



**Metropolitan Housing Partnership's  
National Residents Group  
One-to-One Interviews 2010**

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## **Introduction**

This report is written by the Resident Involvement Strategy Manager (RISM) and gives a qualitative analysis of what the National Residents Group (NRG) feels about their resident involvement input, how they are supported and the outcomes. It contains quantitative results on how they felt their input made a difference to the organisation and a 'training needs analysis' section carried out at their final Development programme weekend in March 2010 at Trafford Hall. It will help Metropolitan Housing Partnership (MHP) plan its partnership working with the group and what direction to take to continue its development. The report will give guidance to the NRG on its Development programme and how it feels it should develop.

## **Recommendations**

1. The NRG remains a very important partner within MHP and will continue to feed a resident perspective on the Tenant Services Authority's six standards for regulation and have an overview of the 'local offers'.
2. The group will take on the role overseeing the work of Resident Inspectors and mystery shoppers and ensure that customer-led scrutiny is robust in MHP.
3. The group needs to take responsibility for the running of the group, ensuring papers are ready, senior managers invited and administration completed for meetings especially as the present RISM has now left and will not be replaced immediately.
4. The group needs to have a better overview of the NRG budget and ensure it is spent using the principle of Value for Money.
5. The group will continue a 3<sup>rd</sup> year of their Development programme, building on the sessions and knowledge gained from Year 1 and 2, based on findings from this report (in particular the skills analysis, below) and implement this throughout the year.
6. The group will continue to work throughout the year on interpersonal relationships, how groups work, group processes and communicating with each other to prepare for work with MHP.
7. Individuals need to take their roles and themes more seriously and ensure that they are reporting back relevant information to the group as well as researching and developing what they do.
8. The group needs to develop better relationships with outside groups and actively seek to be involved in the National Tenant Voice and have roles in other national groups.

Under each area of questioning there will be further detailed recommendations related to the above.

## **State of Play**

The group was selected from MHP's member organisations' involvement structures and began a two year term in October 2008. At present there are ten members representing

the five member organisations, one member retired during the year. All of the members, as well as representing their involvement structures, take on a theme within the group and become an expert in that area, reporting back significant issues to the NRG. These themes include community investment, membership of Customer First Committee, anti-social behaviour, repairs etc.

The group has continued to develop a strong sense of partnership within MHP and feel that they work well within the organisation and, in turn, receive significant commitment and support from staff. There are still issues that the NRG needs to work on, in particular their communication with each other when outside of meetings. They need to ensure that they discuss items of importance prior to meetings, coming up with a consensus and also clarifying details with each other. As individuals, members need to assess their role and what their themes entail ensuring that they are providing relevant information to the group. For some there has been a stronger criticism of MHP and the outcomes as a whole, however this can be partly attributed to a better understanding of their roles and how they fit into this while also ensuring better representation for customers. The group will work hard to continue the transformation that has been taking place within their ranks for the last year and a half.

For 2010/11, the group will develop Year 3 of their 'Development' programme building on the two year programme they completed in March 2010. This will include two weekends away in Trafford Hall and areas for development will be identified from their 'skills analysis' set out at the end of this document. The group will continue to build on its role and individuals will use their experience of last year to increase their successes this year.

## **Methodology**

The RISM undertook one-to-one interviews with all ten members of the NRG. All interviewed members were allowed to reply for as long as they wished on questions 1 to 7 and were able to amend their responses by e-mail. Members then scored the group and its activities over the last year on four questions saying how well they inputted and how they felt things had changed (see page 11). The final section is a 'training needs analysis' self-scoring questionnaire (see page 14) which was completed at the away weekend in March 2010 and compiled by the RISM. Detailed answers are stored separately and are confidential. The interviews were undertaken from March 9th to 25th 2010.

The questions are the same as those asked by the RISM in 2009 with one relevant addition for this year only, Q4 d. The 2009 report will be used as a comparison.

## **The Interviews**

### ***NRG members***

The ten members who were interviewed were Terry McLoughlin (9/03/10), Michael Barron and Anne Travers (10/03/10), June Thompson and Alan Jones (12/03/10), Mary Burt (17/03/10), Daniel Happi (20/03/10), Elspeth Anderson, Stephanie Matthias and Terry Curtis (25/03/10).

