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# WELSH HOUSING AWARDS 2018

## Good practice compendium

Sharing the lessons learnt from Welsh Housing Awards 2018

#WHACymru

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OUR FUTURE 2019**

**1 - 2 MAY 2019**  
**SOPHIA GARDENS, CARDIFF**



# New small development award

sponsored by **WHQ**  
WELSH HOUSING QUARTERLY

This award recognises new developments of 50 units or less that are making a contribution to housing supply or affordability in their area, or that are meeting a previously unmet need. Shortlisted developments have shown:

- that they have worked with the local community to ensure support and that community needs are met by the development
- the impact that the development has for local people. Examples may include, but are not limited to: providing for a previously unmet need (e.g. older people, lower occupancy) having a significant impact on local supply, having a significant impact on local affordability, providing homes in areas that are traditionally difficult to develop in (e.g. isolated rural areas)
- that the development has made design considerations about the purpose and functionality of the homes built - this might be designing for people with access requirements, older people, or designing at high levels of energy efficiency.

## Ty Ryan

First Choice Housing Association with Wrexham County Council, The Ministry of Defence, Community Self-Build Agency (CSBA) and Williams Homes (Bala) Ltd.



### Introduction

Ty Ryan, an innovative self-build scheme for ex-service personnel has been developed thanks to a successful partnership between Wrexham County Council, the Ministry of Defence, FCHA, Community Self-Build Agency (CSBA) and Williams Homes (Bala) Ltd.

Ty Ryan features 10 two bed apartments and six one bed apartments. The scheme also incorporates an individually designed ground floor wheelchair accessible apartment.

### Affordability

Affordability was paramount for the self-build scheme. The drawdown of funding from the MOD has allowed for the rent to be set at local LHA levels. This means that ex-service personnel can access high quality low cost accommodation and anyone relying on welfare benefits in the short term will not have to pay to top-up rent levels.

This was key to the success of the scheme and was echoed by one of the tenants following occupancy:-

*"Lastly let me once again thank everyone at First Choice including the build team. You have given me a lovely home and garden that from the bottom of my heart I dreamed of but honestly never thought available except at an expensive private sector. You have given me the base to rebuild my life again. Keep up the good work!"*

A breakdown of the scheme development costs are as follows:-

Total development cost: £1,970,150.64

MOD funding: £1,585,851.00

FCHA private finance: £354,299.64

Innovative Housing Funding (IHF): £30,000.00

### Community Benefits / Impact on the local area

The scheme was designed around local themes that aim for new-builds to easily fit into the surrounding community and enhance community features, for example, the previous waste land which was designated a flood plain has now been converted

into a play and grass area where family members, community groups and dog walkers can now use and enjoy.

The scheme has brought together a group of individuals who may or may not have known each other, who will have common experiences, needs and purpose; creating a strong community ethos and belonging. It has created a real strong sense of ownership, working as a team to develop and deliver the new homes, and then living as neighbours in an established atmosphere of positive community spirit.

Delivering value for money was considered from the offset with the scheme in terms of design, costs, outcomes as well as social value. In addition to the tenant outcomes below the scheme delivered significant community benefits including:

- 598 person-weeks of employed operatives, semi-skilled, unskilled employees and trades apprenticeships
- 171 person-weeks in employed training and apprenticeships
- 29 local suppliers
- 14 local sub-contractors.

## Local supply

The scheme supported both Welsh Government, with their National Housing Pathway aspirations and Wrexham County Council in their AFCC commitments to ensure that ex-service personnel have access to high quality accommodation and services. The scheme offered ex-service personnel in housing need the opportunity to gain a tenancy while also gaining a range of work experience, training and qualifications in building and / or other construction related skills.

## Design considerations and sustainability

The self-build scheme was built to DQR standards and offered large and spacious one and two bedroom flats with average sizes above the market size for Wrexham.

One ground floor apartment was specifically modified and adapted for physical disability suitability. Adaptations included an adapted kitchen/level access shower room and specialist bathroom equipment, use of its own garden area, as well as exclusive use of its own entrance.

The scheme achieved an energy efficiency rating of 81+. Sustainable materials and highly rated energy efficiency components were used within the specification including PEFC timber frame (sustainably sourced) and Diffutherm - recycled wood fibre insulation board. These measures positively impacted on the association's fuel poverty strategy.

## Outcomes and achievements

Ten self-builders successfully completed the self-build programme and transitioned to their new apartments in April 2018.

The scheme has achieved the following fantastic outcomes :-

- six tenants are in employment
- one tenant is undertaking a trainee scheme
- two tenants are undertaking college courses
- three tenants are back in contact with estranged family members
- two tenants are avoiding Universal Credit sanctions
- seven tenants have transitioned from our ex-services move on scheme
- provision of one wheelchair accessible bungalow with garden

- improved mental wellbeing
- sense of community achieved
- created community based play / park area from waste land
- the scheme was delivered one month ahead of programme
- received Secure By Design: Gold Award.

The University of West of England in their 2016 report entitled 'Evaluation of the impact of self-help projects in supporting ex-service personnel' concluded that for every pound spent on a self-build scheme for ex-service personnel the yield or benefit was between £2.62 at a conservative level and £7.17 at a maximum level. The benefit to the local economy and the public purse are clear and evidenced.

# Trem-y-Cwm

## Trivallis with Morganstone



When designing the scheme, Trivallis made sure to keep residents of the previous Trem-y-Cwm scheme at the heart of the project. The residents were engaged with designing all aspects of the new development, ranging from the layout of the building and external spaces to internal design choices and colour schemes. Residents feedback that they wanted greater outdoor space and as a result, private balconies were incorporated into the design for each individual apartment in addition to the communal garden areas. This design feature means that Trem-y-Cwm is the first sheltered housing scheme in Rhondda Cynon Taf where every flat has a private balcony. Trivallis were also keen to work with the local community. During the planning stage, the local community was invited to view the plans for the new scheme, with the project manager and architect visiting residents in their homes to discuss the scheme. Throughout the construction phase, together with the main contractor Morganstone, Trivallis held numerous events on and off site in order to engage with the local community.

The development provides much needed, high quality, affordable homes for a specific age group with the new scheme being designed for over 60s. Within the immediate locality there is no similar accommodation, and therefore this scheme meets a gap in the market. It hosts new community spaces including a wellbeing room, meeting rooms and a rooftop terrace which can be accessed and utilised by the local community and small businesses. Trivallis has worked closely with

local businesses to enable them to provide services to residents from the building, including; hairdressing, chiropody, beauty, physiotherapy and educational programmes. A huge emphasis has been placed on ensuring local businesses link with the new scheme, to enable local business growth, job creation and increasing Welsh spend along with integrating the development into the core of the community.

As the development is a sheltered scheme, particular design considerations were followed. Working closely with RNIB Cymru, Trivallis has ensured that the project meets their 'Visibly Better' Platinum standard - the highest level. This asks that the company develops and maintains accessible environments so that people can feel more confident in getting in and around where they live. Having accessible environments means that people with sight loss can also benefit from inclusive design alongside those with physical disabilities.

Despite not being in receipt of Welsh Government funding Trivallis has adopted the best principles of DQR within the development and have ensured that it fully meets Lifetime Homes. All areas are wheelchair accessible with widened doorways, widened corridors and lift access. Bathrooms in each apartment have been designed as wet rooms with walk-in showers and feature two accesses - one from the hallway and one from the bedroom - for ease of access and hygiene requirements. Trivallis was mindful that the development had potential to appear clinical, a stereotype of sheltered housing. To overcome this, Trivallis, engaged an interior designer to help create a modern and attractive living space that was adaptable yet non-clinical and encompassed best practice in design focused around older residents, those with sight loss and those with dementia. Each floor in the development has been given a different colour so that those residents suffering with dementia are more easily able to identify where their apartment is located.

### Testimonial

*"People in our area deserve excellent quality housing and this is an archetype for what we need to see rolled out across Wales. The fact that it has such great communal spaces is vital and it's a model for what the housing sector should be doing."*

Owen Smith, MP for Pontypridd



## Outcomes and achievements

### Education engagement:

- Gwaunmeisgyn Primary School Site Safety Talk 15/07/2016
- Bryncellynog Comprehensive School Site Safety Hoarding Design
- Gwaunmeisgyn Primary School Poster Presentation 16/01/2017

### Community engagement:

- BITC Give and Gain Day 20/05/2016
  - Improving Bryncellynog School
- Site open afternoon 14/09/2016
  - 30 community members
- Macmillan Coffee Morning 30/09/2016
  - 20 partner organisations
  - £200 raised
- BITC Wales Action Week 16/10/2016
  - Morganstone staff volunteered and refreshments provided on site
- Christmas open day 09/12/2016
  - 20 partner organisations and 30 community members
  - £300 raised for Age Cymru

- BITC Give and Gain Day 12/05/2017
  - helped refurbish a local school for children with disabilities
  - 20 partner organisations
- Site open afternoon for prospective residents 09/05/2017 and 05/07/2017
- Monthly donation to Pontypridd foodbank

## Resident Satisfaction

With residents living in their homes for one year, Trivallis has recently undertaken a satisfaction survey. The headline results are:

- 95% of residents are very satisfied with the accommodation provided
- 85% are satisfied with the communal areas
- 80% are satisfied with the way their home looks from the outside
- 100% think their home is the right size
- 100% are satisfied with the decorative finish in the communal areas
- 100% think local amenities and public transport are easy to reach

# Library Court, Rhydyfelin

## Jehu Group with Trivallis



From concept design through to completion of build in November 2017 the community has been at the heart of the project, with over 1,500 community members being engaged. Significant to this engagement has been the promotion of housing in a positive light. A dedicated team of project managers

and consultants working for Jehu as the main contractor and Trivallis as the client led the works. This was complemented by a specific, community engagement co-ordinator who was employed by Jehu solely for this site to ensure that the community were involved in all aspects of the project.

The dedication from the co-ordinator and the wider team to deliver community engagement was exceptional. Activities for people of all ages were undertaken during the construction period, ranging from school and university visits, work experience, working with older people and supporting community groups including the creation of 'Rhydyfelin Diamonds', an initiative that sought to encourage older residents to engage with the community and to meet new people through a variety of events both on and off site.

The Library Court development in Rhydyfelin, has transformed the street scene and created a high-quality building which is now a focal point for the village. Due to budget cutbacks, in 2014, Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council announced they were to close Rhydyfelin Library. With the local community devastated by the potential loss of this

village lifeline, Trivallis sought an opportunity to incorporate a library facility into the new development.

Working in partnership with the local authority, the land was transferred at nil cost to Trivallis and a state-of-the-art facility that includes an IT suite, a community meeting room, a dedicated children's area and an improved library provision was delivered by Jehu alongside a large commercial space. Ultimately, the new development at Library Court has created a community hub at the centre of the village. Trivallis and Jehu are leaving behind a critical legacy on this project, through the inclusion of the library that will be available for present and future generations alike.

## Testimonial

*"The council has worked closely with Trivallis, Rhydyfelin Library Support Group and local elected members to ensure the library has all the facilities the local community needs. It is hoped that Library Court will become a focal point in the community of Rhydyfelin, with the new and improved library service at its heart."*

Maureen Webber, Deputy Leader RCTCBC

As the development is a sheltered scheme for over 60's, particular design considerations were followed.

Working closely with RNIB Cymru, we ensured that the project met their 'Visibly Better' Gold standard. This asks that Jehu Group and Trivallis develop and maintain accessible environments so that people can feel more confident in getting in and around where they live. Having accessible environments means that people with sight and wider sensory loss can also benefit from inclusive design alongside those with physical disabilities.

Despite not being grant-funded the company adopted the best principles of DQR, ensuring that Lifetime Homes is fully met. All areas are wheelchair accessible with widened doorways, widened corridors and lift access. Bathrooms in each apartment have been designed as wet rooms with walk-in showers and feature two accesses - one from the hallway and one from the bedroom - for ease of access and hygiene requirements.

Jehu was mindful that such a development had the potential to appear clinical, a stereotype of sheltered housing. To overcome this, an interior designer was engaged to help create a modern and attractive living space that was adaptable yet non-clinical and encompassed best practice in design focused around older residents, those with sight loss and those with dementia.

## Outcomes and achievements

### Educational Engagement:

- work placement for French exchange engineer
- Taff Cluster Construction Youth Trust site visit
- USW BSc Building Surveying site visit x5
- development is used as an exemplar project by the University of South Wales Built Environment Department
- Heol-y-Celyn Primary School Visits x2
- Hawthorn High School A-Level Art designed hoarding.

### Community Engagement:

#### Creation of 'Rhydyfelin Diamonds'

- 30 community members

#### Sponsoring of Hawthorn and Rhydyfelin Scouts

- 80 community members

#### Macmillan Coffee Morning 30/09/2016

- 20 partner organisations, 40 members of the community, raised £400

#### Halloween Open Day 31/10/16

- 50 community members

#### Creation of 'Santa Sleigh' and sponsorship of Rhydyfelin Carol Concert 05/12/2016

- 150 community members

#### Donation of Rhydyfelin Christmas Tree

- Sponsorship of Rhydyfelin Pensioners Christmas Party
- 60 members of the community

#### Christmas Open Day 15/12/16

- 100 community members

#### St David's Day Breakfast 01/03/2017

- 15 partner organisations

#### BITC Give and Gain Day 12/05/2017

- Helped refurbish a local school for children with disabilities, 20 partner organisations

#### Trivallis Community Fun Day 28/07/17

- 1000 attendees

#### Ty Hafan Welsh 3 Peaks

- Raised £7000, included 10 partner organisations.

## Award recognition

- Runner up in Considerate Constructors Site Hoarding Competition 2017
- Gold at Considerate Constructors Scheme National Awards 2018
- Highly Commended at Vale of Glamorgan LABC Awards 2018.

# Llys Awen

## Coastal Housing Group with Pobl Care and Support



Llys Awen is an eight-bedroom supported living facility in Gorseinon for young people with complex needs that has been developed by Coastal Housing Group in partnership with managing agents Pobl, a provider of mixed housing and support services to people across South Wales.

Designed as bespoke 'move-on' accommodation, Llys Awen gives young people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or needing to be re-homed, the opportunity to gain independent living skills to enable them to eventually move into independent accommodation. The young people who have been referred to Llys Awen come from a variety of circumstances including financial difficulties, foster care, street homelessness or a hostile home environment. The development has been designed to handle a high turnover of residents if needed.

Coastal had previously been running a similar scheme in Mount Pleasant, Swansea, but the current building was no longer fit for purpose. To ensure this important scheme continued, Coastal developed Llys Awen, a purpose-built replacement, regenerating the former Gower College building. Coastal believes that the type of building used to house individuals within these circumstances has a real impact on their progress – a poor building communicates to tenants that their worth is not significant enough, therefore being surrounded by a quality environment is integral to ensuring a positive outcome for them.

The development comprises of eight private en-suite bedrooms for each of the tenants, along with a communal living space, kitchen, workshop, garden and learning zone. It offers facilities for community

use and includes staff accommodation and offices, enabling 24-hour supported living. The individual rooms provide tenants with their own private spaces, which they are responsible for, to give them the confidence to manage their own tenancy.

Llys Awen used entirely local labour supply for the development, appointing Llanelli based T.A.D Builders, who are part of the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS) - a requirement by Coastal. Design considerations were made to allow level access, with the incorporation of shared facilities to encourage residents to socialise while creating a feeling of homeliness. The bedrooms were deliberately made smaller than other apartments to discourage residents from congregating in each other's rooms and encourage use of the communal facilities, improving welfare while deterring unwanted behaviour.

The scheme was designed to not appear institutional, using different cladding materials including zinc and timber, in addition to the traditional render and brick found at the site. Features such as undersized and high-level outside windows were incorporated to prevent drug drops (should the facility be used for rehabilitation). The new building has been carefully designed to be in keeping with the already established community and residential area in which it was developed.

Coastal worked closely with the local community to ensure they could voice their thoughts and any potential concerns. Given the nature of the scheme, there were naturally some concerns around an increase in anti-social behaviour in the surrounding area. Of the 190 neighbouring properties that were consulted, only four raised concerns, and all were addressed at a pre-planning consultation meeting. As a result, Coastal began receiving letters of support from community members who felt the development would remove an eyesore near the centre of Gorseinon and further aid regeneration of the town.

The building will directly benefit the community as it retains a flexible training space available for use by the community or the managing agent to offer classes or seminars. It will also be offered to local providers and businesses, enabling Coastal to establish positive working relationships with local agencies and stakeholders. Women's Aid has expressed interest in using the space on a weekly basis for the next three years.

## Outcomes and achievements

- successfully homed eight people into the development upon completion who would have otherwise been experiencing or at risk of homelessness via Pobl
- the project created six new jobs, 12 work placements, seven shared apprentices spanning 134 weeks of work, one new bricklaying apprentice, 23 weeks of training to upskill the existing workforce and resulted in 16 individuals gaining qualifications
- successfully built Llys Awen within budget, taking into account the expensive construction process given the types of materials used
- overcame significant building challenges including building in an established residential area with a nearby house, church and scout hall, which limited space for necessary site facilities
- the service has developed links with the local area co-ordinator for Gorseinon and has been approached by local services to hold workshops and activities in the building. This will allow further opportunities for young people to develop positive relationships within the local community
  - £1.88 reinvested in the Welsh economy per £1 invested
  - 210 tonnes (100%) of waste diverted from landfill
  - £5,000 of in-kind contributions to local initiatives including Pontybrenin Primary.

# New large development award

sponsored by **BLAKE MORGAN**

This award recognises the new developments of 50 units or more that are making a contribution to housing supply or affordability in their area, or that are meeting a previously unmet need. Shortlisted developments have shown:

- that they have worked with the local community to ensure support and that community needs are met by the development
- the impact that the development has for local people. Examples may include, but are not limited to: providing for a previously unmet need (e.g. older people, lower occupancy), having a significant impact on local supply, having a significant impact on local affordability, providing homes in areas that are traditionally difficult to develop in (e.g. isolated rural areas)
- that the development has made design considerations about the purpose and functionality of the homes built – this might be designing for people with access requirements, older people, or designing at high levels of energy efficiency.

## Urban Quarter

**Coastal Housing Group with R&M Williams Ltd, Holder Mathias Architects and Provelio Ltd.**



Urban Quarter is a mixed use residential-led scheme, split across the High Street and Strand areas of Swansea, which consists of three retail units and 57 apartments, all for affordable rent.

The development has been designed as part of a wider strategy by Coastal Housing Group to regenerate Swansea's High Street which, like many urban centres in the UK, has experienced a decline in recent years. Once the commercial heart of the city, the area had become tired with an uninspiring, uninviting townscape that was perceived negatively by visitors and residents. As the principal pedestrian link from the railway station, the area forms the gateway

for visitors to the city centre and Coastal sought to transform the way this strategically important arrival point was perceived.

The idea behind Urban Quarter is to revitalise the area contained by High Street, The Strand and Kings Lane, working towards the physical, social and economic regeneration of this quarter of the city by bringing people back to live in the area. The concept of city centre living, bringing life back to the city, increasing footfall and therefore increasing spend, forms the foundation for this scheme.

The first phase of the scheme was completed in October 2017, with Urban Quarter benefitting local people by improving affordability and providing much needed city centre accommodation. All properties on the scheme are being let out at standard social housing rates as low as £77 per week.

Research conducted by Coastal found a significant shortage of affordable properties within the area and a lack of housing for residents looking to commute into the city centre. During the 12 months prior to breaking ground on the development, Coastal received calls from more than 400 people requesting affordable one or two bedroom accommodation in the city centre. The 57 apartments will help to address this demand.

The retail units, which have welcomed a range of independent businesses, notably in the creative industries, have helped to foster support for local business and contribute to the local economy, becoming inviting places for people to visit.

The development will create greater connectivity with immediate suburbs of Swansea to the east, as well as further afield. The resulting improved connectivity with

public transport meets a wider goal of reducing the need to travel by car, further decreasing costs for tenants, while bringing wider health benefits, and helping to tackle congestion and pollution within Swansea.

The scheme offers an impressive modern architectural landmark development that respects the history of the High Street, remaining in keeping with its character and appearance. A Grade II listed building was purchased as part of the land assembly for the development, which Coastal intended to refurbish, however concerns over its structural integrity meant it had to be demolished. Coastal worked closely with the local authority planning department, CADW and Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust to ensure that the new development incorporated a replica façade of this listed building.

Residents had highlighted a disconnect between the vibrancy of the commercial offering along High Street and Wind Street and the lack of vibrancy and associated activity along The Strand - a disconnect heightened by a change in levels with The Strand sitting at a significantly lower elevation. Urban Quarter will aim to eliminate this.

All residential units have been designed to meet the requirements of Lifetime Homes, ensuring that they are accessible and adaptable to occupants' changing needs reducing the possibility of having to move home as they get older or experience health issues. The apartments have also been constructed to meet Code for Sustainable Homes certification level 3 and energy efficiency performance exceeds mandatory requirements.

## Outcomes and achievements

A positive shift in the way the Strand and High Street is perceived, private property and business owners on High Street are choosing to invest in their buildings with new shopfronts and refurbishments, and in the case of the Grand Hotel, a large extension.

