



GOOD PRACTICE AWARDS 2023

THE WINNERS



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A word from our Sponsors



Wales & West Housing Group are proud to be sponsoring TPAS Cymru's Good Practice Awards Report 2023.

This report shines a light on outstanding work residents and tenants across Wales are doing to make a difference in their communities.

Many of the popular categories are returning with excellent examples of communities supporting one another, and projects that offer essential advice to residents and tenants in many areas of life.

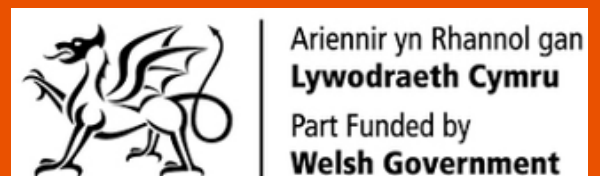
In addition to these there are some new categories, which highlight the great work of tenants and social landlords in making sure tenants' voices are heard to help shape services and influence decision making.

As social landlords, we are all working towards Net Zero. The journey is different for everyone. There is some best practice reflected in this report, highlighting ways landlords are engaging with their communities to raise awareness of the climate emergency and the importance of sustainability.

I hope this report will act as an inspiration to continue sharing best practice which we can all use to shape the way we work in the future.

Congratulations to all included in this report, we look forward to future success stories for years to come.

Anne Hinchey
Group Chief Executive



GOOD PRACTICE AWARDS 2023



Welcome to our 2023 Good Practice Report which contains details about the winning entries from this year's TPAS Cymru National Good Practice Awards.

The awards and this report focus on recognising the achievements of tenants, community volunteers and social landlords from across Wales, whilst helping to spread their learning and practices to as wide an audience as possible.

The categories for 2023 were:

1. Communities Supporting Communities
2. Involving Tenants in Shaping Services
3. Tenant of the Year
4. Communicating with Tenants and Residents
5. Residents Advice / Support Programme
6. NEW Tenant Team of the Year
7. NEW Tenants Voice
8. NEW Net Zero Tenant Engagement

A Special Recognition Award was also given by the judges.

In this report, we're sharing with you the 9 winning entries and the runners up in each category. There are examples of good practice in a range of areas - from tenant communications to engaging tenants in Net Zero, youth projects to tenant scrutiny

Thank you to all 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.

Well done to all of our winners, and we hope you enjoy reading the winning entries as much as we did.

Communities Supporting Communities



WINNER

Monmouth Motivators, Monmouthshire HA

The Type of Support Provided:

The Monmouth Motivators are a community Group of MHA tenants and residents, who come together with the sole purpose of making their own community a better place to live. They meet monthly but that can be more frequent when they are planning an event that will benefit their local community. After widespread consultation with the community by door knocking, coffee mornings and through setting up events for children, the group set themselves 3 aims:

- to help people make their money go further
- health and wellbeing
- providing activities for children

By aligning their priorities with the wider residents, it guaranteed that they were reflective of the community and it also helped to get buy-in from those tenants and residents who did not want to commit to becoming members of the group but would turn up for events and activities which were being put on for the community. Over the last 2 years the group has organised and delivered lots of events and they have utilised local businesses and organisations to help them deliver their projects. The list of projects and events below is not extensive but a to give a flavour of what they have done please see below:

- Children's Keep fit and eat - one day a week during the summer school holidays
- Children's Drama & Dance Classes
- Half term circus skills event
- Children's Halloween Party
- Christmas craft workshops and Christmas Party
- Indian Head massage sessions
- Six sessions - Yoga classes
- Hair and Pedicure Sessions
- Eat well for less cooking sessions



The group also utilised some of the activities and sessions held to invite external agencies to talk about money advice, heating and energy saving tips, Mental Health first aid and exchanges for school uniform.

The group also signpost communities who are needing immediate help with things such as electric, gas or food to the MHA inclusion team who can make referrals or in the case of MHA tenants can issue an immediate hardship payment.

How the needs of the communities/individuals were met

Meeting the needs of the local community was the main priority for the group and that's why the aims of the group were not set until they had held extensive consultation. They felt that they as a group needed to reflect the priorities of the community in which they were operating. By designing a basic questionnaire and dropping it through letterboxes or knocking the door and speaking to the residents, the group felt they were getting a good feel for what the priorities were. They coupled this approach by holding some children's craft sessions in the half term school holidays and the feedback from the sessions built on the local knowledge that had already been established. The group felt that they did not want to bite off more than they could chew, so they prioritised the three areas as outlined above. They wanted to ensure that what they were doing was inclusive and in line with what they were being told the community wanted.

Planning and designing a summer programme of events meant working closely with MHA their local housing association and both the town and county councils. The group sought advice from their local MHA Engagement Officer about how they could get resources to help them pay for the activities and food. Following successful bids to both the Housing Association and Local Authority they were able to secure funding to pay for a local gymnastics business to deliver 4 morning sessions



of sports activities over 4 weeks and funding from the Council's food poverty budget for 30 meals to be provided to the children at the end of each session. MHA provided some additional support with staff in attendance to help at the sessions, which turned out to be very successful with over 120 meals being served during the sessions held. MHA then resourced the final session of the programme where a party with inflatables was held and the children who had completed the fitness session were awarded with certificates and chocolate medals with baseball caps being used in a graduation type ceremony. The feedback from the parents and carers and young people involved was excellent.



Several other events have been held throughout the year and these have included activities from the list above. Again, where funding has been needed the group have been very creative in generating income from local businesses and different funding pots. The group put in a funding bid and secured the funding for their six-week yoga course and they utilized the skills of the group in putting on the hair and pedicure sessions with a group member who had not been working utilising the event to bring her hair dressing skills back up to date. Through the confidence gained by being involved in the group this lady has set up her own self-employed hairdressing business. Another group member who has moved to the UK from Romania is a qualified dance teacher but had not worked in dancing since relocating. She has now set a local business up and she provides free weekly children's drama & dance classes with the cost of the hire of the hall being met by MHA but her time and her teaching skills are being given free. The Monmouth Motivators have become integral members of the community and at last year's Diamond Jubilee celebrations the group teamed up with a local primary school to deliver a joint community Jubilee party.

The impact the support has had on individuals/communities

The impact the support has had on the community has been huge with activities for children increasing in the area dramatically. Everybody is benefiting from the group's activities whether it be those taking part in events or the members putting the events on themselves. The group has brought about a feeling of real social cohesion (community in old language) and with people no longer saying, "there's nothing for young people to do" but now instead saying "what can we do next"? They have helped turn a feeling of malaise within the community into a proactive go-getting attitude.

The effect of the events has also been massive, from young people receiving meals during school holidays, to fun events like the Halloween and Christmas parties, with each child who visited Santa receiving a present. They have been able to promote the local community fridge where people can pick up fresh food and stop it going to landfill and a number of referrals have been made by agencies who attend events so that additional support can be found to help people with increasing price of energy costs or maximising their income to ensure that they are getting everything that they are entitled to. Practical help with budgeting has also been available and where needed referrals for specialist financial help has been made. The feel-good factor and specialist events such as Indian Head Massage and Yoga has also helped many residents health and wellbeing.

There have also been some incredible outcomes from the groups work and for some of the group's members. One lady who is a member of the group has been so inspired from what the group has been doing and what she's seen elsewhere that she has led another group in a different part of the town to set up a Food Pantry whereby residents can become a member of the food club and weekly purchase £20 - £25 worth of food for £3.50 She has led the group through becoming constituted with their own bank account and has been part of a process to help take over an unused shop and turn into a community hub

providing local community services. She plans to start a morning breakfast café of toast, tea and coffee for mum's and carers after they've dropped their children off in school.



Another one of the group members has gained so much confidence from being part of the Monmouth Motivators group that she has set up her own self-employed hair dressing business, something she says she never would have done with gaining the confidence from the group. And yet another lady has set up a drama dance class business utilising skills she thought she had left behind in her native Romania but now those skills are helping her new communities' children on a weekly basis. And yet another one of the group's members is all ready to launch a new initiative with the skills and confidence gained from her work as member of the group and she is opening a baby bank where baby clothes and baby equipment can find new homes to help reduce the costs of a newborn

baby to new parents. The group has certainly delivered on its objectives of helping people's money go further, Health and Wellbeing and providing activities for children and so much more.

Sustainability of the Project for the future

The skills that the group have learnt so far will certainly help them remain sustainable in the future. They have learnt so much about planning and delivering events and those skills will continue to be used for the benefit of their local community. They have learnt about funding and what it takes for something to go from an idea to completion and they have also learnt about partnership working and the importance of working in partnership to get things done.

The group's knowledge around funding will continue to develop as they look to bring in more resources to the community, but they will also need to continue to work with the community to bring in more members to the group and utilise the skills that the community currently has. The model that has worked so well in Monmouth is currently be followed by another group in the South of Monmouthshire and the motivators have already provided advice and assistance to the new group and have recently put on a joint event. I think it's fair to say that the Monmouth Motivators are here and that they're here to stay!

Further information

A MHA perspective

Working with the Monmouth Motivators has been an absolute pleasure. They are so proactive and quick to learn, it has really been an incredible journey. The group lives by its name and not only do they motivate but they inspire all around them too. They work brilliantly with partners whether that be statutory, third sector or private business and they are always looking to maximise what there is to gain for their community at the lowest cost or even free. We have no doubts that they will continue to make a massive impact in their local community, which is also be a massive plus to us as a local Housing Association.

We would finally like to reflect on the unintended outcomes of this group which is phenomenal. Separate to their work as group (outlined above) they have so far also generated:

- A new community Hub called the Wyesham Warren with Food Pantry benefitting a minimum of 40 families per week
- A self employed Hair Dressing business
- A self employed Dance Teacher with classes
- A baby bank for Monmouth

Their community is so lucky to have them. A sprinkle of that very special community fairy dust landed over this group and that has benefitted so many members of their community. It is no exaggeration to say the Monmouth Motivators have absolutely smashed it !!!

For more information, contact: Rob.carey@monmouthshirehousing.co.uk



**Greenwood Golden Oldies -
Merthyr Valleys Homes**
Contact:
Julie.mccarthy@mvhomes.org.uk



**Nxt Gen Youth Club - Cartrefi
Conwy**
Contact:
sioned.williams@creatingenterprise.org.uk

Involving Tenants in Shaping Services



WINNER

Scrutinizing the Flexi Way, Hafod HA

How tenants were involved in scrutinizing or shaping this service

To ensure they maximise how we hear our customer voice and being able to offer flexibility to suit our customer's lives, Hafod offer three different ways for their customers to scrutinise services: 1) Scrutiny Panel, 2) Mystery Shoppers, 3) Question of the Month.

Scrutiny Panel

The scrutiny panel consists of five customers, two colleagues and two board members who act as the link between scrutiny and board to ensure Hafod are putting their customers first.

They meet quarterly online, receive a contribution towards their WIFI cost, have access to a Microsoft 365 account and are loaned a tablet to enable easy access. The loan of the tablet has enabled panel members who work to take the device with them and attend meetings without disrupting their job.

The customers on the panel have defined the agenda items they would like to review throughout the year; and at each meeting they are presented with context information, performance and plans for each topic. They are encouraged to further explore and discuss the topic with the subject matter expert colleague who will be attending to present the data. Challenge resolution and future opportunities are explored with the panel and their feedback and ideas are then incorporated into the business strategic and operational plans.

Mystery Shoppers

Mystery shopping takes place online by customers listening to recorded calls made to our Customer Services team. Customers answer a set of questions on how they feel the call was handled and give suggestions for improvement. All identifiable, confidential, and sensitive information is removed from the recordings to protect customers.

This flexible approach enables customers to take part at a time to suit their needs and removes the need for intensive training required for physical interactions. This takes place four times a year and customers receive a £20 voucher to thank them for their time. Recruitment is ongoing with customers being able to join at any time once they have completed the volunteer agreements covering confidentiality.

Question of the Month (QotM)

The aim is to gain valuable customer insight by asking customer's 12 essential hot topic questions in a way that is quick and easy for both the customer and Hafod, enabling them to make informed decisions, especially when looking to change a service that directly affects the customers. Customers can take part through:

- Incoming calls to the customer services team
- Polls and posts on the social media platforms
- Interaction with neighbourhood coaches and surveyors

The use of incoming calls to customer services has enabled Hafod to hear customer voices that are rarely heard, including customers who are digitally excluded.

The questions of the month are chosen by colleagues from across the organisation who have a particular area of customer insight interest, perhaps to inform a project during ideation or to review feedback on implementation. This ensures Hafod are gaining customer voice and view to inform the plans and review how changes in the operations benefit, or not, the customers so that they have a continuous lessons learnt approach.

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

Scrutiny Panel

The Panel have completed 23 outcomes over the last 12 months, including reviewing themselves! Two of the outcomes have been highlighted below.

Reviewing themselves!

The panel recently undertook a review of how they ensure Value for Money and volunteer time, leading factors and they voted on their topics for the year.

Scrutiny decisions (Outcomes)

Budget – Intranet contributions of £10 per month (£600), plus option for new members (all agreed)

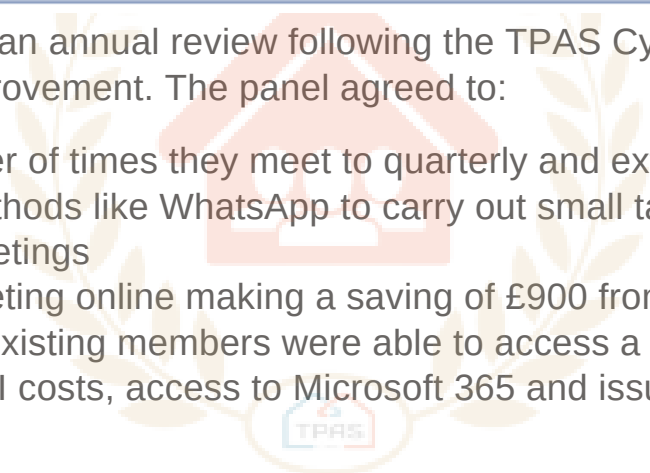
How you meet - The panel will meet online only (majority of 4 against 2)

Time/day of meetings – The panel will meet on a Tuesday 11:30am – 1pm (open from 11:15am) (all agreed)

Topics – Customer Services, Planned Maintenance, ASB, Support in General Needs (all agreed by voting)

They also completed an annual review following the TPAS Cymru 5 p's format to help identify areas for improvement. The panel agreed to:

- reduce the number of times they meet to quarterly and extend the meeting times
- utilised digital methods like WhatsApp to carry out small tasks that could be done outside of the meetings
- continue with meeting online making a saving of £900 from their budget
- ensure new and existing members were able to access a monthly contribution towards their WIFI costs, access to Microsoft 365 and issued a tablet



Communicating to our wider customer

- Influenced how Hafod communicated with customers on important topics including suggestion of on-site roadshows for Cost-of-living feedback to ensure they reach the customers seldom heard from. Example of the different types of roadshows: www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yOfR0E92BU and www.youtube.com/watch?v=udf5e_0OZHw
- Recommendations on flyer design and interactive social media posts led to more interaction

Mystery Shoppers

- Identified colleague training requirements, especially around the use of the 24/7 app.
- Colleague and customer training/trouble shooting videos available on their website enabling customers to access support outside of office hours on their 24/7 App support www.hafod.org.uk/housing/hafod-24-7/.

Question of the Month (QotM)

Nine questions were asked in 2022

1. Are you struggling with your heating/electric bills?
2. Are you aware of our SMART Money Service?
3. Do you use our website?
4. Do you feel safe in your home?
5. What three words would you use to describe Hafod?
6. Would you like to attend a focus group to help shape our service standards?
7. What would you like to see in your local area?
8. If today's query could have been done online, would you feel confident using it?
9. Do you feel your rent is value for money? and how affordable is it for you?

602 customers got involved in total

- 528 customers answered via incoming calls
- 33 customers took part via Social Media
- 41 customers spoke to the neighbourhood coach

How the questions have influenced a decision, supported our customers or helped shape our services

- Seven customers were supported to apply for Winter Fuel support
- Identified that we need to consider rebranding our SMART Money service and promote the service more
- Updated our automated email messages to give guidance on our reply times
- Identified that we have a lot of customers who are not digitally confident or have access to equipment
- Continue to understand more of our customers digital capabilities and needs to inform future developments
- Helped us review and develop our Affordable Rent Policy, set annual rents and review service charges from April 2023
- Helped us refresh and target our support for customers with a focus on affordability, wellbeing and the cost-of-living crisis.

#Get Involved

The outcomes and difference the involvement it has made / will make:

The different methods enable customers to influence services in a way to suit them and give Hafod the valuable insight that is needed to truly put customers first.

The differences made include:

- Saving of £900 from the Scrutiny Panel budget, to be reallocated to customer training
- Flexibility of meeting days/times to suit customers who have childcare/work commitments enabled them to hear 3 additional voices in our Scrutiny Panel

- Loan of IT equipment and contribution to WIFI costs has enabled customers to join anywhere. They even had a panel member join from holidays as they didn't want to miss a meeting!
- Enabled customers to use the self-service app and problem solve outside of office hours through the guides on the website
- Identified training needs within the Customer Services team that have been incorporated into their training plan
- Boosted team morale within our Customer Services team (incoming calls) who continue to get 100% satisfaction on the overall service they deliver to customers
- We were able to hear 45 additional customer voices at the road shows and identified 10 customers who needed support with the cost-of-living crisis

Further information

What's next!

- Advertising to their wider customers on future topics, giving the option to join for a one-off topical meeting to enable Hafod to get a wider customer voice in addition to the existing customer voices
- Recruitment to ensure Hafod hear as many voices as possible and to ensure the voices reflect the customer demographic
- Exploring customer voice in their Physical Adaptation Grant process to ensure they have 'lived' experience when making decisions

For more information, contact: michelle.mcgregor@hafod.org.uk



Listen, Act and Learn - Melin Homes

Contact:
sam@melinhomes.co.uk



Prosiect Gwella – Housing Management System Replacement - North Wales HA

Contact:
iwan.evans@nwha.org.uk

TENANT OF THE YEAR



WINNER

Nigel Phillips-Gunter - Merthyr Valleys Homes

The commitment and dedication shown

Nigel is a resident of one of MVH's Community Living schemes and joined the Democratic Body in 2016. He is one of the most dedicated tenants in MVH, on hand to support the organization and other tenants at a moment's notice.

As a member of Democratic Body, Nigel has provided an invaluable role in scrutinising the development and achievement of strategic objectives, assessing risk management and has proposed countless recommendations which enhances not only the process in MVH, but with it, the satisfaction of our tenants across Merthyr.

His commitment to MVH is beyond doubt, evidenced by his efforts in seeking out training opportunities of his own accord, attending strategic away days and sitting on interviewing panels in the recruitment of MVH staff. In relation to the latter, Nigel always strives to make candidates feel welcome and has a comforting effect on people in high pressured situations.

Nigel's fingerprints are all over MVH's Corporate Plan, 'Gyda'n Gilydd', not only helping to develop strategy, but showing a dedication to understanding how this is interpreted on the ground across our communities.

Nigel works tirelessly to get the best out of others and is constantly making colleagues and tenants aware of opportunities which can enhance learning and benefit MVH.

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

The difference that Nigel has made in MVH is recognised by so many people across the organisation, despite him facing several health difficulties. His commitment is never in question and his achievements are plentiful.

Nigel has been Vice Chair of Democratic Body, Audit Committee and Governance Committee and is a strong champion of the tenant voice in the strategic decision making of MVH. Nigel has represented Democratic Body at various Board meetings and is often invited to provide his input to key reports prior to a decision being taken.

Nigel has served on a number of **committees and working groups**, including:



- Policy committee, where he has helped developed policy, review policy before approval by Board and recommending appropriate alterations. He has been pivotal in his contribution to overseeing compliance with the MVH policy framework and enhancing his knowledge of legislative changes which enables him to constructively challenge changes in policies.
- Social Value working group – exploring how MVH defines social value and how MVH can work constructively with our clients, contractors and communities (reflecting the 3C's approach within the Can Do Toolkit) to ensure community benefits positively benefit those we serve.
- Governance Committee – Nigel has a tangible commitment to continuous improvement and in overseeing the governance arrangements of MVH, he continues to play a pivotal role in reviewing key documentation and driving forward our 'good to great' action plan alongside our external governance assessment.
- Audit Committee – Nigel has a sound financial understanding of housing associations and continues to oversee the financial position of MVH, in addition to the internal/external timetable and effective risk management of the business.
- Interviews and Appointments – Nigel nominated himself to receive recruitment training shortly after getting involved with MVH and has been involved in a range of appointments across MVH, including Corporate Directors and the Chief Executive.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group – (More below)
- Complaints Appeals Panel – Nigel's ability to be impartial has seen him add tremendous value as an intermediary between MVH and tenants who have made a formal complaint. His tact and diplomacy has enabled the mutual resolution of a number of complaints, enhancing MVH's reputation as a listening organisation.

Nigel's also contributes to various **task and finish groups** across the business, bringing a wealth of knowledge and professionalism to the process and plays a significant role in helping less experienced tenants to increase their understanding.



1. STAR Chamber – Nigel actively scrutinises departmental budgets ahead of approval ensuring they align with strategic objectives and provide value for money for tenants.
2. Procurement – Nigel has provided an invaluable tenant voice on the award of countless major contracts in MVH, holding those who tender to account for the commitments they make as part of the procurement process.
3. Refinancing – Nigel’s financial understanding was essential in helping MVH to refinance various covenants which resulted in an improved financial package which has undoubtedly strengthened the financial resilience of MVH. Nigel’s role in helping to secure lower rates of borrowing has enabled MVH to spend more money on supporting tenants and employees during the cost-of-living crisis.
4. Risk Management – In developing a new approach to the management of organisational risk registers, Nigel was a notable force in ensuring these documents were engaging and easy to understand. This has resulted in feedback from Board and our Internal Audit on the positive difference achieved.
5. Climate Group – MVH is shortly due to approve its first Climate Strategy. Nigel has been a constant voice throughout the development of this document, advocating for the wellbeing of future generations in ALL of MVH’s activities including new developments, retrofitting, community development and partnership working

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

- Nigel is constantly thinking of other people. As a member of the Democratic Body, Nigel wanted to help newer tenants understand the plethora of jargon used in a housing environment. Nigel took it upon himself to write a detailed guide of the housing sector and jargon busting glossary which enabled new tenants to feel knowledgeable in a new environment. As a result, Nigel is a strong campaigner at all meetings for the removal of jargon from documentation and verbal updates and has improved communication at meetings and in general conversation.
- MVH began its journey on Tai Pawb’s QED accreditation in February 2021 and were first awarded QED in May 2019, becoming only the 2nd housing organisation to be awarded this status. Nigel’s contribution to this group has been pivotal in helping the organisation recently achieve 3 years accreditation and will soon embark on QED Leaders.
- A recent evaluation showed a 31% increase in the number of MVH staff who ‘know where to get involved with EDI work’. Much of this is down to the tireless work of Nigel to raise the profile of the efforts MVH is going to in this area of activity.

MVH is shortly due to decide on whether to introduce of the 4-day week, following a 12-month pilot study. During this time Nigel has constantly focused on 2 aspects of this study (1) the wellbeing of colleagues and (2) the service experience received by tenants. Nigel’s understanding of the benefits of this novel way of working on staff is comprehensive, but he has equally demonstrated his commitment to ensuring tenants still receive an excellent service. Where there has been an impact, Nigel is the first person to bring a solutions-focused mindset to achieve a positive outcome for all parties.

Further information

Nigel is part of the fabric of MVH. He is regularly in touch with colleagues over Teams, with opinions, contributions, and signposting colleagues to independent research which he has undertaken in order to support initiatives.

His calm manner is a welcoming factor to so many new tenants, and his knowledge of the present and historic work of MVH is unsurpassed.

Current Democratic Body Chair, Marcus Powell said “Nigel is a true advocate for MVH and the passion and enthusiasm that he shows to both myself as Chair and Democratic Body as a collective is truly inspirational and I am forever grateful for his unfailing support. His work ethic in this volunteer role is remarkable and he carries out his duties with utmost professionalism and dedication. Thank you for being an inspiration to the team. Your commitment is exceptional, and you forever add-value to our mutual.”

Former Democratic Body Chair, Natalie Warner said “During my time as chair of Democratic Body, Nigel was a huge support to me at, and outside of, meetings. We have had many interesting conversations around housing and the sector in general, as well as personal achievements. Nigel is completely selfless, always considering others and portrays this at every meeting we have. It’s a privilege to have known Nigel and over the last 7 years. I’ve gained huge respect and admiration for not just my colleague but a friend.”

MVH Tenant Engagement Lead, Ross Williams said “Many tenants in Wales work tirelessly alongside their landlord. None more than Nigel. He is a dedicated advocate for tenants, and his contribution is felt in so many circles. In my first year in my role Nigel was instrumental in helping me understand the history of MVH and continues to be a constant support in helping to increase opportunities for tenants across Merthyr. Every organisation needs a Nigel. The world needs more Nigel’s. We are so grateful in MVH that we have our Nigel, and long may his influence, positivity and dedication benefit us all in Merthyr Valleys Homes.”

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COMMUNICATING WITH TENANTS & RESIDENTS



WINNER

Duffryn heating system: engaging customers in a crisis - Newport City Homes

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

In February 2023, a leak on the biomass district heating network in Duffryn caused significant disruption to local residents. Heating and hot water supplies were affected to nearly 1,000 homes, and a significant crisis communications response was needed by Newport City Homes to support affected residents, some of whom were extremely vulnerable.

The incident response team included both operational and non-operational colleagues, meeting twice daily to consider how the incident was progressing and create messaging in plain English to keep the community informed on their heating and hot water supplies and make sure everyone across the community knew how to access support, including the provision of temporary heaters, blankets, hot water bottles and emergency top up vouchers for electricity bills.

Newport City Homes' immediate priorities were to:

- Communicate what had happened
- Explain how they would fix the leaks on the network, and how long this work might take
- Reassure the community and provide critical information about help and financial support

Due to the complex structure of the heating network, this was a complicated repair, and it needed to break down detailed operational messaging into simple and easily understood updates that could be communicated very quickly, due to the constantly evolving situation.

This was an incredibly difficult situation for residents, so the updates also needed to 'be human' and acknowledge the challenges faced by the community with empathy and sensitivity, with NCH leaders taking accountability and ownership of the issues they faced.

To do this, they communicated with residents in various ways:

- A Duffryn incident website page was established to act as base for all communications activity. This was updated frequently, with each update including the date and time to make it easier for residents to see the latest news. Updates included the latest news and an up-to-date FAQ, based on questions received through social media and the customer services team. A live ticker at the top of the main homepage provided an immediate update and a link to the incident page.

- A dedicated phone line was established for Duffryn residents to easily access support for any questions and help needed
- A substantial number of our Duffryn customers engaged on social media, particularly Facebook. Regular updates were shared throughout the day, and every update included branding to clearly show that the information was related to the ongoing incident, the date and time of posting, and when the next update would be shared. Wider stakeholders were kept informed through Twitter and LinkedIn.
- To accommodate for different communication preferences, updates were shared in both written and video format, with updates filmed directly by the project team on their phones so customers could see how work was progressing ‘on the ground’, in an authentic, accessible and engaging way.



Heating Engineer explains how they depressurized the district heating system to restore hot water supplies



Drone video footage of the site brought to life the extent of the investigation works and how they were responding



Update on the essential repair work



- Not all of the residents are digitally included, so the project team in Duffryn were critical to sharing information. They mobilised a team of more than 50 volunteers from teams across the association to take calls and help out within the community to step up the support and communication provided to customers.
- Any key updates were written in plain English, printed and posted through the doors of affected residents, and colleagues were briefed regularly in order to provide accurate information when answering questions.
- A translation company was on standby for any residents identified as needing updates translated into other languages, as well as Braille or large print.
- A live incident room was established at ther Nightingale Court 55+ scheme, where some residents are especially vulnerable, to provide proximity, visibility and reassurance. Colleagues distributed more than 700 portable heaters, hundreds of blankets and provided cash payments for electricity top-ups to any Duffryn residents who needed them.
- Colleagues carried out door-knocking activity across Duffryn to speak to residents directly, deliver support materials to those unable to travel to Nightingale Court and identify where we needed a different approach to communications to account for individual circumstances. This included moving some of the most vulnerable customers to hotels for the duration of the outage.

- An online group was set up between the Communications and Customer Services teams to manage the substantial number of questions and requests from the local community for help and support. This helped NCH make sure that updates were shared in real time, so all colleagues had the latest information to share through social media and the call centre. The group also helped to address any misinformation or rumours in the community quickly and accurately, informing the ongoing communications updates and helping them to address resident concerns as quickly as possible.
- Key stakeholders including councillors and the local MP were briefed regularly through face-to-face meetings and email and helped to cascade important information to their constituents.



The effectiveness of the communication e.g. feedback from tenants/service users, social media analytics etc

- The Newport City Homes Facebook page saw a 1,800% increase in page visits, a 1,000% increase in page likes and a 423% increase in reach (based on previous 7-day period)
- More than 43,000 social media users saw the updates, with 16,431 clicks, likes, shares and comments
- Their video updates received more than 5,000 views
- The incident page on the NCH website received more than 2,500 views from 1,800 users, who spent an average of 3 minutes reading and watching our updates
- They received 11 pieces of media coverage, including BBC, ITV Wales, South Wales Argus, and Wales Online, which reiterated the key messages. This also included a live interview with their Executive Director of Operations on BBC Radio Cymru
- They received a significantly larger number of positive comments than they would normally expect to receive during a crisis response. 76% of comments received by the community were positive or neutral.

Feedback included:

"Thank you again keeping us all informed. Your all doing a grand job fixing the heating and hot water issues. Well done NCH and contractors."

"Fantastic effort by all involved. Take a bow NCH."

"Fantastic effort , well done NCH. I don't live in Duffryn but to see the communication, hard work and effort to ensure people are warm and compensated is fantastic."

"Thank you for the regular updates you truly have gone above and beyond thank you."

"Thank you for keeping us updated was well appreciated well done for the hard work done by all."

"Well done NCH for all your hard work in restoring our heating and hot water system this is a BIG thank you for the actual work men (heating engineers) and to the staff handing out heaters and blankets hope u all get a little extra in your wages this month thanks once again."

"Not NCH's fault the pipes burst They tried so hard to get the problem fixed. And I Think they done amazing trying to help all the people in Duffryn best they can. And keeping everyone updated on what's happening well done NCH."

Any lessons learnt

- The positive feedback received from the community has been used to inform the wider Business Continuity crisis communications planning.
- A 'people first' approach, with a human tone of voice was essential to build relationships with the community during a challenging time. This included senior leaders and operational colleagues being highly visible and onsite during the work, often delivering updates directly from site.
- Constant and regular communication between operational and back-office teams meant that their messaging was consistent with all residents receiving the same information, helping to quickly address any rumours and cascade important information, such as where to access support and what support was available, quickly and efficiently.
- The Duffryn incident has helped NCH develop an improved approach to communications evaluation through the development of their first 'impact report'.
- Research has been carried out to understand the demographics of the Duffryn community in more detail and support the proactive translation of planned communications where this would benefit residents in the future.

Further Information

- Newport City Homes is now building on the positive community relationships developed during this time as they prepare to carry out a full pipe replacement of the district heating system, with significant engagement and involvement planned with customers throughout to continue building strong relationships in Duffryn.
- This includes developing their storytelling approach and placing customers at the forefront of their communications activity – such as through customer-recorded video diaries and tours of the district heating network.
- The communications plan for the pipe replacement includes the use of text messaging, newsletters and digital screens in our 55+ schemes, helping NCH to make sure that these important updates continue to include all residents across the community.

For more information, contact: hannah.claffey@newportcityhomes.com



Pop Up Communication & Engagement approach - V2C
Contact: marie.kiff@v2c.org.uk



Tir Y Capel Sheltered Refurbishment - Wrexham CBC
Contact: Tracey.roberts@wrexham.gov.uk

Resident Support / Advice Programme



WINNER

Academi Adra

Evidence of positive outcomes for tenants, residents or communities

Background:

Launched in February 2021, Academi Adra brings together the range of opportunities that can be provided through Adra and their partners to help tenants, and those living within their communities, to develop their skills and find employment. This is part of Adra's commitment to support tenants and communities to thrive, providing opportunities for employment locally and helping tenants to maximise their household incomes in economically challenging times.

Opportunities

Working with partners, we offer work experience, work placements, apprenticeships, traineeships, volunteering and much more.

Academi Adra has successfully worked in partnership with more than 20 external organisations and contractors to date. The partnership consists of Adra, Procure Plus, Gwaith Gwynedd, JobCentre Plus, Welsh Contact Centre Forum, Richmond Bright, Citizens Advice, North Wales Training, Grwp Llandrillo Menai., GISDA, DU Construction Ltd, WF Clayton & Co Ltd, Wynne Construction, NWRC, Kickstart, Welsh Government, HM Prison & Probation Service, Careers Wales, Mon CF, GH James Cyf and Williams Homes (Bala).

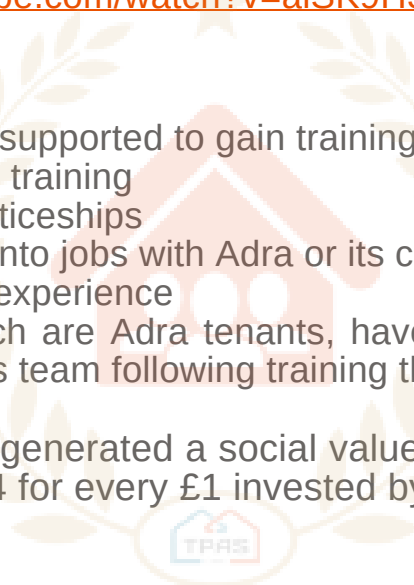
A number of courses have been held, including 6 'Construction Pathway' courses and a customer service course with the Welsh Contact Centre Forum and Welsh Government.

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiSK9H30TNY&feature=youtu.be>

Positive outcomes to date:

- 91 individuals have been supported to gain training and/or work experiences
- 31 have gained access to training
- 30 supported with apprenticeships
- 12 have been supported into jobs with Adra or its contractors
- 8 have gained paid work experience
- 3 individuals, two of which are Adra tenants, have been offered full time jobs in Adra's Customer Services team following training through the Academi.

To date, Academi Adra has generated a social value of £464,252.57. For 2022/23, we recorded a benefit of £44 for every £1 invested by Adra.



Promoting diversity and inclusion

Academi Adra is about providing an opportunity for all, and breaking down barriers to ensure that everyone can succeed.

A campaign was ran to encourage more young women to join the construction and housing industry. Recently over 65 girls from Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle, Penygroes had a taste of working in the field of construction as part of an event called 'Not Just for Boys' (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UchZcSXJLis>)

Adra led this event together with Chwarae Teg, a charity that inspires, leads and implements gender equality in Wales. The event was organized to coincide with International Women's Day (Wednesday 8 March).

During the first part of the event, some Adra staff gave presentations about their careers and the challenges and benefits of working in the housing field and the construction field. The second part of the event involved a visit to Adra's decarbonisation hub where the students received hands-on opportunities to learn about different aspects of the construction industry.

It's hoped that young women will consider a career in housing and/or construction in the future.

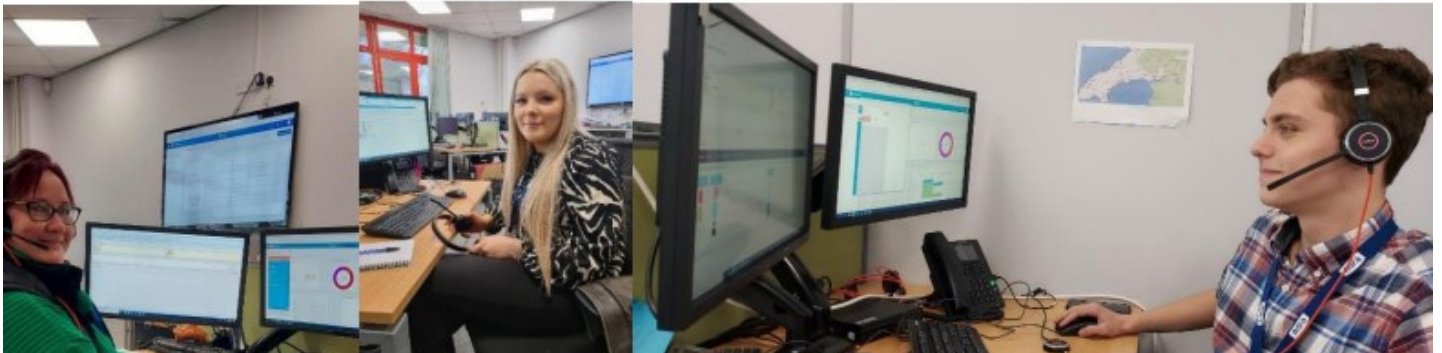


The impact the support has had on individuals and communities

Construction courses: ran in partnership with Procure Plus through CITB's On Site Experience fund. There is room for 12 participants on each course, where they do a week of training gaining various construction tickets (such as Asbestos Awareness, Working at heights, environmental awareness etc) and sit their test to gain a CSCS Labourer's card. This is then followed by a week of work experience with Adra or one of their sub-contractors.

Customer Service Course: ran in January 2023. In partnership with Welsh Contact Centre Forum and funded by Welsh Government. Participants received a week of contact centre & customer service training from trainer Andrew Ashby, and then gained a week of work experience in Adra's contact centre and with customer facing roles within the business e.g. community warden and repairs team. They were given an interview at the end of the 2 weeks and 3 were successful in gaining full time employment within the customer services team (Chloe, Delyth & Cai).

Here's a bit about the 3 and 1 other apprenticeship success stories:

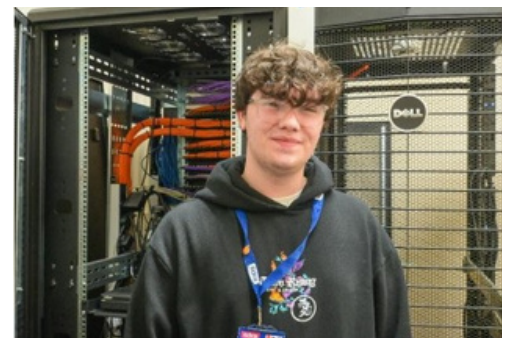


Delyth is an Adra tenant and one of the people supported by Academi Adra: *“I was made redundant just before Christmas 2022, therefore I had a look on the Adra website for jobs and I came across the Customer Service course - so I went for it! I really enjoyed the course – I learned so much and got to know a lot of new people. Taking part has given me so much more confidence and has been a real ‘eye opener’ I’m hoping that there will be an opportunity to stay on within the Customer Service team at Adra so that I can keep learning and be there to help people”*

Chloe’s Story: *“Before starting the course, I was working part time in a clothing store, but we’d heard that our hours might be reduced, so I started to look for a new career path and new opportunities. I really enjoyed the course, especially meeting new people and learning more about what makes good customer service. Since taking part, I have so much more confidence and I’ve had some amazing experiences. I’m looking forward to seeing what the future holds and continuing to learn and moving on within the business.”*

Cai’s Story: *“Before I applied for the course, I was working part time in a hotel. I saw the course on the Adra website and decided to apply because I was looking for full-time work. This opportunity has had a positive impact on my life as I’ve learned so many new skills and gained experience of working in an office environment. It’s increased my confidence and I’m a happier person since starting my job in the call centre, because everyone has been so kind and supportive – I feel like I’m part of a family. I’m hoping to get something long-term with Adra because I’ve made new friends and I’ve met so many different people, everyone’s been so supportive.”*

Declan, an Adra tenant, is one of their apprenticeships success stories. He said: *“I had been living in an Adra property for around 3 years therefore I was aware of the business and the job opportunities that they had on offer. The pandemic and lockdown made it difficult for me to receive the support that I needed from the school and college to look for work and develop a career in the IT sector, so I started working in a pub in Caernarfon to earn some money. Last September, I had a look on the Adra website and saw the Information Technology (IT) apprenticeship and decided to go for it. The difference in my understanding of IT since I started the apprenticeship is astonishing – it’s been great to be able to learn so much about a topic that really interests me. I hope that there will be an opportunity for me to keep on following my passion for IT and give something back to the business with the skills that I’ve learnt”*



Can the support can be sustained / adapted for the future

Academi Adra have been able to provide opportunities by working in partnerships with various partners and funders, with funding received through the DWP, CITB On Site Experience fund, Active Inclusion Fund, Welsh Government Funding as well as direct support from Adra and other contractors / suppliers. They have submitted an application for the Shared Prosperity Fund to take Academi Adra to the next phase, with plans to use the funds and match funding to expand the reach, activities and support that can be provided through Academi Adra.

Future plans include the continuation and expansion on the delivery of their two-week intensive course combining accredited training and work experience in the participants' chosen sector of work. Crucially, following on from the two week course, Academi Adra hope to be able to provide up to 40 paid work placement opportunities. This will facilitate accredited training and work experience, followed by paid supported employment opportunities internally and externally with their partners/suppliers/contractors that then leads in to paid sustainable employment.

They will facilitate monthly sector specific training courses that will result in attendees gaining an accredited qualification up to level 2. They include, but are not limited to, construction, repairs and maintenance, decarbonisation, customer service, administration, care and supported housing. Opportunities will be provided by Adra and their partner organisations.

Academi Adra's work also helps support the development of the labour market in sectors within the economy currently facing difficulties in recruitment and retention e.g. care and support, and those who will be seeing growth in coming years e.g. decarbonisation. This provides real opportunity for employment locally, and they want to support tenants to take full advantage of these opportunities.

Further Information

Adra are in the process of developing Ty Gwyrddfai, a decarbonisation hub in Penygroes. It is a collaborative project between Adra, Grwp Llandrillo Menai and Bangor University and will ensure that North West Wales will be at the forefront of the decarbonisation agenda, working with communities and businesses to retrofit over 18,000 homes over the next 10 years.

Grŵp Llandrillo will deliver bespoke and tailored decarbonisation and construction curriculum to new entrants directly from school, as well as training programmes for existing members of the construction workforce, especially in areas such as exterior wall insulation, installation and servicing of solar panels, air source heat pumps and battery storage. Apprenticeship programmes will also be delivered by Grŵp Llandrillo Menai. Academi Adra courses will also be ran from Ty Gwyrddfai.



Politicians view building progress at Wales' first decarbonisation hub - Ty Gwyrddfai

Tŷ Gwyrddfai already accommodates the head office for Trwsio, Adra's in-house contractor which employs over 150 staff. Travis Perkins have also set up a depot on site to provide Adra and its contractors with materials and supplies. This shows our commitment to keeping jobs locally, allowing our contractors to use the local supply chain and keeping the pound in the local economy, benefitting local communities.

It will also contribute towards reducing carbon emissions in our homes, which in turn will reduce the impact of increasing fuel and energy costs by making our homes more energy efficient and improve the quality of life for our tenants.

For more information, contact: gareth.watson@adra.co.uk



Healthy Homes, People, Lives and Communities - ClwydAlyn/Warm Wales
Contact: Gareth.gathern@clwydalyn.co.uk



Supporting tenants with money worries - Tai Tarian
Contact: Rachel.gardiner-james@taitarian.co.uk



Entries named as 'Highly Commended'

- Taff Housing's Winter Wellbeing Club
- Carmarthenshire CC's Pre-Accommodation Team
- Wales & West Housing Tenancy Support Service

Tenant Team of the Year



WINNER

Tenant & Residents Strategic Group - Linc Cymru

The commitment of the team

The TRSG (Tenant and Residents Strategic Group) were formed during the pandemic. They were set up to take on more of a strategic role, one that challenges and scrutinises how Linc engages with its customers. They are the group Linc go to, to provide challenge or influence prior to reporting to the Linc Board, every two months.

Each group member brings a different skill or talent. From understanding restorative approaches right through to recognising the importance of working in partnership, the group bring together their skills on a regular basis. Most of all the group all share a sense of empathy and understanding towards other people, whether these be work colleagues or other residents.

The team are committed to ensuring the voices of a wider customer base are heard – and scrutinise Linc to ensure that we reach out and consult with all our customers. The last challenge provided by the group was around the recommendations Linc provided, having researched, and explored the STAR satisfaction results in more detail. The recommendations have been adopted into Linc's programme of continuous improvement.

The TRSG meet every two months but since October 22 they have been having extra meetings in order to work more closely with Linc on actions to address the cost of living crisis. They have formed a joint staff/customer task group and worked with Linc on two applications for a cost of living cupboard to address the immediate impact of the cost of living crisis through the provision of food, toiletries and energy vouchers direct to customers.



The team are committed to ensuring dignity throughout the project, promoting their support to customers as a simple act of kindness.

The difference the team's work is making

- An impact report is now produced and was sent directly to residents and is available to all customers.
- The group have also challenged Linc's approach to self-evaluation, getting involved at the outset to cross check the information they submit as a landlord and ensure it demonstrates how they hear the voices of tenants and cross checking their approach to self-evaluation.

- As a result of a series of challenges from the group, an information and communication group was set up in Linc to ensure that the way they write and speak is respectful and in line with their values. This is an organisational wide group to ensure that improvements are made in all that they say and do and that this approach is consistent across the board.
- Linc's Rent Setting Consultation Survey improved by over 400 responses to 998 responses in November 22 representing a significant response rate from customers – a challenge the group provided them with – they wanted Linc to reach out and listen to more customers. The results of this survey lead to informed decision making. For instance, Linc will now invest in planned maintenance to help reduce energy costs and keep homes warm and cheaper to run rather than kitchens and bathrooms that are routinely due to renewal but are still in reasonable condition and in good working order and they became aware of what the impact of a rent increase would be on customers.
- Since meeting as a joint staff/customer cost of living task finish group, the group have supported Linc to successfully raise £36k of direct support for Linc residents (the support is in the form of food or energy vouchers as well as other discretionary items that reduce hardship for customers. The project brings knock on benefits for residents as highlighted in the case study below.

CASE STUDY

An extremely private resident historically declined all attempts at engagement. We knew she was on basic Universal Credit with fines and other costs being deducted, leaving her with just £60.00 per week to live off. Her home furnishings and lifestyle were minimal, and she was frequently seen searching bins in the neighbourhood for leftover food. Despite this, she did not want our help. Her Neighbourhood Officer collected some toiletries, food, blankets, and a quilt from our 'Cost of Living Cupboard' and took them to her property. She explained she was under no obligation to accept anything from us, but the resident was extremely grateful and let her into her flat which previously she was reluctant to do. Noticing her music collection, they began chatting about a shared interest in bands and singers. As a result, she agreed for her Neighbourhood Officer to come back following week to deliver a CD. The resident wasn't in but stopped the Neighbourhood Officer a few days later and apologised for her absence and agreed for her to call back the following week.

We hope this small but significant step has led to a level of trust being initiated, upon which we can build a relationship enabling engagement and further support to improve our resident's living situation.

The range of work undertaken by the team, including any future plans

- As demonstrated above the range of work is extensive but focussed. Future plans now include to grow the group in numbers. The terms of reference for the group have been amended and the code of conduct and confidentiality future proofed to ensure the highest standards are maintained as the group moves forward.
- It is envisaged that we will need to restart the cost-of-living shared staff/customer group given the crisis is not going away and given the outcomes achieved by working together.



- Establishing a group during a pandemic has been difficult as the group have not had many chances to meet outside their 'teams' meetings'. This together with the geographical spread has made getting to know each other more difficult however, it's clear the group have a common purpose and have become more strategic over the time they have developed. Their input is invaluable.
- The group have been supported by TPAS at their meetings, and this enables us to reflect and change the way we work regularly. We also gain a third-party perspective which enables us to see the group from a new angle.



Tenant and Resident Strategic Group



For more information, contact: Karen.jeffreys@linc-cymru.co.uk



Wrexham Active Tenant Group
Contact:
carol.coull@wrexham.gov.uk



Cadwyn Tenant Scrutiny Team
Contact:
Jillian.wadley@cadwyn.co.uk

TENANT VOICE



WINNER

Tai Calon

How the organisation is working to ensure the tenant voice is heard, listened to, and acted upon at all levels of the organization

- When Tai Calon developed their 2020-2025 corporate plan they set out an ambitious but clear objective of achieving 90% customer satisfaction by 2025, it became clear that the existing approach to collecting customer feedback wasn't going to be sufficient to help them achieve the key objective.
- The traditional way of collecting feedback on day-to-day service delivery was predominantly phone and paper based. This was time consuming, expensive, and led to feedback not being collected for several weeks after the service had been received. It was obvious that this approach meant that Tai Calon could not gather sufficient data in a timely manner to generate detailed analysis of the issues that were important to our customers, so a brave and very different approach was required.
- It was identified by the Customer Experience Team that they needed to find a solution that allowed them to gather and analyse higher volumes of feedback, in a simple, flexible, and intuitive way and that's when the decision was made to work with 'Rant and Rave'.
- 'Rant and Rave' was introduced and enabled Tai Calon to collect real time customer feedback via SMS, email, and web-based surveys, crucially these were channels that customers said they liked and actively used to engage.
- Tai Calon now collects insight direct from customers the day after they have had a service. Along with a scored customer satisfaction question (1-very dissatisfied; 5-very satisfied), they now ask open questions to ascertain why that score was given. This approach generates new insights about what makes a great service experience for each individual and they know almost instantly if customers aren't happy and can call to resolve issues the same day. Calling back customers who aren't happy has been a key driver in overall improvements in customer satisfaction, showing a real commitment to listen and act on people's views. The information in 'Rant & Rave' is instantly viewable to both front line staff and executive and leadership team, meaning customer feedback is seen across all levels of the organisation, it is also free, easy to use and takes no time at all for customers to share their views.
- Tai Calon's web-based surveys (Listening Posts) are an easy option for customers to leave feedback at any given time by following a web link from Tai Calon's website, the link is also regularly shared via their Facebook page and all Tai Calon vans include a QR code where a customer can scan to leave any feedback.



- A recent consultation was held in one of Tai Calon's sheltered accommodations due to concerns regarding social isolation with customers staying in their own spaces and some not knowing anyone else in the scheme. They decided to engage with the customers to try and understand if there was anything Tai Calon could do to help. After initial conversations it was apparent that the communal lounge was not being used and comments from customers were that the room was outdated and felt like a "nursing home" which they didn't like as they lived in supported living. The customers completed feedback via the web-based surveys (with support from staff where required) and as a result the communal lounge has now undergone a makeover to make it look and feel more homely and welcoming and customers now hold a weekly coffee morning which is having a positive impact on the social isolation issues previously mentioned.
- As a result of the positive feedback from this scheme Tai Calon have planned consultation events in all of the sheltered schemes to see how customer wellbeing can be improved. They will also update the furniture in all communal lounges.

How tenants are encouraged and supported to be involved. How do you raise awareness and get tenants engaged and involved? What support and training do you provide?

Tai Calon have introduced their Customer Voice Strategy which combines key areas of our Customer experience, measuring satisfaction and communication strategies, with their approach to customer consultation. The strategy outlines a range of options available for tenants to be involved by embracing new and innovative methods to hear the voice of customers. Examples of methods of engagement are:

- **Online consultation** – they use social media, the website's consultation hub and direct marketing as the main way to seek views and feedback on proposed changes that affect all customers. To ensure a representative view, they supplement an online approach with more traditional activities such as phone surveys, face-to-face discussion, and home visits.
- **Focus groups** – they bring customers together for a short period of time to participate in a conversation about specific areas for improvement or to help with designing and testing new services.
- **Localised events and activities** are used to discuss ideas, issues, and solutions to local community challenges. This type of consultation also includes engaging with local specialist interest and community groups. These engagement methods help them fully understand the real-life experience of service delivery in Tai Calon and is a sanity check as to whether services are meeting the needs of all customers.

All board and subcommittee papers now must detail how the impact of any change / decision has been informed by the customer voice. Monthly reports of all aspects of customer feedback are shared across the whole organisation. With a minimum of a quarterly update on customer voice and customer experience going to their homes and communities committee.

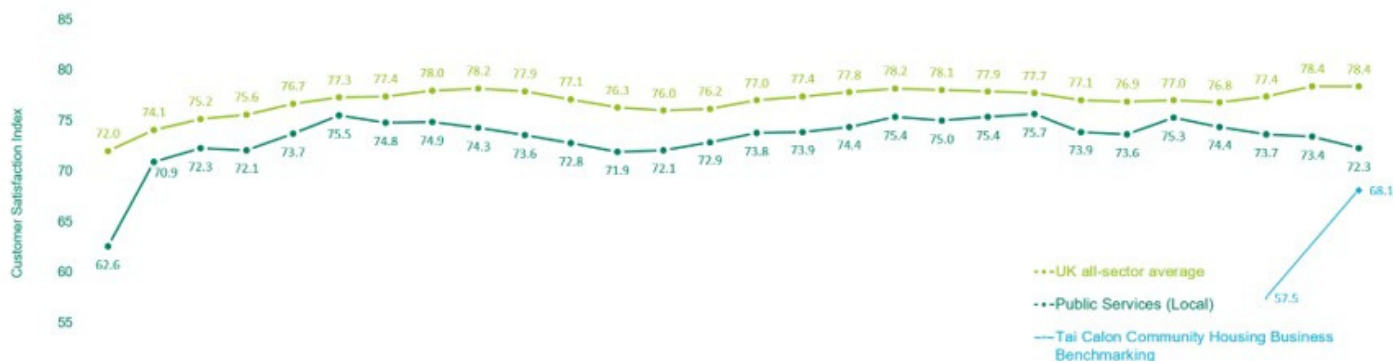
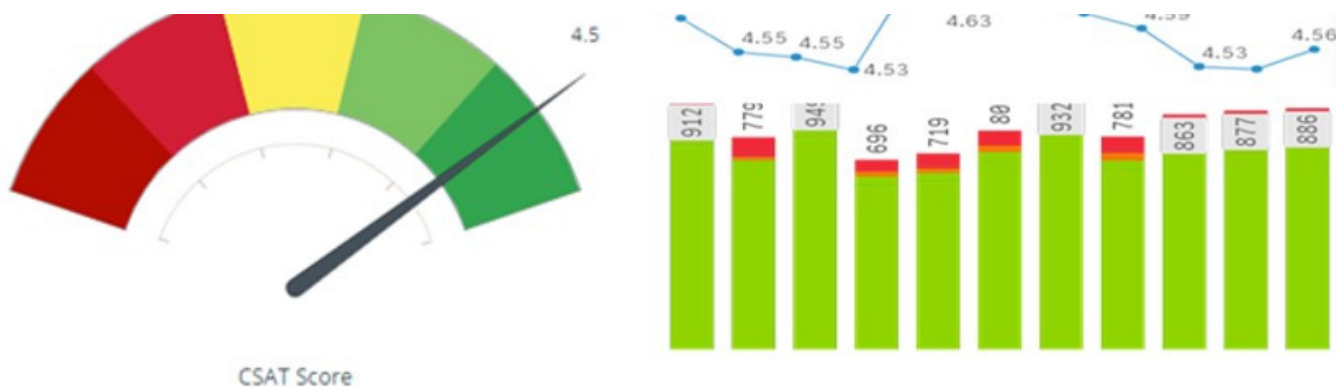
How the organisation is working to ensure the range of tenant's voices are heard, making engagement inclusive for the tenants and communities it serves

- Within Tai Calon's sheltered housing schemes they have included a customer feedback section as part of the Scheme Coordinators Customer check-in audit and Scheme Co-Ordinator's are encouraged to ask customers their views on the service provided. The coordinators are then able to upload the feedback in real time so prompt action can be taken if required.

- To ensure engagement opportunities are inclusive for all we have recently developed an Equality & Diversity monitoring form which is optional for a customer to complete after attending any engagement event. If Tai Calon uses an external location for an engagement event, we complete a venue access checklist form to ensure all customers' needs are met and venues used are fully inclusive and accessible for all.
- We are continuing to review the processes and systems we use to ensure the information we hold on customers is up to date allowing us to easily identify those customers who we are yet to reach.

Any further information to share

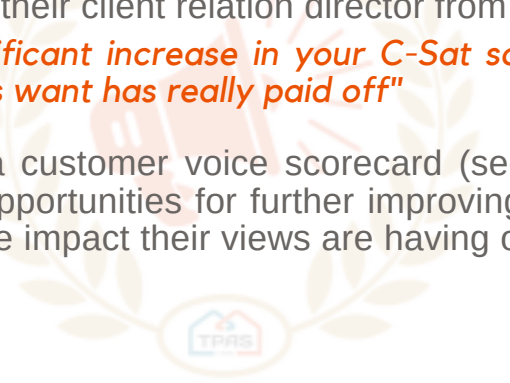
In the last 2 years of using 'Rant and Rave' specifically Tai Calon have collected more than over 14,000 items of customer feedback with a satisfaction score of 4.5 out of 5! This has increased from 4.26 when the system was introduced. Here's an example of some visuals used:



They also work with the Institute of customer services and their recent satisfaction survey done by them with customers has seen their performance improve in the last 12 months by just over 10 % points, seeing increasing satisfaction performance in areas including – Customer experience, emotional connection, ethics and customer ethos. This was a very notable achievement for with their client relation director from the ICS saying:

"Congratulations on the significant increase in your C-Sat score, all your hard work and instinct about what customers want has really paid off"

They have also developed a customer voice scorecard (see overleaf) to allow them to track progress and identify opportunities for further improving the depth of insight gained from customers along with the impact their views are having on the business planning and decision making.



Customer Voice Score Card – October to December 22			
↑ More than the last quarter ↓ Less than last quarter ↕ Same as last quarter			
		Q3 2022/23	YTD
	% of customers that are satisfied that Tai Calon are listening to their views, captured in line with STAR survey results.	68%	↕ 68%
	Business Benchmark scores for Complaint Handling, Customer Ethos and Ethics (Scores out of 100)	Complaint Handling 32.3 Customer Ethos 66.4 Ethics 65.7	↑ 32.3 ↑ 54.1 ↑ 55.2
	The number of customer engagements (including consultations, community events, focus groups and forums)	70	↓ 170
	Number of services consulted on and or changed based on customer consultation	3	↓ 8
	The number of pieces of real time feedback that have been received in the quarter and the % return rate for feedback.	2527	↑ 7333
		25%	↑ 24%
	The number of real time feedback requests that have directly resulted in follow up action from Tai Calon to resolve outstanding issues / queries.	187	↓ 896
	The number of processes and procedures that have changed or being reviewed based on real time customer feedback	11	↓ 24
	Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) with complaint handling and number of lessons learned *5 being excellent	CSAT= 2 out of 5 0 lessons Learned	↓ CSAT 3.3 ↓ 5 lessons learned
	The level of social media engagement related to Customer Voice items and posts.	84 Likes 22 Shares 20 comments 12532 Reached	↓ 249 Likes ↓ 332 Shares ↓ 88 Comments ↓ 12532 Reached
	Customers feedback will be used to improve day to day service delivery and improve customer experience		Customers will have frequent opportunities to influence organisational decision making and service design.
			Customers feedback will be used to provide a detailed assessment of overall organisational performance
			Customers will know how our Customer Voice strategy is making a difference.

In summary, the implementation of these measures has driven a real culture change within the business with all customer facing teams seeing the benefit of having real time information on customer issues and being able to schedule resources in a prompt and cost effective manner. The above measures are now firmly embedded within the business as opposed to being a 'flavour of the month' project and is the vehicle that will continue to drive Tai Calon's commitment to continuous customer improvement engagement.

For more information, contact: Steven.wetten@taicalon.org



Newydd Housing Association
Contact:
tracy_james@newydd.co.uk



Cartrefi Conwy
Contact:
sasha.jones@cartreficonwy.org

NET ZERO TENANT ENGAGEMENT



WINNER

Penderi Energy Project - Pobl Group

How tenants have been engaged in Net Zero

Pobl started with a consultation and engagement programme that collated the thoughts and understanding of the customers within the area. These were in the form of drop-in sessions, customer letters, questionnaires / surveys and individual customer visits by staff associated with the project to ensure that customers understood the aims and outcomes of the project and how they would benefit from being part of it.

How you are working to ensure engagement methods are inclusive for the tenants and communities the organisation serves

Utilizing multiple methods of engagement such as face to face, social media, text/e-mail and letter drops including translations for different languages and verbal translators on the phone, has allowed them to reach a high penetration of customer engagement. By utilizing these different methods, it ensured that nobody was excluded on the grounds of language barriers or not being connected to us digitally.

Pobl have also utilized local drop-in centres and food banks for notices and information including providing warm spaces and donations toward food hampers and raffle prizes. They have also taken part in local events and activities, which has again allowed them to engage with more customers than in previous projects.

The use of customer champions in streets within the project area has also been something that has gained traction and very a positive reaction from within the community.

The litter pick and clean area days have brought customers into contact who wouldn't normally engage, but as they saw the physical impact this was having in their community, the level of pride within the community also increased and resulted in positive action from them to make the area a better-looking place to live.

They have have also had publicity on BBC, ITV and BBC sounds (Deborah Meaden) in which tenants have taken an active role and promoted the project.

The difference tenant engagement in Net Zero has made/is making

There has been a massive difference in terms of energy use by customers within the project. An education campaign, which has been utilized within the area, was supplied to customers, highlighting the ability to maximise the savings from the systems in both monetary and carbon terms.

Since the start of the project, many customers have changed their behavior in terms of usage of household appliances and reducing carbon, including a large uptake of over 2500 low energy LED light bulbs that Pobl have provided. The education around smart metering has also contributed to carbon reduction with several customers being very pleased that they can put their washing machines on and not have any grid usage on sunny days

Follow up and future plans for tenant engagement in Net Zero and sustainable housing

There are follow up plans for further information to be continually shared with Pobl customers. They will continue to do this via email / text, drop-in sessions and social media, thus keeping the printing costs and carbon associated with that to a minimum. Along with partners on the project, Sero, they are working with local schools, colleges and community groups to continue with the education and carbon reduction theme, and have wider plans for integrating more people within the community as customer champions.

Further Information

The area where this project has been undertaken is an area where deprivation and fuel poverty are very high on the Welsh Government's scales. The work Pobl have done has certainly lifted many customers out of fuel poverty and made their lives more comfortable, whilst also giving them an understanding of how and why we are doing this project. It has received national and regional press and TV coverage along with interest from many other housing associations for good practice and lessons learnt so others can also follow a similar program of improvements and engagement with customers.

Penderi will be used as a flag ship project for Pobl to help promote NetZero and sustainable retrofits in other Pobl communities / homes. Feedback from Penderi residents and case studies about the positive impact it has had for them will be shared with other residents in other areas to help alleviate concerns and worries that they may have.

For more information, contact: david.richards1@poblgroup.co.uk



Renewable Technologies/Zero Carbon Tenant Engagement - Swansea CC
Contact: Tim.padfield@swansea.gov.uk



Re-Store project - Linc Cymru
Contact: steve.dixon@linc-cymru.co.uk

Judges Special Recognition Award



WINNER

Wildmill Youth Club - V2C

The type of support provided

Wildmill youth club is a youth club in the Bridgend community run by volunteers Debbie and Sarah who are Valleys to Coast customers. They organise and run a youth club for children and young people of all ages based in the heart of the Wildmill estate, Bridgend. Everyone on the estate is welcome to come along.

How the needs of the communities/individuals were met

Back in 2014 prior to Debbie and Sarah running the youth club it was run by Youth Works. The organisation disbanded and there was going to be no youth provision which many organizations felt was detrimental and could lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour. Identifying the need in the community for young people to have activities and opportunities they haven't been able to access before they decided to develop a committee of volunteers to take over the role. Having lived in Wildmill for many years they had a real passion for the community and providing young people with a safe space.

The committee presented a business case to Valleys to Coast to run the current provision with the support of the local community. Nearly 10 years later and the youth club is going from strength to strength.

Cllr Steven Bletsoe said:

"Since being elected last May I have seen at close hand the amazing work that V2C and the Wildmill Youth Group do for the future generations who are growing up in Wildmill, Bridgend. From empowering them to achieve their full potential to supporting them at times of need. In the modern, complex world we live in we all need the services of organisations like Wildmill Youth Group, and it has been amazing to see the work being done by them in this fantastic community."

The impact the support has had on individuals/communities

Debbie and Sarah lead a small committee and play a key role in delivering the centre. They have created a positive space for the children of Wildmill and surrounding Bridgend areas. They are able to access a warm, sheltered space whereby they can engage in projects they may have not had opportunity to before and engage with the local community.

Environmental

Participants learn about how to look after our environment by growing their own produce and being encouraged to be kind to wildlife. When planting Debbie educates the community about how to grow pollinators to attract the wildlife, how to upcycle items normally thrown away and work on projects with partner organisations like Plantlife Cymru to plant wildflowers in the local community. They also engage with Keep Wales Tidy to undertake local little picks around the community to care for the local community and to give the children a sense of pride in their area. They have a small community garden where they have recently expanded their growing space following a Local Places for Nature grant from Keep Wales Tidy. Here they grow a range of fruit, veg and herbs.

Digital

They have a dedicated computer room with full wifi whereby young people are able to access computers to do their homework and offer homework support. They also assist the wider community in helping them write CVs and are always offering their base to other organisations that can provide support and advice.

Family trips

They organise community trips for families at a reduced cost in the school holidays. They organise transport and activities. They have visited places such as Folly farm and Plantasia land. They want children and their families to be able to enjoy the time off and make new friends encouraging a stronger community presence.

Cooking skills

Children have learnt to cook and most recently whilst attending the warm hub, making soup, pasta and other dishes, providing them life skills. Despite the warm hub grant finishing they have continued to cook with the children providing them a warm meal as they had identified there was a definite need in the community. They are also currently liaising with Baobob-Bach to develop a community food pantry on the estate and won a Social Farms Award for their community garden that they are looking to expand. Valleys to coast attended the presentation event organised by the children and could feel a real sense of pride from the children and appreciation of the youth club.

As one young girl said at the presentation evening:

"you can go to youth club sad but you always leave happy"



Workshops and events

They run workshops using grant funding. These workshops include street dance, circus skills, zumba, bike maintenance. They also run workshops which also help improve the area such as wildflower planting and willow weaving. Debbie and Sarah also organise fun days such as on national play day and plant and share event whereby the community can engage in messy play, planting, scavenger hunts, dancing and much more.

Volunteering opportunities

They also offer volunteering opportunities for the local community who are completing their Duke of Edinburgh award. They encourage other members in the community to get involved and help them at events providing them invaluable experiences.

Working with Valleys to Coast

Over the years the group have worked closely with Valleys to Coast to hear the voice of young people in addition to delivering projects such as designing new signs around the estate; painting the subways; a filming project to see the estate through their eyes and more recently helped with planting wildflower meadows.



Can the project be sustained/adapted for the future

V2C believe the projects can be sustained and grow. Debbie and Sarah secure grant funding to help support the youth club in both activities for young people and for running costs. They are always keen to try out new projects to encourage children and families to attend the club including working with different organisations. They are always on the lookout for new volunteers and with more volunteers to help the youth clubs resources will grow the offering of the group. Their ethos is to always involve the young people in their activities from deciding what refreshments to do to the organising and arranging of events. By doing this they are adapting to what the young people enjoy and want to do..which in turn attracts others to join.

Further Information

Check out more of what they do on their facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100070852935644>

To end, a quote from one of the parents of the children who attend the group:

"Debbie and Sarah have run Wildmill's youth club for many years, they provide a safe, friendly space for our children, to play, learn and explore, giving up their time weekly, and a few days extra during the holidays. Sarah and Debbie advocate for our children to have the right to play, express their feelings and make decisions on how they want the youth club run. My children have grown through play and the safe stability the youth club has provided, and I can't thank them enough for being the lovely kind souls that they are"



Wildmill Youth Club - V2C
Contact: georgia.williams@v2c.org.uk



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