### ***Pre-amble***

All members gave their names, their route to membership of the group, membership of other groups (members listed 20 non-NRG activity groups) and their current theme. There are three London members, one of whom is a service user and two are from the Regional Resident Panel; two regeneration members, one from Roundshaw and one from St Martins; one member from Clapham Park Homes and two from Granta and Spiritita. Each member must report to and feedback from their local group regarding NRG business. Membership length is from eighteen months to over five years. All ten were due to stand down / be re-selected in September 2010, however in agreement with the CEO of MHP (6/03/10 minutes) they have agreed to stay on for an extra year (Terry Curtis will leave as planned). The group will interview for a further three members to begin in October 2010.

### ***Questions and Answers***

A summary of the 2009 response will be in the box below each answer and then proposals from the RISM for improvement in 2010.

#### **1) The National Residents Group**

##### **a) How do you think NRG meetings are going?**

Members felt that the meetings are well constructed and meaningful and that the development training was very good. Most felt that the bonding in Trafford had helped. However, there were concerns that there was some 'coasting'.

#### **Summary 2009**

Most members felt they were going well although some felt a minority of members were not showing enough interest, bringing up personal issues and not attending all meetings.
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### **Solution 2010**

- The NRG have already agreed to continue development training and this should concentrate on individuals' roles within the group and help bring everyone up to the same level
- There will be two weekend events in Trafford again over the next year thus helping the group to bond further.

### **b) Do you think the NRG is making progress?**

Overwhelmingly, members felt that the group had improved quite a lot and that they were now taken a lot more seriously by MHP. Members talked about the numerous policies, groups and government consultation that they had been involved with over the last year.

### **Summary 2009**

Overwhelmingly members felt that the group had improved quite a lot and a lot felt the development training had worked really well.

### **Solution 2010:**

- The group will continue a bespoke development training programme which will continue to help members solidify their roles.

### **c) Do you have any suggestions for improvements?**

In general the group were happy with the way things were. Some pointed out the need to improve communications between each other and a few mentioned a new chair and how active they will be.

### **Summary 2009**

Take advantage of its growing importance and use their continuing development fully, overcome a small amount of rudeness and to have a social event mid-way through the year.

### **Solution 2010:**

- The group should be much more aware of their potential and hence the importance of the Chair. Consideration needs to be given to the new Chair being in more regular contact with Bill Payne and the new Director of Customer Services.

## 2) MHP and the member organisations

### a) Do you feel that the NRG and MHP work well together?

All of the members felt that the work with MHP had grown in confidence and that there is a very good relationship between the group and senior members. One felt that junior staff were less likely to respect the NRG.

#### Summary 2009

Most feel a high level of respect for the group although junior staff needed improvement.

#### Solution 2010:

- The NRG to continually promote their credentials
- More staff will get better information on the NRG through the compulsory e-learning modules
- A further Meet and Greet with key staff will be held in September 2010.

### b) Are the member organisations aware what the NRG do?

Most of the group felt that things had improved and that there was more recognition from member organisations. However, there was a significant minority who felt that the member organisations have a long way to go to work better with the group.

#### Summary 2009

Needs all round improvement and some felt that member organisations do not care about the NRG and the work it does.

#### Solution 2010:

- The NRG have decided in their workplan to invite Chairs of member organisations to some of their meetings in order to improve the relationship
- The NRG will continue their links with local resident involvement structures and work with the member organisations in this way.

### c) Are there any issues you would like to comment on?

All members again felt that communications in MHP generally, between both departments and customers, as well as the communications in the group was very poor and continued to cause major problems. One member felt that contact with some staff was almost impossible.

## Summary 2009

The group generally felt MHP let itself down with communication and there was the perception that some staff do not want to work with residents.

### Solution 2010:

- The group has suggested that they are letting themselves down by not talking to each other between meetings. There is a commitment to start talking to each other and this should also be included in the development programme
- The group needs to continue to urge MHP towards having a communications strategy ensuring that they feed into it from a residents' perspective.

### 3) The Themes

#### a) How do you think your theme(s) is working/ is it making progress?

There was a mixed response on this with some members having developed a very good relationship with key staff and groups on their themes. Others felt that they were left out of most decisions and did not see that things changed much. These included the CFC, ASP and some information on repairs.

## Summary 2009

Members felt very confident with the new system, one theme each, put in place in October 08, and the vast majority felt that they were changing things and working well with staff.

