



GOOD PRACTICE AWARDS 2021

THE WINNERS



Lead Sponsors

**With thanks to
our Sponsor**



Ariennir yn Rhannol gan
Lywodraeth Cymru

Part Funded by
Welsh Government

GOOD PRACTICE AWARDS 2021



We know you are all doing lots of great tenant and community engagement, despite of the challenges of the last year or so. TPAS Cymru wanted to recognise this work and the difference it is making to tenants, residents and communities.

This year again, we organised a virtual Awards event to celebrate and share some of this good practice and to support and inspire others.

The 5 categories for 2021 were:

1. Communities Supporting Communities
2. Making Online Tenant Engagement Work
3. Involving Tenants in Shaping Services
4. Communicating with Tenants & Residents
5. Tenant of the Year

A Special Recognition Award was also given by the judges.

In this booklet, we're sharing with you the 6 winning entries and the judge's Top 3 in each category.

Thank you to the award nominators for providing the content for this report. We've added their contact details for each of the winning entries if you want to find out more about the projects

Thank you again to all those involved, and we hope you enjoy reading the winning entries as much as we did.

Communities Supporting Communities



WINNER

MaesNi

MaesNi is a group that enables and supports residents and groups in Maesgeirchen & Tan-yBryn (Bangor, North Wales) to make their visions for making it a better place to live happen! It includes residents and key partners working and supporting residents in Maesgeirchen and Tan y Bryn

The Type of Support Provided:

Supporting community projects led by residents and ensuring meaningful participation in shaping projects: revamping a new playpark, developing a new integrated community centre, a market garden project.

- The new playpark was designed by young people and project managed by Adra and is always busy, providing an outdoor focal point and interesting play opportunities for children and young people of all ages as well as a family picnic area.
- The new community centre will meet residents' priority for a community-owned, mainly social space to get together (there isn't one) and better access to services residents have asked for – on their terms. This is currently at feasibility stage, project managed by Cyngor Gwynedd, where we are developing plans and considering sites for the new community centre

Supporting groups: MaesNi has supported community groups with funding specific projects or resources (e.g. allotments, boxing club, football club, rap and

performing arts groups and community partnership), supporting new groups to form and become sustainable (e.g. Showzone, Letters Grow, Growing for Change), with training, development, funding for paid work where groups' activities now include non-volunteer demands, and access to resources and opportunities and is always here for ongoing support whatever groups may



need! This means that there are more regular opportunities for children and young people especially to engage with hobbies, learning and personal development, to connect with others and above all have fun and gain a sense of achievement!

Activities: support with setting up weekly community football (kids vs adults!) started by the kids, walk group, gardening group, Hive community Café. These are a way of connecting, getting together, a place for residents to bring and build ideas for other things that would be good for the community and most of all to have a laugh!

Volunteer opportunities: weekly environmental improvements & gardening group, Hive community café, fruit & veg co-op and at activities/events/projects. There is a wonderful core of regular volunteers with e.g. the environment group, Hive Caffi, MaesNi steering group and other groups like performing arts. Others feel welcome to dip in as and when they can – e.g. Hive Caffi, fruit & veg co-op, MaesNi steering group – and then more come together around specific activities or events (cinema, street party etc.).

Advocacy & voice: supporting residents to advocate for their needs themselves locally/regionally/ nationally, e.g education for excluded pupils, changes where service delivery and systemic structures fail to meet needs (e.g. around poverty, family support, access to childcare, covid support).

Improving access to community facilities: community spaces leased and funds for community groups to hire as well as developing a new community centre in a way that residents want. We're also putting on and drawing in regular uses to spaces to build engagement.

Training: Responding to themes and direct asks, we've enabled courses to happen for free in the community like Makaton, safeguarding, first aid, mental health awareness, mental health first aid, wellbeing, Play, resilience and supporting young people with mental health.

How the needs of the communities/individuals were met

MaesNi's activities are driven by the needs and aspirations of the community. Residents shape what MaesNi does through being on the steering group, with workers constantly engaging and inviting meaningful participation and direction on their terms – e.g. through drop-ins, groups and activities as well as more formal consultations. The community work with a number of partner organisations who also form part of the MaesNi steering group, including Adra, Cyngor Gwynedd, Wild Elements, Eglwys y Groes, PMP (Partneriaeth Maesgeirchen Partnership), Penrhyn House and others. Residents views are central to the Driving Change plan, which leads MaesNi's aim and vision, which is to make the community an even better place to live

Supporting residents and groups to meet needs: working with volunteers and other organisations and groups throughout the pandemic to provide early, responsive and joinedup support including emergency food, prescriptions, fuel, fun activity packs for families, checking in, digital support and mental health and wellbeing. The group worked with more than half of households across the estate during lockdowns.

TPAS

This support is ongoing and made sustainable with the help of becoming a WG/BCUHB community-led Covid Support Hub Pilot which includes free lateral flow tests and extended support where Covid is having either a short-term or longer-term impact and where we're building in better access to services on residents' terms and working with other organisations to make e.g. emergency food and fuel ongoing and sustainable. The hub is run from Adra premises in Llys Dylan, Maesgeirchen and we continue to meet the needs of over 150 residents each week and adapt what we can help with. We have also attracted more services to be based in the community and work with MaesNi e.g. full-time mental health support worker.

The impact the support has had on individuals/communities

Local Councillor Nigel Pickavance said:

"I have been blown away to see just what MaesNi have been doing in recent times. Not just supporting community projects but supporting individuals and families in so many different ways, too many to mention. This support and care for families and individuals is valuable and as a community we are so lucky to have this in place and more so, the work and effort from Jess and Paul (MaesNi support workers) which is making a huge difference to lives. I would just like to thank them and their teams behind the scenes for their superb efforts".

Eirian Willams Roberts, co-founder of Maes G Showzone (one of the groups supported by MaesNi) said:

"Since the closure of the long established Youth Club in Maesgeirchen there has been a great reduction of community based activities for the children and young people of Maesgeirchen and the surrounding area especially in the evenings after school or at the weekends.

Since ShowZone opened its doors in September 2020 and welcomed it's first members, the majority of whom are still with us today, we have gone from strength to strength at an alarming rate. The positive feedback we have received from the children, their families, the community, schools and further afield has been overwhelming. We have seen our members grow in confidence on a scale



that we would never have imagined and not a week goes by when a parent tells us how much their son or daughter has grown and come out of themselves since they've been at ShowZone. There has been a need for something like ShowZone on the Maesgeirchen estate for years and we truly believe that need will continue for years to come. We intend to be here to fulfil that need".

