

In Touch

SUMMER 2022

**How are we doing?
Our new-look
performance
report**

**Sowing the seeds
of good health with
our community
gardeners**

**Your guide to
support through the
cost-of-living crisis**

**Platinum parties
Your Jubilee celebrations
in photos**



Newtown resident Mrs Phyllis Davies, of Cae Camlas, Newtown, also had cause for celebration as she recently celebrated her **100th birthday** and received a telegram from the Queen.

Phyllis moved into Cae Camlas when it was first built in 1983 and is the only remaining original resident or 'The Last of the Mohicans!' as she says. Like the Queen, she enjoyed a weekend of celebrations with her family and a party at her church.



Celebrations at Bronrhiw Court, Caerphilly



Jubilee party celebrations at Oakmeadow Court, Cardiff

Turn to pages 24 - 27 for a round-up of photos from your Platinum Jubilee parties



Contact Us

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

Other languages and formats

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

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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this publication. With the ever-changing circumstances we would advise residents to check up-to-date information on our website wwha.co.uk, the Welsh Government website, Public Health Wales website and other official and reputable sources.



Message from Anne

Welcome to the summer edition of In Touch.

This summer feels different from previous years. While Covid-19, and the restrictions it brought, are (hopefully) behind us, there are other challenges ahead. We are living in uncertain times. The ongoing cost-of-living crisis has brought financial hardship to many of our communities.

So, we have decided to focus on saving money as the theme of this edition, and for the rest of the year. We look at what we are doing to help you, our residents, and some of the things you can do too with tips to save on your bills and places you can go for support.

Our Tenancy Support Officers are working harder than ever to help you to make the most of your income and claim the financial support available. We look at some of the areas where they can help.

As an organisation we too must work hard to make sure we get value for money when looking after your homes and building new ones. You can see how we are doing in our

new-look quarterly performance report, where we share statistics and your feedback on our services in easy to read bite-size reports. We also highlight the areas where we are making improvements following your feedback.

We also feature the results of our annual Resident Satisfaction Survey, with our overall satisfaction score remaining high at 86 per cent.

In June many of us came together to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. There were street parties and afternoon teas galore across our communities and you can see the photos from this great occasion in our special Jubilee Gallery.

Elsewhere we share ideas for fun things that are free to do and will keep the family occupied this summer, and we get out into the garden to explore the benefits of community gardens.

I hope you find this edition informative and useful. If you have any questions or ideas, please get in touch.

Anne Hinchey
Group Chief Executive



for money

Making the most of our money is more important than ever, both for our residents and us as a landlord.

From the services we provide to the homes we build, we work hard to achieve value for money. That doesn't mean we go for the cheapest option, but we focus on value such as the quality of materials we use, for example, in our new kitchens and bathrooms. We discuss with you what matters to you so that we can understand what you need.

Here are some of the ways we are working more efficiently to provide safe and secure homes for as long as you want them.

Repairs



When you report a repair, our teams aim to fix the fault on their first visit, wherever possible.

We are currently able to repair **7 out of 10** repairs during the first visit, which saves our operatives time by not having to return a second time. The result is a better service for residents and higher satisfaction levels at **9.5 out of 10**.

There are occasions when our operatives will be carrying out a repair and notice another non-urgent repair and can make a note of the parts needed or measurements, so they can return with the right equipment saving time on another call out. **(For more information on our repairs performance see page 16).**

Building new homes



Since we launched our 10-year long-term construction partnership in 2018 with a number of Welsh construction partners, we have built hundreds of new homes.

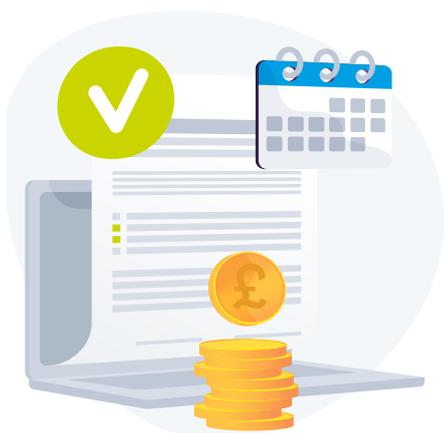
This has allowed us to work more efficiently with a range of small, medium and large businesses across Wales to deliver

much-needed new homes and secure jobs.

Whilst last year was a challenging one for the construction industry, we continued to work with our partners who built **326 new homes across Wales**.

This year we are currently on site building another **780 new homes**.

Tailored rent plans



Our housing staff are able to have the right conversations with you if you are struggling with rent payments.

Since investing in our new payment plan system in 2019, we have been able to tailor payment plans that are affordable for residents.

Currently we have 9,765 residents with payment plans.

If you are having trouble maintaining your rent payments, please speak with your Housing Officer, who can help.



Support when you need it

Before moving into a Wales & West Housing home as a new resident, our Tenancy Support Officers (TSOs) will work with you to complete a pre-tenancy budget. In this way you can receive advice and support with bills and any debt, and make sure that you can afford to live in your home.

Everyone who lives in one of our homes has access to financial help from our TSOs. They can help you to claim the welfare benefits you are entitled to and can support you with advice on managing your money and debts.

For example, regular budget checks can help you

keep on track with your income and bills, and can highlight areas where you could reduce spending. It can also spot areas where there may be additional grants or funds you can claim.

Your TSO can also help you to make your claims. They can also help by suggesting and working with other agencies who are able to offer help such as StepChange in cases of high-level debt.

They also work with the Trussell Trust to identify residents struggling to afford food.



Helping to manage your money through the cost of living crisis

The cost of living crisis is hitting everyone. As the prices of everyday living increase from the food we eat to how we heat and power our homes, our Tenancy Support Officers are helping more and more residents. Here are some of the ways they are helping.

Help with bills

Welsh Water's HelpU tariff is designed to help the lowest income households with their domestic water bills. To qualify, someone in your household must receive at least one means-tested benefit and the combined annual household income must be below

£9,700 for single people, £14,600 for two and £16,100 for 3 or more people. If you qualify, Welsh Water will cap your water bill so you won't pay over £266.47 a year.

To make an application visit dwrcymru.com/en/support-with-bills/helpu-tariff and complete the application online or ring **0800 052 0145**.

In June Welsh Government announced a **£4million fuel voucher scheme** to help some of the most vulnerable households. The extra help will be targeted towards people with pre-payment meters and households not connected to mains gas. It will

also include a **Heat Fund** for eligible households living off the gas grid. Vouchers will range from £30 in summer months to £49 in winter, with households receiving up to three vouchers over a six-month period.

The **Warm Homes Discount** can give you £150 off your electricity bill for the winter period between October 2022 and March 2023, if you qualify.

If you qualify it is applied to your electricity bill. You could also get money off your gas bill if your supplier provides you with both gas and electricity (known as a dual fuel tariff).

If you get the Guarantee Credit

element of Pension Credit the discount will normally be applied automatically, or you should receive a letter from the DWP between October and December 2022 to let you know if you need to take any action or confirm any details with them.

If you're on a low income and getting certain benefits you have to apply directly to your supplier for a discount and it's generally given on a first come, first served basis.

For more information on how to apply visit moneyhelper.org.uk/en/blog/benefits-entitlements/what-is-the-warm-home-discount-and-how-can-i-apply or speak with your TSO.

Personal Independence Payment/Attendance Allowance

If you have a mental or physical disability, you could consider applying for a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) (if you are working age) or Attendance Allowance (if you are retirement age).

You need to contact the Department of Work and Pensions by telephone on **0800 9172222** to make an initial PIP claim and request an application form. It is advised that you seek help from your Tenancy Support Officer or Citizens Advice to complete the form, which is quite lengthy and detailed.