### Solution 2010:

- Members need to discuss with each other how to improve their role on themes, in particular talk with those for whom it is working well to share knowledge
- Members need to take some responsibility and highlight problems to staff as well as use their development programme to improve skills
- Individuals will ensure that they are creating mechanisms for their themes that work and are recording them on the 'job description'.

#### b) What have you changed to make your role more efficient, eg. set up a sub-group, involved relevant staff?

Most members had improved communication with key staff and some had taken up training in order to be better informed. Some had talked more within the group about their role and felt that this had helped improve their ability to be involved.

## Summary 2009

Most members did not identify that they had changed anything, with the majority happy with the current situation. The RISM made suggestions for some changes.

### Solution 2010:

- All to start communicating better with each other and the group about their involvement concerning their roles and what should be being achieved, and getting guidance from the rest of the group about what message they should be communicating
- All members to make sure that they are changing the role to suit.

### c) What do you think of the information and support you are getting from staff for your theme(s)?

Except for one member, all felt that staff provided good information and support on their themes. Staff needed to be aware that some of the members were new to themes and needed more background information.

### Summary 2009:

Information and support from staff has improved dramatically and staff are working a lot better with the NRG and are becoming aware of their important role.

### Solution 2010:

- NRG members need to take responsibility for ensuring that staff give them the right level of support and information. As the group have identified improvement from MHP and staff, then they also need to reciprocate.

## 4) Personal Issues

### a) Is the current workload of the NRG and the frequency of NRG meetings manageable for you?

All ten members felt that they were easily able to manage the workload. One member was concerned about having meetings and training on the same day.

### Summary 2009:

All nine members felt that they were able to cope. However some wanted more information and some less.

**Solution 2010:**

- Members continue their development programme and become better at time management
- The group will select three new members for September 2010 and this will help to spread increasing workloads.

**b) Are you happy with the location of NRG meetings?**

All liked meeting in MIC in Euston and wanted to keep it here.

**Summary 2009:**

All were happy with London and Friends Meeting House

**Solution 2010:**

- April, May and July meeting already booked here.

**c) What do you think of the quality of support you are receiving from staff (including the RISM) and what extra help do you need?**

All felt that they got very good support from the RI team (Louise and Francis) and that anytime they asked for something they get it straight away.

**Summary 2009:**

All felt that they got good support from the RISM and help was there anytime needed.

**Solution 2010:**

- MHP to ensure that support continues for the group

**d) Now that the RISM is leaving (April 2010) what do you think should happen with regard to support of the NRG?**

(this question will only be asked this year) All felt that there needed to be a dedicated member of staff supporting them with the same enthusiasm for customer involvement. Some also felt that the NRG themselves needed to get better at running their own meetings and setting agendas etc.

**5) Training Issues**

**Do you think you as an individual could benefit from any other training to support your role on the NRG and your theme?**

- Continue group training and making decisions together.
- Computers/IT and website design
- Chairing skills
- CIH level 2/3
- Communication
- TSA

<b>Training completed since Apr 09 – (this on top of training with NRG)</b>	<b>Member</b>
(at work) Diversity training	TMc
Contractor selection	AA
(CPP) Company structures	AA
(TPAS) Tenant Scrutiny	AJ
(Capita) ASB workshop	AJ
(Granta) Computers	JT
(Granta) Equality and Diversity	JT
Diversity	M Barron
(ombudsman) Complaints	M Barron

### **6) Other miscellaneous issues**

Most felt that the group works well together. One was concerned about what was happening to ACE while one member felt that staff attitudes towards the group needed to improve.

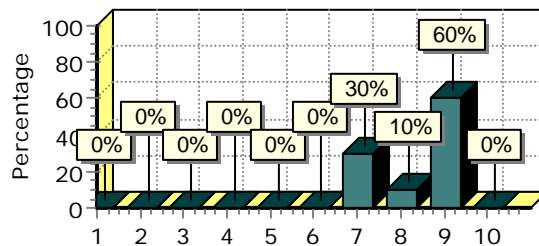
### **7) Survey**

#### **‘How was it for you’ analysis**

The group was asked to mark themselves (1 poor – 10 excellent) on how they felt they contributed and how things went throughout the last year on the NRG.