# Chiltern Close, Llanishen, Cardiff

## Wales and West Housing with Cardiff Council and Welsh Government



Chiltern Close is a £10 million development of 82 apartments on a vacant brownfield site in one of Cardiff's most popular residential suburbs Llanishen. Aimed at over 55's age group, and those with accessibility needs, it has been designed to create a close-knit community of apartments and promote social inclusion.

The area has seen a growth in residential development with private family houses and apartments nearby, providing a sustainable community for future older residents of the scheme.

Built in five blocks, with each of the three storey blocks containing between 11 and 19 apartments, Chiltern Close has been designed with social inclusion in mind and seeks to create a sense of space and avoid the sterile, non-friendly environment of large-scale apartment blocks.

The apartments will be a mix of 66 one and 16 two bedroom flats with communal balconies and social areas, where residents can meet up and make friends. The design of the development has been created to achieve a sense of community and belonging with the entrance to each block facing inwards and towards one another, rather than standing in isolation.

Each apartment block will have an extended foyer area near the entrance, where people can sit and chat with their neighbours. This will create a sense of belonging for residents, while also being able to enjoy the privacy and safety of their own apartment.

It was designed following experience and feedback from residents in a recently-completed WWH scheme for older people was that they appreciated meeting places, where they could bump into their neighbours for a chat.

Therefore, the design brief drew on the HAPPI (Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation) guidelines to create attractive, modern, contemporary homes, with comfortable indoor entrance hubs, and calm and pleasant open-air spaces where residents would be encounter their neighbours regularly and create conversations.

Other designs and specification include:

- design and quality requirements (DQR) are achieved including Lifetime Homes, Secure By Design standards
- insulation levels for each flat are higher than current building regulations
- simplified heating controls
- dedicated, secure stores for buggy parking
- level access showers to all flats
- semi-private communal external drying facilities
- attractive landscaping with larger trees on the edge of the site and softer ornamental planting beds around the blocks, which be easier to maintain than grass.

The construction is unusual as large sections of the homes - including windows, floor and roof cassettes - are manufactured offsite before being delivered to site as units for completion. This technique means that homes will be built more cost effectively, within tighter timescales, often with a healthier carbon footprint than developments that employ traditional building methods.

The homes will also use a revolutionary insulation product called TrisoWarm Hybrid Insulated Panel -the whole panel is insulated within a factory environment. Developed by contractors JG Hale the product, which received approval from the BBA last year, has the potential to substantially reduce heating bills and construction periods.

By using the TrisoWarm system along with offsite manufacturing, contractors JG Hale can complete the development quickly regardless of adverse weather conditions and the current shortage of bricklayers.

The location is a key factor for this development. Llanishen is a popular suburb of Cardiff with a vibrant community and well-supported network of services. There is a bus stop and train station on the doorstep with regular links to the city centre and nearby communities with the aim of reducing car use for residents. Although 39 car parking spaces including eight disabled spaces, will be provided.

Currently under construction Chiltern Close is due for completion in early 2020.

## Outcomes and achievements

Creating a sense of place:

The design of the development has been created to achieve a sense of community. Five architect practices were given the brief and interviewed to best achieve this. Powell Dobson's chosen design will create a cohesive community with the entrance to each of the five blocks facing inwards and towards one another, rather than standing in isolation. Each block will also have an extended foyer area/social hub near the entrance, where people can sit and chat with their neighbours. This avoids the need for common rooms, making the level of service charge more affordable.

Meeting housing needs in Cardiff:

Chiltern Close will achieve the need for attractive accommodation for older residents who are currently under-occupying larger family homes in Cardiff, highlighted in Cardiff Council's Housing Strategy 2016-2021.

There are approximately 2,000 people over the age of 50 on Cardiff Council's housing waiting list, for mostly one bedroom accessible accommodation. When completed it will potentially free up 82 larger social family homes.

Benefits to local economy and communities:

- up to four new apprentices are expected to work on site with contractors JG Hale Construction. it will also support the local supply chain and economy
- JG Hale aim to invest almost £40,000 back into WWH communities, including plans to renovate a rundown scout hall near the site.

# Silverdale Park – Cardiff Living

## Wates Residential Partnership with Cardiff City Council



Silverdale Park is the first development in Cardiff Council and Wates Residential Partnership programme, Cardiff Living (CL). CL is a unique joint venture regeneration partnership in Wales delivering new high quality affordable homes while regenerating communities and bringing underused sites back into use. Design quality and place making have been central to the process both to create new and vibrant communities and to integrate them into their existing surroundings. Wates were appointed as Cardiff Council's partner in January 2016.

CL will deliver 1500 homes over a ten year period:

- 600 homes for rent including a number to buy through the Councils Assisted Home Ownership Scheme
- 900 homes for sale
- all homes branded as Cardiff Living
- tenure neutral in appearance.

Central to CL is the delivery of community investment benefits through training/employment, supply chain opportunities and capacity building in the communities we are working in.

Cardiff Living is being procured in three phases. Five schemes are on site and five are being worked up for start on site in the next 12 months. A further fifteen schemes are currently undergoing initial feasibility appraisals with three planned to obtain planning consent before Christmas 2018. Enabling works on Silverdale began in April 2017 with new build works commencing in June 2017.

### Housing need

The scheme mix was developed in consultation with Cardiff to meet housing need and includes accessible units and a higher proportion of smaller units such as apartments for both rent and sale, to attract downsizers and first time buyers

### Design

Silverdale is a development of 58 Council affordable homes 134 home for sale. Cardiff developed their own design standard for the project with design quality at its heart aiming to promote place making and a new sustainable community. Examples of this approach include:

- high quality soft and hard landscaping designs
- new formal green square and central apartment block square
- tree lined streets
- soft green edge incorporating SUD's features
- permeability and legibility of design where also critical while not compromising security
- house types developed specifically for the project including accessible ground floor flats and adopted units.
- detailed comprehensive design reviews and critiques
- Wates 'Designing the Promise' initiative to ensure design quality was maintained
- design commission for Wales reviews.

### Commercial delivery

CL represents a partnership to deliver new affordable homes without SHG funding. The model works through:

- council provision of land
- Wates development expertise and funding take schemes from inception through to planning and start on site
- Wates provision of affordable homes at cost
- Wates taking sales risk on open market homes at capped margin
- overall capped blended margin
- average mechanism for sales income uplift.

40% of the homes will be affordable sale and rent with 60% to be open market sale. The mix on each site is project specific to development; Silverdale is 70% sale and 30% affordable.

### Energy performance

All properties will achieve a 17% improvement above build regulations through a fabric first approach developed in conjunction with the BRE, to sustainably address fuel poverty.



## Future innovation

- procure four sites through a modular solution, with units assembled in pop up factories in the city
- Silvertale has also recently obtained consent for an affordable and open market sale Passivhaus scheme of 42 homes.

## Community investment

Silvertale is delivering a highly ambitious community investment programme, including:

- forging a close partnership with Meadowlane School delivering more than 177 hours of engagement
- a bespoke project saw children designing their dream homes
- workshops from design teams to site

- show home visits for more than 80 children
- piloted an initiative with Merthyr Institute for the Blind and Paint 360 delivering site hoarding using local re-engineered paint, and contributed to our £100k local social enterprise spend.

## Testimonial

*"The Cardiff Living scheme is really gathering pace. Wates are progressing very well across the city too and it's an exciting time with our first affordable homes due for completion before the end of the year. Cardiff Living is bringing new, high quality, affordable homes to the city for people who need them most and significantly contributing to our target of delivering 2,000 new council homes in the city."*

Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member, Housing and Communities.

## Outcomes and achievements

- excellent example of partnership between local authority, client, contractor, design team and supply chain
- first five affordable homes to be handed over end of 2018
- 20 Homes sold to date
- high quality design focused project
- housing mix driven by affordable housing need for sale and rent
- green spaces created and SUD's features incorporated
- regeneration and design quality realised
- 17% Improvement in energy performance.
- Considerate Constructor score of 41
- providing affordable and homes for sale
- supply chain event held
- £60k+ social enterprise spend
- local SME spend to date on site £3m+ to second quarter 2018
- 135+ hours engagement in local school
- Over £2,000 donated to local school
- archaeological school site visit
- 100+ visitors to site through educational initiatives
- 77% of supply chain SME's within city region.

# Community focussed contractor

sponsored by



This award recognises the contribution that contractors have made towards the local community and economy. Shortlisted organisations will have embedded delivering community benefits into their work programmes. They have demonstrated:

- the local impact that their work on community benefits has delivered
- that they have embraced the targeted recruitment and training agenda, delivering local jobs and training opportunities
- that they have gone above and beyond in their commitment to both benefitting the Welsh economy and providing benefits to the local community.

## Mi-Space and Swansea City AFC Community Trust

### Mi-Space with Swansea City AFC Community Trust and Traumatic Brain Injury Service Morrision Hospital



In June 2017 Mi-Space made contact with the Swansea City AFC Community Trust (SCCT) in an attempt to find a new partner to work with in order to enhance their existing social value programme in the city. Mi-Space has been working in Swansea as a partner to the city council delivering new kitchens and bathrooms to some one thousand properties each year. As well as working with several other local partners such as Beyond Bricks and Mortar and Cyfle, Mi-Space felt that there was more scope to create new partnerships in order to grow our legacy in the City of Swansea.

SCCT exist to improve the lifestyle of individuals and neighbourhoods from Bridgend to Haverfordwest. The community trust not only does this through the delivery of projects and sessions designed to improve

peoples' health and fitness, but by helping to educate within schools and helping people to break down barriers to finding employment.

After an initial meeting between Mi-Space and SCCT, a programme of initiatives was established whereby Mi-Space would facilitate opportunities for people in the Swansea area in partnership with the community trust. Initiative has included:

- providing asbestos awareness training for thirty long term unemployed individuals in order to assist them with the qualifications required to enter or return to the construction industry
- performing talks to school leavers in the Swansea City area to advise them of the range of opportunities and roles available in the construction industry and how to go about seeking out these opportunities
- undertaking 'Ready-for-Work' sessions to the long term unemployed which includes cv writing skills, interview skills and practice and connecting people with agencies and businesses seeking to recruit new staff
- providing work experience opportunities for people directly on the Swansea Kitchen and Bathroom project offering people the chance to demonstrate their skills, commitment and aptitude for work in a live environment
- more recently, through its partnership with SCCT, Mi-Space has teamed up with Morrision Hospital's Traumatic Brain Injury Service and is providing opportunities for people with neurological injuries complete their recovery with back-to-work opportunities.

Outcomes of the partnerships that Mi-Space has been involved in have been numerous with several of the candidates obtaining full time employment on the project including; Rhydian Evans (QS) Jack Samuel (QS) Bobby Gray (labourer) Jack Gray (labourer) Matthew Dixon (scaffolder) Ben Parkin (plumber), Billy Morgan (painter), Tom Jones (electrician), Leighton James (plasterer), Jay Thomas (plumber) and Sarah Groves (TLO).

Mi-Space's most exciting and rewarding initiative by far is the work the company is doing with Morriston Hospital's Traumatic Brain Injury Service. As a result of this partnership Mi-Space has been able to offer

'return to work' programmes in the Swansea area for people who find that following a traumatic brain injury, they are no longer able to return to their original career of choice for medical or practical reasons. Their sense of purpose is hugely affected by this realisation, yet they remain determined to recapture their independence, support themselves and their families and maximise their social function. Mi-Space has provided several opportunities for candidates identified by Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board's (ABMU HB) Traumatic Brain Injury Service, to obtain return-to-work opportunities in a safe, secure and supported environment.

## Outcomes and achievements

The objective of Mi-Space's involvement with the SCCT was to exceed the expectations and obligations of our contractual relationship with Swansea Council and leave a legacy in the communities that the company works in.

The creation of 11 apprenticeships, which have resulted in continued full time employment for all concerned, has been supplemented with Mi-Space's work with the Traumatic Brain Injury Unit.

*"Mi-Space has been a great supporter of the 'Sign Up To Success' project offering support in many areas such as further training, work experience, employment and equipment for learners. Mi-Space shows them what behaviours are expected of people in industry. Mi-Space has brought a new dimension to and their support is invaluable"*

Helen Felton - Head of Community, SCCT

*"Mi-Space has been an extremely proactive partner in seeking to work with the Traumatic Brain Injury Service at Morriston in our efforts to find employment experiences for our patients who are seeking to return to employment following their injury. We are very excited to be working with Mi-Space on placement schemes and are exploring ways of expanding this considerably"*

Helen Hughes; Occupational Therapist, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board's (ABMU HB) Traumatic Brain Injury Service, Morriston Hospital, Swansea.

# Maelfa Regeneration Scheme

## Jehu with Cardiff Community Housing Association (CCHA)



During the Maelfa Regeneration Scheme Jehu's approach within the community has been around developing a long-term partnership with CCHA. The company worked with CCHA to develop a strategic community benefit action plan, to create an overall positive impact for both the business objectives and the wider community needs. This plan ensures all parties engage and commit to joint working to achieve more together than the traditional contractor approach.

Jehu integrate this responsible business practice through their daily operations which is delivered through the plan. This process has assisted Jehu to embed responsible business into their core practices and filter it through to their supply chain, enabling them to meet the needs of their clients whilst sustaining, protecting and enhancing the wider community.

### Targeted recruitment and training (TR&T)

Tackling employability, adding value and incorporating social inclusion plays an important part of this contract, the need to strengthen the local economy and create more sustainable communities. Jehu has implemented a TR&T programme and offered a number of employment, apprenticeship and work placement opportunities through the company and their sub-contractors.

### School engagement

As part of the plan Jehu has engaged with local schools and the wider community by attending and delivering local events with CCHA. These activities support young people and promote the construction industry as a potential career path. Some of the events attended are as follows:

- SHEP Programme at Llanedeyrn Primary School and Springwood Primary
- Opportunity Knocks careers event at the Powerhouse

- Keeping it Equal event at Cardiff City Stadium
- St Teilo's High School health and safety talk and site visit
- CCHA Maelfa Mega Fun Day
- Halloween community event
- Christmas community event.

### Community action days

Jehu has currently been involved in two community action days - St John Lloyd Primary School outdoor learning area scheme and Maelfa Youth Centre scheme.

There is a strong business case for running a volunteering programme, first and foremost to continually develop staff and the wider community and expose them to all opportunities. The second key driver is to make a tangible positive change to the communities we live and work in.

### Testimonials

*"Thank you so much for today, we are so very very grateful. Despite the weather it was a fab day, absolutely wonderful. Thank you so much again, everyone at St John Lloyd RC Primary are so grateful for your help and support with the outdoor learning area."*

*"We had the most wonderful day in the garden with the children today!"*

Maria Shore, Early Years SLTA, St John's Primary School

*"It was a fantastic rewarding day of volunteering and a lot of hard work, in the rain. As a team of 14 people comprising of CCHA, Jehu, St John Lloyd staff and parents and the kind donations from our suppliers/contractors we were able to make it happen. The children and staff in this school will enjoy this for many years, it was an absolute pleasure to be part of it."*

Natalie Pillinger, Communities & Regeneration Co-ordinator, CCHA.

Working with SMEs and the local money multiplier effect.

Working with SME's and supporting the local economy are the forward steps to creating a more sustainable future. The construction industry is uniquely placed to support economic growth and social change.

Jehu uses a local supply chain to help deliver this contract which is linked to the TR&T plan, continuing to work with the CCHA to deliver their JETS Programme which is a flagship employability scheme to support tenants who are experiencing unemployment or in-work poverty. Jehu also works with the local job centre, Y-Prentis and other recommended employability programmes to tackle the local employability issues and incorporating social inclusion.

## Outcomes and achievements

Below is a list of the outcomes Jehu has achieved through the delivery of the Maelfa Regeneration Scheme.

Full-time employment opportunities:

- Daniel Martin – local labourer
- Craig Ullah – local bricklayer
- Trainee – bath demolition.

Apprentices:

- Leuan Humphreys – plasterer (two months)
- Calum Powell – plasterer (two months)
- Anthony Stevens – carpenter (five months)
- Nathan Jenkins – bricklayer (four months)
- Lee McDonald – scaffolder (two months).

School engagement:

- Opportunity Knocks event - engaged with 50 pupils from St Philip Evans Primary School, Llanedeyrn Primary school, Springwood Primary School, St Illtyds high and Eastern High schools
- Maelfa Fun Day 2017/18 – engaged with 900 attendees and 26 partner organisations.

- Keeping it Equal event – engaged with 400 young women aged 11-25, covering non-traditional jobs, challenge gender stereotypes and broaden career horizons.

Action Day outcomes:

- created community capacity building
- developed a strong relationship with the local community
- businesses and communities working in a more connected way
- increased staff loyalty and motivation
- increased personal and professional skills development for staff and the community
- improved and enhanced local community areas
- the business made a firm impact in a community of social need
- raised aspirations and confidence amongst local communities
- raised the profile and brand of all stakeholders involved, through positive PR.

## Creating a community in Canton

**Lovell with Tirion, Cadwyn Housing Association and Principality Building Society**



Community, education, employment and sustainability are the four cornerstones of Lovell's commitment to sustainable community benefits.

For Lovell, their goal is always to go further than the here and now, endeavouring to leave a long-lasting legacy. In the case of The Mill the company set out to create an increased sense of community in an area that

had previously been abandoned. Providing a positive impact on the Welsh economy, not only through the generation of new jobs, but also through an influx of new residents. The Mill development has successfully brought new life to one of Cardiff's biggest brownfield sites, creating urgently needed quality homes in a sought-after location close to the city centre.

With their partners Tirion and Cadwyn, The Mill will be one of Wales' largest ever urban regeneration programmes with 800 new homes. A key component of the Welsh economy's infrastructure is good quality, well managed, affordable housing. Addressing this need is one of the key priorities on-site, which is why they offer homes with a good range of prices, allowing them to be available for all price brackets, in accordance with Lovell's affordable housing policy. As a product of this policy 85 out of the 108 homes currently sold, were sold to first time buyers – that's over 79%. In addition, over 400 homes are being offered as discounted rent and social rent, whilst the remaining homes will be available for open market sale through Lovell.

Over 120 residents currently live at The Mill further strengthening the local economy.

The name Lovell is synonymous with going above and beyond in relation to social value and training commitments. In order to further strengthen this,

Lovell has set-up 'The Mill Employment and Training Group' with representatives from The Prince's Trust, Tirion Group, Cadwyn Housing, Communities First, Careers Wales, Cardiff & Vale College, CITB, Construction Trust, Y Prentis Scheme, Ex Forces Career & Transition Partnership.

When the former Arjo Wiggins paper mill closed its doors over 20 years ago, 460 jobs were lost and a community was left with an abandoned site that contributed nothing, now over 1,000 jobs have been created through the development providing a much needed lift to the local economy.

One of the largest successes so far has been Lovell's 'Get into Construction' course, delivered in conjunction with the Prince's Trust. 16 local unemployed young adults were given the opportunity to improve their employability prospects. Offering interview/cv writing skills, construction specific skills by sampling the various trades wanted at The Mill, gain a health and safety qualification and a Construction Skills Certification Scheme card. At completion, one

trainee has gone on to gain a trade apprenticeship with Lovell and three others with the company's supply chain partners.

Twenty-one-year-old Otis is forging his new career in construction after taking part in the course, based at The Mill.

### Testimonial

"I feel like I've really landed on my feet. The apprenticeship is a good pathway to be on and will open up opportunities for me. I'll be able to widen my experience of different trades and there's also the option to move into management. This is a really big site and the experience I'm getting will be valuable for the rest of my career. Working on the scheme means a lot to me - I'm from the Canton area and in the future I'll be able to drive past and say I was part of it"

Otis Simpson, Lovell's 100th employee and Get into Construction candidate.

### Outcomes and achievements

Lovell is committed to leaving a "Lovell Legacy" and over the last 18 months at The Mill this has been achieved by:

- provided 58 weeks of work experience
- ensured 61% of the total spend equating to £886,516.33 has been secured with Welsh companies
- spoken with over 500 local pupils and encouraged women to get into construction by participating in the 'Keeping it Equal' event.
- 250 volunteering hours by Lovell
- as an associate member of the Considerate Constructors Scheme Lovell is respectful and considerate to their neighbouring communities with a current score of 43/50
- created a bike shed to securely store all of the schools bikes at Ysgol Gymraeg Treganna on Sanatorium Road, tarmacked a new walkway for the safety of parents and guardians as they collect their children and challenged the pupils with a project to name one of the streets on the development
- supported the Caerau and Ely festival, participated in the 'Give and Gain Initiative' where five of their staff volunteered as referees at the Cardiff Blues annual tag rugby festival and raised over £1400 for Cancer Research Wales in the Cardiff Dragon Boat Festival
- refurbished the changing rooms at the Jubilee Park in Canton.

# Railway Close

## ENGIE with Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association



At ENGIE 'Community: it's at the heart of everything we do'. Their work goes beyond bricks and mortar, they recognise that it is hugely important to support local people and their initiatives, to make a difference to people's lives.

