



GOOD PRACTICE AWARDS 2022

THE WINNERS



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A word from our Sponsors



We are delighted to be sponsoring TPAS Cymru's Participation Awards Good Practice Report 2022.

This report highlights some of the fantastic work being done by residents across Wales to make a difference in their communities.

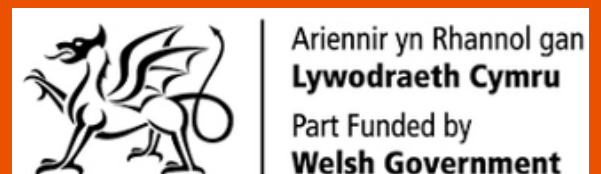
As you read on, you will discover the many creative and innovative ways that residents are getting involved to support or shape their communities.

There are examples too of new methods that Welsh housing providers are using to support the wellbeing of their residents or involve them in environmental and digital inclusion initiatives.

I hope you will join me in being inspired by the achievements and ideas shared in this report. It reflects the broad variety of best practice taking place in our communities, which we can use to shape our future work.

Well done to all the residents and projects included and we look forward to further successes in the year ahead.

Anne Hinchey
Group Chief Executive



GOOD PRACTICE AWARDS 2022



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We know that during the pandemic and beyond that organisations in Wales have been doing lots of great tenant and community engagement, despite of the challenges in such an unprecedented time. TPAS Cymru wanted to recognise this work and the difference it is making to tenants, residents and communities.

This year, we were thrilled to be back in-person with you all to celebrate and share some of this good practice and to support and inspire others.

The categories for 2022 were:

1. Communities Supporting Communities
2. Involving Tenants in Shaping Services
3. Communicating with Tenants and Residents
4. Supporting the Wellbeing of Tenants and Residents
5. Resident Support/Advice Program
6. Excellence in Digital Inclusion
7. Involving Tenants in Environmental Initiatives
8. Tenant of the Year

A Special Recognition Award was also given by the judges.

In this booklet, we're sharing with you the 9 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

Valley Pantries, Linc Cymru

This project is part of Linc's poverty reduction plan and its aim is to encourage residents to take positive action within their communities. The project supports the aspirations of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act 2015, by working with communities to become more resilient and contribute towards a globally responsible Wales.

The Type of Support Provided:

Supporting community projects led by residents and ensuring meaningful participation in shaping projects: creating a partnership between Linc, a local community interest company Baobab CIC and 22 other partners in the community including residents. This support included

- Overall, supporting the development of a community network that supplies affordable food to local communities
- Developing a post-Covid pantry network that is more than the supply of food for the community. The project centres around friendships developing, reducing isolation, strengthening the community, delivering a niche/hook for people to utilise and tap into their energy and potential.
- Signposting to solve personal queries and issues
- Sustaining 12 community pantries that were created during the pandemic and overall reducing the amount of food going to landfill.
- Develop informal café hubs in the community and enabling more volunteering opportunities for local people in local places, supported by local networks and organisations.
- Providing an opportunity for those in the community to gain work experience with admin and delivery
- Overall creating more opportunities for communities to come together to support others



How the needs of the communities/individuals were met

The project has helped to address a variety of different needs as identified in the case studies below:

Case Study 1

A member of the public expressed concern about her next-door neighbour. She felt they neighbour had a disturbed mental state, was struggling to make ends meet and was generally vulnerable. A referral to the Local Community Coordinator was made.

Case Study 2

A homeless woman presented in one of the Community Pantries. She was put in contact with BCBC Housing department and spoke with them on the phone whilst in the pantry. The eventual result was that she was given a place in Ty Ogwr homeless hostel whilst more permanent measures could be organised.

Case Study 3

A regular pantry client was concerned about a legal matter potentially affecting his ability to work. The client needed to write an official letter but is not fully literate. He was referred to Sycamore Service, who have discussed the content with him and assisted by writing the letter for him.

Case Study 4

Client concerned about the unsuitability of her housing, especially about her partner's needs. She was encouraged to speak to her Social Landlord, which she did and is now eagerly awaiting a move to her new, more suitable property.

Case Study 5

Client expressed concern about roof tiles missing after a storm. Now widowed, she was unsure how to get help as her husband had previously dealt with such matters. She was signposted to Sycamore Service who have arranged for her roof to be repaired and are helping to assess her other needs.

Case Study 6

The PCSO, regularly present in one of the pantries, has dealt with several issues, brought to him by Community Pantry clients involving anti-social behaviour of local children and issues with cyclists on the mountain roads.

Case Study 7

A woman with a significant disability, unable to leave her home without assistance, has a regular delivery of food from her local Community Pantry each week. The volunteer ensures that she well and that she can access prescriptions from the doctor etc. by taking time to have a chat each week.

Case Study 8

A young single mother, eating only every 3 days to have enough food for her children, was referred to Bridgend Foodbank (a voucher was issued by one of our volunteers who has also trained as a voucher issuer) and given a free pantry bag of food. Contact was also made with her support worker and measures put in place to ensure that she has a consistent supply of food.

Case Study 9

Lads and Dads referred a gentleman in his 50s who had recently suffered some devastating life events. He had reached a point in his recovery where he wished to volunteer and was happy to be introduced to the team in his local pantry. He has made friends with other volunteers, and as he is able to drive, now assists with delivering food to local clients who are unable to get to the pantry.

The impact the support has had on individuals/communities

Overall, Valley Pantries have supported over 1000 members, delivered 4,444 bags of food (to date!) Overall, 100 tonnes of food waste has been diverted from landfill and it has provided the opportunity for 71 volunteers to develop their skills and get involved in the project.

The following quotes from the public show the impact of the project on the community:

Councillor Mary Hughes said:

"Before the pantry opened at the Mem Centre in Nantymoel very few people used the centre. Now it's a vibrant place full of activity. The pantry has brought the community together."

An anonymous member of the public said:

"Accessing the food from the pantry has made a huge difference to me and my husband. It means we can have fresh food and still pay the bills. This means a great deal as we are living on a pension."

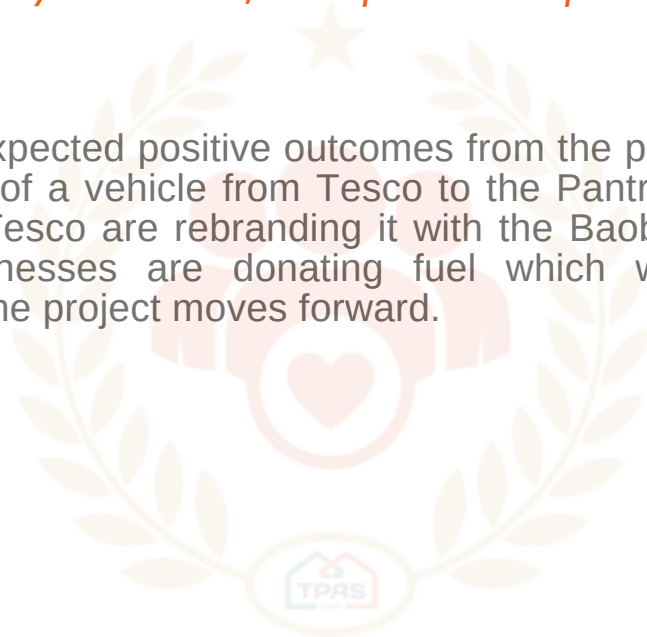
Alison Starling said:

"It's clear that as well as providing affordable fresh food and diverting food waste from landfill they make a significant contribution to health and wellbeing, community cohesion and support residents to access valuable services and vice versa where conversations between agencies and residents can take place in a more 'natural' unobtrusive way. Reduction in food waste is also an outcome."