To claim **Attendance Allowance** you need to access the following website: gov.uk/government/publications/attendance-allowance-claim-form and complete the form online before printing and sending it to **Freepost DWP Attendance Allowance**,

or you can call the **Attendance Allowance Helpline** on **0800 731 0122** and request that they send you a form to complete. Your TSO or Citizens Advice can help you complete this form.

Discretionary Assistance Fund

Your TSO can help you to apply to the **Department of Work & Pensions' Discretionary Assistance Fund**, which can help with payments if you have a delay in benefit payments, are on a low income or in need of fuel vouchers (Emergency Assistance Payment Fund).

There is also help available for buying essential furniture and white goods if you are moving into your first home or replacing broken essential items, through the Individual Assistance Payment scheme.

You can apply yourself online at <https://gov.wales/discretionary-assistance-fund-daf/how-apply> or by phoning **0800 859 5924** but you cannot get more than 5 grants in a year.

Discretionary Housing Payments

You can apply for these discretionary payments if you

have an unaffordable housing cost, e.g. a shortfall of housing benefit, rent arrears, moving costs, or bedroom tax.

If successful the payments are usually made for a limited time, around 13 weeks, whilst you overcome a financial hardship or move to alternative accommodation to suit your family size. Sometimes it can also be a single payment to cover your costs of moving.

You can apply for these through your local council Housing Benefit department. You will need to be in receipt of either Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing Costs to be considered.

To make an online application visit your local council's website and search for 'Discretionary Housing Payment application.' You will need to provide proof of income and expenditure.

Pension and Pension Credits

If you were born between 6 October 1954 and 5 April 1960 you are eligible for these payments from your 66th birthday. Ideally you should wait for the 'invitation to claim' letter which is sent between 4 and 2 months prior to your



66th birthday, but you can claim without the letter no earlier than 4 months prior to your 66th birthday.

Claims are made online: gov.uk/new-state-pension/how-to-claim or alternatively by telephone: **0800 731 7898**.

If you are still working, you may want to defer claiming your state pension. You can check if you qualify on the Pension Credit Calculator: gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator.

Dealing with debts

Your TSO can help you to manage your debts. For example, they can help you to make an application to have arrears in rent or council tax, or fuel or water debt, paid directly to the organisations you owe through your Universal Credit entitlement as a Third Party Deduction. There are limitations, but your TSO or local Citizens Advice can help you.

If you do not have enough money to live on because of deductions from your Universal Credit payments, you can ask for a 'financial hardship decision' to reduce your deductions.

Help with food

Your TSO can help you get a food parcel from Trussell Trust if you are struggling to afford food.

Care professionals such as Tenancy Support Workers, Citizens Advice staff, Health visitors, staff at schools and social workers identify people in crisis and can issue them with a food bank voucher. This means people can receive a food bank parcel of three days' nutritionally balanced,

non-perishable food from their local food bank.

This food can be collected from a foodbank centre or is sometimes home delivered to you. Generally, you can only receive 3 parcels every 6 months, but this is discretionary based on individual circumstances.

Support from the Government

In May the UK Government announced a package of support to help millions of households across the UK. They are increasing the **Household Support Fund**, which is managed by local authorities.

They also announced a series of payments to help households, which include:

- **Energy Bills Support Scheme** doubled to a one-off £400 payment as a grant. Energy suppliers will deliver this support to households with a domestic electricity meter over six months from October. Direct debit and credit customers will have the money credited to their

account, while customers with pre-payment meters will have the money applied to their meter or paid via a voucher.

- A **£650 one-off Cost of Living Payment** for those on means tested benefits. Households who are eligible will get a payment of £650 this year, made in two instalments. This includes all households receiving a number of benefits and the DWP will make the payment in two lump sums – the first from July, with the second in the autumn. To be eligible you must either be claiming the benefits on May 25th 2022, or have started a successful claim on that date.
- A **one-off £300 Cost of Living Payment** for pensioner households as a top-up to their annual Winter Fuel Payment in November/ December.

For more information visit:

gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-living-support/cost-of-living-support-factsheet-26-may-2022



If you would like advice and support to manage your money, please contact your Tenancy Support Officer or call **0800 052 2526**.

Which appliance eats the most energy in your home?

As gas, oil and electricity prices continue to rocket, being efficient with our use of energy has never been more important.

Choosing the most energy efficient household appliances can help you save energy – and money – on bills. However, some common household items use more energy than others.

Here, we find out which are the biggest users of electricity in the home, according to the Energy Saving Trust and offer some tips on how to use them as efficiently as possible.



Washing appliances

Washing machines, dishwashers and tumble dryers account for 14% of a typical energy bill.

The power needed to heat the water that they use pushes up consumption, making them energy-hungry household appliances.

Actively choosing to wash clothes at a lower temperature can help reduce your energy consumption. Using your washing machine on a 30-degree cycle instead of higher temperatures, can also save money. Try to avoid washing half loads to save your water.

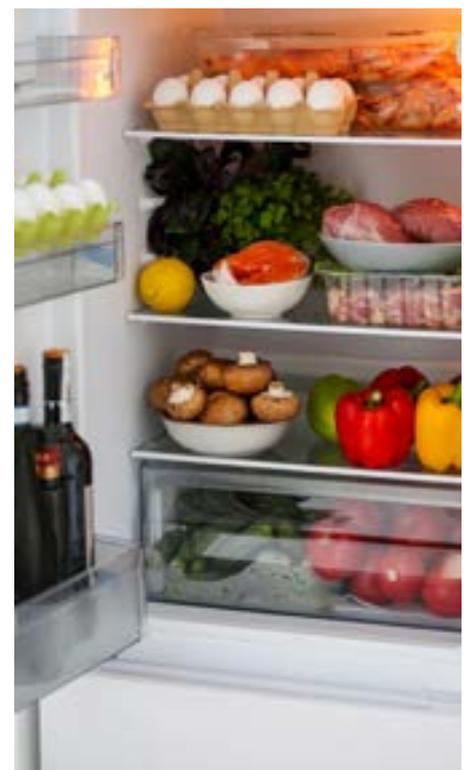
The same advice goes for your dishwasher: use the Eco setting if it has one and try to wait until it's full to set it off.

Avoid using a tumble dryer for your clothes: dry clothes on racks inside where possible and safe or outside in warmer weather, but make sure you leave a window open for ventilation.



Fridge/freezers

Fridges and freezers account for around 13% of the average household's energy bill.



These appliances need to stay on all the time, so they're continually drawing power to maintain a constant temperature. They're also among the longest lasting appliances in our home.

The typical fridge-freezer has a lifespan of 17 years! Since they'll be on 24 hours a day, and could last you 17 years, there's a huge benefit to investing in an energy efficient one. The next time

you're buying a new fridge or freezer, consider the smallest that meets your needs, as well as the highest rated one you can afford. Regular defrosting can also help.

Electronics

From laptops to TVs to game consoles – we are more reliant on electronic gadgets than ever, and they now account for around 6% of our energy bills. Some of the oldest advice remains relevant: remember to turn your devices off, not leaving them on standby, where possible.

If you are investing in a new TV, look for the most energy-efficient one you can afford, or choose a smaller screen size to save on running costs.



Lighting

Lighting takes up around 5% of an average home's total energy bill. You can reduce the amount of energy you use by replacing halogen bulbs with LEDs. If the average household replaced all bulbs with LEDs, it would cost about £160 and save around £55 a year on bills.



Make sure you turn your lights off when you're not using them or when you leave a room. This will also save you on your annual energy bills.

they only heat the food and not the air space inside. Try to avoid overfilling the kettle and save on your electricity bill.

For more tips and advice visit energysavingtrust.org.uk

Cooking

Around 4% of your energy bill is spent on powering kitchen appliances, including the hob, oven, kettle and microwave.

