



**WELSH
HOUSING
AWARDS
2017**

**GOOD PRACTICE
COMPENDIUM**

Sharing the lessons learnt from
Welsh Housing Awards 2017



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Welsh Housing Awards 2017 - shortlisted entries

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BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES AWARD

This award recognises organisations that are working to build safer communities by addressing specific problems and supporting people who have experienced those issues. They include partnerships between local authorities, housing associations and relevant non-sector partners/services to address a range of issues, and demonstrate tangible results as a direct result of the action taken.



Linc STRIVE

Linc Cymru Housing Association

Domestic abuse remains one of the most un-reported crimes in the UK. Victims often feel isolated, may not recognise that what they're experiencing is domestic abuse and can be unsure of how, or too afraid, to access support. As a housing provider, Linc were in a unique position to help victims. The service was initially developed in 2015, since that time, Linc has continually re-assessed the service to ensure it meets tenants needs. Today, the service is known as Linc STRIVE. The service has been embedded as a core business function having achieved numerous successful outcomes. The aim is to reach out to those people affected by domestic abuse, offer help and support to assist them to live fear free. The project has not only supported tenants, it has supported staff and provided support and guidance to other departments e.g HR in cases of staff disclosure.

Making a difference: "Thank you for everything you've done. I love my home and didn't want to have to move and uproot my son from his school. I feel it's now safe for me and my son and I feel empowered to help others going through what I've been through"

Linc STRIVE ensures those who experience domestic abuse receive an effective response, and that when they're ready, they know where to seek any help and support. The number of domestic abuse cases dealt with by Linc has risen dramatically to one of the most prolific issues faced by so many tenants. Linc is committed to building safe, strong and resilient communities and therefore dedicated resources to Linc STRIVE to ensure

Linc could influence positive outcomes for victims. The resources include a specialist domestic abuse case officer, case management system, target hardening budget and a supportive Community Safety Team who can also provide advice and specialist legal advice in cases where action is required against perpetrators.

Making a difference: 'Having one member of staff to deal with really makes a difference, not telling my story over and over'

Linc STRIVE operates effective case management carried out by Linc's Community Empowerment Officer, Kerry Lee. This influences positive outcomes for victims. It can make the difference between someone continuing to engage with services and feeling they have the resilience and support they need to end an abusive relationship. The initial support package offered is a comprehensive framework based on a tenant's needs. It includes a DASH risk assessment, advice, guidance and reassurance. Support networks are established and improved personal and home security (target hardening) is facilitated. Where alternative accommodation is required, assistance and support are provided. Regular contact is maintained and reporting is encouraged, in some cases reporting on tenants behalf. The importance of safeguarding and other services e.g Police are highlighted.

Making a difference: "I didn't know all this (target hardening) even existed. I suffer with anxiety and they really help"

Partnership working is a key feature; facilitating appropriate referrals to specialist agencies, external and internal support programmes, MARAC attendance and DACC (Daily Domestic Abuse Conference Call) screening. Tenants are informed where to seek legal advice and the Community Safety Team assist in cases where action against the perpetrator is appropriate e.g. injunction / possession of property.

Linc STRIVE cases remains open until all outstanding tenancy matters are resolved e.g. repairs, and that the action plan is complete. Exit interviews are conducted and tenants feel assured about how to re-engage with the service.

Making a difference: 'In the beginning I didn't really know why you were coming. But now I'm so glad you were there to support me'

Outcomes and achievements:

Linc STRIVE has successfully influenced positive outcomes for victims through its dedicated officer offering a tailored support package based on tenant need. Support was offered in 168 cases of domestic abuse in its first 2 years, almost trebling the number of cases dealt with in the preceding 2 years. Linc STRIVE's engagement with tenants has increased resilience, well-being, independence, and ultimately, assists individuals to live fear free.

Making a difference: "I am really happy I've moved, I feel like I can relax now, thank you for all your help"

STRIVE Outcomes:

- Feeling safer
- Less likely to move from property/community and support networks
- Where a move is required, quick and safe assistance provided
- Early awareness of help and support available
- Single point of contact
- Reduces risk and prevents abuse escalating
- Tailored support based on tenant need
- Co-ordinated response between agencies
- Increased well-being
- Builds a trusting relationship between landlord and tenant

Making a difference: 'I feel so much safer in my home with everything you've put in place. I feel prepared for when he comes out of prison'

Linc is a Free From Fear project member www.freefromfear.cymru The toolkit will include Linc's good practice example on case management.

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Information sharing for safer communities

Trivallis with South Wales Police and Cardiff Council

Trivallis provides nearly 11,000 homes to over 12,000 customers in Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT). RCT has the second largest population of all local authority areas within Wales.

Trivallis' dedicated community safety team (comprised of 1 manager and 4 officers) works closely with partner organisations such as the South Wales Police (SWP) and South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner to tackle issues of anti-social behaviour (ASB). The Information Sharing Pilot

Information sharing has always been a core element of effective partnership working, with a significant step forward being taken through the enactment of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Despite the provisions of the Act, information sharing has remained one of the more contentious topics for organisations managing crime and ASB; with huge discrepancies across the UK.

Trivallis, SWP, South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner and Cardiff Council developed an information sharing pilot to address this issue, with the aim of intervening early to improve the safety of those in areas affected by criminal activity and ASB.

The pilot involves the uploading of address lists onto the niche system; SWP ASB co-ordinators then extract any cases involving Trivallis and provide a summary of the incident via a secure email address on a daily basis.

The data is sent through in excel format and falls into 1 of 3 categories:

1. Welfare
2. Updating ongoing cases
3. Creating new cases

Since October 2016, 3295 incidents have been shared. The information is cleansed to include only those cases which are related to Trivallis properties. During this time, there have been over 1000.

When data is received, it is reviewed by Trivallis so any reoccurring issues can be identified easily. Interventions in the form of collaborative working with housing managers are then undertaken where suitable.

This has led to effective action and intervention, resulting in an improved service and safety within the communities. It has also reduced the risk of ongoing ASB behaviour for both SWP and Trivallis.

One example of this in action occurred when SWP were receiving reports that a Trivallis male tenant would regularly cause a disturbance in a local car park whilst intoxicated. This was initially treated as ASB and Trivallis was made aware of the incidents via the data transfer tool. As a result, the team carried out a door knocking exercise and discovered there were overwhelming feelings of concerns for the male from the community.

Trivallis was subsequently informed via the data transfer tool that the reports had abruptly stopped and therefore a joint visit was carried out to the male. Upon the visit, it was apparent that he was vulnerable and had substance misuse issues; through joint working the male signed up to Trivallis' tenancy support program.

The above is just one example of the way in which the data transfer tool both addresses community feelings of safety and concern whilst also providing earlier intervention and support to tenants.

This pilot fits the remit of Future Generations and Wellbeing for 'Right intervention at the right time with an emphasis on prevention' and proves that information sharing can and does have a positive impact on Community Safety.

Moving forward, Trivallis is working to find solutions that enable actions taken via Trivallis' case management system, Locality, to be sent directly back to the police as they happen. This will ensure service delivery is joined-up at the frontline.

The data transfer tool has been instrumental in dealing with longer term problems and has yielded some very positive results. It acts as a safety net, ensuring that relevant information is shared; allowing persistent low-level cases to be identified and effectively managed by both organisations.

Outcomes and achievements:

Over 1000 cases have been shared between SWP and Trivallis via the pilot, since October 2016.

A Trivallis customer was identified by the community as being responsible for ASB and alleged drug dealing. SWP had intelligence reports and warrants were carried out at the property, however SWP were not receiving any reports from the community.

This didn't mirror information that Trivallis was receiving from residents, insinuating neighbours feared repercussions of reporting incidents to the police.

The data transfer tool was critical in identifying the discrepancy in reporting, this began information sharing between Trivallis and SWP.

Trivallis, SWP and the council worked in partnership to gain a closure order on the property. The tenant subsequently gave up the tenancy which meant the surrounding community was much safer.

The tenant was offered support by Trivallis for the issues identified

Bonnie Navara, Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner, said: **"This is an innovative, sustainable solution to sharing information between the Police and the housing sector which is showing real success. It's the first time this has been done in the UK and we're excited to see how it can improve the identification of vulnerable people and further prevent issues escalating at the earliest opportunity."**

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Stronger families safer communities

Charter Housing (Pobl Group)

At Charter Housing we have a passion for working with people to build confidence, self-esteem and belief to achieve successful, happy, resilient people and safer communities. A specialist Young People and Families team works with people to increase awareness and knowledge on how to positively impact their own lives, by establishing strategies and developing skills for life.

The team work with vulnerable people, many of whom may have experienced domestic abuse, adverse childhood experiences, substance misuse or been victims or perpetrators of anti-social behaviour. The wellbeing of people is central to the approach, building projects organically and adapting to meet changing demands in a community, encouraging a sense of belonging and connection to others. The team aim to address specific problems and support people by removing barriers to engagement, providing appropriate services early, before a crisis is reached.

Projects co-exist providing a wrap-around support network, addressing health, wellbeing and skills development. Adopting an asset-based community development approach Charter can identify and mitigate risks of adverse childhood experiences. Believing in people's strengths and abilities, the team nurture them to build capacity and confidence to achieve a positive outcome.

Project highlights:

OK Kids - A parenting project that originated from neighbour complaints of very young children out on the streets late into the evening unsupervised. Welfare concerns generated conflict between neighbours. OK Kids provides a non-judgemental confidential approach working in the home with families to develop strategies and techniques to deal with children's challenging behaviour. The approach benefits the whole family and wider community, with a focus to identify and mitigate the risks of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs),

supporting the family to find root-causes and underlying needs rather than treating the reactive behaviour.

Karma Kids group workshops - These centre around health, wellbeing and mindfulness, learning skills together as a family, and having support from OK Kids to establish the techniques back in the home. Workshops have a positive impact on the reduction of stress, chaotic thoughts and levels of anxiety.

Growing Together - A partnership with Gingerbread, which focuses on the personal and social development of young single parents aged 14-25 in all areas of their life, of which parenting is just one. It provides opportunities that motivate and inspire parents to make positive choices about the next stage of their lives. Through participation, they develop confidence and self-efficacy to set achievable goals and are fully supported to work towards them.

'People think that when you're a young mum you are like the stereotype, but I'm not. Growing Together has given me the opportunity to better myself before I'm able to work. Employers will see that I did stuff, I didn't just sit at home living off benefits, I want to be a good role model to my child.'

'Some young women have experienced domestic violence that damaged their confidence and self-esteem. Growing Together is nurturing as well as offering tools to learn self-help strategies. They literally couldn't have done what they do now a year ago.' (Referrer)

Brothers – A project that works with young men aged 15-25 building confidence, resilience, tackling issues such as domestic abuse, mental health and inequality. Developed to tackle a community safety concern around levels of domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, Brothers challenges stereotypes and the macho culture which is putting pressure on young men to conform, suppress feelings and 'to man up!' subsequently leading to high levels of anti-social behaviour, violence, gender inequality, poor mental health and suicide amongst young men. Brothers encourages young men who may have ACEs and limited male role models to be a part of a positive social action group, changing attitudes and behaviours through a peer-led delivery and 1-2-1 mentoring approach.

Outcomes and achievements:

OK Kids: 162 families engaged

- 92% more confident coping with and managing their children's behaviour
- 89% reduction in feelings of social isolation
- 91% improvement in behaviour of children within the home and local community
- 92% improvement in health/well-being.

<http://www.charterhousing.co.uk/parenting-project-makes-positive-impact-on-our-tenants-lives/>

Karma Kids: 49 engaged

- 78% report gaining strategies that help them stay calm in stressful situations
- 89% increased their confidence in managing the emotional wellbeing of themselves and their family
- 89% feel better able to cope with feelings of anxiety and low moods.

www.karmakids.blog

Growing Together: 182 young parents participated

- 93 positive progressions
- 57 currently engaged.

<https://vimeo.com/199807611> Password: GROWING2017

<https://stepsintothefuture.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Jessica-Hemmings-English.pdf>

'Growing Together has had a huge impact on young parents. They report the project has enabled them to grow and change their lives for the better. Encouraging peer support networks that flourish outside the project will mean that Growing Together leaves a legacy that will continue to reduce social isolation experienced by many young parents, enabling them to move forward, together.' (External Evaluator, July 2017)

Brothers: 46 young men engaged

- developed a domestic abuse digital forum theatre resource.
- 100% increased knowledge and understanding of Domestic abuse
- 100% felt workshop will have a positive influence on their behaviour

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ui8HnfO4Ric>

<http://www.charterhousing.co.uk/faqs/we-are-the-aspirations-youth-team/>

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CAMPAIGNS, COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

This award showcases organisations that recognise the important role that both communicating change and advocating for communities plays in providing housing services. The entries demonstrate effective and high level engagement with tenants or residents, and/or the public at large.