Sustainability of the Project for the future

The aim with our training initiatives is to build in skills that enable residents to put on more activities and events and groups confidently as well as building in a peer-support network, especially around mental health and wellbeing, thus building resilience within the community.

Much of our work focuses on an ethos of volunteering, and encouraging residents to come together to help each other and their communities. Many residents regularly volunteer with us, building skills and capacity to continue activities and the development of the community for years to come. We believe in supporting young people to fulfil their potential and feel part of their community as they are the future of our communities.

On top of supporting existing groups MaesNi has helped new groups set up which provide new opportunities to over 60 children each week. While MaesNi started with a pot of funds for community activities and events, funding is now much more sustainable and groups are increasingly confident and successful in applying for their own funding.

The activities developed through Maes-Ni become increasingly sustainable as time goes on so that eventually MaesNi need only be available for support as and when needed and then step out.

You can see some of what we do here: www.facebook.com/groups/MaesNi

And some of the star groups we've supported here:

www.facebook.com/maesg.showzone www.facebook.com/LettersGrowOfficial

For more information, contact: elin.williams@adra.co.uk



Tremorfa Community Pantry
Contact:
Rhiannon.Robertson@ccha.org.uk



**Daren Howe's Cardigan
Community Support**
Contact:
Alison.Stokes@wwha.co.uk

Making Online Tenant Engagement Work

WINNER



Practice Makes Progress - Newydd HA

The support given to tenants to enable them to get involved using different online platforms/methods

Our Digital Inclusion Officer and Assistant offer in person and virtual support to any tenant who is digitally excluded. Tenants can borrow IT equipment, with access to Wi-Fi, free of charge and training and support is provided to improve tenants' skills and confidence. Easy read instruction manuals on a variety of applications and software have also been produced to help the user as well as an online meeting protocols document that is shared with participants before they engage in meetings.

ReciteMe software has been added to our website to enable easier access to information. The new software assists viewers with literacy issues and visual impairments and addresses communication barriers as tenants can easily modify the appearance and font size of the website to suit their needs; change the content to another language; use a magnifier; and use a dictionary if words are not understood.

The range of activities online engagement is being used for:

- **Encouraging more diverse tenant engagement** - we produced a Top Ten involvement opportunities Canva video with a variety of options with different time commitments to encourage more tenants to get involved
- **Enhancing Tenant Scrutiny** - We have now facilitated three joint Newydd and Tenant Scrutiny Group Facebook conferences and wider tenant feedback informs the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Group which helps improve and drive our services forward
- **Capturing wider tenant opinion** – We use online SNAP survey consultations to collate feedback on various topics and service areas which aids service improvements
- **Raising awareness of important issues** - 'Straight Talking' sessions with Newydd's Tenant Scrutiny Group have been recorded and shared on social media and My Newydd to raise awareness of priority issues amongst tenants and the wider community



- **Supporting our older tenants** - we have installed portals in our 5 independent living communal lounges not only as a means of combating social isolation, but to ensure that tenants can have their say on the services they receive
- **Enabling tenants to steer our future direction** – Besides our Tenant Scrutiny and NEADS (Newydd's Equality and Diversity Subgroup) activities, we are currently running a 'Do you want to be a Newydd influencer?' campaign where an online SNAP survey is being used to consult with tenants on the 5 new corporate plan themes – growth, sustainability, safety, support, and excellent services
- **Enabling faster and easier communication** - What's App, Zoom, Teams and Email are now used as the main methods of communicating with our Tenant Scrutiny Group
- **Improving guiding documents** - our Reading and Policy Panel are consulted via email on various policies and documents to ensure they are relevant, accurate and easily understandable
- **Embedding Equality and Diversity** - Our NEADS (Newydd's Equality and Diversity Subgroup) has been established with key staff and tenants to progress our QED (Quality in Equality and Diversity) action plan. Meetings are held on Zoom (2 meetings are held, one in the daytime and another in the early evening to enable working tenants to get involved in this key area of work)
- **Involving tenants in strategic decisions** - There has been tenant representation on Newydd's VFM (Value for Money) working group and audit committee who both meet virtually on Teams
- **Sharing information** - our Community Club Facebook page complements the main Newydd page and focuses on Newydd's involvement activities and sharing useful information from the housing sector
- **Upskilling tenants** - tenants attend online training and webinars to expand their knowledge and skills so they feel more confident when engaging with us
- **Improving relationships** – we regularly promote that Zoom coffee mornings with key staff are available to our tenants upon request
- **Promoting engagement opportunities** - we have used the My Newydd homepage on our tenant's portal accessed via our website to advertise our upcoming involvement opportunities, share information videos, links to surveys etc



- **Testing our front-line service** - Digital mystery shopping – tenants are emailed SNAP surveys which include actual recorded anonymised phone calls that have been made by tenants – the survey feedback received helps us assess our standards and quality of service (unfortunately, this practice has been on hold whilst a new telephone system has been installed but a relaunch is planned shortly)
- **Sharing tenant stories** – we have an ‘Up Your Street’ blog page on our website which shares content written by our tenants
- **Problem resolution** - Live Chat on the website enables tenants to speak directly to a Customer Solutions Officer
- **Soft engagement** – Newydd’s lottery funded hapi project has been running successfully for a number of years and at the start of the pandemic all their activities were moved online onto their Facebook page with great and far-reaching success. The activities offered help improve confidence as well as physical and mental health and wellbeing and is a great first step towards encouraging our tenants to get more involved with Newydd.

The outcomes achieved to date and the benefits to the wider tenant population

Digital Inclusion engagement figures

So far this year 40 tenants have loaned IT equipment and 37 have received support/training from the Digital Inclusion Officer and Assistant (last year, it was 101 and 158 respectively - 69 tenants were also supported to gain access to devices via the Vale Tablet Loan Scheme).

The Digital Inclusion Officer and Assistant also supported and helped upskill our Independent Living Officers on using the portals to effectively run their activities and engagement events in their schemes.