The team fully integrate themselves within communities in which they work, to ensure that the business leaves a lasting legacy behind and a positive impact on the area. In the last year alone, ENGIE has dedicated over £10k to community and charity projects in South Wales.

ENGIE is committed to providing employment and training opportunities for local people, with 40% of our workforce in Wales being either trainees or apprentices.

From assemblies and site visits to construction-themed workshops and employability sessions, ENGIE works with schools and colleges to inform them of the dangers of playing on building sites, and help to inspire the next generation of construction talent.

### Case Study - Railway Close, Walters Terrace

ENGIE were appointed by Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association (MTHA) to build a £2.5million housing development in Aberfan, South Wales.

The Railway Close development in Walters Terrace consists of 23 homes; a mixture of flats and family houses for affordable rent. The scheme includes seven homes especially adapted to meet the mobility needs of residents.

As an ode to the history of Railway Close, the original stone wall which belonged to the railway station platform was salvaged and rebuilt in three locations onsite, and a plaque was unveiled by the Mayor of Merthyr Tydfil, Councillor Clive Tovey, to mark the official opening of the development.

As well as bringing much-needed new homes to the area, the scheme has enabled ENGIE to provide valuable outputs to the local community, including:

- dedicating over 250 hours to local community and charity project in Aberfan
- hosting open days for rehoused residents
- fundraising for the Aberfan Memorial Fund to mark the anniversary of the Aberfan disaster
- hosting a ball in support of domestic abuse charity Hafan Cymru
- donating 10-tonnes of chipping to the Trinity Child & Family Centre and building a ramp to make their garden wheelchair-accessible.

### Testimonial

Tania Stephens, Centre Manager from Trinity Childcare and Family Centre said: *"We cannot thank ENGIE enough for supporting us as a community project. For providing materials and staff to put in ramps leading to our play yard - thus enabling our children, who are wheelchair-bound, easier access to play areas. And for providing several site visits to enable our children to visit and find out about building work in our community. We would like to thank them for making us part of the project and bringing the community together."*

Furthermore, the scheme has enabled ENGIE to provide employment/training opportunities for local people, including:

- creating seven apprenticeships, three work experience placements
- working with local primary schools in Aberfan, providing construction-themed workshops and site visits
- working with local secondary schools in Aberfan, providing health and safety awareness sessions
- working with the local youth group members to assist them with expanding on their community involvement programme by helping children to build a bug hotel on site
- working in partnership with MTHA and Communities for Work to launch an Induction to Construction training programme for 12 candidates, resulting in community members gaining qualifications, confidence and full-time employment
- provide mock interview sessions to sixth form students in partnership with Careers Wales to give them the best opportunity to gain employment.

Lee Jones, Community Development Manager at MTHA said: *"The programme of community events that ENGIE facilitated far exceeded the expectations of the housing association; they are a credit to the building trade."*

## Outcomes and achievements

In the last year, ENGIE has dedicated over 1,400 man-hours to community/charity projects and 400 social value hours for employment/training opportunities in South Wales, including:

- the investment of over £10k in CSR to give back to the local community
- raised money for Ty Hafan charity, including staff members taking part in the Bubble Rush Run in Cardiff, the team have raised a staggering £35k for charitable causes over the last few years
- succession rate of 100% for apprentices, work experience candidates and Induction to Construction candidates who secured further employment after completing their time on the development, with one going on to win the Traineeship Engagement Learner of the Year Award at the People Plus Awards
- school engagement with over 55 schools to provide over 200 workshop sessions and 70 work experience opportunities
- attendance of over 60 careers fairs to teach students about careers in construction
- sponsored the Grow A Pound enterprise project at a local Primary School as a way of teaching pupils how to manage their own money
- sponsored the Be in to Win attendance competition at a Secondary School in Wales, which awards students who achieve the highest overall attendance scores.

# Cardiff Living – supporting sustainable communities

## Wates Residential South with Cardiff Council



Wates Residential (WR) is part of family-owned Wates Group, established in 1897, now one of the leading privately owned construction, development and property services businesses in Britain. It employs approximately 4,000 people and generated turnover of £1.62bn in 2017.

In 2016 WR signed the largest joint venture (JV) partnership within Wales with Cardiff County Council, 'Cardiff Living'. This promises to deliver 1,500 much needed homes across the city by 2026.

The partnership has an investment plan setting out clear, smart, measurable commitments; focusing on employment, skills and training, economic growth, community cohesion, engagement and contribution

to education. All commitments are monitored and audited; generating a quarterly report.

As this unique partnership spans over ten years it has allowed Cardiff Living to focus on long-term projects that have greater impact and measurable results, within the communities we work.

The JV recently completed its first year since starting on site and has continued to grow from strength to strength, already delivering tangible results. High on Cardiff Living's agenda is tackling local unemployment and providing training initiatives to support this. This has included running a number of schemes and working collaboratively with local organisations to develop further innovative ideas for the future of the scheme.

Working with CAVC and Career Ready, the partnership supports BTEC level 3 Construction students providing mentoring and offering three paid internships on completion. This allows us to help bridge the skills gap in Wales, supporting increased community cohesion and encouraging a reduction of migration from Wales for those in search of jobs/training.

WR's award-winning, two week Building Futures course was also offered to long-term unemployed adults from the Cardiff. Working closely with the probation service and council-led 'Into Work' team we identified 13 candidates. All graduated, gaining a BTEC level 1, CSCS, traffic marshalling, manual handling and asbestos awareness certificates. Within a week of the course completing, five candidates had secured full time work, three within Wates. Further job offers and work experience placements are also in the process of



being made to the other candidates from supply chain partners.

As committed as the company is to bridging the industry's skills gap, they understand that construction isn't for everyone. The company wants to ensure that it impacts and supports as many people within the communities in which they work in whilst improving the local economy. This year they collaboratively sponsored the PopUp Business School, an innovative new programme that saw over 60 people benefit from a free two week course that provides support and guidance in starting up a business without the initial outlay or getting into debt. It proved hugely successful and boosted confidence, happiness and self-efficiency of those that participated.

Local social enterprises (SEs) and SMEs have been another focus area, hosting a Seeing Is Believing tour in Cardiff, showcasing local SEs to local businesses to demonstrate the social impact that they have on the local area. The company has also supported and mentored some of these local companies to help them obtain accreditations that will enable them to

work with other major contractors. This has seen five local SE's appointed by WR on Cardiff Living sites, with over £100k in order value. Including a pilot scheme to produce site hoarding with Merthyr Institute for the Blind and Paint 360 (local re-engineered paint).

All local SEs and SMEs have been invited to join and provided with support by the 'Supply Chain Sustainability School'. This Wates-sponsored initiative supports businesses in meeting their clients' sustainability requirements, as well as their own sustainable business growth ambitions, enabling safer business expansion.

### Testimonial

*"We at MTIB are delighted to be included in Wates' supply chain to provide painted hoardings using recycled paint from Wales through our collaboration with Paint360. Our disabled employees are busy producing the first of hopefully many orders that will help sustain and secure their employment."*

Richard Welfoot, CEO at MTIB,

## Outcomes and achievements

Outcomes and achievements on Cardiff Living - 2017-18

- 1795 training /employment weeks
- 51 people employed locally
- 31 apprentices
- 219 hours of school engagement
- 3734 volunteering hours
- £232,104 invested in local charities/community causes, including large refurbishment project at 'The Old Library' in Rumney and install of a shower room at Llanrumney Boxing club
- over £100,000 SE spend in first year
- membership of the Wales BITC/Royal British Legion Veteran Leadership Board
- dedicated Cardiff Living website with large community forum to help market local businesses and events, free of charge
- 80 children visited site to participate in a two week curriculum-based school project to design and sell their own home with Wates support
- second year supporting CCC 'School Holiday Enrichment Programme' with 500 children supported across 10 schools with food and fun throughout a four week period
- a mentee has since been offered a fantastic opportunity to complete her structural engineering degree with one of WR's consultant partners.

# New ideas and approaches award

sponsored by



This award recognises the housing associations, local authorities, and other housing providers that are pushing the envelope in terms of developing new ways to deliver housing services, or projects and initiatives that can demonstrate innovative uses of technology, or projects that have increased the adoption of technology, reducing digital inequality or exclusion. Shortlisted projects or initiatives will have a creative approach or idea that can demonstrate better outcomes or increased efficiency. Shortlisted applications have demonstrated:

- that the project or initiative addresses a specific need or problem which has, using a new or creative approach, been appropriately met or solved
- the 'before and after' scenario, demonstrating that the project or initiative has been successfully implemented
- improved outcomes for users
- value for money.

## Open doors

### Tai Pawb with Residential Landlords Association



The size of the private rental sector (PRS) in Wales is increasing - a CIH Cymru report (2014) indicated that if current trends continue, it is set to reach 20% of the total stock by 2020.

Tai Pawb is an organisation which promotes equality and social justice in housing in Wales. Until 2017, they had previously only worked with housing associations and local authority housing providers. However, recognising the growing importance of the PRS in Wales, and the diversity of the tenants who were living in this sector, they decided to take action to address this. Taking the innovate approach of working in partnership with a private sector organisation, Tai Pawb approached the Residential Landlords Association (RLA). The two worked together to jointly apply for a

Big Lottery Fund grant to create a project that would aim to reduce inequality and discrimination in the PRS.

The Open Doors project was the result of this bid, and has been up and running since July 2017. It is a response to a very clear and direct need: a survey by Runnymede Trust (2014) found that 29% of Black Caribbean respondents to a survey had been discriminated against when applying for private houses, and that 28% of Black African and 27% of Pakistani respondents felt discriminated against because of their ethnic background, nationality or religion when applying to private housing. In contrast, only 1% of white British people surveyed experienced discrimination when applying to private housing.

Stonewall Cymru published research in 2003 that showed that almost 18% of LGB people they surveyed had experienced discrimination which involved being evicted from discrimination because of their sexuality. Stonewall Housing's statistics (2012) show that 40% of LGBT people who live in PRS feel insecure in their own home.

Open Doors is working with both tenants and landlords to address some of these issues, by ensuring that everyone is aware of their rights and responsibilities. With landlords, we are providing free training to ensure that they are fully aware of their legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010. We also provide information, support and advice for specific equalities issues, and have produced an equality and diversity guide for private landlords. With tenants, we are trying to educate and empower people to know their rights, through individual support and group information sessions. We are encouraging them to up-

skill themselves to challenge discrimination, and give PRS tenants more of a voice.

One of the ways in which our project has engaged with tenants has been to form partnerships with other third sector organisations, and provide support and assistance to any of their clients who are living in private rented sector accommodation and experiencing issues. A particularly successful example of this is our ongoing work with the Big Issue, and Beth Thomas (Regional Manager, Wales and South West) has the following to say about our project:

*"Nazia has been working with one of my team Lotty to help a number of vendors (and ex-vendors) regarding a number of issues. Lotty has found her to be helpful,*

*friendly, approachable and extremely knowledgeable. I really would like to say thank you to Tai Pawb and Nazia in particular, for her support and hard work. She has made a huge difference to many vendors' housing situations. Personally, I feel partnership working and collaboration is the best way to achieve good outcomes for the people we work with, and I think this is a really good example and I'm pleased for The Big Issue and Tai Pawb to be working together to support and empower some of the most vulnerable in our society."*

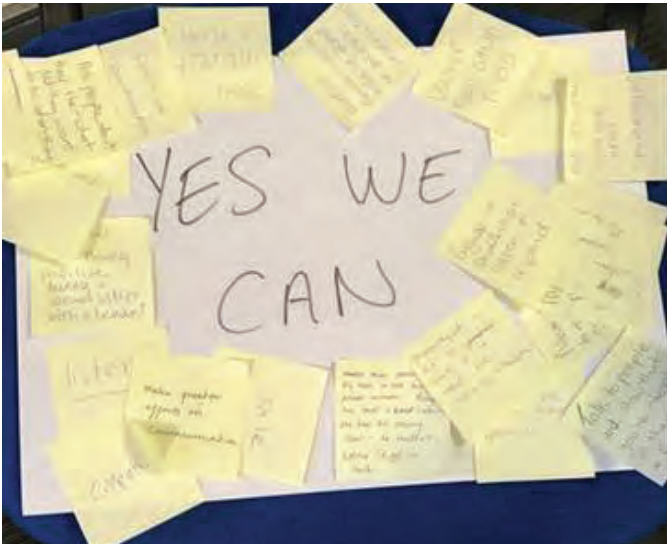
## Outcomes and achievements

At the end of the first year of our project (August 2018) the following outcomes had been achieved:

- 182 tenants reported an increased awareness of their rights and responsibilities through accessing outreach services and training
- 38 landlords said that they feel more confident in letting to diverse and vulnerable tenants following using project services
- 95 landlords have increased knowledge of requirements of equality legislation after engaging with Tai Pawb project services
- 596 people have accessed information on their rights and responsibilities on the Tai Pawb online hub
- 92 landlords felt 'more confident' following attendance at Tai Pawb events
- 80% average increase in the level of confidence of local authorities and third sector organisations to be able to engage with private rented sector landlords following engagement with the Tai Pawb project
- Six tenants and five landlord champions were recruited, who have improved capacity and skills to support others
- Tai Pawb attended, organised or spoke at 35 events throughout the year
- Tai Pawb launched an equality and diversity guide for private landlords with a prestigious Senedd event, which was attended by over 30 people including eight Assembly Members.

# Review together

**Review Together with South Wales PCC, Welsh Government, Trivallis and Cardiff Council**



The Review Together project was created as a response to a growing interest from Welsh Government in the issue of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and the response of social landlords to this. This, combined with a changing policy environment focussing on person-centred approaches and cohesive communities, led to the establishment of a steering group chaired by Alun Michael (South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner). This was tasked with looking at the issue of ASB in relation to the concept of vulnerability and adverse childhood experiences. The result of the original business case and discussions within the steering group was the creation of the Review Together project.

Review Together is a 'supported self-assessment tool', a facilitated process which was created in order to help social landlords evaluate, reflect and adapt their response and approach to ASB, vulnerabilities and customer relationship. It encompasses current thinking on relational approaches, such as adverse childhood experiences, physiologically informed environments and trauma informed care, to engender creative thinking and ideas.

The general principles developed were to have clear learning outcomes, delivered in such a way that would model the behaviours we were discussing with the organisations. These included openness, honesty, a willingness to gain feedback and act on it and to share information.

The process itself was to be non-judgmental, inclusive of tenant's voice and of staff and to use the techniques that are considered important in enabling working in a PIE environment. The project is delivered through

a number of stages of engagement and facilitated sessions with an organisation and it concludes with a dynamic action planning session that helps organisations develop a practical action plan for future service development.

## **Self-assessment**

Comprises of three questionnaires, strategic, delivery team and associated services. Designed for the organisation to reflect on current service delivery and create a baseline understanding of potential areas for change and development.

## **Session 1 exchange and reflect**

This session is both informative and reflective to help develop understanding around current thinking about relational approaches and generally set the scene. It starts the creative process around service development.

## **Session 2 insight and voice**

A creative way to use reflective tools (learning through stories and a customer voice focus group) to generate ideas and suggestions, create further insight to deepen understanding and inform the development of the action plan.

## **Session 3 assets and actions**

Bringing together what has been learned from the previous sessions, shaped by the outcomes, staff's knowledge and insight, a plan for change is created and most importantly Review Together works with the organisation to plan how to support those changes.

There are two aims to the project. First, to facilitate a cognitive shift away from understanding services in terms of systems to understanding services in terms of relationships. Second, to support discussions around how this can be operationalised within the organisation by its staff members, tenants, and stakeholders.

*"The space and support required for staff to consider using this approach, the knowledge and the insight needed and the input of the view of complainants and those complained against are key components of the review process"* Review Together Literature Review 2018.

Review Together feels that a different way of working to traditional review methods and an innovative way of enabling practical application of relational approaches featuring in current social policy.

## Outcomes and achievements

Two organisations - Trivallis and Cardiff City Council

Approx. 90 people participated in the review from board and strategic leads to frontline officers and tenants 80% felt it would change their practice

*"Both organisations' experience of the pilot project has been successful, with staff and tenants understanding how and why the shift to a relational approach to ASB service delivery could be positive. Organisations have both started either to implement change already, or to start the process of strategic change."* Cardiff Metropolitan Review Together, Final Evaluation Report, July 2018

A testament to the design of the Review Together model is that it helps organisations to understand vulnerability in a wider context and could be applied to a variety of service delivery areas and sectors, a vision that is supported by Bonnie Navarra, Deputy South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner.

*"The approach taken has ensured that Review Together is a supportive process for organisations to effectively transform their service design and delivery. The independent evaluation clearly demonstrated the success of the model. Welsh Government are currently considering the future roll out of Review Together."*

Bonnie Navarra

## Wake up to housing

**Pobl Group with Bron Afon and Llamau with NCH, Melin, CRISIS and Pobl Care and Support**



Last year, the Welsh Government Under 35's and Welfare Reform Group was set up to look at solutions to mitigate the issues facing young people needing housing. At this point, the changes in Local Housing Allowance were applying to social housing, so the group were keen to look at alternative accommodation solutions, such as sharing, and other issues, like the roll out of Universal Credit and the removal of Housing Benefit for 18-21 year olds.

Wanting to make sure that housing professionals didn't design services to mitigate these issues, without listening to the experts first, we embarked upon 'Wake Up to the Changes' and set up a subgroup to work on this project.

The subgroup, led by Charter(Pobl) Bron Afon and Llamau, were tasked with gaining views of young people who'd experienced homelessness and asked them to set the questions and design the

format for the project. Using UNITY and Afon Youth, Charter(Pobl), Newport City Homes and Bron Afon's young people's forums, we asked them to decide what needed to be done. They quickly threw out the idea of a hand written survey and instead designed a series of interactive focus groups to be followed up by a Facebook survey.

Following 'train the trainer' sessions with young people and professional from across Charter(Pobl), Llamau, Bron Afon, Solas, Melin, CRISIS and Newport City Homes, delivery of the interactive focus groups began over a six week period.

From both the workshops and social media, four key themes emerged, safety, education, choice and support but overwhelmingly young people wanted somewhere safe to live. The reality, for so many young people, is they don't feel safe where they live and some said they have never felt safe. This project highlighted that it's really important therefore that as housing professionals, we actively take a trauma and psychologically informed approach to our accommodation and support services.

It was shocking to see how many people didn't know about Government changes or didn't know how to get help. Since then the context has changed, but the need for affordable housing options for under 35's continues, as does the need for young people to be aware of their rights and the options available to them, ensure that young people have the right education, in the right place and at the right time.

With this in mind, 'Wake Up to the Changes' evolved into 'Wake Up to Housing', an educational resource for young people aged 15+ informing them of their housing rights and promoting positive aspirations around their housing options. It was recognised that this approach to engaging with young people around their housing options was a far more positive,

empowering and inclusive way of getting a message out to young people.

Since then 'Wake up to Housing' has been adopted by both Bron Afon and Charter(Pobl) as an early intervention /education project and a positive way of consulting with young people, linked into the Housing Futures Board and the Newport Steering group, with the aim of developing a consistent message to young people about their housing options and an opportunity for learning for professionals who are responsible for developing services.

Wake up to Housing Project Objectives:

- to develop young people's understanding of housing
- raise awareness of moving out and costs involved
- signpost young people to support and information available
- deliver programme of early educational awareness in a range of settings
- peer-led involving Unity and Afon Youth members
- continue to collect feedback and data regarding young people's views on housing options for under 35's to included shared accommodation models.

## Outcomes and achievements

'Wake up to the Changes' - On Housing Day 2017, 30 people were trained and tasked to go out and talk to as many young people as possible within the six week pilot timescale. In total, delivered 18 sessions, 124 young people were consulted and a further 50 engaged in a Facebook poll.

Furthermore following the learning and evolution of 'Wake up to the Changes', 'Wake up to Housing' sessions have now been delivered to 500 plus young people from January to July 2018 across Torfaen and Newport, with confirmation from schools following positive feedback that they would like to roll out the programme to all schools in Torfaen. Newport Steering Group, are also building this in their housing

educational pathway for young people in Newport to include delivery to college's, PRU's, training providers and youth homelessness schemes.

This project has provided value for money through partnership working and development of shared approaches. This project received no external funding and relied on the pulling together of resources along with the shared commitment and will of the partnership to deliver on the project objectives.

This research has also informed organisations approach to ensuring services for young people are PIE informed.

## Porth y Gymuned

Ceredigion County Council with Hywel Dda University Health Board and CAVO



The Porth y Gymuned service took forward a new way of working where greater emphasis is placed on prevention and early intervention, working with individuals, families and communities to source

and develop their own solutions in supporting and promoting independence within their own home.

Porth y Gymuned (PyG) has been in place since April 2018 and enables members of the public and professionals to access information, advice and assistance provided by the third sector and activities within community sector. PyG works closely with the social care portal and housing, ensuring that those who are unable to reach a statutory threshold for intervention are supported on a 1:1 basis over six weeks, preventing their needs escalating to a point of crisis. Following a What Matters to Me conversation, based on the signs of safety / principles and using motivational interviewing techniques, enables targeted solution approach, delivered by the third and community sector instead of statutory health and social care services.