John Westwood said:

'From a health and wellbeing perspective most of the pantries have become wellbeing hubs with cafes at 7 of the locations. Partner organisations use the pantries to advertise their services and hold regular drop ins. They've added to the sense of community and have brought vibrancy to some community buildings that have been chronically underused, even prior to the pandemic.'

Linc also reported unexpected positive outcomes from the project. One being the promise of a donation of a vehicle from Tesco to the Pantry project. Along with donating the vehicle, Tesco are rebranding it with the Baobab branding prior to handover. Local businesses are donating fuel which will provide a huge community benefit as the project moves forward.



Sustainability of the Project for the future

The **Valley Pantries** model works by charging a small amount of money (£5) for a bag of food. Members then receive a bag of food that is worth between £20 and £25.

The money collected pays Fareshare for the transport costs. There is some funding left over which a community group can use to cover any venue costs or volunteer expenses as the individual pantries are staffed by volunteers.

There are currently 2 paid posts that offer support around governance, health and safety, volunteer support and networking events.

Moving forward, the challenge is to find ways of funding these paid posts which perform a valuable support system.

Overall, they have developed a toolkit that community groups can download and use in their own communities with the idea that groups could purchase the toolkit and the support for a small annual membership cost and overall believe this model could be used across Wales

You can see some of what we do here: baobab-bach.org

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Unity Group, Caerau
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Sirhowy Community Centre volunteers
Contact:
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Involving Tenants in Shaping Services

WINNER



Customers at the Heart of Support Services Recruitment, Hafod

Summary of the aims and purpose of the project:

At Hafod we pride ourselves at placing the customer at the centre of everything we do. In our Support Services department we work to ensure the people we support have an input into how we work and deliver our services to ensure they continue to meet their needs.

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.

As an organisation, we pride ourselves on delivering services that are psychologically informed and person-centred and therefore thought it was important for the people we support to have a say in who we recruit to provide housing related support in our services.



How tenants were included in shaping this service:

In 2020 we embarked on a project to involve tenants and service users in our recruitment and selection processes in Support Services, with the aim of ensuring they have an influence on the colleagues we recruit and in turn the services we provide.

Involving people with lived experience in the shaping and continuous improvement of our services is key to us providing person-centred services that meet people's needs.

We developed a process in partnership with our HR colleagues where recruiting managers would complete stage 1 interviews and tenants/service users would complete stage 2 interviews – meaning customers have the final say on all appointments. We developed a suite of training and helpful resources for tenants/service users to undertake/refer to prior to embarking on interviewing candidates.



Once we had the processes, training and resources in place we started a campaign to recruit tenants and service users to be a part of our Customer Interview Group.

We promoted the positive affect customer involvement would have on our services but also promoted the positive impact being involved would have on the individuals involved. As we have a wide range of customers of different ages, backgrounds with varying needs, this would be different for everyone but included: building confidence, reducing isolation, developing skills and providing valuable experience for those looking to get into jobs, education or training.

We now have a regular pool of tenants/service users that are actively involved in our recruitment activity. The pool has developed a wide range of questions and are further developing these as they gain more experience and relate to what's important to them as customers.



During the pandemic where interviews took place online, customers were supported to utilise technology to take part, developing skills and confidence in using technology.

How services have been shaped as a result of tenant involvement:

From feedback gained from our customer recruitment group, we have evidence and knowledge that this approach has resulted in:

- Recruitment of support colleagues with the right values
- Recruitment of support colleagues who practice in a person-centred and psychologically informed way and are approachable and understanding to people's needs
- Tenants and service users feel listened to and that their voice matters
- Involving tenants/service users at the start of a colleagues employment journey with Hafod conveys the message that customers are at the heart of everything we do
- Tenants/Service Users have gained valuable skills, knowledge and experience
- Tenant/Service users have had the opportunity to meet new people, thus reducing isolation and expanding their social network and wellbeing

The outcomes and difference it has made and the outcomes of the involvement with the wider tenant body:

As Housing Related Support is most successful when good professional relationships are built we know recruiting colleagues that are not only skilled and experienced but have the right values is so important. If colleagues are not approachable and understanding of people's individual needs this will affect the working relationship and in turn the person's progress.

We also recognise the benefits to tenants and service users where they are gaining skills, experience and confidence themselves as part of the process. Each person receives training and mentoring to enable them to feel confident in the process.



We have a range of regular tenants/service users who take part in Support Services recruitment activity. Two examples are:

1) Older Persons Support Services Recruitment

We have a range of support service providing housing related support to older people, including Supported Housing and Floating Support. Peter and Jeffrey have been active on customer interview panels and have contributed to developing some older persons service specific interview questions.



A quote from Peter Jones - “It was an experience interviewing new applicants for a position with Hafod. I wished them all the best in the future.”

A quote from Jeffrey Jones – “I have found the experience of interviewing people for jobs interesting and beneficial. I have had the opportunity of meeting people and talking about life regarding employment. The candidates have been intelligent, clever and astute.”



2) Young Persons Homelessness Services Recruitment

A young person from one of our young persons homelessness projects also fed back;

“I found the experience fun and the answers are really interesting. I helped create the interview questions, which linked to day to day life as a young person living here”.

The same young person advised the experience gained in interviewing Support Workers will help them in their future goal of becoming a Youth Worker

For more information, contact: caroline.davies@hafod.org.uk



**Shaping Service for Older People
2.0 - V2C**

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**Ymgynghoriad Polisi Rent
Cymdeithasol - Grwp Cynefin**

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TENANT OF THE YEAR



WINNER

Paul Clasby - Barcud

The commitment and dedication shown

Paul has been a committed and became a heavily involved tenant in 2012, when he was a tenant with Tai Ceredigion. Paul wanted to use his personal experience to help improved services for other tenants, who at the time were having major improvement works to their homes. Prior to Tai Ceredigion and Mid-Wales Housing associations' merger, Paul was heavily involved in Joint Tenant Panel meetings and attended many of the consultation events held across both counties - a mark of his dedication.

Following the merger, Paul was elected Chair of Barcud Monitoring Group (BMG) and has ensured that the group works cohesively as one, chairing online meetings and informal catch up's and most of all ensures that everyone has an equal voice.

More examples of the dedication Paul shows:

- Attends meetings with the BMG, the Leadership team, Operational managers and the Board of management
- Attends business planning meetings with the Board of management to discuss Barcud's priorities and has been part of the self-evaluation process and feeds back on whether Barcud is achieving it's strategic priorities
- Writes an article in every tenant newsletter outlining the BMG's work and encourages more tenants to get involved. The link to the newsletter is -
<https://www.barcud.cymru/newsletter/>
- Produces an annual report, which outlines the work of the BMG which is presented to tenants at the Tenant Liason Forum. This report is also included in Barcud's annual report. The link to the BMG report is on the Barcud website -
<https://www.barcud.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Barcud-Monitoring-Group-Annual-Report-2020-21-final.pdf>



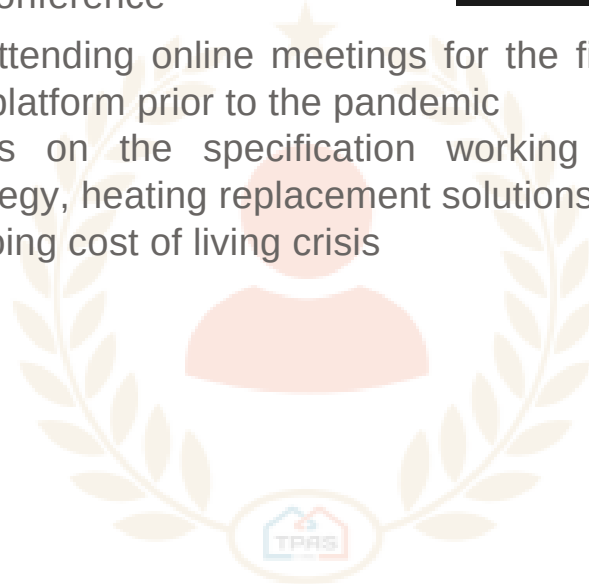
More examples of the dedication Paul has shown:

