

RTB Survey of Landlords, Tenants and Letting Agents

Summary Report

July 2021

amárach
research

Part 1: Tenants Research

1



Introduction

This element of the research project, commissioned by the Residential Tenancies Board and undertaken by Amárach Research is a nationally representative survey of tenants living in the private rented sector in Ireland. It forms a key part of the RTB research programme, the overall aim of which is to create evidence-based reporting on key issues in the sector. The research is undertaken against a background of significant legislative, regulatory and policy change in recent years, in the wake of 2016's new Strategy for the Rental Sector and 2018's new Strategy for the Rental Sector as published in part of the Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness, Rebuilding Ireland.

In recent years the extent of the regulatory regime governing landlord and tenant relations has been expanded to cover the voluntary housing sector and students living in student specific accommodation. The primary legislation, the Residential Tenancies Act 2004 – 2021 has also been modified and added to on many occasions in response to the global pandemic.

The purpose of this research study is to provide up-to-date and robust information on tenants in the rental sector. The research project is part of a strategic priority for the RTB to use data and research to promote a better understanding of the rental sector, monitor trends, assess their impact and influence policy and outcomes.

Page 1

RTB Survey of Landlords, Tenants and Letting Agents | Summary Report | July 2021

The methodology consisted of both quantitative and qualitative elements. The quantitative element was a nationally representative survey of tenants living in the private rental sector. The qualitative element consisted of two thematic focus groups including one exploratory focus group. For the purpose of both the quantitative and qualitative tenant research, the sample only included those who answered in the affirmative to the following question:

"Can I confirm, you are currently a tenant in this property and pay rent?"

The sampling approach taken was a quota-based methodology, similar to many large-scale national surveys. The sample was representative of the Irish population aged 18+ living in accommodation in the private rental sector. To achieve this, quotas were set on age and gender to align with the Central Statistics Office's Census 2016 data on renters.

The survey achieved a sample of 1,038 face-to-face surveys across 130 sampling points. An average of 8 effective surveys with appropriate participants was achieved per sampling point. The margin of error was 2.5%, at a 95% confidence interval.

While all efforts were made to achieve a wholly representative survey sample, some variables are weighted to match that recorded by the CSO 2016 census of population broken down by age and gender. Due to rounding of data to reflect CSO figures some base data may vary.



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The main survey instrument for the tenants survey was designed by Amárach with input from the RTB Research Team and project steering group. The questionnaire was then scripted for data collection on CAP (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) devices using the international industry standard software (iDOL).

A pilot study of 40 face-to-face surveys was undertaken using CAP across five sampling points nationally in August 2019. This served to highlight any potential issues that could affect data quality and feedback effectiveness. Findings from the pilot study were used to improve the questionnaire and to inform the main stage interview findings. The pilot survey were subsequently included in the total sample to be reported on (iDOL).

A total of five focus groups were conducted with tenants living in the private rental sector. The first focus group was exploratory and was conducted in July 2019. An additional four focus groups were conducted after the main tenant survey to explore some of the findings from the quantitative research in more detail.

The four main focus groups included a mix of long-term and short-term private renters as follows:

- Two general tenant focus groups
- One with non-Irish nationals living in the private rental sector
- One with older people aged 45+ living in the private rental sector

This commentary combines findings from both the quantitative and qualitative research.

Client

Residential Tenancies Board

Brief

Contract for provision of full design services for design, artwork and print management of all publications, promotional and exhibition requirements and consultancy.

Deliverables

Brand Development
Publications and Reports
Infographics
Digital Media
Animated Campaigns
MS Word and Powerpoint templates

The RTB supports and develops the rental housing sector. It regulates the rental sector, provides information and research, resolve disputes between tenants and landlords, conducts investigation and provides information to the public.

The Challenge

With housing and rental issues topical and legislative changes introduced, the RTB continues to expand its output of information to communicate clear information to those involved in the sector to understand their rights and responsibilities is of the utmost importance.

To this end, we needed to provide the RTB with a structured approach to streamline publications and messaging across applications for print, online and social media platforms, and improve efficiency both in terms of time and cost.