Tenant Involvement outcomes

- Our involvement opportunities video - <https://youtu.be/xllaS23hTDM>
- 3 Facebook conferences – the first a week-long with a different theme each day, the 2nd was on communication and the latest one has been on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – our #YouSpokeWeListened campaign feedback to tenants: what is changing as a result of the feedback that was captured from the SNAP survey results and comments on posts/documents
- Newydd’s Tenant Scrutiny Group have recorded four ‘Straight Talking’ sessions with key Newydd staff and guests from the sector which have been



shared on social media and My Newydd and have been well received by tenants and the wider community. The group interviewed:

- Jason Wroe, Newydd's Chief Executive, about his future plans <https://youtu.be/XgQFv0CvkNY>
 - Oonagh Lyons, Director of Housing and Communities and Elizabeth Lending, Finance and Resources Director, about affordability and value for money <https://youtu.be/J5Zd3lJ31PY>
 - David Wilton, TPAS Cymru CEO, about his role and what TPAS Cymru's aims, and priorities are <https://youtu.be/Gp9d5yqFIEI> and
 - Oonagh Lyons, Director of Housing and Communities, Rachel Honey-Jones, Head of Community Regeneration, and Ross Thomas, Policy and Public Affairs Manager for Tai Pawb on the importance equality, diversity, and inclusion <https://youtu.be/ep1wupUTmLw>
- The portals in the independent living schemes have been used for linking up with the other independent living schemes for social events and activities (the communal lounges were closed during the pandemic and social isolation increased during this time); the portals have also been used for a Q&A session with senior management and to share video content from the latest conference day (28 tenants (across 5 schemes) attended the in-person events hosted on the day of the conference).
 - Successfully co-produced a Customer Services Charter at NEADS meeting (later approved by the Reading and Policy Panel)
 - Tenants have attended various webinars and training sessions over the past year including TPAS England scrutiny week; various TPAS Cymru webinars/networks/training/conferences; and Tai Pawb's annual conference
 - The advert for Zoom coffee mornings is shared regularly on the Newydd Facebook page
 - The homepage of My Newydd can be seen here: <https://www.mynewydd.co.uk/Newydd/www/dashboard>
 - One of our tenants wrote a compelling story about their lockdown experiences which was shared on the Up Your Street page of the website <https://www.newydd.co.uk/stories/up-your-street-introduction>
 - Our hapi Facebook page demonstrates the wealth of
 - activities that are offered to tenants and the wider community <https://www.facebook.com/hapiCymru>



Any problems along the way and how you have tried or are trying to overcome them

Some of our tenants lack IT skills and confidence. This is a challenge our Digital Inclusion Officer and Assistance work tirelessly to address as not having these skills not only hinders tenants' opportunities to get more involved and communicate more easily with Newydd, but also their ability to interact online with other services, access money saving opportunities and they face getting left behind in this new fast moving digital world.

We are lucky that we have a safe to fail ethos at Newydd, so we are empowered to try new engagement methods and use the lessons we learn to improve and adapt accordingly.

Any success in attracting new tenants to become involved because of the group engaging online

At the start of the pandemic, we consulted 3139 tenants via email/post on how they would like Newydd's community regeneration and tenant involvement services to be delivered in the future and how they would like to engage with us on service improvements. As a result, we had an increased interest in our involvement opportunities and now have:

- 77 Estate Ambassadors (tenants are consulted by our surveyors prior to their estate inspections or accompany them on their estate visits)
- 73 Reading and Policy Panel members who assess our policies and documentation
- 80 members of our Community Club Facebook page, and
- 57 Digital Mystery Shoppers
- 77 also said they would be interested in participating in virtual meetings; 99 in online consultations; 94 in watching pre-recorded videos. 75 in attending a virtual coffee morning, and 58 in attending a webinar

Lessons learnt

- Engaging digitally has less impact on the environment as there is no travel, wasting paper or printing. There have also been monetary savings as there are no postage costs, stationery, venue hire for in person meeting, refreshments, or taxis to get tenants to and from meetings.
- Engaging online has also meant involvement has been far more wide-reaching and enabled those who wouldn't normally engage, to join in.
- Sharing video content using the portals has been in the main successful. However, some tenants with visual and hearing impairments struggled to enjoy the videos shown on the latest conference day, so video transcripts were emailed to the Independent Living Officers to share with their tenants afterwards.

TPAS

Future development of Tenant Engagement using online or hybrid approaches

- We are in the process of developing our new corporate plan and are currently consulting our tenants via a SNAP survey to find out what the new themes of growth, sustainability, safety, support, and excellent services mean to them. We will then follow this up with in person meetings and roadshows, to further discuss the survey feedback and hone our aims and priorities for the next 5 years
- We plan to trial a Facebook live session on affordability and VFM with Directors in the near future
- We will be relaunching and expanding digital mystery shopping to also include a review of actual email and live chat responses
- We will be working in collaboration with other housing associations to progress the development of the MyWales portal to improve engagement/community cohesion and maintain tenant health and wellbeing by offering easy access to online groups and meaningful content
- We will be adding What's App and Zoom as a communication preference for our tenants on our housing management system
- We will soon be reviewing all our policy documents in line with RHA and will be producing easy read summaries as well – these will be made available on our website. Easy ready versions of legal and important documents are also being developed for tenants with struggle with literacy

For more information, contact: tracy.james@newydd.co.uk



#InfluenceUs - ClwydAlyn

Contact:

Stuart.Hughes2@clwydalyn.co.uk



**Hearing the Online Tenant Voice -
Cartrefi Conwy**

Contact:

owen.veldhuizen@cartreficonwy.org

Involving Tenants in Shaping Services



WINNER

Complaints Panel - ClwydAlyn

How services have been shaped as a result of tenant involvement

The Complaints Panel consists of both Resident Committee Members (minimum of 3 core Members) and InfluenceUs Volunteers. Each quarter contact is made with all InfluenceUs volunteers (over 200) to invite any of them to sit on the Complaints Panel. What we find is that those volunteers who have had an issue with a specific repair/appointment etc or have had first-hand experience of the complaints process are keen to join the Panel.

There is a standard section with the meeting on the agenda to allow feedback specifically from Residents/Volunteers to give them a voice on any points they wish to feed back on or highlight. This has proven extremely successful, and the Complaints Officer had also had the opportunity to follow up on any points directly with the individual volunteers outside of the meeting, from which a number of small, yet important improvements have been made.

As the Complaints Panel is led by the Residents/Volunteers, they are able to direct the area or topic that will be considered at the next meeting. They are able to request the attendance of specific officers and ask for further information to be provided for the next meeting. The Panel are able to have open and honest discussion whilst challenging and seeking answers in a safe environment and thus shaping where within the business the Panel will focus on and what issues they would like to raise.

Below are the areas that the Resident-led Panel has had direct involvement in shaping the Complaints Panel and the service it provides:

- Panel sought a Terms of Reference be set up to ensure that the purpose of the Panel was clear, setting out the reporting mechanism and activities/responsibilities assigned.
- Panel agreed that the membership be expanded to include InfluenceUS volunteers, to add depth to the knowledge, experience and Residents' perceptions of complaints.
- Panel agreed to the formalisation of an agenda, to include standard items and ad hoc items led by Members.
- Panel agreed on notes being taken to document all actions and follow-up matters – demonstrating the commitment of the Panel to ensure actions points were looked into and addressed.

