

Nomination Form

Excellence in Digital Engagement



TIS National Excellence Awards 2024

The **TIS National Excellence awards** recognise and celebrate housing organisations, staff, volunteers, tenants, residents, and community groups **who are leading the way and making positive change in the Scottish social housing sector.**

Categories honour excellence in everything **from partnership working, tenant participation and scrutiny practice, to digital creativity and innovation.** Hotly anticipated, the awards offer a seal of approval for the most outstanding work.

Finalists are selected by an expert and independent judging panel, and **winners announced at an awards ceremony on Thursday 7th November 2024 at the Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow.**

The closing date for applications is 5:00pm on Thursday 11th July 2024. TIS accepts submissions in more than one award category.

Category Overview

The **Excellence in Digital Engagement** award recognises housing organisations who have demonstrated creativity in developing meaningful digital engagement opportunities.

The Covid-19 pandemic significantly changed the way that housing organisations engage with their tenants and communities. Traditional methods to get involved are now enriched by new technologies, innovative practices, and online communication tools to ensure tenants and communities stayed connected.

Submissions must **evidence how the organisation has worked collaboratively with tenants, residents, and communities to broaden the reach of engagement** by offering innovative, digital engagement opportunities and more, flexible choices to participate.

Who you can nominate

This award is open to housing organisations operating across the Scottish social housing sector.

About you

Please note information about the individual, organisation, or group submitting the application:

Name	Zhan McIntyre
Position	Head of Policy and Customer Standards
Organisation	Bield Housing and Care
Email address	z.mcintyre@bield.co.uk
Telephone number	

About the nominee

Please note information about the housing organisation you are nominating:

Organisation	Bield Housing and Care
Email address	z.mcintyre@bield.co.uk
Telephone number	

Background

Maximum 250 words

Please outline background information about the housing organisation that you are nominating.

For example, detail:

- The background of the organisation, including: total number of homes, total number of employees, and the geographical areas the organisation covers, etc.
- A brief overview of their current tenant participation, scrutiny, and wider engagement methods.

Bield Housing and Care is a housing association dedicated to providing homes for older people in 21 local authority areas across Scotland. We have around 4,353 homes across around 160 developments. Bield employs around 600 employees, including onsite staff, care, and office staff, to support and maintain these properties and services.

In recent years, Bield faced challenges that impact tenant engagement, including a major restructure in 2019/20, followed by the Covid-19 Pandemic. These events necessitated a concerted effort from both tenants and officers to revitalise engagement activities. To address these challenges, Bield introduced an interim strategy called 'Engage', which outlined several actions aimed at reinvigorating tenant engagement and participation.

Following 'Engage', Bield launched a broader business strategy named 'Setting the Pace', which emphasised tenant engagement and coproduction as central values. This strategic focus highlights the organisation's commitment to involving tenants in decision making processes and ensuring their voices are heard and respected.

As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance tenant interaction and engagement, Bield developed the 'My Bield' online tenant portal. This portal, a key component of Bield's five-year strategy, provides tenants with 24/7 access to information about their tenancy. Through My Bield, tenants can request repairs, download essential documents, and access a range of services at their convenience.

These initiatives demonstrate Bield's dedication to fostering meaningful tenant participation, scrutiny, and wider engagement, ensuring that tenants remain at the heart of the organisation's mission and operations.

Actions

Maximum 500 words

Please outline specific actions the housing organisation has taken to develop meaningful digital engagement opportunities.

For example, outline:

- The organisation's reason to develop digital engagement opportunities.
- How the organisation worked collaboratively with tenants, residents, and communities to develop digital engagement opportunities.
- An overview of the digital engagement opportunities that the organisation embraced.
- How the organisation explored innovative new ways to reach more people to get involved.
- How the organisation has championed digital engagement opportunities within their organisation.
- The work involved and their overall aim.

Driver to digital engagement

We recognized the need to develop digital engagement opportunities to enhance tenant interaction and ensure seamless access services, following the Covid-19 pandemic. Digital engagement had been on the radar, but the events of the pandemic underscored the need to accelerate these plans. Furthermore, many tenants that had previously not engaged in digital interaction had been forced to by the lock down.