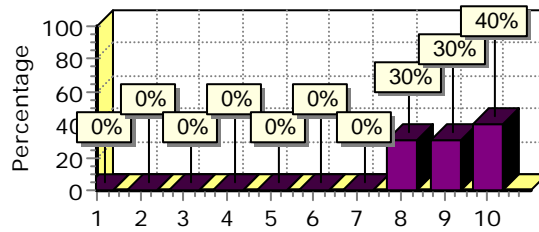
#### ***How well is the NRG meeting your expectations?***

**(10 responses)**



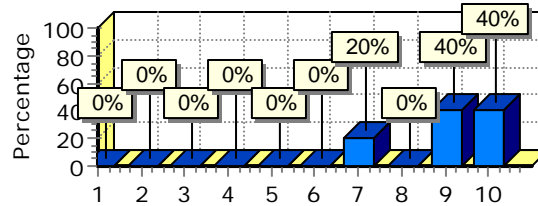
**How satisfied are you with the way the NRG is organised and conducted?**

(10 responses)



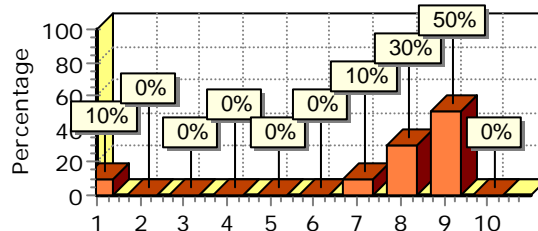
**How well are your views listened to in the NRG?**

(10 responses)



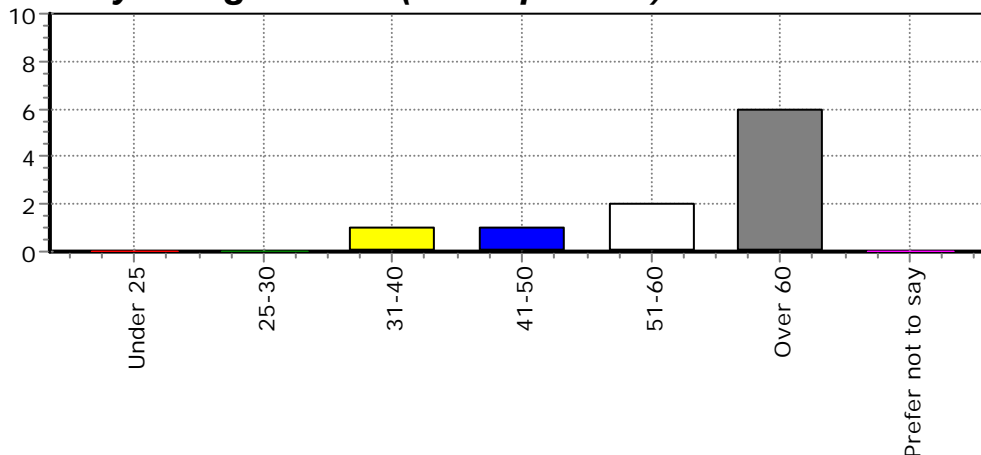
**How confident are you that things change with your involvement in the NRG?**

(10 responses)

