

The magazine for residents of Wales & West Housing

FREE

# In Touch

AUTUMN 2018 | ISSUE 95

**NEW HOME  
GIVES HEIDI  
A NEW LEASE  
OF LIFE**

**WIN £60  
IN SHOPPING  
VOUCHERS**

**FIVE YEARS OF  
EXTRA CARE**

**FIRST LOOK AT OUR NEW  
HOMES FOR BRIDGEND**





# Tenant Pulse

## Are you a tenant in Wales?



Want your views on a wide range of subjects to be heard by:

- Your landlord?
- Your local Council?
- Welsh Government?
- Key community decision makers?

### If you do, why not join Tenant Pulse.

You will be asked occasionally via short surveys about important issues e.g. Welfare reform, new housing legislation etc.

**Each time you give your view, you could win High Street vouchers.**

We positively encourage tenants from all types of housing.

### How to join Tenant Pulse

Go to: [www.tpas.cymru/pulse](http://www.tpas.cymru/pulse) or by filling out our freepost paper registration form – copies available by phoning 02920 237303 or 01492 593046.

**Joining Offer: Everyone who joins Tenant Pulse will be entered in a prize draw every month to win £20 of High Street vouchers.**

### Contact Us

Wales & West Housing, Archway House, 77 Parc Tŷ Glas, Llanishen, Cardiff CF14 5DU  
Telephone: 0800 052 2526 Text: 07788 310420 Email: [contactus@wwha.co.uk](mailto:contactus@wwha.co.uk)  
Website: [www.wwha.co.uk](http://www.wwha.co.uk)

You can also contact members of staff direct by their email. For example, [joe.bloggs@wwha.co.uk](mailto:joe.bloggs@wwha.co.uk)

### Follow us on twitter @wwha



Did you know that you can now get more news and updates online?

### 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.

# CONTENTS



- 4 Celebrating five years of extra care
- 6 Our new website goes live
- 10 New homes for Bridgend
- 12 A guide to leasehold
- 14 Do you know a hero?  
Nominate for MAD Awards 2019
- 16 Stay happy, be active
- 18 Independent living in our new homes
- 20 Apprenticeships
- 21 Supporting families in poverty
- 22 Guide to Universal Credit
- 25 Corporate
- 26 Crime behind closed doors
- 28 Resident news
- 30 How to change a smoke detector battery
- 32 Dementia care on call
- 33 Gardening with Glenys
- 34 Make a toffee apple cake and autumn leaves candleholder
- 36 Prize puzzles
- 38 A day in the life of a support officer
- 39 Autumn what's on

*Cover photo: Martin and Allison Rogerson with daughter Heidi at their specially adapted new home in Flintshire*



## WELCOME FROM ANNE

Dear residents

Welcome to the Autumn issue of In Touch.

In October we will be celebrating five years since we opened our first extra care scheme at Llys Jasmine in Mold, Flintshire, so it's fitting that the theme of this issue is Independent Living.

As you read on, you will find out how older, and younger, residents with care needs are living independently in their own apartments at our extra care schemes. As we start work on our fourth scheme, with a fifth in the pipeline, we hope to welcome even more residents into this type of independent living in the future.

As more people are living longer, we also look at some of the key factors that can help us to get the most out of our lives in later years. Having a home where you feel safe and secure, in an area with a strong sense of community, plays a

big part in wellbeing, so we talk to some of our residents about what they have done to make themselves a valuable part of their communities.

Financial security is also important and with Universal Credit affecting more and more of our residents across Wales we look at what it will mean for you and what you can do to prepare for it.

It's that time of year when we look towards celebrating our residents achievements at our Making A Difference Awards and you can find out how to nominate someone who plays an important part in your life and community.

Plus there's a round-up of news from our development sites and our schemes plus the usual seasonal crafts, gardening and prize puzzle pages.

So as the nights get darker, close your curtains, settle down and enjoy reading your In Touch.

**Anne Hinchey**  
Chief Executive

If you have any thoughts on In Touch or how we could improve, please let us know. We will continue to listen to you. Simply email [contactus@wwha.co.uk](mailto:contactus@wwha.co.uk) or speak to our PR and Communications Team on 0800 052 2526.

# EXTRA

- friendship
- peace of mind
- care

This October marks five years since the opening of Wales & West Housing's Llys Jasmine extra care scheme and we've just started building our fourth one in Holywell, Flintshire.

But why have they become so popular and what makes them such a desirable place to live for our residents?

Extra care has grown rapidly largely due to the independence which it offers for people who have care and support needs. Residents live in apartments with their own front door, with facilities such as fully fitted kitchen and ensuite bathroom – and 24 hour on-site care and support staff. All of our extra care

schemes are located near town centres, providing easy access to essential facilities.

"Our extra care housing continues to be a popular choice

themselves, which are important to residents, it's the opportunity they have to socialise in communal areas or take part in activities on site if they want to.

Llys Jasmine resident Ella Hardy said: "It really is wonderful at Llys Jasmine, everyone is so friendly. It's been reassuring for my

children as they know I'm being well looked after."

Each extra care scheme is developed in collaboration with local authority partners to understand the needs of the local communities where they are built.

Llys Glan Yr Afon in Newtown marked another milestone for WWH when it became our first

“ *It's the peace of mind which residents enjoy more than anything else.* ”

because of this reassuring combination," says Anne Caloe, WWH Housing Manager (Extra Care).

"It's the peace of mind which residents enjoy more than anything else - knowing that they can enjoy the individual surroundings of their apartment with support when they need it."

It's not just the apartments

L-R: Residents and staff enjoying the outdoor life at Llys Jasmine, Nant y Môr and Llys Glan yr Afon



extra care scheme to offer accommodation for people aged 18 and over, not just those at retirement age.

“Living in a home of their own is an aspiration for people of all ages and the services which we provide in Newtown support people in a way that enables them to do just that,” adds Anne.

“Having a mixed age range at Llys Glan yr Afon brings together a wealth of different interests, skills and knowledge, adding to the vibrancy of the community.”

More than anything else, it is community spirit which will be celebrated the most at Llys Jasmine when it marks its fifth birthday.

“Activities are frequented by residents, family and the wider community and visitors always comment on how lovely the atmosphere is at Llys Jasmine. We’re incredibly proud that it has become an integral part of the community.”

## Our extra care schemes are:

### ■ Nant Y Môr, Prestatyn, Denbighshire

Our first extra care scheme of 59 apartments for over 60s opened in 2011 with care provided by Denbighshire County Council.

### ■ Llys Jasmine, Mold, Flintshire

Opened in 2013 with 61 apartments for over 65s including 15 apartments specially adapted for people with dementia and care provided by Flintshire County Council.

### ■ Llys Glan Yr Afon, Newtown, Powys

The first extra care scheme to be built in Powys opened in 2017 with 48 apartments for residents aged 18 and over and care provided by Castell Care and Support.

# Extra care – the facts

## How much does it cost?

There are five parts to the cost of extra care housing:

- Housing – the cost of renting your home
- Service charges - the cost of services provided within the scheme, such as cleaning and maintenance
- Heating and hot and cold water in your own apartment
- Restaurant service
- Care and support – the cost of your own care and support needs, which is not included in rent

## How do I apply?

If you think living in extra care could be the right option for you, there is a simple process to follow:

- Call our housing options team on 0800 052 2526 or email [housingoptionsteam@wwha.co.uk](mailto:housingoptionsteam@wwha.co.uk)
- You’ll be invited for a tour around whichever scheme you’re interested in
- We can then arrange to visit you in your home to discuss your housing care and support needs
- Your circumstances will be assessed and if successful you will be considered for future vacancies in one of our extra care schemes

## What residents say

■ Rachel and Gwyn Davies, moved to Llys Jasmine in November 2017.

Rachel said: “We’re very happy here. My sister-in-law already lived here and we always liked Llys Jasmine when we visited. We were getting less mobile where we were living at nearby Oakenholt so the move was definitely the best thing for us. Our children can carry on with

their lives knowing we are in good care. Being able to go down to the restaurant for a daytime meal with a choice of menus and not having to wash up after is wonderful.”

■ One Nant y Môr resident said: “I’d become isolated where I was living before but it’s safe here and I feel part of the community again.”

# Going live

## Launch of our new website

Next time you visit our website you'll notice quite a difference.

After months of planning behind the scenes, the new Wales & West Housing bilingual website was due to go live at the end of September bringing with it some important new features designed with residents in mind.

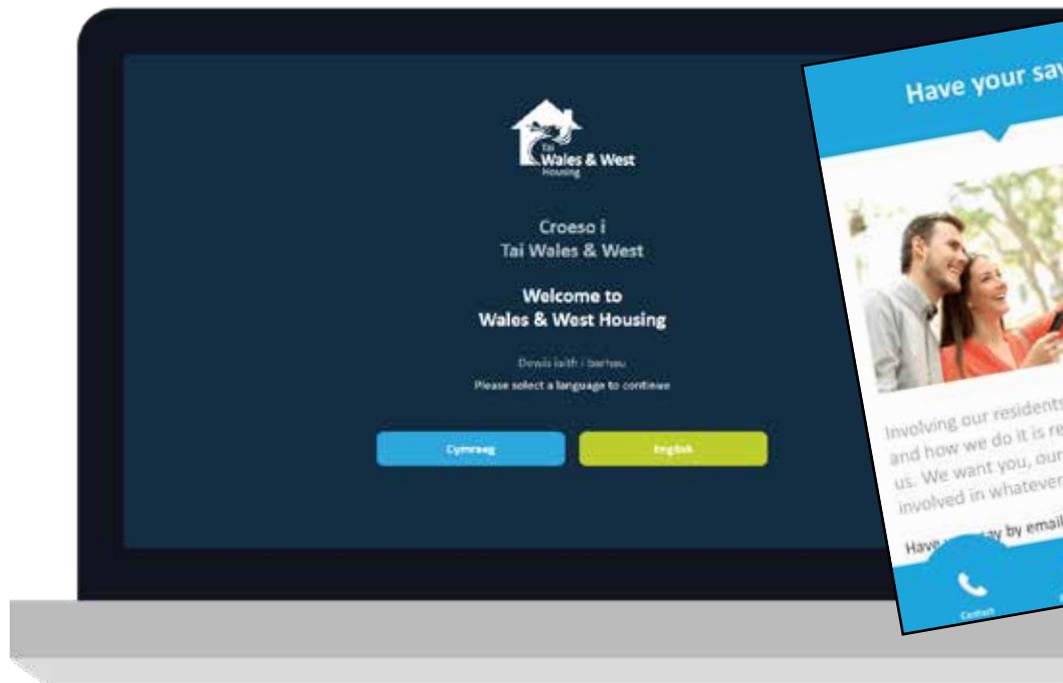
When you visit [www.wwha.co.uk](http://www.wwha.co.uk), whether on a mobile phone, tablet or computer, you will now find a streamlined site with many of the things our residents use regularly. There are features like how to pay rent or set up a direct debit and simpler ways to contact us for a variety of services.

