figure 20: How do you keep informed about local decision-making?



7 A co-designed future

Once we had collated the results from these four pieces of research, our first step was to reflect on their practical implications for the future of our approach to resident involvement. Focusing on the two different strands, we developed a number of ideas that we wanted to discuss with our key stakeholders: our staff, our residents and our colleagues within the social housing sector.

The results were perhaps predictable: it was very difficult to reach a consensus. Staff had one view; residents had another; and our colleagues in the sector expressed a myriad of alternative solutions.

Those staff we consulted – the majority of whom were from our housing management or social inclusion teams – instinctively agreed with the research findings. They concurred that for most of our residents, involvement with us wasn't on their radar, and for those who were involved with us, it was because of a specific problem, issue or area of interest.

There was, however, a clear recognition that we needed to break with the current model and adopt a more progressive approach. When it came to how best we might involve our residents in improving our services, staff liked the idea of a more informal and fluid approach, with fewer standing panels and more issue-focused groups.

The responses of those involved residents we spoke with were less consistent. While there wasn't as strong a sense of a need to break with the existing structures, it was recognised turnout was declining and some fresh thinking was needed to reinvigorate participation. There was, though, still a perception that panels and meetings were the best approach.

We then held a roundtable discussion with representatives from 22 housing associations, where we shared our preliminary findings and invited people to discuss their implications. The ensuing debate was lively, and invaluable in helping us to shape our ideas further.

Many housing associations are reforming their approach to resident involvement, and our research findings resounded with them. Participants at our discussion expressed a desire to move away from long-standing panels to shorter, more focused, issues-based groups. Others concurred that we needed to increase opportunities for involvement, whether remotely or through better use of big data.

What was clear, though, was that when it comes to involving residents, there is no single structure that works for everyone. There is no one size fits all approach. Perhaps we need to take a flexible, more fluid and responsive approach instead. We've realised that instead of looking at structures, perhaps we needed to look at the principles that inform our approach.

Simultaneously, when it comes to our second objective – of empowering customers to have their say over what matters to them most – we need to re-assess the role we play within our local communities. Our discussions with our residents, staff and colleagues highlighted that this role is fundamentally different to what it had been in the past, and, if we want to succeed in this second objective, we need to adapt our approach towards resident involvement.

8 A new model of involvement: part 1

When we involve our residents with us, their role should be purely to drive service improvement. To do this we have created a new model to maximise the input from our tenants to drive outcomes, and foster a productive relationship with us.

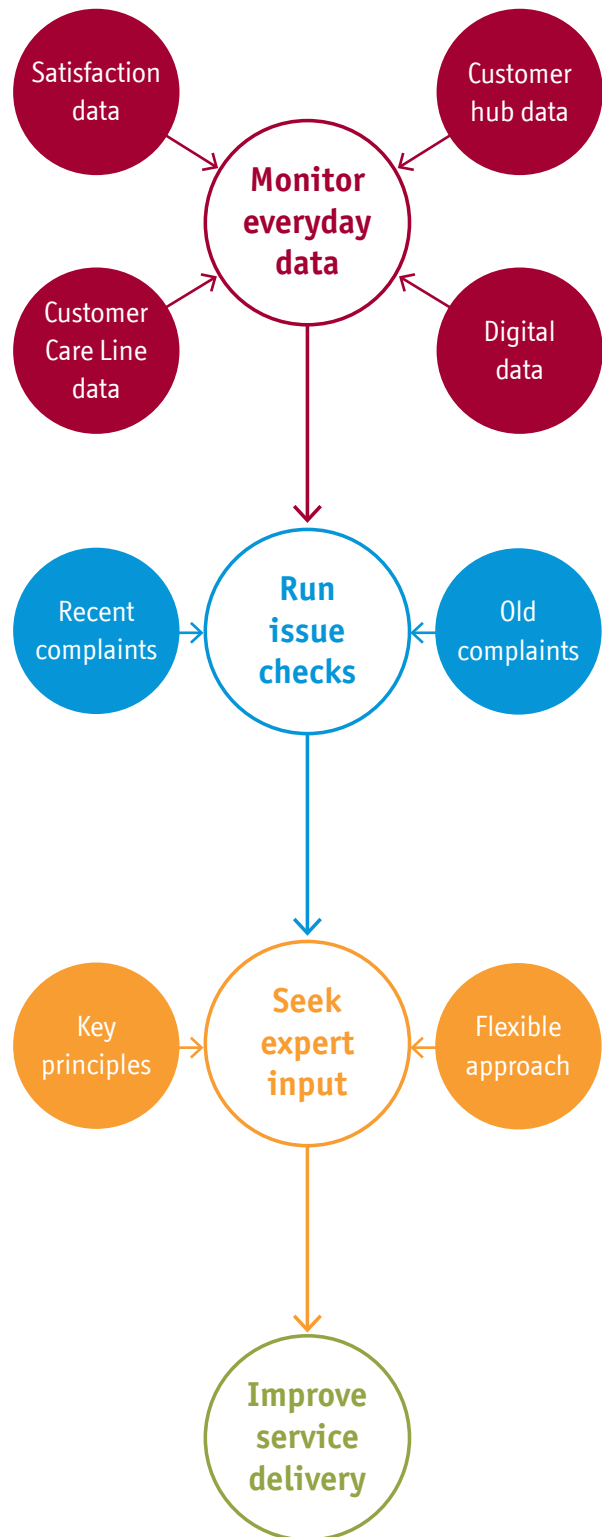
The first step is to maximise our use of data. Every day, our residents make multiple interactions with us – by phone, by email, in person and online. We will monitor these everyday customer interactions so we can identify leading indicators of potential issues, rather than depend on lagging statistics.