Microwaves are more efficient than ovens at cooking, as



“ We were in our Wales & West Housing home within seven weeks of finding out we were going to be made homeless.

Moving house can be a stressful process at the best of times but they made it as easy as they could. ”

Duncan Suddell,
resident,
Llys Hafren,
Newtown

A stable and secure home

When the owner of their privately rented home passed away and the family wanted to sell the property, Duncan Suddell and his wife Sian faced an uncertain future with no roof over their heads.

They were given a 56-day notice period to find a new home and after contacting Powys County Council were placed on the common housing list.

Their request was passed to Wales & West Housing and two months later they moved into Llys Hafren, a retirement housing complex in Newtown.

“Wales & West Housing were absolutely superb with us,” said Duncan. “We were invited to view the property and signed up on the same day. We got the keys two or three days later and moved in. It took around seven weeks in total from finding out we were going to

be made homeless.

“We were treated extremely well, we were offered help with the move itself, help with arranging anything financially if we needed it. It was a very simple process.”

Llys Hafren has 32 flats, with a day room and laundry room, and is conveniently located near the town centre.

Duncan and Sian’s home became available after a previous resident left the property and Duncan said they were impressed with the condition of the apartment as soon as they viewed it.

“It was lovely, clean and bright so they really had done a lot of work to get it ready for us. As I have an underlying health condition I was able to move in despite being younger than 55.

“We are younger than the average age of residents here,

which was a bit of a concern before we moved in. However, everyone has looked after us. We have a fantastic little home.”

Moving into Llys Hafren has given Duncan a fresh start, enabling him to work again and having peace of mind that his property will be maintained in a timely fashion.

“It’s provided three things – stability, security and it’s boosted my confidence. I believe I was in a bit of a mess from a physical and mental point of view before I moved in. Since February I’ve got myself a part-time job which has given me security. For the first time we’re not privately renting so we feel we are supremely lucky and privileged to be here. We have the security and stability we need. It’s a perfect little home for us. We don’t want to move anywhere else, why would we?”

Our new homes

We are determined to play our part in helping to solve the housing crisis in Wales by building more new homes for social rent.

Last year, despite challenges within the construction industry, we completed **326 new homes** – the highest number we have delivered in a single year for over 20 years.

In the first 3 months of this

year, we have completed **106 new homes** too and started work on **62** more across 3 sites.

By the end of March, we had 27 development projects underway, that will deliver a total of **780 new homes**. These are in Cardiff, Caerphilly, Bridgend, Vale of Glamorgan, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion, Powys, Conwy, Flintshire and

Wrexham. We are looking to start work on more sites, too.

Satisfaction for our new homes is high with residents scoring **9.7 out of 10**. The top things they said they liked was the layout and size of their new homes and the quiet location.

Here's what some of our residents say about their new homes:

Subway Road, Barry, Vale of Glamorgan



“My new home will make such a difference”

Luke Webber

“A place to call home” is how some of our residents described their new WWH apartments in the popular seaside town of Barry.

Some of the first residents who moved into the 72-apartment development in April were previously living in temporary accommodation.

Built in 2 blocks of 4 & 5 storeys, the development at Subway Road provides much needed modern, high quality, energy-efficient 1- and 2-bedroom apartments.

Local hotel worker Luke Webber said: “My new home will make such a difference. I have two sons who were not able to visit me when I lived in temporary accommodation, now they can come and visit me whenever they want.”

Another resident Tom Hodges said: “I’m so happy to have a place I can call home at last.”



Subway Road, Barry



Housing Officer Danielle Gouge, with new resident, Tom Hodges

Clos Y Porthmyn, Abergwili, Carmarthenshire



"I'm going to be very happy here"

Elsbeth Jenkins

In June residents moved into our first development in Carmarthenshire of 4 new houses and 2 flats.

Care worker Elsbeth Jenkins and her grown-up son were among the first to move into their new 2-bed house after downsizing from a larger WWH home near Llandeilo.

"The garden in my old house was getting too much to look after, so my new house is ideal for what I want. It's closer to my daughter too."

"It's a nice little estate and the garden is a manageable size. I'm going to be very happy here."

Her neighbour Chelsea Dunne and her two young children were living at home with her parents before moving to Clos Y Porthmyn.

She said: "It's a lovely area, close to my son's school and my work. It's the perfect house for me and the boys."



"It's the perfect house for me and the boys."

Chelsea Dunne

Heol Gruffydd, Newtown, Powys



Football fan Riley Struthers and his dad Sam were among the first residents to move into our new homes at Heol Gruffydd in Newtown.

Built by SY Homes, the development is a mix of 16 two bed homes, 3 four bed homes and 6 one bed apartments.

"I'm really looking forward to playing football in the garden and watching football on TV together in our new home" said Riley, who supports Manchester United.

How are we performing?

We want to provide the best services we can and are always looking for ways to improve.

Involving you, our residents, in the design and management of services, we know, is the best way to ensure services are what people need and want and that quality and performance meets expectations.

Part of that involvement is telling you about our performance in the delivery of services. For many years, in every issue of In Touch we have included information about performance – the good and the bad – so that you can see how well we are doing, read about the actions we are taking to improve and give us feedback about what

else we should do to get better.

Resident participation is a central part of staff roles and the way we run the business. Our ethos is to listen and understand what matters to you about the services you want so that we can design the way we work and what we do to achieve the outcomes we have been told people want.

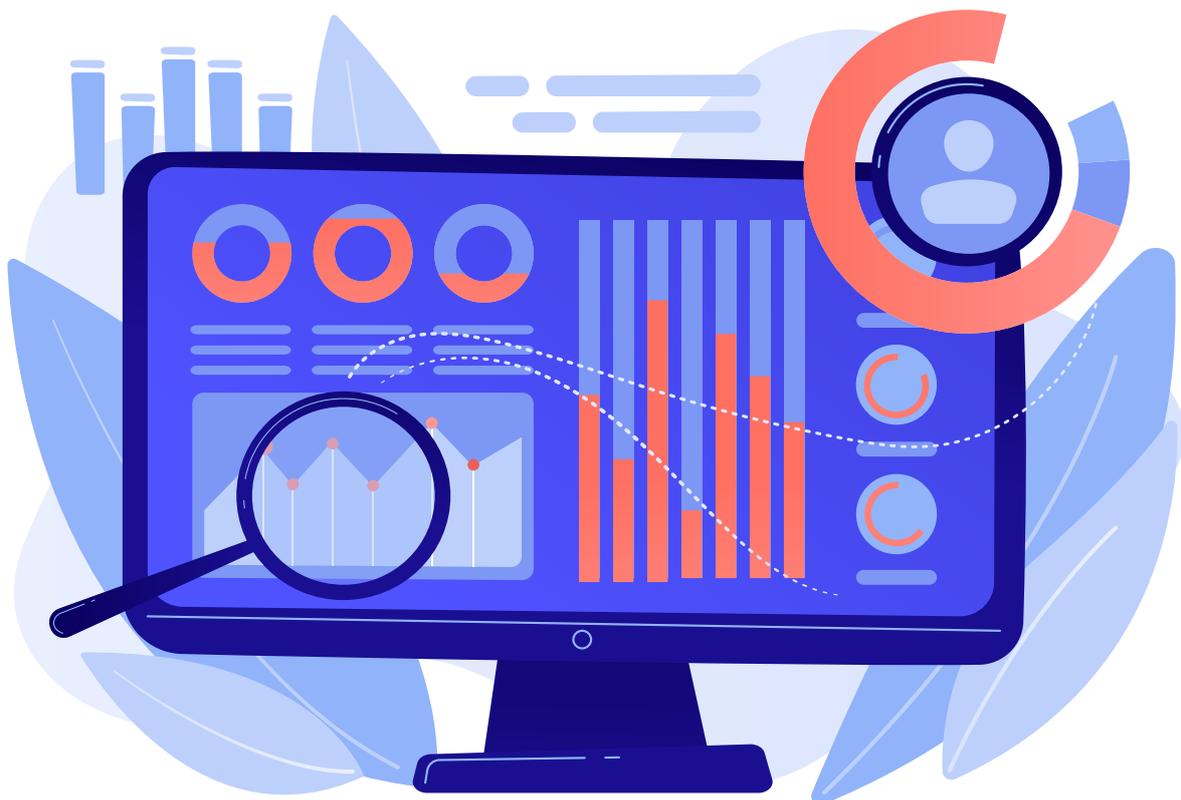
Our aim is to engage with residents in a way that suits them in order to understand what matters and to then tailor how and what we do to meet each person's priorities.