- Panel agreed that a Senior Officer be present at each meeting to facilitate a more productive and insightful meeting, and to provide an overview of an area of the business as directed by the Panel.
- Meetings are now very much Member-led, with the ad hoc agenda items determined by the Panel.
- Through the Panel, communications and collaboration with Officers has improved significantly, not now working under a blame culture, but working towards identifying a solution or improvement of service.
- Notes of all actions are fed through to the Resident Committee. Should any significant points/process improvements be identified, these are also submitted to the Committee for approval.
- The notes of the Panel meetings, together with any service improvements identified are reported to the Board on an annual basis.

Below are the actual services where the Panel has put forward process improvements, suggested areas be looked at more closely (where issues have been identified at Panel meetings) or where the Panel has been able to positively influence the communications between departments and actioned some small, but extremely important, service improvements:

- Recommended that for Stage 2 complaints, the Senior Officer, where possible, meet face to face with the Complainant to demonstrate that the Association is taking their complaint seriously and hopefully meeting in person may help to work through the issues to an amicable solution.
- Helped to produce the Compliments & Complaints Information Pack for Residents, together with a one-page flyer. The flyer the Panel was insistent on, to provide Residents with a clear and concise outline of the complaints process. Sitting behind this they wanted an Information Pack which detailed in clear and friendly terms the questions and answers that may arise during the complaints process. This Information Pack and flyer is sent to each Complainant to help them navigate the complaints process.
- Compiled a Compensation Guidance Sheet for Officers to use in establishing the amount of compensation that could be awarded. This provided clarity to both Officer and Resident, with less ambiguity, and from which the compensation calculation could be made quicker.
- From details provided by InfluenceUs Volunteer at the Panel meeting it was made evident that window cleaning issues at a scheme had become untenable. The Senior Officer at the meeting agreed to liaise directly with the Scheme Manager to address. Reported back to the next meeting, positive outcome with the issue addressed and Residents sending compliments to the cleaning staff.
- Complaint template letters. The Panel was instrumental in the Complaints Team being instructed to review and overhaul the complaints letters. Having drilled down on some complaints, a number of points were highlighted to be revised. These have now been actioned, together with making the letters more person-centred, empathetic and not defensive. They have also been made as clear as possible for the Officers to utilise. As such, we are now seeing a decrease in the number of complaints that are progressed to Stage 2 – getting it right first time



- The Panel was instrumental in pushing through that all responses required a full feedback to Complainants on any process improvements / changes / lessons learnt.
- Points were raised by the Panel relating to the automation of appointments and checking medical issues when raising appointments – process improvements suggested.
- Through the Panel, the Facilitating Officer has had the opportunity of meeting individually with InfluenceUs Volunteers, drilling down into some teething issues and acting as liaison to get the points addressed. This has firstly addressed some issues that the Association had not been made aware of, but also builds trust with Residents, shows we are listening, value their input and improves our overall communication.

How tenants were involved in shaping the service

From the above, the Complaints Panel was instrumental in considering, discussing and putting forward their proposals in terms of how the Panel should operate. To assist in enabling the level of involvement, the following support is offered:

- Following the launch of InfluenceUs Volunteers (our new and improved approach for Resident involvement), a regular invite goes out to all registered InfluenceUs members advising them of the date of the next Panel Meeting and asking them to get in touch if they are interested.
- Initial contact with InfluenceUs is made by the Resident Involvement Officer who was heavily involved in shaping the InfluenceUs model and is widely known to the Volunteers. The Complaints Officer works closely with the RI Officer to establish links with Residents.
- Following notification, the Complaints Officer will make contact with the volunteer, so they are familiar, outlining the process and making them feel welcome and appreciated and that their feedback is extremely valued. We will talk them through the process of the meeting and go through anything they have issues with to ensure they feel comfortable.
- Virtual meetings have been set up over the past few years. The Governance Assistant arranges this with the individuals and provides a test run to make sure they are happy with the technology and how it works and feel relaxed and familiar with this approach in readiness for the meeting.
- Face to face meetings – we try to use an external venue such as one of our schemes. Transport is arranged or expenses paid. Lunch is also provided.
- Should any InfluenceUs Volunteers feel slightly intimidated or unsure, the Resident Involvement Officer will attend with them to assist.
- We have had times when Members have had disabilities. Where these are highlighted we have always accommodated and made any adjustments required.
- The Panel strives to ensure that every individual is treated equal. There is no hierarchy in terms of how the meeting is conducted. There is a mutual respect and time given for each individual to have their comments or raise questions. It is a safe environment, where Residents are encouraged and thanked for providing feedback.

- It is not always possible for Residents/Volunteers to have their say on every aspect as we may run out of time. Should this be the case, the Complaints Officer will ensure she contacts them outside of the meeting and will arrange a further meet up to listen and go through any issues they may have.
- Agenda Papers are uploaded on to Board Intel (platform for Board/Committee Members). We also send electronic versions of the Papers 1 week prior to the meeting to allow for everyone to have digested the information and put together any comments/queries they have. At this point, all Members are advised that they can contact me if they have any problems or questions they need to raise prior to the meeting.
- Residents are made aware that Officer support is always on hand should they need it. The culture of ClwydAlyn is such that Officers are happy, willing and supportive to help Residents.
- The Complaints Team monitor the training courses on offer and will arrange for any core members to attend complaint training sessions.
- The Complaints Team have also helped assist Resident Committee Members / Volunteers attend other training courses which it was identified may assist them in their roles.

What difference has it made i.e. the outcomes of the involvement and how those outcomes were shared with the wider tenant body

The difference being made / will make concerning the Complaints Panel and the involvement of Residents is significant:

- Assurance provided that the complaints process is monitored independently AND by ClwydAlyn Residents.
- With the Panel's influence with the complaints process and Residents / Volunteers it helps to demonstrate the openness and transparency to break down barriers and build the trust between ClwydAlyn and its customers.
- The Panel provides a stop gap, to be able to step back and take the time to consider the processes, identify themes and look at lessons being learnt. For the future, the Panel will be instrumental in looking at these elements further – have they continued to be implemented, are they still successful/fit for purpose, if working well have they been rolled out to other teams, is there anything we can improve on again?
- Openness and transparency – questions/challenges raised by Residents are answered fully and where they can't be, reported back at the next meeting.
- The role of the Complaints Panel is now well-established, it is time to take it to the next level, looking at the service improvements and drilling down further in these areas.
- By the Panel helping to make the complaints process the best it can be, we are already seeing improvements in terms of Stage 1 complaints being resolved rather than progressing to Stage 2.
- By including more InfluenceUs Members, we are getting a broader and more comprehensive overview of how complaints and the way we conduct our services is perceived.