When you land on our home page, you will be able to choose whether you want to find out information in Welsh or English. From there you'll be taken to the main home page, where you can scroll through the sections, such as find a home or pay my rent, and find the answers to the common questions our residents want to know. There's also sections where you can get involved and read the latest news about WWH.

Chief Executive Anne Hinchey said: "We hope residents will find the answers for most things they need to know on our website. We have been testing it behind the scenes, but we will only know how well it works when residents start using it regularly and give us their comments and feedback."

"We know that for some residents being able to contact us online at a time when they want is important to them. The new website will make it easier for those residents to do that."

"The launch is only the start of an ongoing process to keep the website fresh and up-to-date."



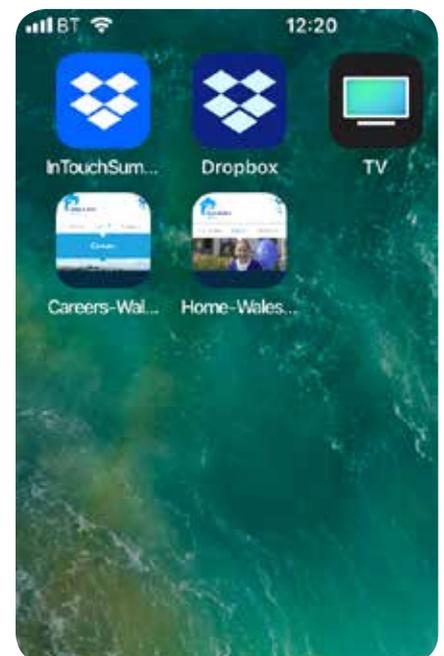
## How to make a quick link to the WWH website that looks like an app on your phone

### iPhones

1. Open up Safari and load [wwha.co.uk](http://wwha.co.uk)
2. At the bottom of the screen you'll see an icon depicting an arrow coming out of a square. Tap this.
3. Now you should have several options, choose "add to home screen".
4. You'll be asked to choose a name for the home screen icon, then it's saved and appears on your home screen.

### Android/Firefox

1. Open Firefox for Android app and go to [wwha.co.uk](http://wwha.co.uk)



When residents visit the new site they'll have the opportunity to give us comments and feedback on what they like and what they don't like. These comments will be important to help us shape and change the site to make it work for our residents."



## Cleaning up in Cardigan

Residents at Golwg y Castell, Cardigan, have had a major clean up of all their broken and unwanted electrical items.

The waste day was organised in partnership with Ceredigion County Council.

Altogether they collected four fridge freezers, three fridges, three washing machines, three vacuum cleaners, seven TVs, two cookers, a tumble dryer, microwave, computer, DVD and CD player and even an electric scooter.

Thanks to the Cambria Maintenance Services Team who helped residents carry items to the van, then took them away free of charge.



## Don't be alarmed - tell us what you think

We are always looking at ways to improve our emergency alarm services.

That's why, if you use your emergency alarm, we send you a survey in the post asking about your experience.

It only takes a couple of minutes to fill in, but the survey can have a long-lasting effect on the way we operate our alarm services.

Customer Service Centre Manager, Christine Bowns, said: "The comments you give us are really important, good and bad. We can use what you tell us to improve services for other alarm users in the future and feedback positive comments to staff.

"If residents are unable to post the survey back in the self-addressed envelope we'd be happy for them to call us on our freephone number 0800 0522526 and will take their comments over the phone."

2. Press the menu button (either below the screen on some devices or at the top-right corner of the browser), then tap on Page.
3. Tap Add Page Shortcut.
4. Your shortcut should now appear on your home screen.

### Android/Google Chrome

1. Launch Google Chrome browser app and go to [wwha.co.uk](http://wwha.co.uk)
2. Tap on the Menu button and tap "add to home screen."
3. You'll be able to enter a name for the shortcut and then Chrome will add it to your home screen.
4. Your shortcut should now appear on your home screen.

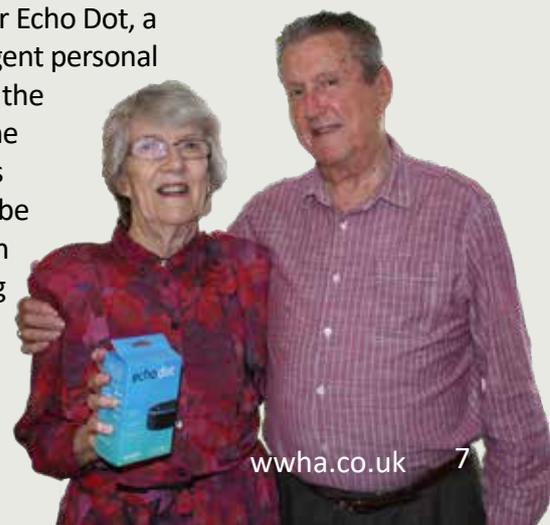
## Echo Dot competition winners

Octogenarian Eddie Atkins is hoping his new Echo Dot device will help him and his wife with gentle reminders around the home.

Eddie and Alma have lived at Hanover Court in Bridgend for nine years, having come to Wales fifteen years ago. They celebrated their Silver Wedding anniversary in June by holding a dinner party for 40 of their friends in the community hall on site.

We presented the couple with their Echo Dot, a virtual-computer-generated intelligent personal assistant, which we hope will help the family with general tasks around the home. Eddie says: "With both of us getting on in years, this device will be invaluable to us for reminders, such as collecting the laundry and taking our medications."

Debbie Brown of Rhyl was the winner of the other Echo Dot.





# Work starts on £8.5 million extra care scheme in Holywell

Wales & West Housing has started work on Flintshire’s fourth extra care scheme on the site of the former Ysgol Perth y Teryn.

The four storey building on Halkyn Road will have 43 one bedroom and 12 two bedroom apartments with a range of facilities and 24 hour on site care and support for older people with support needs.

The development is a partnership with Flintshire Council and Anwyl Construction are the main contractors.

Shayne Hembrow, WWH Deputy Chief Executive, said: “This new extra care scheme will be our second in Flintshire, providing even more capacity for independent living in high quality accommodation with access to 24 hour on-site care and support.

“We are delighted to be working closely with Flintshire County Council to deliver the scheme and with Anwyl Construction as lead contractor we are able to ensure that jobs are created and retained in North Wales, providing a significant economic boost for the region.”

Councillor Christine Jones, Flintshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Social Services said: "This is another great step forward for our latest extra care scheme in Flintshire.

“With the Council, WWH and Anwyl Construction working in partnership, we are all looking forward to seeing this scheme come to fruition. The new development in Holywell will provide excellent facilities to make a real difference to

residents' lives.”

The first residents are expected to move into Holywell extra care by Spring 2020.

During the building phase Anwyl Construction aim to use local contractors and suppliers, and provide apprenticeship and work experience placements, to bring employment opportunities to local people, bringing investment into the area’s economy.

*Computer-generated image of the new scheme*



# Inspiring builders of the future



Developers of WWH's new housing scheme in Prestatyn have given local nursery school children a taste of construction.

Daisy Chains Bodnant, based at Bodnant Community School on Nant Hall Road, took delivery of hard hats, hi-vis jackets and construction site safety signs from WWH and Castlemead Group.

As well as being used for play, the equipment will help children learn about the dangers of live construction sites. One such site

is the former Prestatyn Police Station, where we are building 20 affordable new homes, using Wrexham-based construction firm Castlemead.

The donation is just one of a series of community benefits which are being delivered by WWH close to the new development in Prestatyn. The 20 energy-efficient homes off Victoria Road will feature a mix of apartments and two bedroom family houses, and are due for completion by Summer 2019.

Sammy Beattie, from Daisy Chains Bodnant, said: "We are so grateful to Wales & West Housing and Castlemead for their kind donations to our outdoor area.

"The children will have so much fun re-enacting roles in our construction site using real equipment. It will help them learn important issues such as safety, teamwork and communication.

"This is so important for the children to be able to "play" in roles

they observe in day to day life or see their parents and grandparents do on a daily basis. It builds confidence, reassurance and social interaction which are valuable life skills."

Matt Hall, WWH Construction Manager, said: "We are passionate about making a difference within the community and so were delighted to get involved when we heard about the construction play area at the nursery school."

Joe O'Donnell, Castlemead director, said: "We work with communities across North Wales and as a responsible developer committed to raising awareness of construction site safety we were happy to provide the equipment.

"It was great to meet the children and I'm sure all of the new gear will be put to good use for play purposes and for learning the importance of health and safety in construction. Hopefully we might be able to inspire a few of them to take up careers in construction in the future as well."





# New homes for Bridgend

Families will soon be moving into our new development in Bridgend – almost four months ahead of schedule.

The development of 24 affordable homes at Parc Farm, Coity, was due to be finished in January 2019.

However, Llanelli-based contractor Morganstone is now expecting to complete the homes

by the end of September.

As well as forging ahead on site, the contractors have also been busy working in the local community. Site manager Dean Longden recently handed out hanging baskets, donated by the nearby Parc Prison, to residents living at nearby Parc Derwen, Coity.

When complete the scheme will provide 24 affordable one and

two bedroom properties and two specially adapted four bedroom homes close to Parc Derwen, which is a popular new private housing development of more than 600 private homes on the outskirts of Bridgend.

Parc Farm is named after the old and unsafe farm, which once stood on the site. Before work could start at the end of last year,

## IN THE PIPELINE

### West Wales

**Ceredigion:** We're aiming to bring 14 new homes to the site of the former Tollgate pub, Aberystwyth.

The site is in the Penparcau area of the town, where WWH already has around 90 homes, the majority are general needs.

Public consultation for the proposed development of 10 houses and four apartments was due to start at the end of August and run through September.

Following the consultation, our development team will take into

account any comments made during the consultation before drawing up the plans, which will then be submitted to Ceredigion Council's Planning Department.

**Extra Care:** We have submitted plans for a 56-bed extra care scheme at Plas Morolwg in Aberystwyth to Ceredigion Council.

Consultants Asbri Planning, who are working for WWH, made the application in July, following an extensive public consultation with councillors and residents in the town.

The application is expected to be considered by the planning Committee this autumn.

### South Wales

**Cardiff:** WWH has bought the site of the former YMCA at Wedal Road in the Roath area of Cardiff. Subject to planning permission, we hope to build apartments on the site next year.

### North Wales

**Flintshire:** Plans are set to be submitted for 10 new homes on land at Earl Street in Flint. The proposed development would be

WWH employed environmental specialists and worked closely with Natural Resources Wales to protect and relocate local wildlife nesting in the old farm buildings.

WWH Construction Manager Grant Prosser said, "This is going to be a popular development for families. Parc Derwen is a sought-after area, but with the average family home costing more than £150,000 to buy and more than £600 to rent privately, it is out of reach of many families on lower incomes.