We believe by listening and engaging with you we can deliver the best service possible. Not everyone is the same and therefore our services are flexible

as we try to meet individual needs where ever we can. We ask for feedback, for example, when we have completed a repair, let a property or responded to an incident of anti-social behaviour in order to learn about what worked and what needs to improve.

We want you to be actively involved in continuously improving our services and information about performance contained in the next few pages will enable you to see the progress we are making.

The figures in this report are for January to March 2022.



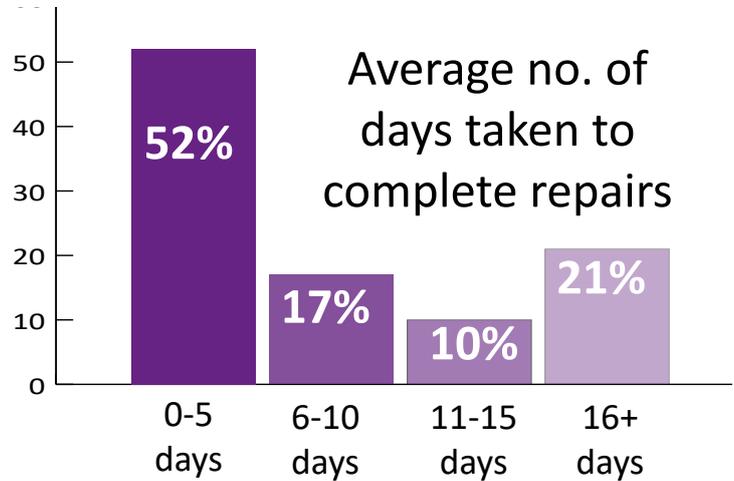
Repairs and maintenance



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



Between Jan - Mar we fixed **7 out of 10** repairs on our first visit.



Electrical repairs
- 8 days average

Heating repairs
- 6 days average

Between Jan - Mar we completed

9,289 repairs

That's an average of 714 repairs per week

More than 1 in 5 repairs took longer than 16 days due to our heating suppliers being unable to get parts.

We also had some additional delays with gas repairs due to recruitment to fill vacancies caused by some engineers leaving and others being promoted.



Did You Know?



We are able to offer appointments for non-emergency repairs within two weeks of the repair being reported.

All emergency repairs are programmed accordingly.

Between Jan - Mar

99%

of arranged appointments were kept

Keeping you safe

In your homes, we carried out:

9,729 gas services/
safety checks
11,478 electrical tests

> **99% compliant**

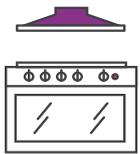


In communal areas of our schemes, we carried out:

311 fire risk assessments
183 asbestos inspections
78 water checks



This year, we plan to install



433
kitchens



207
bathrooms



356
boilers



343
windows



377
doors



Last year we invested

£775,322

on retrofitting some homes with energy-efficient new technologies such as air source heat pumps, mechanical heat/ventilation systems, PV (solar) panels and batteries and/or new windows and doors to decarbonise our homes.

Your feedback



You liked:

- Friendly, professional operatives
- Easy to report
- Appointments kept



What you want to see improve:

- Repairs completed in one visit
- Repairs completed quicker
- Repairs stay fixed

Help me pay



6,417

people are paying by Direct Debit, which is the simplest way to pay your rent

143

90

We aim to support people to pay their rent and act quickly when they don't, to understand why and help them overcome barriers. There were **143** people in high level arrears and, with the

right support, this has reduced to **90** cases.

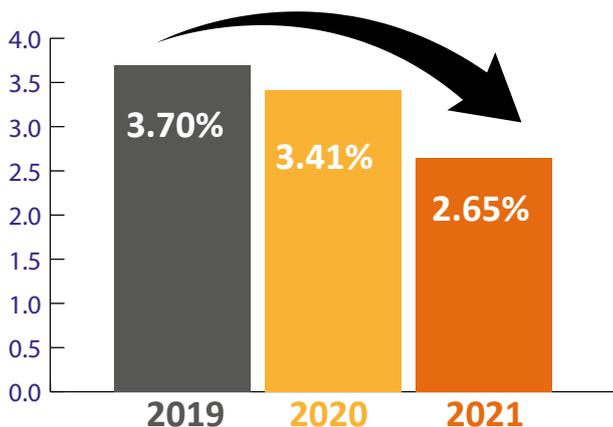
We help people move into their new home able to afford their rent and access funding to help them set up their home with essential items.

This year we've helped more than **450** households access grants, funding and support to help them with rent payments, manage debts, maximise income, food parcels, fuel vouchers, and furniture and white goods packages.

We assisted residents access **£182,000** of Discretionary Housing Payments to help them pay their rent.

For more information on how we can help see pages 4 and 5.

RENT ARREARS



of people are presently keeping to the repayment arrangements we have agreed with them (June 2022)

Anti-social behaviour

The most commonly reported issue is:

NOISE

We are currently dealing with

45
ongoing noise cases

339
cases

We dealt with 339 cases, of which 181 required investigation and actions, sometimes involving partners such as the police and other community safety partners.

We also dealt with 158 reports requiring other assistance and advice.



Our specialist Neighbourhood Dispute Officers are using a restorative approach in 31 cases to help those involved understand the impact their behaviour is having on others and bring about lasting change in behaviours.

I want a home



Re-letting our properties



We have improved the time we relet properties to an average **65 days** to relet an empty property compared to 70 days a year ago.



The satisfaction rate - that's the score that you give us for our service when finding a home - remains high.

We let

327

homes during Jan - Mar

We speak with potential new residents to help them decide whether the property is right for them. For example, is it the right location, close to the services they need and affordable?

Your feedback



You liked:

- Location of the property
- Property suits your needs



What you want to see improve:

- Cleanliness of the property
- Outstanding repairs

How we run our business

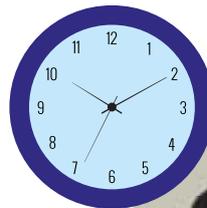
Between January and March we received

301

repairs and heating calls per day and

150

calls about rent, lettings, housing advice or ASB per day



The busiest times to call our repairs and housing support lines are between 9am and 12pm.



Complaints

In total we received

27

complaints

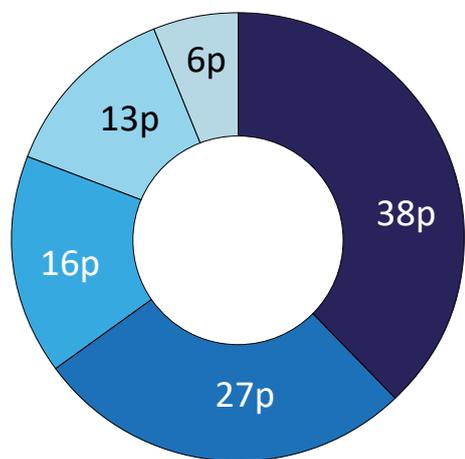


The average waiting time for residents calling our repairs line was **21 seconds**.