The experience of Universal Credit: a tenant's perspective

Housing Studies, Cardiff Metropolitan University with Community Housing Cymru

Cardiff Metropolitan University's Housing Studies Team was commissioned by CHC, through funding from The Oak Foundation, to undertake a piece of research into the impact of Universal Credit in Wales. The culmination of this work was the publication 'The experience of Universal Credit: a tenant's perspective' which is the first academic research on this topic in Wales.

The approach taken within the research was one of peer-research, where members of the target research group (in this case tenants and claimants) adopted the role of active researchers. Peer researchers facilitated focus groups which consisted on tenants between 18 and 60 who were claiming or eligible for UC. Through these groups, 7 peer researchers engaged with 19% of the sample population.

The core findings of the research were that 94% of participants had received information about UC, but that 91% of them had a negative view of the new benefit. Tenants highlighted that the wait for money causes anxiety and that several participants were using foodbanks as a direct result of these waiting times.

"I live week by week, when it happens we'll be in dire straits"

Engagement with their landlord was also discussed. Letters were the most frequently used method of communication between landlord and tenants about rent or benefits, however the issue of literacy came up frequently within the focus groups.

This issue of communication between landlord and tenant was a key finding of the research. Tenants highlighted that formal letters for rent arrears are ineffective and discouraged them from contacting the association. Instead, tenants asked for letters that were:

"gentle, kind, a personal reminder"

"tender"

"just remember that these are human beings sat in their home...what's going on in their life"

The publication outlines key points to consider around the findings:

- Impact and effectiveness of formal rent arrears process
- Management, communication of UC, timing and support
- Re-setting of the relationship between landlord and tenant, and how to move closer to tenants

How does it meet the criteria?

This publication has been central to driving discussions within the sector around the role and format of the formal rent arrears process. Using the voices of tenants, it has effectively promoted discussions about working practices and approaches within the sector. The research team have also facilitated conversations around innovation and best practice.

Specific objectives were met by the activity...

The aim of the research was to try and understand the tenants' experience of UC, and barriers to engagement with landlords.

Through undertaking a peer research approach, the authentic voice of claimants and tenants is captured within the publication providing the sector with an understanding of UC from a tenant's perspective. The research outlines a number of barriers between landlord and tenants, and suggests points for organisations to consider to address these.

The accompanying section of outcomes shows a high level of engagement from the intended audience of the research. The publication is still gaining momentum, with invites to present the findings from across the UK.

A creative approach to getting a message across

Paul Langley, former Head of Business Development for CHC's Your Benefits are Changing project, welcomed the report's findings. He said: **"This report is the first of its kind about the impact of Universal Credit (UC) from tenants' perspectives, uniquely undertaken by tenants themselves. CHC's members are actively working to mitigate the impact of UC and, while it's heartening to read the praise for support staff from tenants, there is a lot we can learn from this research."**

Outcomes and achievements:

The publication has had a positive response with the sector with the authors being invited to a variety of sector events outlined below.

- The research was launched in the Senedd sponsored by Jane Bryant AM and attended by a variety of tenants, sector professionals, and AMs.
- Two CHC fora
- CHC Annual Conference 2016
- Three visits to housing associations to discuss the research and how it could be applied in their organisations
- Two organisations have halted their restructure of rent arrears and income recovery following engagement with the research
- Researchers are working with Welsh Government on the format of rent arrears letters
- A seminar has been delivered as part of a Shelter Cymru event
- The following events are planned for the future:
 - Presentation of the research to the National Federation Northern Ireland conference
 - Attendance at Shelter Cymru conference
 - Event at the House of Commons to present the research

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BIG day out

Cartrefi Conwy

The BIG day out is Cartrefi Conwy's annual tenant fun day. But it is much more than just a 'fun' day. The aim of the day is to engage with over 1000 tenants regarding key business objectives, but the tenants would never know it. Cartrefi Conwy works really hard to make sure tenants have an interactive, exciting, fun-filled day with their family whilst giving them valuable information to support them.

The event always includes fire breathers, acrobats, aerial acts, free runners, street dancers, stilt walkers, face painters, circus workshops, football and rugby sessions with high profile teams, wrestling, creepy crawlies, musical shows (previously featured Joe Woolford and Richard and Adam), lots of inflatable fun, climbing walls (the list goes on).

But in addition to all this 'fun stuff' the BIG day out always has a serious message.

Cartrefi Conwy co-ordinates a range of interactions with tenants. Here are just a few examples:

- A walk around the 'house of horrors' filled with dangerous objects that have been collected from tenants over the years to get people thinking about safety in their home.
- A selfie facebook competition with famous people to encourage tenants to sign up to voices @cartrefi and have their say whilst increasing facebook followers.
- Building a dream home out of scrap materials to promote Cartrefi Conwy's new developments.
- Treasure hunts to promote content insurance.
- Candy floss give-aways to encourage tenants to take part in the tenant satisfaction survey.
- Encouraging tenants to sign-up to the online portal through a photobooth competition.
- 'Messy' art competition to promote gas safety.

The BIG day out has gone from strength to strength over the past couple of years and last year nearly 1000 tenants took part on the day.

The event planning starts in January every year and there is a small but dedicated project planning group with representatives from all areas of the business (including their apprentices) that lead on specific areas of work. However, ALL colleagues get stuck in; whether its hand delivering the invites to tenants, litter picking on the day, car park attending, looking after their stands or dressed as "mascots" at the event.

A number of external standholders are invited to the event and last year this resulted in 30 partner organisations attending.

Feedback given by the partner organisations:

- **"We found the event to be very successful in terms of engagement, raising awareness, and feedback to consider in the messages we need to deliver in promoting current events"**
– Conwy County Borough Council Events team
- **"The event was very successful with 33 people showing interest in the courses"**
– Grwp Llandrillo Menai
- **"Interacted with over 150 people"**
– SP Energy Networks
- **"Engaged with 127 families"**
– Illegal Money Lending team
- **"Very successful. Over 250 people engaged with in total, with around 150 beach bags made. More detailed information provided to 27 adults"** – Communities First
- **"One of the most visited stands we have had with an estimated 102 people visiting our stands with most enquiring about our services"**
– Credit Union

The BIG day out really gives us the chance to interact and engage with our tenants in a fun and 'stress free' environment. The event is totally free of charge (including lunch). All our 'key messages' on the day are 'serious' (gas safety, fire safety, contents insurance, property condition, rent arrears, debt, benefits, child safety etc) but we deliver these messages in fun and interactive ways.

We have had lots of positive feedback from the tenants:

"I would like to thank you for a fantastic day and to all staff present, they were very helpful, and all the exhibitors"

"Thank you ever so much for a wonderful day".

"I would like to thank you all so much for a wonderful day out at Eirias Park. I am sure a great day was had by all. The staff and everyone involved in making the day happen were all wonderful, and very helpful to the tenants who went out on the completely free day out, once again many thanks on behalf of myself and all who had a lovely day"

"Well Done"

"It was a fantastic day hopefully you have one next year I will be attending definitely"

"Thank you for a lovely day. Your staff were kind and helpful. We had a great time and were very very impressed. Congratulations for a fantastic ' day out ' and a job well done ! :)"

You can watch the highlights of last year's BIG day out here: <https://vimeo.com/186390320>

Outcomes and achievements:

The BIG day out is the highlight of Cartrefi Conwy's event calendar and attracts in excess of 1000 tenants every year. Everyone at Cartrefi Conwy gets 'stuck in' to making the event a massive success, culminating in winning the event of the year at last year's Community Housing Cymru Communications and PR Awards.

This event enables Cartrefi Conwy to truly engage with tenants in a fun and interactive way and has proved to be a fantastic way to get key messages to tenants.

Stand-holders (from a range of partner organisations) recorded nearly 3000 effective engagements (i.e. they signed up to something or agreed to receive further information etc) with tenants last year alone and demand from external organisations to attend increases year on year.

Each year a theme is chosen for the event. In 2016 it was 'Home Rewards' to promote a new tenant incentive scheme. This year the theme is 'Get Connected' and the focus will be on encouraging tenants to sign-up to the new Tenant Portal. There will also be a whole 'house of

horrors' to reinforce fire safety messages with tenants.

But first and foremost, this is a fun day for tenants, designed by tenants. In fact tenants took to social media to highlight what a great day they had.

Find out more here: <https://vimeo.com/186390320>

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Persona project

Valleys to Coast Housing

One of Valleys to Coast's (V2C) key principles is to put 'customers at the heart' of everything the organisation does. The challenge is knowing who customers are. V2C has tried many ways to keep tenant profiling data up to date but this can be an onerous and time consuming task.

V2C believes that it is vital to know your customers: their cultural background, aspirations, needs, habits and experiences. If you understand why your customers do what they do and what problems they might face while interacting with your service, you have a greater chance of improving your customer's overall experience.

Last year V2C worked with Satori Labs to develop Customer Personas. These were prepared using information and insights gathered during interviews with real customers in their homes. The aim was to understand the customer's life and lifestyle, and understand what, when, how and why they use the services of V2C. A member of Satori Lab independently interviewed a range of different people from different households to identify the main groups of customers.

Annette Hennessey

Communications and Marketing Manager

Cartrefi Conwy

Even from this task V2C learned how quickly the tenant data had become out of date. V2C also wanted to target those tenants who don't normally get involved with the organisation and hear all of their views whether good or bad.

Workshops were put on to discuss with all staff what the project was, to discuss the different Personas identified and consider if there were any other 'groups' of customers to look into. Staff were able to feed in their experience and look at ways that they could use the Personas in their service area.

From all the information collected Satori Lab created 8 Personas, fictional characters created by using the main characteristics of the major customer groups identified:

1. Amanda
2. Brenda
3. Chris
4. George
5. Jenny and Mike (and Buster the Dog!)
6. Jess
7. Marta and Tomek
8. Mary and David

Just identifying the Personas wasn't enough. To make sure the message got across and staff didn't forget them all staff members were given a pack of cards. Each card has different personas which gives background into their situation, lifestyle and ambitions, as well as the ways in which they would like to engage, how they pay their bills and how digitally included they are.

The Personas have also been made into life-size cut outs and large canvases which are placed around the V2C offices as a constant reminder to think about them and the services V2C provide. This gives staff another 'tool' to use when reviewing services, policies or new project

ideas to make sure that the effect to different groups of customers is considered.

Since the Personas have been introduced they have been used in updating policies and strategies, such as the Tenant Participation Strategy as well as pushing the agenda for V2C's 'Forward Programme'. This is an exciting new programme of work that will take place over the next 18 months - it will modernise the business, make V2C more efficient and bring about changes to the way services are delivered and introduce new ways for customers to engage and interact.

Paul Ryall-Friend, Director of Operations and Executive sponsor of the programme said, **"The Personas we have developed will be used to ensure the changes we introduce meet both the needs and the preferences of our diverse customer base and allows them to choose how they want to transact with us. Understanding our customers in this way will help us develop tailored and different communications to these groups to ensure they know about these changes and what it means for them."**

Outcomes and achievements:

The Persona Project aims were to identify V2C's customers and produce a number of Personas that show staff the different lifestyles, ambitions, expectations that customers have as well as what they expect from the services they receive. Over 150 staff were issued with Persona cards to use as a toolkit and staff have been using the persona cards when reviewing services, policies and new projects. In designing new communications or reviewing a project, the questions are asked 'Is George going to be able to take part?' or 'Will Marta be able to understand the leaflet?'

The project has since been used to push internal projects that maximise the way V2C deliver services and communicate, through the Forward Programme, this will be rolled out over the next 18 months. It has also been used to identify key areas that V2C need to address as part of the Tenant Participation Strategy. A further outcome from the project was the emphasis on tenant data and how out of date it was, to address this in more detail the Scrutiny Panel are currently investigating 'How well do V2C know their tenants?'

More outcomes will come from the project over the next few years.

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This award recognises contractors who have shown a commitment to embedding benefits to the community into their work programmes. They will have shown creativity and will have embraced the wider targeted recruitment and training agenda. They will have a range of practical examples of how they have delivered corporate social responsibility objectives to enhance the lives of Welsh communities.