- Paul has recorded training videos for Barcud staff, outlining and emphasising the importance of tenant involvement from a tenant's perspective
- Paul writes an article for the monthly staff bulletin

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

Paul's work has been invaluable to ensuring tenant voices are heard. Paul is keen to ensure that that all tenants have the opportunity to get involved at a level that suits them and that any information they receive is easy to understand. Paul also has:

- Been involved in developing many documents for tenants, including a FAQs sheet, which was sent out to all Tai Ceredigion and Mid-Wales Housing association tenants, prior to the merger and was part of the wider tenant consultation
- Presented feedback from the merger consultations to the Boards of Tai Ceredigion and Mid-Wales Housing, prior to merger, highlighting tenants priorities and any concerns
- Been instrumental in developing a "What you need to know before signing your new Tenancy Agreement" information sheet. This outlines what tenants' rights and obligations are and also what Barcud's responsibilities are, in an easy to understand way and is sent out with all offers of a property.
- Sought and achieved the removal of questionable service charges
- Ensured tenants continued inclusion in service charge reviews
- Has been involved in the out of hours emergency repair service review, ensuring vulnerable tenants are being prioritised
- Chaired Barcud's first online Tenant Liason Forum and Tenant Conference
- Supported tenants attending online meetings for the first time, many of whom had never used this platform prior to the pandemic
- Represented tenants on the specification working group, looking at the decarbonisation strategy, heating replacement solutions and how best to support tenants with the ongoing cost of living crisis



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

- As Chair of the BMG, Paul speaks directly to any potential new members, explaining how this independent tenant group operates and encouraging them to attend a meeting to see how their meetings work.
- He ensures that any new members have the opportunity to speak, and that any individual member does not dominate the meeting. This is something he also does when hosting the Tenant Liaison Forum meetings or the Tenant Conference.
- He is always keen to encourage tenants to get involved, by promoting other avenues for involvement, as well as the BMG, in order to ensure that the tenants' voice represents the demographic of Barcud.
- This is not a complete list of Paul's involvement but does highlight how committed he is.
- Paul is visually impaired, but has never let this become a barrier to his involvement. In fact, this has helped many Barcud staff to better understand some of the challenges he and other tenants face, with everyday tasks that many of us take for granted. He has encouraged and supported many tenants to get involved, working tirelessly, for the benefit of all tenants at Barcud. He uses specialised computer software when reading any paperwork, whether it is minutes, policies or consultation documents. This means that it can take him much longer to do things and needs a great deal of time and commitment on his part, something that he gives freely. Paul has an incredible memory, and is not afraid to challenge staff, directors or Board members if he thinks decisions are not taken in the best interest of tenants. His continued enthusiasm and positive attitude is an inspiration to both staff and tenants and we hope to work with Paul for many more years to come.

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COMMUNICATING WITH TENANTS & RESIDENTS



WINNER

'Together We Do - CCHA

Summary of the purpose and aims of the project

Following the COVID lockdown, a number of CCHA estates had a build-up of issues and had begun to lose trust in CCHA as an organization due to failing to deliver on past promises.

The Housing teams needed to address these issues and restore trust in CCHA, so they enlisted the help of the communications team to develop a newsletter that was clear and bespoke to the needs of each community.

Teams from across CCHA worked together to create an action plan using the “You talk, We Listen, Together We do” approach to:

- Build Trust
- Explain what is happening
- Be accountable for actions

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

Design

Following events at the estates to discuss the issues with tenants and the residents, updates were designed using CCHA’s bright and colourful branding to ensure that it captured tenants attention and was not just seen as another letter or junk mail. Each topic was assigned a colour and broken into the 3 parts: You Talk; We Listen; Together We Do. The text used short explanations and simple graphics.

The layout was consistent across all the updates and sites and included a who’s who at the end including the staff responsible for some of the actions with contact details and photos. This was to not only provide a ‘face to a name’ but to encourage tenants to talk to us and recognise us when we were out and about.

The design also allowed CCHA to use just one or two elements or adapt the design for different delivery methods, for example using the who’s who on the digital boards across CCHA sites, posting on the website or social media.

Language

Simple and clear language was key to the approach used in these resident updates, CCHA has a diverse customer base and we needed to ensure that we made the document as easy to read as possible. This was supported by the use of simple graphics to highlight topics. Tenants can sometimes be put off by long and wordy letters so the updates were focused and to the point and included a deadline date where possible.

The sites that we focused on during this exercise did not have need for translation, but in future additional sites may and the short and simple language will make it quicker and easier to translate.

Delivery

Most of the updates were delivered by post or by hand. Some elements of the action plans or information have also been shared on the 6 digital notice boards that we have in some of our blocks

The “You talk, We Listen, Together We do” approach is also used throughout our communications on social media and on the website. Most notably was the message sent to out about the changes to our grounds maintenance service:

The effectiveness of the communication.

The action plans received positive feedback from tenants and as tenants were aware of what was going on it reduced the number of calls and complaints coming through. Tenants felt informed and begun looking forward to the next update.

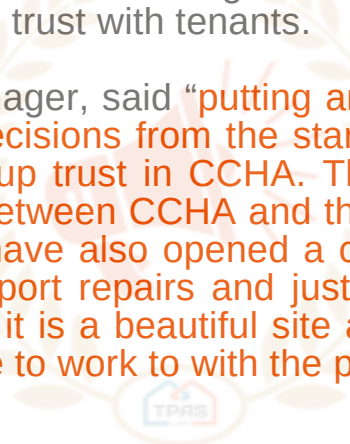


Tenant 1:

“Very straightforward, easy to read with lots of relevant information. A massive improvement from what we had.”

For staff they felt that they had a clear way to manage the issues on estates and easily communicate with tenants. Providing timescales and updates on completed outcomes helped us to rebuild trust with tenants.

Joni Williams, Neighbour Manager, said “putting an action plan in place and getting the tenants involved in the decisions from the start made my role as neighborhood manager easier as this built up trust in CCHA. The trust had previously been lost from lack of communication between CCHA and the tenants at Holmview. Following the feedback from tenants I have also opened a clinic once a month for tenants to come and raise concerns, report repairs and just have a general chit chat. I look forward to my morning there, it is a beautiful site and the tenants take real pride in where they live, it's a pleasure to work to with the people there.”



Any lessons learnt and sustainability of the methods

This has been a great success for CCHA and has really improved the relationship with tenants on these estates. The approach is now being set up for other sites and will follow a number of Estate Visits that are taking place over the next few months.

CCHA will also be looking at creating these into digital newsletters that can be sent out via email and text to reach a greater audience.

Each action plan is designed with the needs of that estate in mind and can be easily adapted to take these into account.

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The ClwydAlyn Way
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NCH Connected
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Judges Special Recognition Award



WINNER

BG Reach - Linc Cymru

Background

BG Reach is a creative arts project which provides support for the people of Blaenau Gwent to make art, music, creative writing and film that reflects on the rich and fascinating history of their local area.