"These homes will be modern, attractive and affordable to run for families who may struggle to make ends meet."

Once ready, the homes will be allocated to people in need via Bridgend Council's Common Housing Register.



Dean Longden, Morganstone site manager, and one of the workers on the site hand out hanging baskets to residents at Parc Derwen.

made up of six one bedroom and four two bedroom apartments for people with a disability.

**Wrexham:** A public consultation is due to be held this autumn for a scheme of 28 homes at Woodlands Farm in Gwersyllt near Wrexham, consisting of a mix of apartments, houses and bungalows.

**Denbighshire:** WWH is about to submit a planning application for a new development on Rhyl's seafront. We are hoping to build 41 new homes for residents aged 55+.

## We've started building more homes this year compared to the same time last year

We have been busy over the last quarter with over 160 much-needed homes across Wales either starting on site or being completed ready for new residents to move in.

In Cardiff, we completed 14 new homes at Hendre Road and 43 in the Vale of Glamorgan at Aberthin, Cowbridge (2) and Golwg Y Môr, Rhoose (41). Residents also moved into two new homes in Dan Y Bryn, Fishguard, Pembrokeshire and four at Dol Y Dintir, Cardigan, Ceredigion. In Flintshire we completed 23 new homes at Coed Onn, and started work on 55 new extra care apartments in Holywell. Work also began on 20 new homes at Victoria Road Rhyl, Denbighshire.

New residents are highly satisfied with their new homes, scoring us over nine out of ten, giving us valuable feedback on the things that matter to them. We use this feedback to make sure we keep our residents' needs at the centre of our considerations when building new homes.

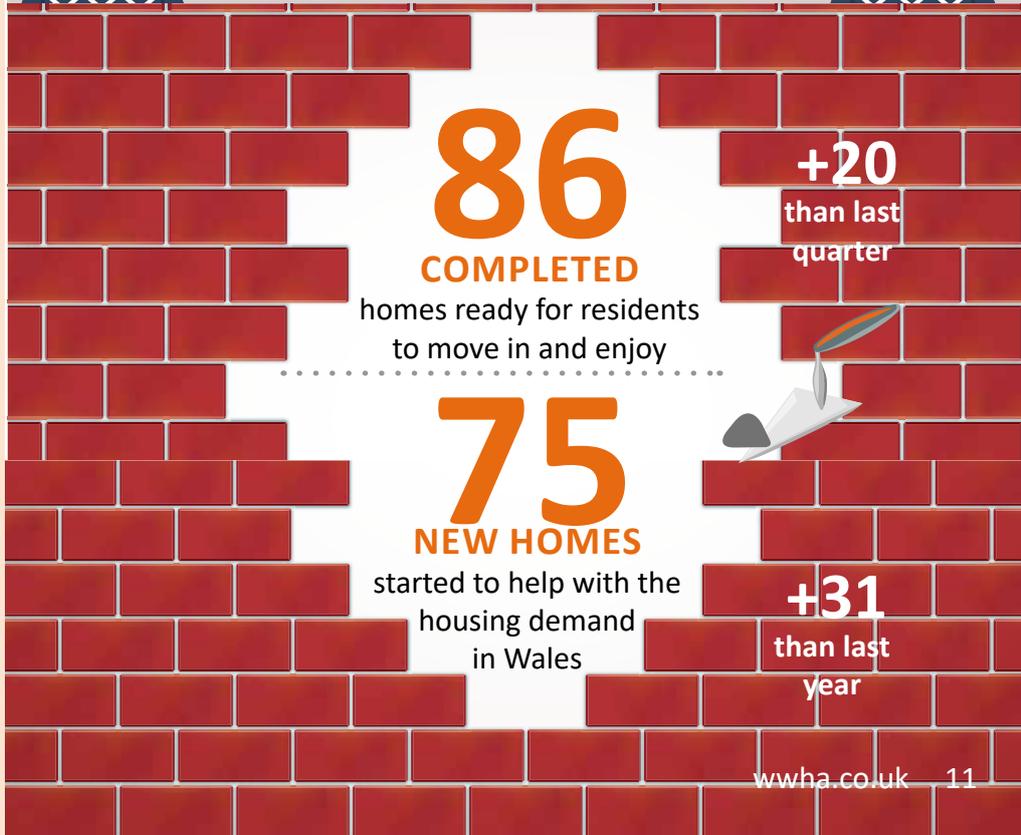
Our experience has shown us that the best way to procure, build and hand over well-designed, good quality homes is to develop close long-term working relationships with developers and builders. To create these relationships we have completed a major procurement exercise to establish strong, partnering contracts covering the whole of Wales for the next 10 years. We've created eight partnership contracts for projects large and small across Wales, which will provide a strong foundation to our plans to build more homes to meet the growing need.



I love the location and there were little repairs needed!



I really wish there was better bin storage



# A new lease of life



At Wales & West Housing, the majority of our 12,000 homes are available to residents at an affordable rent.

There are also over 1,000 residents who have bought their own properties and are classed as leaseholders. These consist of retirement properties, and also general needs properties that have previously been sold under the Right to Buy or the Right to Acquire legislation.

Retired marine engineer Malcolm Rayner and his wife,

“ We love the peace and quiet at our development, and our neighbours are so friendly ”

Mary, bought their bungalow in Clarendon, Cyncoed, Cardiff, (main picture) four years ago.

They had previously lived in a newly-built private apartment block in the Heath area of Cardiff, where Malcolm was actively involved in forming an Owners Association to take over the

management of the development.

“We decided we wanted to move to a retirement scheme, but we were impressed by the quality of the

development at Clarendon and decided to buy our bungalow instead.”

“We love the peace and quiet at our development, and our neighbours are so friendly.”

# A guide to leasehold

## Retirement Leasehold properties

These are privately-owned retirement properties for older people, who traditionally have been looking to downsize from their family home. The lease length can vary from 999 years to 60 or 99 years. Wales & West Housing manage 19 leasehold retirement schemes across Wales.

## What's the difference between renting and leasing a property?

In the majority of areas of Wales, our properties are allocated according to the local authority's common housing register. However leasehold properties are bought and sold on the open housing market through local estate agents. Like our rented properties, the leasehold schemes can be retirement or general needs.

## What services do we provide?

This can vary depending on the services type and needs of the individual scheme. Generally it covers maintenance of the building and grounds, gardening, cleaning of communal areas and, in the case of retirement schemes, the emergency alarm and in some cases a scheme manager service.

## Who pays for major repairs?

In retirement schemes the cost of major works is funded from a sinking fund, which is a reserve account held for the scheme to cover such costs. The fund is collected either via the monthly service charge or in the majority of cases, a one off contribution is made when the property is sold. Where there is a leasehold property within general needs rented accommodation, they will be invoiced individually for their share of the works.

There is a legal process called Section 20, which all landlords have to follow by law, under the Landlord & Tenancy Act 1985. It was introduced in 2003 to prevent landlords from imposing expensive bills on their leaseholders with no notice or consultation. In practice, it means that if any work carried out amounts to a contribution of more than £250 for any one leaseholder, then the residents in that scheme have to be consulted first.

As part of this process, we will obtain quotations for the work and the residents have the option to comment on the process.

***For further information contact 0800 0522526 and ask for the Leasehold team.***



Cwrt Glas, Llanishen



Restway Gardens,  
Bridgend

# Do you know someone who deserves a Making a Difference

Nominations have opened for Wales & West Housing's Making A Difference Awards 2019.

As ever, the awards celebrate the community spirit, kindness, courage and enterprise of you, our residents and those people who selflessly give their time to support and help you.

For 2019, we've brought back many of the popular categories such as Good Neighbour, Community Heroes, Going Green and Wellbeing Champion. We've also introduced two new categories Fundraising Champion and Outstanding Achievement to reflect the outstanding people in our communities.

This year's sparkling ceremony takes place on Friday 8 February and due to popular demand, we'll be returning to the Vale Resort, Hensol, near Cardiff.

Chief Executive Anne Hinchey said, "Every year we hear so many amazing stories about the amazing courage and the acts of kindness that our residents encounter every day. It's important to shine a spotlight on those people and celebrate their amazing achievements.

"The MAD Awards are your way of saying thank you. So we would encourage you to speak to a WWH staff member or call us and tell us who you'd like to put forward for this recognition."



## The Categories

### Good Neighbour

This award celebrates the kindness of those special people whose small day-to-day actions make a big difference to the lives of their neighbours.

From lending a helping hand or a listening ear, these selfless individuals go out of their way to help others who live near.

### Fresh Start

This award recognises those who have made it through tough times and turned things around for the better.

From overcoming illness, supporting their family through difficult times or confronting personal issues and finding happiness in a safe and secure home of their own, these extraordinary individuals set an example to us all.

### Bridging the Gap

This award celebrates young and older people working together to improve the relationships between the generations and make their community a better place.

Whether it is younger people helping their elderly neighbours with new ways of working such as helping with technology or older people using their experience to mentor younger people, these individuals learn from each other and help to build respect and understanding between the different generations.

### Wellbeing Champion

This award recognises the individuals, volunteers or groups who set an example or encourage others to improve their physical or mental health and wellbeing.

# Award?

Whether setting up regular activities or promoting healthier eating and lifestyles, these people are making life better for residents and their communities.

## Going Green

This award recognises green-fingered residents who have made a real difference to their environment.

From growing beautiful floral displays to recycling and reusing goods in the garden, or even producing fruit and veg for others to enjoy, these residents lead the way when it comes to going green.

## Community Heroes

This award celebrates individuals or groups who have started something special in their WWH community to benefit those who live there.

From running community groups, tackling local issues affecting their neighbourhoods or leading the way in environmental and sustainable projects, these people make

a big difference to the places where they live.

## Fundraising Champion

This award recognises those tireless and inspirational people who work hard to raise money for many charities. This award is not necessarily about the amount raised but the person, or young person, who gives their time and puts their heart and soul into raising money for good causes.

## Outstanding Achievement

The award recognises those individuals who have shown great determination and personal development.

Whether learning new skills or qualifications to get back into work, running their own successful business enterprises, creating opportunities to make a difference to their own lives or delivering community projects that make a difference to their community, they are an inspiration to us all.

## MAD Winners keep on winning

Congratulations to our MAD Awards 2018 winners and finalists Abby Kinloch, Michelle Sheppard and Jermaine Drennan, who have now been recognised at the national TPAS Awards in Cardiff.



Abby, 19, won the Bridging the Gap Award at last year's MAD Awards, and has gone on to win the TPAS Young Tenant of the Year Award for the way she helps older residents at our Llys Glan Yr Afon Extra Care scheme in Newtown, Powys.



Former carer Michelle, winner of the MAD Community Hero Award, went on to win the Community in Action Award (alongside her colleague Claire) for providing regular, affordable hot meals for residents at our Danymynydd retirement scheme in Blaengarw, Bridgend.



Jermaine of Aberystwyth, a MAD Bridging the Gap finalist, was also a finalist in the TPAS Tenant of the Year category.