Building futures in Flintshire

Wates Residential with Flintshire County Council, Communities First, Futureworks Wales

Embedding Community Benefits: Wates Residential was appointed by Flintshire County Council in 2015 as a strategic partner to deliver 500 much needed homes across the county by 2020, known as SHARP – Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme. Working together the organisations co-produced the 'Regeneration Framework' that not only set targets but also set up a whole monitoring and auditing regime focussing on regeneration to the economy, benefits to the community and contribution to education. Each month a report is produced detailing impact and outcomes to date, showing a Social Return on Investment.

Local Impact: Since works started on site in May 2016, an amazing £8.9m worth of economic, environment and social value has been generated through all targeted programmes as detailed below:

TR&T: Flintshire County Council entered into an agreement with Futureworks Wales, a Community Interest Company, to introduce a 'Shared Apprentice Academy'. The academy has maximised the creation of skilled jobs which is needed over the next five years to not only deliver the SHARP new build programme but also the WHQS refurbishment programmes. To date it has employed 11 apprentices.

The biggest success so far has been the Building Futures Programme. This innovative training programme was delivered in conjunction with Communities First. 11 local candidates were recruited through the Welsh Government's 'LIFT' initiative. The programme provides jobseekers with practical construction skills trade sessions (e.g. carpentry and brickwork) as well as CV and interview workshops with Wates and its supply chain partners. The candidates received a full set of personal protective equipment and were given the opportunity to take a CSCS test to help them in securing future training and work experience on building sites.

Launched by Wates in 2005, Building Futures is accredited by the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and has so far seen more than 1,000 jobseekers gain work experience across the UK.

To ensure that candidates got the most out of this Building Futures Programme, Wates ring-fenced opportunities for LIFT candidates who were enrolled onto pre-course support programmes. This helped candidates to be 'work ready' and because of this, they were able to successfully complete the programme without any barriers. This upfront work in partnership with LIFT ensured a 100% pass rate of all candidates.

Eight of the candidates have now secured positions with local companies following completion. The remaining three individuals are continuing to receive support from LIFT and Communities First Flintshire to secure employment.

"The Building Futures course was really good for me and I managed to get some qualifications I never thought I would. This has meant I can now start this job with Wates and get some experience which will hopefully lead to more opportunities for me in the future. Without this opportunity through LIFT and Communities First, this would never have happened and they are still there to support, which is great".

Richard Morgan, Building Futures Candidate

The programme has been such a success at getting long term unemployed local people back into employment that the Welsh Government funded a second programme through LIFT and Communities First.

Benefitting the Welsh economy: A key driver was to ensure that not only local SME businesses benefitted from the council's investment but also micro-businesses. Wates worked with Flintshire County Council's business team to create opportunities for these micro-businesses that would not normally have the resource or capacity to take in larger packages. Teaming up these businesses with our regular SME supply chain not only provided them with the security of work but also provided them with help and advice on securing further opportunities. This was facilitated by Sell2Wales and through local Social Enterprises.

Outcomes and achievements:

Since the SHARP scheme commenced 15 months ago, some fantastic results have been achieved working as a partnership:

- 343 local people have benefitted from employment and training initiatives through Building Futures, apprenticeships, employment opportunities and employment through SMEs.
- Creation of Shared Apprenticeship Scheme with 11 apprentices employed including creating a new role and co-funding the salary of a Scheme Manager.
- 3,709 employment weeks created for local people.
- 60 students supported through education activities

such as work experience and school visits.

- £4.4m spent with local SMEs.
- £20k spent with local social enterprises.
- 4,455 volunteering hours by Wates and Flintshire County Council staff donated to supporting 20 local causes including visiting local schools, sponsoring a football team and a dementia friendly initiative.
- 73% of Building Futures candidates secured full time employment on completion.
- Exceeded contract KPIs with 100% compliance of CITB benchmarks.
- Bespoke Community Investment Plans co-produced for each individual site taking into account the regeneration priorities for each area.

In essence, it is ensured that every penny of the money invested in housing is spent effectively and in a way that delivers the most benefit to people and their communities.

Liam Manton

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Walters Terrace

Keepmoat Regeneration with Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association

Community: it's the heart of what we do.

At Keepmoat Regeneration, part of the ENGIE Group, communities are at the heart of the organisation's work. This goes beyond bricks and mortar, Keepmoat recognises that it is hugely important to support local people and make a difference to people's lives.

Keepmoat fully integrate within communities and work closely with residents and partners to leave a long-term positive impact. In the last year, the organisation has dedicated over £12,000 to community and charity projects in South Wales.

Keepmoat is committed to providing employment and training opportunities for local people, with 40% of the workforce in the region being either trainees or apprentices.

From assemblies to site visits they work with schools and colleges to inform them of the dangers of playing on building sites and inspire the next generation of construction talent.

Case Study – Walters Terrace

Keepmoat Regeneration was appointed by Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association to build a £2.5million housing development in Aberfan, South Wales.

The Walters Terrace development consists of 23 homes, a mixture of flats and family houses for affordable rent. The scheme includes seven homes especially adapted to meet the mobility needs of residents.

As well as bringing much-needed new homes to the area, the scheme has enabled Keepmoat Regeneration to provide employment/training opportunities for local people, including:

- Seven apprenticeships.
- Three work experience placements.
- Construction themed workshops and site visits for local primary schools.
- An Induction to Construction employability Programme in partnership with Communities First, Communities for Work and Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association which provided employability skills workshops and work experience for long-term unemployed people.
- Mock interview sessions to sixth form students in partnership with Careers Wales.

Lee Jones, Community Development Manager at Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association said: **“Keepmoat Regeneration worked with partners to ensure that work placements on the ‘Introduction to Construction’ course were a great success. This resulted in community members gaining qualifications, confidence and full-time employment. They also arranged health and safety awareness sessions and created a bug hotel with our youth group members to assist them with expanding on their community involvement programme. The programme of community events that Keepmoat Regeneration facilitated far exceeded the expectations of the housing association; they are a credit to the building trade.”**

In the last year, Keepmoat Regeneration has dedicated over 1400 man-hours to community/charity projects in south Wales, including:

- School engagement with over 20 schools to provide over 200 sessions including; health and safety presentations and competitions, building bug hotels to highlight environmental issues, bulb planting and design projects including Easter egg painting activities and STEM sessions in partnership with The Eden Education Centre using LEGO.
- Sponsored Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association by donating eight slow cookers for their cooking classes.
- Attended over 40 careers fairs to teach students about careers in construction.
- In partnership with the Business Class, which is part of Careers Wales, Keepmoat collaborated with Blackwood School over a three year period, to provide school engagement opportunities to the entire school, including a design project and employability workshops.
- Staff also took extra qualifications to become ICE Bridge Ambassadors and carried out sessions at Penllwyn Primary School to build a 12ft ICE bridge to promote careers in the construction industry.

- Staff have also fundraised for many charities over the last year, including homelessness charity The Wallich and domestic violence charity Hafan Cymru, as well as the 2017’s corporate nominated charity - Velindre Cancer Centre. Staff took part and arranged activities for these charities including; a golf day, a sky dive, fundraising dinners and hosting a Masquer-aid ball. The team have raised a staggering £35k for charity over the last few years.

Outcomes and achievements:

- Around 40% of Keepmoat’s workforce in south Wales is made up of apprentices and trainees.
- In the last year, over 1400 man-hours have been dedicated to community and charity projects. Staff spend time outside of work and use volunteering days to give back to the community too.
- The value of Keepmoat’s CSR contribution in south Wales for the year is more than £12,000.
- Feedback has been collated from the schools/colleges Keepmoat work with and the satisfaction score currently stands at 99%.
- Positive comments were received too: **“The health and safety talk and bug hotel session were a great success in terms of providing provocations for learning and fun! When the children were asked about what they would like to be when they’re older, four of the children wanted to be builders; building a range of things from houses to monsters that stomp around, showing the sessions had been inspiring too.”** – Headteacher at Westfield Primary and Nursery
- One work experience student gained a trainee position with us. She also won the Traineeship Engagement Learner of the Year Award at the People Plus Awards.
- Over 1000 students from schools local to where Keepmoat are developing homes are now aware of the dangers of construction sites.
- The team has raised £35k for charities over the last year.

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The Mill

Lovell with Tirion and Cadwyn Housing Association

Community, education, employment and sustainability are the four cornerstones of Lovell's commitment to sustainable community benefits. Along with partners Tirion and Cadwyn, Lovell are developing one of Wales' largest ever urban regeneration programmes at The Mill, Canton with 800 new homes. The development is addressing the need for affordable housing as half of the homes will be for discounted rent and social rent managed by Cadwyn for the Tirion Group, whilst the remaining homes be available for the open market sale through Lovell.

Lovell has set-up 'The Mill Employment and Training Group' with representatives from The Prince's Trust, Tirion Group, Cadwyn Housing, Communities First, Careers Wales, Cardiff & Vale College, CITB, Construction Trust, Y Prentis Scheme, Ex Forces Career and Transition Partnership. This group provides a co-ordinated approach to delivering the employment and skills plan and ensures the right interventions are delivered at the right time.

Community projects delivered so far include a highly successful The Prince's Trust 'Get into Construction' programme. The intensive three-week course, gave 16 local unemployed people aged 18-25 the opportunity to improve their employability prospects. Lovell offered general skills including interview and CV writing along with construction specific skills through sampling the various trades wanted at The Mill site, helped them to obtain CSCS cards and to complete Level 1 Health and Safety, First Aid and Manual Handling. After the programme finished, they were interviewed for jobs and training opportunities.

As part of Lovell's commitment to education, the organisation took part in Cardiff Council's 'Open Your Eyes to Careers week', where pupils from local primary schools, Radnor Road, Landsdown, Severn Road and Kitchener received talks about the construction sector.

At Ysgol Gymraeg Treganna on Sanatorium Road a bike shed has been created to securely store all of the school's bikes, tarmacked a new walkway for the safety of parents and guardians as they collect their children and challenged the pupils with a project to name one of the streets on the development – Lovell has certainly received imaginative names! Along with other local businesses, Lovell has donated raffle prizes such as Amazon vouchers and supported the PTA by participating in their golf day to raise funds for the school's minibus, which resulted in a profit of over £900. Lovell's Community Liaison Co-ordinator Bernie, has been busy visiting secondary schools, at Fitzalan where students took part in the 'Lovell House Construction Challenge' and arrangements were made for students from Cantonian to visit The Mill site.

Lovell enjoys getting involved with the community, bringing a new lease of life to the changing rooms at the Jubilee Park in Canton which are unsafe and unusable. They will be ready for local sporting teams of all ages to use throughout the season. Lovell has also supported the Caerau and Ely festival, participated in the 'Give and Gain Initiative' where 5 members of staff volunteered as referees at the Cardiff Blues annual tag rugby festival and raised over £1400 for Cancer Research Wales in the Cardiff Dragon Boat Festival.

Lovell recently hosted its 24th consecutive charity golf day in Whitchurch Golf Club and raised £7250 for Welsh charities Shelter Cymru and Cancer Research Wales. Awareness and money has also been raised for Breast Cancer Wales by hosting an afternoon tea event at Lovell's office.

At The Mill development Lovell are committed to supporting the Welsh economy through encouraging local contractors to become part of the organisation's supply chain. A supply chain event has been held at Cardiff City Stadium, where over 150 people attended and a number of local companies have since been added to Lovell's supply chain and are now working at The Mill.

Outcomes and achievements:

Lovell is committed to leaving a 'Lovell Legacy' through all developments. Over the last 12 months at the Mill this has been achieved by:

- Providing 58 weeks of work experience.
- Ensuring 61% of the total spend equating to £886,516.33 has been secured with Welsh companies.
- Visiting 7 schools within a 2 miles radius to The Mill site.
- Talking to over 500 local school children.
- Creating a job for 21 year old Graduate Site Manager, Jac Evans living locally in Cardiff Bay who was recently was promoted to Assistant Site Manager.

- Providing 16 places on the 'Get into Construction' programme. 13 attendees have completed the programme and will be mentored for a further six months to help them make the most of the experience. 3 trainees have started roles with Lovell's sub-contractors. Kayleigh Nasir, a 22 year old and one of four female trainees has secured a role with a local plastering and dry lining specialist - NTJ Plasterers Ltd. Lizzie Williams secured a job directly with Lovell working as an apprentice carpenter at The Mill. Following the success of this programme, Lovell has decided to run the programme again next year.