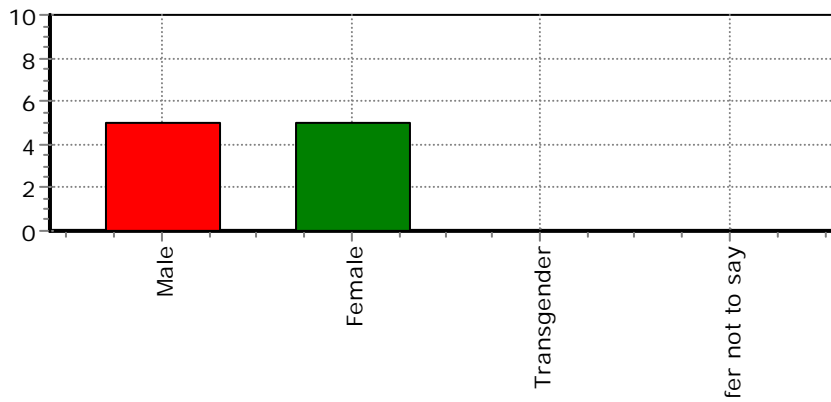


**Diversity Information (taken from 21/03/10)**

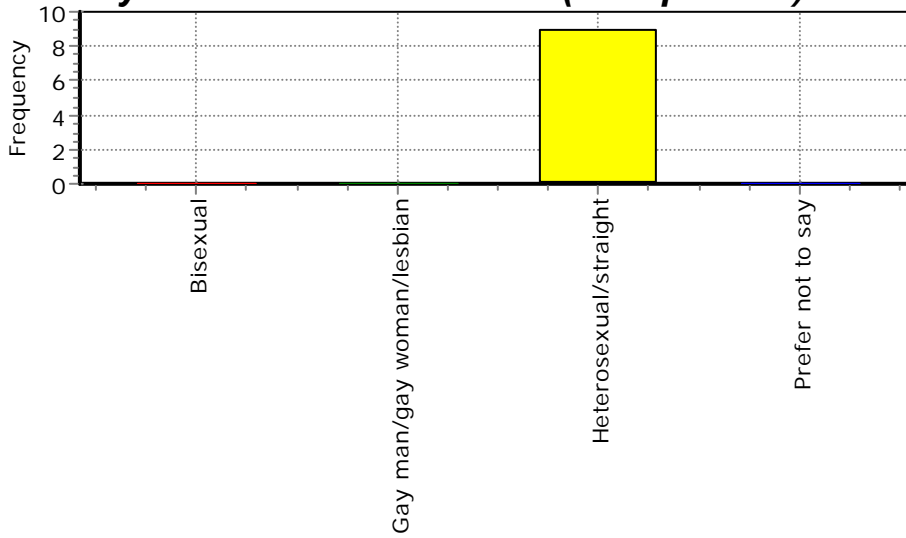
**What is your age band? (10 responses)**



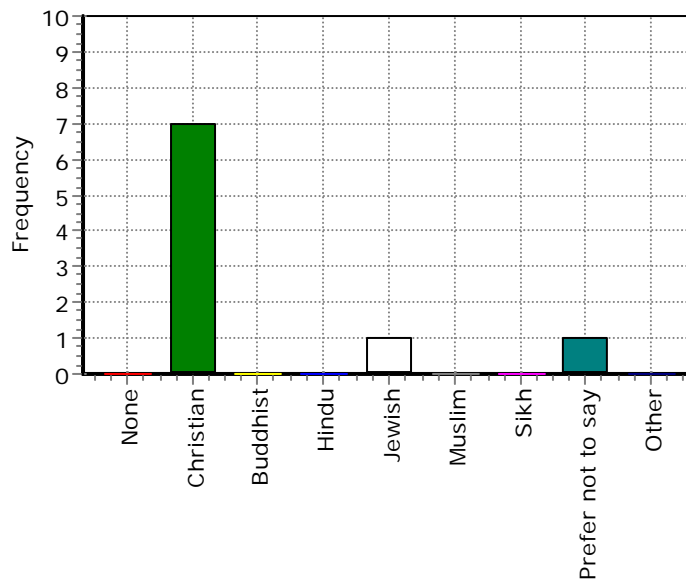
### What is your gender? (10 responses)



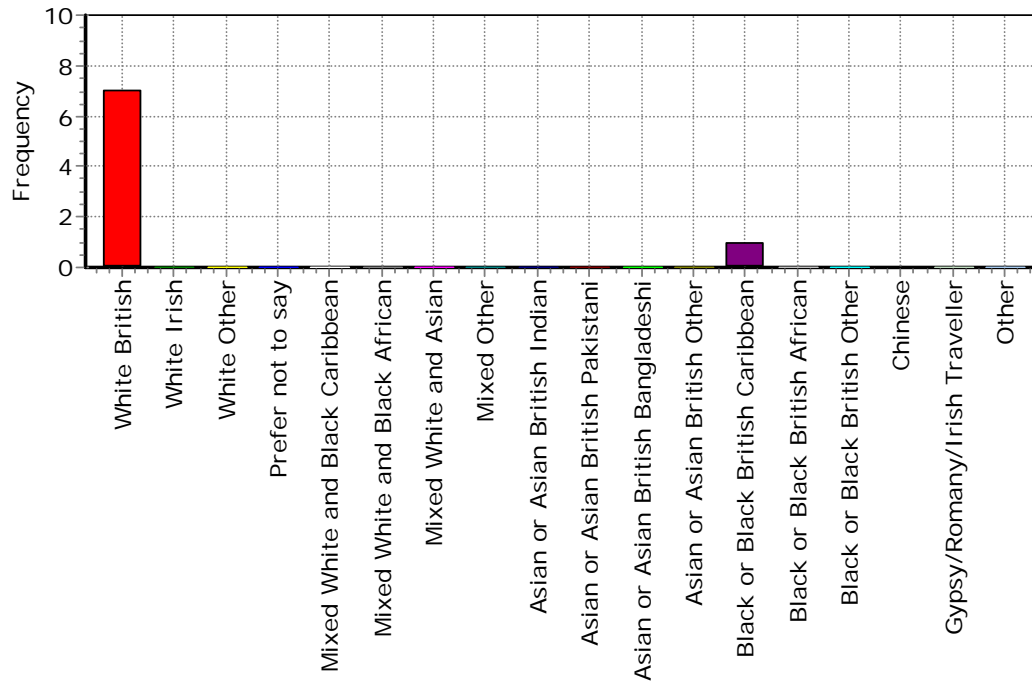
### What is your sexual orientation? (9 responses)