- By including more InfluenceUs Members, it is envisaged that the work of the Association in terms of complaints will be seen in larger circles in a positive light.
- The Panel, over the next 12 months, will be looking to work alongside the Complaints Team to establish a promotional campaign, to get the message across to the wider Tenant Body that we welcome complaints, that we benefit and prosper from the feedback to be able to make changes – that we actually listen and put remedial actions in place, encouraging a two-way process - collaboration.
- To promote on successes and the work the Panel and Team undertake will further help to enlighten our customers as to how seriously we take complaints and how the Association wants to work with Residents to improve the services they receive. Promoting to the wider Tenant Body will also help to encourage other Housing Associations to embark on the same approach and improve their complaints stats and ultimately the services they provide.
- The Panel will be looking at agreeing on some infographics to be promoted in the Residents' Newsletter – we find that this is a far better way to get information and stats across, rather than getting bogged down in the narrative.
- The Panel will be considering how best to contact Residents who have made a complaint and have completed the process – whether they could provide their own feedback for the Panel to consider, take on board and put forward any suggestions/process improvements
- The Panel will also be reviewing the Compliments and Complaints Policy together with the compensation criteria and Information Pack – to ensure they are still fit for purpose and provide the adequate support.
- IT support is made available should it be required to Residents.
- The Panel has been flexible and changed its meeting times to the evenings to allow for those InfluenceUs Volunteers who work to be able to still attend



If you have a complaint

Sometimes things go wrong. We like to deal with things straight away!
This is how it works....

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

We like to deal with the problem quickly, so you will be happy 😊

If we cannot agree, this is what we do:

Stage 1 – We record the complaint and pass this on to one of our Officers who will investigate and get back to you within 10 working days to resolve the problem.

Stage 2 – If you are still not happy, you can ask for your complaint to be looked at by a Department Director. We aim to sort out the problem within 20 working days, but sometimes it may take a little longer.

Stage 3 – We try our hardest to sort out your complaint. In the unlikely event that you are still not happy, you can contact the Ombudsman. They are completely independent and have no connection whatsoever with ClwydAlyn.

This is how you can contact the Ombudsman:

Email: ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk

Tel: 0845 601 0987 (local rate)

Write: The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed, Cardiff, CF35 5LJ

Website: www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk

The Complaints Panel has not only demonstrated its success in identifying process issues/improvements, assisted in the forming of an Information Pack for Residents and setting out a compensation guidance, it has helped to improve the bond between Resident/Volunteers and Officers. It helps provide to the Committee, the Board, to Officers and the Complaints Team, Resident Committee Members and Volunteers reassurance that the processes we have in place are robust and stand up to rigorous scrutiny. It demonstrates the commitment of the Association to continuously look to improve the services offered to Residents, identifying issues and putting these right.

For more information, contact: Lorraine.Orger@clwydalyn.co.uk



**Working Independently Together -
Newydd HA**
Contact:
tracy.james@newydd.co.uk



**Shaping Services for Older
People - V2C**
Contact:
rebecca.iddon@V2C.org.uk

COMMUNICATING WITH TENANTS & RESIDENTS



WINNER

'Our Community' Newspaper - Hafod HA

The consideration given to the variety/appropriateness of communication methods used in relation to diversity of the tenants e.g. plain language/avoiding jargon during communication

It was recognised that during covid most of our correspondence was online through our website and social media channels with a focus on changes that were happening in relation to our services within the Covid restriction guidelines.

Informal conversations with customers revealed that they were benefitting from hearing positive stories about their neighbours and wider community.

This is where the idea came to use the newspaper to:

- Share positive stories and experiences of our customers
- Enable customers to submit their own articles to express how they are feeling
- Give the wider customer an idea of what was going on across care, support, and housing
- Update on the services that matter to our customers

An editorial panel was set up with colleagues and customers to ensure the tone and language used was suitable for our customers including those in our care and supported schemes.

Customers were asked their preference on how they would like to receive the newspaper:

Paper 54%



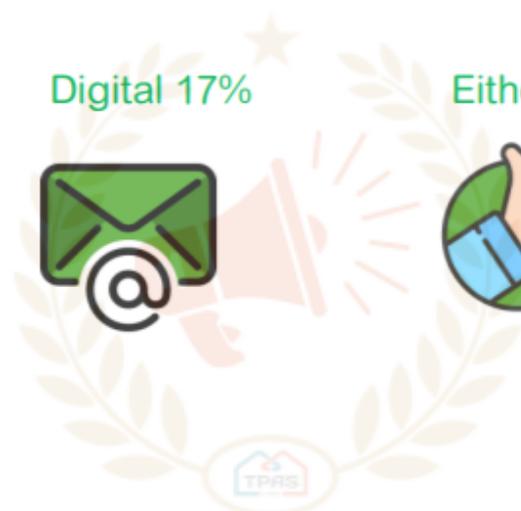
Digital 17%



Either 4%



None 25%



The range of topics communicated

There was a focus on ensuring the newspaper content was relevant to our customers. To achieve this our customers were asked what they would like to see in the newspaper through *Question of the month*. This is a method we use to gain customer feedback on a topical question.

This is done in the following ways:

- when contacting our customer service team
- polls on social media channels
- interaction with our colleagues

72 customers responded, with lots of feedback and ideas, this led to the top 3 areas to focus on:

1. community news
2. service updates
3. fun and a competition

It was also important to include any relevant changes within the business such as the office opening, update on repairs service etc.

The effectiveness of the communication

This edition is hot off the press, so we have no feedback yet. Customers are able feedback in the following ways:

- tear off strip on the hard copy of the newspaper (freepost address provided)
- link on our website and social media
<https://www.hafod.org.uk/communitynews/>
- QR code added to the newspaper for quick access



Our Community Hafod

Read online at [hafod.org.uk/communitynews](https://www.hafod.org.uk/communitynews) Autumn 2021

Remembering our loved ones
Our care homes have been holding memorials, planting trees or installing memorial plaques in honour of those they have lost over the past 18 months.

Tŷ Heulog turns five!
Residents and colleagues at our Tŷ Heulog Extra Care scheme in Talbot Green recently pulled out all the stops to celebrate five fantastic years since opening in 2016.