Gemma Clissett
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Back into the community campaign

Morganstone Limited

Morganstone established in 2008, is a Welsh SME and Living Wage Employer with offices in Llanelli and Cardiff. Morganstone closely collaborates with housing associations across Wales to develop a range of housing options that meet the needs of local communities. Leaving a legacy and delivering tangible benefits to the local community is a key focus for the company and sits at the heart of every development. This approach is embedded in Morganstone's Corporate Social Responsibility Policy and influences all activities.

Over the last year the impact and reach across Wales within local communities has been wide ranging with housing schemes developed in partnership with many housing associations across Wales including Cardiff Community Housing Association, Linc Cymru, Pobl (Charter, Seren and Gwalia), Trivallis, Rhondda Housing Association, Coastal Housing Group, Wales and West Housing and Pembrokeshire Housing Association.

Morganstone believes the promotion of training, employment and supply chain opportunities within Wales provides employment opportunities and supports the local economy within the communities where the organisation works; whilst having the added benefit of supporting the Welsh economy. Morganstone has continued to work closely with Cyfle and Y-Prentis

increasing the number of apprentices from 37 to 59 from communities throughout Wales and the directly employed workforce from 85 to 120 from within Wales including the employment of 6 new trainee and graduate positions. Morganstone has worked closely with local employment bureaux such as LIFT, Workways, Princes Trust and Coastal Housing and offered work experience and employment opportunities for people who have previously been unemployed. Sub-contractors and supply chains are actively sourced from the communities they work within which has resulted in 100% investment back into Welsh SME's.

In 2015 Morganstone developed a World of Work Education programme that promotes the wide and varied roles and opportunities within the construction industry with a clear focus on rolling out this campaign in the communities surrounding their developments. This programme is seen as key to supporting Welsh Government's target to build 20,000 affordable homes within Wales by 2021 and vital to help negate the current skills shortage and further predicted shortages within the Welsh construction industry. Over the last year there has been continued development of the World of Work Education Programme and collaboration with primary schools, comprehensive schools, colleges, universities and employment bureaux in Wales that has delivered a wide range of events including: primary school safety talks, primary schools careers events, 'World of Work' days, women in construction events, careers fairs, team and confidence building events, site tours and presentations and provided a range of work experience opportunities. In January 2017 a careers brochure and a hoarding advertising campaign was developed across sites focusing on promoting the opportunities within construction and in particular for women across Wales.

Both prior to and during the construction phase Morganstone works closely with the local community and housing association partners. Each project has its own "community web page" enabling communities to be updated regularly in addition to open days, feedback questionnaires, newsletters, traditional letter drops and community notice boards.

The organisation operates a 'grass roots' approach to community engagement with tailored community strategies for each development focusing on the needs of the local communities and multiple stakeholders e.g. Wales Action Week, Age Cymru, Prostate Cymru, Ty Olwen Hospice, Disability Sport, Cancer Research Wales, Morriston RFC, Llamau, Welsh Foodbanks, Pembrokeshire Cricket Club.

In 2016-17 alongside the training and education initiatives Morganstone organised a range of community projects such as DIY SOS style projects, Housing Co-operative bricklaying events, Prostate Cymru Awareness, Healthy Eating Sessions, Mental Health Awareness, site open days, 'give and gain' days, family fun days, Christmas and Easter children's hospital visits, bug hotel building and sporting events all aimed at supporting local communities. This proactive approach to reaching out to local communities resulted in an increase community investment in terms of community sponsorship, charitable contributions, in-kind labour and goods of £56,477 (2015-16) to £91,663 (2016-17).

Outcomes and achievements:

- Welsh economy investment £48,240,730
- £1.98 Welsh local multiplier
- Welsh SME's – 100% contribution
- 900 hours in-kind labour
- £ 28,865 in-kind labour/goods donations
- £62,798 contributions and donations to Welsh organisations
- 3 'give and gain' projects
- 'World of Work' education programme - 29 schools, careers and construction events and careers advertising campaign developed
- Community events – 31
- 2 local supply chain events – attended by in excess of 300 new Welsh suppliers
- 59 apprentices
- 946 apprentice weeks
- 6 trainees employed
- 94 trainee weeks
- 17 work experience placements
- 6 unemployed people given employment positions e.g Lift
- Development of Technical Shared Apprentice and Armed Forces Services Leavers

Programmes

- Training 593 training days
- Company CCS average score – 41; Bronze Award, Imble Lane, PHA
- 100% repeat business and excellent client feedback ensuring continued investment in local communities and the Welsh construction workforce e.g.

“With a dedicated resource, rare in this size of organisation Morganstone has put the community including, it's residents, businesses and schools at the heart of every project they have undertaken. The organisation has gone above and beyond complying to community benefit requirements and acted as a real partner in delivering schemes and projects benefitting many parts of the community throughout the delivery of our projects. Morganstone's site teams are the most considerate of neighbours and actively engage with community.” Clare Watkins, T,R&T Officer, Coastal Housing Group

Antonia John

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CUSTOMER EXCELLENCE AWARD

This award recognises organisations driving excellent approaches to customer service that can show high levels of satisfaction for the service delivered. They demonstrate employee engagement in customer service, and show improvements across the business.



Change engage improve

First Choice Housing Association

First Choice Housing provides supported housing for vulnerable people enabling them to live independently within the community. Initially established in 1988 to provide housing for people with learning disabilities resettling from long stay institutions the organisation has enabled individuals to live independently as valued members within their local community. Since that time First Choice has diversified and now provide housing to a much broader range of tenants including acquired brain injury, physical disabilities and veterans who may need support when leaving the Armed Forces. Their passion and values for providing specialist housing for the most vulnerable drives the organisation to continuously look for ways to improve standards and ensure that our customers receive the best service possible. The team's engagement and strong values base has led them to have one of the highest customer satisfaction levels across the country.

Eighteen months ago First Choice developed a strategy to amalgamate the housing, maintenance and administrative services to form a customer services team. The aim was to increase customer satisfaction with repairs, reduce waiting times, provide a more reactive housing management function and greater engagement between tenants and staff.

The project did not come without challenges and it was difficult to blend such diverse roles into one team, however all team members are passionate about the services they provide and engaged in the implementation of the project to ensure services were developed further. Extensive training was provided to

upskill the team and development days held to support the differing personalities and raise self-awareness.

Taking on board feedback from tenants First Choice introduced a repairs appointment system. This system enabled tenants to receive more convenient appointments and has resulted in the average appointment time dramatically reducing. Every repair is followed up with a telephone call to ascertain satisfaction and this approach has led to greater engagement between the association and tenants.

Alongside this First Choice radically updated their tenant councils to Ivor Voice Clubs and changed their communication with tenants by working alongside them to deliver their own newsletter which they own and predominantly features their stories and the things that matter to them as a First Choice tenant.

A number of changes were made to procedures which were suggested and implemented by the Customer Services team themselves with little senior direction, which has led to cost savings, efficiencies and improved measures all which have had a positive impact to the organisation and most importantly tenants. The team has established monitoring systems for tenancy agreements to ensure all stages of a new tenancy are comprehensive which has seen an increase in equality data held which is now at 100%. This enables us to tailor services to the diversity of tenants. As the team cover such a diverse range of functions they began utilising a task management system to ensure that all tasks are completed on time. Through their willingness to continually improve services they have targeted areas for improvements and efficiencies and this includes the administration of fire risk assessments, aged debtors and rent arrears.

The team has commenced e-filing in a bid to become paperless which will again create further efficiencies and enable the organisation to comply with legislation such as Data Protection more efficiently. Whilst making these changes the team has remained positive and engaged and has seen an increase in employee satisfaction.

Outcomes and achievements:

Improvements made within the customer services team have resulted in increases in key performance indicators. The team has excelled in implementing and following up on rechargeable repairs and has attained success in retrieving 89% of rechargeable repairs. Increased engagement has resulted in low rent arrears which are 0.55% of rent receivable. The organisation has zero open complaints and due to following up all customers to rate their satisfaction levels have attained feedback from 91% of those receiving services. This gives First Choice confidence that their KPI's are validated. Their latest statistics show

- 100% satisfaction with their service standards
- 99% appointments kept on time
- 98% completed to a high standard
- 99% satisfied with the contractor
- 100% target emergency calls completion

There is strong evidence to support the team's achievements, since inception the following areas have increased in performance

- satisfaction with communications risen from 85%-96%
- satisfaction with overall services risen from 91%-99%
- customers feel FCHA is a good landlord risen from 92%-99%

The team has been highly successful in putting the needs of tenants at the heart of the work they do, which has seen the highest performance statistics in their recording period.

Donna Lloyd-Williams

Director of Corporate Services

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Together we can – customer contact team

Melin Homes

The Customer Contact Team (CCT) at Melin Homes consists of 13 experienced advisors, committed to providing customer service excellence to over 4000 homes, ensuring that customers are at the heart of service delivery and change decisions. Focussing on the customer's journey, by not only meeting expectations but exceeding them. Customer's circumstances are unique, and Melin tailors services to support them.

Melin Homes has had some excellent team feedback, demonstrating team engagement in customer service.

Recent comments are:

“You were very helpful and understanding”

“Every time I contact Melin I always have exceptional customer service, thank you”

“The staff at Melin are always friendly and extremely efficient and helpful”

At the organisation's core is the ethos 'doing the right thing for our residents'. The team is committed to providing resolution to customers during initial contact, doing whatever is needed to resolve the query, empowering staff has been vital, ensuring that they have the correct training, systems and access to information/support referrals.

As poverty reaches an all-time high, so does the link of suicidal behaviours. By removing barriers, talking openly to residents, and removing attached stigmas, the team has saved lives. Ensuring the most vulnerable are prioritised and protected, Melin works closely with its internal teams to ensure that these cases are escalated and support is given.

Melin understands residents' needs change from day to day. Working with resident groups and staff they have identified some further areas where improvements could be made to enhance the customer's journey.

With changes to welfare reform fast approaching, the organisation worked with Income and Inclusion to improve processes for dealing with rent enquiries, including setting up arrangements to pay arrears, a task

that had sat with Income Officers. Following training, CCT are delivering arrangements to pay on a first call basis, residents no longer have to wait for a call back and the team are relieving concerns around rent arrears, something that we know is an issue for residents.

Melin prides itself on passion for doing the right thing. They believe they play a vital role in helping residents create and sustain a home. They use satisfaction survey responses to keep up to date with their customers views, the CCT investigate and use the feedback to shape services based on resident's needs. Some of these have included:

- Increasing/improving contact channels for residents, including Facebook, Live chat, phone/text, email and website.
- Understanding that repairs are important to residents, Melin has made a number of improvements to these services, and recently developed an app 'Snap It Send It' that will allow residents to report repairs (with pictures), streamlining the process.
- Offering/arranging repair appointments outside of normal working hours including weekends to support residents who can't be available through the week.
- Following a pilot last year, Melin has a late night opening every other week so that residents can contact the organisation and speak to an advisor.

Melin understands that in order to provide services to the standards that our residents need, effective and efficient collaboration with all teams is essential. The "organisation" has excellent relationships with teams allowing them to deploy staff where needed in order to resolve issues. They have recently taken ownership of Melin's out of hours service, ensuring seamless services for residents 24 hours a day.

And it doesn't stop there, community engagement is important to the team, in their spare time team members volunteer at a local homeless shelter providing food, drink and a friendly ear to those who need it, with their experience in housing they are able to offer support and guidance around housing issues.

Outcomes and achievements:

Melin has seen achievements in a number of areas across the services being provided by CCT, some of these include:

Queries being dealt with on a first call resolution basis have increased to an all-time high, in 2014 this was around 47%, this is now over 85%.

A decrease in rent arrears; this is now at 1.2%, CCT play a key role in collecting rent arrears, giving Income Officers the ability to concentrate on the those hard to reach cases and complete more face to face activity with residents

For the first time since Melin has been recording data, the "organisation" saw a decrease in calls and an increase in other contact channels equating to over 30% of interactions.

There have been increased satisfaction levels across all KPI's associated to the CCT, these are:

- Residents are surveyed on how satisfied they were with the ability of staff to deal with their query quickly and efficiently, this is consistently over 80%, something that Melin will continue to improve.
- The team are tasked with answering calls within 15 seconds, their KPI is set at 92% and this is regularly achieved or exceeded latest report shows the organisation at 97%

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Mi-space (UK) Ltd

working on behalf of Tai Tarian

In March 2017 Mi-space completed a four year Electrical Re-Wiring contract for Tai Tarian (formerly known as NPT Homes). The project was the second of two large scale planned maintenance initiatives undertaken by Mi-space on behalf of Tai Tarian, the other project being a kitchen and bathroom renewal project. Both the rewire and the kitchen and bathroom project related to occupied homes which meant that the true success of the works would be gauged in terms of the 'customer experience'.