### What is your religion?



## What is your ethnic group? (8 responses)



## Development Training Needs

All members received a skills assessment form to complete on 19 March 2010 and this highlighted what they should concentrate on group development and individual training in the following year. Particular highlights were further work on the TSA and the six standards, social responsibility planning and personal goals and what other countries do. The full report is set out below.

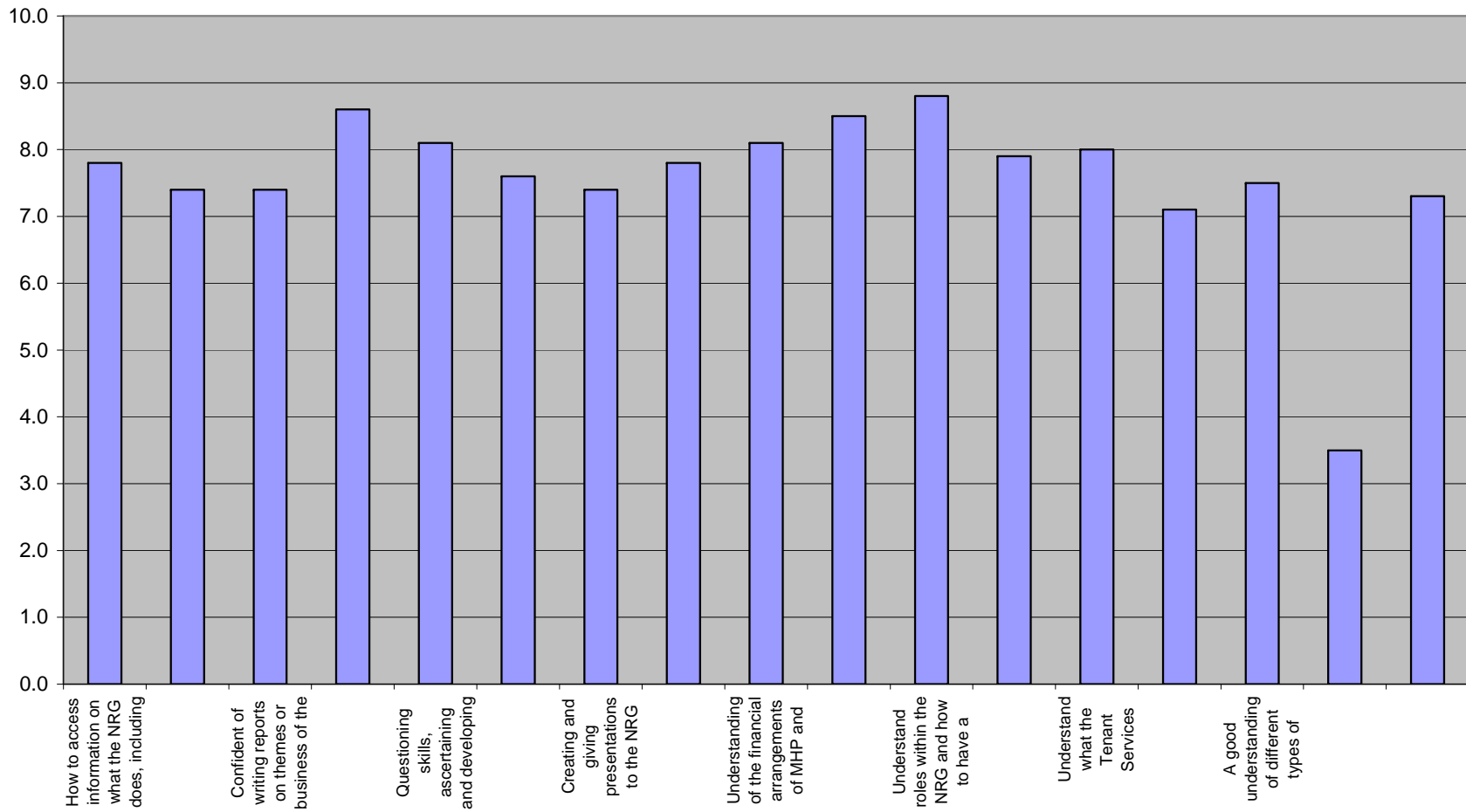
## Training needs analysis - NRG End of Term 2010