The average time for our housing support lines was **39 seconds**.

Are we an efficient organisation?

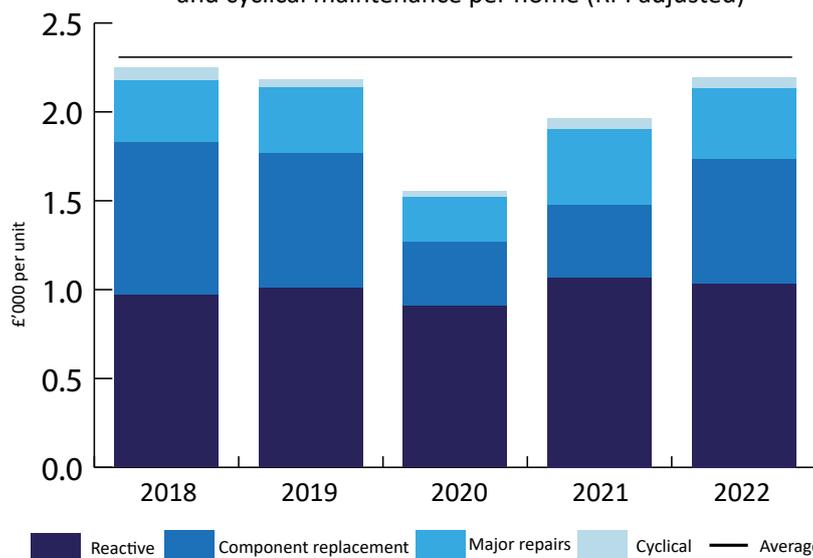
Here is how we spent every £1 of your rent in 2021



- Maintaining and upgrading our homes
- People
- Interest on loans
- Overheads
- New homes

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

Reinvestment in properties, reactive maintenance and cyclical maintenance per home (RPI adjusted)



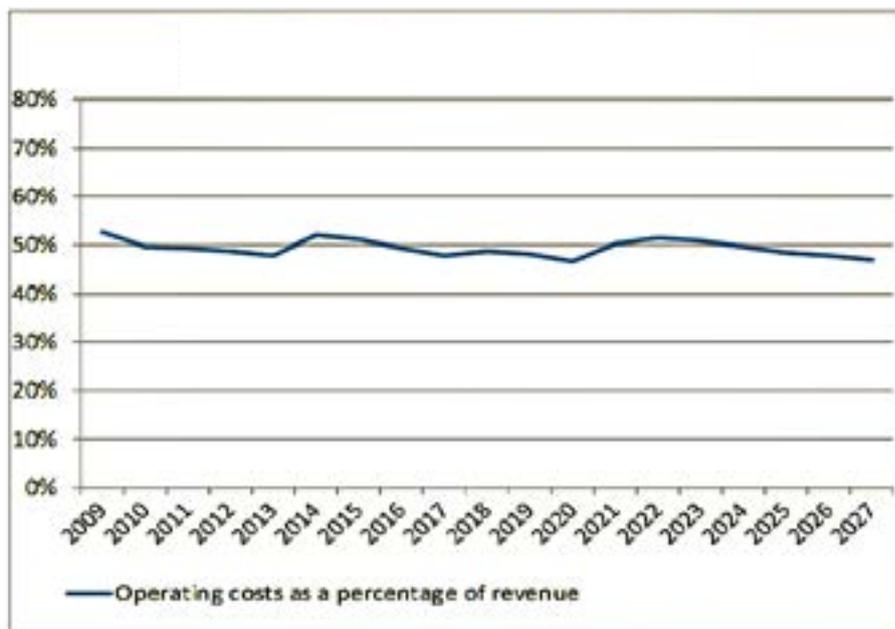
Looking after our homes



During 2021 we spent **£2,911** on operating costs for each of our homes (not including major repairs)

Our efficiency

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



Our projects

As part of the new-look performance report we wanted to let you know a bit about what we are working on currently, and what is to come. We have a series of corporate projects which guides our work as an organisation and helps us to focus on the right things. We also have work which is going on across the organisation to improve the way we do things and we will use this page to tell you a bit about these too.



Following consultation with our Resident Participation Steering Group and feedback from residents affected we have begun work on a new set of fire safety documents to help explain your scheme's fire strategy. These are tailored to your scheme. We have begun to give these out to those in schemes where the risk assessments have changed following the removal of emergency alarm equipment. We will include general needs schemes over the coming year.



Over the past few years, we have developed our own housing management software system to manage your tenancy details.

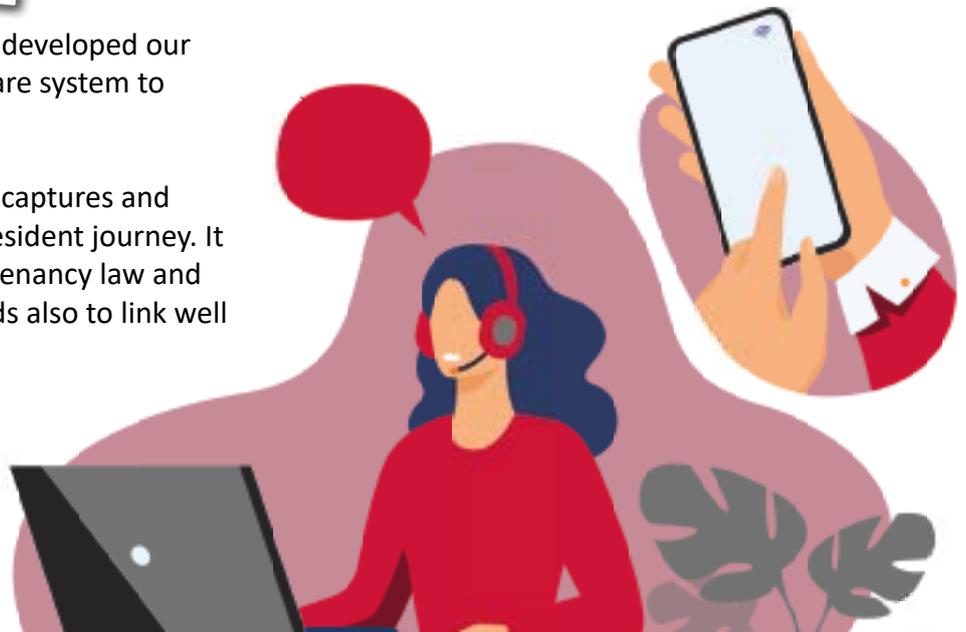
We set out to build a system that captures and keeps the understanding of the resident journey. It needs to deal with all aspects of tenancy law and lots of different situations. It needs also to link well

with the other systems we are building as this will help us to let properties more quickly meaning homes will be empty for shorter periods of time.

One of the projects we are focusing on this year is the Asset Management system (how we monitor and look after your home). The system will include repairs, testing, servicing and all types of major works including how long jobs take for efficiency and performance measures.

We are actively recruiting more electrical engineers across the country to help us get our testing done more quickly and improve our performance in this area.

We have several projects coming up over the next few years to continue to grow and improve this system to help you access the information you want quickly and help us manage your tenancy effectively.



Privacy Notice



We have recently updated our Privacy Notice. This lets you know how we look after and manage the personal information we hold.

You can contact our Data Protection Manager, Russell Davey, by email at data.protection@wwha.co.uk or by calling **02920 415 329**.

Your information is important to us, and we take our responsibilities seriously, ensuring that any personal information we collect about you and use is done so proportionately, correctly, and safely.