Prior to commencement a series of workshops were undertaken so experiences and lessons-learned from the kitchen and bathroom project which had commenced a year earlier could be implemented into the delivery model for the rewires project. Mi-space and Tai Tarian documented what was making the Kitchen and bathroom contract a success as well as recording what aspects of the delivery of the project could be done better, resulting in a 'Customer-Excellence' focused Quality Plan which was used as the backbone for all aspects of the project from inception to completion. Key factors in what Mi-space established during the workshops were:

- Clear and simple communication: the project team established a principle of "say WHO we are, say WHAT we're doing, say WHY we're doing it, say WHEN we'll start and finish – and keep our promises". By establishing what became a mission

statement for the project, Mi-space applied this key objective to everything they did on the project and measured their own performance against this simple but effective statement.

- Specific to the needs of the resident: through a customer excellence training module delivered to Mi-space staff, the skill of 'empathic listening' was developed. Empathic listening is defined as paying attention to another person with empathy in order to "seek to understand, before being understood". In utilising this training in all communication with the resident Mi-space was able to truly appreciate the individual needs and concerns of the residents, and adjust their approach where necessary in order for the residents and the workforce to enjoy a more successful interaction during the installation.
- Rewire with respect: In a workshop specific to improving how such an invasive activity could be performed with the greatest level of care for the resident, their own installation teams established several guidelines which included:
 - maximising use of floor protection, dust sheets and temporary containers for resident's valuables. Each team were offered unlimited volumes of floor covering and dustsheets were regularly commercially laundered.
 - Using the tag-line "brilliant behaviours" their engineers listed traits and actions to employ which would ensure a great customer experience such as; parking considerately, introducing all team members on arrival, working as quietly as possible, knowing the residents name, only taking the necessary amount of tools and materials in the property.
 - "Is there anything else I can help you with?" – taking inspiration from brands famous for good customer service, Mi-space engineers undertook to ask this question to every household before leaving their property.

In terms of a before-and-after effect on their workforce, the engineers reported that the principles employed on the project made for much a more enjoyable project. As a result, sickness and absenteeism for the project was greatly reduced and the team had zero 'churn' (Leavers) in the course of the project.

The outcomes of this enhanced customer service approach during the rewires for Tai Tarian were high quantities of survey completions (90%) as well as consistently high scores (99% average for very good/good). The survey measured the residents' experience of the service, not their satisfaction. This is an enhanced approach to the standard 'satisfaction' questionnaire, which drives service delivery beyond satisfaction.

Outcomes and achievements:

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	%
Very Good	83	84	85	74	76	85	81	81	82	87	94%
Good	3	3	2	12	9	2	5	6	5	0	5%
Poor	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	1%
Unacceptable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
No answer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
	87	87	87	87	87	87	87	87	87	87	

“Mi-space has performed multiple planned maintenance contracts for Tai Tarian in the last five years. A consistent trend in terms of their service to their residents is their consistently high levels of customer satisfaction which is achieved through a customer focused approach. In one of the most recent projects undertaken for Tai Tarian by Mi-space, tenant satisfaction was consistently in the high 90’s with good numbers of returns. This level of customer satisfaction made Mi-space a trusted partner to NPT Homes”

- Karl Jones, Major Works Senior Supervisor

AJ Eaton

Divisional Director

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EMPOWERING AND INVOLVING COMMUNITIES

This award recognises successful approaches to involving, empowering and supporting tenants and residents to shape services, to drive improvements and to deliver meaningful change in an organisation or within the community.



Shaftesbury Youf Gang

Newport City Homes with Gwent Police, Newport City Council and Energize Media

Eleven pioneering Shaftesbury youngsters are helping to improve their local environment.

Police community support officer Janet Woodward started the Shaftesbury 'Youf Gang' in 2015 and 11 enthusiastic local children aged nine to 14 now take part.

Youf Gang member Charlie Young said: **"We have an interest in the local neighbourhood and have a motto of 'making Shaftesbury a nicer place to live'. We hold monthly meetings and have already carried out several litter picks in the area."**

Newport City Homes has supported the group by supplying new equipment including litter pick gear, gloves, high visibility jackets, and lockers based in the community centre. It has also engaged with them to find out their views and help shape service delivery.

The Youf Gang holds monthly litter picks of streets and gardens in the area, with the support of partners including Newport City Council, Gwent Police, Communities First, Energize Media and parents.

Gwent Police community support officer Richy Davies

said: **"The Youf Gang really are a credit not only to themselves but to the local community. It has been a pleasure to work with and guide the youngsters into hopefully prosperous futures."**

Newport City Homes has been supporting Youf Gang for the last two years because they are an incredible group of young people who are role models to other teenagers. They are showing what can be done when you work together to have fun and look after your community.

Their work is also supported by the city council. The cabinet member for community services, works and skills, councillor Roger Jeavons, has praised the work of the Youf Gang. He said it would be great if others could follow their lead in wards across the city: **"It is very heartening to hear about these community-minded youngsters who are willing to pull together to help improve their local environment. They are a great example of the good young people are doing across the city. Well done and good luck for the future."**

As background, the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that there are pockets of significant deprivation within Shaftesbury. Three out of the four lower super output areas (LSOAs) in Shaftesbury are ranked as deprived in terms of 'physical environment'. Aside from this deprivation in the ward is focussed on the Shaftesbury 1 LSOA, which is ranked as deprived in terms of 'income', 'community safety', 'physical environment' and 'housing'.

Outcomes and achievements:

- The Youf Gang is an excellent example of a housing association working with the police and residents to improve the environment, tackle anti-social behaviour and work with a demographic that is generally hard to reach. The project has awarded £595 from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent's Partnership Fund to increase sport-based youth engagement;
- Summer and Christmas fetes have been attended to promote sustainability and recruit additional members.
- A football team team has been started, with its own club badge and sponsored kit.

- Work has been undertaken with the residents at Shaftesbury Court sheltered housing scheme to improve their facilities
- Work has been undertaken to help tackle stereotypes about young people in one of the more deprived wards in the city.

Youf Gang is currently working towards gaining charity status.

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UNITY – uniting Newport inspiring tomorrow’s youth

Newport City Homes with Charter Housing (Pobl Group) and Newport City Council

UNITY is a youth forum led by young people aged 14-25. They focus on developments within the housing sector, issues that affect the young people and the communities they live in. UNITY is a place for young people to have a voice, challenge, influence and shape housing and community services in Newport. The forum is a partnership project between Newport City Homes, Charter Housing Association and Newport City Council.

UNITY was set up in September 2015 but officially launched at a Newport Community Event in July 2016. They have 17 registered members who meet on a fortnightly basis

Young people’s views on UNITY include:

‘We want to know other people’s views and opinions on Housing

‘We want to give back to make things better in the future’

‘UNITY makes me happy and confident’

‘UNITY means I can help other people out’

‘UNITY makes me feel better about myself’

‘I take an active role, helping to make changes’

‘UNITY is a family’

It’s a step in the right direction to making a change’

‘UNITY is a life changer!’

UNITY has provided a voice, campaigned and has had influence regarding Welfare Reform and in particular the Local Housing Allowance and Universal Credit cuts for young people. UNITY has been a part of consultations, informing the Welsh Government Steering Group of their views and heavily influencing the Welsh Government’s approach to consulting young people on this topic. As a way of raising awareness amongst other young people, UNITY has also worked alongside UK Charity Fixers to develop a coaster with information and guidance on and have placed these in places young people are e.g. youth clubs, bars, colleges etc. More information about this ongoing project can be found here:

<http://www.fixers.org.uk/news/16112-11208/housing-benefit-crisis.php>

UNITY has also helped to shape services for example consulting with Newport City Homes on their website and resident engagement strategy and working with Charter Housing about Shared Accommodation Agreements. Andrew Frame, Sustainable Communities Manager at Charter Housing commented, **“Unity has helped us shape our young person’s sharing plan. I found the forum to be a great sounding board for our ideas for shared accommodation. They were very receptive to the information provided around Welfare Reform. I was impressed by their positivity and pragmatism when discussing the challenges that Welfare Reform will bring, especially as it is their age group that will be worst affected by it”.**

UNITY has undertaken partnership work with other youth forums and services for young people and has met local parliamentarians and local authority representatives. UNITY took part in a local service debate with Heads of Service at Newport City Council. The debate was to help shape education and youth service provision in Newport. UNITY suggested that a greater emphasis should be spent on encouraging vocational studies and apprenticeships as well as tackling levels of mental health and bullying in schools as a priority. Another example of this was when UNITY attended the Model Commonwealth Youth Summit with The Royal Commonwealth Society and also attended The Senedd to meet with and build relationships with their local AM’s.

To find out more about UNITY visit:
<https://vimeo.com/20924189>

Outcomes and achievements:

UNITY has had a brilliant impact in Newport and Gwent. It has influenced both Newport City Homes and Charter Housing on both an operational and corporate level, making sure the voice of young people is heard and considered when decisions are being made.

In addition to this, the work of UNITY around the LHA and welfare reform impacts on young people has had an influence in Newport with the Gwent wide partnership and with the Welsh Government's Under 35's working group. UNITY's LHA campaign is informing young people in Newport and surrounding areas and the form has helped local RSLs to further consider the impacts of welfare reforms on young people.

Newport City Council has come to consider UNITY a 'go to' group for consultation, particularly in light of the work they did to help shape education and youth service provision in the city.

UNITY has also created a 12 month action plan with targets for engagement and key pieces of work across the year to improve Newport by engaging with activities that help to tackle homelessness, fly tipping, environmental issues and much more.

UNITY is a modern approach to tenant participation which also allows for skills development and personal development. It is a long term, two way relationship based on core youth work values and capacity building. UNITY is about having a genuine youth voice to consult with and work alongside to develop initiatives and design projects based on need. It provides mutual benefit for RSLs but more importantly for young people.

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Own 2 feet...living

Bron Afon Community Housing

Welsh Government, Improving Lives and Communities, 2010 – ‘the view is that housing services should reflect the needs of those who use them and not the needs of the organisation that delivers them’.

Ty Cyfle is an innovative housing development supporting young people into independence with 8 starter homes for those aged 16 to 24, with a Community Connection Hub on the ground floor providing, training, informal learning and ‘bite size’ employability programmes for residents and the local community.

Ground breaking in that it is youth led, with solutions to prevent homelessness, and is based on co-operative principles. It promotes inclusion, responding to the needs of Torfaen’s young people. It evidences the high level of co-operation, support and partnership between the community and Bron Afon, addressing the challenges of housing shortages in a creative, co-operative and community led way. The scheme can demonstrate its impact in changing people’s lives.

Many young people’s tenancies, for various reasons, failed in the first year. The question was posed how can we break this cycle of failed tenancies? Who knows better than the young people themselves? They were very clear, they decided they wanted to develop a project that was a form of transitional housing, bridging the gap between 24-hour hostel support and fully independent living. It had to be sustainable and youth led.

Ty Cyfle ... Own 2 Feet Living ...

The extensive refurbishment of a derelict building was completed, designed by young people for young people. They developed tenancy agreements and policies – it was a true co-operative effort!

By encompassing the Families First process and framework, the support programme provided them with the skills they need to live independently.

They learn:

- To manage their money
- To pay bills
- To cook healthy meals on a budget,
- To be a good neighbour
- The healthy minds, healthy bodies programme
- The safer relationships programme

Next Steps - Continuing to learn from Ty Cyfle

- The empowerment of young people to create ‘step change’ within the housing sector. Lessons learnt have closely informed Bron Afon’s approach to engaging and supporting young people involved in Bron Afon’s under 35’s pilot.
- The Management Committee and Afon Youth’s focus is to raise awareness of Welfare Reform, explore creative housing solutions, including shared accommodation and the trialling of new housing models.
- Own 2 Feet Living, Phase 2, will provide 12 new homes, of innovative construction as a viable means of producing comfortable low cost housing that can be replicated in different locations.

Ty Cyfle tenant (aged 22), **“I used to be homeless. I had hit rock bottom. I saw Ty Cyfle and was attracted by the support being offered, not just as somewhere to live. It’s brilliant to run this place as a co-op, it makes you feel important and our views are taken seriously. I’m now thinking more positively about the future”.**

Outcomes and achievements:

Ty Cyfle continues to be run on co-operative principles by the Management Committee, consisting of Afon Youth and the young residents. The project is fully embedded and is an integral part of the community.