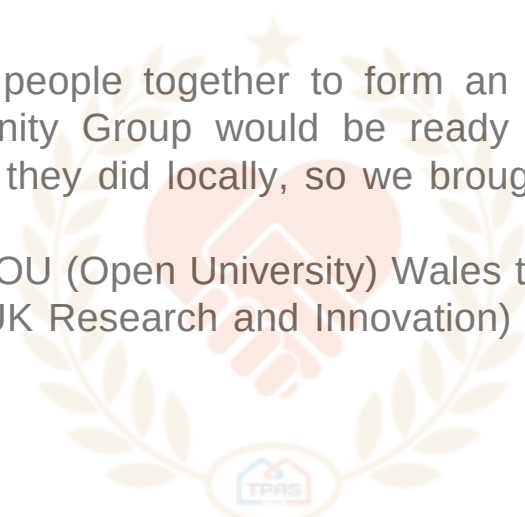
It's a partnership between the Aberbeeg Community Group, The Open University Wales and Linc Cymru whose aim is to increase confidence levels through informal learning opportunities, through capturing stories by the local community culminating in a multimedia National Exhibition in St Fagans Museum National Museum of History, proudly displaying local skills and talent.



The type of support provided

As part of the project a wide range of support was put in place. Examples of the support included:

- Bringing the right people together to form an equal partnership. We felt Aberbeeg Community Group would be ready for a challenge given the extent of the work they did locally, so we brought them on board from the outset.
- We supported the OU (Open University) Wales to make their application for funding to UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) fund for £36,000 to run the project.





- We worked together to identify community needs and co-design workshops—we did this through 3 launches provided in the community via those we work with. This provided the local community with the chance to meet the partners, tutors and local community members who would be working on the project and talk to them about their needs and aspirations'. At one of the launches, we were welcomed Neville Southall, a former Welsh international goalkeeper, who was keen to listen and support the community.
- Organising group activities to gather stories – We held intergenerational sessions with the residents of Llys Glyncoed Extracare scheme and young learners from Ebbw Fawr Learning Community. It gave everyone a chance to swap stories and for the young learners to learn about the lives and histories of the older residents.
- We supported the young learners through local organisations' such as Breaking Barriers Community Arts –who helped learned how to interview and gather stories, how to use digital equipment and edit videos.
- We then supported a wider range of participants from the local community to take part in videos, either telling their own stories about growing up in Blaenau Gwent, playing music, reading their own creative writing, or giving feedback about the project.
- During the programme we supported the community to prepare for online sessions to enable wider participation – Creative writing and music sessions were held online, some of which were held in the evening to enable more people to join in. We were able to support tenants with skills and equipment to do this where needed and the OU paid for wifi access and a screen for the community centre.
- We enlisted the support of Malarky Arts who were able to support participants from 2 – 96 years old to flourish by encouraging people to produced tiles that represented how they saw Blaenau Gwent.
- Preparation and delivery of an online and national exhibition – Participants were involved with discussions and giving their ideas for creating the online exhibition. Participants were supported by the team from St Fagans National History Museum to create the physical exhibition.
- Support to access St Fagans national museum in Cardiff – Participants and the wider community were invited to a community day at St Fagans Museum. The museum offered a family workshop and creative writing session on the day. For many of the community it was their first visit to St Fagans and for some the first visit to a museum. A bus was provided to enable access.

How the needs of the communities/individuals were met?

As a place-based project, Blaenau Gwent was chosen for this project because almost 50 percent of the county falls within the bottom two quintiles of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. The region around Aberbeeg was selected because Linc Cymru had good links with residents there and, most importantly, the area already had strong structures to support community action in the form of Aberbeeg Community Group who run a local community Centre and are always keen to see it used more by the local and wider community.

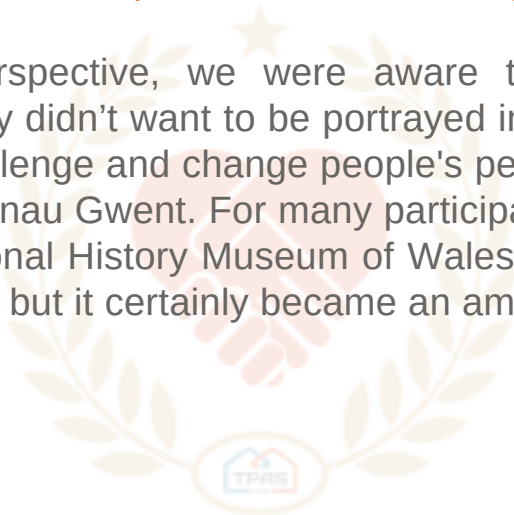
Co-design and co-production were central to the BG REACH ethos. The project began by meeting up with Aberbeeg Community Group, with the aim to bring them on board as a key partner. Having the Aberbeeg community Group was essential to the success of the project as nothing would happen without them (or at least it would have been difficult or impossible to deliver a project of this type without this group).



The aim was to establish what the community wanted to get from the project and then work out how to collaboratively deliver that. From there, three launch events were held to generate interest and engagement. These events were arranged with the community for the community.

'It was important that the partners listened to each other, and we planned in changes as appropriate. When we tried to set up a Steering Group the Aberbeeg Community Group thought that the steering group was too stiff and formal. They didn't volunteer to chair it. They delegated the handling of the budget to the other partners so that the community group could proceed with more relaxed conversations to enable them to put their views on the project'.

From a community perspective, we were aware through our work with the Aberbeeg group that they didn't want to be portrayed in a negative way. There was always the desire to challenge and change people's perceptions of their community which was based in Blaenau Gwent. For many participants being able to show their work at St Fagan's National History Museum of Wales was an exciting prospect. It didn't start off as a need, but it certainly became an ambition.



The project consisted of two strands. The first centred on a series of public workshops held in Aberbeeg, facilitated by OU tutors and local freelance experts. The community were outreached and supported to reflect on the heritage of Blaenau Gwent and their experiences of living there, through creative writing, music, oral history and visual art. These sessions enabled community members to learn new skills, build new relationships and produce creative outputs which would be shared nationally.

The second strand involved supporting secondary school pupils from Ebbw Fawr Learning Community to interview elderly residents at Llys Glyncoed extra care scheme about their lives in Blaenau Gwent, and then create digital stories of those reminiscences. The aim was to foster intergenerational links and knowledge & sharing whilst equipping the pupils involved with new skills and a stronger connection to where they lived.



Barriers associated with fear, lack of education and low confidence levels were expressed, particularly at the start.

‘Trepidation levels among potential participants were clearly high before the project began. Many people felt that it would be like going back to school. It took some persuasion for people to attend the first workshop, this was due to the brilliant work of the Aberbeeg group championing the project. Once people had taken part in the first workshop things started to change’ Suzy Bowers

Mental health - The project needed to cater for a wide range of people with a wide range of issues including those associated with poor mental health. The Aberbeeg community has always been keen to support local people, especially those with poor mental health. Knowing this was a need, helped shape the programme and support was provided sensitively. But the knock-on effects are that people have struck up friendships, combatted loneliness and have a renewed sense of ambition

There was also a need to bring different communities together - Because of the geographical area, communities tend to stick together, but as the project grew, we experienced communities getting together. A poetry group from Ebbw Vale joined in creative writing workshops in Aberbeeg, and several artists came from all over Blaenau Gwent to join in the workshops.

The impact the support has had on individuals/communities

A significant amount of work has been achieved by working together. The statistics around the project share some of the outputs that were achieved but the quotes and pictures we have submitted tell a much more personal story, so we have included these in this section.