PyG recognised that to improve someone's wellbeing and their resilience to recover from times of adversity is not only about the services they can access but the environment in which they live, including their home and community. During 1:1 visits to people in their homes, PyG has an important opportunity to identify

housing concerns at an early stage, referring cases of disrepair, substandard rental accommodation, hoarding, falls prevention, cold homes and adaptation opportunities. If PyG is unable to inform of the mechanisms to support individuals and their families within their own homes, through the support we can identify from local authority housing services, fire service's home safety checks and third sector groups. In so doing, it can significantly contribute to their wellbeing at the outset and are then in a position to continue to identify the wider support based on the wider determinants of wellbeing, including access to community activities and third sector services.

This scheme also provides an entry point to non-statutory services for people stepping down from preventative and long-term social care services. Community connectors in the Porth y Gymuned service work with communities to find out what is available in their areas, to make appropriate links to Dewis Cymru, thus strengthening their local knowledge base and potential signposting opportunities for those whom they are assisting.

This is a through age service, delivered by the county council's customer contact service, it has been designed to be a sustainable model by recognising the worth of investing in prevention, to reduce demand on stretched statutory service delivery and avoiding escalation of need and reaching a point of crisis. Having this service in place also enables the community connectors to raise awareness of Dewis Cymru and encourage and support community groups to place their information on the information portal. This again is designed to be a more sustainable solution to ensuring the Dewis Cymru website is well supported both from placing information on the website as well as encouraging its use from a self-supporting perspective.

It is anticipated that this creates a more sustainable model for self service within the county. Stakeholders include; Ceredigion County Council, Hywel Dda University Health Board, Ceredigion's Association of Voluntary Organisations, Dyfed Powys Police and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

## Outcomes and achievements

Early referrals are being received from social services, hospital discharge team, occupational therapists, Macmillan, self referrals as well as from family and friends.

Over 100 referrals have been received in the first three months of service. Early indications are that this is filling a needed gap, offering the customer a more holistic service, ensuring solutions are sought around the person and or their family.

Furthermore, through this service PyG is able to

identify where the demand is, based on what the company is able to capture from conversations and importantly PyG is also able then to identify gaps in services and community based activities as well as barriers to uptake.

In a rural area where social isolation is an issue, transportation to activities which are offered as a solution are limited and thus can impact on the value of signposting. Capturing this information, will help measure the extent of the issue and inform potential targeted options to overcome such barriers to access.

# Valuing equality and diversity award

sponsored by 

This award recognises the work of housing associations, local authorities, or any organisation in the housing sector, in increasing diversity and equality. Shortlisted organisations will have developed excellent equality and/or diversity measures, and will have successfully implemented them. Shortlisted entries have demonstrated at least one of the following:

- an approach that recognises the diversity deficiency in housing leadership and has taken steps to addressing it
- increased diversity and equality in the workforce
- positive outcomes for specific groups that have previously been excluded, under represented, or that require additional support.

## Dads Can

### Monmouthshire Housing Association



Dads Can is funded by the Big Lottery to address the gender inequalities that exist within society so that fathers and father figures have a solid network of support across Monmouthshire and Newport.

Dads are referred to the scheme due to social services involvement, lack of engagement with support services, have a poor emotional connection with their children or lack of access, for offending reasons, mental ill health, vulnerability or the fact they live in poverty. Fathers are often discriminated against because society and support services generally focus at engaging mothers and children.

Dads Can supports dads in all aspects of future development offering a bespoke and innovative service that is male orientated. The project focuses on paving the way for political and organisational change so that society takes a more inclusive approach to engaging dads and they too get support they greatly need.

The project reduces the impact of traumatic events experienced by families. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) creates an increased risk to children's future development and therefore the project focusses on breaking this generational cycle through 1-2-1 emotional support and embedding positive behavioural change.

Dads Can uses a coaching approach to support dads in identifying solutions to problems they face such as low self-esteem, mental ill health, relationship breakdown, access to children and negative lifestyle choices.

Dads Can has created a network of support through peer mentoring, rolemodelling, advocacy and brokering relationships with local support providers. Dads Can also provides advice and guidance and opportunities to access family enrichment programmes.

As a result of services being mother focussed, many dads feel isolated during their child's early years. 75% of dads reported they felt excluded and alienated during this phase, so it is no surprise to find that 25% of dads experience depression in the first year, which is almost always undiagnosed. Early Years services are predominantly provided by females, creating a female orientated environment, one of which dads do not want to step into. Dads Can's work of co-delivering some of these sessions means that dads have had effective engagement in these programmes.

Statistics demonstrate that 15 year old children are more likely to have a smart phone than dad in the home and in Wales one in three children live without their father. The Family Courts now focus on equal access for both parents but problems arise when dads are stopped from seeing their children. Dads are often manipulated and are left unable to pay court



fees. Dads experiencing in work poverty, are often desperate to see their children but cannot access legal aid which in turn has a negative impact upon their health and lifestyle choices.

The Dads Can programme is now expanding into Blaenau Gwent in partnership with the Flying Start programme through the Welsh Government Legacy fund. The purpose of this partnership will be to expand support provision in a new county with the future aim of developing a 'Dads Can' Gwent wide provision.

## Testimonials

*"I have found dads can a very useful project for fathers who do not know where to start with support and are often reluctant to engage with support. Having a service dedicated to dads helps overcome stigma, supports them to link up with other services and ultimately can only help in supporting them to be better fathers to their children."*

Dawn Moore, Integrated Family Support Services.

*"This organisation means so much to me. If it wasn't for Dads Can I wouldn't have anyone to talk to in confidence for support morally and emotionally."*  
Ben Beynon, Dad.

## Outcomes and achievements

In the last year between our two development workers, we have worked in collaboration with over 100 organisations such as social services and Team Around the Family in supporting those engaged fathers.

Dads Can has provided support services to 120 beneficiaries and from this 79% of our dads have engaged with other agencies and 94% of our dads feel more confident and positive about their future.

Other results through our increased engagement with support services means we have supported 10 children being removed from the protection register through supporting our dads engage effectively with social services and develop into a positive role model.

In the last year Dads Can has delivered 700 hours of direct support through this work 55% of service users have a better relationship with their families. 16 dads have gained access to their children. 77% have improved their family quality time and two thirds are closer to the labour market.

# NuLife furniture

## Cadwyn Housing Association



NuLife Furniture was founded on equality of opportunity. Their core aim in 2014 was to provide affordable, reconditioned furniture to households across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. Over the last four years NuLife Furniture has furnished over 400 homes, and in doing so founded a training programme, carpentry workshop and white goods repair centre.

NuLife's guiding vision is that anyone who is referred or self refers to their scheme will get a placement, irrespective of their background, capabilities, any diagnosed conditions or any other previous history. The only requirement the company has is that their volunteers are willing to grow and commit to their volunteer development pathway.

This open door approach to volunteer recruitment and retention has meant that the company has massive diversity across their teams on a day to day basis, introducing life changing relationships to people with complex vulnerabilities who would normally be excluded from mainstream placements or from working alongside colleagues from more traditional work backgrounds.

At this point in time NuLife Furniture is employing adults with learning disabilities, individuals with substance misuse and dependency issues, care leavers, offenders with co-occurring complex needs, refugees and a range of skilled and semi-skilled workers. These placements all run alongside one another, not in isolation, giving all of NuLife Furniture volunteers the chance to work alongside each other, and gain the valuable learning that this diversity and integration offers.

At this point 44% of NuLife Furniture placements are allocated to adults with a diagnosed learning difficulty and 33% have a diagnosed mental health condition that has historically excluded them from work. Of these volunteers over half have history of poorly managed health conditions, relapse into substance misuse or risk taking behaviours or criminal offending, All of their work is integrated with our 'mainstream placements'. This approach has time and time again proven life changing.

## Testimonials

*"My life has totally changed and it's like I'm a new person. I'm living on a ward because of the offences I committed when I was living on my own. Since starting at NuLife I can manage my mood better, I've got motivation and a job I care about. I'm out in the community now, and on the way to having unescorted leave from my supervised hospital placement. Having this job at NuLife has given me a purpose. I'm mixing with people who've got no learning disability for the first time in ages, and it's helped me manage my*

*autism and offending behaviours really well. Before this I was only with people who'd offended or people with the same problems as me and that meant that I would never leave the ward I was on, and I'd be in my room constantly. NuLife is helping me to get better, and stopping me from re-offending by showing me that there's a different way to be. Before I was working here the chance of me re-offending and going back into hospital was massive, now I'm on my way to living in the community in a supported house. I haven't had the chance to be out in my own place for over five years. I wouldn't be here without NuLife"* Nathan, who joined NuLife Furniture placements in 2015.

NuLife Furniture's integrated placements change lives every day, whether it's someone returning to work because of their peer support environment, someone having the confidence to mix socially, or just someone feeling slightly better than they did before, it all stems from our inclusive approach to volunteer management, where everyone has equality of chance, a diverse and enriching community of peers around them and a new beginning.

## Outcomes and achievements

Of NuLife volunteers who have offending history recidivism has been reduced by 100%. None of the volunteers referred through the company's secure ward placement partnership have reoffended, where previously re-offending had been a regular occurrence in their case history.

Eight volunteers with complex mental health needs have secured their first ever mainstream paid employment after placement with NuLife.

NuLife delivered over 350 hours of integrated placements every week.

NuLife volunteers produce their seasonal product lines which they design, source the materials for and produce. They also then teach other volunteers how to make these products.

NuLife has supported 13 volunteers into other support, including money advice, counselling and careers advice.

Seven of NuLife's volunteers now provide supervision and support to other volunteers in a peer capacity.

# QED - quality in equality and diversity

## Tai Pawb with Melin Homes



Tai Pawb recognised that RSLs were keen to improve their performance on equality and diversity but didn't always know which areas to focus on or what constituted good practice, and so created QED (Quality in Equality and Diversity) in partnership with Melin. QED is a new quality mark which is transforming the Welsh social housing sector and setting a new standard of excellence in equality and diversity.

QED is a comprehensive, Wales specific framework for reviewing and improving the equality and diversity impact of housing associations across governance, services, access, involvement and culture. Melin acted as a pilot for QED, to help Tai Pawb refine and develop the QED process through carrying out a thorough assessment of Melin's work on equality and diversity and drawing up an extensive action plan for Melin to undertake over six months, before being reassessed. As a result of Melin's hard work and improvement through the QED process, in May they became the

first housing association in Wales to be awarded QED by an independent panel. The award was presented to Melin by renowned equalities campaigner Peter Tatchell, at Tai Pawb's annual conference.

QED uses a variety of methods, including staff and stakeholder surveys, staff and tenant focus groups, in-depth interviews with senior managers and board members and a full desktop assessment to gain a thorough understanding of equality and diversity practice and attitudes across a housing association's functions. QED looks at five key outcomes:

1. a clear strategic approach is taken to achieving equality in everything that the organisation does
2. services delivered are fair, don't discriminate and meet people's needs, continually responding to changes and challenges as they develop
3. all people are aware, can access and have positive experiences of services delivered
4. as a result of engagement, the organisation is fairer and more responsive in how it works and what it does
5. the organisation is an inclusive workplace with a culture which values, promotes and embraces equality and diversity.

The QED process allows Tai Pawb to identify areas for improvement in an RSL as well as highlighting examples of good practice. Housing associations that achieve QED will improve the experiences of their diverse tenants, customers and staff, be able to plan

for continuous improvement and will meet regulatory requirements in relation to equality and diversity. The QED mark is awarded for three years, with annual checks to ensure that the RSL is continuing to improve and embedding equality and diversity across all their work. Melin has found that their participation in QED has had an impact not only on outputs and outcomes, but also on the entire organisational culture and attitudes to equality and diversity.

Two further RSLs have now completed stage one of QED, with Tai Pawb drawing up detailed action plans for them to enact, while another RSL is currently undergoing assessment. Meanwhile, other RSLs are planning to start QED in the next year, and are preparing by increasing their activity on equality and diversity, training staff, setting up equality and diversity working groups and asking Tai Pawb to carry out equality health checks, to identify areas they can start working on in advance of the assessment. Melin has been helping other housing associations prepare for QED by sharing their experiences, giving advice on lessons learned, and acting as sector leader on equality and diversity.

Over time, through QED Tai Pawb is also building an understanding of trends and common issues shared by Welsh RSLs in relation to equality and diversity that will allow better targeted resources, support and campaigning to make the Welsh housing sector more inclusive and diverse.

## Outcomes and achievements

Melin has already seen a range of positive outcomes and achievements from participating in QED, including:

- increased understanding among staff of the purpose of gathering resident equalities data
- delivery of training on Islam, transgender awareness, domestic abuse and unconscious bias, which have improved attitudes towards equality and diversity
- a previously poorly-attended equality and diversity group now has a waiting list
- change in staff culture from an already friendly organisation to one which is more inclusive and where people are more aware of how what they say may affect others
- Melin board has greater awareness of their role with regards to equality and diversity and increased scrutiny of the business in terms of ensuring inclusivity and considering the equality impact of business decisions
- more robust policies and procedures, which are assessed for equality impact
- equality related questions embedded into the association's procurement process
- increased tenant engagement through a new digital initiative, which it is hoped will increase numbers particularly of BME, LGBTQ and younger residents
- monitoring reports of staff data carried out and compared with that of local populations, which will be used to assess and improve equality outcomes for staff.

# 'We All Matter' – tenant panel inclusion project

## Linc-Cymru with Linc-Cymru Tenant Panel



The Linc-Cymru tenant panel (an independently constituted strategic group) undertook a group self-evaluation with the support of an external consultant. Staff were not involved in the sessions and after two days they concluded that:

- there was a lack of diversity on the panel 'we're all white'!
- they would need to explore new ideas with the wider community about how to improve engagement techniques
- there were too many written rules weren't easy to work/understand
- that a new induction process was needed to get it right from the start
- that they would seek more referarrals from under-represented tenants utilising the skills of front line housing staff.

An action plan was agreed with the chair and the journey began. However, the catalyst for real change followed tenants attendance at a conference on domestic abuse by BAWSO. "This was a massive eye opener" which led to an ongoing interest and a increased understanding of a wider range of communities.

The panel identified the following underrepresented groups:

1. black and minority ethnic minorities (BME)
2. lesbian gay bisexual and transgender groups (LGBT)
3. young people
4. disabled people, especially those under represented such as those with a learning disability.

A summary of action taken is as follows:

**BME** - Linc-Cymru discussed taking positive action with housing staff, discussed language used, accessibility, times, dates, how the group is perceived, and whether all members were made to feel welcome. Linc-Cymru made inclusion a priority on every occasion. It was agreed that tenants, with their renewed vigour, would lead the induction process of involving new tenants. To support this Linc-Cymru we co-attended training and accessed more support externally as well as through the skills within the organisation. Most of all tenants were encouraged to challenge each other.

Tenants went out to tenants homes and we witnessed first hand a real effort to engage and bring in tenants from BME communities, one tenant said - *"I never knew you (tenant chair) were like this. I am definitely getting involved, I was a bit suspicious of you at first but yes I'm up for it."*

**LGBT** - one tenant said *"I'd love to do Pride and will do as despite my age (83) and religion which is against practicing homosexuality we must include everybody - that's why we're here - we've got to do it."*

The panel sought the assistance of housing staff to take positive action to seek the involvement of LGBT tenants. The panel sent the message that 'you could be whoever you wanted to be' as part of the panel. This also helped staff understand the panel more as a 'more inclusive and progressive' group.

Young people - more challenging but after unsuccessful attempts at engaging with young people at panel, plans were made to engage differently. Staff led community days were dropped and support was directed into the communities. With panel support young people are now being involved at a more local level such as 'Food and Fun, Our Suffragette Project, Lysaght Community Group, Morrison craft afternoon, local parents groups and more.

Disabled people - whilst disabled people were in fact more active on the panel, than people with a learning disability, the panel sought support from Cardiff People First and attended training run by people with a learning disability. With all these groups institutional barriers such as 'complicated reports, inaccessible language, cliques, homogeneity, etc' were explored and now accessibility is on everybody's agenda.

## Outcomes and achievements

'The Panel is different now - 'we have many new members'. They have recently considered the CHC Code of Governance. Some fab new outcomes and the journey continues!

### BME groups

- TP strengthened through equalities training and seminars
- TP has increased BME membership by a quarter
- they assessed equality and diversity practice by contractors
- rated 'excellent practice' Tai Pawb
- chair of panel - Tenant of the Year award (2018)
- TPAS - 'The TP is so diverse now'.

### LGBT tenants

Now represented and the atmosphere at panel meetings has become more open and friendly. Following a digital engagement session, newly involved tenants expressed an appetite for a LGBT group.

### Young people

- several under 25's have joined the panel's scrutiny group
- six young women have signed up to vote in the new youth Parliament
- young people linked up with their TRA to make a film short - 'Our Suffragette'.

### Project'

- 1,000's of young people (aged 11-16) have been engaged in other projects such as 'Steel Remembered' through schools.

### Disabled people

Taining with Cardiff People First (run by and for disabled people) has been set up and shortly after the panel successfully recruited.

Finally, one tenant has video blogged - emphasising inclusivity.

# Building safer communities award

sponsored by



This award recognises projects that are working to build safer communities, by addressing specific problems and supporting people who have experienced those issues. Projects have been initiated by any organisation, but must include an element that is housing-led. Partnerships between local authorities, housing associations and relevant non-sector partners/ services are also eligible. Shortlisted projects have been able to demonstrate tangible results as a direct result of the action taken. Shortlisted projects have addressed (but are not limited to) the following issues and areas of work:

- anti-social behaviour
- domestic abuse and violence against women
- modern slavery
- safeguarding
- drugs and alcohol.

## Compassionate approaches to ASB

### Trivallis



14% of Welsh adults have experienced four or more ACEs. Due to the current policy of allocating social housing according to need it's conceivable to think this proportion is higher in social housing. Considering the increased chances of using drugs, being a high risk drinker, violence and incarceration it's easy to see the correlation between ASB and ACEs.

The ACEs service review started with the team being trained in the impact of ACEs, how and why trauma creates behaviours that can intensify ASB and how to create psychologically informed environments. It developed an understanding that many people involved in ASB have challenges communicating

emotions which can lead to defensive or aggressive behaviours. These in turn can be destructive to relationships, leading to ASB escalating faster, exacerbating disengagement with relevant services. This better understanding of people's motivations has helped develop a non judgemental and kinder approach to service delivery

Trivallis's new approach acknowledges that ASB is a symptom of unmet needs or trauma. Therefore to deal with ASB effectively we have moved the focus of the service from the ASB incidents to the behaviours, strengths and needs of both parties involved.

Trivallis has spoken to perpetrators and victims who have experienced their services. They agreed that they feel more confident in a service that is delivered by experts. They wanted honesty and transparency about the options available, they wanted to be part of the decision making and they did not want to have to repeat their story.

As an RSL Trivallis recognises that early intervention in ASB disputes improves the outcomes not only for the individuals involved, but for the wider community. The company understands that this principle of effective case management is crucial not only for the most serious cases and comparatively isolated incidents of ASB, but where the cumulative nature of small anti-social acts create a significant and sustained impact on an individual or community.

Trivallis has moved from a more traditional approach of the case being investigated by a generic neighbourhood manager then passed to a specialist

community safety team as the case escalates, to one that frontloads the organisations expertise in ASB and support. This allows specialist staff to assess the case from the outset, inspiring confidence, managing expectations, building resilience, decreasing distress and minimising the re-traumatization that comes with multiple individuals handling a case. As such each case is triaged by the community safety officer who discusses it with the complainant to try to help them find a realistic and appropriate solution for them. If the case requires further intervention an action plan is created with the victim so they understand exactly what actions we are going to take and what they are expected to do. The case is allocated to a neighbourhood manager who visits and takes the case forward. Both the perpetrator and victim are allocated a support worker at this point. This enables specialist skills to be offered, and relationships to be built, with all parties right from the start.

This coordination and cooperation also ensures that Trivallis does not create a clash of internal processes as the case progresses. As Trivallis has gone through this process they have come to understand that

it's primarily the perpetrator who is in need of the specialist support, as it is their vulnerabilities resulting in chaotic behaviours causing the ASB.

Prior to taking any legal action a case conference is called between all parties to ensure that all support action required and all options have been exhausted.

### Customer case study

Mr R has frequent visitors to his address, he and his visitors are often drunk to a level police intervention is required. Mr M the victim has a heart condition, the stress and the worry about his neighbour's behaviour is exacerbating his condition. The usual process would have been to deploy a tenancy enforcement agreement. The new support first identified Mr R was using alcohol as pain relief which when resolved helped him reduce his alcohol intake and modify his behaviour. Mr M was helped to develop an understanding around Mr R which enabled them build a relationship, allowing them to manage any future incidents between themselves. Mr R has also taken part in community litter pick events.

### Outcomes and achievements

The project has had 76 cases of ASB incidents reported. 27 have now been closed, 13 of which were closed at the point of triage. This is a direct result of our early intervention and expert triage, which has

saved significant resources. Only one case has been re-opened. On average a case is open for 68 days which is a reduction from 71 days. None of the cases have been resolved through a legal intervention.