Look inside for...
Hafod in Bloom p3
Repairs update p5
Our Care Stars p6

We have also asked colleagues for their thoughts on the newspaper and suggestions for future editions. <https://forms.office.com/r/7byfpHYSGj>

Our scrutiny panel had the opportunity to comment at the start of the process and felt that this was a good way to keep customers updated and liked the style of a newspaper, they even submitted some articles!

Any lessons learnt and sustainability of the methods

What worked

- Involving customers in developing content for the newspaper
- Involving all colleagues across the business by arranging hand delivery of the newsletter, including those who are not in customer facing roles. We felt that this was a fantastic opportunity for colleagues to visit our communities to get a better understanding of where our customers live
- The opportunity for colleagues to earn a bit of extra money by acting as Hafod 'posties'
- The financial savings compared to sending the newsletters out by post

Lesson learnt

- Start gathering stories earlier! Was a mad dash at the end to get the stories in and proofread in time
- Suggestions have included, gathering stories in between editions to be used when needed. This will reduce the pressure on colleagues and customers to submit articles with tight deadlines

For more information, contact: Michelle.McGregor@hafod.org.uk



Chatbot - North Wales Housing
Contact:
iwan.evans@nwaha.org.uk

TENANT OF THE YEAR



WINNER

Amanda Lawrence

The commitment and dedication shown

Amanda Lawrence is an inspiring, enthusiastic, dedicated and passionate involved tenant and is Newydd's Disability and Equalities Champion and a much-valued member of our Tenant Scrutiny Group. Amanda's main goal is to help create a fully inclusive society where people, especially those with disabilities, don't have to ask for help as adjustments have already been considered and implemented. To Amanda, it's all about give and take but mainly respect.

A former scout leader and foster carer, Amanda has always volunteered as a means of giving back to her community. Since attending her first AGM in 2016, Amanda went on to participate in several of Newydd's themed sub-groups, soon becoming Chair of our Development sub-group, a role which she thoroughly enjoyed as it enabled her to positively challenge Newydd and bring issues that the disabled community face on a daily basis to the fore which has helped future proof our housing provision.

Amanda later stepped down from this position when she was invited to be a member of Newydd's tenant Scrutiny Group in October 2019. Amanda was absolutely thrilled to be appointed to this high-profile multi award winning group which has an excellent reputation in the housing sector. At the same time, Amanda also volunteered to be our tenant representative on Newydd's Audit Committee.

A further impressive achievement was when Amanda was invited to join the TPAS Cymru Board of Directors in 2020 because of the notable work she had undertaken with Newydd and because of her contribution at TPAS's Disability Network meetings / conferences and Welsh Government and Tai Pawb consultations



The difference her commitment has made to the tenant community and / or groups she's worked with

The work Amanda has undertaken with the Scrutiny Group has improved services for all Newydd's tenants and she was hugely involved in:

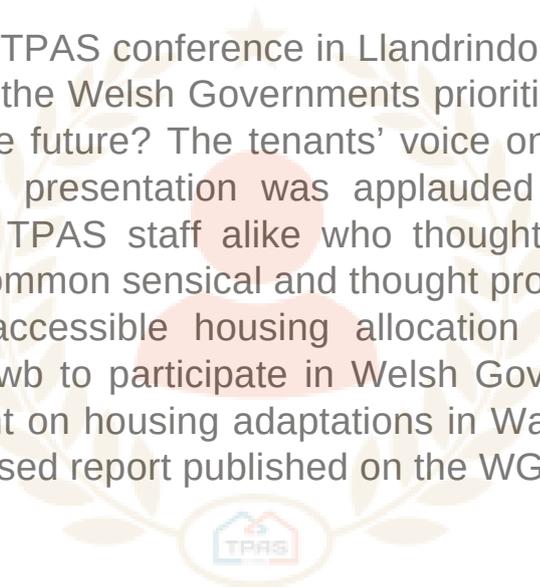
- A scrutiny review of Newydd's void service which took an in-depth look at the whole process from beginning to end.
- Three joint Tenant Scrutiny Group and Newydd Facebook conferences which have positively impacted on several service areas – here is Amanda introducing the first conference we facilitated <https://youtu.be/SO3iwYIk25c>
- Our Scrutiny Group's 'Straight Talking' sessions which aims to raise awareness of important issues to the wider tenant audience
- NEADS (Newydd's Equality and Diversity subgroup) and helped co-produce our Customer Services Charter
- Reviewing Newydd's new rent account management process which adopts a restorative approach

Here is the video that the Scrutiny Group filmed to inform Newydd tenants about the valuable work they undertake and the importance of the tenants' voice <https://youtu.be/wJpurSOoYKI> and here is a celebration video from when the group celebrated their 10-year anniversary <https://youtu.be/gXTEJX8VRFI>

Amanda is also a member of our Reading and Policy Panel so helps to review all policies that are due for an update to ensure the content is relevant, accurate and easy to read. Amanda also sits on the Service Improvement Panel which is a partnership project that enables trained tenants to assess the services of other partner landlord either through digital mystery shopping or site visits (unfortunately the project has been put on hold during the pandemic).

Additionally, Amanda's fantastic contribution to the wider housing sector has included:

- Being a speaker at the TPAS conference in Llandrindod Wells in 2019 in their 'What do tenants think the Welsh Governments priorities should be for social housing now and in the future? The tenants' voice on affordable housing in Wales' workshop. Her presentation was applauded by tenant attendees, guests, speakers and TPAS staff alike who thought her comments to be passionate, realistic, common sensical and thought provoking.
- After completing an accessible housing allocation survey, Amanda was approached by Tai Pawb to participate in Welsh Government research into the way money is spent on housing adaptations in Wales. The findings were included in an anonymised report published on the WG website to help inform WG policies.



- Amanda was invited by CIH to do a presentation at the 2020 Tai conference and participate in a panel session involving a CEO, an operational member of staff and tenant involved in scrutiny about their perspectives on the challenges and opportunities relating to asset management and maintenance. Another challenge which was enthusiastically accepted.
- Amanda also co-hosted the 'Big concerns and priorities of tenants in Wales' session at this year's TPAS conference with Rob Simkins, Campaigns Manager at Shelter Cymru, and her contribution to the discussion was passionate, engaging, and insightful as always.

How inclusive has she been and how she's considered the diversity of the wider tenant population

The Scrutiny Group always considers the wider tenant population when undertaking their reviews and complete an equality impact assessment as part of their process to determine if any group is being adversely affected. They also consider how any identified barriers can be overcome and include any potential solutions in their recommendations which are then considered by Senior Management Team and board for implementation.