Once an issue has been identified, we'll run tests to compare it against any trends in recent and outstanding complaints. We want to determine whether this is a new issue that needs to be addressed, whether it's an isolated issue, or whether it's part of an existing issue we're already dealing with.

If the issue is occurring across multiple resident populations, we will escalate it to stage three, where we will seek expert input from our residents. We've called this expert input, to reflect the expertise residents have in being our residents. So how should we seek this expert input?

Our research shows that of the 2,000 residents who would like to work with us, we are currently engaged with fewer than 250. So what are we doing wrong? Our survey told us residents want to work with us in a huge variety of ways and that by and large the driver for this was one-off, individual issues. We therefore need an approach that is flexible enough to be responsive to the immediate needs and concerns of our residents, and lets them give input on issues which really matter to them.

Figure 21: Involving our residents in improving our business



We know, though, that previous rigid structures haven't worked. So instead of having one singular resident involvement structure, we want to have a strategy that enables residents to get involved as and when they choose, to make the changes that they want to see. The groups, panels and consultations will change, stop and start in line with current needs and demands. What *involvement* looks like will be defined by residents and staff together. The strategy will be the guiding principles for the development and delivery of this involvement.

Rather than developing the principles on our own and imposing them on our residents, we created the strategy by running co-design workshops with our residents and staff. Its purpose was simple: to develop principles of successful collaboration.

We grounded our workshops in real life resident issues, and the pitfalls our involved residents had outlined for us. This ensured we learned from our research into our previous involvement structures.

The key principles we developed were:

- *Communication* – a key element of successful collaboration. Having effective communication is essential to build trust, work efficiently as a team, and get the job done. From now on, staff and residents working together will be committed to communicating openly and honestly from day one.
- *Planning* – one stumbling block we have often encountered is a lack of clarity about how the process will work. By committing to a clear goal straight away, and planning how to work towards it – “a road map” as one workshop put it – everyone can feel secure in the process and their role in it. By setting clear

expectations, planning also enables us to fulfil our commitment to communication.

- *Respect* – building trust and respect between residents and staff is essential to the success of any initiative. By everyone committing to being open, objective and respectful to one another throughout any collaboration we set a strong groundwork for any obstacles we may encounter along the way.
- *Equality* – working together means everyone involved should have their voice heard, and their ideas valued. Family Mosaic has a commitment to diversity, and that commitment must be carried through to resident involvement. Everyone should be attending with an open mind, and be willing to listen to each other.
- *High standards* – when working together, everyone needs to take responsibility. Committing to holding ourselves to high standards and doing our best for each other will make collaborations successful. At the same time, we should always be ambitious in what we can achieve together.
- *Solution focused* – in our new model of resident involvement, residents are being asked to take the role of experts and helping us to improve our services. We should always be aiming to make real improvements to their lives, and should always consider this when setting goals and planning projects.

Developing the six principles is just the first step. We now need to make sure we put them into practice. Working with members of our existing

panels and resident groups, we're developing a questionnaire to assess how well our residents feel their involvement measures up against the principles. Using the responses of our existing involved residents as our benchmark, we will be able to monitor how well the principles are working, and then determine whether they need adapting.

Simultaneously, we will also collaborate with other housing associations and specialists within the sector, to assess whether these six principles can be used across the sector. If this is the case, we hope the questionnaire can develop into a benchmark against which all involvement initiatives can be measured.

Figure 22: Our six principles of resident involvement

COMMUNICATION
PLANNING
RESPECT
EQUALITY
HIGH STANDARDS
SOLUTION FOCUSED

9 A new model of involvement: part 2

As well as resident involvement driving service improvement, we believe it can also act as a means of enabling residents to become active local citizens. When it comes to our role in local communities, we, and our colleagues in the sector, need to acknowledge that the local environment in which we operate has changed.