Part 2: Landlords Research

2



In order to understand landlords, the research differentiated between small, medium and large landlords in terms of the number of properties they rent to tenants. This section presents the key findings from the different research elements, beginning with small landlords.

Small Landlords

For the survey of small landlords, quotes were set based on region and number of tenancies to ensure that the achieved sample in each case was representative of the population of landlords. Leads for contacting landlords were provided by the RTB. The RTB contacted landlords in advance to check to inform them that the research was taking place and that they may be asked to participate.

A Computer-Aided Telephone Interview (CATI) methodology was used to complete a sample of 100 small landlords (2 properties), representative in terms of region and number of tenancies. The margin of error was 3.0%, at a 95% confidence interval.

Additional short telephone surveys were conducted as follows:

• Sixty-six (66) landlords meeting >1 properties. These landlords meeting increased the number of rental properties that they were associated with. These short surveys were conducted to identify the reasons that they increased the number of rental properties and to explore their intentions with regard to purchasing more rental property in the future.

• Seventy-four (74) landlords who left the sector and were no longer operating as landlords. These former landlords previously let out either one or two properties but had ceased to be landlords at the time of the survey.

Page 11

Residential Letting Agents Report

July 2021

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Large Landlords Report

100+ Tenancies

July 2021

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Tenants Research Report

July 2021

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How we approached and accomplished the project goals

Having analysed the extent and frequency of updating, and other ad-hoc requests, we ensure a streamline, time-saving approach to projects by:

- Designing simple, flexible document templates that could easily apply to a wide range of existing publications
- Review application forms and the need for interactiveness and frequency of updates, with consideration to creating Microsoft templates, installed with building blocks on RTB systems.
- Creative use of Powerpoint templates to provide self sufficiency in producing internal messaging for social media
- Knowledge bank - ensure that the design team are familiar with all standard items such as 'boiler plates' or 'small print' are referred to saving time.
- Providing solid advice on print solutions and sourcing in relation to cost effectiveness, quality and environmental issues.
- Devise and agree a cost-saving re-charging system for small amendments

Why we did it this way

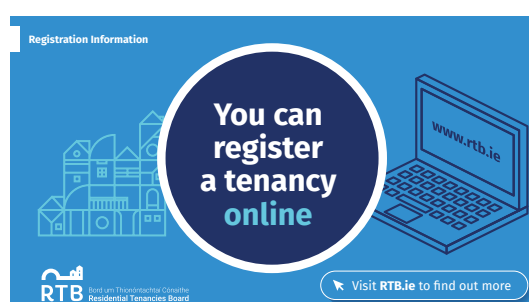
With the increased output of information required by the RTB, it was important to provide them with time and cost efficient method of delivering their requirements, particularly with small updates and amendments of existing forms and publications. As their social media presence and actively is increasing, we were keen to provide them with a time and cost saving solution to quickly produce instant messaging internally.

Outcome

We delivered on all RTB's design requirements and have improved efficiency on turnaround times on all small ad-hoc urgent requests. We are currently working on a full review and solution for their online forms to facilitate best use and user friendliness for the user.