Amanda draws from not only her own personal experience regarding disability, but also the experiences of others she has learned about through attending TPAS Cymru's Disability Network. As Amanda has not always been a

wheelchair user, she is able to look at issues from both perspectives and therefore is able to always give a fair and balanced opinion.

Amanda fully appreciates that whilst disability may be considered a minority need, she remains ever passionate about her crusade to make a positive difference and make the best future possible for disabled people, particularly as one of her own children will require supported housing when older because of their specialised needs.

Amanda has a thirst for knowledge and welcomes the opportunity to attend any relevant webinar, forum or training session that will further develop her skills and understanding, particularly around equality and diversity.



Clear examples of the work that has been achieved and how it's made a positive difference

Amanda has made a tremendous impact on the housing sector and has made an impressive and much-valued contribution that has helped Newydd to shape, drive and improve the way we deliver our services. The main difference Amanda's involvement has had is that she has encouraged Newydd to think about how they can better support disabled tenants and have a positive impact on their lives. Amanda embraces the mind hive approach (a collective consciousness, comparable to the behaviour of social insects, in which a group of people become aware of their commonality and think and act as a community, sharing their knowledge, thoughts, and resources) which has proved most useful when undertaking scrutiny. Here are some of her achievements:

- Scrutiny Group review of Newydd's voids process: the recommendations made have ensured that voids standards are consistent; interdepartmental comms is improved; former tenant debt is reduced by undertaking more pre-void inspections to identify rechargeable repairs (which will also help to reduce void costs); void loss is reduced and income will be maximized



through the introduction of any day lettings (as opposed to only on a Monday); attention is given to how Newydd can address hard to let properties; the tenancy ready project is extended to new areas; and further consideration is given to recycling items left in void properties.

- Three joint Facebook conferences - The first conference was a week-long with a different theme each day and enabled the group to make recommendations much quicker on a number of service areas as opposed to just one, thereby increasing productivity, streamlining processes, offering better value for money, and increasing satisfaction for the group and Newydd. The second conference focused on communication and the most recent on equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Newydd's Tenant Scrutiny Group's 'Straight Talking' sessions with key staff and guests: Amanda has participated in the following interview sessions with:
 - Oonagh Lyons, Director of Housing & Communities and Elizabeth Lendering, Finance & Resources Director: Affordability & VfM <https://youtu.be/J5Zd3IJ31PY>
 - Oonagh Lyons, Head of Housing & Communities, Rachel Honey-Jones, Head of Community Regeneration, and Ross Thomas, Policy & Public Affairs Manager for Tai Pawb: Importance of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion <https://youtu.be/ep1wupUTmLw>

- Amanda helped to co-produce our Customer Services Charter at a recent Newydd's Equality and Diversity Subgroup (NEADS) meeting.

As you can imagine Amanda has to undertake a lot more planning and preparation than most just to carry out normal day to day activities, so her continued and committed involvement is testament to how determined she is to contribute and make a real and positive difference for others.



For more information, contact: tracy.james@newydd.co.uk



Rhys Humphreys - Cadwyn HA
Contact:
Alessa.hill@cadwyn.co.uk



Adam Kaps - Cardiff Community HA
Contact:
Susan.Anscombe@ccha.org.uk

Judges Special Recognition Award



WINNER

Barcud Cyf & The Barcud Monitoring Group, Working As One

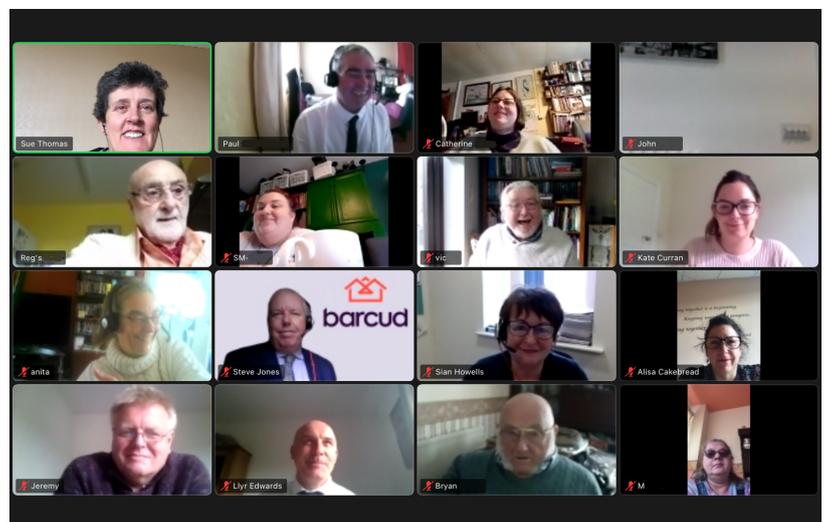
Background

Following the merger of Mid-Wales Housing Association (MWAHA) and Tai Ceredigion (TC) in November 2020, a newly formed housing association was established called Barcud. As a result, the Barcud Monitoring Group (BMG) was formed, consisting of members from both former associations tenant representative groups both of whom had been operating for a number of years previously to ensure the voices of tenants were heard. Following on from the tenants' requests, the BMG was written into the association's new rules of association, provided with an Independent operating model, provided with a simple Service Level Agreement and funding agreement. More importantly, the group is managed by tenants and not the association, something that both the association and the tenant representatives supported.

Barcud and the BMG have a coproductive working relationship and the group is a valued member of the Barcud team. The group works with the Board of management, CEO & Leadership Team and the Operational Management Team. Members of the group meet with the CEO & Leadership Team and Operational Managers monthly at either a Strategic or Operational meeting. Members also attend Business Planning Days and Self-Assessments with the Board and aforementioned teams.

Activities

This may not be a comprehensive list of our full involvement with Barcud, but we believe you will gain a good insight as to how much we are involved. We wish to note that much of our work is conducted via Task & Finishing groups, which includes representatives (incl. Directors) from the various depts within the association).