Quotes from members of the community

“At the beginning we were all worried it would be like school, it put a lot of people off. After the first few sessions word got around it was nothing like school, it was interesting, fun and the tutors were great.” Anon

“I hadn’t done any creative writing for years, but after the first session I realised how much I had enjoyed it. Through lockdown I kept a diary, and that really helped me” Jan

It was a wonderful feeling to see my work exhibited at St Fagans, I was really proud and brought all the family to see it.” Jayne

“Since the project was launched more people know about the centre and more activities and clubs are being run from there. The monies raised are being spent on improvements to the centre to help it to be more effective for the community to use’ Anon

"The impact and support has had a huge effect on the community and for some people it has changed their lives by boosting their confidence and allowing them to try and experience new things, and in some cases return to full time education. Suzy

I told my story and haven’t done anything like this before. I thought I’d be useless. I didn’t think I'd be able to do it as I'm getting on now, but I did it and it looks good - I got help with the narration’ Hilary

"People have been trying the Open University free Open Learn courses, this has opened a new way of learning and potential for further personal development’ – Sarah

‘I was emotional looking at that (the exhibition) ...brought a little tear to my eye’ Anon



Whether the project can be sustained and developed for the future

Additional funding

The project has been so successful that an additional £40,000 has been added to the budget, this has allowed 20 additional workshops in art, creative writing, employability, photography and sustainability to be run in Aberbeeg, Abertillery, Ebbw Vale and in Llys Glyncoed extracare along with a range of other support.

New Learning Hub

In addition to this we are now developing a learning hub with the Open University Wales for Linc tenants and local residents to access for additional learning

Wales REACH

Following the success of BG REACH, a new bid is being prepared for funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The partnership will now consist of The Open University, The National Museum of Wales and Linc-Cymru and five housing association partners who are all on board. The project will span through North, Mid and South Wales and will be constructed on the same lines as B G REACH. Aberbeeg Community Group will be able to mentor and provide advice and guidance to future participants. The Aberbeeg Community Project are now accessing further funding to run projects close to their heart and now have an improved track record of running and delivering projects which has helped them with their endeavors.

Community collaboration

All the partners pulled together and worked to their own strengths to support one another. Excellent communication between partners, tutors and participants led to this project being a success. Despite misgivings by the community prior to the project starting, people in the community were willing to have a go, and after the first workshop, word spread around Blaenau Gwent and more of the community joined in. Compassionate tutors, partners and community members played a big part in the success of the BG REACH. All the tutors excelled in engaging participants, making them feel valued, encouraging them and allowing people to find their own way of expressing themselves. Members of the community have a new found confidence and as a result feel they have a stronger voice and better understanding of their community



For more information, contact: Suzanne.Bowers@linc-cymru.org.uk

Excellence in Digital Inclusion

WINNER



Anglesey Virtual Hub - Ynys Mon CC

Summary of the purpose of the project

The aim of the AVH project is to support tenants and residents within our communities to become digitally involved by offering weekly lessons and loaning tablets during the course to help reduce loneliness, improve their health and wellbeing and to build confidence using the internet.

- To help people become digitally involved
- To ensure participants understand online safety
- To help people connect with friends and family
- To help people become confident shopping online
- Provide help and support using the internet
- Support people to stay connected with their communities digitally
- Reduce isolation and loneliness
- Improve health and wellbeing

Evidence of the positive impact of the initiative on residents

The positive impact that the Anglesey Virtual Hub project has had on our tenants and residents is massive, and it is such a joy to see tenants who had no experience using the internet, or some who had some experience but no confidence, becoming extremely confident as the weeks pass.

I created a 12 week lesson plan and the sessions were held for 2 hours each week. We ensured that the same topic was covered over a two week period to make sure everyone was comfortable and confident before moving on to the next topic.

- 10 people become digitally involved and have undertaken numerous online courses
- The majority of participants have now joined social media and have re-connected with family and friends that they haven't seen since for years.

- All of the participants have become more confident shopping online
- Participants have signed up to become a member of the Digital Panel that will be starting back up after Summer
- 1 Tenant has looked into going to additional Digital Classes hosted by Coleg Menai to become an accredited digital champion for his estate
- 1 Tenant has shown interest in wanting to further their education digitally
- 1 tenant has shown interest in becoming a digital champion and we will be supporting him in getting this training
- All participants have explained how much the course has helped them and many have stated how much they have also enjoyed the course so far
- Participants have received 4 presentations from Digital Communities Wales: Introduction to Online Safety, Email Safety, Online Scams and Keeping your Information Safe, Social
- Media Safety and Understanding Boundaries Online and Shopping Safely Online and Saving Money
- Participants were shown a presentation by Age Cymru Gwynedd a Môn on their new Cymuned website which is a community website sharing news, events and activities that are happening locally, as well as videos for one to enjoy. This will be a website where one can look at to get involved in their community.
- All participants are going to have a presentation from Medrwn Môn on My Health Online
- Participants will still be able to contact Tai Môn staff for support once the 12 week classes have come to an end if they need help or advice with their tablet.

How getting more residents online has positively impacted your organisation

Getting more tenants online has positively benefited our organization as tenants now feel confident in using the council website, emailing and logging non urgent queries through the council app, which then releases the phone lines for urgent matters and lessens the waiting times. We have also recruited a number of tenants to our digital panel once that re-starts in the summer months.

How the project has been inclusive of the communities they serve

As we worked in partnership with Age Cymru Gwynedd a Môn, letters were sent out to all residents residing in Bungalows on Anglesey. Over 60 tenants showed interest, but as we only had 20 tablets, the other tenants have been put on a waiting list for next time having first offers.

We mapped out all the locations of the tenants and residents who were successful in joining the project ensuring that they were held at the Community Hubs in their area or provided transport for participants who lived rurally to ensure they could attend. We also offered to hold the project over the phone for those who were not yet ready to come back into the community following the pandemic.



Further Information

Age Cymru Gwynedd a Môn, Medrwn Môn and the Housing Department are working in partnership with several Community Hubs and Organisations across Anglesey on the Anglesey Virtual Hub.

The aim is to support more people within our communities to have the opportunity and confidence to stay connected with their communities digitally who have been out of touch with friends and family for some time, to reduce loneliness and improve their health and wellbeing by coming out to classes each week that we host.

Tenants have received a new Samsung tablet and 4G, Monthly 10G data package for a pilot period of 4 months as well as 2 hour weekly sessions for a period of 12 weeks, as well as the 10G of data Medrwn Môn supplied MIFI for those who did not have WIFI in their homes and for those who may require more than 10G of data.

Tai Môn have secured 20 tablets through Age Gwynedd and Môn, and have bought an additional 20 tablets. Tenants who are taking part in this project and who receives a tablet to loan for a period of 4 months receive full support from their local hub/organisation/Tai Môn Staff.

The topics we chose to provide as sessions were: Getting to know your tablet, Online Safety, Using the Internet, E-mails, Social Media, Online Shopping and Downloading apps, we then have 2 weeks' worth of sessions where the participants can request what they would like to go over again or a new topic they may like to learn.

For more information, contact: LucyKelly@ynysmon.gov.uk



Pan Wales Digital Inclusion Project with Digital Co-Op Wales - FCHA

Contact:
davidbingham@fcha.org



Lets get digital - Hafod HA

Contact:
michelle.mcgregor@hafod.org.uk

Resident Support / Advice Programme

WINNER



Afghan Resettlement Support Team - Taff HA

Summary of the purpose of the project

This team came together to support the resettlement of Afghan refugees, who were airlifted from Kabul following the Taliban seizure of power in August 2021. Now a team of ten, many of whom have their own experience of seeking asylum, they have directly supported and advised over 70 families who have arrived at bridging accommodation in Cardiff.



Evidence of positive outcomes for tenants, residents or communities

Families and individuals arrived scared and traumatised. Many had been separated from other close family members in the chaos at Kabul.

From the outset the support team have been available to provide, not only practical support, but also much needed emotional support and care.

The team have really brought to life the clear pledge made in Wales to be a nation of sanctuary. Time and time again the team have gone the extra mile to make sure the individuals who served our country, and their families, receive the support they need to rebuild their lives, find work, pursue education and integrate into local communities. It has been a stunning display of compassion and kindness, alongside skilled partnership working.