	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5	Member 6	Member 7	Member 8	Member 9	Member 10	NRG member total	NRG member sub-totals
<b>Knowledge gained at the NRG</b>												
1	8	8	9	8	7	6	8	8	8	8	78	7.8
2	7	7	9	7	5	9	10	8	6	6	74	7.4
3	8	10	9	8	4	9	6	7	5	8	74	7.4
4	8	10	9	9	6	8	9	10	8	9	86	8.6
5	7	10	9	7	6	8	9	9	8	8	81	8.1
6	8	9	9	8	5	7	8	8	8	6	76	7.6
7	5	10	8	7	5	6	8	10	6	9	74	7.4
8	6	10	9	9	6	7	9	9	7	6	78	7.8
9	8	9	8	9	3	10	9	8	8	9	81	8.1
10	7	9	9	9	7	9	10	9	8	8	85	8.5
11	9	10	9	10	6	9	10	9	8	8	88	8.8
12	7	9	9	10	5	8	9	8	8	6	79	7.9
13	7	9	8	10	7	9	8	8	6	8	80	8.0
14	5	9	8	7	4	10	8	7	6	7	71	7.1
15	5	9	9	5	7	9	8	7	7	9	75	7.5

16	Some understanding of what other countries do in involvement and overall history of social housing	3	0	7	2	2	2	7	2	5	5	35	3.5
17	Appreciation of social responsibility in housing, sustainability, humanity, and ethics.	5	9	9	9	4	7	8	8	6	8	73	7.3
totals		113	147	147	134	89	133	144	135	118	128		
averages		6.6	8.6	8.6	7.9	5.2	7.8	8.5	7.9	6.9	7.5		
<b>Personal attribute strengths</b>													
1	Striving for new skills, knowledge, experience and personal development.	7	9	8	9	3	7	9	7	8	8	75	7.5
2	Taking personal responsibility to resolve problems, even those not of my own making.	7	9	9	8	4	10	9	9	7	7	79	7.9
3	Understanding the way people really feel, beyond what they seem to be saying.	6	8	9	7	5	10	8	9	7	6	75	7.5
4	Developing positive relationships, co-operation with, and supporting my colleagues and MHP staff.	8	10	9	8	8	9	10	9	7	8	86	8.6
5	Being a self-starter, self-motivated, keeping focused and productive.	5	9	9	8	6	9	9	9	7	8	79	7.9
6	Planning how to achieve my NRG and personal goals.	6	9	9	8	6	7	10	8	7	7	77	7.7
7	Handling stress, conflict and pressure in a positive way.	6	9	9	9	9	9	9	10	8	9	87	8.7
8	Confident in using IT in particular e-mail	10	10	9	8	8	10	9	10	5	7	86	8.6
9	Contributing positively to team spirit of NRG and MHP morale.	8	10	9	8	7	10	10	9	8	7	86	8.6
10	Seeking and picking up responsibility that I see waiting to be filled.	7	9	9	8	6	10	10	9	6	6	80	8.0
11	Coming up with recommendations and suggestions, more than asking for answers.	6	9	9	9	6	10	10	9	7	6	81	8.1
12	Prioritising, planning and organising the balance between NRG tasks and home life.	7	10	9	10	6	10	9	8	7	8	84	8.4
13	Using integrity and ethics in my judgement about NRG business	8	10	9	10	5	9	9	8	8	9	85	8.5
totals		91	121	116	110	79	120	121	114	92	96		
averages		7.0	9.3	8.9	8.5	6.1	9.2	9.3	8.8	7.1	7.4		