To see the new Privacy notice please see wwha.co.uk/en/legal/

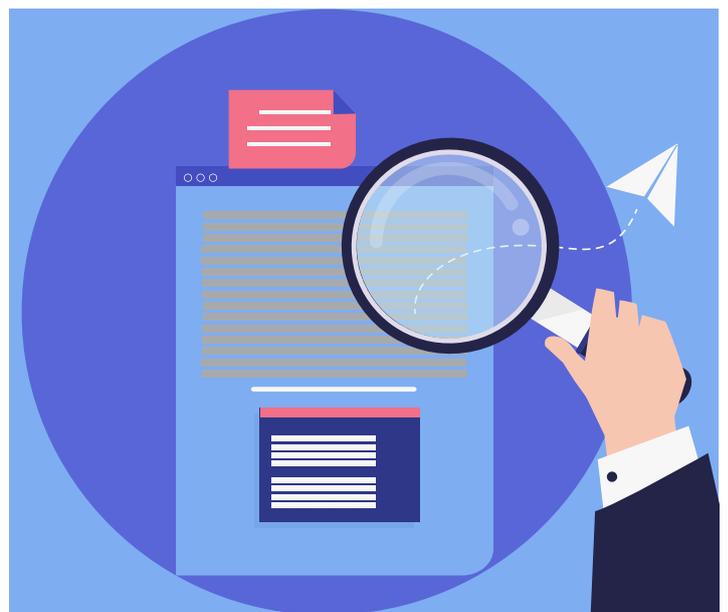
Do you want it in **digital,** **large print, Welsh or audio?**

We want to know about how you want to hear from us, in what format, what frequency and language. This is not just for In Touch, but you can request your copy of In Touch digitally.

If you want to update your contact preferences, please speak to your Housing Officer or email contactus@wwha.co.uk.

We are currently reviewing our West Wales residents' communication preferences, carrying out an active profiling exercise to find out whether you want to be communicated with in Welsh or English, and whether this differs when we are writing to you or speaking with you.

We can also send you an audio version of In Touch. If you would like to get In Touch digitally or in audio form please email communications.team@wwha.co.uk



How are we doing?

Last year when we told you about our Resident Satisfaction Survey results, we outlined a few areas where we would be making changes following your feedback.

One of these areas was how we report anti-social behaviour. Thanks to your feedback which we have collected in our Resident Satisfaction survey, through our regular ASB surveys, and through regular conversations with you about 'what matters' we have updated our system of reporting ASB. Our policy and procedure can be found on our website, as can a summary.

We support residents to feel safe in their homes and communities. Where issues do arise, our procedure is to make sure that:

- Residents are supported to deal with issues that are affecting them.
- Residents are listened to and the right problem to fix is fully understood.
- Residents are supported to get the right help at the right time.
- Residents feel safe in their homes and communities.
- Residents are kept informed

[wwha.co.uk/en/report-anti-social-behaviour/](https://www.waha.co.uk/en/report-anti-social-behaviour/)

We are in the process of upgrading our 'Contact us' systems so that you will receive an automated reply from all emails and forms.

In the meantime, when you email us at contactus@wwha.co.uk we will send an acknowledgement to you (during office hours) and assign your query to the relevant team member, and we will follow up with the team member weekly until it has been resolved.

2021 Resident Satisfaction results

The past few years have really highlighted the importance of the home.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the way we all lived our lives, it meant at times we had to adapt the way some of our services were delivered to you.

We carried out our work in the safest way we could to protect the safety of our residents, customers and staff.

In October 2021 we carried out a Resident Satisfaction Survey. We asked a representative sample from across Wales several questions we need to ask for Welsh Government, and some extra questions we wanted to find out about, including digital activity at a time when we were all home more and had to do more things online.

Overall satisfaction with our services remains high, unchanged from our survey in 2020, with **86% satisfied**, more than half of whom were 'very satisfied'.

- Most residents are satisfied with the quality of their home (86%)
- Over 9 out of 10 are satisfied with the safety and security of their home (92%)
- 88% are satisfied with their rent as value for money
- Satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live improved to 83% in 2021 with our West Wales respondents significantly more satisfied than average at 93%
- Residents were slightly more positive about having a say in how services are managed than they were about the opportunities available to take part in decision making (73% v 66%). We would like to find out more about this in our next survey which will take place in Autumn 2022.

92%

were satisfied with the safety and security of their homes



Bench mark	2020 result	Change over time	2021 result	
81%	86%	◀▶	86%	Satisfaction overall
81%	87%	↓	86%	Quality of home
85%	N/A		92%	Safety and security of home
74%	N/A		83%	Repairs & maintenance overall
82%	80%	↑	83%	Neighbourhood as a place to live
80%	88%	◀▶	88%	Value for money of rent
69%	N/A		71%	Value for money of service charge
69%	81%	↓	77%	Listens to views and acts on them
63%	N/A		68%	Dealing with anti-social behaviour
58%	N/A		66%	Taking part in decision making
55%	N/A		73%	Having a say in service management
78%	87%	↓	82%	Trust Wales & West Housing

↑
Statistically significant improvement

◀▶
No statistically significant change

↓
Statistically significant change

Digital

- 67% of residents used digital services in their daily lives
- 81% have internet access.
- 21% used our digital services
- 40% used government or council online services
- 55% did their shopping or banking online

One of our major corporate projects for the next few years will be to improve our digital access for you. This may help you access rent account details easily or look at your repairs information. What we have learned in this survey will inform our strategy and plans going forward.

83%
were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live

86%
satisfaction overall

81%
have internet access



Garn Las, Fishguard



Hightown Community Centre
Wrexham



Byron Court,
Vale of Glamorgan

In June, many of you joined the rest of the country to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Across our communities our residents organised community events and parties which were supported with grants for community celebrations. Here are some of the photos.



Pen Lasgan, Cardiff



Heol William Trigg, Bridgend



Llain Las, Cardigan



Redwood Close,
Vale of Glamorgan



Redwood Close



Bryn Amlwg, Bridgend



Tregaron



Oakmeadow Court, Cardiff



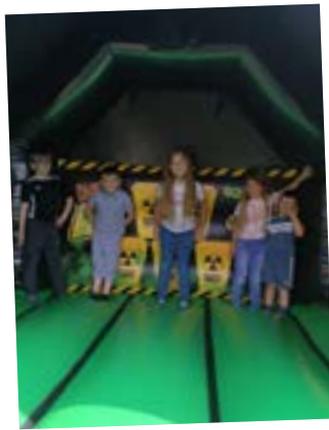
Nant y Môr Extra Care, Denbighshire



Sir David's Court, Cardiff



The Beeches,
Bridgend



Maes Hyfryd, Wrexham



Clos y Waun,
Bridgend



Bridgeman Court,
Vale of Glamorgan



Cae Mawr, Llandudno



Plas yr Ywen Extra Care,
Flintshire



Meridian Court, Cardiff



Stephenson Court, Cardiff



Llys Glan yr Afon Extra Care,
Powys



Llys Glan yr Afon



Oakmeadow Court,
Cardiff



Maes y Môr Extra Care
Ceredigion



Restway Court, Cardiff



Western Court, Cardiff



Heol y Coed,
Bridgend

Having a barbecue this summer?

Don't serve up a noise problem for your neighbours

Summer months bring more time spent outdoors as people tend to their gardens, or enjoy a barbecue with family and friends, but they can also be a time of friction between neighbours.

So, what can you do to make sure you're a good neighbour all summer long?

One of the biggest causes of neighbour disputes in summer is noise pollution, whether it's music being played too loudly outside or raised voices late into the evening during the long summer days.

Here are some things to be aware of which will ensure everyone in your community can have an enjoyable summer:

- Keep music to a reasonable level all day and try and avoid playing any loud music at all in the evening after 10pm. Similarly, if you have doors and windows open while watching TV try and keep the volume down so as not to cause too much disturbance to others
- If you have a garden, keep it clean and tidy
- Use the household bins you've been provided with to dispose of any waste, ensuring you reduce the risk of attracting any unwanted pests during the warmer weather
- If you have a dog, be a responsible owner.