Comparable to this contract

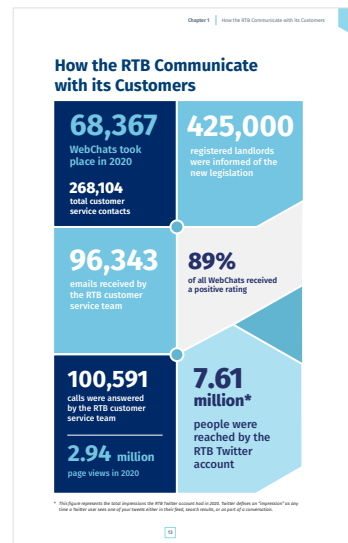
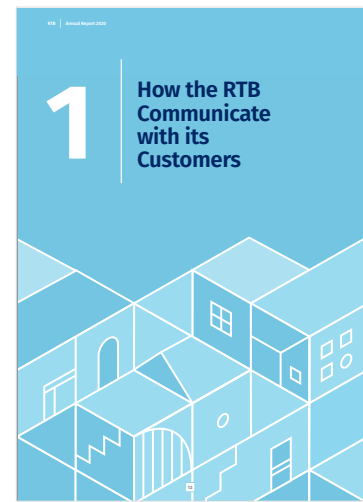
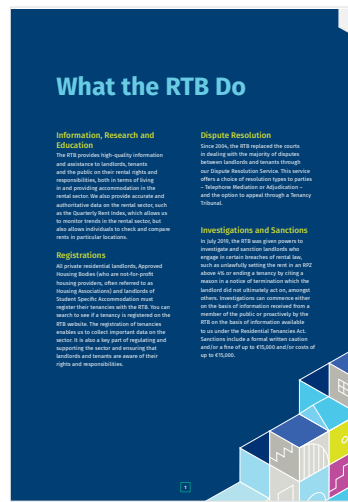
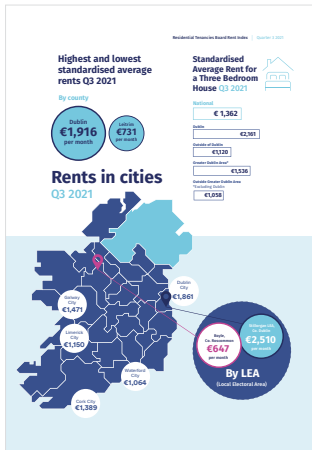
Our work with the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) is comparable to the requirements of this contract in that the wide variety of work, from publications, campaigns and special projects, needs to be designed and communicated in a consistent manner with a strong democratically diverse theme. Our experience on building on brand guidelines and maximising the potential was key to providing the RTB with a unifying and consistent presence on all communications and our strength in publication design helped to consolidate all published documents. The RTB have recently updated their overall design theme and we will work closely with them to roll this out on all future publications. Our work with the RTB also demonstrates our ability to manage frequent publications and form updates in the most cost efficient manner. As with other clients, there is a requirement to produce documents in multi-lingual versions.



Twitter images



Annual Report Design



Interactive Forms

Schedule 2 Regulation 4

RTB Bord um Thionntachtai Cónaithe
Residential Tenancies Board

Notice to be served by the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) under section 10(2)(a) of the Residential Tenancies Act 2004 (as amended)

Notice of Exemption from RPZ Rent Restriction

Landlords should read the Important Note at the end of this document before completing this form.

Rent increases in Rent Pressure Zones (RPZs) cannot exceed general inflation as recorded in the All-Ireland Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) in relation to Ireland and as published on www.rtb.ie, unless an exemption applies to the dwelling subject to tenancy.

The RTB provides a Rent Pressure Zone calculator to calculate the maximum permissible rent increase (if any) with reference to any inflation recorded by HICP. The RTB displays a table with the HICP values that inform the calculations made by its calculator on www.rtb.ie.

Landlords must use this form to notify the RTB of any RPZ rent exemption that they wish to rely on (Part E of this form refers). If a landlord wishes to rely on an exemption, he or she must fill out this form and attach all supporting information required (see below). The form and supporting information must be sent to the RTB at the postal or email address provided (see details for service) within one month of the setting review is served).

Details for service:

RTB Address: PO Box 47, Clonakilty, County Cork

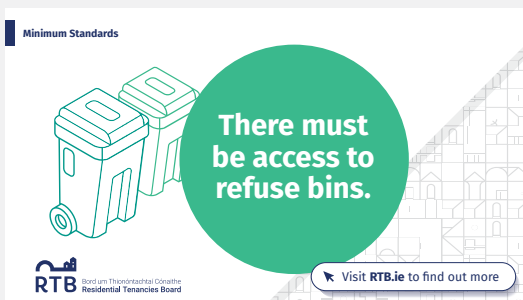
RTB Email: registrations@rtb.ie

Part A - Rented Dwelling

1. RT Number: (Registered Tenancy Number)

2. Address of Dwelling Subject to Tenancy:

Eircode:



Powerpoint Deck for creating digital messaging