Outcomes:

- From dereliction, brought back into use, delivering the two stranded approach of supply and support.
- An innovative Youth Co Operative created with a Management Committee.
- A bespoke Allocations Process, Tenancy Agreement and Management Policy with a unique traffic light system to enforce any breaches of tenancy.
- 100% tenancy sustainability with zero rent arrears.
- Young people actively engaged in EET or Volunteering.
- A mainly, self-managing housing project with reduced housing management hours for the organisation.
- 100% successful move on.

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TAG Team (Tenant Assessor Group)

Rhondda Housing Association

Rhondda Housing Association's new ambitious TAG team (Tenant Assessor Group) is THE vital role in testing services and feeding back on how the organisation can improve for its tenants and the wider community. RHA worked with focus groups, consulted with tenants and community members and asked them how they wanted to really help the organisation shape and improve services so they could put into practice a proficiently trained, enthusiastically involved group that would clearly demonstrate tangible benefits.

TAG launched in April 2016 and in the last fifteen months has worked on 18 projects, all aimed at improving services for RHA's communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Cynon Valley which has significant levels of child poverty, social isolation, deprivation and unemployment. The TAG team channel their volunteering energies and passion into helping others across RCT and this is an avenue for real change through working with partners and truly listening.

One of the group's achievements has been a research project carried out with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council in identifying why older residents weren't accessing their 'Homefinder RCT' online service. This is the principal way in which older people access socially rented housing in RCT so has a far reaching impact. The group met with older community members who weren't able to use this online electronic system, meaning that they could not express interest in properties that could have met their needs; leading to missed opportunities and a stagnant waiting list. There were obvious knock on effects in terms of empty properties, unstable communities and lost revenue which could be reinvested in housing service provision.

TAG identified those on the waiting list who hadn't accessed their online services, creating a questionnaire and spending over 80 hours speaking to those affected. They tried to understand their reasons for not engaging or showing interest in suitable properties so they could consider how to rectify them.

Other achievements include:

- Strengthening of brand and perception - removing any references to CBL, CHR or Housing Solutions.
- Website changes - to improve navigation and information.
- Supporting older people to get online during digital inclusion sessions organised at Pontypridd Library.
- Producing the HomefinderRCT leaflet specifically targeted towards older people.
- Social media coverage on updates to services and encouraging access (this wasn't in place before as the assumption was older people didn't use social media).

One TAG member was involved in the high profile research project, reporting on the impact and experience on Universal Credit, with Cardiff Metropolitan University and Community Housing Cymru, presenting to Assembly Members at The Senedd in March 2017. The TAG group used focus group sessions and helped forge the questions asked, alongside supporting the delivery of sessions which has made recommendation for changes to ease the Universal Credit process.

TAG identified that RHA's Income Collection team tone and language was too difficult for tenants to understand and adapted this inline with the Plain English Campaign; since these changes were made the organisation has reported an increase in income collection engagement.

TAG continues to work with RHA's Maintenance Team on their Lettable Standards, used when re-letting empty properties. TAG has identified duplication in the document and other areas where more specific detail is needed and is now working with RHA's contractors to make short 'how to' videos with information on how to better maintain a home.

TAG volunteers are making a difference, they are a shining example of how to empower individuals who become involved in shaping services. The TAG members have all had their fair share of life long struggles but through adversity have channelled their passion and willingly devoted their time, some members with debilitating physical and mental illness.

Outcomes and achievements:

Alongside the above, other achievements from the work of TAG has been further reaching and outcomes include:

- Over 400 hours of volunteer time; training sessions, working with partners, guest speaking at meetings and improving services.
- Reviewing the language used in promotional material, letters and polices, as well as better use of digital services and multi media in promotion.

- Taking responsibility for visitor health and safety during RHA's office refurbishment. Providing accredited training and improving the workplace for staff and visitors has been significant. Creating baby changing units, digital screens, access and comfort improvements and now hosting community events.
- The changes to the RCT Homefinder service will allow many more residents across the borough to access the waiting list and make full use of the service. This will impact on prevention of homelessness, improving engagement in the service and giving senior community members a voice.
- Streamlining the organisation's policies resulting in a better understanding and offering more protection to staff and tenants.
- Supporting RHA's new 'Dealing with Vexatious Complainants' policy, making it strong and more robust.
- Helping to empower and engage isolated community members with their neighbours, with RHA and other organisations and increasing the organisation volunteers.

Lian Carter

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INCREASING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN HOUSING

This award recognises the work of housing organisations in increasing equality and diversity in the sector. They will have developed approaches to address the diversity deficiency in leadership, increased equality and diversity in the workforce and created a working culture that celebrates and encourages equality and diversity



Gwent Gypsy and Traveller Service

Gwalia Care and Support (Pobl Group)

The Gwent Gypsy and Traveller Service employs two support workers who provide direct support and advice to gypsy and traveller communities, local authorities and key stakeholder groups in Newport, Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent. It is the only dedicated Gypsy and Traveller Service to be funded by Supporting People and provided by a housing association in Wales. The service was established in April 2016 following a study titled "The Housing Related Support Needs of Gypsies and Travellers in Gwent".

The Gwent Gypsy and Traveller Service has been established and continues to evolve based on the needs of the community evidenced through research, consultation and ongoing outcome monitoring. Coproduction with the community is a key element of the service provision with the aim of building on the skills and knowledge within the community to create sustainable and culturally appropriate communities.

Support and advice is available to local authorities, key stakeholders and other organisations to ensure that they are meeting the needs of gypsies and travellers in line with legislation and guidance including Housing (Wales)

Act 2014, Travelling to a Better Future and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Comments by Newport City Council:

What impact has your involvement with the Gwent Gypsy and Traveller Service had on your organisation?

"Prior to the setting up of the Gwent Gypsy and Traveller Service there was no dedicated support service for gypsies and travellers in Newport. Despite many members of the community having support needs few were receiving appropriate support".

"The Gwent Gypsy and Traveller Service has also played a vital role in the development of Newport's gypsy and traveller site. They have ensured the community knew about the process of applying for the site and supported people in doing so. This has enabled us to be confident that everyone who is potentially in need of a pitch has been able to apply for one".

What impact has the Gwent Gypsy and Traveller Service had on your client group?

"The Gwent Gypsy and Traveller Service has been able to provide specialist, dedicated support. They have been able to resolve several long standing issues, such as deliveries of post, for families that I am aware of. As they are not part of the local authority the Gwent Gypsy and Traveller Service is able to advocate much more effectively for families on issues such as applying for housing or planning permission, ensuring that they have their voices heard and the reality of their circumstances acknowledged. The Gwent Gypsy and Traveller Service seems to be a trusted and valued service amongst the gypsy and traveller community in Newport, which is an achievement considering the relatively short amount of time it has been in operation."

Any other comments:

"The Gwent Gypsy Traveller Service is a key partner in the development of Newport's socially rented site. Many of the families that have applied for a pitch on that site have been homeless for

many, many years and have never lived on an authorised site. They will need a huge amount of support in preparing to live on site in terms of understanding their rights and responsibilities as well as support to apply for benefits to cover their rent. Once a site has been developed the families will need support adjusting to life on an official site as well as with things such as setting up utilities, managing bills etc. In my view the Gwent Gypsy and Traveller Service is best placed to do this work as it has built good relationships with the families and is trusted by them to talk about sensitive issues such as finances.”

Outcomes and achievements:

59% of identified gypsy and traveller households in Gwent have accessed the service and parents of at least 129 children have received support.

98% of service users have poor literacy, 42% have a health condition and 93% are not in employment, education or training.

85% of service users received support for managing accommodation, 64% managing money, 13% safety of themselves and others, 12% feeling safe, 5.1% managing relationships, 5.1% engaging in employment, 4% for physical health, 2.6% engaging in learning and education, 1.3% feeling part of the community and 1.3% for leading a healthy and active lifestyle.

The service has been well received within the gypsy and traveller communities, they welcome the weekly presence on sites and are pleased that LA's acted on the findings of the study that they contributed to. As evidenced above a large percentage of service users have identified a health condition and high levels are not in employment, education or training. The service is aware that that outcomes do not reflect the needs of the community. The service does not have the capacity to meet all of the complex needs of the community and is actively applying for additional funding to expand the service.

Rebecca Preston

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WISH - Women in social housing - professional development network

WISH North Wales Region with WISH GB

Women in Social Housing (WISH) North Wales: is a network providing personal and professional development for women working in social housing and supporting sectors.

Why launch?

“While our workforce is diverse, this is not reflected in our leadership which remains too white, too old and too male. Just look at me.”
Then-CIH President Steve Stride, Housing 2014

“Women account for the majority of service users and employees in the social housing sector yet, they are still underrepresented in management and senior roles. The representation of women increases as we move down the tiers of the organisational hierarchy.” Chwarae Teg A Woman’s Place in Housing Report Feb 2016

Training and inspiring current female employees as well as the next generation of women in property must be high on everyone’s agenda.

Austerity measures means retaining staff, attracting the best candidates, encouraging high level motivation and promoting housing as a good career option for women is becoming more difficult to achieve.

If these challenges aren't met, it is likely to take many years to reach true equality in our workforce.

The above challenges were voiced by senior professionals to our founding board members and WISH North Wales was born.

"...it is important we have organisations like WISH promoting fairness and equality in the workplace. WISH North Wales are deserving of recognition".

Lesley Griffiths, Assembly Member for Wrexham and Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs in Welsh Government.

"WISH gives a great opportunity for like-minded individuals to share best practice...feedback I have had has been very positive and I expect WISH to grow from strength to strength.

Andrew Bowden, CEO, Cartrefi Conwy.

WISH was launched October 2016 to encourage personal and professional development for women to reach their true career potential by nurturing talent and abilities not always captured by paper qualifications.

WISH is led by a board of twelve women from public and private sector. 6-8 events per year are held.

WISH already has 60 members including Grwp Cynefin, Flintshire Council, Conwy Council, Wales and West, Cartrefi Conwy, Ynys Mon and North Wales Housing, private sector companies and housing students.

Some of the issues addressed by WISH include:

- Are enough women choosing housing as a career?
- WISH commissioned a short film to show within schools to showcase the different roles for women in social housing.
- Do women have a clear idea of their career path and how to achieve it?
- Talks by industry leading females about their career paths, challenges and lessons learned - to inspire/encourage other women in the industry.
- Do women lack confidence to progress further?
- Workshop by Molly Harvey author and international motivational speaker. (Most requested topic by members).
- Can women 'have it all'?
- Resilience workshop, how to effectively deal with the pressures of life and work.
- Plus much more! Factual, industry led workshops, training sessions and speakers are planned - chosen from feedback given by WISH audiences.

"The professional development opportunities over the last 18 months have been limitless: studying for a housing degree... WISH sessions to name just a few". Claire Twamley, CIH Cymru New Housing Professional Award Finalist 2017.

We encourage males to attend our events helping an understanding of some of the different challenges that women feel.

The future for WISH includes expanding across Wales and collaborating with complementary organisations such as CIH, WEN and CHC, ensuring that together we improve gender inequality as effectively as possible. WISH will support women in their current and future careers. WISH has only just begun!

"It has been brilliant to see WISH North Wales develop...from the start their friendly and inclusive approach has created something very special. It will have undoubtedly led to positive outcomes for women working in social housing in North Wales...." Helen White, Chair - Wales Regulatory Board.

Outcomes and achievements:

The following outcomes were a direct result of the North Wales WISH organisation:

- Networking – events hosted where women who attended were directly inspired to become volunteers and board members for charitable organisations such as Care & Repair North East Wales and Housing Association board members.
- Personal and professional development – all WISH events tangibly provide advice, guidance and support to women to realise their maximum potential. Through these networking events WISH has received positive comments via feedback surveys that their members have felt empowered to proactively build positive relationships and improve their own self-confidence.
- Shared best practice – a number of inspirational international motivational and leadership speakers such as Lesley Griffiths, Paul Johnson (3DK Solutions) and John Walton (Green Bottle Solutions – Olympic gold coach) have freely shared not only their own learning but their highly acclaimed expertise and knowledge to support and inspire WISH members.
- Encouraged females in schools to consider a career in social housing – development of an educational video shared with school children throughout the North Wales region to promote the concept that females can work and have a leading career in housing working in diverse roles across the sector.