In the unfortunate event that you do find yourself disturbed by anti-social behaviour during the summer there are some steps you can take to resolve any issues:

- If possible, speak to your neighbour in a calm and polite manner first if you have any concerns about noise, for example.
- If this doesn't resolve the issue you can report your concerns to your local authority's environmental health teams. They have equipment to record noise levels.



What to do if...

Our repairs teams deal with hundreds of calls every day. Here are some tips to help you with some of the more common issues.

No heating or hot water

First check to see if your boiler is showing an error code.

There are a number of different codes, depending on the make and model of the boiler, which you can find in the manual.

One of the most common on Vaillant boilers is **F22**. This indicates your water pressure is low.

The fix for most boilers with an external filling loop is straightforward. Simply open the little tap around a quarter turn until the display on the unit hits 1.5 bar, then close the tap again. You may have to reset the boiler.

Vaillant EcoTEC Plus

Vaillant EcoTEC Plus models are a bit different. They have a built-in filling loop. On these models you should look below the boiler, where there are two grey levers which have 'closed' written on them

(shown in picture below). They should be sitting at the 'quarter to 3' position (if it were a clock).

Open both of these valves a quarter turn, they should now be at the 12:30 position. This will allow the system to refill.

Once the pressure returns to 1.5 bar, close the levers and reset the boiler.



A suspected gas or carbon monoxide leak

If you smell gas or suspect carbon monoxide issues, please call the national gas emergency number **0800 111 999**. They will send an engineer out to make the situation safe.

Once you've called the emergency line, you should follow these steps:

- Turn off all your gas appliances. If possible, switch off the gas at the meter.
- Open all your windows and doors to ventilate the area.
- Do not use any electrical appliances. This includes your lights and light switches.
- Do not smoke, vape or use naked flames such as candles, lighters etc.



Planting the seed

We know that gardens are good for the environment and wildlife, but did you know they are good for people too?

In recent years, there's been a growing number of studies to show that being outdoors with nature and gardening is good for your mental health. Some of the key benefits of connecting with nature include a reduction in stress or anger, an increase in physical activity, and a sense of community and support. It can also be a way of making friends.

Across our communities in Wales, more residents are getting sowing and reaping the benefits of good mental and physical health through their gardens.

From Western Court, Bridgend to Clos Meithrin, Prestatyn, there are a number of gardens where residents get together to grow. One of the most well-established is the St Mellons Community Garden in Cardiff, where Wales & West Housing residents and their neighbours get together every Friday afternoon, and have done so for almost a decade.

Our resident gardener, Glenys Vandervolk, is one of the original members. She regularly shares her gardening knowledge with existing club members and welcomes newcomers with a cuppa and a smile. The gardeners grow fruit trees, vegetables and flowers.

Glenys says: "We all look forward to working in the garden every week. I make a list of the jobs that need to be done and we share the tasks between the members depending on their



abilities.

"Some of our members are recovering from serious illnesses, and are limited in what they can do, others come with their support workers or carers. We all have a part to play - that's what makes our club so important.

"We discuss what we would like to grow, then plant the seeds. Over the years, we've grown melons, monkey nuts and butternut squash. We like to grow the fruit and veg that are expensive to buy.

"When we first started the garden we didn't know one another, but we have made friends and look forward to getting together every week.

Another regular member said: "When I first came to the garden I was very anxious. I was petrified of walking into the garden and meeting new people. But they gave me time to find my confidence. Now I love being here, I have made so many friends and feel part of a great growing community."

s of good health



“ We all have a part to play - that’s what makes our club so important. ”

DID YOU KNOW...

The number of calories burnt from **30 minutes of gardening** compares with playing badminton, volleyball or practising yoga.

Earlier this year a group of residents at Cradoc Close, Brecon, worked with Keep Wales Tidy to create a community food growing garden.

Over three days in March 2022, they worked hard to create the garden, learning to lay wildflower turf, planting fruit trees, and building a wildlife area for slowworms and hedgehogs.

Sylvia Williams, who has lived on Cradoc Close for 23 years, said: “It took a lot of hard work to clear the plot but it was worth it. We are beginners at gardening and are learning as we go along.

“Working on the allotment brings the community together. It is already helping those

neighbours who live alone and those who are struggling with their mental health.

“We haven’t benefitted from our planting yet, but we are all looking forward to when we do. We have met some amazing people who have helped.

“With the cost of living rising it will help us to grow our own. We are growing vegetables and fruit for the community and, if we have any produce left over, we can donate it to the local foodbank.

“It’s not only a garden, it’s a meeting place, where people can come and sit and enjoy the quiet and the wildlife.”

WHAT GARDENERS SAY:

“We grow a fair bit of fruit and veg. We put what we can’t use in a box on the street for local people to take. Helping others gives us a feel good mood.”

K Burnand, Prestatyn



PUZZLES

In this edition our puzzles are just for fun so please **do not** post your completed puzzles to us this time.

Wordsearch

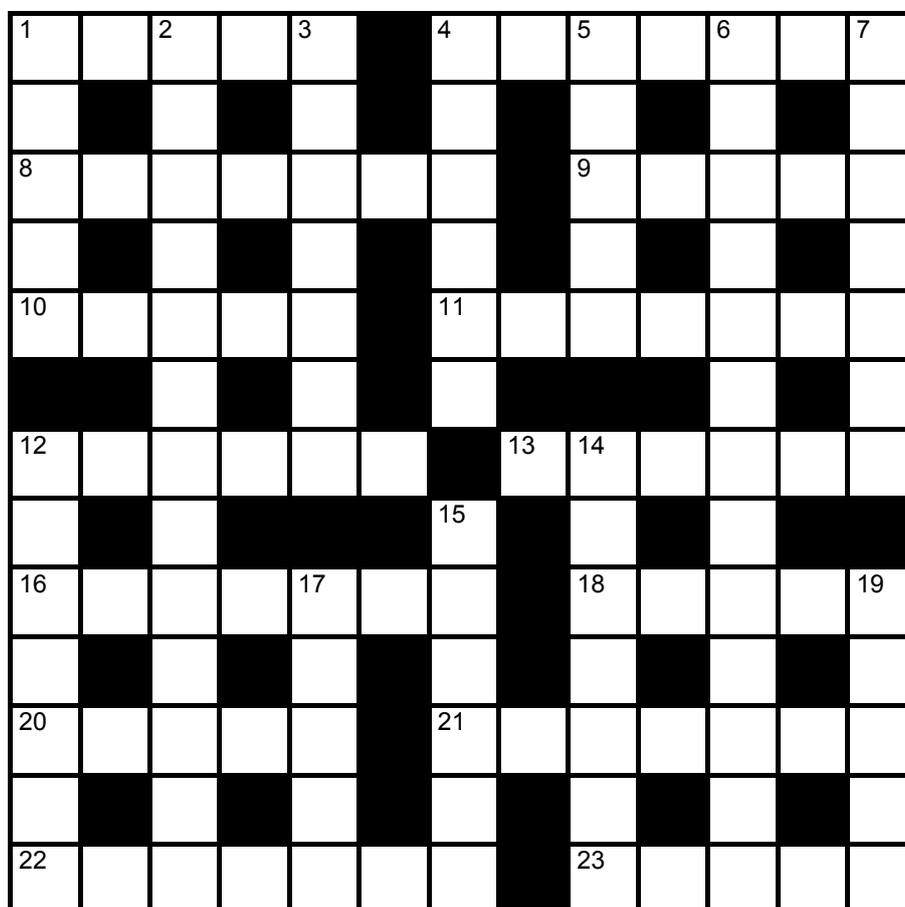
H	A	R	T	W	F	M	G	A	R	D	E	N	T	H
I	S	H	S	B	A	C	E	L	K	B	E	A	C	H
C	H	O	Y	F	H	V	F	L	O	E	M	X	Z	D
E	W	L	F	L	O	W	E	R	S	K	H	O	O	T
C	A	I	R	H	C	V	R	S	T	W	A	P	E	S
R	R	D	I	U	Z	E	F	Q	S	B	T	F	U	X
E	M	A	G	X	M	L	S	U	U	H	Y	N	D	U
A	D	Y	E	M	S	D	P	A	R	R	G	O	H	T
M	S	D	U	F	N	I	P	R	F	L	Y	E	A	M
U	P	S	L	E	D	F	U	N	A	B	J	E	P	N
T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