## Enter Now

It's easy to nominate – simply speak to your Housing Officer or a member of WWH staff who can help you put forward your nomination.

Alternatively, contact our PR & Comms team on 0800 052 2526, or email [communications.team@wwha.co.uk](mailto:communications.team@wwha.co.uk), and they'll be happy to take down the details and put your nomination forward.

The closing date is  
**16 November 2018**



# Stay happy, be active

How being an active part of your community can help you remain independent and happy

“A baby girl born today will have a 50 per cent chance of reaching 100.” So says the Centre for Better Ageing, an organisation that helps promote and understand ageing. With more people living longer, it brings the opportunity to enjoy more fulfilling lives as we get older. Good health, financial security, social connections and purpose are among the main things that contribute to ageing well, the organisation says.

Funded by the Big Lottery, the Centre for Better Ageing, promotes and campaigns for a society where everyone can “age well.”

## ♥ Contributing to communities

Voluntary activities, formal civic roles and small acts of neighbourliness can all contribute significantly to personal wellbeing and create stronger social connections. Older people can contribute their skills, knowledge and experience to their communities.

## ♥ Keeping physically active

This has many benefits – it

improves physical and mental health and enables people to stay connected to their family, friends and communities.

Focussing on maintaining and improving muscle strength can help people in later life live independently and reduce the risk of falls.

## ♥ Living in a suitable home and neighbourhood

Homes and neighbourhoods designed to be age-friendly and a supportive community can improve health and wellbeing, help people to develop and maintain social connections and feel in control.

Wales & West Housing is developing more purpose-build, modern homes with older people in mind, which are easy to run. We are also incorporating accessibility into the design of our general homes with wider doors and ground floor toilets.

■ For more information about Better Ageing visit: [www.ageing-better.org.uk/living-longer](http://www.ageing-better.org.uk/living-longer)

## How volunteering

Resident Christine Ellis knows how important it is to play an active part in her local community in Bridgend.

She is the administrator of the three churches she attends and edits the churches’ monthly magazine.

As the self-confessed “one of the original silver surfers”, she has taught herself computer skills to create the monthly magazine. She is also on hand, as needed, to volunteer at her Church’s Community Shop.

Recently she “retired” after 25 years as a volunteer with the Stroke Association, where she helped run the Stroke Association’s Bridgend groups three times a week and input the statistics of the groups on a computer on a fourth day.

Christine started volunteering for the Stroke Association while she was caring for her husband, who had suffered a stroke. When he passed away, she continued

## Online help to find activities in your area

If you're looking to get out more or join in with activities in your local community, there's a new online service to help you.

Recently launched, Dewis Cymru is the place for wellbeing information in Wales. It's an online resource with a single, clear and reliable information source for residents and care service professionals, that provides information and advice to help support people achieve their wellbeing goals.

You can go online, type in your postcode and find out what organisations operate in your area. Whether you're looking for advice on health and eating well, managing your finances, or joining in groups, Dewis Cymru can offer solutions.

If you're retired, recently bereaved or your friends and family have moved away, you can find places where you can join in and broaden your social circles. If mobility is an issue, but you are online, Dewis can point you in the direction of online forums organised by national charities where you can chat and make friends with people in similar circumstances around the world any time of the day or night.

Or maybe you're looking for activities or groups to get your children active and healthy, whether it's organised groups or places where they can learn new skills.

For more information visit [www.dewis.wales](http://www.dewis.wales)

## is helping our residents

her voluntary work.

As she said: "I was 52 when my husband died and I had seen how much of a difference the stroke group made to him and the other families and carers, so I carried on as a volunteer for another 21 years."

"Volunteering is important to me as I don't want to be one of those people who stay indoors all day doing nothing.

"Playing a part in my community keeps my mind and body active and gives me a purpose. If it weren't for my voluntary work, I wouldn't see a soul from one day to the next. By getting out and working in the community I have lots of friends

and I feel that I have something to contribute to help others."

"I would recommend that if a person is feeling lonely or at a loose end, they should give

*"Playing a part in my community keeps my mind and body active and gives me a purpose."*

volunteering a go. A good way to start is to find an organisation that you have an interest in, and find out how you can help."

.....  
Moving to Wrexham with no family or friends around her, Sian Hope faced a lonely time. But she pushed herself to get out in the community, starting with a local fun day, where she met other neighbours and friends.

In the years that followed Sian worked hard to be an active member of the community in Hightown, volunteering at the Resource Centre and with Communities First groups. Now

she has become a community councillor in Rhosnesni, where she now lives.

"I had two choices – sit at home alone or go out and meet people. It took courage to make those first steps, but I'm so glad I did it. I would recommend other people to find organisations in their area where they can volunteer as a way of meeting people.

"From being a very lonely person, I now have a full and rich life from becoming involved in events and meeting people in my community."

.....  
■ For information about voluntary organisations near you contact Wales Council for Voluntary Action. Phone 0300 111 0124, email [volunteering@wcva.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@wcva.org.uk) or visit [www.wcva.org.uk](http://www.wcva.org.uk)

■ You can also try Volunteering Wales - [www.volunteering-wales.net](http://www.volunteering-wales.net)



# “Our quality of life has improved”

How moving into their specially-adapted bungalow in Flintshire has given young Heidi her independence

A 10-year-old girl has been given a new lease of life to play, socialise and live independently, thanks to a specially-adapted bungalow provided by Wales & West Housing.

Heidi Rogerson used to struggle to move freely around her previous home due to severe pain caused by a medical condition called Ehlers-Danlos syndrome which affects her joints.

She was unable to complete any day-to-day tasks without the help of her parents, but since moving into the bungalow at WWH's new development at Romans Way in Flint her life has been transformed.

The bungalow features wide hallways and door entrances

to accommodate her powered wheelchair, a shower room which Heidi can use independently and low level kitchen fittings so she can help her mum in the kitchen and learn to cook for herself when she is old enough.

Outdoors, Heidi now has a large, safe garden where she can play with her friends, family and beloved pet German Shepherd dogs Ice and Storm. There is also space for a hydrotherapy pool which has been a vital source of pain relief for her since she was three years old.

Heidi is happier in her new home than she's ever been, say proud parents Allison and Martin.

Martin said: “Heidi absolutely loves it here, she does so much

more now that she has that extra bit of independence and her confidence has improved significantly.

“Heidi has good and bad days with her condition and at times she couldn't get up and down the stairs in our old two bed home. I used to do a lot of lifting but now I don't need to because of the adaptations. Our quality of life has improved considerably. There's less stress for Heidi so there's less stress for us as a result.”

The new home, part of a development of 23 homes, also features a carport and a bedroom



# I want a home

Whenever we speak to our new residents, the most common thing they tell us is that they would have liked a bit more choice in their preferred area.

We recognise that we are not able to provide all types of housing in all areas, but we aim to ensure that we are having the right conversation early, to make sure that we help you, as an applicant, to make the right decision about your future home.



built to accommodate Heidi's needs.

Allison said: "Heidi has spent a lot of time in and out of hospital since she was a young girl and in our old home we had to have a hospital bed in the living room as there was nowhere else for it. We don't need that now.

"Even simple things have made a big difference, like having enough room for a table and chairs in our kitchen so we can sit down as a family at meal times, which has helped with Heidi's social skills. The estate is a nice area, it's quiet here and we're closer to Heidi's school in Flint."

Anne Hinchey, Chief Executive of Wales & West Housing, said: "It's so pleasing to see the impact which one of our homes has had on Heidi's life already.

"Everyone should have the right to live in a home which is suitable for their needs and thankfully we have been able to make such a big difference to Heidi and her parents."

## 330 residents had keys to their new home

The average time it takes us to let our empty homes has reduced this quarter by

**8**  
days



I still like the quality of Wales & West Housing homes

I would like more choice in my preferred area



# Working holiday for university students



While most university students were enjoying the holidays, Bradley Latty-Williams and Anastasia Weeks were studying how we work at Wales & West Housing.

Bradley and Anastasia are studying Accounting and Finance at the Institute of Business & Law at Aberystwyth University and as part of their degree course they applied to WWH for a work placement.

They spent three weeks in August at our head office in Cardiff, working mainly alongside our

finance department.

As part of the placement, they were given a tour of two of our Cardiff schemes, where they met residents. They also had a taste of other areas of the business spending time with our Customer Service Centre, our repairs/data teams, and the In Touch editorial team.

Anastasia said: "It's been interesting to see how different areas of the organisation work. I'm hoping to work as an accountant

*"It's been interesting to see how different areas of the organisation work. ... it's given me valuable experience of being in a real workplace."*

after I finish my degree, so it has given me valuable experience of being in a real workplace."

Bradley added: "I am interested in working as an accountant or internal auditor after I graduate, so it's been a great opportunity to learn more about those areas."

Kate Thomas, WWH People Development Facilitator, organised the three-week placement for the students. She explained: "We wanted to make sure the placements we offered were valuable and relevant to the students' degrees. The placement is equivalent to one-sixth of the final year of their degree, so it was important for them to experience all areas of the business, to understand where the work of our finance teams fit in.

"We hope this will be the continuation of a valuable partnership between WWH and Aberystwyth University. Two more students will be joining our supported housing team for placements in September and if this is successful we hope to offer placements to students from other relevant areas in the future."

## Guiding apprentices on their career paths

Teenager Max Clements has joined WWH as our first ICT apprentice. Max was offered the role following a series of open evenings and interviews earlier this summer.

As part of the 15-month apprenticeship Max will work Monday to Fridays and attend college once a week to study for a qualification in Information Technology.

"Technology has always interested me so when I saw the advert for the open evening, I came along and found out more about the company and met

the people I would be working with. It felt like a good company to work for, so I was really pleased when I was offered the apprenticeship. It's my first full-time job and working here is a real boost to my confidence. I hope it will lead to a career in IT."

Head of ICT Richard Troote said: "This opportunity will give Max genuine work experience and the chance to experience first-hand what an ICT department does. It will allow Max to choose a career path in IT that best suits and interests him."

Max isn't the only new face at

Wales & West Housing, Cardiff University graduate Mia Frost has also joined our team on a 12-month graduate placement working as a Support Administrator with our HR team.



# Helping families out of poverty

At WWH a safe and secure place to call home is important, which is why we are supporting a charity which helps thousands of families and homeless people struggling on the poverty line with food, clothes and furniture.

Boomerang Cardiff is a relatively new but rapidly growing charity that helps local people who are down on their luck. Since its beginnings in 2012, the charity has far exceeded its modest mission to help 100 families in need. It now collects donations of unwanted furniture and clothes from individuals, house clearances, and items that would normally be thrown out, and recycles them.