## Go girls ... 'every 30 seconds' ... working to create CSE hostile communities

### Bron Afon Community Housing with Pobl Group



Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is happening in communities and properties. It's not exclusive to Rotherham, Oxford or Birmingham, it's here, affecting Welsh tenants, their children. The typical housing

response is to evict for Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) with all the associated financial costs. A tenant is having numerous parties, lots of people back and forth to the property, neighbours complaining. Tenancy action begins. Should housing providers be digging deeper? Should the housing sector be looking at what lies beneath the surface, through the lens of CSE? The very real costs could be in human terms, for those young people who are affected and impacted, it can be life-long.

Through working with Go Girls, Bron Afon Community Housing has looked at a very different approach to prevention and stimulating building safer communities.

Go Girls is a social action group for change for young women, aged 15 to 25, empowering them to be the best they can be, building confidence and resilience. It is a partnership project with Bron Afon and Charter Housing with three themes; safer relationships, equality and diversity plus health and wellbeing. The girls have focused on child sexual exploitation, sharing experiences, learning from each other with a legacy of a strong support network.

The 'Go Girls' learnt about CSE, trafficking and modern day slavery, what it is, the signs, what to look out for and where to get support and help. For some, this included sharing their experiences, what had happened to them. They wanted to raise awareness, share their message, inform and educate professionals, prevent others becoming embroiled in this dark world and also show that there is a way out.

Supported with funding from Torfaen GUTS, the Go Girls became forum theatre trained. Working with Gwent missing persons they designed and developed the interactive forum theatre, 'Every 30 Seconds'. They are passionate about its delivery and launched at the Riverfront Theatre in Newport to a packed audience. It opens the eyes of the audience, young people and professionals, providing them with the understanding and an opportunity to intervene to change the course of events. For many professionals it really is a 'light bulb moment'.

They have delivered and engaged with 1,059 young people and professionals in five counties across the Gwent footprint in high schools, at the South East Wales Safeguarding Network, VAWDASVV conference and the launch of Free from Fear event, making it their mission to create CSE hostile communities and to provide awareness of trafficking and modern day slavery.

## Testimonials

*'Go Girls has helped me a lot by showing me how to be myself again.'*

*'Thank you again in making me part of this much needed project, the girls looked so happy and confident, they really owned the piece, their confidence improved, this could be a life changing moment for some or perhaps all of them'* Eleanor Shaw

*'Amazing! So powerful. Stark reminder of the realities so many girls face on a daily basis I wish I had this support when I was 15. Thank you so much for such an enlightening experience.'*

*'An inspiring presentation on young people making an impact and difference on ACEs'*

Eleri Thomas, Gwent Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.

*'Excellent way to bring CSE, Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery to the attention of young people and professionals!'*

## Outcomes and achievements

- delivery to professionals across the Gwent Footprint, raising awareness, stimulating thinking around where the housing association could have intervened and have changed the course of events?
- housing working differently, is this ASB or CSE? Being mindful of CSE lens
- increased intelligence and awareness has resulted in change of process and practice, linking CSE and community safety to influence and change our housing management response
- co-location of the Gwent Missing Persons team at Bron Afon headquarters, working together to create CSE hostile communities

- linking health, housing, education, police and social services through MASE
- young people delivering to other young people, creating the step change, enough is enough.

### Next Steps

- young people continue to be empowered to create 'step change' within our communities, Go Girls delivering to every High School in Torfaen
- development of CSE within Bron Afon's safeguarding and high risk escalation processes
- sourcing of funding to upscale the Go Girls Project, incorporating Every 30 Seconds Forum Theatre.



# Free from fear web portal

**Pobl Group with Bron Afon Community Housing, Charter Housing, Derwen Cymru, Melin Homes, Monmouthshire Housing Association, Newport City Homes, United Welsh Housing Association, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Tai Calon Community Housing, Tai Gwalia, Linc Cymru, Newport City Council and the Welsh Governments Regional DA Team, The South Wales Police Crime Commissioners Office partnership (which includes social housing providers Valleys to Coast, Vale of Glamorgan County Council, and Trivallis) Gwent Police and Crime Commissioners Office.**



The Free from Fear project started in 2014 when as a Gwent group of social landlords we came together to improve our response to domestic abuse. The introduction of an information sharing protocol on cases of domestic abuse with Gwent Police opened the company's eyes to the prevalence amongst their tenants. With a 500% increase in referral of cases, the company recognised the role of social landlords in combating domestic abuse affecting both our tenants and our employees. Whilst staff and contractors were trained to recognise signs, many lacked confidence to this into practice, particularly the case occurred a while after the training. Frontline staff needed a toolkit containing the right information and a prompt that provided this on the spot.

The project aims were to identify best practice and innovation in responding to those experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse and to produce a practical toolkit for operational staff in Gwent. With the introduction of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) (Wales) Act 2015, the project broadened its perspective and became involved in the pilot for Welsh Governments Ask and Act initiative.

Having funded their own research and paper-based toolkit, they realised that it was impractical to expect staff to carry this with them. The solution was [www.freefromfear.wales](http://www.freefromfear.wales) an online resource accessible on smartphones, tablets or laptops.

In 2016, the project sought grant funding from the Welsh Government's VAWDASV programme and in 2017 with staff, victims and specialists, developed an online toolkit based on the Welsh Governments 'Ask and Act' training framework. This provides easily accessible information on domestic abuse for staff, managers who support them or deal with more complex cases, and senior managers concerned with strategic approaches.

This digital solution shows how having information instantly accessible can improve the way in which staff can respond to people who need their help. Creative thinking has produced a portal which is designed so that staff, managers and others can immediately see which parts of the portal are relevant to them. The link to a staff prompt <https://www.freefromfear.wales/staff/creating-right-environment-tool-staff> is designed to change when viewed on a smartphone.

Its content needs minimal input as most links are to WG or specialist agencies who regularly update the information themselves. By pooling resources, sharing our ideas, concerns and practice Free from Fear has made this work a reality. The scale of the collaboration has been a great achievement, and a fantastic example of bringing many different partners together. Every member of the partnership has made a contribution collaborating on elements of the toolkit, sharing best practice, giving staff time and financial resources to achieve our goal. Importantly, the portal is welcomed by survivors of domestic abuse and specialist agencies and their input was invaluable as well as interest from police and how it may be adapted for use in social services.

Pobl Group believes that social housing can and should provide a gateway through which people experiencing abuse can access support, enabling them to achieve greater independence, improved resilience and a life free from fear.

## Testimonials

*"This has been a unique opportunity for social landlords (council and RSL) involved to learn from each other and work collaboratively together to develop processes and tools that will be of benefit to any of our tenants experiencing domestic abuse."*

Rachel Thornett, Caerphilly Council.

*"It's a one stop shop designed to equip any housing organisation to up the 'anti' and to be able to give anyone experiencing domestic abuse the confidence and reassurance that we, as their landlords, will be there to support and signpost them to the help that they need, when they need it."*

Kathryn Edwards Managing Director Pobl Homes and Communities.

## Outcomes and achievements

Free from Fear is leading the way in Wales tackling domestic abuse within the sector, it has

- influenced the VAWDASV agenda, ensuring social landlords are now part of the conversation
- built more positive relationships between tenants, staff and specialist agencies FFF demonstrates an amazing shift in thinking .... we must work together to tackle domestic abuse Shelter Cymru Twitter
- staff love it, they were involved in the design and testing. "The portal is an easy to use system which assists professionals day to day to enable them to best support and signpost victims of domestic abuse " Liz Davis, NCH
- staff more aware of domestic abuse and how to help

- tenants offered support earlier (reducing risk and escalation)
- more tenants disclosing; say they feel safer; more aware of support available; can stay in their home or move quickly and safely if needed; more likely to engage with specialist services for on-going support  
*'staff were great they responded quickly'* Linc tenant
- TWA reports fewer families in refuge
- cited best practice by Wales Audit Office.

The portal is now being used across Wales and being translated into Welsh, so all social landlords can improve their response and help people in Wales live 'Free from Fear'.

## Tackling loan sharks

### Tai Tarian with Coastal Housing and Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit



Tai Tarian was awarded a £6,000 grant from the Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit (WIMLU) and pledged to raise awareness of the dangers of illegal money lending amongst tenants, staff and the wider public.

Tai Tarian was keen to involve our tenants in the project to ensure the message was spread as far and as wide as possible. This was achieved by organising a co-design event in June 2017 for staff and tenants to plan what would be included in an informative leaflet about illegal money lending. It was then produced, printed and distributed to the company's various offices and included in new tenancy packs.

Tai Tarian encouraged tenant involvement in their 'Money Saving Matters' community event held in November 2017, where a number of local Tai Tarian residents attended and helped out on the day. At the event, there were stallholders from various local

agencies, such as Credit Union, Welfare Rights, DWP, Welsh Water and the Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit, to name a few. These organisations were able to offer support and advice relating to money management.

Working with the organisational development department, an e-learning module about loan sharks and illegal money lending has been produced which has gone out to all Tai Tarian staff. The company hopes that this will increase awareness amongst staff and allow them to spot the signs if a tenant is in danger.

A large part of the project involved Tai Tarian producing a video that tells the reconstructed true story of a Tai Tarian tenant who had been the victim of a loan shark for over four years. The company worked closely with the tenant to ensure the film was a true representation of his story. The short film tells the story of his frightening ordeal and how he overcame his financial difficulties through the help of our Financial Inclusion Team.

A link to both versions of the short film are below:

English - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZ4Sne0wdxY>

Welsh - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKBppY3rm1U>

Various media sources have picked up on the story, including BBC Wales Today, Wales Online, South Wales Evening Post, Swansea Sound and The Wave. Tai Tarian's illegal money lending campaign has achieved a reach of 1.5 million people.

The campaign has been a huge success and Tai Tarian's has had a number of tenants approach them to say how well the issue was portrayed and they would be delighted if Tai Tarian were fortunate enough to win the award. The tenant whose story was voiced

by an actor in the film watched the video and sent a text message with feedback as follows:

*"Just watched the film. It brought back a lot of feelings about the situation I was in, hope that people that are in the same predicament that I was in watch your film*

*and get the help which I received from Tai Tarian. You totally changed my life and I can't thank everyone at Tai Tarian enough who do this excellent work in helping people who are in trouble financially or otherwise. Keep up the good work and thanks for everything".*

## Outcomes and achievements

The grant was used to action the following outcomes and achievements:

Outcomes:

- holding a co-design meeting to agree the content of an informative leaflet warning against the dangers of loan sharks
- producing and distributing the leaflet
- organising and holding a "Money Saving Matters" community event for residents, staff and local agencies
- producing an e-learning module about loan sharks
- producing a video (reconstructed true story of a tenant). Please see links below:

English - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZ4Sne0wdxY>

Welsh - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKBppY3rm1U>

- using media sources to reach over 1.5 million people
- tenants have provided feedback to say how well the issue has been portrayed.

Achievements:

- the initiative demonstrates our commitment to invest in our communities and deliver what matters to our customers by providing guidance about how to stay safe and deal with dangers such as illegal money lenders
- we have successfully delivered this initiative using the principles of co-design by harnessing all community assets to achieve a safer outcome.

# Working with other sectors award

sponsored by **resource**  
making it happen\*

This award recognises the projects that require the involvement of organisations from outside the housing sphere. Partnerships with sectors like health, education, personal finance, are examples, but any project that requires the involvement of a non-housing collaboration will be considered. Shortlisted projects have been able to demonstrate:

- That the project required the involvement of a non-housing collaboration to deliver the desired results
- That housing was an important partner in delivering the project
- Improved outcomes for local people or service users
- Value for money

## Autism in social housing

### Mi-Space and Outside



In early 2017 Mi-Space's team of Tenant Liaison Officers (TLO's) reported that during the course of their work, they were encountering a significant increase in the number of residents advising that one or more of the occupants in the home were being diagnosed with Autism or a related condition. With the aim of better understanding this increasingly common condition, Mi-Space sought to find out more about the condition with a view to training their workforce about the condition, only to find that there was little by way of opportunities to learn about Autism. There was no information available on how to adjust working methods in the social housing sector in order to respond to the needs of residents with this diagnosis.

After a considerable amount of research, Mi-Space discovered a small start-up business called AutSiDe Education & Consultancy Limited in South Wales. After explaining their needs to AutSiDe, Mi-Space felt this provider of specialist advice on Autism was the perfect partner to analyse their working methods and prepare a training module for their workforce on how to better deliver their services in the homes of residents with this and other related conditions.

In order for Donna Sharland and Emma Durham of Outside to understand Mi-Space's activities in social housing, it was necessary to embed them in their workforce on several of their social housing projects in Wales. After visiting all of Mi-Space's active Welsh Project, they were able to understand the true impact of repairs and upgrades in occupied premises on the residents with the condition of Autism.

Armed with this information, Donna & Emma set about preparing their training module called 'Autism in Social Housing' in consultation with Mi-Space and ultimately created a unique and highly informative presentation on the subject. As the presentation evolved, Mi-Space realised that it would only be right to share the training opportunity with its supply chain and partners in the social housing sector.

Launching the first lecture at Liberty Stadium, Swansea on 29th March during National Autism Awareness Week Mi-Space in partnership with Outside delivered their first lecture to Mi-Space staff and supply chain, representatives from local authorities and housing associations and members of national government agencies and third sector parties. The success of this

lecture led to the event being repeated in Merthyr Tydfil on the 3 May and at the offices of Wales and West Housing on 18 June.

The lecture provided each of the attendees with “a background understanding of what autism is and how it impacts daily life, the ability to apply this

knowledge to acknowledge potential barriers it may pose specifically in the Social Housing sector while identifying strategies for effective management and enable you to assist autistic individuals and their families, while improving their living conditions and fulfilling their duty to social housing associations.”

## Outcomes and achievements

*“I recently attended the Autism in social housing training in Merthyr Tydfil delivered by Mi-Space in partnership with AutSiDe. The training was excellent and I would highly recommend it to other organisations. We were so impressed we hosted the next event at our Head Office in Cardiff which also received fantastic feedback from our staff.”*

Carly Hodson, Head of People Development - Wales & West Housing

*“As an experienced lecturer in the field of Autism, it’s rare to see private sector companies taking such active steps to respond to the needs of the non-neurotypical community, better still, sharing their knowledge openly.*

*Additionally, Mi-Space’s commission of AutSiDe has enabled me to take my start up consultancy to the next level and to offer more training to a broader audience”.*

Donna Sharland, Director of AutSiDe Education and Consultancy Ltd

Venue	Swansea	Merthyr Tydfil	Cardiff (Wales and West)
No’s Trained	41	33	25

In total 99 people have received the training module “Autism in Social Housing”.

## Fit & fed

**Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association with Street Games Wales, Cwm Taf Health Board, Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil, Interlink, Merthyr Tydfil CBC, RCT CBC, 3G’s youth project, The Willows Youth Forum, Pant and Dowlais Boys and Girls Club, Treharris Boys and Girls Club, The Gellideg Foundation, Think Family - MIA (Multiple intervention Assistance) & Barnardo’s.**



At the end of the 2017 summer school holidays Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association became acutely aware of the increasing demands placed on family finances during school holidays after consultation with families who accessed their youth group activities. Many families detailed how they struggled to find the additional finances required both to feed their

children and providing activities for them through the school holidays, this is exacerbated further during the longer summer holiday. The housing association realised that in order to provide assistance to not only Merthyr Housing tenants but the whole community they would need to engage with partner agencies in order to tackle the problem on as wide a scale as possible.

Using their position as a community based organisation the MTHA was already linked with many local organisations that were also looking to tackle the problem. Through attending participation meetings with local youth group providers and the local youth service, as well as linking in with the local health board and Street Games Wales they felt they could improve the situation at a local level significantly. Through these meetings it soon became apparent that all the partners from health, the local authority, the youth service, Street Games Wales and Housing all had a similar agenda but were individually unable to address the problem. Through working together however we were able to pool our respective resources and endeavor to ensure that young people throughout the whole of the borough were able to access free activities with free healthy meals and snacks regularly throughout the school holiday period.

Each of the partner organisations brought its own specialism and value to the group and the role of Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association was to access funding streams and co-ordinate the delivery of the programme. Having successfully obtained funding through the local health board Merthyr Housing

became the grant recipient and have overseen the delivery of the project as well as co-ordinating the monitoring to ensure that the benefits of the programme are able to be effectively detailed. This was the key role in the success of the delivery of the project as all sites and delivery agents needed to sign up to the ethos of the programme and deliver the set standard while also being allowed to deliver a programme that suited their specific area and young people. This created many difficulties but through working together with each of the sites and creating a service level agreement they were all able to agree to work in a very similar way but at the same time having the flexibility to deliver the scheme in different ways.

This style of collaborative working has allowed the project to improve the overall service offered to young people in the borough over the school holidays. It has also had a huge impact in ensuring that vulnerable young people are given the opportunity to attend free leisure provision and have been able to eat healthy meals and snacks at least three times per week throughout the entirety of the school holidays. Possibly the most important outcome for service users both current and in the future is that the project has created a replicable template for future and on-going

projects. Through the collaborative approach the cost of the programme has been minimised by using the expertise of all those involved and by not having to buy in services the funding of less than £13,000 has been adequate to provide the service across 7 sites for the 6 weeks holidays as well as 2 further half term periods ensuring that the project delivers exceptional value for money.

*"Young people have reported back that it has been a fantastic summer of activities for them. We would love to see this initiative happen each year as this has been a fantastic engagement tool for youth workers."*  
(Troedyrhiw Boys & Girls Club)

*"Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association really do know the meaning of true partnership working and put it into practice-we look forward to further collaborations!"*  
(Interlink & Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil)

*"MTHA have co-ordinated seven community sites, supporting local organisations to effectively provide: healthy and nutritious meals for young people, positive sporting opportunities, and a safe environment where young people can play, socialise, grow, develop and even volunteer."* (Street Games Wales)

## Outcomes and achievements

The original outcomes for the project were to tackle holiday hunger by providing several free meals a week for young people who might otherwise go without during school holidays and also to provide these young people with access to leisure activities. The project has been more successful than MTHA hoped for with each of their partners delivering a varied and eclectic mix of activities for young people that has improved health and wellbeing and ensured they are able to eat healthy meals through a period where they may otherwise be at risk of social isolation, malnutrition and multiple other deprivations. They

have far exceeded their original projections for engagements over the holiday period with over 500 young people accessing the provision with all of these young people receiving free access to activities as well as healthy eating and snacks. While the young people accessing the service will benefit from the scheme and the associated outcomes of improved health and wellbeing, the biggest achievement of the project is the collaborate approach. This approach has developed a template which will enable the long term viability of the project ensuring that many more young people will benefit in the future.

# Parenting support nightingale house

## Cadwyn Housing Association with Flying Start



Nightingale House is a 26 bedroom hostel for families experiencing homelessness, managed by Cadwyn Housing Association. Nightingale House approached Flying Start to develop a joint initiative in April 2017 to jointly deliver two specific courses aimed at improving the parenting skills and resilience of families. Parent Nurturing is a ten week course which centres on wellbeing and resilience of parents, while covering strategies to positively respond to and manage children's behaviour. Gro Brain is a six week course which focuses on pregnancy through to one year old and teaches parents about bonding and attachment and how parents can lay the foundations for their child's life long emotional wellbeing.

Before the collaboration, Flying Start delivered the courses in the community therefore interested residents would have to travel with their children to attend off-site locations. A large percentage of Cadwyn Housing Association's residents are fleeing domestic abuse so travelling was a safety concern. They are acutely aware that the majority of their residents have experienced trauma and often find it difficult to build up relationships with unknown professionals. The association found these factors put off residents or they found it too difficult to manage and stopped attending.

The association took the decision to train Nightingale House staff to deliver the courses alongside Flying Start in-house because they felt they could overcome the barriers above. Delivering the courses in the

hostel helped residents feel more relaxed in familiar surroundings. Central to the support they offer at Nightingale is the strong relationship between staff and residents, and Cadwyn Housing Association felt that by including Nightingale staff in the delivery of the courses, engagement would increase. Diane Brookes (Flying Start) stated *"Key staff at the Hostel recognised the benefit of joint delivery, which has enabled a pooling of resources and experience in order to deliver a quality provision. By working in partnership, it allows the residents to have 'wrap around' support, through familiarity of staff and venue. This allows residents to have continued support from a facilitating key worker following on from a session. This is unique to this partnership."*

They also trained a male member of staff who is currently the only male delivering the courses in Cardiff. We recognised that previous delivery of the courses off site were delivered by an all-female team and felt it was important the courses were attractive to male residents also. Aileen Johnson (Flying Start) said *"It is always more beneficial for the families to have people who already know them. Particularly as some of the parents feel vulnerable and feel they can't trust other people who they don't know. I have delivered PNP twice in Nightingale and both times have been successful. Part of the reason for this is due to the fact that staff in Nightingale have built up good relationships with the families already and they therefore feel more comfortable attending."*

There was no cost involved in this collaboration. The training courses for Nightingale staff were free. Nightingale provided complimentary crèche facilities for the children and a training room for the course to be delivered.

With the growing awareness of the impact of ACE's it is even more evident that a child needs a safe and nurturing home environment and upbringing. The association identified that these courses would directly mitigate many of the concerns that can lead to Social Services' involvement and in some cases have led to children being removed from the register. With a further proven benefit of the courses reducing longer term reliance on health services through parents making healthier, better-informed decisions, this collaboration has now become a fundamental part of our support to all of our homeless families.

## Outcomes and achievements

Since April 2017, 20 families have engaged with Gro Brain and Parent Nurturing. 90% successfully completed 6 weeks of Gro Brain and 10 weeks of Parent Nurturing. This is an impressive completion rate given the nature of our client group who often have chaotic lifestyles. Cadwyn Housing Association was able to identify families who needed extra support e.g. a young mum disclosed that she was suffering from postpartum psychosis. Hostel staff ensured she received specialist support which resulted in her getting appropriate treatment and being able to continue to care for her son.

The courses covered areas such as honouring children's feelings, nurturing ourselves, how stress impacts on children & praise. At completion, 100%

of families rated their confidence levels as either confident or very confident.

100% of families who completed said they would recommend the course to others.

Feedback included:

- *'I am becoming a calmer, less agitated mother who is shouting less and enjoying spending time with my daughter.'*
- *'I am more patient and empathetic as a parent.'*
- *'I realise now that I require nurture so I am re-fuelled during the day with my daughter.'*
- *'I am playing more with my son. I have a better understanding of my children's feelings.'*



# Empowering and involving communities award

sponsored by  united living

This award recognises successful approaches to involving, empowering and supporting tenants and residents to shape services, to drive improvements and to deliver meaningful change in an organisation or with the community. Shortlisted projects have been able to demonstrate at least one of the following:

- That community members have helped to shape how a service is delivered, showing tangible benefits to the new approach
- That community members have been empowered to drive improvement in any aspect of the business, showing the results of any improvement with a before and after scenario
- That a community has seen meaningful change as a result of an organisations work to support community members to deliver it - this must be supported by evidence of change.

## Loftus Village Association Housing Co-op

### Pobl Group with Loftus Village Association



Loftus Village Association Housing Co-operative (LVA) is a vibrant and inspirational housing project that has empowered 19 individuals and families to work together to create a thriving new community in East Newport.

LVA is Newport's first and only housing co-operative and the only shared ownership/multi-tenure co-op in the UK is one of three pioneer co-operative housing schemes started with the support of Welsh Government.

Creating a housing co-op has been a huge learning curve for Pobl as an organisation and for the co-operators. Very few of the involved knew anything at all about co-operative housing (which comes in many forms) and so they have built and learned together.

It has been a sometimes bumpy journey involving much patience, flexibility and learning on all sides. For

the co-operative members it has been about gaining the confidence and skills to take on responsibility for their homes and their community.

The co-op collects the rent on behalf of Charter, deals with low level arrears, neighbourhood nuisance, stair casing up, and new members. Pobl staff have had to learn to let go and entrust key management functions to an embryonic group.

Before moving in two years ago they would be co-operators met fortnightly for over a year tussling with the complex tasks of co-writing management agreements, rent collection and arrears policies, as well as their own constitution and rules. A lot of this work was detailed, tedious, and hard work.

When they moved in the reality of living co-operatively literally hit home. The theory has been a reality for two years and now LVA is continuing to grow in confidence, take on new challenges, and discover more about themselves and what being a co-op really means.

They've been courageous, taking Pobl and the local authority to task about speeding motorists and working with Sustrans to introduce traffic calming measures in their street.

They've been tenacious, badgering to get the changes needed to transform a communal garage into a building they can use as an indoor meeting space.

Their beautiful communal garden is a tribute to the energy and commitment of several members who work to create a place of beauty and calm.

They've used the power of collective bargaining to gain fantastic members rates for household costs e.g. boiler servicing and energy bills.

They have fulfilled all their housing management tasks, not only do they have 0% rent arrears but have successfully let one home and arranged the resale of another.

The Co-op has gardening tools which they all share. Due to popular demand a larger mower was bought this year. By sharing the mower they can save up to £2,000 on their household spend.

The Co-op has worked hard to bring the wider community together. It has organised events in the community including Christmas carol singing, Halloween and Easter fun days, street play days, and informal social gatherings in the street, to which they have invited the whole neighbourhood.

Local children (some who don't live in the street but live nearby ) have helped out with the community garden and enjoyed learning the joy of growing.

Their recent Playing Out Day helped local children to play safely in the street, banning motor vehicles for the day. The Co-op organised the road closure, and bought play equipment including chalk, hula hoops and skipping ropes.

Not everything has been rosy. There have been differences in opinion, apathy from some, some very complex and particular challenges , and the grumbling that we all excel at.

But the Co-op and Pobl are still working at it. Between them they provide a fantastic example of empowering and involving communities.

## Outcomes and achievements

- the creation of Newport's first housing co-operative
- 19 individuals trained and upskilled in areas of housing management and co-operative principles
- the creation of a safe, green, inclusive and self-reliant community
- creating a new co-operative housing legal and financial model for others to adopt
- achieving a greener environmentally sustainable community with shared resources
- reducing the streets carbon footprint by sharing resources
- challenging and changing driving behaviour to create a safer street
- reducing members' household costs by collective bargaining
- run a community garden and food growing project to promote education and social interaction through vegetable gardening
- 100 % of rent collected / 0% rent arrears.
- promoting a sense of identity and belonging and making a big contribution to community cohesion in the whole neighbourhood
- promoting democracy by using Dotmocracy as a way of making decisions. (This is where you use a limited number of dot stickers to vote on an issue)
- recognised by Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations for its work to offer alternative uniting, caring and sharing activities
- commended by Renew Wales for its work in helping to create a greener more sustainable Wales
- providing learning activities for local children (not just Co-op members).

# Saving the Terrace

## Family Housing Association with Tenants living at Hazel Court



### Hitting a brick wall

Saving the Terrace had hit a brick wall! At least this is how it felt in Hazel Court, one of their extra care schemes in Swansea which provides homes for 150 tenants in 120 flats.

The association's problem was that their sub-contracted restaurant just wasn't making money and hadn't been making any money for years - and this couldn't continue!

They had been heavily subsidising the restaurant every year. There had been a decline in the number of tenants using it and the withdrawal of the council providing care meals, meant the losses were increasing. They knew that many other housing associations had removed catering provision as they too were making a loss. However after consulting with all the association's tenants who told them how important it was they wanted it to find a way for it to continue - closure would be a last resort.

### A radical approach

With a small working group consisting of tenants and FHA staff, along with the support of a consultant we decided to enter a competitive dialogue process. Saving the Terrace established what the "ideal service" would be for their tenants and for FHA and produced a service brief which they promoted on Sell2Wales, social media and sent directly to a number of small local businesses.

They proactively invited organisations and small business to meet with them, tour the premises, meet with tenants, gave them all the current financial information and were very open about the current situation.

### The selection

Saving the Terrace selected six organisations to come and speak to them, made up of contract caterers, private local businesses and a social enterprise.

Each organisation was interviewed by the working group made up of tenants, FHA frontline staff and managers. As you can imagine each organisation came with very different ideas and plans about how to provide the service and different financial proposals. Each were asked a range of questions from tenants and staff to further understand what was being proposed.

Each organisation was scored by each member of the working group, each score holding equal weighting between tenants and staff.

At the end of the day everyone was unanimous about who to shortlist and the association chose three organisations to move into a competitive tender process.

### Breaking through

Each of the organisations submitted a tender and a panel of two staff and two tenants, again with equal votes evaluated the tenders and selected a new organisation to provide the catering.

The association developed a new vision of what the service should look like for the tenant, opting to move from a sub-contractor relationship to simply leasing the restaurant, kitchen and all the equipment to the new provider (or tenant as they are now called!)

### The Future

A local business with a number of other restaurants (which were thought highly of by the tenants!) won the tender process. Saving the Terrace are still at the start of their journey and they have been in place for just over two months.

### Tenants views

Layton said: *"It was very satisfying and much appreciated."*

Naomi *"Felt disempowered due to ill health and I lost my job, this made me feel empowered in life. " Naomi has since being involved in the restaurant asked to get involved in the tenants' panel."*

## Outcomes and achievements

Saving the Terrace now have a new leaseholder who is really developing the restaurant to reach its full potential and they're excited about the future. So far, they have seen:

- improvement in the quality and options of food provided – including food cooked to order – something believed to be out of reach previously!
- extended opening hours
- engagement with tenants to ensure they are providing a service that they want

- bringing in new trade from the surrounding area further helping to make Hazel Court a community resource
- feedback from tenants has all been very positive and they are supportive of the new venture
- feedback from tenants about the whole process was really positive and they feel valued and involved in the running and strategic direction of Hazel Court.

In addition there has been greater involvement of tenants in all aspects of Hazel Court e.g. staffing structures, recruitment of staff, parking solutions.

## The feeling is mutual

### Bron Afon Community Housing



Bron Afon's mutuality approach means that community involvement is not just an activity. As a core value it's a way of working that underpins the decisions they make, the services they provide and the direction that they take as an organisation.

Bron Afon membership has grown to almost 2000 people who have a say in influencing the services it provides. This makes it one of the largest community mutuels and co-operatives in the country.

While others may be withdrawing they are maintaining their community presence and they will see increasing pressure on their services in consequence. In this context their customers will play an increasingly critical part in defining what their priorities are and how they can best deliver effective and appropriate services that provide all round value for money.

This has been achieved through the following:

- mutual futures - provides opportunities for Bron Afon Community Housing to extend their wider membership to help shape and influence at a strategic level, it is a key priority and is achieved

through meetings at key intervals throughout the year for them to listen to the views, comments and suggestions of our members which help to shape our future services.

- Tenant Services Forum – ensures Bron Afon review performance against service standards and tenant satisfaction levels and agree, where appropriate, plans to deliver improvement or change.
- the scrutiny team – as an independent group they oversee Bron Afon's policies and procedures ensuring that they are fair for all, fit for purpose and provide value for money. An example of this is during the review of the Responsive Repairs service the team identified the need for an up to date Recharge policy that all departments adhere to.

Currently Bron Afon is unable recoup monies lost due to tenant responsibility repairs. As a result of these findings the director of property and development has commissioned a working group to create and implement a new procedure.

The chair of the scrutiny team commented that, the process was enlightening and it was great to see their recommendations addressed.

Bron Afon has a variety of additional groups that offer tailored involvement that help to support the needs and interests of our members.

These include;

- equality and diversity reference group
- complaints forum
- Afon Retirement Forum fire safety group – a founder member commented that, he feels safe living in his high-rise block and is pleased with the new approach and innovative ideas that the group have brought forward
- leasehold group.

As well as formal involvement Bron Afon's officer works across the borough undertaking community

development work, supporting people and communities to bring about change that is important to them locally, to create sustainable, resilient and thriving places where people feel proud to live and work. They provide bespoke support, training and development for local groups and community champions so that they are able to deliver community specific action plans tailored in accordance with local need and priorities.

Examples include;

- Membership Academy - free online and workshop based training. Donna, a member, shared her delight in securing employment as a direct result of undertaking the training
- development of a new Youth Club in Garnsychan.

- a range of Intergenerational projects that challenge perceptions of age and combat loneliness such as a nursery visiting a retirement scheme, youths supporting older people with gardening projects and the Never Too Old Project
- a dementia project
- development of children's play spaces
- community food share scheme, the chair of Northville Community Group commented that, this is a fantastic new project that will provide much needed support for families in the community that are in food poverty
- environmental initiatives e.g. community orchard and edible landscape project.

## Outcomes and achievements

Bron Afon's new way of working has seen a great commitment from local people who have contributed to a range of decisions, improvements and projects. They have reached a total of 2783 members which is an increase of 635 people this year, with over 3250 volunteer hours invested in Bron Afon.

- 97% of members advised that they had gained new or useful information and felt that their views were valued
- 98% of members felt that they were able to make a contribution and were listened to

- Bron Afon is currently supporting 63 community groups and have secured £60105.00 to deliver community based projects. A member of the St Dials Action Group recognised Bron Afon's Community Involvement Officer and said he is amazing at helping us with applications for funding, courses and support us to make their community a safer place
- 100% of people within our communities felt supported and empowered to make a change in their community, as a result their personal sense of wellbeing and quality of life has improved
- The Bron Afon trust has awarded over £17000 to support local groups to deliver a range of community focused activities that provide opportunities for people to be socially included and realise their potential.

# Customer and digital services task and finish group

## Newport City Homes



The Customer Services task and finish group was set up to assist NCH in developing truly customer focused service standards that put residents at the heart of its services and activities. Its aim was to ensure that tenants would be directly involved in the decision making process of developing customer services standards and in developing mechanisms, through which, NCH residents would receive these services and give feedback.

Prior to the group being set up, the situation was as follows:

- the existing customer service standards had not been fully adopted across NCH and many staff and residents were not aware of them
- feedback regarding the NCH website was that it was cluttered, out of date and difficult to navigate. Monitoring the site revealed it wasn't visited regularly and many visits were to the recruitment pages. Residents didn't find it a useful way to gain information about NCH
- NCH had not circulated a resident satisfaction survey for some time, so satisfaction data was old and based on a Welsh Government survey from two years before
- many residents felt that it was difficult to attend area housing offices, with some needing to catch multiple buses or to walk considerable distances to get to an office where they could meet staff face to face.

The Customer Services task and finish group recruited a team which involved a mix of previously involved residents and some who had never been involved. They were a mix of residents from different areas of the

city, made up of contributors from seven communities, aged between 23 and 76 and involving residents with mobility issues and sight impairments, as it was important to get the perspective of our diverse community members and their specific needs.

As a result of the group's work, a new STAR satisfaction survey was created. The survey was circulated to 25% of residents every quarter, to rule out seasonal trends, so that after 12 months, all residents would have been surveyed, giving us a citywide picture of resident satisfaction.

A delegated sub-group helped to appoint the web developers that would build the new NCH website. The wider group then worked with NCH and The Customer Services task and finish group's consultants to develop a new, more responsive website, which residents can log into, accessing services directly and undertaking some self-service activities. They tested the content and navigation of the site prior to construction and, once built, tested the site before it went live. They also prompted the organisation to undertake online Q&A sessions to reach residents that don't traditionally engage. NCH also now provide a web chat option for residents to be able to contact someone live via the website ([www.newportcityhomes.com](http://www.newportcityhomes.com)).

As a result of consultation with residents across the city and in conjunction with the group, NCH have opened a new drop in face to face office in the centre of Newport, directly opposite the bus station, in order to make the organisation more accessible to the group's residents.

Perhaps most importantly, the group, working with staff and senior managers, developed NCH's new Customer Service Standards. The combined group undertook customer journey mapping to examine The Customer Services task and finish group's existing services and then went on to work together on making improvements and developing new service standards. As a result of this project, all staff across NCH have received direct training on the standards from the customer experience manager, and the standards have been published and made visible to the residents. The most obvious example of this is in the group's new face to face office, where they are displayed on a large wall section, which residents can write on, giving their feedback about if they think the group is achieving its customer service standards.

## Outcomes and achievements

- increased use of online services
- improved service delivery through website - 261 enquiries in 1st month, average wait time 11 seconds
- self-service provision on website - 143 case create and 140 resolutions in 1st month these are available out of hours, with plans to expand range of services over time
- new city centre office delivered next to bus station reducing travel time for many residents *"Better location, easier to get to than Nexus House" - Jim from Duffryn. "This office is much better! Far less of a walk for me... I told them at Nexus and they listened..." - anonymous, Ringland*
- involving residents in service reviews embedded through new customer service standards recent letting review a key example 744 residents contacted and 94 fed into review
- satisfaction survey conducted, 15% response rate. 5 key themes identified and actions undertaken to address issues raised e.g. operations undertaken with police to improve community safety, more staff recruited to improve call handling times, a new caretaking team recruited to improve environment of our communities and our customer services focus has been changed to focus on resolution at first point of contact and our Resident Services team has been restructured to reflect this focus.

# Customer excellence award

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The judges have been looking for an excellent approach to customer services that can show high levels of satisfaction for the service delivered. Shortlisted entries have demonstrated employee engagement in customer service, and shown improvements across the business. We have looked at both your overall approach and specific outcomes achieved. The judges have been looking for entries to demonstrate examples that may include:

- high levels of satisfaction achieved
- employees who are fully engaged with customer service
- “before and after” evidence of improvements gained by developing better customer service

## Customer insight strategy

**Valleys to Coast with Energise Learning and Development Ltd, Mustard Research Ltd, Greenstone Data Solutions Ltd and Institute of Customer Service**



### Statement of Support

Valleys to Coast’s key strategic priority is about putting customers at the heart of their business - but they needed to understand how customers felt about them and the quality of their services. They wanted to find out what was important to their customers and then use this insight to change the way their colleagues interact and behave with customers, and change the way they deliver their services to improve the overall customer experience.

Valleys to Coast created their Customer Insight strategy to gain this knowledge and analysed this data so they could understand the key drivers behind their customer satisfaction. They worked with 3 key partners to pull together a comprehensive approach to understanding their customers and then turning this

knowledge into actionable insight that they could use to put into practice what they mean by ‘customers at the heart of their business’.

The strategy comprises four integrated elements and was approved by their board in September 2017:

- 1) The business purchased data from Greenstone Data Solutions Ltd that enabled them to build a profile of their customers - they matched data to 70% of their customers and they began to understand the size and composition of their households; where and how customers spent their money; levels of debt they managed; how they used the internet and their shopping preferences; the newspapers and media they engaged with - and a whole lot more - a level of understanding Valleys to Coast had never achieved before.
- 2) Valleys to Coast instigated a telephone based survey with their research partner Mustard Research Ltd. A customer is included within their survey sample after a key service interaction (a repair to their home; a new letting; a gas boiler service; completion of planned works or engagement with their Money Matters team). The survey measures customer satisfaction with the service they have just received and overall satisfaction with Valleys to Coast as an organisation. It also measured the extent they were ‘fans’ of Valleys to Coast by asking them how likely they would be to recommend Valleys to Coast to their friends and family - this generated our Net Promoter Score (NPS). This monthly survey means they engage with over 1200 customers during the year - that’s feedback from 20% of our customer base. Customers are telling them to make it easier for them to contact, engage and transact with Valleys to Coast.



3) Understanding why customers felt the way they did demonstrated how important colleagues were in delivering these services - it highlighted the value placed on Valleys to Coast people by our customers who said colleagues were polite, friendly, understanding and caring but Valleys to Coast were aware that some colleagues were better at displaying this than others! So they developed the Building Excellent Service Together (BEST) programme with Energise Learning and Development Ltd, with the aim of training every colleague on what they mean by great customer experience; how they might deliver that and how they can help others across the organisation deliver great experience, time and again. Energise helped the business to develop their bespoke BEST programme meeting with 70 colleagues, as well as our Board members and customers, to

understand service issues and their frustrations, and what is working really well or could be improved - the programme was written both colleagues and customers - this wasn't an 'off the shelf' customer service programme!

4) Valleys to Coast became a member of the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) so could access the latest research and thinking about great customer experiences and also benchmark themselves against the best customer focused organisations in the UK.

knowledge to acknowledge potential barriers it may pose specifically in the Social Housing sector while identifying strategies for effective management and enable you to assist autistic individuals and their families, while improving their living conditions and fulfilling their duty to social housing associations.

## Outcomes and achievements

In less than 12 months Valleys to Coast used this understanding to inform changes they made to their service:

- 1) Implemented Webchat so customers could talk with them directly on their website
- 2) Introduced Homehunt (first RSL in Wales!) - automating their current process and making it easier for customers to apply for a home
- 3) Valleys to Coast used SMS text messaging to confirm individual home repair appointments, send reminders and tell customers when they're on their way!

All Valleys to Coast colleagues (240) have been through their BEST training programme - they now have a new and unique customer service language they use around the business! Colleague satisfaction with BEST programme was 96.81% - highest ever rating!

Customer Satisfaction (Overall Service Quality) measured by Mustard has increased by 7% to 85.6% since May 2017.

Customer NPS increased to +55 in August 2018 from the baseline we undertook with the ICS in December 2017 at +37.6.

In April 2018 Valleys to Coast used the Greenstone data to work with 603 households they identified might have struggled to meet the Rent increase - their Money Matters team secured further benefits totalling £79,000 for these customers.

There's still more to do - Valleys to Coast is using this insight to shape their digital self-service model for 2019.

# It's all about the base – our customer base

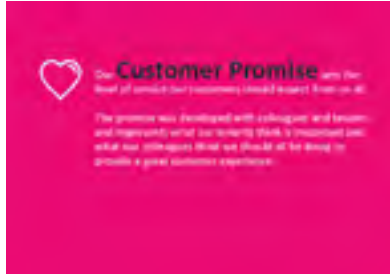
## Cartrefi Conwy

Keeping the Customer Service Excellence communications flowing.



Screen Wobbler

Examples of items and publications used to involve colleagues in giving Customer Service Excellence to our customers.



Our Customer Promise

In August 2014 with a new customer service manager and Customer Service team Cartrefi Conwy began focusing on raising its profile with all colleagues.

Since then every aspect of our customers' experience has been improved from how they:

- handled their complaints and compliments
- responded to repairs
- manage improvement works
- understood their daily life and wellbeing
- interacted with them.

Cartrefi Conwy has been striving to become a 'Customer Service Excellence Standard' organisation and they did!

*"It was clear from the quality and detailed nature of the evidence presented for the assessment that Cartrefi Conwy is actively seeking to meet both the ethos and the requirements of the Customer Service Excellence Standard."* Robin Croft, Lead Assessor

### How they did it

Having real insight to their customer base and making 'Customer Service Excellence' a business performance priority was the key to unlocking their potential. Colleagues now actually talk about the customer experience – a phrase which wasn't heard before.

Cartrefi Conwy created a service improvement officer post focusing on managing complaints. They wanted satisfied customers who have trust and confidence in them. In a very short space of time, with the right training, colleagues were able to take responsibility for managing complaints well.

The housing association's customer liaison officer works proactively at the first point of contact with tenants around planned improvements. Any difficulties are dealt with so they can manage work around tenants needs. This means it's rare for any concerns to escalate to formal complaints.

Around the same time in 2014 Cartrefi Conwy brought their Gas Servicing in house and, the savings made, allowed them to create two new Home Partner roles.

During gas servicing, the Home Partners carry out a profiling survey face to face with tenants, inside their homes - once a year - every year! This profiling not only gives them important data knowledge but more significantly, lets them see their tenants, way beyond what the data says.

This insight is so valuable for them to help their tenants manage their tenancies. It's also made a huge impact with the work they do with their partners especially North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, North Wales Police, local authority and their sister organisation, Creating Enterprise.

All of the above would never have been possible without changing the way colleagues talk to the customers.

Cartrefi Conwy used many different interactive initiatives to help change colleagues' attitudes towards Customer Service Excellence including:

- making National Customer Service Week one of the most important weeks in their calendar
- in 2016 introducing "People not Properties - Handle Complaints with CARE" where CARE is a mnemonic; Care, Act, Respond, Explain
- in 2017 introducing SMILE - Our Customer Promise developed by Colleagues and Tenants say that we will: Support customer's needs, Make a Good Impression, Inform and update, Listen and Act and Empathise
- since 2016 the team have created three publications to keep up conversations about customer experience: Gripes and Glory, PACE and Let's Talk give performance updates and top tips
- they use their satisfaction survey as a learning tool, they are sent out after any outstanding matters have been put right and the learning is shared with all teams
- Cartrefi Conwy capture compliments and email colleagues to share the thanks
- they also write to the customer thanking them for the compliment
- Cartrefi Conwy is a member of the Plain English Campaign which means they now write in a more customer friendly way
- every year colleagues now recognise Customer Service Excellence and nominate each other for awards. Cartrefi Conwy awards Customer Service Champions, Gold Medal Winners and even have six Customer Service Super Heroes.

# Connecting linc

## Linc-Cymru



### Introduction

Linc are committed to improving the services they deliver to tenants and residents. Over the last 12 months, they have taken great strides towards delivering excellent customer services for all their customers.

How have they improved?

### Priority

Linc has made 'hearing the customer voice' one of the key strategic priorities for its board and across the whole business. Linc's board and organisational commitments to listen to their customers and improve services are regularly monitored and illustrate their positive intentions to drive improvement by working with and improving their tenant and resident's customer experience.

### Process

As well as making customer service a priority Linc also wanted to test their services, using a framework as a driver for continuous improvement, as well as gaining external challenge and validation. There are a number of 'customer service accreditations' available but they decided to apply for one of the more challenging accreditations, the 'Customer Service Excellence Standard'. For them it was not about collecting the badge, but about analysing the way in which they work, and looking at how they can make things better for their tenants and residents.

The standard tests customer service delivery, timelines, information, as well as professionalism and staff attitude.

An independent assessor spent two days with Linc, interviewing over 30 tenants, staff and stakeholders assessing against the standards. Linc is one of the

few housing associations to achieve the standard and showed exemplary practice within five areas. Feedback from the assessor included:

*"Great care is taken to resolve issues and put things right for customers, in a friendly and professional manner."*

*"A real and genuine "Can do Attitude" was observed amongst all the staff spoken to at Linc."*

*"The culture of the organisation is exemplified by the importance that it places on innovation and service improvements, empowering people to make the right decisions that have a positive impact on the customer experience."*

Alongside the customer service standard, Linc also works with their tenants to test services. Their tenants told them that complaints were not handled systematically and that there should be one point of contact to ensure consistency, so that tenants can be kept informed.

Linc fully accepted this recommendation and put in place a central point of contact, and completely revamped the way they deal with complaints. The onus is now 'investigate once, investigate well', and is about putting things right for the tenant at the earliest opportunity.

### People

Linc's team has been extensively upskilled over the past year. They continue to commit to investing in their team through further learning and development for all staff from housing law, welfare advice to the softer communication skills of working restoratively. They feel at times, their staff were doing things for tenants, or doing things to tenants, and it was essential they moved to a model of working with their tenants. This was not just an approach for front line staff, but for the managers too.

Tenants are an essential part of Linc's customer service improvement journey. They are an integral part of the self-evaluation process and include tenant service testers and diverse tenant panel. Their tenants' recommendations are taken seriously, from simple improvements such as changing their initial telephone-greeting message to more strategic recommendations including overhauling their complaints process.

Also the housing association has recently reduced patch sizes, the aim was for all housing officers to visit every single tenant each year enabling conversations with the tenants about what is working well, what is working not so well, any issues the tenants may be having and any additional support requirements.

## Outcomes and achievements

The changes to Housing Officer patches, customer complaints procedures and engaging so closely with tenants have had the biggest impact, with Linc's staff really committing to improving the way in which they deliver their services by working with their tenants to drive change. The process of applying for the Customer Service Excellence Standard took a whole team approach that built understanding and reiterated the importance of this strategic priority for Linc.

The positive outcomes are really coming through and include:

- Linc's customer contact team are solving over 70% queries at first point of contact, up from just over 50%.
- 87% of tenants agreed that Linc is easy to contact and do business with at their most recent tenant satisfaction survey

- an increase in the percentage of tenants and residents who are getting the service they expect (3% increase).

Below are just some of the recent comments the latest tenant satisfaction survey:

*"Their service is fabulous; when you phone up they sort it out straightaway, always very helpful."*

*"Linc are great at sorting out issues and communication with tenants is really good."*

*"I think they're excellent. When you need them, they're there."*

# Innovation in communications award

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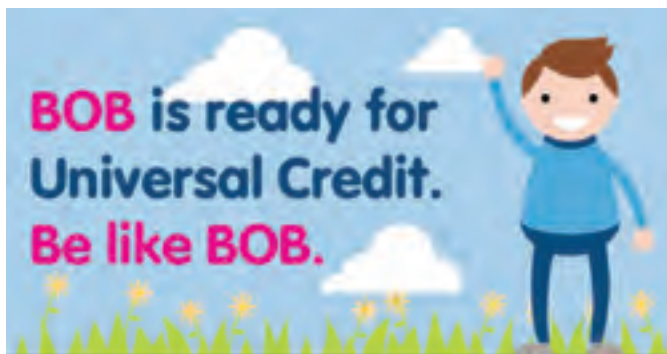
Whether it's delivering a campaign for social good; dealing with a crisis or simply raising awareness, excellent communications are vital to all housing organisations. This new award recognises housing teams (not just dedicated comms teams) who have delivered outstanding communications in the last year. Shortlisted entries have addressed any or all of the following:

- planning, strategy and campaign tactics
- evidence of impact of communications eg media coverage, more supporters
- evidence of outcomes

Judges will be mindful of impact against the original comms budget.

## Be like bob - get ready for universal credit

### United Welsh



United Welsh has an important role to play in preparing its tenants for benefit changes.

Their previous communication materials were too text-heavy without simple calls-to-action, so they created an easy-to-follow campaign to help tenants prepare for the changes brought by welfare reform.

United Welsh categorised information into three key areas: banking; getting online and budgeting.

As the first letters of the three areas; Banking, getting online and budgeting spell BOB they created a mascot ... Bob!

The 'Be like Bob' campaign concept communicates that tenants should be like Bob because he is managing his UC payments after organising his banking, online access and budget.

Firstly, they researched customer segmentation and determined support levels needed by tenants; using Experian data to band them into three groups according to levels of financial distress: red, amber and green.

The red group were those in higher levels of financial distress and they determined those in amber needed less support and the green category needed information only.

After segmenting tenants into groups, United Welsh targeted the campaign by their needs.

Direct marketing communication to tenants was the staple element of the Bob campaign.

Bob-themed letters and leaflets were developed using 'nudge' theory techniques, with materials personalised by name, area and date.

These were placed in coloured envelopes with a campaign sticker so that the communication looked different to other United Welsh letters; encouraging tenants to pay more attention rather than assuming they were receiving 'another rent statement'.

The content of the letters varied depending on the recipient's financial category:

- "red" tenants received a leaflet and letter with an appointment for a visit, so tenants needing more intensive support could have face-to-face advice
- "amber" tenants received a leaflet and an appointment for a phone call
- "green" tenants received a leaflet and letter with information about how to get support.

Another innovative part of the Bob campaign was the partnership element.

The campaign initially launched in Torfaen (our first UC 'full service' area), after which housing association colleagues approached us about using the materials for their tenants.

United Welsh shared their materials with partners who could update them with logos and contact details, and shared information about their integrated communications campaign which included, for example, social media scripts.

The campaign has since been adopted by Cadwyn; CCHA; Tai Calon; Monmouthshire Housing; Wales Cooperative Centre; Newport City Homes; Newydd and Family Housing.

They also developed a Bob campaign toolkit and shared it across Wales via CH Cymru.

Pooling resources has prevented associations from having to pay more for design and advertising and made advertising more affordable by launching initiatives jointly.

Other elements of the campaign included:

- social media - monthly content plans are written by United Welsh and shared with local partners. paid promotions are targeted to local authority areas
- animation film - used on social media and at tenant events. It has been shared with partners for their channels

- publications - Bob has regularly featured in United Welsh's tenants' magazine 'Linkup', their business bulletin 'The Latest' to raise awareness amongst local authorities, Welsh Government, local health boards and supported housing, and their 'Let's Thrive Together' magazine for managing agents and health sector colleagues
- web pages - an information section which signposts visitors to other resources
- bus advertising - launched a four-week bus panel campaign in Cardiff in January with Cadwyn
- radio advertising - launched a three-month radio advertising campaign on BGfm with Tai Calon from July
- internal Communication - regular article updates about Bob have featured on their intranet; the staff newsletter 'Core Brief' and Yammer
- rent officer calling cards - posted to tenants who missed appointments.

## Outcomes and achievements

Direct communication results (mid-campaign based on Torfaen, Newport and Cardiff):

- 908 tenants contacted
- 41% were in amber / red categories and received higher levels of intervention (calls and visits)
- of 372 tenants in amber / red, 43% kept to the first visit / phone appointment time
- calls also received from numerous tenants in the 'green' category.

During the home / phone appointments, United Welsh asked users about their level of knowledge prior to seeing the campaign.

- 130 tenants had limited or no knowledge of UC prior to the campaign contact (81% of those in red / amber, demonstrating the campaign value)
- 38% needed money advice or digital skills support which was followed up by staff.

United Welsh also conducted a phone survey with 34 tenants, with '1' being not at all and '5' being loved it.

The average score of "How much did you like the content and style of the communication?" was 5. The average score for "Do you have a better understanding of the changes and how they will affect you?" was 4.

Integrated online campaign results (mid-campaign):

Facebook:

- reach of posts: 42,649 people
- likes: 145
- shares: 103

Twitter:

- #belikebobUC reach: 43,088 people
- likes, click-throughs, retweets: 393.

Animation: 10,700+ views.

Web-page: 602 views.

The campaign cost less than £4,900 (budget was £6K) due to partnership work, resourcing and methods.

# Nudging your way to channel shift

## Cartrefi Conwy with Collaborative Change



Cartrefi Conwy invested a lot of time, resources and effort into developing their new MyCartrefi online portal which enables their tenants to make payments, report repairs, view their balance and contact us 24/7. In June 2017 they were looking at innovative ways of encouraging tenants to channel shift and move to digital methods of communication and payments.

Cartrefi Conwy were then given the opportunity to work with leading ICT providers, Capita, alongside Collaborative Change, a behavioural insights consultancy, on a ground breaking UK wide project 'Nudging your way to channel shift'.

Cartrefi Conwy were the only housing association in Wales to join this programme and they have been utilising the learning from the project to encourage more tenants to interact with us using digital methods ever since.

The aim of the project was to build organisational capacity around the use of 'Nudge' approaches, behavioural insights and evidence-based decision-making. It also set out to investigate how behavioural insights could be used to influence tenant channel choice, with an emphasis on adoption of digital self-service. They are now using this approach for all their communications in the following work areas:

- digital channel shift
- rent collection and arrears management
- Universal Credit support.

Cartrefi Conwy 'tested' the following communications styles / nudge techniques with all their tenants who pay all (or part of) their rent through manual payment methods:

- salience - using messages of lifestyle and effect. Highlighting personal benefits/emotional connections

- ego - we tend to act in ways that make us feel good e.g. being ahead of the game by being one of the first to sign up
- social norm - we're influenced by what others do e.g. three out of four people pay bills online.

They also gathered qualitative evidence through telephone interviews with their tenants to get a feel for their payment habits.

The trial concluded that:

- tenants who receive a salience communication are three times more likely to pay online
- sign up rates for online accounts are strongly associated with age this effect ranged from a 17% sign-up rate amongst our youngest customers to 0% amongst the oldest
- customers with arrears of £500 - £1,000 were most likely to sign-up younger face to face payers, would be more influenced by a salience nudge.

You might be thinking 'so what'? But the learning from this project has really brought about a step change in terms of how Cartrefi Conwy communicates with its tenants. The nudge approach has been successfully used for:

- Take Control Campaign - a branded campaign encouraging tenants to take control of their finances and come to Cartrefi Conwy for help and support
- 'Where do you pay yours?' launch campaign - to encourage tenants to register for 'Cartrefi Conwy's tenant portal
- 'Universal Credit doesn't have to be scary' - multifaceted campaign to prepare tenants for Universal Credit
- re-write of all their rent collection letters and rent statements
- improved fire safety signage and other resources following the Grenfell Fire.

Steven Johnson, Collaborative Change (Programme Manager) fed back:

*"It was a pleasure to work with the Cartrefi Conwy team throughout the duration of this year-long project. They committed to the evidence-based approach from the outset, fully embracing the use of data science as a means of tailoring and targeting communications more effectively. At the design stage, they delved deeply into the behavioural science literature on the drivers of channel choice and behaviours, isolating a range of 'nudge'-style tactics to test through a Randomised Controlled Trial. The fact that the Cartrefi Conwy trial performed significantly better than those from the other six providers on the project is testament to the effectiveness with which they deployed the behavioural insights approach."*

## Outcomes and achievements

Since Cartrefi Conwy launched the Channel shift campaign in August 2017 they have had over 5,000 online payments totalling over £750,000. This has led to a potential £40,000 transactional cost saving so far as online transactions cost a fraction to process compared to manual payments.

They have also seen over 650 repairs reported online, freeing up our call centre colleagues to provide a more efficient service. Since the portal was launched, they have seen a 6% reduction in calls.

They launched the portal at their annual tenant fun day back in August 2017. The stand used basic nudge principles to brand the stand, 'Where do you pay yours?' Over 250 tenants actively engaged with the stand and 63 tenants registered on the day or immediately afterwards.

They have also introduced a range of communication materials to support their income collection team when dealing with rent arrears. Again, nudge theory underpinned all of these.



# Supporting future generations award

sponsored by



We all have a role to play in making sure Wales is a great place to live well both now and in the future. This award recognises the contribution of forward-thinking projects which seek to achieve outcomes that will benefit generations to come. Shortlisted applications have been able to demonstrate:

- specific ways through which future generations will benefit from the work of the project
- a co-produced approach that shows the benefit of gaining expertise and insight from people receiving services and the wider community
- an awareness of and links with the wellbeing goal reflected within our landmark legislation - the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- the potential impact and benefits for the local community/environment.

## Bron afon

**'Locked out' ... Own 2 Feet Living, Housing Strategy for Young People ... young people are key to the solution**

**Bron Afon Pledge...with our support young people will gain resilience and independence and improve their quality of life through developing their own living and housing solution.**



### Background

Young People are increasingly marginalised within the housing and welfare systems, facing the challenge of house prices that continue to rise, lack of affordable social housing and impact of Welfare Reform. Affordable housing has never been more critical to improve the lives of future generations. Bron Afon could predict the human and financial impact that Welfare Reform would have in Torfaen, especially on young people. Continuing to learn from Own 2 Feet Living, Ty Cyfle, the housing co-operative for young people, Bron Afon is confident that young people

are able to drive forward the housing and support solutions that they need. The empowerment of young people and lessons learnt continue to create a 'step change' within the housing sector and shape their approach to engaging and supporting young people. Affordability is the primary dilemma for young people, would it be possible to extend further and roll out the Own2Feet Living co-operative approach...?

Without a place to call home, people are less likely to obtain and maintain employment with their physical and mental health adversely affected. For Bron Afon it makes business sense to work with their future clients who will be their long-term customers to provide housing solutions that meet their needs, creating sustainable tenancies and settled communities.

Working with Afon Youth, using co-productive principles, Bron Afon has developed the Own2Feet Living Housing Strategy for Young People, recognising that the dual strand of housing supply and appropriate support is vital to deliver young people's housing solutions. No one understands the needs and challenges of young people better than them and tenancy sustainability is embedded throughout ensuring the housing solutions are affordable, linking with Bron Afon's 'That Works Academy', maximising the income of young people and providing potential job opportunities.

The young people are excited to explore models of intergenerational living, promote shared housing and provide new builds with alternative and flexible methods of construction. This first strand is now under construction providing 12 homes that are flexible with low rents and are energy efficient. Bron Afon are testing innovative approaches using alternative housing sources oppose to traditional bricks and mortar.

The external landscape constantly shifts and changes but the need for safe secure homes will never change. With Bron Afon's support young people will gain resilience and independence and improve their quality of life through developing their own living and housing solutions.

Collaboration is the key, working across sectors, sharing resources, sharing skills and costs to reach the most vulnerable. The Own2Feet Living Strategy is a long term commitment, embedded in the organisation

providing future proof solutions and exciting, innovative alternative housing models that are affordable for future customers - future generations.

Bron Afon's commitment: "We will help young people by offering them housing solutions that reduce their cost of living, and that help them make the best of any support they're offered, by providing a safe, comfortable and economical home."

## Outcomes and achievements

Outcomes- meeting the ambitions of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act

- sustainable tenancies and cohesive communities
- meeting the housing need of young people, with young people, providing affordable solutions for future generations
- increased supply of affordable homes
- long term commitment

- holistic approach, building resilience and increasing prosperity of future customers
- co-produced approach
- production of globally responsive housing solutions.

Early learning and experience with partners has described our way of working and impact as breathtaking.

## Growing together

### Pobl Group with Big Lottery Fund and Gingerbread



Growing Together (GT) supports young single parents aged 14-25 living in social housing across Caerphilly, Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Newport. GT is funded by Big Lottery Fund Wales 'Bright New Futures' and brings together the skills and expertise of Gingerbread and Charter Housing(Pobl) in partnership.

Different in its approach to more traditional parent and baby support groups, GT develops personal and social skills to increase confidence, build the capability and resilience of parents, enabling them to live independently in a secure tenancy and manage more successfully key transitions in their lives. Through the creation of Practitioner Training and a Toolkit, co-

produced with the parents themselves, GT advocates on behalf of young single parents to break down barriers and improve their access and use of local support services.

Key policy documents informing the development of GT are the Welsh Government's 'Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014' that identifies how crucial timely parenting support is in reducing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and 'Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015'. The latter sets out the 'Seven Foundations for the Wellbeing of Future Generations' which includes: "Foundation 1: Children need to be given the best start in life from the very early years", identifying that "preventative action in pregnancy or childhood has a positive impact on several generations simultaneously".

Growing Together contributes to reducing the negative impact of ACEs by building resilience and protective factors in young parents and their children. As well as increasing positive outcomes for young parents, GT provides their children with opportunities for social learning and positive play. This, along with increased confidence in parenting, reduces ACE's in the next generation.

Growing Together adopts the core youth work values of:

- participation and active involvement
- equality, diversity and inclusion.

Co-production

- personal, social and political development.

Participation is voluntary. Once a parent has signed up to the project and attended an 'All About You' course, there are several choices available including skills workshops, progression meetings, personal action planning and volunteering opportunities.

Delivery approaches include one-to-one and groupwork support, interactive life-skills workshops and the development of a network of peer support groups that will extend after the life of the project.

Emma a young person on Growing Together was referred by her PaCE adviser.

*"If someone had said I'd be doing that eleven months ago I'd have told them, never. I was so shy and nervous, I found it really hard to talk to new people."*

Emma says that a focus on enabling young single parents to identify and achieve their goals is what makes Growing Together unique. She says they see her as 'a person not just a mum' and the opportunities to learn new skills and accreditation are what keeps her interested, focussed and committed.

*"What's Growing Together given me? Friendship, support and confidence, that's what it's given me, I couldn't have done this without them, I really couldn't."*

*"Growing Together helps put a routine back into their lives, they get used to being at a certain place at a certain time. They have to plan to get up early and get ready, make themselves and the kids presentable and have breakfast, all of which will be needed when they get a job....GT has enabled Emma to learn and develop to a point where she is ready to take the next steps to independence and a more financially stable future." (PaCE Parent Employment Adviser)*

Charter Housing will embed this learning in future projects for young parents. To support the Growing Together Legacy, The Pobl Trust has provided funding to co-produced, peer led, social action groups of young parents.

## Outcomes and achievements

Key findings from external evaluation:

- participation in GT improves self-confidence and belief in their own abilities, not just as an effective parent but as a young person with educational and employment potential
- parents feel better able to manage their money and maintain their tenancies
- GT builds positive relationships, reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation
- GT workers non-judgemental attitude, high levels of encouragement and a deep understanding of the challenges faced by young single parents is pivotal to the building of co-productive relationships based on mutual trust and respect
- keeping projects local helps with sustainability, reducing barriers to engagement and enabling parents to build strong community networks of peer support
- referral agencies value the work that GT has done, believing that it has had a direct impact on strengthening families, reducing the risk of negative childhood outcomes and increasing the emotional, social and employability skills required to make positive life choices.

Some achievements include:

- worked with 240 young single parents
- set up 3 self-sustaining friendship groups one being online
- 81% report increased their confidence and self esteem
- 89% report better access to services
- 91% more socially included and supported
- 153 positive progression including volunteering, college, university and employment.

Links

- <https://growingtogetherproject.co.uk/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/growingtogetherwales>
- <https://stepsintothefuture.co.uk/en/home/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THdLS1ue92g&t=120s>
- <https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/skills-and-learning/single-parent-support-practitioner/about-the-toolkit/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/growingtogetherwales/photos/a.1593426457570230/2204156619830541/?type=3&theater>

# Health impact and economic value of meeting WHQS

Carmarthenshire County Council with Swansea University Medical School



Carmarthenshire County Council's health impact study with Swansea University proves that by bringing their housing stock up to the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard (CHS is comparable to Welsh Housing Quality Standard) It is improving people's lives and wellbeing achieving outcomes that will benefit generations to come. The questions were:

- what is the change in emergency hospital admission rates for tenants?
- what are the changes in emergency department attendances, general practitioner (GP) treatments for mental health and respiratory conditions, and attendances at the GP for respiratory conditions?
- finally, the council estimated the impact on costs associated with hospital admissions.

Carmarthenshire County Council's aim was to study if improvements to housing standards could lead to better health in people. Housing improvements and hospital visits are expensive, and we wanted to see if there was a reduction in the number of people going to hospital for emergencies among those living in homes that received improvements, compared with people whose homes did not receive those particular improvements.

They know that cold, damp and unsafe homes can make people ill, make illness worse or even cause early death.

Carmarthenshire County Council invested in their homes to bring them up to a new national standard. In 2003, they consulted with a 1000 of their tenants about their views on the WHQS. Following this, in 2005, they took the decision to retain ownership and management of their housing stock and to set their own housing quality standard, the CHS.

The study tracked tenants' health and wellbeing through the period they were carrying out the investment programmes to homes. They assessed the health outcomes for over 32,000 residents living in 8,558 council homes, which were compared to a control group of residents who did not receive housing improvements.

Dr Sarah Rodgers, Professor at Swansea University Medical School, said *"Our findings showed that housing upgrades could reduce the strain on the NHS and release beds for planned admissions."*

The improvement works were delivered by contractors reporting to Steering Group and a Tenant Involvement Panel made up of a wide range of tenants from across the county. This provided a mechanism for tenant views to be expressed to the team, in addition to newsletters, reports and regular surveys.

The council recognised at the start that the involvement of tenants in the development of the programme would be the main factor in its successful delivery.

Pam Every, tenant rep, said *"This has been a wonderful project to be involved in from start to finish. The council allowed us to make decisions on the works programme from the start and throughout the upgrades"*

The council liaised with the tenant's forums to establish the programme roll-out, and gave households several choices for the type of materials to be used for their new kitchens and bathrooms. In 2014, the council also started working with its tenants and other stakeholders to consider what further improvements might be required beyond 2015, a programme known as the CHS+ (Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus).

Over £2million of CHS+ works achieved the following:

- for every £1 spent, £1.80 was reinvested into the Welsh economy
- 11 people were hired during this period who were previously unemployed, and who will continue to be employed
- over 84 weeks of training was provided, including:
  - o 12 Apprenticeships started and over 50 weeks carried out
  - o 10 Traineeships completed amounting to over 30 weeks in total.

They have already used the health evaluation results and study recommendations to update our development plans, and encourage the adoption of the recommendations by local authorities around the UK and further afield. Making small changes in housing policy improves health, which also carries social, economic and environmental benefits for all.

## Outcomes and achievements

- a 39% reduction in hospital emergency admissions for those aged 60 plus who received electrical improvements, with similar reductions for new windows and doors, wall insulation, and safe paths (25%-29%)
- smaller (2%-9%) reductions in hospital admissions for those who received new windows and doors, wall insulation and garden path improvements
- prescribed asthma medications and GP visits also dropped for residents of all ages who received electrical system upgrades and improved windows and doors
- while the effects were most pronounced in those aged 60 plus the results applied to all age groups, where overall there was a 34% reduction in emergency admissions for those who had received electrical systems upgrades
- housing upgrades costed £138 million while direct hospital admission savings for those 60 plus was estimated to be approximately £200 per person per year, when this result is extended to the estimated 21% of Welsh 60 plus population currently receiving social housing improvements, this has cost savings of approximately £30 million for hospital admissions alone
- applying changes to private rental properties has the potential to further accrue cost effective health savings
- importantly, fewer emergency admissions frees valuable hospital spaces for planned admissions.

# PRS award

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This award is open to all organisations operating in the private rented sector in Wales and is open to any private sector letting agency or landlord. It is aimed at letting agents or landlords who strive to excel in the areas of customer service and innovation. Shortlisted applications have been able to show that their organisations do things differently which sets them apart from the competition and that innovation is one of the keys to their success.

Judges have been looking for organisations who can demonstrate that they excel in the following criteria

- developing excellent levels of customer service or tenant satisfaction
- used innovative approaches to solve a particular problem or challenge

## Seraph Property Management



Seraph provides a full range of property management services from one off advice to full bespoke management. It covers residential property management, block management, purpose built student accommodation, facilities management, portfolio management, and commercial and mixed use property management. Moreover, it represents landlords and investors, providing a service to both landlords and tenants while following the codes of practice set by The Property Ombudsman. Seraph works closely with private landlords, portfolio investors and housing associations, (such as Trivallis), assisting with the day to day running of a property as well as more challenging matters such as anti-social behaviour and rent arrears.

Seraph goes above and beyond its duties in many ways, in particular its extra opening hours (12 hours on four days of the week) enables it to provide an extended service to its tenants and landlords, to

ensure its approachable and contactable at times convenient for its customers.

They work closely with their sister company James Douglas Sales and Lettings, which offers a property rental and sales service. The tight working relationship allows a smooth transition between a tenant letting a property and moving-in as they deal with all matters in-house meaning tenants are always fully informed and landlords are satisfied knowing that their property has been successfully let and efficiently managed during each tenancy.

Seraph focuses on separating out the lettings elements ensuring that its team is entirely focused on sustaining tenancies as opposed to churning them. They do not charge renewal fees and encourage their landlords to grant longer tenancies with their average tenancy length being over three years which is considerably longer than most city centre agents. Their landlord retention figures demonstrate a high satisfaction rate with less than 10 landlords having left them for another agent in 10 years for reasons other than having sold the property.

Seraph also go above and beyond when tenancy issues arise by being attentive to any problems that may occur, no matter how big or small. In particular, with a serious water leak at one of their mixed use blocks caused by the original contractor, the team worked around the clock for 48 hours over the Christmas period to keep services in place, the building safe and ensure that everything was fixed for Christmas Day.

Another area of Seraph is the Block Management side, which takes care of over 30 blocks in the Cardiff area, working with both leaseholders and freeholders to ensure a safe and secure environment in the communal areas of each building. Seraph was

recognised for its work in taking over previously neglected blocks and bringing them back up to a high standard in terms of safety, aesthetic quality and importantly long term stability. Their testimonials for Block Management services highlight their efforts.

Simon Williams said in a google review: *"We feel very comfortable knowing the Seraph team are fairly representing our interests, they communicate quickly when issues occur and manage the building, and partner relations proactively."*

In addition to providing high levels of customer service, Seraph is always looking out for the best interest of its client and carries out money saving exercises to ensure its clients get value for money. One of their leaseholders comments: *"Seraph have helped us source better contractors than were originally installed. They do seem to genuinely want to manage the flats to the benefit of the leaseholders and work with the leaseholders and contractors to keep things running smoothly."*

## Outcomes and achievements

Seraph are proud to boast many positive project outcomes, including;

- providing tenants long-term homes whilst allowing landlords to do everything right and saving for the future of themselves and their families
- developing sustainability plans for buildings to ensure they are safe and have the budget to replace and repair infrastructure from reserves rather than leaseholders having unexpected one-off costs, particularly when preserving Grade II listed buildings
- working with organisations (YMCA) to develop long term sustainable tenancies for vulnerable tenants in the PRS
- being one of the few private housing managers to manage affordable housing tenancies on behalf of registered social landlords

- giving tenants opportunities for employment in the developments they manage.

Recently, Seraph carried out a more positive tenant programme where they organised a 'Resident Fun Day' for a block. They provided free food and ice cream, including child-friendly events with a bouncy castle, and they also had the support of the local community, with councillors, police and fire service. Seraph received great feedback from the event, where they found that over 72% of residents would like to get involved with community projects and 63% of residents would rate their experience as 'very positive' while living in a property managed by Seraph.

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## HAWS letting agency

Cartrefi Conwy with Conwy Council



HAWS was established as part of Conwy Housing Solutions in 2014. It was created to make the private sector more accessible, to raise the standard of properties in the private rented sector, provide support to landlords to work with households

receiving support for their housing costs and importantly to reduce the number of failing tenancies causing additional pressures on ourselves and partners. They support landlords and tenants to overcome barriers, challenges and perceptions of working with each other.

Since the start HAW has been committed to its objectives. This has been challenging as they compete with other services however it's important for them to maintain a social focus to their work with the Private Rented Sector.

### What is HAWS' 'USP'?

No application fees have been charged to any applicant and the business plan to support the agency is based solely on income generated from landlords to cover the costs. In turn, the set up costs charged to landlords are lower than other agencies operating in the area so landlords feel they are getting value for money. They do not charge landlords any hidden extras, their fees include tenancies agreements and inventories, as well as the referencing and advertising of the property.

All applicants who contact the social housing register are encouraged to consider HAWS as an option for the private rented sector, this can sometimes mean people are able to meet their housing needs more quickly or more appropriately.

The applicants are assessed 'in house' and receive the same support as social housing tenants e.g. support with money management in order to secure a tenancy. HAW has difficult conversations with applicants about the cost of maintaining a tenancy and paying rent and bills. They are open and transparent with landlords who receive a full report on the applicants and they assess up to five applicants per property to give the landlord the best possible choice of tenant.

Every property that is taken on through the agency undergoes inspections to ensure it meets HHSRS as a minimum. Asbestos surveys are also completed at a cost to HAWS as part of the take on process so they can safely offer their comprehensive out of hours repairs service to their landlords.

HAW works closely with Housing Benefit departments and requests any housing benefit claimants are paid direct to them due to the agency being part of Cartrefi Conwy. For the same reason they also have access to the landlords' portal for Universal Credit. They struck a deal with the local housing benefit team to allow direct payments in return for rents being set where possible at 10% above LHA so they could offer landlords greater security if they were willing to accept benefit claimants.

We introduced a tenanted take on service for landlords who are experiencing a difficult tenancy in order to save as many tenancies as possible, using our experience with difficult to engage tenants and our knowledge of the welfare benefits system in order to maximise income.

## Outcomes and achievements

- HAW has expanded to work in other local authority areas
- HAW are the partner of choice for the local authority and manage their temporary accommodation units as well as supporting them to manage a property they have secured through an Interim Management Order
- every property they have managed has had works completed to improve the property
- 97% year to date rent collection
- compliance is critical. All gas and electrical safety certs are checked. Every property has an asbestos survey if it is to be fully managed
- 50% of tenants who have moved into properties were homeless
- business plan set up and remains non-reliant on application fees for income
- HAW has a unique brand, logo, website and social media presence
- HAW runs their own free events for landlords to attend and they are a key partner at local landlord forums with up to 70 landlords in attendance.



# Calon residential living

**Cadwyn Housing Association with Cardiff County Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council**



## The challenge?

To provide safe and well managed temporary accommodation in a competitive lettings market with un-affordable private rents, insufficient social housing, large waiting lists, diminishing social housing grant and record numbers of homelessness.

## The Calon Concept

An innovative housing solution utilising its experience in the Private Rented Sector, Calon created a tailor made service for the local authority.

What was required?

- a portfolio of homes that match the high supply and demand
- good quality homes across the city
- support for homeless families
- an attractive package for landlords.

## How Calon met the need?

Cadwyn set up a self-funding model, partnering with RSL's and private landlords to lease properties. The social rents buffered the private rents paid on open market.

The attractive offer minimised the risk to private landlords. By offering guaranteed rent, no fees, no void periods and a full repairs service Calon provides value for money. In securing private rented accommodation they provide more housing and access properties previously unreachable.

Calon delivers a first class service with a highly experienced staff with expertise in property surveying, maintenance, rent, welfare benefits and tenancy management.

They have robust tenancy and property management procedures which ensures access to their stock was maximised, tenants supported, and success rates for move onto permanent accommodation realised.

Calon have continued to innovate through a variable housing market and sector changes including Welfare Reform.

These challenges have meant more restricted margins and forced them to review operations while maintaining high level of service to our customers.

As Leah Whitty of Cardiff Council Welfare Reform Manager States: *"Cardiff Council has worked extensively with Calon TA to mitigate the effects of the Benefit Cap. Calon committed to accepting our homeless referrals in spite of the potential financial risk to the organisation. Calon was a vital partner in developing a package of support to assist families affected by benefit cap. This includes providing projected HB entitlement to pro-actively work with residents, developing a DHP scheme to align the benefit cap to LHA rates to ensure that residents are not disproportionately affected. Calon is a fundamental partner in getting residents work ready, accessing support from Cardiff Into Work Advice Services and the Benefit Cap DHP scheme."*

Calon operates a 24 hour repairs reporting line and a boiler maintenance plan for landlords. Its tenant app gives access to rent accounts and an easy way to report and track repairs meaning its services are accessible 24/7.

Partnership working with Swalec has allowed Calon to install smart meters to its properties enabling tenants to take control of their energy spends.

Voids is the highest risk area and to mitigate this Calon employs a bespoke voids team to inspect, assess and repair properties to their agreed standard and drive down vacant periods.

Partnership working with Housing Options teams ensures that any tenants at risk of failing in their tenancy are proactively supported to succeed.

Empty properties are a wasted resource and Calon have undertaken works and deducted cost from future rental payments to bring them back into use.

Calon is the housing partner for an adapted properties pilot to unburden an already stretched NHS from the difficulties of bed blocking.

19% of Calon's tenants speak English as a second language, so its staff use interpretation services to ensure communication and advice is clear and understood.

Calon's innovative approach to projects means they have become the go to partner for new Local Authority projects. It is the housing provider for the Syrian Refugee Project which has seen ten refugee families housed and are due to launch the container project for homes on 18 December.

## Outcomes and achievements

- biggest temporary accommodation provider in Wales
- 3,343 tenancies
- no B&B accommodation used for nine years in Cardiff
- expanded to Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil
- 299 leased properties
- 43% private landlord properties
- 0.67% landlord withdrawal rate
- turn-over 31 properties a month for re-let
- an eviction rate of 0.6%
- rent arrears of 1.5%

*"Thanks to you guys for looking after our property for the last 6 years, it has been a very good experience."*  
James Hewett, Landlord

*"Our partnership with Calon assists us greatly in providing safe and suitable temporary accommodation for families and individuals who have become homeless. The partnership is innovative as it works to ensure people maintain their temporary accommodation successfully and move-on independently."* – Laura Garvey, Cardiff Council

*"Perfect, you guys are wonderful and doing a really good job."* – Mr Idowu Ogunkoya, tenant

*"Not every temporary accommodation property is as good as this, I never had any problems. The whole Calon team were wonderful, the property was lovely and I hope now I move to permanent my new home and landlord will be just as good."* – Fanta Ndoeka, tenant

*"Great location for my children's school. Friendly staff, much appreciated for their service."* Samantha Reynolds, Tenant

## Adore Cardiff

### Taff Housing Association



Adore Sales and Lettings is areis Taff Housing Association's first commercial venture and was launched in 2013. It is the only not-for-profit agency in Cardiff. The agency strives to build long term relationships with landlords, tenants and vendors. They are completely transparent, providing accurate valuations with their local knowledge and by always putting customers first. They offer competitive rates with the bonus of knowing that fees benefit the local community. Small enough to really care for tenants and landlords, Adore understands that people are what matter and this is why investment in the community is embedded in Adore's vision, values and practice.

Earlier this year, Taff's Board wanted to increase the number of shareholding members both amongst their own tenants and the wider community so they got help from Adore. All Adore customers are now invited to become shareholders and this is helping cement local relationships and closer ties within the community. It also helps promote the extensive range of work undertaken by Taff.

Taff's board opened up shareholding membership to the wider community to help highlight that, despite being a housing association, they are not just housing. The decision to increase shareholding membership both amongst their own tenants and the wider community has enabled growth of local relationships and closer ties within the community that both Adore and Taff Housing Association benefit from.

Adore donates 15% of all sales fees + all other profits from the agency to Taff Housing Association, meaning that customers' fees do more than just cover costs. The profits from sales are placed into a community fund that Taff's Shareholders can vote upon and decide which of Taff's projects will be funded by Adore's donation. The community fund, known as the 'The Shareholders' Choice Award', gives Taff's shareholders the opportunity to vote on a range of options that will have an influence/ positive benefit on people's lives. The options range from jobs and training opportunities, to life skills excursions that will increase confidence and reduce isolation among some of our most vulnerable residents. Adore customers, are invited to these events when they become a shareholder of Taff Housing Association, so that they can directly influence where their money is invested.

Their community focused ethos is not just limited to the Shareholders' Choice Award; throughout the year the Adore team sponsors local teams/ events and donates to worthwhile causes within the local community. In the past year they have contributed to the community in a number of ways, including: donating an electric spice mixer to a Syrian man who had newly arrived in the country and was a chef by trade, sponsoring a local football team and working with Kitchener Road Primary School - allowing the children to design their flyers and posters. This continued commitment to providing opportunity within the community ensures that Adore stands out from all other private sales and lettings agencies.

Adore is proud of its excellent customer satisfaction rate. Focused on improving the reputation of the sales and lettings industry one satisfied customer at a time,

Adore regularly receive positive customer feedback and hold 100% 5\* Google Reviews.

5\* - *"Very professional, fun to work with and had the best interests of the folks moving in and those of the Landlord in mind. Everything was a very smooth process and VERY transparent. No hidden fees, everything was clear and in black and white terms. I would highly and unreservedly recommend this company for your leasing needs - they will take care of you and match you to your new home. I enjoyed working with them very much."*

- Marc Williams, Landlord, Google Review, June 2018.

Now in its 5th year, Adore is making their mark on the sales and lettings industry. With a professional and knowledgeable team, they are fast becoming the 'go to' not-for-profit agent in South Wales known for great customer service.

## Outcomes and achievements

Adore have developed excellent levels of customer service by ensuring and ensure that they go the extra mile for their clients. They ensure that no matter the circumstance, a solution can be found with as little hassle for the customer as possible. The vast majority of their clients want to give back to the community in which their property is located.

5\* - *"When a bad accident meant I had to let out a property I had recently bought to live in. Adore took care of everything and made a stressful situation so much easier for me and I couldn't have asked for a better service. I recently decided to sell the property and again with Adore, the sale went through very quickly and sold on the first viewing for full asking price! I would highly recommend Adore!"*

- Miss Case, Landlord/Vendor, Facebook Review, October 2016

The Shareholders' Choice award was introduced during the last year and the proceeds from sales is are now in a fund waiting for Shareholders to vote for their favourite projects at its AGM. Projects include - Cooking on a budget sessions for Taff Housing Tenants and Service Users who are on a low income; or a Life skills day for the young, homeless women who reside at Ty Seren Hostel. Shareholding Membership has increased by 51.