- Created the Tenant Involvement Strategy & Action Plan for Barcud.
- Created the new tenancy agreement for Barcud.
- Created a supplement for the new Tenancy Agreement which highlighted to potential tenants their rights and obligations and important clauses from a tenant's perspective.
- Gave a presentation to the new Barcud Board on the importance of tenant involvement and the role of the BMG.
- Created a staff training video from the perspective of a tenant on the new culture for Barcud.
- Participated in the Rent Setting T&F group.
- Conducted our own review of Service Charges and submitted our recommendations.
- Participated in the Heating Specification T&F group in which we explored various forms of alternative and affordable heating systems. This also included reviewing EPC levels; the use of Solar PV panels, ASHP and HHRS heating systems, a fabric first approach to ensure heat is retained within the property and the continued use of Rockwool external wall insulation.
- Reviewed and amended various specifications prior to the tendering process, such as Double Glazing, Boiler, & Radiator replacements, external decorating, bathroom and kitchen replacements. This also included the code of conduct for contractors when engaging with tenants.
- Instigated and participated in the association's 2-stage complaints policy and procedures following a TPAS event with the CSA. We are currently working jointly on what data we wish to see on a quarterly basis so that we can also monitor trends and make our recommendations.
- Reviewed and amended the Tenant Involvement Action Plan after 6 months of operation.
- Reviewed and proposed further questions for Barcud's first STAR survey, which contained 29 questions. This survey was posted to all tenants and the returned data is currently being compiled and we will receive the full report and be included in the creation of an action plan.
- Participated in the review of Barcud's H&S & Wellbeing policy.
- Participated in the Barcud H&S & Wellbeing Forum.
- Reviewed and approved various Local Lettings Policies.
- Reviewed and approved tenant related policies and procedures such as the Welfare Benefit Reform Strategy and Rent Arrears policy. It should be noted that all tenant related policies need to be approved by the group prior to their submission to the Board for adoption.
- Participated in the T&F group to review and design the "Out of Hours Emergency Repair" service.
- Reviewed the group's Void Inspection checklist, which has been adopted by Barcud.



- Conducted inspections on void properties prior to reletting
- Conducted WHQS Verification whilst conducting void inspections. Due to the group's independent status, we are recognised by WG as Barcud's independent WHQS verifiers.
- Reviewed the groups Estate Management checklist which has also been adopted by Barcud.
- Conducted various estate inspections and service reviews.
- Met with our Housing Regulator independently of Barcud to provide our views of Barcud during the regulatory assessment process.
- Begun work with Barcud on the implementation of the Renting Homes Act Wales 2016 & Model Contracts.
- As tenants, we continually monitor service delivery and take our observations, recommendations and concerns to Barcud at our pre-arranged monthly meetings with the association. The minutes of these meetings are provided to the Barcud Board.
- Due to being an independent tenants group, we have participated in WG consultations and provided tenants viewpoint. We do not require permission from Barcud or its oversight on our submissions as the association fully supports the tenant's voice.

Reporting

- The group informs all of our tenants of our activities and achievements via:-
- Barcud's regular tenant newsletter which all tenants receive a paper copy.
- Barcud's Annual General Meeting (AGM) Report. As the group answers to Barcud shareholders which are predominantly tenants, our submission is included in the association's Annual Report.
- The group holds 2 Tenant Liaison Forum meetings each year at which we update our tenants.
- The Barcud Tenants Conference. The group hosts this event and provides our tenants with our Annual Report as well as seeking their consent to represent them for the coming year.
- All tenants are provided with the opportunity to attend our monthly meetings to see what we do and have the opportunity of joining the group if they so wish.
- Through the Barcud website on which we have our own dedicated area, which contains our Annual Reports and other material. Link to annual report on website: <https://www.barcud.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Barcud-Monitoring-Group-Annual-Report-2020-21-final.pdf>
- Barcud staff are also proactive in promoting the work and achievements of the group and the majority of our members have been recruited through this initial engagement. Following the initial engagement, the group conducts the recruitment process independently of Barcud.



Outcomes: what difference our work makes

- A tenant focused RSL, which values tenant involvement and nurtures a positive culture towards its tenants.
- Tenants involved at every level of the association's operations and not just in service delivery, monitoring and design.
- An independent tenants group, which actively seeks involvement in all levels of Barcud's operations. The group also has its own logo, which is featured on our work.
- An independent tenants group, which ensures Barcud, is accountable, transparent and tenant focused.
- Barcud and the BMG genuinely meeting the RBW's guidelines as contained within "Hearing the Tenants Voice" and "The Right Stuff".
- A meaningful, productive and co-productive working relationship between Barcud and the BMG. We are valued members of the Barcud Team and our involvement is continually sought and welcomed.
- Tenant designed and monitored services.
- The removal of questionable service charges and continued inclusion on Service Charge reviews.
- The removal of discriminatory rental charges and continued inclusion on the Rent Setting panel.
- A new Out of Hours Emergency Repair service where our vulnerable tenants are of the utmost importance.
- The creation of a Carbon Monoxide leaflet, which will be included in the Barcud newsletter, located in communal areas and included in heating service notifications.
- The inclusion of our Tenancy Agreement supplement in all offers of a property
- Positions for 2 BMG representatives on the H&S & Wellbeing Forum.
- Tenant agreed specifications for WHQS component replacements and the decarbonisation agenda including heating systems
- Full inclusion of the BMG in the decision-making processes. The approach of Barcud is not simply to implement changes or new services but to ensure tenants are involved from the very outset and to incorporate our recommendations.
- Continued involvement in the further development of the 2-stage complaints process and monitoring of the data and creation of action plans



- Full involvement in the Decarbonisation program with the association and the Carbon Trust.
- The creation of other platforms for tenant involvement dependent on a tenants preferred level of involvement.
- Continued tenant oversight of KPI's, their trends and required actions.
- A self-managing independent tenant representative body for tenants of Barcud, which requires the consent of Barcud tenants to continue its operations.
- A tenant group, which has continued to recruit new tenants on a monthly basis due to its achievements and operational model.
- A diverse tenant representative body representing the demographics of Barcud's tenant community.
- Tenants involved in the creation and review of policies and procedures.

As stated, this is not a comprehensive list of the Barcud and BMG activities, but I hope it clearly demonstrates what can be achieved through a positive working relationship when tenants are afforded the right opportunities and internal culture.

For more information, contact: BMG.Chair@Barcud.cymru





TPAS Cymru has supported tenants and landlords in Wales for over 30 years and has a strong track record in developing effective tenant and community participation through training, support, practical projects and policy development. We have an extensive knowledge of housing with a focus on issues from the tenant perspective and for tenants' benefit.

We develop best practice at landlord, tenant group and project level through practical advice, support, training and project work. Across Wales, we improve and support community empowerment and improve the quality of tenant participation through disseminating and promoting good practice.

By channelling the experience and needs of tenants and landlords, and working with partners, we can influence policy change at Government level.

We hope you have found this information of interest and enjoyed reading about some of the fantastic work done across Wales.

Should you wish to discuss anything further, please get in touch with TPAS Cymru. We are available to support or develop options for your organisation.

If you wish us to present or talk to your board, leadership team, tenant or community group we would love to hear from you.

Contact us at enquiries@tpas.cymru or 01492 593046 / 02920 237303

Once again thank you to our sponsor, Wales & West Housing