From its warehouse/community centre in Cardiff, Boomerang's team of 50 volunteers provide starter packs of mugs, kettles, toasters, plates and glasses



(L-R) Boomerang Cardiff volunteers Rhodri Jones and Ria Ecclestone with Herman Valentin (Community Development Officer at Wales & West Housing), Boomerang Cardiff founder Paul Gwilym, Anne Hinchey (Chief Executive of Wales & West Housing) and volunteer Kyron Davies.

for homeless people moving into their first accommodation and furniture and white goods for working families in need.

Charity founder Paul Gwilym, who has experienced homelessness, said: "The sponsorship from Wales & West Housing is amazing. It means we can put our efforts into what's important - helping families in need. This donation will cover the cost of our rent, heating and lighting for a year, giving our charity time to apply for other grants and raise more funds.

"Each and every person that works for

Boomerang Cardiff has either experienced homelessness or the strains of poverty themselves or knows of a person who has and are able to understand what people need and how quickly they need it."

CEO Anne Hinchey said: "As an organisation Wales & West Housing aims to make a difference to people's lives, homes and communities. By supporting charities like Boomerang we can help more families in need and give homeless people the things they need to enable them to settle in a safe and secure home of their own."

## Some other charities helping to recycle furniture in Wales are:

- Rhondda & Cynon Valley: Too Good To Waste [www.toogoodtowaste.co.uk](http://www.toogoodtowaste.co.uk)
- Bridgend: Emmaus South Wales [www.emmaus-southwales.org.uk](http://www.emmaus-southwales.org.uk)
- Flintshire: Refurbs Flintshire [www.refurbs.org.uk/home](http://www.refurbs.org.uk/home)
- Colwyn Bay: CREST Furniture Reclaim [www.crestcooperative.co.uk](http://www.crestcooperative.co.uk)
- Pembrokeshire: Pembrokeshire Frame [www.pembrokeshire-frame.org.uk](http://www.pembrokeshire-frame.org.uk)
- Ceredigion Craft Recycling [www.craftrecycling.org.uk](http://www.craftrecycling.org.uk)
- Swansea: Caer Las furniture scheme [www.caerlas.org.uk](http://www.caerlas.org.uk)
- To find other organisations near you visit [www.reuse-network.org.uk](http://www.reuse-network.org.uk)

## Supporting local communities

Some of the events we have sponsored in our communities recently include:

- Drefach Felindre Carnival in Carmarthenshire
- Lampeter Carnival and Food Festivals
- We helped Aberaeron Town Improvement Committee to host the All Wales National Tug of War Championships in Ceredigion
- In Cardiff young people visiting the fun day at Coed Glas Primary School in Llanishen, enjoyed a BBQ, bouncy castle and inflatable slide thanks to our sponsorship
- In North Wales, we were among the organisations who supported the National Armed Forces Day in Llandudno
- At a more local level in north east Wales money which we provided helped to fund this year's Hawarden Carnival and two youth sports events in the village for children aged 8-16
- We also sponsored an 80<sup>th</sup> year celebration at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Ewloe this autumn
- We've made a donation to provide white goods for a new kitchen which will equip pupils at Ysgol Maeshyfyrd specialist school in Flint with independent living skills.

# DON'T STAY IN THE

# DARK

# ABOUT UNIVERSAL CREDIT



More than 40,000 people in Wales are now claiming Universal Credit as it continues to be rolled out across Wales.

With more areas going live every month, our housing staff have been busy preparing for the changes and frontline staff have been trained to help residents use the Universal Credit system

and make claims.

Areas already affected include Flintshire and Wrexham, which were the first areas in Wales to introduce the benefit last year, and also Swansea, Cardiff, Conwy, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil.

Other areas due to roll out Universal Credit this year are:

- **September**  
Caerphilly  
Pembrokeshire
- **October**  
Powys  
Vale of Glamorgan
- **November**  
Rhondda Cynon Taf
- **December:**  
Ceredigion  
Carmarthenshire

## What is Universal Credit (UC)?

Universal Credit is a new benefit that combines multiple benefits into one monthly payment.

Anyone under 65 who currently claims Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit and/or Tax Credits will eventually be moved onto this new system.

## When will it affect me?

Currently it is being rolled out in all areas of Wales and soon anyone making a new claim for the benefits listed above will instead make a claim for UC.

People already claiming benefit, who are not currently affected, are unlikely to be moved onto this system before 2019. However there are several elements of UC that people will have to prepare for and it's never too early to start.

## Can I do anything to prepare?

### ■ Getting online

UC claims are made and managed online. If you don't currently use the internet start to think of ways that you could access it, for example many libraries or Council buildings have beginner courses to show you the basics. As well as preparing for UC this also opens up numerous options to save money, from using comparison sites to monitoring energy usage and bills.

### ■ Budgeting monthly

UC will be paid monthly which may differ from the way you currently receive your income. It is therefore important to make sure your budget is in good health so that you find this transition easier than if you are struggling to balance your income and expenditure now. Even though UC may not be imminent for you, now is the time to act as getting a handle on your finances isn't easy. The Money Advice Service can also help. Visit [www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk) or call them on 0300 500 5000.

### ■ Getting a bank account

You may currently use a Post Office account that only allows you to withdraw your money or you may find you are incurring bank charges from the account you currently use. If this is the case, now is the time to open a new bank account and enable yourself to manage your money as conveniently and effectively as possible. This will allow you to pay your bills like rent and Council Tax by Direct Debit, meaning you don't have to remember to pay or visit a shop or Post Office.

## What happens if I do claim it?

Once you have completed your online claim you will be offered an advance payment to help you manage the five week period before your UC starts. This advance will be made up of your standard allowance (e.g. what would have been your Jobseekers Allowance, Income support or Employment and Support Allowance) and also an

amount towards your rent. It is important that if you take the full advance that you contact us regarding making a rent payment. This allowance will then be recovered through your ongoing UC payments over the next 12 months so ensure that you can live on this reduced amount over that period.

You will also be asked to attend an appointment in the Job Centre to provide ID documents and to discuss your claimant commitment. Your claimant commitment will involve a discussion with a work coach and is your record of the responsibilities that you have accepted in return for receiving Universal Credit, and the consequences of not meeting them (ultimately a sanction).

## When will I get my first payment?

You will receive your first payment approximately five weeks after you have made your claim online.

## Where can I get help?

If you are struggling with any aspect of your UC claim give your Housing Officer a call. They will be able to advise you on how to resolve the issue or refer you to one of our Tenancy Support Officers if you need assistance.



# Get ready for **Black Friday**

Be a savvy Christmas shopper and know how to spot a bargain

Black Friday has become one of those dates when shops go all out to lure shoppers to spend their cash.

Originating from the United States, where the name comes from the day following Thanksgiving Day (the fourth Thursday of November), it has come to mark the start of the Christmas shopping season.

In recent years, there have been enormous queues, and even the occasional fight, as shoppers waited in line to grab the best bargains.

This year's Black Friday will be Friday November 29. At the time In Touch went to press there were no major saving announcements,

but in the past major high street stores such as Debenhams have offered 30% off across the board, while Currys and Argos have previously advertised special Black Friday savings on items such as TVs and games. Online retailer Amazon usually releases new deals and big savings every hour during the week of Black Friday.

If you're planning to make a dent in your Christmas shopping, remember the wise words of TV's Money Saving Expert Martin Lewis:

**"Ask yourself do I need it? Can I afford it? Have I checked whether it is available cheaper elsewhere?"**

**If the answer to any of those is no.... DON'T BUY IT."**

If you were planning to buy an item and it is reduced from £100 to £50 then you've saved £50. However, if you're only buying it because you think it's a bargain, it's not a saving it's an extra cost of £50. So maybe you should control your spending urges.

■ If you are planning to splurge on a Black Friday sale item it's worth checking prices on a comparison site like 123PriceCheck, PriceRunner and Dealpond. Sometimes you'll find that the deal you've seen isn't that cheap after all.

## This year there are more residents paying by Direct Debit than this time last year



The number of residents setting up an easy, stress-free Direct Debit to pay their rent has gone up by almost 20 per cent from this time last year.

Every month an average of 5,000 residents are choosing to pay this way at a date that is convenient to them.

More residents have been contacting us for help and advice on Universal Credit, whether this be completing a new claim, or keeping information updated. We have been building relationships with local Job Centres and local authorities, and undertaking training to make sure that we are able to provide the right advice at the right time. We are also providing facilities in some areas to give people access to online services to help manage their Universal Credit claims.



## Less on loans... more on homes

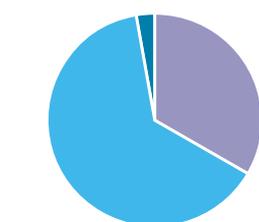
We've increased the proportion of your rent that we invest on new kitchens and bathrooms for our residents and are spending a lower proportion on the interest we pay on our loans.

For every £1 we receive in rent, we invest 21p in new kitchens, bathroom and equipment – that's an increase of 2p on the previous three months.

While the amount of interest we pay on our loans has dropped to 3p in every £1, 2p less than last year. We've also cut the proportion of your rent that we spend on overheads to just 7p in every £1.



### How much it costs per home to run our business



Management  
Maintenance  
Other

## Satisfaction and complaints

### SATISFACTION

9.5

Our lettings service continued to register the highest levels of satisfaction among residents, who rated the service out of 10

with zero complaints. You were also more satisfied with our Anti-Social Behaviour service with ratings rising to 6.9 compared to 5.7 at the start of the year with only one complaint received out of 78 cases.

### RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

18.9

Working days on average to resolve complaints

### COMPLAINTS

7

We received a total of 7 complaints in the last three months – 3 less than the previous quarter. The area attracting the highest

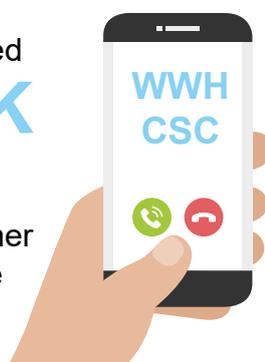
amount of complaints was Fix My Home with 5 complaints registered in the last three months out of a total of 7796 repairs carried out.

## Our quietest call times are usually after lunch

10am is our busiest call time



We received **19K** calls to our customer service centre



99% of repair calls received were answered



# Crime

## behind closed doors

To mark White Ribbon Day 2018 on November 25th, the international awareness day of family violence, we look at the issue of domestic violence.

Every week in the UK two women will die at the hands of their partner or ex-partner and every hour police in England and Wales receive an average of 100 calls relating to domestic abuse.

It is one of the biggest issues currently facing society. It's estimated that millions of people experience domestic abuse every year. One in four women and one in six men will experience some form of domestic abuse or violence during an average lifetime.

While these figures may be shocking, the true scale could be even worse as a large proportion of domestic abuse is unreported.

As a social housing provider, WWH believes that your home should provide safety and security, but for victims of domestic abuse it is anything but safe. That is why we have pledged to Make a Stand\* and support our residents, and staff, who are experiencing domestic abuse. Our housing staff are also trained to follow the Welsh Government's Ask & Act approach to identifying violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and provide support for those experiencing it.

### Recognising domestic abuse

Although every situation is unique, there are some common factors according to Welsh Women's Aid.

■ **Destructive criticism and verbal abuse:** shouting, mocking,

accusing, name calling, verbally threatening.

■ **Pressure tactics:** sulking, threatening to withhold money; disconnecting the phone and internet; taking away your mobile or car; taking the children away.

■ **Disrespect:** persistently putting you down in front of other people; not listening or responding when you talk; refusing to help with childcare or housework.

■ **Breaking trust:** lying to you; withholding information from you; being jealous; breaking promises and shared agreements.

■ **Isolation:** monitoring or blocking your phone calls, e-mails and social media accounts; telling you where you can and cannot go and with whom.

■ **Harassment:** following you;

checking up on you; not allowing you any privacy, repeatedly checking to see who has phoned you.

■ **Threats:** making angry gestures; using physical size to intimidate; shouting you down; destroying your possessions; breaking things; punching walls; threatening to kill or harm you and the children; threatening to kill or harm family pets; threats of suicide.

■ **Sexual violence:** using force, threats or intimidation to make you perform sexual acts; constant pressure and harassment into having sex; any degrading treatment.

■ **Physical violence:** punching; slapping; hitting; biting; pinching; kicking; pulling hair out; pushing; strangling, pinning you down, restraining you.

■ **Denial:** saying the abuse doesn't happen or you caused it.

# Noise is still the biggest issue in our communities

We have all been enjoying the long summer, but unfortunately the good weather has brought an increase in the number of complaints that we have received regarding noise, particularly music from open windows and people being out in their gardens later in the evening.

Your local authority will generally be the first point of contact for any noise problems. When we become involved we aim to remind residents to consider the volume and time of any outdoor activities to avoid any potential disruption to neighbours.



We opened **78** Anti-Social Behaviour cases in the last quarter

## What can you do?

If you, or someone you know, is in immediate danger from domestic violence call 999 to report the issue to the police. You can also call 101 to report a previous incident.

If the person subjected to the abuse or violence is too afraid to stay in their home and seeking refuge, these agencies can help:

- Welsh Women's Aid:  
[www.welshwomensaid.org.uk](http://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk)  
0808 80 10 800
- Live Fear Free All Wales Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Helpline 0808 8010800  
<https://livefearfree.gov.wales>
- The Dyn Helpline for men  
[www.dynwales.org](http://www.dynwales.org)  
0808 801 0321
- Bawso, specialist services to victims and BME people affected by domestic abuse and all forms of violence 0800 7318147

*\* The Make A Stand pledge is a partnership between the Chartered Institute of Housing, Women's Aid and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance.*

I liked being able to speak to the right person..

..but would like the problem resolved more quickly



**1** Noise is the biggest problem for our residents

**2** Harassment and aggressive behaviour are second

**3** Drug issues are the third biggest problem

Residents at Cwrt Anghorfa retirement scheme in Pyle, near Bridgend, opened their garden to friends, families and residents from other WWH schemes to show off their hard work.

The members of the gardening club at Cwrt Anghorfa work hard all year round to make sure the communal gardens are blooming lovely. So on Friday July 20, they held an open day to share their knowledge and work with others. Residents came from Llys Faen and £150 was raised for the garden.

### Bridgend



Young residents from Glannant, Llechryd, Cardigan, spent their summer holidays helping to look after their communal gardens. Ruby and Hannah, pictured, regularly weed, plant and pick up litter on their estate. They also made willow bird feeders to hang around the play area to attract birds into the gardens.

### Cardigan



Residents at Llys Owen retirement scheme in Cardigan have been enjoying relaxing in the sunshine thanks to the delivery of new wooden benches, which were funded through our WWH community grant scheme.

## Rhondda residents get ahead with fundraising

Rhondda scheme manager Chris Ball braved the shave to help residents at the Tŷ Ddewi retirement scheme in Ton Pentre to raise more than £500 for Breast Cancer Care.

The residents' fundraising group, led by Sally Jones and cleaner Gill Amos, organised an afternoon tea at the scheme with cake and bric-a-brac stall and raffles.

During the afternoon Chris lost his hair but raised £150 towards the total, including a £50 donation from WWH staff.

Chris said: "It was a fab afternoon and the residents were delighted with the amount they raised. The haircut is growing on me. I think I'll keep it trimmed."



Chris Ball with hairdresser Lisa Hardy

### Rhondda

More than 150 people joined in a free Community Fun Day at Drefach Felindre, near Newcastle Emlyn, Carmarthenshire in June. Over 20 stall holders, including WWH, took part, with activities for visitors including a toy exchange

### Newcastle Emlyn



Sophie & Ffion Jones with Sali Mali

and craft and make-it sessions, making everything from slime to fruit kebabs. The real star of the day, however, was Sali Mali.

## Rock hunting in Merthyr Tydfil

Young people at our Twyncarmel scheme in Merthyr Tydfil took part in a rather unusual treasure hunt recently. They were invited to find rocks that had been hidden around the area as part of a project to promote responsible cat ownership in the area.

It was part of a community project between WWH, the Cats Protection and youth workers from the Gellideg Foundation.

During a series of workshops, young people painted around 50 rocks with designs including feline faces and paw prints. Then the colourful stones were hidden around the area for others to find. The first five to find 25 rocks and post their pictures on the Cyfarthfa Cat Neutering Support Facebook page won a WWH goodie bag.

Ali Chaplin, WWH Community Development Officer, said: "It was a great success and parents and children had fun."

Kelly Haley's children were the first to receive bags. She said: "We found 27 rocks in total, it's a great idea for children to have fun with."



Merthyr Tydfil

## Residents brighten up their extra care scheme with a mural



Denbighshire

Artistic residents have created a giant mural depicting the town's proud seaside heritage to brighten up a terrace at Nant Y Môr in Prestatyn, Denbighshire.

Claire Halliday, who runs a weekly art class at the extra care scheme, led the project to paint the 70 metre mural which has transformed an outdoor area overlooking the sea.

The design was completed in four weeks thanks to regulars from the painting class and WWH employees. The mural features residents' personal contributions in the form of their memories of life at the seaside – including tributes to lost loved ones.

Staff from Wales & West

Housing and Castell Ventures put on an afternoon tea to mark the completion of the project.

Claire said: "It was a brilliant project to be involved with and we had superb weather all the way through which was a huge bonus.

"Every day while we were out here working on the painting someone came out and asked if they could get involved. Lots of residents helped out as they all wanted to paint a memorial to a loved one or complete part of the wall where they would have a permanent reminder to show people 'this is the bit I did.'"

## World's oldest skydiver drops in to Crickhowell



Powys

Scheme Manager Rob Llewellyn with Dilys Price

The world's oldest female skydiver visited residents at our Maes Y Ffynnon scheme in Crickhowell recently.

The Guinness World Record holder held a talk on following your dreams – something she is well-known for. At 86 Dilys holds the world record for being the oldest skydiver as well as numerous awards, including a Pride of Britain Award for her work as the founder of the Touch Trust disabled charity in Cardiff.

She talked to residents about her inspirational life and discussed with them how they could use their own hopes and dreams to make a difference to the community.

Scheme manager Rob Llewellyn said: "Dilys is such an incredible, inspirational lady. Hearing her speak showed residents that they don't just have to exist, they can live their life to the full at any age."

# What to do if your smoke alarm

Most of our properties have mains-powered smoke alarms, which contain batteries that act as a back up during power cuts. Some have a lithium battery that can only be changed by an electrician, and others have 9v batteries that can easily be changed by the householder.

Whether you have a round or square alarm,

if you follow these steps you'll be able to check which battery your alarm has.

If your alarm is beeping intermittently it could mean that the battery needs replacing.

By following these steps you should be able to find out what you need to do.

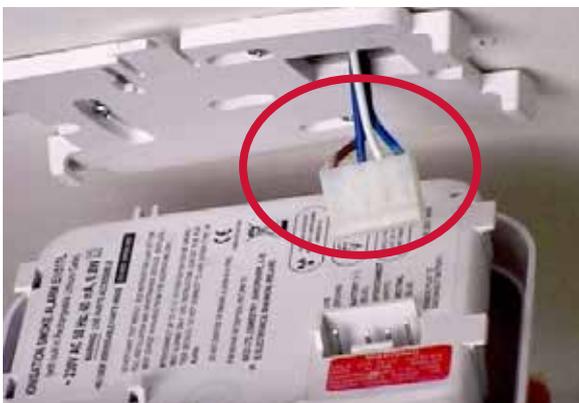
1. Switch electrical power off at mains making sure the green light on the alarm goes off to ensure there is no power going into the unit.



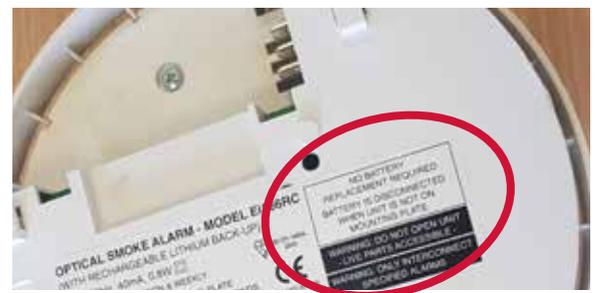
2. Insert a small screwdriver into the clip or slot that holds the alarm unit onto the base. Pull the unit until you feel slight movement, indicating the alarm has been released from the base.



4. In some alarms the unit will need to be disconnected from the base. You can do this by unclipping the plastic connectors. DO NOT PULL ON THE WIRES.



5. With the unit removed you will be able to check what to do next. If your alarm has a sticker that says no battery replacement required, you will need to leave the cover off and call us immediately to arrange a replacement. When you call tell the repairs team that you have checked and your alarm has a lithium battery.



7. Having replaced the battery pop the alarm back up on the ceiling and press the test or reset button. The alarm should sound loudly for a few moments then go silent.

8. If the beeping continues, remove the alarm from the ceiling again to stop the noise and contact us immediately to arrange a replacement.

# is beeping

If your smoke alarm is beeping constantly, first check there is no fire in your home. If there is, evacuate your property (or sound the alarm if you live in a flat) and call the fire service. Sometimes frying or grilling will cause the alarm to sound.

- There should be an arrow on the unit, showing which way to slide the cover to remove it. Push alarm in that direction until the unit can be removed from the base.



- If your alarm looks like this with a square 9v battery, you will need to change it. There is a sticker that usually recommends which type of battery to use, such as a 9v alkaline battery.



## First time fix

– How are we doing this?

We have been looking into updating what products and materials are kept on our vehicles, by having the right supplies on the van, we are more likely to be able to fix your problem on the first visit.

We have also been investigating the reasons why people telephone repairs and one of the biggest reasons is to check when their appointment is. So we have begun to look at a text messaging service.

Our aim is to be able to give you a text to confirm your appointment details and then a reminder text a couple of days before the appointment.



On average we made  
120 repairs per day totalling  
**7796** for the quarter

You said

You found  
our operatives  
pleasant and  
helpful

You said

You would have  
preferred your repair  
to be completed  
quicker





# Dementia care on call

Wales & West Housing's Board recently agreed to support Dementia UK to support its Admiral Nurse Service helping families living with dementia. Dementia UK runs an Admiral Nursing Dementia Helpline, which provides specialist practical and emotional support over the telephone, and currently has six Admiral Nurses, working in the community in Wales with plans to expand. Admiral Nurse Caroline Woodcock talks about a typical day on the Helpline.

"The best part about my job is speaking to people who do such an amazing job in caring for a loved one who is living with dementia and supporting them in doing this.

For example, a woman called one morning, she was concerned about her mother who has Alzheimer's disease and had started to show a dramatic change in behaviour. She told me how her mother had become quite agitated at times and shouted at her carers as she thought they were going to lock her in a cupboard. She had even hit out at her daughter. The caller was very concerned about the sudden change in her mother's behaviour as it was so out of

character and worried that the carers would no longer visit.

I was able to explain some of the possible causes for such a sudden change, which could include delirium caused by infection, pain or dehydration and advised her to contact her GP. I also offered advice on ways she could remain calm and comfort her mother and reassured her that she was providing good care.

The next call came from a woman who cared for her husband with vascular dementia at home. She had her own mobility problems and was finding it more difficult to help her husband to wash and dress every morning. I asked her how she and her husband would feel about carers visiting, but she didn't know who to ask. We discussed the option of asking for a care needs assessment by Social Services for her husband as well as a carer's assessment for her. I then gave her contact details of her local Social Services and advised her what she could expect from the assessment.

'I feel guilty that I am no longer able to do everything for my husband,' the caller explained. However as we talked about the other care she provided and

how the extra support would give them more time to spend together, her feelings of guilt were eased. We also discussed how she could help her husband to build a good relationship with carers by telling them about his interests so they could talk about them during their visits.

She ended the call by telling me how much better she felt for having someone to talk to who understood the difficulties of living with someone with dementia. Hearing a caller say that I have helped is what makes this job so rewarding."

If you would like help from the Admiral Nurse Dementia Helpline call **0800 8886678** or email [helpline@dementiauk.org](mailto:helpline@dementiauk.org)

The helpline is open from 9am to 9pm, Mon – Fri, and 9am to 5pm, weekends (excluding Bank Holidays).

If you would like to fundraise for Dementia UK by organising your own fundraising event in your community, or setting up a remembrance fund in memory of a loved one, contact Dementia UK Website: [www.dementiauk.org](http://www.dementiauk.org) Call: **0207 697 4160** Email: [info@dementiauk.org](mailto:info@dementiauk.org)

# Gardening WITH GLENYS

*Glenys Vandervolk is an award-winning gardener, living at our St Mellons scheme in Cardiff. She is one of the leading lights in St Mellons Community Garden. In her regular column she shares her tips and advice to make your garden grow.*



## Time to think about growing your own Christmas lunch

As we say goodbye to Summer and look ahead to the Autumn, it's been a great time for growing.

At our St Mellons Community Garden in Cardiff, we've had a bumper year for produce. The warm weather was great for our tomatoes and salad and we've harvested plenty of apples and plums from our fruit trees and summer berries, which I'll be turning into jam.

In July we had some good news when our garden was awarded the Green Flag Award from Keep Wales Tidy for turning an empty space into a community garden

for everyone to enjoy. We were thrilled as it is the gardening equivalent of a Blue Flag and means our garden has maintained a high standard of community involvement.

But what can you do in your gardens in the coming months?

Well, Autumn is the time to start protecting those tender and fragile plants from the oncoming chill. It's a good idea to take them indoors for the winter or wrap them in plant fleece, widely available from garden or DIY stores or online, to stop the frost from killing them.

It's also a good time to start planting vegetables, such as potatoes, peas, onions, garlic and broad beans, especially if you want to grow your own Christmas lunch.

Instead of buying seeded potatoes, you can make your own with any potato you have in your vegetable basket. Cut them in half and let them dry out for a couple of days in your kitchen or on a windowsill. You can then plant them in the garden or in pots.

If you'd rather plant Spring flowers in your pots, a good tip I always follow is to plant bulbs in layers in your pots.

First put a layer of compost in the bottom of your pot. Then plant a layer of tulip bulbs.

Add another layer of compost and plant the daffodil bulbs.

Another layer of compost, then plant crocus bulbs. Cover with compost, then finally plant some snowdrop bulbs, before finishing off with a top layer of compost.

In January or February, the snowdrops will be the first flowers to burst through, followed by the crocus, daffodils and last, but not least, the tulips giving a pot of beautiful Spring flowers to admire until May.

Keep growing

*Glenys*



# Toffee apple cake

Get your children involved in the kitchen by making an afternoon tea treat



## Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp sunflower oil plus some for the tin
- 1 large apple
- 1 egg

## Method:

1. Pre-heat the oven to 190C/170C fan/ gas 5.
2. Brush your loaf tin with a little oil.
3. Peel and cut the apple into quarters removing the cores, then grate into a large bowl.
4. Break the egg into a cup then add to the apple. Add 3 tbsps oil and the vanilla extract and mix well.
5. Add the flour and sugar to the bowl and mix well.
6. Scrape the mixture into your prepared tin and push the toffees

# Autumn leaves candleholder

Bring the autumn colours indoors with this simple, yet effective candleholder.

## You will need:

- A collection of autumn leaves (fake or real)
- A mason jar or empty glass jam jar (you can buy mason jars at some pound shops)
- Glue (thin PVA glue is ideal)
- Sponge or paintbrush (for glue)
- Battery operated tea-light candle
- If using real leaves you'll also need wax paper and an iron



## Method:

1. Thoroughly clean and dry the outside of the jar (and inside if recycling old jam jars) otherwise you will have difficulty sticking the leaves.
2. If using real leaves you'll need to preserve them. To do this, sandwich each leaf between two sheets of wax paper and iron for a few seconds until the leaves have been sufficiently coated with the wax. Then leave to cool.
3. Paint a thin layer of glue on a section of the jar. Once it becomes sticky, place a leaf on the jar.
4. Paint another thin layer of glue on top of the leaf, making sure to smooth out the edges. It may take some time for the leaves to stick. Don't be afraid to use your fingers to smooth out the leaf.
5. Keep layering more leaves on top, filling the jar with as many as you prefer, leaving some gaps for the

# Community action to prevent unwanted kittens



- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 110g self-raising flour
- 50g golden caster sugar
- 3 soft toffees
- 500g/1lb loaf tin

into the mix in a row.

7. Bake in the oven for 30-40 minutes or until cooked through.
8. Leave to cool.



light to shine through.

6. Leave to dry for several hours, before adding your tea light.
7. Finish the look by tying raffia or ribbon to the neck

**Tip:** Dampen or iron your leaves to make them more flexible before you stick them to the jar.

There should be less unwanted kittens on our Twyncarmel scheme in Merthyr Tydfil as a result of our project with Cats Protection.

The scheme has only been running for a couple of months and already six cats, belonging to residents, have been neutered and a further 12 cats and kittens have been rehomed. Two residents in the area have also signed up as volunteers to continue promoting the work around the scheme.

It's all part of the Cats Protection and RSPCA's neutering campaign across Wales where pet owners on low-incomes and pensioners can get their cats neutered and micro-chipped for just £5.

Cats Protection recommend neutering as **female cats**:

- won't become pregnant, so there will be no expense associated with litters of kittens
- do not call or wail

- are less likely to contract diseases spread by bites and mating behaviour
- are unable to develop cancer of the ovaries or uterus and less likely to develop mammary cancer

They also say that **neutered male cats** make better pets as they are:

- less likely to roam and be involved in car accidents
- less likely to fight which reduces the risk of them getting injured
- are less likely to spray

If you live in other parts of Wales and want to find out more about the neutering scheme, call Cats Protection directly on 03000 12 12 12 (option 2) Monday to Friday, 9.30am – 1pm.

To find out your nearest vet taking part in the scheme visit <https://www.cats.org.uk/what-we-do/neutering/current-neutering-campaigns/wales-neutering-campaign>

## Send us your pet stories

Do you have a favourite family pet you'd like to tell us about? Send your stories to [communications.team@wwha.co.uk](mailto:communications.team@wwha.co.uk) or call **0800 052 2526**. Don't forget to include your name, address and phone number.

# PUZZLE PAGES

Win **£30 shopping vouchers** with our Wordsearch and Crossword puzzles



## AUTUMN WORDSEARCH

*This issue's Wordsearch is all about Autumn. All the words may be found backwards, forwards, horizontal, vertical or diagonal.*

Q	N	L	Y	W	I	N	D	Y	T	Q	O	Y	Q	N
T	F	S	E	Y	Q	J	B	Q	Q	E	C	N	N	W
E	E	R	T	R	E	B	M	A	L	G	T	O	V	F
N	O	I	T	A	R	G	I	M	T	A	X	C	R	X
R	R	S	O	S	C	I	T	D	U	I	C	P	X	N
S	I	D	V	L	W	S	U	O	N	L	Q	B	S	J
A	N	P	P	R	E	C	R	Q	F	O	Z	Y	E	X
G	P	E	Z	V	O	Y	D	P	S	F	I	F	A	Z
S	A	P	R	P	U	M	P	K	I	N	I	L	S	H
R	T	A	L	R	X	S	S	N	G	H	J	R	O	N
M	H	O	E	E	F	J	A	F	F	K	S	C	N	L
T	Z	D	O	R	S	C	L	Z	P	S	D	O	M	E
Z	I	K	N	B	O	P	R	L	K	I	C	X	R	A
C	E	W	Q	R	Q	C	Y	H	I	R	G	U	B	F
O	M	U	N	H	K	I	A	H	K	B	N	I	F	L

- ACORN      LEAF
- AMBER      MIGRATION
- APPLES      NUT
- BOOTS      PEAR
- BRISK      PUMPKIN
- CIDER      SEASON
- CORN      SQUIRREL
- FOLIAGE      TREE
- HARVEST      WINDY
- HAY



## CROSSWORD

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
			8									
9								10				
11												12
13		14					15	16				
					17							
	18			19						20		
21												
22								23				
					24							
25								26				

### ACROSS

- 1 Spring-flowering plant (5)
- 4 Person who rides a bike (7)
- 8 Egg cells (3)
- 9 Limited periods of time (5)
- 10 Mass of eggs deposited by frogs (5)
- 11 Associated with a church (12)
- 13 The act of coming out (6)
- 15 Art of growing miniature trees (6)
- 18 Not satisfactory or allowable (12)
- 22 Residence (5)
- 23 Pair of game birds (5)
- 24 Cereal crop (3)
- 25 Number in one century (7)
- 26 Sources (5)

### DOWN

- 1 Worn to shreds (8)
- 2 Characteristic of song (5)
- 3 Own (7)
- 4 Frank and direct (6)
- 5 Prices (5)
- 6 Slanted letters (7)
- 7 Savoury taste experience (4)
- 12 Radio receiver (8)
- 14 Concluding summary (7)
- 16 Autumn month (7)
- 17 Phonographic disc (6)
- 19 Cloudless (5)
- 20 Great feast (5)
- 21 Clean with soap and water (4)

## SUDOKU

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

## SUMMER PUZZLE WINNERS

Congratulations to the winners of our Summer puzzle competitions. They were Mrs Pat Gregory of Hanover Court, Whitchurch, Cardiff, who won the crossword and Mrs Mary Oliver of Gerddi'r Ffynnon, Aberystwyth, who correctly found all the words in the Wordsearch.

## WIN

To be in with a chance of winning a £30 shopping voucher for our wordsearch or crossword puzzle, simply send your entry with your name, address and contact details to Alison Stokes, Wales & West Housing, Archway House, 77 Parc Tŷ Glas, Llanishen, Cardiff CF14 5DU. All correct entries will be put into the draw and one lucky winner will be chosen for each puzzle and will receive a £30 shopping voucher. The closing date for entries is **October 30 2018**.



## Get neighbourly

Neighbourly is an online "giving platform" that connects businesses with charities and communities where they can donate their surplus produce.



Major high street names such as M&S and Lidl have signed up and regularly donate surplus products such as bakery, fruit and veg and non-perishable goods.

So far, ten of our residents' groups from Bridgend, the Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff and Powys have signed up for weekly collections. These include Danymynydd Lunch Club in Blaengarw, Bridgend, and the Unity group from Ely, Cardiff, who are going to use the donations for the children's activities they run and help families who are struggling when transferring over to Universal Credit.

Some of our groups have already received donations of boxes of flower bulbs from M&S, which are being shared out amongst our gardening groups, and two large boxes of food from Lidl in Barry.

The Lidl "Feed It Back" scheme was originally for food only, but following our requests for gardening

items such as compost and woodchip for our garden groups, flowers and garden sundries have now been added to the list of items that the Lidl stores can donate. This could be a big saving for our gardening groups.

Claire Hammond, Resident Participation Strategy Officer, is championing the scheme. So if you know a group that could make use of these donations email [claire.hammond@wwha.co.uk](mailto:claire.hammond@wwha.co.uk) or call 029 2041 4057 or 07766 832 692. There's just one requirement for any group wanting to sign up - one of the members must hold a food safety certificate. Don't worry if you don't have this - we can come to you and get you trained.

Claire says: "It's a great idea and a good way to recycle supermarket food waste. It's a bit of a lucky dip as groups won't know what they get from one week to the next."

A day in the life of ...

# a Support Officer

Robin Jones is approaching the end of his first year as Wales & West Housing's first Independent Living Officer, a new role which has improved support for residents in our extra care and Kickstart schemes.

Drawing on previous experience working with university students and vulnerable homeless young people, fluent Welsh speaker Robin provides specialist help in housing, welfare and tenancy management bilingually.

"All of my work is essentially geared towards supporting people to become as independent as possible," he said. "This involves working closely with colleagues to understand residents' aspirations, helping people to transition in and out of supported housing and equipping them with new skills along the way."

Tasks residents need help with range from budgeting to securing employment or taking advantage of opportunities to further their education.

"Kickstart is located in Abergele and all of our extra care schemes are in north and mid Wales so I'm hardly ever in the office as I'm usually travelling between them.

"I'm responsible for maintaining waiting lists for these schemes so I also attend home visits to complete housing and financial assessments with prospective residents. It's important that we make close ties

with people before they move in as if I notice there's something they are struggling with I can help as best I can.

"For existing residents, the range of support I provide includes things like helping them to manage their finances and liaising with benefit agencies to ensure residents are not missing out on any income they are entitled to.

"I also help them with grant-funding applications and provide cover in the absence of our extra care managers."

Kickstart was created to support adults to cope with things they may find hard and help people who have simply reached adulthood without the skills needed to live independently. And it's this side of the role which provides so many highlights for Robin.

"Seeing residents who have had hardship in their lives blossom and go on to live happy, independent lives is so rewarding," he said.

"It's great to see people that had very

little or no confidence progress to do things independently and achieve the outcomes that they want for themselves. Kickstart helps people realise they do have a bright future ahead of them.

"As I lived abroad for many years, it's nice to be back home travelling through Wales interacting with people in Welsh as well!"

*"All of my work is essentially geared towards supporting people to become as independent as possible"*



# What's on

## NORTH WALES

### 4 – 7 Oct: Wales Rally GB

The 11th round of the FIA World Rally Championship visits North Wales, with the Rally Village based at Deeside and a course which takes in Snowdonia and mid Wales. The race ends in Llandudno with a spectacular finish taking in the Great Orme and Promenade. Tickets priced from £15.

[Walesrallygb.com](http://Walesrallygb.com)

### 26 - 28 Oct: Gwledd Conwy Feast

A three-day music, food and drink, arts and crafts event in the historic North Wales town of Conwy.

Tickets tbc  
[Conwyfeast.co.uk](http://Conwyfeast.co.uk)

### 2-4 Nov: North Wales Choral Festival

Llandudno's Venue Cymru is the host for this three-day celebration of music featuring competitions, school workshops, concerts and community performances. Tickets priced from £6.50.  
<http://www.northwaleschoralfestival.com>

### 15–18 Nov: Llandudno Christmas Fayre

More than 35,000 visitors are expected over the four days of this annual festive event set in North Wales' historic Victorian seaside resort. Expect lots of food, drink, crafts, music and festive-themed entertainment, including a Santa's Grotto. Open daily from 9.30am (10am on Thurs 15)  
<https://www.llandudnochristmasfayre.co.uk/>

## MID WALES

### 6 Oct: Brecon Beacons Food Festival

Brecon Indoor Market, LD3 7LF  
Watch celebrity chef demonstrations, sample local food and take in some musical entertainment along the way at this 20th annual festival in mid Wales.  
[www.breconbeaconsfoodfestival.co.uk](http://www.breconbeaconsfoodfestival.co.uk)

### 7 Oct: Apple Festival at Llanerchaeron

Ciliau Aeron, near Aberaeron, Ceredigion, SA48 8DG  
This 200 year old National Trust property is home to ancient espalier trees dating back to the 1800s. Join in a day of apple-themed activities – plus the chance to take home some freshly pressed apple juice. 11am to 4pm. Free event  
<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/llanerchaeron>

### 6-7 Oct, 3-4 Nov: Binoculars and telescopes open weekend

RSPB Lake Vyrnwy, Llanwddyn, Oswestry, SY10 0LZ  
Try out some of the RSPB's binoculars and telescopes at picturesque Lake Vyrnwy 10.30am-4pm. Free event  
[www.rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/reserves-a-z/lake-vyrnwy](http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/reserves-a-z/lake-vyrnwy)

### 19-22 Oct: Brecon Baroque Festival

Multiple locations.  
The Festival is inspired by angels and archangels – divine, maverick and diabolical. Features live music concerts, Baroque dance events and guided walks in the Brecon Beacons National Park. Various prices  
[www.breconbaroquefestival.com/llandudnochristmasfayre.co.uk/](http://www.breconbaroquefestival.com/llandudnochristmasfayre.co.uk/)

## SOUTH WALES

### 7 Oct: Cardiff Half Marathon

Thousands of runners race through Cardiff city centre past some iconic locations and historic buildings, starting at Cardiff Castle, crossing the Cardiff Barrage to Cardiff Bay to finish at Cardiff City Hall. Go along and cheer them on. This year's lead charity is the NSPCC.  
[www.cardiffhalfmarathon.co.uk](http://www.cardiffhalfmarathon.co.uk) for more information.

### 3 Nov: Wales Festival of Remembrance

St David's Hall, Cardiff  
Now in its thirty-eighth year, The Royal British Legion's Wales Festival of Remembrance, in support of the annual Poppy Appeal, is the nation's chance to come together to commemorate and honour all those who have lost their lives in conflict. Tickets from £12 to £22.  
[www.stdavidshallcardiff.co.uk](http://www.stdavidshallcardiff.co.uk)  
029 2087 8444

### 29–31 Oct: Halloween Nights

St Fagan's National Museum of History. Put on your blood-curdling costumes for a night at the Museum. Those familiar, friendly buildings will be showing their dark side as spirits are conjured up with bucket loads of SPOOK-tacular technical wizardry, spooky stories for little ones, creepy craft workshops and an extra-creepy SCARE ZONE for children 12+. Tickets £15 (adults), £8 (children)  
<https://museum.wales/stfagans>

### 29 & 30 Oct: Ghost Tours

Cyfarthfa Castle, Brecon Road, Merthyr Tydfil. A guided tour around Cyfarthfa Castle Museum and Art Gallery by torchlight. Ghost stories will be told about all the mysterious things to happen at the Castle over the decades. Cost £10.00 per person. Booking essential. (Adult Event – over 16's)  
[www.Cyfarthfa.com](http://www.Cyfarthfa.com) Phone: 01685 727371

## WEST WALES

### 4 Oct: National Museums Week

Kick off Museums Week with a visit to Scolton Manor or Tenby Museum, a treasure chest of history, telling the story of a fishing and trading port that became a fashionable resort. Narberth Museum are starting their "Letters from the Front: Learning from the Past" Exhibition featuring photographs, newspaper cuttings, letters, and other related objects examining the part played by Narberth men and women in World War I.

### 27 Oct- 4 Nov: Llanerchaeron

Action-packed half term events and activities to keep the whole family entertained. We'll have spooky activities including pumpkin carving, Halloween trails and ghostly tales! Booking not needed. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/llanerchaeron](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/llanerchaeron)  
01545 573024

### 27 Oct - 4 Nov: Gwili Railway

Bronwydd Arms Station, Carmarthen. SA33 6HT  
All aboard the Magic Express for spooky fun during half term. Standard Fares Apply: Wizards, Witches, Zombies and Monsters Adults £12.00 Senior; £11.00, Child; Apprentice Wizards and Witches £6.00 Dogs; Werewolves £2.00, Family £31.50. Prizes for best outfits. Tel: 01267 238213  
[www.gwili-railway.co.uk](http://www.gwili-railway.co.uk)

### 28 Oct – 1 Nov: Fishguard Autumn Festival

3-day food, drink and music festival hosted by Fishguard Round Table. Events include seal watch at Strumble Head, junk art, bread making and fireworks, as well as the infamous 'Cawl Crawl Challenge' on Saturday – bring a bowl and spoon! For full list of events: [www.fishguardsautumnfestival.co.uk](http://www.fishguardsautumnfestival.co.uk)

## Taking the Strain

Around 48 teams from 12 clubs across Wales descended on the Ceredigion seaside town of Aberaeron, in the scorching sunshine, to compete in the All Wales National Tug of War Championships. Wales & West Housing was the main sponsor of the event on Saturday, July 14.