Nikki Waud

Chair

WISH North Wales

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Equality Street

Tai Calon Community Housing

Equality and diversity is the golden thread throughout Tai Calon, it forms the basis of everything the organisation does. Recognising its importance meant that Tai Calon were awarded the CIH 10 challenges by 2020 award and logo, the organisation now includes the logo on all its corporate documents to show the importance of equality and diversity.

On a strategic level, Tai Calon has worked extensively on increasing the knowledge of staff and board members. All staff have received two rounds of compulsory training regarding equalities and diversity whilst Tai Calon board members have also received training and have an Equality and Diversity Board Champion. The responsibility of the Board Equalities Champion is to make sure all decisions made by the board are made with an equality view taken into account.

Tai Calon reports key performance indicators to the board regarding equality and diversity data.

All strategies, policy and procedures are now required to have a completed equality and diversity impact assessment. The impact assessment ensures each document/proposal has considered each protected characteristic and adjusted practices where appropriate. These impact assessments are reviewed periodically to make sure no adverse effects from the policy.

Tai Calon recognised that increasing awareness of equality and diversity in the workplace was needed and therefore devised a long term plan. Some of the actions included in the plan are:

- Building equalities into the branding of Tai Calon. For all communications and publications, illustrations/ graphics of people with all the protected characteristics are used – this is called 'Equality Street'.
- Installing a 5 x 3.5 meter mural of the Equality Street characters demonstrating the link between equality and Tai Calon vision and values and promoting equality of staff, tenants and the community.

- Incorporating into corporate documents the LGBT+ rainbow, the dementia friends logo (which the organisation does extensive work with) and the white ribbon campaign logo which again the organisation promotes. This is designed to demonstrate that Tai Calon are keen supporters of all aspects of equality and diversity.
- Using Yammer internally to promote articles on equality and to encourage discussion. Articles such as examples of discrimination in shops always generate discussions with staff and therefore raise awareness of equality and discrimination.
- Liaising with national campaigns such as 'act F.A.S.T' (stroke). Displaying posters around the building which are bilingual, featuring models who are multi-cultural and different genders.
- Linking with internal promotion of equalities such as International Womens Day. Promoting this on all social media platforms highlighting extraordinary women from different cultures, religions, countries and professions. These were well received on social media with a new post being shown every hour.
- Hosting numerous external meetings such as a Disability Group Meeting. This meeting is for member of the community to meet and discuss any discrimination, best practice or to raise awareness of a particular issue.
- Providing free Welsh lessons from September for staff members, Tai Calon will be paying for the course and allowing staff time for the lessons during working hours.
- Providing sign language lessons for staff to ensure all members of the community will be able to communicate effectively when dealing with Tai Calon.

Tai Calon uses data to ensure consistency in providing services and employment opportunities, ensuring no protected characteristic is under represented. The organisation is currently undertaking a more detailed equality profile of its tenants to make sure their services are best suited to the community and their needs.

Tai Calon Board, Senior Team and staff are all working together to encourage and celebrate diversity and equality, ensuring a positive working environment for all.

Outcomes and achievements:

In 2016 Tai Calon received a red from its internal audit of equality and diversity. Through hard and consistent work the organisation has this year been awarded a green with only 3 minor recommendations which were already identified in their Equality and Diversity Action Plan.

Policies and processes have changed since completing an Equality Impact Assessment became compulsory. This has been demonstrated by the repairs policy amending its non-urgent repairs from a 60 day appointment to a 20 day appointment.

The impact assessment showed the outcome of the original procedure may have had a bigger consequence for some protected characteristics and therefore should be amended.

The staff at Tai Calon have certainly realised the importance of holding quality profiling data of tenants as now they are able to consult easier with tenants of the community to gather their views. Consultation has become far easier and is now a matter of course.

The outcomes of the other items used to raise awareness such as 'Equality Street' will be seen over time as Tai Calon becomes an even more equality and diversity aware company.

Sarah Freeman

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This award recognises new developments achieving high levels of build and design quality, making a meaningful contribution to increasing housing supply and improving affordability, nationally or in the local area. They feature innovative and cutting edge design and demonstrate how working with the community has ensured local support and provided value for money.



Wenallt Uchaf, Dolgellau

Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd

Situated high up in the valley, overlooking the beautiful town of Dolgellau in rural Gwynedd, Wenallt Uchaf is a truly breathtaking affordable social housing development. Built by Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd (CCG) the largest housing association in north Wales, the twelve houses which are a mixture of two and three bedroom homes, were completed in April 2017.

Across Gwynedd there is great demand for two-bedroom houses following the introduction of bedroom tax, and at the time of the build there were 42 families in Dolgellau classed as under occupying.

Throughout the scheme, CCG worked alongside Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA) to ensure their shared objective, to provide affordable housing to those in need, was achieved. The homes have a section 106 to ensure they will always be provided to local residents for affordable rent. Although the development is within the development boundary it was decided to go for 100% affordability rather than the 50% (which is requested by the planning authority).

The homes were traditionally built and achieved Code of Sustainable Homes Level 3, Secure by Design, Lifetime Homes and achieved a rating of A in the EPC's.

CCG also introduced a 2Kw photovoltaic system for each home that will hopefully assist the tenants in

reducing their electrics bills by a potential £125 per year. With mains gas, central heating, ample amount of insulation in the roof, walls and floor, the homes are highly efficient.

Early consultation with the SNPA planning officer was crucial to the success of the development. It allowed CCG to know that they were on the right track with their design and their recommendations were incorporated into the scheme. Set high up in the valley, it was important to ensure that the development would look aesthetically pleasing from every angle.

CCG was also able to work with the ecologist to protect and enhance biodiversity on the site, a biodiversity protected area was designed into the scheme, which will provide a habitat for wildlife and native plants. Bat boxes have also been built in the walls of the homes, and mature oak trees kept.

This is an affordable housing development that the residents, the local community of Dolgellau and all stakeholders involved are extremely proud of.

Testimonials

"Previously we lived in a private rented home and had real problems with the house which affected our health. It caused us both a lot of stress. We spent a lot of our money trying to keep the house warm, dealing with damp issues, and tackling a hole in the roof. The best thing about the house is that our health has improved already, we can now relax and enjoy our home. We couldn't have asked for a better start for our baby."

Angharad Davies, 7 Wenallt Uchaf

"We couldn't be happier in our new home. We have a lovely garden which our foster children and dogs can enjoy. I was too embarrassed to invite friends and family to my other home as it was falling apart, now I'm always asking people to come over, I'm thrilled and feel so privileged to be living in such a beautiful home."

Anne Cook, 2 Wenallt Uchaf

"These new homes are beautiful, their look, the location and the feeling on the estate is something very special. It is obvious that the tenants already have a great sense of pride in their new homes and it was a pleasure to meet some of them on

Friday. These will be comfortable, warm and cosy homes for the families, and help meet the local demand for affordable housing."

Lord Dafydd-Elis Thomas, AM for Dwyfor Meirionnydd

Outcomes and achievements:

The aim of this development was to satisfy the need for social rented properties in the rural community of Dolgellau – which has been achieved with twelve local families moving in.

The local authority identified the need for social rented homes in the area, the following figures were presented in October 2015:

- 17 families on the waiting list for two bedroom properties
- 14 families on the waiting list for three bedroom properties

The development and the type of units built was based on these figures.

The development generated several training and employment opportunities and wider community benefits:

- 7 apprentices and 1 trainee supported on scheme including 1 electrician, 1 plumber, 4 plasterers, 1 bricklayer and a trainee joiner
- 45 training weeks generated as part of contract
- Contract supported 61% Gwynedd based labour, 86% north Wales based labour
- On average 88% of sub-contractor expenditure stayed within Wales (61% within Gwynedd)
- Work experience placements for three individual jobseekers (two weeks each) from Job Centre Plus
- Cooperated with a local college to offer site visits to construction students and offered two work experience placements to two female plasterers under 'Creative Solutions' scheme.
- Installation of new kitchen at nearby Llanbedr Community Hall

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Leonard Charles

Morganstone with Coastal Housing Group

Leonard Charles is a refurbishment redevelopment of the former Leonard Charles department store on Oxford Street, Swansea. The store was built in the early 1970's and for many years was a major shopping destination in Swansea. The store along with much of the surrounding commercial and retail areas unfortunately declined during the 1980's and 1990's finally closing to the public in 2013. By then the exterior of the store itself had deteriorated and was contributing to the general rundown and neglected appearance of parts of Oxford Street.

Morganstone in partnership with Coastal Housing Group brought the site forward as a package deal to regenerate a landmark building in Swansea and contribute to the wider regeneration of Swansea City Centre. The project involved the

- stripping back the building to its frame;
- converting the basement retail floor back into an underground car park;
- conversion of the ground floor into 5920sqft of commercial use;
- conversion of the upper 3 floors into 26 residential apartments including 2 duplex apartments;
- the addition of a new 4th floor to provide 6 apartments.

The project addressed the following specific needs and requirements:

- Regeneration opportunity;
- Providing affordable residential properties within Swansea City Centre;
- Leonard Charles was supported by the Welsh Government through a fund created to provide smaller homes for persons affected by the spare bedroom subsidy under the UK government's welfare reforms.
- Partly as a result of the above, the flats are the first Coastal has allocated to families with young children. Although in the city centre, children do not have to go far to play outside in traffic-free space as the building is close to the newly landscaped open space on the Vetch Field and within 5 minutes walk of the seafront and beach.

Coastal, Morganstone and the design team worked closely together from the outset on the design and specification of the building. The project required complex surveys of the existing concrete frame as well as significant internal redesign and remodelling of the ventilation requirements for the basement car park. The external appearance of the building was transformed by new rainscreen cladding, windows and curtain walling. The new external envelope provided thermal performance above building regulation requirements. Central gas plant was installed to provide heating and hot water as the most efficient way to deliver the buildings energy requirements.

The Joint Project Team undertook extensive consultation work with local residents including pre planning local stakeholder engagement. This was maintained throughout with works scheduled to fit in with surrounding business such as the adjacent funeral parlour; letter drops and stakeholder newsletters engaging with the 20 businesses and local residents surrounding the development; community noticeboard, website project page and social media. The project committed to community benefits and targeted recruitment and training initiatives including supporting local charities and sporting organisations, local primary school engagement, children hospitals visits, construction careers events, UWTSO street art project, graduate placements, employing previously unemployed persons, apprenticeships and work placement weeks.

“The exceptional street art work to the hoardings, which is included on the CCS best practice hub, together with the site team’s open door policy and friendly approach has helped to generate a positive atmosphere with neighbours and stakeholders which will leave a positive image of the industry.” Brian Jones CCS Monitor

On completion Lessons Learned Workshops have been held with the supply chain, designers and the client and the information from these disseminated. In addition a full review of the fire strategy was undertaken in conjunction with Building Control in the light of the Grenfell Tower fire.

Design quality was a major driver for both the Joint Project Team and Swansea City Council. The Project Team worked hard to find creative solutions that delivered a high quality of design within a challenging budget. What has been achieved is a building that not only offers residents a high standard of accommodation, but also contributes positively to the wider built environment and regeneration of the surrounding area.

Outcomes and achievements:

- Excellent example of partnership working between local government, client, contractor, design team and supply chain
- High quality design
- Regeneration and design quality realised
- Redundant building brought back into use
- Active street frontage recreated
- Regeneration of wider area
- Housing need addressed and families affected by the Bedroom Tax supported
- Use of modern methods of construction
- CCS Score 40 and Performance Beyond Compliance Certificate
- Providing 32 affordable rented apartments
- Providing commercial floor space to assist with wider regeneration and job creation
- Community benefits initiatives:
 - Primary school engagement – site safety and construction careers talks, posters prize-giving
 - 7 construction and careers events
 - 4 Morrision hospital visits - Christmas with Santa, Easter Bunny and goody bags
 - Morrision RFC tag rugby competition
 - Local charitable donations – Kidney-Wales, Morrision Ty-Olwen Hospice, Swansea Foodbank
 - Charitable donations/sponsorships £9,436
 - In kind labour/goods/services £3,390
 - UWTSO street art project designed around Swansea’s history
 - 94% of spend on Welsh SME’s
 - 99% of contract value spent in Wales
 - 100% waste diverted from Landfill
 - Project Lessons Learned Workshops

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Loftus Garden Village

Lovell with Pobl Group and Newport Council

Loftus Garden Village is an exceptional scheme delivering 250 new homes which fully blends social, intermediate/market rent, homes for sale and shared ownership. Built on the former Pirelli Cable Factory site this is a pioneering venture between Pobl Group, Newport Council, Welsh Government and Lovell.