With this context, the primary motivation for My Bield was to provide tenants with a convenient, efficient and user-friendly platform that could be accessed at any time. This initiative aimed to overcome the challenges posed by the geographical distances as well as capitalising on the technology available.

Collaborative development with tenants

During the development phase of 'My Bield,' we actively collaborated with tenants, leveraging the expertise of our Communication Champions and Interested Parties. Their invaluable feedback and questions guided the tailoring of communication and guidance materials to better meet the needs of our diverse tenant base. This collaborative approach ensured that the platform was designed with direct input from the end-users, making it more relevant and user-friendly.

Overview of digital engagement opportunities

Bield embraced several digital engagement opportunities through 'My Bield' an online tenant portal. The portal offers tenants 24/7 access to information about their tenancy allowing them to:

- Request repairs
- Download essential documents
- Make payments
- Engage with various service conveniently
- These features were designed to streamline tenant interactions and provide them with a comprehensive digital solution to manage their housing needs.

Exploring innovative ways to reach more people

To reach and involve more people, Bield explored innovative methods based on tenant feedback. One significant suggestion from tenant testers was the creation of instructional videos to assist with the registration process. Recognising the potential impact, we expanded this idea to develop a comprehensive suite of approximately 25 short videos. These videos cover various portal features, such as adding the portal as a badge on devices, requesting repairs, making payments and downloading documents. Each video is presented in plain language and bite-sized segments to facilitate ease of understanding and accessibility.

Championing digital engagement opportunities

Bield championed digital engagement opportunities by actively promoting 'My Bield' within the organisation and the tenant community. The soft launch of 'My Bield' in October 2023 allowed for the identification and resolution of any initial issues ensuring a seamless experience for tenants. On 6th February 2024, coinciding the Safer Internet Day, Bield officially launched 'My Bield'. This milestone was marked by a comprehensive promotional campaign, including outreach via social media platforms and the distribution of leaflets alongside the rent-setting letter.

The work involved and overall aim

The overall aim of 'My Bield' was to empower tenants with the necessary resources to navigate the portal confidently and efficiently. The work involved included:

- Actively seeking tenant input during the development phase
- Developing a suite of instructional videos based on tenant feedback
- Conducting a soft launch to identify and resolve initial issues
- Implementing a comprehensive promotional campaign for the official launch
- Engaging with tenant groups through various channels to promote 'My Bield'.

In addition to virtual promotions, Bield conducted face-to-face sessions with tenants in their common lounges further encouraging use of the platform. The instructional videos proved to be a valuable resource, offering step-by-step guidance and enhancing accessibility to 'My Bield'.

The result was a notable increase in registrations and growing tenant engagement with the platform.

Outcomes

Maximum 700 words

Please outline **positive outcomes** achieved as a result of the housing organisation developing meaningful digital engagement opportunities.

For example, detail the impact on:

- Opportunities that have emerged as a result of introducing digital engagement options.

- Offering more, flexible participation options, that offer more choice and opportunities to get involved.
- Extending the reach of tenants, residents, and communities.
- The delivery of housing services.
- The improvement of satisfaction levels.
- Communication, strengthening relationships, and partnership working.
- The inclusion and lasting benefits of tenants, residents, and communities.
- The skills and knowledge of other tenants, residents, and communities.
- How others can learn from the organisation’s good practice now and in the future.

Please use this space to input your answer.

Flexible participation options

‘My Bield’ offers tenants flexible participation options, providing more choices and opportunities to get involved. Tenants can engage with Bield’s services at their convenience, wither it’s requesting repairs, making payments, or accessing important documents.

The instructional videos further support this flexibility, ensuring that tenants can easily navigate the portal regardless of their technical proficiency.

Extending reach to tenants

The digital platform has extended Bield’s reach to a broader tenant base. The ease of accessing My Bield from anywhere has enabled more tenants to participate actively in their housing services. People with Power of Attorney for our tenants can also use this facility.

While the primary goal has been to give tenants more flexibility and options for engagement, over time, we project that this digital approach will reduce the administrative burden on staff, which will allow them to focus on enhancing the overall tenant experience.