- FLOWERS
- OUTDOORS
- SWIM
- HAT
- HAPPY
- SUMMER
- FRIENDS
- BEACH
- GARDEN
- WARM
- WAVES
- SURF
- LOTION
- CAMP
- SUNGLASSES
- ICE CREAM
- HOLIDAY
- FUN

Sudoku

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

Crossword



Across

- 1 Range of mountains (5)
 4 Defendant in a criminal proceeding (7)
 8 Break into many pieces (7)
 9 Lascivious looks (5)
 10 One of the two main branches of orthodox Islam (5)
 11 Disciple (7)
 12 Fail to fulfil a promise (6)
 13 Flower, the source of saffron (6)
 16 Gliding on ice (7)
 18 Small areas of land surrounded by water (5)
 20 Biting flies (5)
 21 Former province of northern Ethiopia (7)
 22 Innocent, without fault (7)
 23 Fashion (5)

Down

- 1 Instances (5)
 2 Repeatedly (5,3,5)
 3 Zilch, zero (7)
 4 Pilot of a plane (6)
 5 Stringed instrument (5)
 6 In a stunning way (13)
 7 Cleaning cloths (7)
 12 Hands in one's notice (7)
 14 Dried grapes (7)
 15 Female monster (6)
 17 Emerge (5)
 19 Platform (5)



Fun things to do

with your family this summer

Spending more money on essentials means there's less cash available for fun stuff. With the summer holidays starting, here are some free things to do to entertain your family.

Learn something new at a free gallery or museum

Wales has seven national museums which are all free and offer a wealth of fun and interesting things to do. In Cardiff there is the National Museum and the St Fagans National Museum of History, which is set in 100 acres of parkland, and is a popular choice to see craftsmen demonstrate their traditional skills.

There is also the National Wool Museum at Drefach Felindre, near Newcastle Emlyn; Big Pit National Coal Museum, Blaenafon; the National Waterfront Museum, Swansea; the National Slate Museum, Llanberis and the National Roman Legion Museum in Caerleon, nr Newport. They often hold special events through the holidays so check museum.wales for more information. There may be parking costs at the museums - check before you travel.

Keep fit for free

Parkruns are free, weekly, community events taking place in parks and open spaces across Wales. Saturday morning events are 5k and Sundays are 2k junior

parkruns for children aged four to 14. To find out the nearest event near you and register to join in visit parkrun.org.uk

It's also worth checking your local council websites for opportunities, some offer free swimming lessons for children, for example. Just search for your local council name and summer activities online.

Picnic in the park

Why not pack up a couple of sandwiches and explore your nearest country park. There are thousands of acres of lush and beautiful parks to enjoy. Some favourites are Bryngarw Country Park, near Bridgend, Bute Park behind Cardiff Castle, Tŷ Mawr Country Park near Cefn Mawr in Wrexham, Margam Country Park near Port Talbot, Pembrey Country Park, Carmarthenshire and Penglais Nature Park, Aberystwyth.

Visit a castle

This September, more than 150 of Wales' historic sites, landmarks and hidden gems will offer visitors free entry, events or guided tours as part of the Open Doors

— Wales' initiative. Funded and organised by Cadw, the festival encourages people to explore some of the country's lesser-known and smaller-scale sites.

To find out more visit cadw.gov.wales/visit/whats-on/open-doors

One that is free all year with amazing hilltop views is Dryslwyn Castle in Carmarthen. visitwales.com/attraction/castle/dryslwyn-castle-cadw-1843262

Dolphin spotting

If you live near Cardigan Bay, or are visiting the area this summer, say hello to the resident dolphins, porpoises and seals. If you're patient and lucky you can see them from the clifftop areas around Mwnt or the harbour at Newquay.

Geocaching

All you need is a smartphone with GPS to join in a global game of hide-and-seek. There are more than 180 "hidden treasures/caches" to find in the Brecon Beacons National Park. breconbeacons.org/things-to-do/activities/geocaching-and-orienteering

A day in the life of... a Site Superintendent



Bradley Thompson is one of our Site Superintendents, who work hard every day to make sure our housing sites are well maintained.

Along with a colleague, Brad works on schemes in some areas of Cardiff including Grangetown, Canton, Fairwater, Ely, Llandaff, Caerau, Danescourt, Pontcanna and Culverhouse Cross.

You may have spotted him and his van in your area, cutting grass and hedges, picking up litter or testing fire alarms in our retirement and flat schemes.

How long have you worked for WWH?

Coming up to 20 years in October. Time flies actually, it feels more like 10 years. When I started, I was working by myself across several schemes. Now I work as part of a team, covering more schemes, including Hope Court, Doyle Court, Restways, Rowan Court, Westlee, Sir David's and Lord Pontypridd House.

What does your job involve?

I'm responsible for all aspects of grounds maintenance, to make sure our schemes are looking tidy.

That ranges from cutting grass and hedges, pruning trees and cutting back others to clearing overgrown and neglected gardens.

I make sure all the communal paths and flower beds are free from moss and weeds and litter. I also make sure the bin stores are kept clear and free of rubbish or litter.

It's also my job to make sure the fire alarms at some of the larger retirement schemes are tested and in good working order to keep residents safe.

What does a typical day/week involve?

Our team works on a rota to visit schemes once every 10 days. This is linked to the bin days in different areas, so I can go and check everything is clean and tidy after the bin men have been. We also have a rota for testing the fire alarms.

The workload also changes with the seasons. For example, during summer my work is mostly grass cutting as it grows so quickly. In autumn, it's a combination of hedge cutting and grass cutting. There are laws we have to follow

which means we cannot cut hedges during the main breeding season for nesting birds, which usually runs from March to August each year. And even outside of these times, we have to be careful and check for nests. Most of our tree lopping and pruning work is carried out in winter, unless there is an imminent danger to residents.

What do you least like about your job?

Quite often I find I have to clean out plastic bags full of food waste out of the food collection bins in the bin stores. Local councils will only collect food waste if it is put in the green biodegradable waste bags. If it's in a plastic bag, the council will not collect them so we have to take them out and put them in the general waste. I also spend a lot of time clearing waste from the floors around the communal bins - again the council will not collect any rubbish unless it's put in the bins. If residents put their waste in the bins provided, it would mean that the team and I would spend less time on site and the service charges would be less for residents.

What do you most enjoy?

I enjoy working as part of an effective team and leaving a scheme looking a lot nicer than it was when I arrived. It gives me satisfaction knowing I have helped residents who are vulnerable and unable to carry out tasks for themselves

When we're working on site and a resident comes up and praises our good work, it gives me a real buzz!



We have recently completed our first new homes in the county town of Carmarthen in West Wales.

The 4 new houses and 2 flats at Clos Y Porthmyn, Abergwili, Carmarthenshire, are close to local schools and Carmarthen Museum. Residents started moving in in June.

See page 13 for more information.