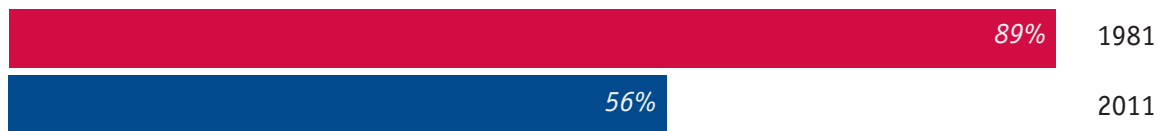
In 1981, just after resident involvement became a legal requirement for social housing providers, nearly 90% of social housing in London was managed by local councils. And over half of social housing was located in electoral wards where it comprised the majority of all housing stock.

Thirty years later, the picture had changed: in 2011, 56% of social housing in London was managed by local councils; and only 13% of social housing was in areas where it comprised the majority of all housing stock. Or to illustrate this point in another way: in 1981, a third of all London's electoral wards had a majority of social housing; by 2011, this had fallen to 5%.

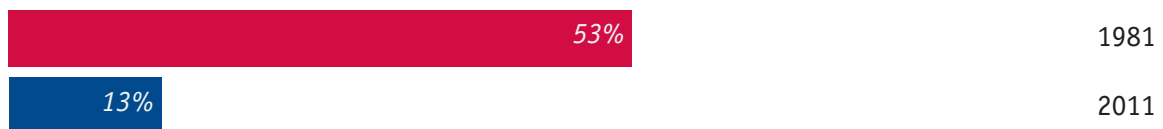
Going back to our research, when we asked residents to define their communities, they responded by saying that their community was defined by the people who live near them, or share their interests. In 1981, people living near our residents would

Figure 23: Changes in tenure of London's housing stock, 1981-2011

Social housing in London managed by local councils



Social housing comprising the majority of all housing stock, by electoral ward



London's electoral wards with a majority of social housing



be more likely to be social housing residents, with shared interests. This is no longer the case. Our residents are less likely to have neighbours who are also social housing tenants. And our communities are more likely to consist of mixed tenure properties, with multiple landlords.

Empowering residents by encouraging them to become involved with their social housing provider no longer gives them the means to shape their communities. The research showed that residents involved with us tended to be part of an *active minority*, but they were less active than other members of that minority who weren't involved with us. We need, therefore, to enable our residents to make the changes they want in their communities, rather than hijacking the process and making it about us. Just because we're their landlord, we don't get to define their community.

As their landlord, our responsibility to them is distinct from any role we might play in empowering our residents locally. When we asked our residents what we could do to improve their lives, their response was clear: focus on improving our services. That is the single most important positive impact we can have on their lives.

We have had to bear this in mind when developing a model to meet the second objective of our resident involvement strategy:

to empower customers to have their say over what matters to them the most.

It may be that what matters most to our residents is Family Mosaic and that's fine. They can become one of our experts when reviewing services which matter to them.

For other residents though, it's still uncertain what we can do to empower them in their communities. We will continue to experiment with the nudge pilots we've already pioneered. Critically, though, our research found that 29% of residents said the main barrier to getting them involved locally was lack of information. To reduce the information gap, we need to tell them about local community opportunities. This approach is called Nudge+Information.

As part of our new business strategy, Family Mosaic is moving to a localised *branch* service delivery model. This provides us with the perfect opportunity to deliver local information to our residents. Branch and local community centre staff will keep up-to-date with knowledge of local involvement opportunities. We will promote local community opportunities on our website and self-serve portal and tailor them to our residents' local areas.

As well as promoting local information, we will also be testing a number of nudges to see what works for getting residents involved, and to bridge the gap between involvement, aspiration and action.

For this research, we're basing our nudges on the Behavioural Insight Team's EAST model.³ This model states that nudge interventions should be one or more of Easy, Attractive, Social or Timely.

3: The Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) is a social purpose company. We are jointly owned by the UK Government; Nesta (the innovation charity); and our employees. BIT started life inside 10 Downing Street as the world's first government institution dedicated to the application of behavioural sciences. (see: www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk)

To test the efficacy of each, we will be piloting different nudges in different boroughs to see what works best. Our planned nudges are:

- **Easy** – using our staff’s expertise to enable community projects to get off the ground. For example, making staff available to help with the process of gaining funding for projects. We will publicise this to make sure residents are aware of the assistance on offer.
- **Attractive** – using our new residents online self-serve portal to promote opportunities to residents that they are more likely to be interested in. We will be doing some A/B testing to check how effective this is in grabbing residents’ attention.
- **Social** – we will revamp our community champions programme, so they will work side-by-side with our social inclusion teams to promote community engagement, and make sure the local community’s voice is heard.
- **Timely** – as part of our fixed term tenancies, we encourage our residents to get involved in their local communities. We will be making this even easier for them, by sending them text reminders about community involvement opportunities in those areas in which they have expressed an interest.

We will report back on how effective these pilots have been in the next report in this series.

Figure 24: Our planned nudges, using EAST



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