Learning to share

Our approach to digital engagement and roll out of the portal can be shared with other organizations. Key learnings include the importance of tenant involvement in the development process, the value of the instructional videos for enhancing accessibility, and the benefits of offering flexible options for getting in touch.

Impact of instructional videos

The instructional videos for ‘My Bield’ have proven to be a valuable resource, significantly enhancing the platform’s accessibility and usability. The videos cover various functionalities of the portal, from logging in to requesting repairs. Below are some of the key metrics indicating the impact of the videos.

	Views as at 9th July 2024
<u>My Bield – Introductory video</u>	113
<u>My Bield – Logging in</u>	82
<u>My Bield – how to register</u>	166

My Bield – adding a badge	32
My Bield – making a payment	23
My Bield – viewing messages	23
My Bield – updating email address	22
My Bield – viewing agreement information	17
My Bield – viewing and uploading agreement documents	26
My Bield – resetting your password	28
My Bield – finding customer registration details	21
My Bield – viewing requests	23
My Bield – viewing payments	17
My Bield – changing your password	30
My Bield – editing secret question	33
My Bield – logging an enquiry	15
My Bield – viewing personal details	33
My Bield – accessing Bield’s social media channels	21
My Bield – keeping your account safe	36
My Bield – requesting repairs	21
Bield – viewing a payment	17
Bield – viewing rent statements	15
Bield – viewing repairs	23
Bield – navigating other links	17

These view counts, as at 9 July 2024, highlight the usage and effectiveness of the instructional videos. The feedback from tenants has been positive, with many appreciating the clear, step-by-step guidance provided.

Tenant collaboration and continuous improvement

An important part of our journey was the active involvement of tenants. The early testing conducted by our Communication Champions and Interested Parties played a crucial role in shaping the instructional videos for My Bield. Their feedback guided and the refinement of our communication materials and emphasized the importance of tenant involvement in the decision-making process.

By engaging tenants from the outset, we were able to tailor our approach to better meet their needs and preferences. This collaboration has not only improved the tenant experience but also reinforces our commitment to continuous improvement.

Moving forward, we will continue to recognise and celebrate the ongoing significance of tenant collaboration, ensuring that tenants remain central to our operations and strategic initiatives. This ongoing commitment to digital engagement will pave the way for more meaningful and impactful improvements.

What makes this nominee stand out from the rest?

Maximum 100 words

Please provide a short testimonial on why this housing organisation deserves to win.

Please use this space to input your answer.

Our user-centric approach was designed to ensure accessibility and ease of use, enhancing tenant satisfaction. Our instructional videos further empower tenants, fostering a deeper understanding of portal functionalities and encouraging active participation. By embracing digital solutions, we are trying to elevate tenant engagement for this demographic group, ensuring our services and tenants are ready for our digital future.

Declaration

As the proposer I have completed this nomination form to the best of my knowledge, and the information provided is a true representation of the nominee's achievements.

Name	Zhan McIntyre
Signature	Zhan McIntyre
Date	09/07/2024

Thank you for taking the time to complete this nomination form.

Please submit your nomination by **5:00pm on Thursday 11th July 2024** to TIS by email at: info@tis.org.uk or by post to: **TIS – Clockwise Offices, 77 Renfrew Street, Glasgow, G2 3BZ.**

Next steps

- **All applications will be acknowledged on receipt by TIS.** If you do not receive acknowledgement within 3 working days, please contact us to ensure your application has been received.
- An **independent judging panel** will rate your application against the award criteria. The panel will consist of representatives from organisations across the Scottish social rented sector.
- Your award submission will provide the basis for both the shortlist and final decision of the winning entry.
- **TIS welcomes applications in more than one award category.**
- Please ensure you answer all questions as fully as possible and keep the content of your nomination focused – avoid exceeding the suggested word count.
- **TIS will inform all proposers of the outcome of their application Thursday 29th August 2024.**

- Finalists will be invited to the **TIS National Excellence Awards Ceremony**, as part of the TIS National Housing Conference and Exhibition, on **Thursday 7th November 2024** at the Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow.