

The magazine for residents of Wales & West Housing

FREE

In Touch

SPRING 2024

What we're doing
to make our homes
warm for the future

Help with your
cost-of-living
questions

Money saving
tips for your
garden





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You can also contact members of staff direct by their email. For example,
joe.bloggs@wwha.co.uk

Other languages and formats

If you would like a copy of this edition of In Touch in Welsh or another language or format, for example, in large print, please let us know and we will help you.

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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this publication. We would advise residents to check up-to-date information on our website, wwha.co.uk, Government websites and other official and reputable sources.



Message from Anne

Welcome to the Spring edition of our In Touch magazine, the first of 2024.

The year has started with little improvement to the cost-of-living crisis for many.

Our Tenancy Support Officers have put together some advice on the issues they are being asked to help with. That could be making sure you get any benefits available to you or finding ways to make that money go further.

We also look at Food Action on Waste Week in March and give some ideas to reduce shopping bills, cut household food waste and help to save the planet.

Food pantries are a service that is growing in our communities. They do a fantastic job of saving supermarkets from sending their surplus food to landfill by offering it at a low price to local members. We list some of the pantries county by county, so you may be able to find one that is close to you.

When it comes to looking

after our homes, we have always aimed to make sure that our homes are kept safe, secure, habitable, and warm for the future. We have recently reviewed the way we do this, and you can find out more about our plans for the future alongside some of the new energy-efficient homes we are building.

Spring is traditionally the time of growing and we welcome back our resident gardeners from the St Mellons Community Garden who share their tips for saving money by growing your own veg. Happy planting!

There's also a round up of your news from around Wales, a look back on some residents' Christmas celebrations plus all your usual puzzles.

As ever, if you have any questions or suggestions, please get in touch.

Anne Hinchey
Group Chief Executive

Summer In Touch is going digital

The Summer edition of your In Touch magazine will be digital. We'll be bringing you all the latest news from your communities, financial advice and tips to keep you safe in your home.

If you would like to have your copy emailed to you, please send your details to communications.team@wwha.co.uk It will be published online at www.wwha.co.uk.



Keeping you safe and secure

We understand that a safe and secure place to call home is important to everyone. At Wales & West Housing we have plans in place to make sure we look after your home and make the right decisions for your property.

To do this we have a plan, which we call our Asset Management Strategy, to keep us on track. It sets out what's important for you, and for us to make sure we meet your needs and are complying with Welsh Government regulations for social housing in Wales.

We have recently reviewed our plan to make sure that our homes are kept safe, secure, habitable, and warm for the future.

What does our Asset Management Strategy do?

It's about gathering the right information to help us to make the right decisions around how we maintain or make improvements to your home.

We use that information to create a programme of works such as kitchen or bathroom replacements, replacing fencing

or walls, installing new heating systems and so on. We obviously can't do it all at once, but it helps us to know how, what, and when we are going to do these things.

Setting the standard

Welsh Government have regulations for the standards of social housing homes across

Wales. You may have heard about these Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) in the news.

We've been working with these standards since 2002 and at the end of last year Welsh Government updated these regulations to what matters to residents in the future.

The revised standard says that homes must:

- be in a good state of repair
- be safe and secure

- be affordable to heat and have minimal environmental impact
- have an up-to-date kitchen and utility area
- have an up-to-date bathroom
- be comfortable and promote wellbeing
- have a suitable garden
- have an attractive and practical outside space

So, what does this mean for you?

Our aim is to have a consistent, stable, practical and usable approach, which is fair to different schemes and situations and is effective in the long term. We have set out key elements for us to work towards in how we make our decisions. They are to:

- **make the right investment decision** by considering all the wider factors, including impact upon the environment and resident affordability, safety, and comfort, and are based on evidence and data.
- **make decisions at the right time**, taking into account when investment is needed within our means and will be forecast in good time.
- **invest in homes and schemes that are in demand**. Where there is not the demand for homes, investment options will either restore the demand or take action to remodel or remove the homes from our ownership.
- **keep our homes well maintained and attractive**. Our homes and environments will



be well maintained and attractive such that they meet residents' reasonable expectations.

What next?

We already have lots of information about homes such as when things are due to be replaced, how old your home is etc.

We need to make sure we gather as much information as possible about your home over the next 10 years so you will start to see a bit more of us. To make improvements to your home, we need to come and make a visit,

to be sure that we have the right information.

Gathering as much information as possible will inform us about your home and how it can work best for you and be confident that it meets as far as possible the Welsh Housing Quality Standards.

This will take time, and we need to plan it, so we won't be out making changes to your home tomorrow. What the strategy does help us to do is to understand where we are now, where we need to be and how we will plan to get there in relation to achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standards.

We will review the strategy every year as things change and we gather more information.

FLINTSHIRE

Extra care residents celebrate

Residents at Plas yr Ywen extra care scheme in Holywell welcomed the First Minister of Wales, The Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS, who officially opened the scheme.

Ysgol Maes y Felin school choir also performed at the ceremony and the First Minister also unveiled a friendship-themed bench for residents to use, commissioned by Wales & West Housing to mark National Friendship Month.

The visit included a tour of Plas yr Ywen's woodland walk, situated in an ancient woodland which was preserved as a feature of an

old primary school which once stood on the site. The school was demolished to make way for Plas yr Ywen.

First Minister Mark Drakeford said: "It was a pleasure to see the high-quality accommodation being provided for local people here in Flintshire.

"It's always good to see our public land being reused for the benefit of the community and especially to see the ancient woodland has been retained so residents can continue to enjoy the wonderful trees and wildlife for years to come."



Meanwhile at Llys Jasmine in Mold, residents celebrated their scheme's 10th birthday with cake, fizz and a live performance from a choir.

The James Lambert Singers were invited to perform to mark a decade since it opened.

Kara Foulkes, Extra Care Manager, said "Residents had a lovely afternoon celebrating.

There have been so many wonderful memories over the last 10 years. We've built a fantastic community here which is a real credit to everyone who has been involved over the years. Most importantly we've built a safe and caring environment for all of our residents."



CARDIGAN

Holiday day out for Cardigan families

Families in Cardigan got together over the Christmas holidays for an indoor activity day.

The children and their parents visited The Loft activity centre over the Christmas holidays, where they enjoyed climbing, crazy golf and other indoor games.



CARDIFF

Life saving lessons in Cardiff

Residents at Western Court, Cardiff, were shown how to save lives using a defibrillator.

They had a visit from a staff member of St John Ambulance, who demonstrated how a defibrillator works and how they should use it. As a defibrillator is installed at the scheme, they were also shown resuscitation techniques.

Scheme Estate Assistant Ann White said: "It was a very useful afternoon and has given residents confidence in how to access and use the equipment and resuscitation in an emergency."



NEWTOWN

91-year-old resident goes out of his way to help others

Neighbours of a resident who goes above and beyond to help with gardening and jobs around their retirement scheme aged 91 say they 'do not know where they would be without him.'

Not one for putting his feet up despite his age, Iorwerth Jones goes above and beyond to help residents at Llys Hafren in Newtown.

Iori, as his neighbours call

him, is at the heart of life at the scheme, building and making things for residents and taking the lead in keeping gardens in tip-top shape.

Neighbour Vivien Evans says "Iori does so much for everyone around the scheme. I have a complete little piece of garden for myself outside my porch, all thanks to Iori."

Rhian Marsh, Housing Officer

at Llys Hafren, said: "Iori's contribution to life at the scheme is amazing. He trims hedges, paints benches and does all manner of things to help keep the scheme looking lovely."

Since this article was written we have heard the sad news that Iori has passed away. His family have asked us to publish his story to recognise his outstanding work in his community.



Your money advice

The cost-of-living crisis is still having a big impact on many of our residents.

In recent months our Tenancy Support Officers (TSOs) have been dealing with an increase in the number of calls for help from residents in financial difficulties.

Here our team of TSOs have put together some advice on the issues residents ask them for help about most regularly.

I don't have enough money to live on. What can I do?

We can help by running a financial check with you. We can check what benefits you are eligible for and help you to claim them, if you don't already. Then we would discuss any debts you may have that are being taken out of your benefits and check whether you could qualify for money-saving energy tariffs and any other things to help you save money on essentials.

We'd also look at some of your outgoings and check whether any subscriptions and other non-essential payments could be stopped. It's hard when your income is limited but we can help with tips to better manage the money you have.

How can I apply for disability benefits like Personal Independence Payments (PIP)?

We're seeing more people applying for PIP this year. We can help you to complete your application for disability benefits, depending on the complexity of your circumstances.

We'll discuss the type of PIP application you want to make and what health conditions you are currently experiencing

We'll then arrange a home visit to help you complete the application or sometimes we'll refer you to another agency such as Citizens Advice or Welfare Rights if we think you need specialist input.

It can take two or three appointments, either on the phone or in person, to prepare the application. DWP (Department of Work and Pensions) should then contact you to arrange an assessment to see how your health condition affects you day to day.

I've been turned down for disability payments, can I appeal the decision?

If your application is turned down and you don't agree with the decision, you can appeal.

We would refer you directly to our partners at Citizens Advice, who have experience in the appeals process. If you are going through an appeal, we can help you to fill in forms and gather paperwork and evidence that you need.

I'm in debt and threatened with court action. I'm worried, what can I do?

We can help you to get in touch with your creditors to put a hold on recovery actions such as enforcement or demand for payments.

We would then go through an income and expenditure questionnaire with you to look at your priority debts. These are the important payments such as rent, council tax, gas, electric and water bills and food.

From that you can work out how much you can afford to pay. Then we'll help you to negotiate with the companies that you owe money.

If you have a lot of large debts, we might refer you to Citizens Advice for debt advice who can help with a variety of debt solutions including debt relief orders and arrangements to pay.

I've fallen behind with my council tax payments and don't know what to do.

We can start by finding out how much you owe and for what tax years. Then, we would check

whether you are getting any council tax reductions.

If not, we can carry out a benefit check and help you to make a claim if you are eligible. In some cases, the payments can be backdated for three months. We can also check if you are eligible for a Single Person Discount and help you to apply.

We would also check the income of any other adults such as grown-up children or non-relatives, called non-dependants, living in the house. If their details are not correct, your council tax bill could be higher.

Then we'd go through a budget check with you to find out what you can afford to pay towards the debt. Once you identify how much you can afford to pay back, we would help you to put a payment plan to your council and also spread the council tax instalments over 12 months instead of the standard 10 months of the year.

If the council tax debt is significant, under threat of legal action or you have no available income to pay towards the debt, you could request a one month hold from council, this could buy you time to be referred to Citizens Advice for debt advice.

My Universal Credit payment isn't right

In some cases Universal Credit (UC) payments can be incorrect due to wages not matching.

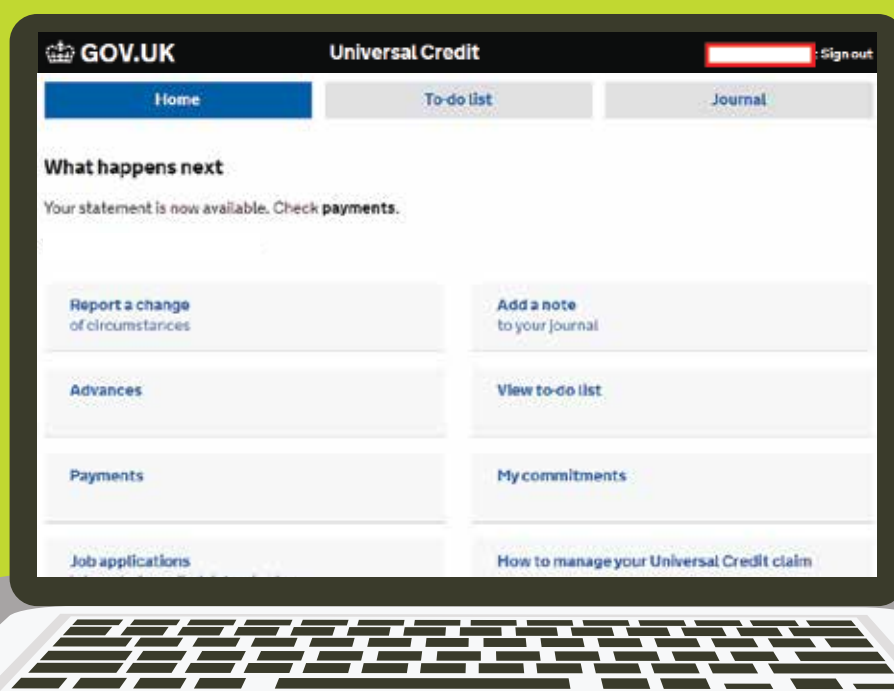
We would first ask you to check your full breakdown Universal Credit statement and talk you through how to do this if you're not confident. To do this log onto your online Universal Credit account, select 'Home' then 'Payments' and the most recent months' statement.

If the wage figure on your UC statement doesn't match the figure on your bank statement, check your pay slip. A common reason for this is if you have an

attachment of earnings deduction for a debt taken directly from your wages. If this is the case, the wage figure on the UC statement is usually correct as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has to account for the full wage before any debt deductions.

If the wage figure is incorrect and there are no debt deductions send UC a journal message asking to raise a Real Time Earnings Dispute stating the amount of wages received and the amount UC has incorrectly accounted for.

Always check that your income and circumstances are correct and up to date on your UC journal and report any changes as quickly as you can, as this can also affect your payments.



I've fallen behind with my water bills, can you help?

We would first check how much you owe and the total of your annual bill. Dŵr Cymru has a number of schemes to help households in financial hardship.

If you have a water meter and are on qualifying benefits, you could apply for the WaterSure Wales bill cap scheme so that you won't pay over a certain amount for the year. You can also ask to have a water meter fitted when you apply for Watersure. To be eligible you must be claiming child benefit for three or more children under the age of 19 or have a household member with a medical condition that requires significant use of extra water.

There is also the HelpU tariff for the lowest income households where the annual charge is capped.

You could also apply for Dŵr Cymru's Customer Assistance Fund Debt Support scheme, a one-off payment plan to help those in severe financial hardship to clear and get on top of their payments. If your application is successful the water company will set up a monthly, fortnightly or weekly payment plan for your current year's charges and once you've made payments for six months, they'll pay off 50% of your previous arrears. Your payment plan may need to include an affordable amount towards the arrears for up to eight months depending on your circumstances.

If you carry on making payments for a further six months, they'll pay off the rest of your previous arrears.

Water meter fitting

Our TSO team could also check to see if you could save money by having a water meter fitted, if you don't already have one.

Don't worry about having a meter fitted, if there are any issues you can ask to have it removed within two years.

Once we establish that you are paying the lowest tariff available to you, we would help you to fill in a budget check to work out what you can afford to pay towards any debt.

Legal action

If Dŵr Cymru have written telling you they're about to take action or are going to pass your account to a debt collection company, you can request a month hold on action to get further debt advice.

For more information on Dŵr Cymru's tariffs and funds visit www.dwrcymru.com

I can't afford to pay my rent, what should I do?

Don't hide away. Talk to your Housing Officer or your Tenancy Support Officer.

We'll run a benefits check, to make sure that you are claiming all the financial support available to you.

In some cases, we can help you to apply to your local

council for a one-off payment such as Discretionary Housing Payments to pay off your arrears or Homeless Prevention grants, designed to help those most in need. We can then work with you to draw up a rent payment plan that takes your financial situation into account.

If we don't know that you're struggling, we can't help you.

I've spent all my money on bills and rent and have nothing left for food.

Most food banks run on a referral scheme. We can provide you with a referral/food bank voucher if you are going through extreme hardship.

A food bank parcel usually contains enough food for three to five days, and sometimes essential toiletries. Food banks usually limit the number of parcels they give to a person.

The number of food bank vouchers we have given out has increased in recent months, so we would check how many vouchers you have had in the past six months. If you have reached the limit, usually a maximum of four every six months, we would run through a household budgeting exercise with you and discuss other financial support as food banks are meant to be a short-term solution.

There are a number of pantries in many of our communities, where you can join for a low fee, then pay a nominal fee of around £5 for a bag of food every week.

To find out if there are any pantries in your area, turn to page 27 and 34.

Energy companies can restart pre payment meters

Energy companies have been allowed to restart fitting prepayment meters (PPM) in people's homes after nearly a year, the energy regulator Ofgem has announced.

It came after an investigation revealed that agents for some energy companies were forcing their way into the homes of vulnerable people, against Ofgem rules.

In the past, meters, which must be paid upfront, were fitted to avoid debts building up when people made no attempt to pay their bills.

New rules

The rules now state that before fitting a pre-payment meter companies must

- make at least 10 attempts to contact a customer
- carry out a site welfare visit before installing a prepayment meter

Under the rules, meters should not be fitted:

- when customers are over 75, unless someone younger also lives in the home
- in households with children under the age of two
- if anyone lives there with a terminal illness or certain conditions which would get worse in a cold home

Any company that breaks the rules would face enforcement action and unlimited fines. They would also be required to refit a standard meter within 24 hours and pay compensation.

Fuel poverty campaigners say they still want a total ban on the force-fitting of prepayment meters.

Ofgem advises anyone in energy debt to speak to your supplier as soon as possible to come up with a repayment plan, to avoid reaching the point of an involuntary PPM being fitted. For more information about dealing with energy debt visit www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households

Mae Llywodraeth Cymru'n gwneud popeth o fewn ei gallu i roi arian yn ôl ym mhocedi pobl.



The Welsh Government is doing everything it can to put money back into people's pockets.

Here to help

The rising cost of living is a worry to a lot of people in Wales. The Welsh Government has support available that could help you ease some of your living costs.

To find out more about the support available visit: gov.wales/heretohelp

Or call Advicelink Cymru for free today on 0808 250 5700 to claim what's yours.

Carers can go free with HYNT

If you like going to the theatre and arts events but need support or assistance to attend a performance, you may be eligible to join Hynt.

Hynt is a free membership organisation that allows carers to go to performances "free" with the person they support at participating venues.

To be eligible you will need to receive certain disability allowances or care packages.

To apply for a Hynt membership and find out how the scheme works visit hynt.co.uk



Changes to your

If you rent your home, you will have received a letter in January explaining the reviewed cost to your rent and service charges for 2024.

We review our rents and charges every April, but this year the dates have changed slightly. That means that for some residents, the dates when your payments go up will also look a little different.

Here are some questions and answers which can help you.

When will my rent go up?

If you pay monthly, your payments will go up on Monday April 1 as usual. If you pay weekly, your payments will go up on Wednesday, April 3.

How will a midweek increase appear on my account?

Your charges over the first two weeks of April will vary. For the week starting on Monday April 1, you will be charged two days (Monday 1 to Tuesday 2) at your current rate plus five days at your new increased rent and

service charge (Wednesday 3 to Sunday 7).

From Monday April 8 your weekly charges will be in full at the new rate shown in your review letter.

Why isn't my weekly rent increasing on a Monday as usual?

The law around renting homes in Wales changed when the Renting Homes Act Wales came in. All landlords must now allow one full year between rent increases.

As your rent increased on April 3 last year, this will now be your new rent increase date every year, regardless of which day of the week that falls.



rent for 2024



How will a midweek increase affect my Direct Debit payments?

Due to the way the direct debit system operates the new direct debit payment due shown in your letter has been calculated using a full week of revised charges effective from the April 1 rather than the April 3.

How will a midweek increase affect my Universal Credit claim?

You will need to update your online account with the new rent details on the date that your rent increases, and not before, giving the exact date of your increase and the new amount.

How will a midweek increase affect my Housing Benefit claim?

If your Housing Benefit is paid directly to us, we will give the council the date for the rent increases.

Please contact your Housing Officer if you need more help or call the Housing Support Team on 0800 052 2526.



How can we make homes warmer for the future?

We've secured £4.9million of Welsh Government funding to carry out research on some of our homes to find out what can be done to make them warmer and use less energy.

It means that this year we will start work on seven schemes across Wales, using various new energy saving and generating technology.

It's all part of our ongoing work with Welsh Government, and other social landlords and local authorities, to invest in ways to make Welsh homes warmer to tackle fuel poverty and lower the amount of carbon being put into the climate.

The funding programme (called Optimised Retrofit) has focused on older properties, looking at what we can do to make them fit for the future and tackle climate change.

To date we have worked on a select number of homes fitting different equipment to different types of homes to find out what works well.

This equipment has included:

- external wall insulation - insulated boards fitted to the outside of the building to keep the building warmer and reduce the amount of energy needed.
- energy-efficient double-glazed windows and doors
- air source heat pumps, which use heat from the air to power the heating and hot water
- MVHR (mechanical ventilation with heat recovery) systems, which take stale air, odours and moisture out, bring

fresh, clean air in and recycle warm air helping to prevent condensation that can cause mould

- solar PV (photovoltaic) roof panels and batteries to store the electricity generated so it can be used later

Martin Ford, Director of Assets and Maintenance said: "We're pleased to secure the funding for this important work, which feeds into a wider learning for the sector about the best way to make our older homes more energy efficient for the future."



“It will allow us to test different improvements to find out what can be done to make the structure of the homes less draughty and more energy efficient.

“The trials we are working on now will feed into a wider learning for Welsh housing providers about the best way to make homes more energy efficient for the future and to help us achieve the new Welsh Housing Quality Standards in the coming years.”



Alun and Lorraine Riggs say their home is much warmer since it was fitted with new energy-saving equipment.

The couple moved to their retirement bungalow at Dol Fach, Bridgend, in February 2023 having lived at another Wales & West Housing scheme, the Beeches, for 18 years.

Two months later WWH contractors SMK started work to improve the energy efficiency of the homes.

All 16 homes in the cul-de-sac were fitted with:

- new double-glazed windows and doors
- external wall insulation (EWI)
- solar panels on the roofs
- batteries to store electricity
- systems to filter and circulate heat, clean air, and reduce condensation, called Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery (MVHR) units

Work started in April 2023 and finished early in September 2023.

Alun, an ex-RAF serviceman who worked in the rescue services for more than 36 years, says he and his wife had no reservations about having the work done.

“The first we knew was when

we had a letter telling us when they were going to start the work and our main contact was Paul, the site manager for SMK.

Paul and his team were very good. Most of the work was done outside. They would let us know when they needed access to our garden and if we were going out, we would leave the gate open for them.”

“They had to extend the roofs so they could put the insulation on the walls. To do that, they had to put scaffolding up around our homes that stayed there for eight weeks. It wasn’t a problem for us as we could still get in and out of our front door and go into the garden. The only problem was – they didn’t like my tea making!

“The new windows were put

in in one day, no hassle and no mess. Straight away we could feel the difference. The old ones were warped with gaps, which made the house cold. Some days we would watch the curtains blowing in the draught!

“The MVHR box was fitted in the attic, so it’s not taking up any space in cupboards. We have no condensation at all in the house, in fact the windows are misting up on the outside now!

“We are more than happy with all the work, and I would recommend it to any of my friends and neighbours if they have the chance to have it done.

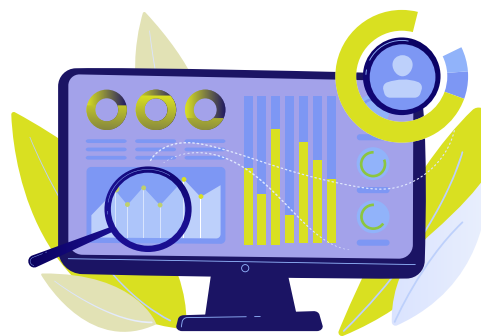
“It’s great, we are finding it so much warmer. I’ve no doubt we will save money on our bills over time.”



How are we performing?

Here is our latest performance report, showing you how we are doing as a business. All the figures in this report cover the three months between July

to September 2023, unless otherwise stated. We use this information to shape and improve our services.



Lettings



We let

241

homes

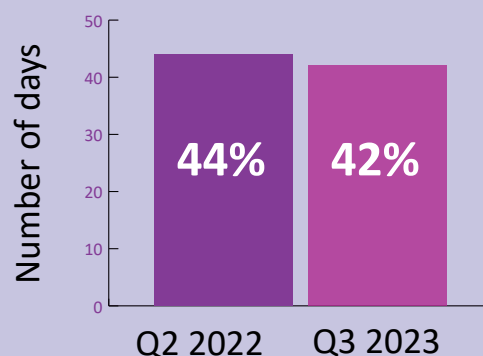
166 were relets and

75 were newly-built homes

144 (6 out of 10) were

accepted by the first applicant

Re-letting our properties



As part of our commitment to help reduce homelessness, we continued to work with local authorities to let homes to those in housing need. In some areas there has been an increase in the number of families without a place to call home. Of all the homes we relet during this period, **41%** were to homeless households, with the remainder going to applicants with other housing needs such as needing to move to more suitable properties, medical requirements or threatened with becoming homeless.



More than half of the residents we asked scored their service **10 out of 10**. Of the **6** residents who rated our service **7** or below, their main concerns were lack of floor covering and how they could afford their utility bills.

Your feedback

You liked:

- Friendly neighbours
- Peaceful and quiet area
- Size of the property

What you want to see improve:

- Outstanding repairs dealt with
- Anti-social behaviour dealt with
- Renovation work to property



Repairs and maintenance

During the summer we were busy responding to your repair requests and delivering major maintenance projects at pace.

Almost **8,000** repairs were completed, and we were able to attend almost all appointments at the agreed time. More than **7 out of 10** repairs were fixed at the first visit.

Just under half of these repairs were completed within **5** days. You told us in your feedback that the time it takes to complete a repair in some areas of Wales are a bit too long. We recognise that we need to make some improvements to the time it takes to get to your repair and we are currently working on this with a project team. Satisfaction scores you gave us tell us that you are satisfied with our repairs service. The repairs score overall are **9.6 out of 10** which we are so pleased with.

We received around **17,500** telephone calls for repairs in July, August, and September. In most cases, you had to wait less than a minute for your calls to be answered!

Between July and September this year we completed

7,849 repairs

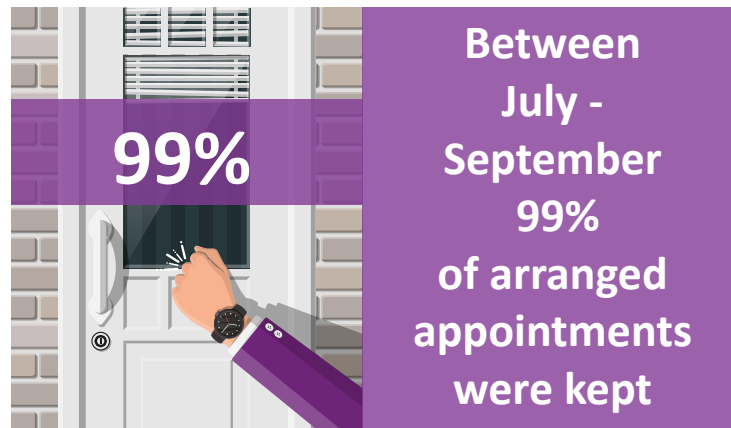
You said you wanted us to fix your repairs on our first visit.



The percentage we fixed first time

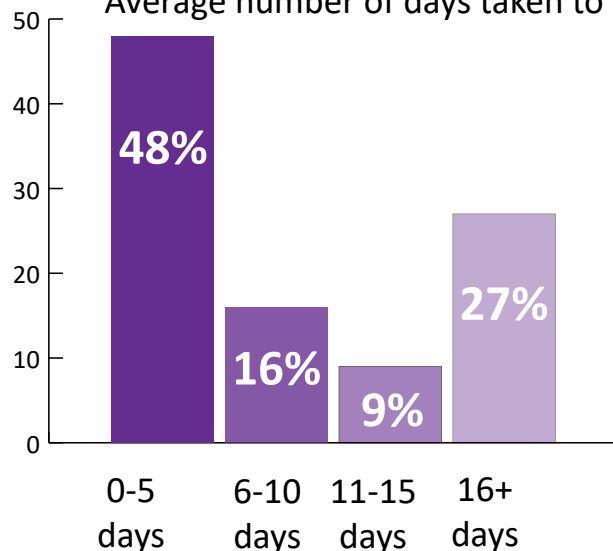


The satisfaction rating for our repairs service



Scan here to visit the repairs section on our website.

Average number of days taken to complete repairs



Electrical repairs
9.5 days average

Heating repairs
8.1 days average

Keeping you safe

9,720 homes have had a gas safety check in the past year

11,358 homes have up to date electrical safety certificates

In communal areas of our schemes, we carried out:

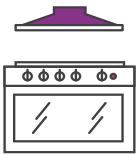
298 fire risk assessments

161 asbestos inspections

Each month we carry out

75 water checks

We installed:



59
kitchens



33
bathrooms



79
boilers



windows in
47 homes



19 front doors

14 back doors

Your feedback



You liked:

- Easy to report
- Repairs stayed fixed
- Appointments kept



What you want to see improve:

- Quality and behaviour of work and tradespersons
- Repairs not completed in a timely manner
- Further work is required



Three research projects to bring new energy-saving technologies to our homes were finished by the end of September. A total of **27** homes in Flintshire, Ceredigion and Bridgend were improved with funding from Welsh Government. Some were fitted with air source heat pumps, while others had external wall insulation and ventilation/heat systems. The largest project was in Bridgend, where we fitted external wall insulation, solar PV panels and batteries and new ventilation systems to **16** homes. We are currently carrying out decarbonisation projects on **144** more homes with **98** more starting in 2024.

Rents

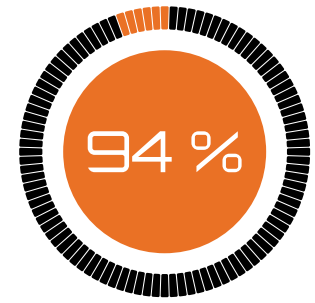
The number of residents maintaining an agreed payment plan remains high. In only **4** cases were more formal legal actions of notices of seeking possession served on residents failing to address their rent debt.

Our Tenancy Support Officers helped more than **900** residents in the three months up to the end of September. This support covered a wide range of assistance including all types of household expenses, fuel switching, challenging fuel repayment charges, school uniform costs and applying for additional benefits.

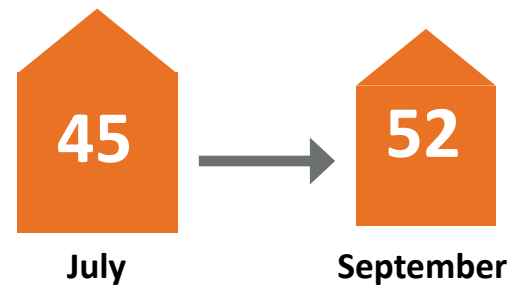
The cost of living continues to be a challenge and the number of residents needing fuel bank and food bank vouchers almost doubled as TSOs issued **119** fuel bank vouchers and **65** food bank vouchers.

They also helped **90** residents to apply for Discretionary Assistance Funds to help them to move in and furnish their new homes with white goods and furniture. Almost **£21,000** in Discretionary Housing Payments administered by local authorities were also secured to help those residents struggling to meet their rent payments.

The support offered by TSOs is available to all residents, and you don't need to be in rent arrears.

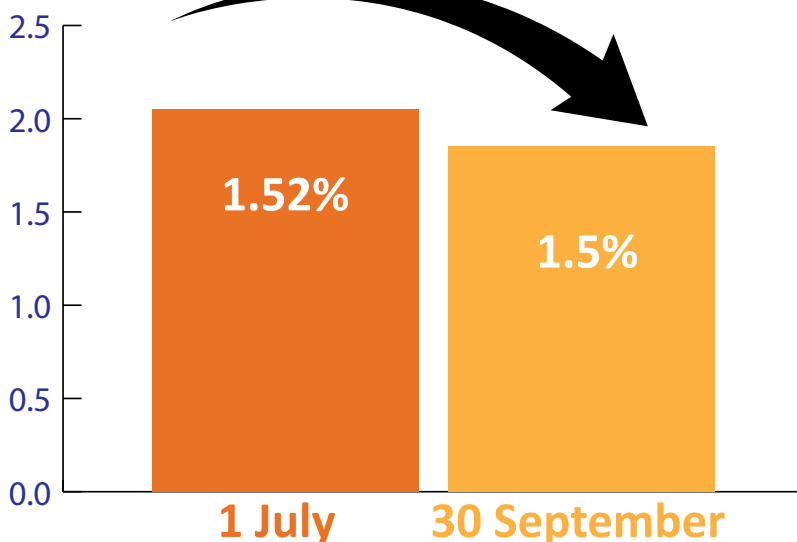


of residents are paying their rent as arranged with Housing Officers.



The number of residents in high level arrears increased from **45** at the start of July to **52** at the end of September. This is lower than the **67** at the start of the financial year.

RENT ARREARS



By the end of September **6,677** people were paying by Direct Debit which is the simplest way to pay your rent.

Anti-social behaviour

We have undertaken an exercise to understand what types of concerns you report to us. Over a 2-week period we recorded, in your own words, what you were telling us. We heard that residents want to feel supported to deal with issues affecting them; want to feel safe in their own homes and that the cleanliness and appearance of where they live is important. From this we are redesigning our approach to how we deal with your concerns including anti-social behaviour. The review will make sure we are delivering a service designed to the needs of our customers. It will help us to understand the cause of the problem and how we can help that person to deal with it.

The number of new ASB cases dropped from **128** the previous three months. We opened **55** new cases of ASB, which is lower than previous years. Of those cases **29** are still being investigated and **26** are no longer active. **92** low-level cases were reported to us, among the most common complaints were noise and behaviour in communal areas.

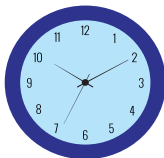


The three most commonly reported issues are:

- Neighbour dispute**
- Domestic abuse**
- Noise**

How we run our business

We received
287 calls
per day about repairs
and heating and
167 calls
per day about
housing support



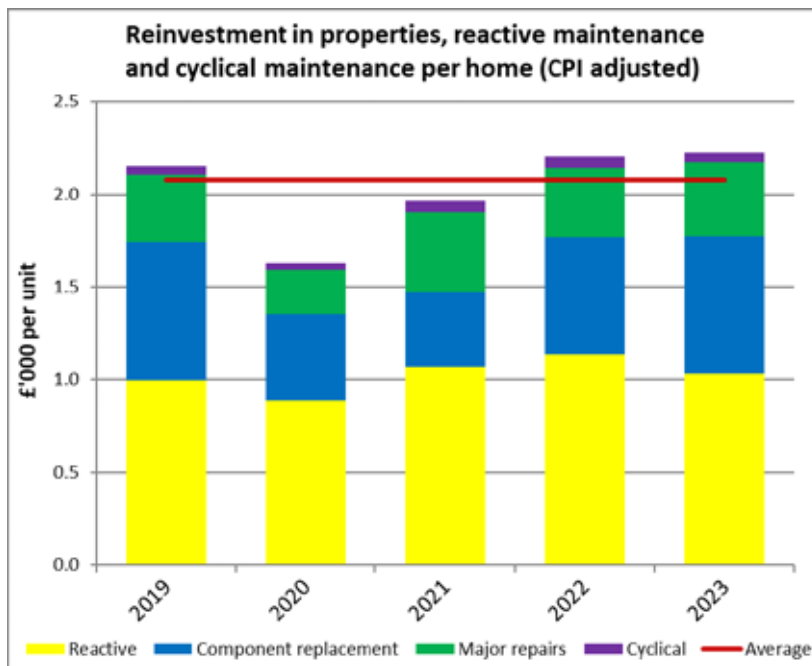
9am to 10am was the busiest time to call our Repairs Team. Our Housing Support Team were busiest between 11am and 12pm. If you are able to call after 12pm, it is generally quieter.



The average waiting time for residents calling our:

- Repairs Team was **24 seconds**
- Gas Servicing Team was **18 seconds**
- Housing Support Team was **63 seconds**

How we run our business



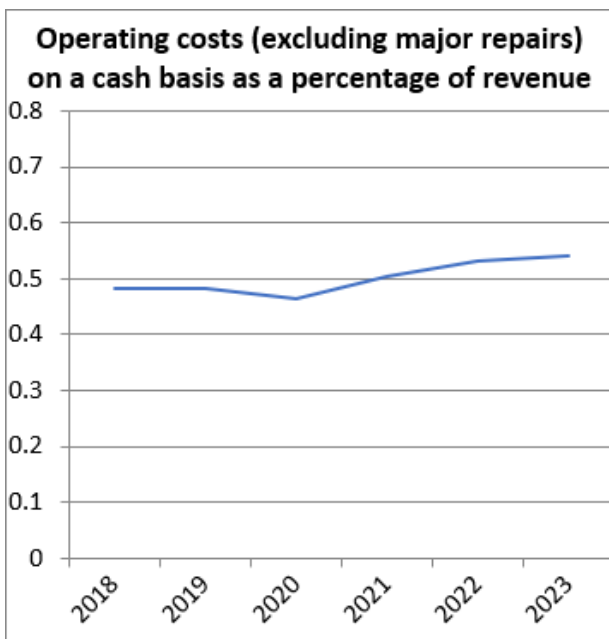
How we reinvest in our homes

This is how we reinvest in maintaining our homes. New kitchens, bathrooms, replacement windows and front doors, roofs and boilers make up the components while cyclical work includes decoration of communal areas and exterior works such as fences, gates and railings.

Looking after our homes

Our efficiency

By focusing on efficiency, we have maintained our operating costs at about **50%** for many years, even though costs have been higher than inflation.



Complaints

In total we received:

22
complaints

Of these, 15 were about repairs and maintenance, 2 about advice and support, 2 about communication and the others related to adaptations, staff and service charges.

Aberystwyth



“We were going to be made homeless and couldn’t believe our luck when we moved here.”

Rachel Jones, Kristian Davies and their three-year-old daughter Lily-Grace were facing homelessness when their private landlord wanted to sell the home they were renting.

By moving to their new home in Aberystwyth, they say they now have the warmth and security of a forever home and the support of their family, who live nearby.

Kristian was born and raised in Aberystwyth. He was left disabled following an accident when he was younger and says having the support of his family will make their lives easier.

The family are one of six moving to a new home at Cae Dan yr Haidd, meaning field under the barley, in Aberystwyth.

Built by Castlemead Developments on the site of the former Tollgate pub in Penparcau, Cae Dan Yr Haidd, is

made up of six flats, four houses and two bungalows.

Rachel said: “We were going to be made homeless as our landlord wanted to sell. We had been looking around for another privately rented house but were getting disheartened as we couldn’t find anything we could afford to rent.

“Then we had the chance to move to Cae Dan Yr Haidd.

“We couldn’t believe our luck. We’ve never had a new house before. It’s amazing. It’s so warm and the solar panels will hopefully help us save on our electricity bills.”

“Now we are living close to Kris’ family we are looking forward to getting help to look after Lily-Grace so I can go back to work full time.”

Tir Coed homes take shape

Tir Coed is the name for our new development of 23 affordable homes on land at Woodlands Farm on Dodds Lane in Gwersyllt. The homes are starting to take shape, with timber frames, electrics and plumbing work well underway. The first residents are scheduled to move in at Tir Coed by Autumn 2024.



New homes for former Lidl site in Carmarthen



Work to bring new homes to the site of the former Lidl store in Carmarthen town centre has started.

In December Carmarthenshire County Council's planning committee approved our plans to demolish the former Lidl supermarket on Priory Street and replace it with 48 apartments for people aged over 55.

The flats are designed in two and three-storey blocks with a split-level communal courtyard garden in the centre and resident parking.

Each one-bedroom apartment will have its own access and views over the garden.

The site, which is in the town's conservation area, has been unused since the supermarket moved to Friars Park in Carmarthen in 2019.

The next stage will be the demolition of the former supermarket building followed by an archaeological dig.

We will employ archaeologists to excavate and record the remains of walls dating back to Roman and post-medieval times, which were

uncovered during the initial site investigations.

The homes will be built to the highest energy efficiency rate of EPC A. They will be fitted with air source heat pumps to heat the hot water and solar PV (photovoltaic) panels on the roof to help power the electric heating. Mechanical ventilation and heat recovery (MVHR) systems will also be installed to take stale air, odours and moisture out, bring fresh, clean air in and recycle warm moist air.

Homes with a view near Old Colwyn

All homes are now occupied at Penmaenhead in Conwy, North Wales.

The development of six apartments and houses are providing much-needed affordable homes for rent for the community, set in a spectacular location near Old Colwyn, overlooking the North Wales coast.



The new laws around XL Bully dogs

New laws for the ownership of XL Bully dogs came into force on 31 December 31 2023, making it illegal to buy, breed, sell or give away these dogs or to take them outside without a muzzle.

After February 1 2024 it also became illegal to own an XL Bully without an exemption certificate.

As a landlord we believe that responsible pet ownership is important, both for the safety of residents and staff and for the wellbeing of animals.

Under the terms of your contract, all residents must request consent to keep a pet. Permission will not be given for any breed of dog covered by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, which will now include the XL Bully.

If you own such an animal and don't have the correct exemption this may be a breach of your contract.

How to get an exemption certificate

You can find guidance on how to get a certificate from the Government website [gov.uk/guidance/prepare-for-the-ban-on-xl-bully-dogs](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prepare-for-the-ban-on-xl-bully-dogs).

The Government states that to register an XL Bully, owners must hold active public liability insurance for their dog, have had their dog microchipped, and pay the application fee. Owners will also be required to provide proof that their dog has been neutered.

Muzzle training

Animal charities including the PDSA and the Dogs Trust have lots of videos and information to help owners train their XL Bullies to wear a muzzle.

[Blue Cross bluecross.org.uk](https://www.bluecross.org.uk)

[Dogs Trust dogstrust.org.uk](https://www.dogstrust.org.uk)

[PDSA pdsa.org.uk](https://www.pdsa.org.uk)

Are you a concerned XL Bully owner?

If you are a resident and worried about your own XL Bully, please contact us on [0800 052 2526](tel:08000522526)

How to report suspected illegal dogs

If you are concerned that there are illegal dogs in your area after February 1, call 101 and report it to the police.



Get Healthy, Get 'Appy

We live in a world where there now seems to be an app for everything.

Here are some ideas for apps that could make your lives a little easier and a bit more fun.

All of these apps are either free to use or have free versions which you can upgrade if you really think it's worth investing in.

Created by the BBC in conjunction with the NHS. The NHS Couch to 5K app from Better Health does what it says on the tin.

It takes you from a non-runner to 30 minutes of running over a nine-week programme of three runs per week, with rest days in between.

At the start you'll do more brisk walking with one-minute bursts of running and gradually build on it. By the end you'll be walking for five minutes and running 5km, without stopping, for 30 minutes.

As well as the app narrator Laura, you can also choose from celebrity trainers Jo Whiley, Sarah Millican, Sanjeev Kohli or Steve Cram to motivate you.

COUCH TO 5K



FOREST



This app helps you to stay focused on the important things in your life in an environmental game.

The aim is to plant a virtual tree. As long as you can stay off your phone long enough, the tree will finish growing and be added to your on-screen forest for the day. If you get back on your phone too fast, the tree withers and dies.

You can plant with friends or family too challenging everyone to go phone-free at the same time. If one person in the group uses their phone, everyone's trees will die.

Forest partners with a real-tree-planting organisation, Trees for the Future, to plant real trees on Earth.

Physical exercise is just one of the things we can do to look after our wellbeing.

A healthy diet, good sleep, hygiene and practices like journaling, mindfulness and gratitude are also good for our wellbeing. But if your challenge is motivating yourself, this handy little app turns self-care into a game.

The idea is that you take Care of your pet by taking care of yourself. By completing self-care exercises your pet gets to explore and grow, and you can also earn points which you can use to buy new clothes for your pet!

It's free to download but there are in-app purchases.

FINCH



Reducing food waste around Wales

Countries and communities around the world are doing more and more to help reduce food waste and protect our environment.

Here in Wales the Welsh Government is committed to achieving zero food waste by 2050* and all of us can do our bit to help out.

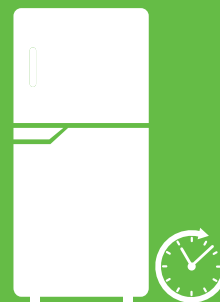
The result will be a cleaner environment and better world for all of us to live in.

Recycle your food waste at home. It's surprising how much food you can recycle at home. You can place all sorts of food in your food waste bin provided by your local authority, for example leftover food on plates at the end of a meal, bread, cakes, pastries, eggs, fruit and vegetables, tea bags and coffee granules. The food you put into your food waste bin can go towards creating energy to power a home.



Buy only what you need or try batch cooking and freezing. Creating a weekly meal plan is a great way of ensuring you have all the meals you need for the week ahead and only buying what you need – this way you could save money and reduce food waste. If you need to buy more food than you need (like buying a bigger pack of meat or vegetables for better value), try making your favourite meals in bigger quantities and freezing portions for another day. There are lots of great recipe ideas on the Love Food Hate Waste website: www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/

Store food properly. Foods come with different date labels, most commonly 'Use By' and 'Best Before'. Use By dates are about food safety and Best Before dates are related to food quality. Eating, cooking or freezing your food after a Use By date could make you ill but if it's a Best Before date you could use your senses to work out if something is ok to eat – visible signs or smells, for example. You can find out more on the Food Standards Agency website: www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/best-before-and-use-by-dates



Find your local food pantry

There are a growing number of food pantries opening up across all counties in Wales. They run differently to food banks by offering bags of food to members at a low cost. They redistribute surplus food from supermarkets and manufacturers.

Bridgend

- Food pantries provided by **Baobab Bach** operate across Bridgend. They provide £5 food bags.
A bag of food will contain at least 15 mixed items of food, plus seasonal fruit and vegetables.
- **Bettws Pantry, Tanio Community Arts**, Sardis Media Centre, Heol Dewi Sant, Bettws, CF32 8SU
Open Wednesday 1pm – 3pm
- **Blaengarw Community Pantry**, William Trigg Community Centre, Nanthir Road, Blaengarw, CF32 8AQ
Open Thursday 10am – 12 noon
- **Maesteg Community Pantry**, Cwm Calon, Castle Street, Maesteg, CF34 9UN
Open Friday 9:30am – 11:30pm
- **Brackla Community Pantry**, Temporarily located mobile pantry service at Brackla Tabernacle Church, Oak Tree Way, Bridgend, CF31 2DN
Open Thursday 2pm – 2.30pm
- **Pyle Community Pantry**, KPC Youth, Off Pyle Inn Way, Pyle, CF33 6AB
Open Wednesday 5:15pm – 6:45pm
- **Sarn Community Pantry**, Merfield House, Merfield Close, Sarn, CF32 9PZ
Open Thursday 2pm – 4pm
- **Pencoed Community Pantry**, Pencoed Miners Welfare Hall, Heol Y Groes, Pencoed, CF35 5PE
Open Thursday 2pm – 4pm
- **Wildmill Community Pantry**, Wildmill Youth Club, Wildmill

Youth Club, Tairfelin, Bridgend, CF31 1SP
Open Wednesday: 4:30pm – 5:30pm

Caerphilly

- **GYR Community Fridge** is run by GYR Community Association from Graig-y-Rhacca Community Centre, Machen, Caerphilly CF83 8WW

Cardiff

- **Food pantries** – fresh food, fruit and veg for a small weekly subscription, usually around £5. Find your local pantry at www.yourlocalpantry.co.uk
- **Cathays Community Fridge** at Cathays Community Centre, Cathays Terrace. Pay what you can afford in exchange for sandwiches, cooked food, meat, dairy and vegetables.
Open every day, 9.30am-11pm
- **Al-Ikhlās Foodbank**, Al-Ikhlās Centre, Broadway, Adamsdown
Open Tuesdays, 10am-noon
- **Food for Life Wales, Atma Lounge**, Unit 20, Capital Centre, Queen Street, Cardiff city centre
offers free, nutritious plant-based meals
Open Monday to Friday 11am-6pm, Saturday 11am-5pm
- **Rainbow of Hope**, 23-25 Broadway, Cardiff, CF24 1QE
offers free tea and coffee for those in need
Open Monday to Thursday, 10.30am-1pm, Saturday 12pm-1pm
- **Rumney Forum**, Brachdy

House, Brachdy Road, Rumney offers foodbags for £7 for those in CF3 area
Open Tuesday

- **St Phillip's Church**, Tweedsmuir Road, Tremorfa offers a free market
Open Sunday 3.30pm-4pm
- **Glenwood Community Church**, Circle Way West, Llanedeyrn, has a pantry for people in Llanedeyrn or Pentwyn, £3 for 16 items
Open Friday. Register first at www.glenwoodchurch.org/food-club
- **Food Cycle Cardiff Riverside** offers free hot meals on Wednesday at 6.30pm, families welcome. Located at Wyndam Street Centre, 3-5 Wyndam Street, Cardiff, CF11 6DQ
- **Food Cycle Cardiff Ely** offers free hot meals on Monday at 6.30pm, families welcome. Located at Dusty Forge (ACE - Action in Caerau & Ely), 460 Cowbridge Rd W, Cardiff CF5 5BZ
- **Rumney Chapel Living Room** on Brachdy Road, Rumney offers free breakfast and lunch, plus dinner on some evenings
- **Splo-Down Food Coop at Oasis Centre Courtyard**, Splott Road, Splott has a weekly market stall. Offers pay-what-you-can memberships.
Open Wednesday, 5pm-7pm (www.splo-down.org/)

Carmarthenshire

- **Kidwelly Community Fridge**, CETMA Kidwelly, Banc Pendre, Kidwelly, United Kingdom
Open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 10am-3pm
- **Llanelli Community Fridge**, The Lord Arthur Rank Centre SA14 9RA Llanelli
Open Monday to Friday 10am-4pm

For more listings, turn to page 34.

Giving back to the community in 2023



Every year we give back to our communities across Wales by supporting groups and activities which make a difference to people's lives homes and communities
2023 was no exception and saw us support more than 50 projects through our Making A Difference programme.
Here are just some of the projects we helped in our communities.

The Willow Collective

In North Wales, The Willow Collective is a Community Interest Company which operates a working mill on its base in Rhyl, providing work experience and career opportunities to hard-to-reach young people. Our funding went towards the construction of a new structure on the yard so that the mill could expand its operations.

Nicky Hodge, founder of The Willow Collective, said: "Some of the young people who come here are the hardest to reach young people. I wanted to turn the Willow Collective into a careers-based centre, sending young people off on career pathways, and the funding from Wales & West Housing was the first stage of starting this project."



“The difference the new equipment has made to us is unmeasurable!”



Southern XL Jazz Band

Southern XL Jazz Band, based in Maesteg, is a marching band which provides children and adults from all backgrounds the chance to learn to play musical instruments and march. We offered sponsorship so the band

could buy five new marching drums to replace old equipment, which was being held together with tape.

A spokesperson for the band said: “The difference the new equipment has made to us is unmeasurable! We can now focus our efforts on fundraising,

training, education and recruiting new members rather than holding our instruments together. This is vital to the future of our band. The new instruments mean that the sound and music we produce will be of a first-class standard.”

Support during the cost-of-living-crisis

2023 was an exceptional year for price hikes which saw the cost of living rocket for everyone, resulting in stretched budgets and financial hardship for many families across Wales. To help address the increased demand we also supported 10 projects which are helping people cope with the current cost of living challenges.

In North Wales we supported Rhyl Foodbank, providing money for general running costs for three months.

In West Wales, Cardigan and Pembrokeshire Foodbank received funding to support their work in the community.

In Mid Wales, Welshpool and District Foodbank received financial assistance to help



purchase more food supplies to meet rising demand.

In South Wales, at AcePlace, our funding supported food supplies and volunteer costs.

Over Christmas we also supported other great causes including the Here for Good

Collective based in St Mellons, Cardiff who were able to buy gifts to make available for families who were struggling to afford Christmas. At their free Christmas shop families were able to choose presents, free of charge, to gift to their loved ones.

Greener Gardening with Glenys

Welcome back to our resident gardener Glenys Vandervolk and the volunteers at St Mellons Community garden.

In every edition they will share their green-fingered money-saving tips for the months ahead.

Glenys says; "At our community garden we never throw anything away. And that goes for old fruit and vegetables in the bottom of your fridge."



Tomatoes

You don't need to buy packets of seeds. Take a tomato slice and plant it in a pot with soil covering it.

If you have room indoors you can leave them on a window sill and soon seedlings will start sprouting through. In May you'll be able to plant out into the garden or in pots on your patio.

Cucumbers

Just like tomatoes, you can take a slice of cucumber and plant it in a pot and this too, will start sprouting individual plants from the seeds.

Potatoes

Our gardeners never throw away their potatoes when they start sprouting in the cupboard. We plant them in the garden. In 15-17 weeks they'll give us a crop of potatoes. We always find that doing it this way gives tastier potatoes than if you buy them ready to plant from a garden centre.

You don't need a garden to grow potatoes they can be planted in strong black bags or even an old reusable shopping bag as long as you put in drainage holes. In fact potatoes will grow in anything as long as it has drainage holes.

Onions

When you slice up your onions for your dinner, don't throw away the end with the "hairs." Cut it into quarters and plant them in a pot and onion plants should burst through. You can plant them out in the garden from April onwards.

You can do the same with old garlic cloves that start sprouting in the fridge.

Peas

I love Leo dried peas on my roast dinner. If you soak a couple in water for longer, they should start to sprout and you can plant those in the garden too.



Top tips

- Plant lavender next to summer bulbs, such as gladioli, irises or allium. It will attract the bees to pollinate the flowers.
- If you are planting up hanging baskets, put a dish or saucer in the bottom first. (You could recycle large plastic pot lids or silver foil pie dishes.) These will collect the water and stop your baskets drying out so quickly.
- Cut down old plastic bottles to make pots. You can even hang them from trees and grow carrots in them. Just remember to make drainage holes.
- Plastic trays with covers, like the type you get with cupcakes, can be used as propagators, which act like mini greenhouses to grow seeds.
- Plant marigolds next to your veg, especially tomatoes, to help keep the bugs away. Similarly cosmos flowers can be planted next to cabbage and cauliflower as their scent confuses the cabbage white butterfly and stops them eating your plants.



How to make a paper daffodil

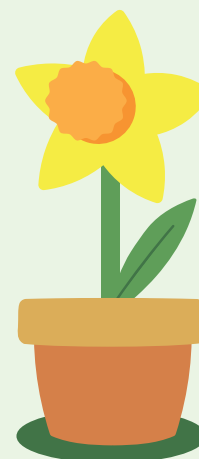
You don't need a lot of materials to make these fun little paper daffodils. Raid your kitchen cupboards for some paper cupcake cases, grab some yellow and green card and glue and watch as your kids make these beautiful flowers bloom!

YOU'LL NEED:

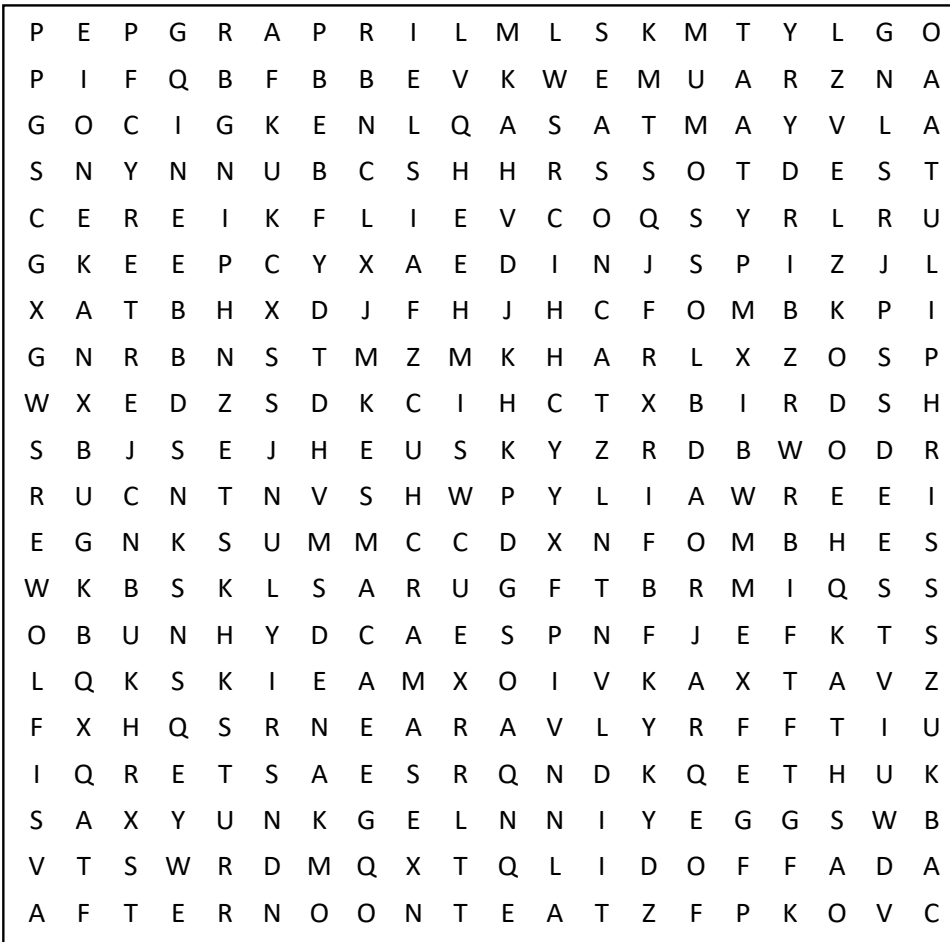
- Yellow card
- Lolly sticks
- Green pens or green paint
- Yellow or white cupcake cases
- A glue stick
- Sticky tape
- Scissors
- Pencil
- Rubber

METHOD:

1. Prepare your lolly stick by either colouring it with a green felt tip pen or by painting it and letting it dry.
2. Draw a light circle on the yellow card with a pencil. It should be slightly smaller than the cupcake case base.
3. Draw five daffodil shaped petals coming off the circle you have drawn.
4. Cut out the flower shape and rub out any pencil marks.
5. Stick the cupcake case in the middle of the flower petals.
6. Now attach the lolly stick to the back of the flower using a small piece of sticky tape.



Wordsearch



1. Sunshine
2. Picnic
3. Afternoon tea
4. Tulip
5. Daffodil
6. Bunny
7. Blossom
8. Nest
9. May
10. Bees
11. March
12. Chick
13. Flowers
14. Season
15. Rainbow
16. Seeds
17. Garden
18. April
19. Butterfly
20. Eggs
21. Easter
22. Birds

Residents' photo gallery

The latest photo comes from Cardigan resident John Trott.

John says this photo of boats on the Teifi was taken in May 2021.

“It was a lovely morning and the boats were moored up in such a way that they caught my eye.”

“The photo was taken with an old Panasonic Lumix camera that I bought secondhand from eBay.”

Top tip

John says “photograph in good light, not necessarily sunlight but bright-even if overcast. Modern phone cameras take quite good shots in low light but they don’t teach you about light, a good photography book is always a handy thing to have so that you can learn about light and take better photos.



Send us your photos

Would you like to see your photos printed in In Touch? Please send us your favourite snaps of scenery or wildlife.

You can email your photos to communications.team@wwha.co.uk. Include your name and address and tell us a bit about the photo.

Please note we cannot print photos of people including children.

Across

- 1 Clothing worn by pupils (6,7)
- 8 Most unsightly (7)
- 9 In many instances (5)
- 10 Privet boundary (5)
- 11 Dismissed from work, usually for economic reasons (4,3)
- 12 Protective cover for the central part of a wheel (3-3)
- 14 Corresponds, tallies (6)
- 16 Tapers (7)
- 17 Board used with a planchette (5)
- 19 Tuscan province (5)
- 20 Native of Haifa or Tel Aviv, for example (7)
- 21 Seek authorisation (3,10)

Down

- 1 Tropical arm of the Pacific Ocean (5,5,3)
- 2 Successfully potted (5)
- 3 Excessively embellished (4-9)
- 4 Of an incalculable amount (6)
- 5 Laundry aids (7-6)
- 6 Result (7)
- 7 Appearance in bodily form, materialisation (13)
- 13 In a murderous frenzy (7)
- 15 Hard, brittle element; the heaviest known metal (6)
- 18 Boudicca's tribe (5)

Crossword

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
	■		■		■		■		■		■	
8								9				
	■		■		■		■		■		■	
10						11						
	■		■		■		■		■		■	
12		13					14					
	■		■		■		15		■		■	
16								17		18		
	■		■		■		■		■		■	
19							20					
	■		■		■		■		■		■	
21												

Sudoku

9			5		3		7	6
	8			1		4		
4			2		7		9	
3					4	6	1	
6				3				2
	7	5	9					8
	5		8		6			4
		9		2			6	
2	4		3		5			1

	5					9	8	7
		7	3	4				
8		1	9					2
	4	6		3	7		2	
		9	1		6	5		
	3		4	8		1	7	
2					3	4		1
				5	2	7		
6	9	3					5	

Correction

In the Autumn edition of In Touch there was a printing error in the sudoku puzzle. Here is the correct grid. We are sorry for the error.

Ceredigion

- **Aber Food Surplus**, ECO Food Sharing Hub, 15 Chalybeate Street, Aberystwyth, SY23 1HS
Open Wednesday to Friday
- **Aberporth Community Fridge**, Aberporth Village Hall, Aberporth, Cardigan, SA43 2EU

Conwy

- **Abergele District Foodbank**, Abergele and Pensarn Station, Station Approach, Pensarn, Conwy, LL22 7PQ
Open Monday to Friday, 10am-2pm
- **Conwy Foodbank** is run by The Sanctuary Trust from the Lighthouse Community Church, Great Orme's Road, West Shore, Llandudno, LL30 2BY.
- **St Giles Trust** have an innovative foodbank based in Colwyn Bay. It operates as a social supermarket and residents can access food and additional support services for a weekly fee of £3.50. Located at the former Porters Coffee Shop & Bistro on Station Road.

Denbighshire

- **Rhyl Foodbank**, Sussex Street Christian Centre, 15 Sussex Street, Rhyl, LL18 1SE
Open Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 1030am-2pm
- **Prestatyn & Meliden Foodbank**, Festival Church Prestatyn (Side Entrance), 200 Victoria Road, Prestatyn, Denbighshire, LL19 7TL
Open Tuesday and Thursday, 10am-2pm
- **Kings Storehouse Foodbank** in Rhyl is run by the Wellspring Church, 102 Vale Rd, Rhyl LL18 2PD

Flintshire

- **Nanny Biscuit** is run by a team

of volunteers to tackle food poverty in Flintshire. Includes option to choose shopping from the Nanny Biscuit Pantry in return for small contribution

Various locations, visit www.facebook.com/groups/nannybiscuit/

- **Love North Wales Charity** has a food bank which is open daily.
www.lovenorthwales.org.uk/about-us

Merthyr Tydfil

- **Hope Pantry**, Hope Chapel, High Street, Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 8UG
Open Tuesday and Friday
- **Twyncarmel Pantry** is open to Wales & West Housing residents only at Flat 47 in Twyncarmel. £3.50 for 12 items. Open Tuesday

Pembrokeshire

- **Fishguard and Goodwick Community Fridge**, Gateway Club, off Clive Rd, Fishguard
- Open daily except Thursday and Sunday

Powys

- **Newtown Food Surplus** distributes food twice each week through food shares at Jubilee Scout Hall in Newtown, SY16 1EN
Open: Food shares are held Monday and Friday
- **Llanidloes Community Fridge**, The Hanging Gardens, Bethel Street, Llanidloes, SY18 6BS
Open every day except Monday
- **Zero Waste Hay** operates from Hay Cheese Market, Hay-on-Wye

Vale of Glamorgan

- **Baobab Bach food pantry**, Alexandra Gardens Community Association,

Margaret Alexander Community Centre, Alexandra Crescent, Barry, Vale of Glamorgan, CF62 7HU

Open Tuesdays 4.15pm-6pm

- **Foodshare at Castleland Community Centre**, Belvedere Crescent, Barry, CF63 4JZ
Open Wednesday
- **Food Pod**, St Luke's Ave, Penarth CF64 3PS
Open Monday, Wednesday and Friday (check opening times)
- **Foodshare Pantry Llantwit Major**, CF61 Building, Station Road, CF61 1ST
Open Thursday 1230-2pm

Wrexham

- **Chirk Community Cupboard** is available for local residents to access directly without a referral at Chirk Parish Hall, Holyhead Road, Chirk, Wrexham, LL14 5NA
Open: Wednesdays, 2pm and 5pm
- **Caia Park Community Fridge** is available for residents to access without a referral. Located at the Caia Park Partnership, Prince Charles Road, Caia Park, Wrexham, LL13 8TH
Open Tuesday to Friday, 11am-3.30pm.

Foodbanks

All areas of Wales have foodbanks where you can collect emergency food parcels if you have a voucher. These are issued by referral from a relevant support service. Visit the Trussell Trust website to find your nearest foodbank: www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/

Looking back...

December was a fun time for many of our residents. From trips out for lunch to visits from school choirs, here are some of your resident photos.



Residents at Bronrhiw Court enjoyed a trip out together to Caerphilly Golf Club for Christmas lunch. Neighbours gathered, sharing Christmas stories, building new relationships, and creating a sense of togetherness that resonated with the true spirit of the festive season.



Residents at St Catherine's Court, Caerphilly, welcomed pupils from Twyn Primary School to sing Christmas carols.

The school children brought the festive spirit right to our residents' doorstep, as they turned the communal lounge into a hub of holiday joy.



Residents at Llys Owen scheme took a trip to Cardigan Golf Club for their Christmas lunch. Everyone had a good time and after their meal they held a Christmas raffle.



Residents at Gerddi'r Ffynnon scheme in Aberystwyth brightened the doors to their flats with a Christmas decoration competition. Winners received chocolates or biscuits. They were:

1. Mrs Parry
2. Mr B Adams
3. Mr D Harries



Members of our food pantry at Twyncarmel in Merthyr Tydfil had a few extra Christmas treats and toys. Residents received extra festive food goodies and toys, books and games for their children. The food was funded by Welsh Government while the toys were donated by customers at the local Lidl store.



The weeks leading up to Christmas were busy for staff and volunteers at Hightown Community Resource Centre. The festive fun included a Parent & Toddler Festive Party and festive craft sessions making wire angels, fairies, wreaths and rosettes. At the Christmas afternoon tea, locals were entertained by the choir from Ysgol Bodhyfryd.

We've handed residents the keys to their new homes in Aberystwyth.

We worked with Castlemead Group Ltd to develop six flats, two bungalows and four houses on the site of the former Tollgate Pub, which closed many years ago.

Cae Dan yr Haidd, which means field under the barley, is close to our other homes at Cae Job, Parc Dinas and Brynystwyth.

Turn to page 22 to meet some of the residents.



Easter opening hours 2024

Please note that our repairs and housing support telephone lines will be closed from 5pm on Thursday 28 March 2024 until 8am on Tuesday 2 April 2024 for the Bank Holiday. We will be running an emergency call and emergency repairs service only during this time. For emergencies please call 0800 052 2526.

You can pay your rent online or report a non-urgent repair online www.wwha.co.uk