The team have shown grit and determination with no limits to their ingenuity, creativity, and tenacity as they support people in their time of greatest need.

The impact the support has had on individuals and communities

Some of the initiatives devised and implemented by colleagues in Taff have included:

Cultural Orientation: Taff devised and delivered weekly session introducing families to all aspect of Welsh life.

Emotional Support: staff lend their time to listen, engage and work towards solutions with each person on the scheme, and a great deal of trust and rapport has resulted from this.

Gender Equality and child-rearing: Gently and sensitively, families have been introduced to the legislative underpinnings, as well as cultural norms that are acceptable in Wales. The team arranged for the women and children to go on a day trip to Barry Island. For many of the women this was the first time they had travelled independently without a male presence. It was the first time many had ever seen the sea! Not only was a great time had by all, it was an opportunity to develop confidence and independence. The trip was so successful many have returned to enjoy days out!

Working in collaboration with the Police: Taff invited SW Police to present around role of the Police; Hate Crime - what it is and reporting; opportunities to work within the Force (many Afghans were Police in their former jobs).

Managing Housing expectations: Across England many families have refused accommodation offers, causing quite some difficulty. This has not happened in Wales. Taff have been very proactive in managing move-on expectations as well as 'acclimatizing' families before their move (looking at google maps for the location, using Street View to 'see' the area and understand that all essential amenities will be nearby for them - and this has been very successful in helping with what might otherwise be a traumatic move away from Cardiff. Team members travel with families to their new homes to ensure the move on has the best possible start.

Bank Accounts: Taff's role has been pivotal in exploring with Lloyds Bank to successfully open accounts for everyone without the normal documentation and evidence required.

Whether this support can be sustained/adapted for the future

Over 100 Afghan families have been received into Cardiff Bridging Accommodation. Of these well over 40 families have already been successfully moved on to privately rented accommodation in participating local authority areas across Wales, and more recently across England as part of a wider UK scheme. The partnership between agencies has been tremendously successful in delivering the best outcome for the families in what was dubbed 'Welcome Wales' - a project that managed to extract all the families that had connections with the Welsh Regiments out of Afghanistan, and to extend the warmest introduction to Welsh life. We are now sharing the work we have done with others including our own team working with Ukrainian refugees as well as other external organisations delivering this type of support.

How the support and advice has been inclusive of those it serves

8 families are to remain in Cardiff, and 6 are already in their homes, 2 of these have already found employment. A further 3 individuals have been successful in becoming Taff employees working on the scheme, now able to provide the same support they received. Two Welsh-born Afghans have been welcomed into the scheme. One lady and here 4 children who had become separated from her husband travelled five days through the mountains (main roads were blocked by Taliban) to get to the British Embassy in Pakistan. Along the way in the mountains, she had to get out of the car



to deliver her baby on the roadside, then got back in and completed the journey. The team supported the reunion between husband and family once they finally managed to arrive here in Wales. They named the baby Safaa - which means 'Journey'.

A large group of women and men attended a Wales international rugby match, thanks to tickets donated by the MOD. LFT Covid Passes took almost a day to take and register - but it was worth it! Taff staff and volunteers from CCC and Oasis wrapped 150 presents for the Christmas Party's children at the Novotel. The kids loved them! Taff staff arranged alongside the Novotel a Christmas buffet which went down very well. Afghan music and videos were played on the big screen, and afterwards the men voluntarily left the room so that the women could dance. The team worked alongside the hotel staff to design and source ingredients for an authentic Afghan feast to be served. It was a wonderful celebration reminding all that as much as the families want to look to the future they should not forget the traditions they have had to leave behind.

It's hard to convey just how far the team have gone and continue to go to give the refugees the best possible start here in Wales. Their energy, enthusiasm and resilience in the face of what can often feel like insurmountable hurdle and hurdle is inspiring. Not only to they support the refugees but they support each other, living up to our Taff values of Trust, Ambition, Learning and Kindness every single day!



For more information, contact: Helen.white@taffhousing.co.uk



**Camau i Gyflogaeth - Grwp
Cynefin**
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Resilience Team**
Contact:
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Supporting the Wellbeing of Tenants and Residents



WINNER

The Older Persons Housing Team - Caerphilly CC

Summary of the purpose of the project

The Sheltered Housing and Floating Support Teams monitor the general welfare of tenants/clients and provide person centred housing related support to help them live an independent life for as long as possible. The Floating Support Team provides support across all tenures and ages. The Sheltered Housing Team provides support to tenants across 33 sheltered housing schemes within the Borough.

The teams work closely together and with the Activities Co-Ordinator to assist tenants to develop relationships amongst themselves and the wider community to promote and support activities to prevent social isolation and loneliness, which ultimately improves their general wellbeing.

Evidence of positive outcomes for tenants, residents or communities

The impact of tenants receiving flexible, high quality and effective floating support in their own homes enables them to:

- Maintain their tenancy
- Resolve any housing related issues such as repairs, rehousing if needed
- Maintain their independence
- Lead more fulfilling lives
- Become involved in social activities and therefore, reduce social isolation
- Become digitally included
- Maintain their tenancy
- Resolve any housing related issues such as repairs, rehousing if needed
- Maintain their independence
- Lead more fulfilling lives
- Become involved in social activities and therefore, reduce social isolation
- Become digitally included
- Maximise income with assistance to claim benefits which they were not previously claiming, therefore, removing them from potential poverty and reduce debt
- Become involved with local groups to create relationships and friendships with others



Where necessary, tenants are signposted to relevant agencies if specialist support is identified

TPAS

How the approach was relevant or adapted to suit the needs of tenants, residents, or communities

Normally the person centred housing related support is provided to each tenant in the comfort and security of their own homes. These visits are made by a mutually convenient appointment and at a pace that is suited to each tenant.

The Older Persons Housing Team are passionate about the health, safety and wellbeing of their tenants/clients and the upkeep of our sheltered housing schemes. All our team are trained to enable efficient and effective housing related support, advice and guidance to all our tenants. Despite having to work remotely from 21 March 2020 the commitment and dedication of each and every member of the team was clearly evident as they continued to deliver the service in the best way possible to ensure everyone received the contact, support and reassurance that they needed.

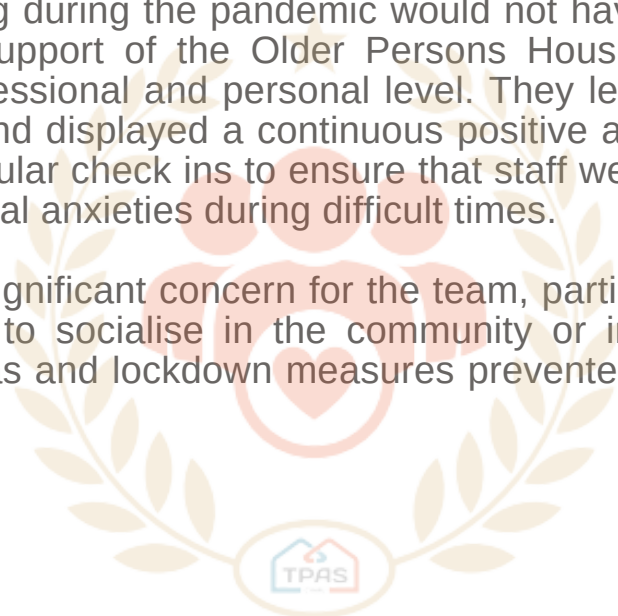
Working from home was a challenging for staff in itself, with remote working, IT issues and adapting to a home working environment, which is not something that they had done before. Despite experiencing both personal and professional anxieties due to the pandemic and its associated uncertainties, the team embraced the changes and quickly settled into a new way of working.

Over a 24 month period during the pandemic, the Sheltered Housing Team made 200,000+ reassurance calls to our sheltered housing tenants to check on their wellbeing and safe keeping and to ensure that the appropriate services were in place, eg shopping, adequate food, medical needs, prescriptions. A significant number of the phone calls were to provide reassurance to tenants who were anxious and afraid of what the pandemic meant to their families, friends and themselves and our team worked tirelessly to alleviate tenants' anxieties to the best of their ability.

The Floating Support Team maintained contact with 508[CA1] clients in the community to provide ongoing support and engagement, providing a significant[CA2] number of food parcels where required and other vital support.

The new way of working during the pandemic would not have been possible without the commitment and support of the Older Persons Housing Manager and Team Leaders on both a professional and personal level. They led the team through their worries and anxieties and displayed a continuous positive and supportive attitude to the entire team with regular check ins to ensure that staff were coping with both their personal and professional anxieties during difficult times.

Social isolation was a significant concern for the team, particularly as tenants/clients were no longer able to socialise in the community or in the sheltered housing scheme communal areas and lockdown measures prevented them from seeing their families and friends



Prior to the pandemic, tenants/clients had been used to seeing the Activities Co-ordinator and team members, who would regularly visit to discuss activities and encourage tenants to take part. The Activities Co-ordinator continued to work hard throughout the pandemic to promote activities which could be delivered remotely.

Newsletters for Sheltered Housing tenants are produced on a quarterly basis to keep tenants informed and the Activities Co-ordinator continued to produce newsletters which were delivered to tenants along with activities for them to enjoy in their own homes. The activities proved to be successful with a large number of tenants requesting additional activities on a regular basis such as puzzle pages, recipes, craft items, jigsaws, sewing, knitting and crochet patterns.

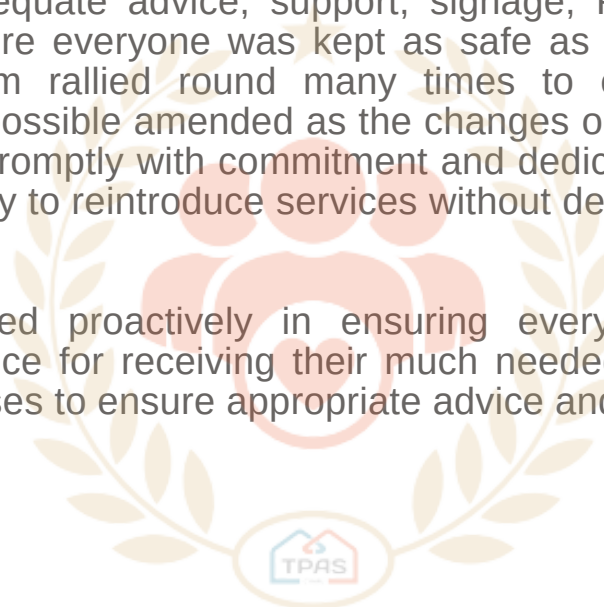
The team continued to engage with tenants/clients to obtain “good news” stories to share with everyone and to promote them on social media.

The Activities Co-ordinator has continued to provide support with community and charity craft work, a ‘sporting memories’ home activity programme and digital inclusion programmes. It was important for the team to promote digital inclusion and the Activities Co-ordinator was able to obtain a number of digital tablets from The Welsh Government to support those who did not have access to the internet or digital equipment. Support continues throughout their use of the digital tablets and we have seen some positive results, as in addition to building confidence, they are regularly using their tablets with one tenant remaking connections with friends from many years ago and another tenant being able to take part in regular Teams meetings. This is an ongoing project and we are looking to obtain additional tablets to enable more tenants to become digitally included.

Throughout the pandemic, where necessary in the case of an emergency or vital support need the team visited to provide assistance such as the death of a tenant/client, replacement pendants, essential building managers checks on our sheltered housing schemes, delivering food parcels etc. In particular, losing anyone during the pandemic was a challenge and sad situation for us all.

The Sheltered Housing Team were particularly proactive in ensuring all the schemes were provided with adequate advice, support, signage, PPE, anti bac gel/wipes, restrictions etc. to ensure everyone was kept as safe as they could be during the difficult time. The team rallied round many times to ensure restrictions were maintained and where possible amended as the changes occurred. This in itself was a great challenge met promptly with commitment and dedication to ensure everyone remained safe and finally to reintroduce services without delay once it was safe to do so.

The teams also worked proactively in ensuring everyone received and was supported with assistance for receiving their much needed covid vaccinations and monitored any covid cases to ensure appropriate advice and support was given.



Whilst this list isn't exhaustive, these are some of the tasks that the Sheltered Housing Officers and Floating Support Officers regularly undertake to enable tenants to live an independent life for as long as possible:

- Assess and review individual personal needs to enable the Team to provide person centred housing related support
- Ensure all new tenants/clients receive the information they need to know about the sheltered housing scheme or properties they are moving into and the facilities in the area
- Regular pendant and pullcord checks to ensure all sheltered housing tenants and clients using dispersed alarms in the community are able to access support all day every day if they need it
- Completing person centred Risk Assessments
- Referring to and liaising with various internal and external agencies, Social Services, GP surgeries, hospitals, District Nurses, support services, pharmacies, housing officers, repairs, contractors, Supporting People, meal providers, Police, Gofal, Reach, Shelter, Fire Service, Ambulance Service and Department for Work and Pensions to name just a few! Our contact with these services covers a wide range of issues such as support in relation to adaptations, reporting repairs, problems with keys, organising care packages, mental health issues, alcohol and drug advice, financial support, Home Fire Safety visits, safeguarding concerns, welfare benefit enquiries, signposting to befriending and counselling services, organising prescriptions, organising food deliveries, dealing with anti-social behaviour issues, liaising with hospitals regarding tenant admissions/discharges.
- Regular checks to ensure that our sheltered housing schemes are a safe and clean environment to live in. These checks include monitoring the communal areas and grounds of our schemes to ensure they are free of any risks as best as possible and checking that fire alarms and emergency lighting are in working order. They also undertake regular safety checks for legionella, fire risks & asbestos, check that fire doors open and close and that the escape routes are clear of any items. Routine inspections for litter, illicit dumping, grounds maintenance work, grass cutting and cleaning arrangements.

Whether the support can be sustained/adapted for the future

Support to every tenants can be sustained as the team continuously monitor the ever changing needs of tenants/clients and provide additional support as and when the need arises.

This is monitored via regular contact with tenants by either telephone call, face to face visit, emergency alarm intercom system, risk assessments and the regular review of support plans.



Use of any new and innovative approaches

The pandemic significantly changed the team's way of working, for example with the introduction of home working arrangements, regular reassurance calls, digital tablet scheme.

More information

The Older Persons Housing Team consists of the Older Persons Housing Manager, 23 Sheltered Housing Officers, 1 Senior Sheltered Housing Team Leader, 2 Sheltered Housing Team Leaders, 1 Activities Co-Ordinator, 1 Clerical Officer and 3 Floating Support Officers and 1 Senior Floating Support Officer.

The Sheltered Housing Officers are dispersed throughout the Borough, providing day to day support for tenants over 33 Sheltered Housing Schemes, totalling 952 units. They are supported by their respective Team Leaders. The Floating Support Officers provide housing related support to council tenants in decommissioned schemes totalling 132 units and to their individual variable caseload of approximately 508 which is across all tenures and ages within the Borough. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Floating Support team have increased clients' benefits by £223,762.37 per year with a further £76,473.53 for one off payments and backdated benefits. The sum of £7,675.00 was obtained by way of DAF Grants for white goods and other household items.

There has always been an excellent team spirit and a high level of commitment amongst staff within the team to provide an effective housing support related service, and we are proud to have been able to maintain a service for our tenants/clients throughout the pandemic and to be part of such a dedicated and caring team.

In addition to providing support to the tenants, the team are considerate and are always thinking about their colleagues and how best to support them. Without the dedication and commitment of the team, they would not have been able to achieve what they have for tenants, during these difficult times.



Project Impact - Wrexham CBC
Contact:
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The Emerging Woman Art Journey - Cartrefi Conwy
Contact:
lydia.watson@cartreficonwy@org

Involving Tenants in Environmental Initiatives



WINNER

Wales & West Housing Residents making plaes for nature - Wales & West HA

Summary of the purpose of the project

Wales & West Housing residents across Wales have been getting together in an initiative which is bringing nature into their lives and their communal gardens. Working in partnership with WWH Community Development Officers and staff from Keep Wales Tidy, residents have been building wildlife, butterfly and fruit gardens in their communal outdoor spaces.

In some areas the residents have transformed overgrown, uncared for areas into community gardens to grow food and where wildflowers, plants and wildlife can flourish.

The projects have brought neighbours together to care for their environment, promoting ownership, friendship and healthy activities while tackling loneliness and educating residents.

Evidence of positive outcomes for tenants, residents or communities

Evidence of the positive outcomes for communities can be seen in the environment as well as in the physical and mental wellbeing of the residents involved.

For example, building a wildlife garden near their homes at Cefn Coed in Pembrokeshire had a positive impact for residents. They said: "The lockdown was hard for many people. Working on the wildlife project was a great opportunity to get outdoors and socialise safely. Everyone has said it's nice to see the estate looking so colourful."

Other residents say:

"It's excellent to have this opportunity to make the area look nice and get the neighbours involved." Resident, Celyn Avenue, Cardiff

"Lockdown was hard for me. I enjoyed being able to help build the garden to create an area for me and my neighbours to be proud of."

"It has transformed the place. I can't wait to sit in our fruit garden on a Sunday afternoon"

"It will be lovely to watch butterflies and birds in our garden "

Places where our residents have worked together on environmental nature gardens since 2020 include:

Food Growing Garden

1. Cradoc Close, Brecon

Butterfly Gardens

1. Applewood Close, Limebourne Court, Hanover Court and Carmel Court, Cardiff
2. Llwyn Y Mor, Swansea
3. Rhiw Cefn Gwlad, Bridgend

Wildlife Gardens

1. Cefn Coed Resident's Group, Scleddau, Pembrokeshire
2. Twyncarmel, Merthyr Tydfil
3. Cyncoed, Ynysybwl, Rhondda Cynon Taf
4. Celyn Avenue, Cardiff
5. Pentland Close, Cardiff
6. Close Meithrin, Prestatyn
7. Finch Court, Llandrindod
8. Llynddu House, Welshpool
9. Erw Hir, Brackla, Bridgend

Fruit Gardens

1. Sydney Hall Court Garden Club, Flintshire
2. Catherine's Court, Caerphilly

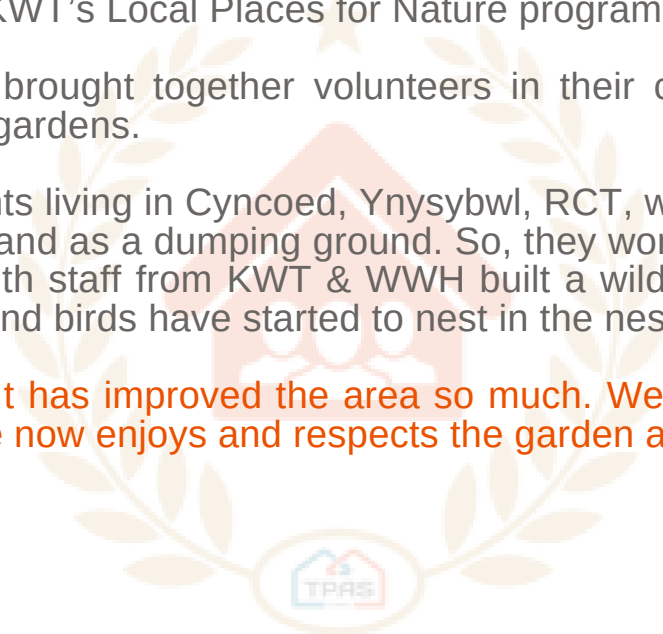
How tenants and residents have been actively involved in the project

Residents have taken an active involvement in their projects. They identified areas in their community where they wanted to make environmental improvements. They then worked with their local WWH Community Development Officers to apply for starter packs under KWT's Local Places for Nature programme.

The residents have brought together volunteers in their community to help them build and create the gardens.

For example, residents living in Cyncoed, Ynysybwl, RCT, were tired of people using an area of common land as a dumping ground. So, they worked together to clear the area and together with staff from KWT & WWH built a wildlife garden, where bees, butterflies now visit and birds have started to nest in the nesting boxes.

One resident says: **"It has improved the area so much. We feel proud to live where we live and everyone now enjoys and respects the garden and its wildlife."**



The positive impact on the environment

The project has had a positive impact on the environment by restoring and enhancing nature on residents' doorsteps. They have focused on areas of deprivation with little or no access to nature.

For example, at Pentland Close in Llanishen Cardiff, older residents moved into their new apartments during the lockdown. When restrictions eased they were able to get together to help to build a wildlife garden with raised beds, which they planted with pollinator plants, herbs and bulbs. They also planted trees along the perimeter and fruit trees in an orchard area. They installed boxes for birds, hedgehogs and bats and benches for the residents.

Resident Mary said: "The project has really brought the neighbours together. The spring bulbs and flowers have brought colour to the area. We enjoy looking after the plants and sitting in the garden. We're excited to see what wildlife will nest in the boxes too."

How the initiative can be sustained/adapted for the future

The initiative has given residents the tools and materials they needed to start their gardens. By working alongside staff from Keep Wales Tidy, they have learnt more about gardening and nature, and caring for the wildlife in their local areas. In areas, where they have developed fruit and community gardens, the residents are growing their own food.

For example, in Cradoc Close, Brecon, residents wanted to create a community garden to grow their own food on an area of waste ground. They cleared the area by hand and with support from KWT they created a community food growing garden. The project is involving the whole community in growing and harvesting fruit and vegetables.

Over three days in March 2022, they worked hard to create the garden, learning to lay wildflower turf, planting fruits trees, and building a wildlife area for slowworms and hedgehogs. It has created a sustainable project which will benefit nature for the long-term and has allowed residents to take ownership of growing and distributing their own produce.

Residents are now planning to grow their own fruit and veg and plan to hold community planting days.

Sylvia has lived on Cradoc Close for 23 years, said: "All the residents have been involved and worked hard. With the cost of living rising it will help us to grow our own. We are growing vegetables and fruit for the community and if we have any produce left over, we can donate it to the local foodbank. Since we've started working on the garden all we've heard is laughter. Everyone has pulled together. It's not only a garden it's a meeting place, where people can come and sit and enjoy the quiet and the wildlife."



Further information

WWH Community Development Officer Claire Hammond says: “During the lockdowns when many of us were brought closer to nature, residents have said these wildlife projects have given them a positive focus during difficult times. In some areas we’ve been able to take unloved areas and give them a new purpose. It’s brought neighbours together and given them enormous pride and enthusiasm in the environment where they live.”

For more information, contact: Claire.hammond@wwha.co.uk



Caerphilly's Environmental Improvement Programme - Caerphilly CC

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Llanfachraeth's Community Garden - Ynys Mon CC

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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