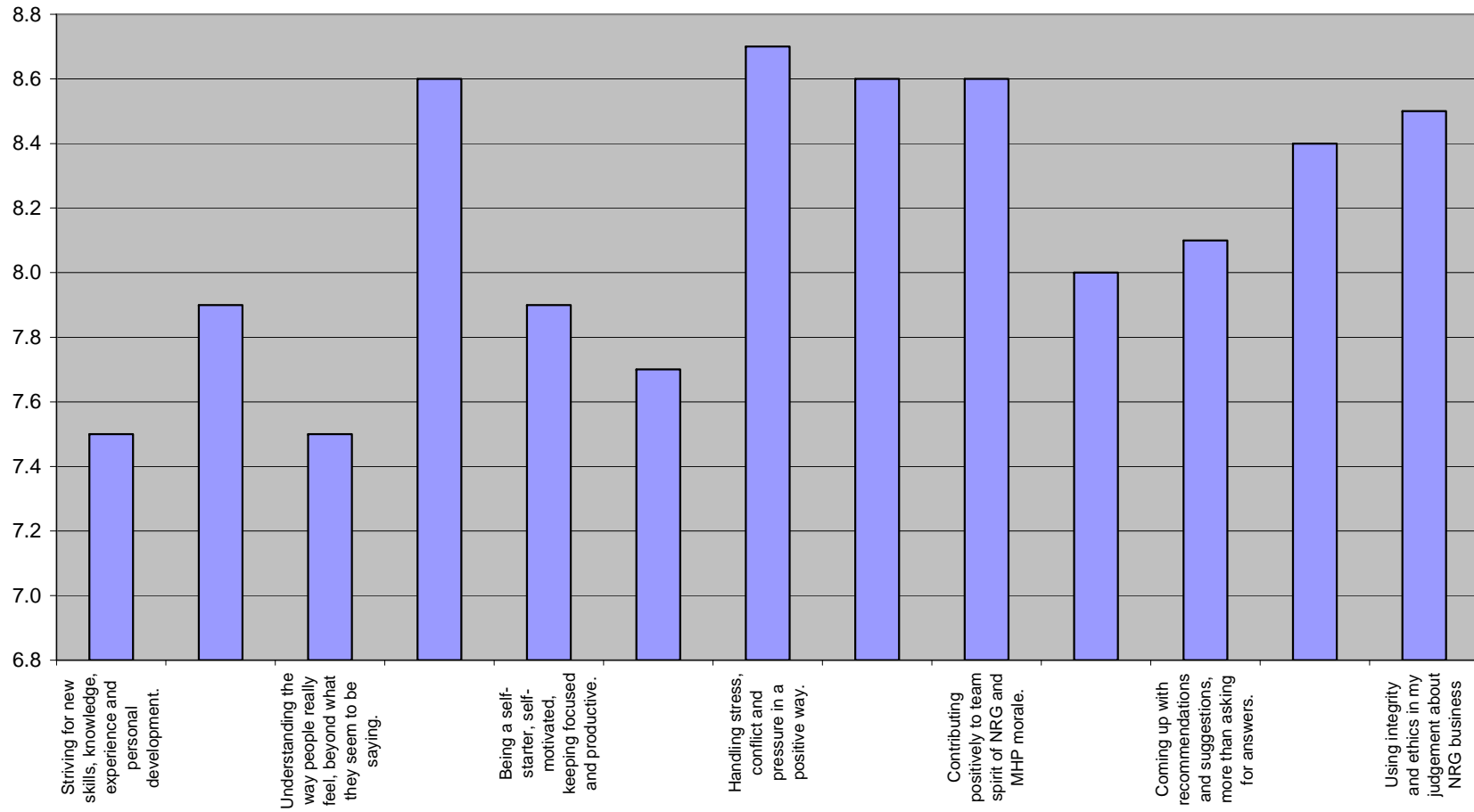
## Skills analysis chart

skills analysis



## Attribute analysis chart

attributes analysis



## **Conclusion**

The group continues to develop and has identified issues for improvement in the group and its structure and has managed to correct a number of problems in the last year. Over the next year they need to continue this process as well as working with individuals to help them understand their role in the group and their themes and how to meaningfully feed this back to the group.

As a customer group made up of individuals from all over the country, the NRG has performed really well, bonding significantly and increasing their capacity to constructively challenge MHP on services provided to customers. This has been noted by several senior staff including the CEO and the Chair of MHP.

I wish the group well in the future and hope that they continue to build on their potential.

Francis Brazil - RISM