Pobl had an ambitious vision to re-define what could be achieved on a derelict site in a challenging area of Newport and wanted 'to create a place where people would aspire to live'. In order to make their vision a reality, they needed to be bold and do much more than simply build high quality, well-designed homes.

Lovell wanted to establish an environment where the community could flourish, placing as much emphasis on the external environment as the homes themselves. The extensive amount of landscaping has required Lovell to adopt an innovative, ethical approach to management and maintenance, protecting the vision for future generations in a sustainable and affordable manner.

Pobl wanted to move away from the traditional approach to the design of the infrastructure and a 'tokenistic' approach to the landscaped environment, which has resulted in so many bland and soulless developments, and create a Garden Village for Newport where the external landscape is as important as the homes themselves. Designed with a central green space, parking spaces situated behind homes giving the development's tree-lined streets an uncluttered feel, environmental friendly planting and with rainwater harvested discharging into a central water feature, homes have been designed utilising a 'fabric first' approach without the requirement for 'bolt on' technologies.

The team had to overcome long held local resistance around street connection to the new homes, and were passionate with their desire to achieve a legible housing layout that would benefit the entire community. They achieved this through extensive and carefully considered consultation with the local community and design considerations.

Pobl have reduced the substantial waiting list in Newport through this development by providing 60% of the homes as affordable without any SHG to residents who originally would struggle to step on the property ladder. A wide choice of homes were provided ranging from 1 bed apartments to 4 bed family homes, with properties available across all tenures. 19 homes have been offered mainly through shared ownership on a co-operative basis and homes of different tenures are pepper potted throughout the development to ensure a fully integrated and inclusive community.

Involving and engaging the local community has been integral to the development of the Garden Village project, with equal emphasis placed on celebrating the site's history and importance to the local area – a commitment clearly reflected in the naming of the development in honour of Newport's Ruby Loftus. Ruby gained fame in the 1940's when she was painted by war artist Dame Laura Knight which went on to become one of the war's most iconic images and the new development celebrates her memory and the site's past.

The story of Ruby Loftus has also been commemorated through a series of community projects, including large-scale murals created by Coleg Gwent's art students for the construction site's hoardings. Other community activities have included talks in schools, starting gardening clubs, creating safety slow down signs and working with local further education colleagues.

"We are extremely excited to be working with our partners to bring this 21st century-style garden village to Newport. There's a lot more to Loftus Garden Village than just affordable homes. In addition to creating employment and training opportunities for local people, LGV will be an inclusive community where people can thrive and feel proud to live and grow together" - Amanda Davies, Chief Executive, Pobl Group

Outcomes and achievements:

Whilst developing The Loftus Garden Village, Lovell is proud to have achieved the following benefits to the local area:

- Winning the 'Best Residential Development of the Year' - Insider Wales Property Awards, with one of the judges commenting that 'it will be a great place to live'.
- Being Shortlisted for a Constructing Excellence Wales, 'Project of the Year – Buildings' Award (2016–2017)
- Delivering all affordable homes without SHG.
- Achieving 18 apprentice completions, equating to over 800 apprentice weeks.
- Employing 4 people on the project who were previously unemployed.
- Providing 31 work placements from Coleg Gwent in the following trades – carpentry, plumbing, brickwork and electrical
- Providing 4 people from job centre plus with construction experience in groundworks

- Securing 3 local people from Newport on the shared apprentice scheme
- Securing 3 graduate placements.
- Providing 108 weeks of work experience.
- Achieving completion of 4 NVQs – Trainee Site Manager currently completing NVQ Level 6 with NHBC.
- Engaging with over 200 local school children through history talks, site visits and an interview with two elderly ladies who worked in the factory.
- Being selected by CEW for its 'Enabling Zero Waste' Scheme – extensive recycling on site with 90% of construction waste re-used.
- Utilising an impressive 90% local employment.
- Winning Lovell Regional and National H&S Award 2017.

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NEW IDEAS AND APPROACHES

This award recognises successful, creative practices and approaches which re-think services in order to deliver better outcomes and increase efficiency. They showcase practices and approaches that address a specific problem or need, “before and after” situations that demonstrate a successful implementation, and improved outcomes for users and value for money.



Outside in – preventing homelessness together

Charter Housing (Pobl Group) with Caerphilly County Borough Council Homelessness Team

This is a collaborative project between Charter Housing’s Rents and Financial Solutions Team and Caerphilly County Borough Council’s Homelessness Team. At its heart is early intervention to prevent homelessness caused through serious rent arrears. The strong relationship between teams at both organisations has meant that through early engagement and assessment Charter Housing is able to prevent evictions and safeguard tenancies.

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 puts new duties on local authorities to carry out homeless prevention work. Previously contact was only made with the Caerphilly Homelessness team by Charter Housing when an eviction (warrant) date was confirmed by the court.

Since March 2016, the new working arrangement has been activated where:

- The Charter Rents Team is unable to engage with a tenant and are at the stage of entering a case into court for possession hearings. This is potentially the start of the eviction process.

- a previous suspended court (possession) order for rent arrears has been broken and the agreed payments have been missed by the tenant.

Charter Rents Team sends an email referral to the Caerphilly Homelessness Team. They immediately pick up the case and initiate contact via home visits, phone calls, post and email. They advise the tenant of how serious the situation is, how close they may be to becoming homeless, what this means and how they can help.

The intervention has been overwhelmingly positive. Caerphilly has engaged with Charter Housing’s referrals to make Discretionary Housing Payment applications, make housing benefit claims, identify other benefit entitlements and access the homelessness fund. There has been reduced rent arrears, increased household income and landlord engagement, and most importantly, it has prevented tenants from losing their home.

This holistic engagement and new partnership is an innovative solution that acts in the early stages. Evidence shows that changes in benefit, household, employment, health issues and mounting debts are the main reasons tenants fall behind with their rent.

The partnership with Caerphilly Homelessness has not only increased financial sustainability for those referred, but for many tenants, prevented homelessness from eviction, which costs the Welsh economy £24 million pounds a year. This support based initiative offers a proactive, appropriate and sensitive solution to tenants, many of whom are vulnerable. It seeks to rebuild a positive relationship between Charter Housing and its tenants.

This testimonial from Caerphilly Homelessness team highlights the process:

“We were involved with the tenant ‘LT’, on two occasions. He had been in custody and after liaison with ‘NC’ [Charter Court Services Manager], probation and his neighbour, he made contact. We went to the library and made a new Housing Benefit claim and asked for an out of time backdate supported by a letter from myself talking about literary skills and the gentleman’s ongoing

mental health problems. He was granted a housing benefit backdate of over £3000 to clear his arrears”.

Without this joint intervention, it is likely this tenant may have been evicted. The Caerphilly team worked with the tenant to keep their home and maintain stability in their life when they were going through a difficult period.

Strong relationships between departments has proved vital. The Homelessness team has been well supported by the Housing Benefit department in Caerphilly, and as illustrated in the above case, this has helped to make a big difference to people's lives.

There has never been a more critical time for social landlords to balance social heart with commercial head. Welfare reforms such as bedroom tax, benefit cap, Universal Credit and benefit cuts, not only make it harder for those on limited income to pay their rent on time, but also further challenge the organisation to collect the £22 million annual rental income to provide homes and essential services.

This innovative partnership shares resources and shows the strength in working collaboratively to safeguard tenant's homes, their lives and families, as well as providing value for money.

Outcomes and achievements:

Since the start of the partnership (March 2016), of the cases that engaged with the Caerphilly Homelessness team, all 8 were prevented from eviction.

The combined arrears were £7,821 and the successful outcomes were:

- achieving a 100% engagement rate.
- Caerphilly Council helping Charter Housing Association clear three rent accounts in full with £6,656 received in backdated/unclaimed Housing Benefit and Discretionary Housing Payments.
- Reducing rent arrears on the remaining five accounts by 82% overall, also achieved through Caerphilly's assistance of awarded backdated Housing Benefit and Discretionary Housing Payments. For the £1,405 rent arrears outstanding new agreements were made with Charter to clear.

According to the 'Troubled Families Costs Database' (2013) it is estimated that housing associations like Charter spend on average £8,000 in direct eviction costs. These costs include unpaid rent/arrears, repair costs, rent losses when the property is empty, staff time and court/administration costs. However it is the immeasurable human cost of homelessness that is perhaps the biggest cost and this can't be overlooked. It is estimated to cost the Welsh economy £24 million pounds a year to provide temporary accommodation, process homeless applications and provide support following evictions.

This successful and collaborative homelessness prevention project has a solution focussed approach that holistically works with Charter Housing tenants' individual circumstances, supporting them to stay in a home they may have previously been evicted from.

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New Homes Team

Monmouthshire Housing Association

On analysing tenancy sustainment, Monmouthshire Housing Association (MHA) recognised that starter tenants were disproportionately more likely to be in arrears, struggle with tenancy responsibilities and end tenancies in an unplanned way. This was inefficient for MHA, traumatic for tenants and had serious consequences for their partners. A dramatic and dynamic approach was considered to be the cost effective solution. MHA were determined to be sector leaders not followers.

MHA ditched its old void standard and introduced a sector-leading one, on the basis of spend to save, whilst nailing customer satisfaction. MHA believes it has the highest re-let standards in Wales if not the UK, including a full decoration in all properties and carpets in apartments. Out with the old and in with the New Homes team - in May 2016 providing a transformed starter tenant service.

MHA visited UK social landlords to seek out innovation, undertook a tenant survey and interviews, and talked to colleagues and partners. Time was spent crafting a new approach to make sure they got it right, giving everyone what they wanted and then some. Since October 2016 dedicated New Homes Officers deliver the new starter housing management service, from pre-tenancy to the nine-month visit; only when tenancies become assured do tenants move to the organisation's income and neighbourhood teams.

Officers complete an in-depth, pre-tenancy 'It's all about you form' assessment, capturing tenancy needs and risks, a financial assessment with credit check, a 'rent-first' focus and an outcomes star and action plan. Applicants are informed at this stage of their 'RAG rating', determining the level of support they will receive from their New Homes Officer, and fast-tracked referrals are made to financial/support services as required.

MHA has improved the way they communicate too, during a consultation younger tenants told the organisation to use different media, so they developed animations - aspiring local actors provided voice-overs giving useful experience for their college applications. A 'new tenant' website page was developed featuring

films, team details and a host of useful documents.

Listening to tenant feedback MHA stripped out all administration on sign-up day that was not completely necessary. A 'walk-around sheet' was created to ensure tenants are introduced properly to rooms and equipment. Benefits and grants are applied for at sign-up, including DAFs, but otherwise the organisation concentrates on property and legal, allowing tenants to focus on moving in.

During the one-month visit staff collect tenant insight data, valuable information on digital, financial and social needs and complete a customer survey. Rent accounts are reviewed and referrals to inclusion/involvement services are discussed.

Relationships are key for New Homes Officers who carry a maximum 100 tenancy caseload, giving them capacity to spend in-depth time with tenants, jointly finding solutions to issues and difficulties, such as Universal Credit, and learning to manage their new home.

At the 9 month visit the tenancy is reviewed and tenants are informed whether they will progress onto an assured tenancy or not. Tenants are asked to complete their second outcome star providing valuable qualitative data used to measure service success. Tenant feedback is overwhelmingly positive and staff are motivated by, and dedicated to the service delivery.

Testimonials:

Monmouthshire HomeSearch: **"the New Homes team really listened to our comments and ideas for improving the system the changes have had a huge positive impact on results, our relationship, and our applicants"**.

Monmouthshire MIND: **"I would like to thank everyone involved in D's recent move. I appreciate the work that went in to ensuring that his flat was everything he wanted and geographically right. Hopefully this will aid his transition into independent living... - partnership working at its best"**!

Mr G, tenant: **"Thank you for all your help- I couldn't have asked for any more support... moving into my new home has made me the most excited and happy I've ever been"**.

Mr S, tenant: **"Everything is top marks, I have been given a new life, you couldn't have done better- MHA changed my life"**.

Building Services Operative: **"I take so much more pride in what we do for tenants now, I would move into one of our relets tomorrow, they are that good"**.

Outcomes and achievements:

From 2016/17 end of year report:

Starter Tenant Arrears: In June 2016 starter arrears were significantly higher than the general arrears level, at 3.73% compared to 2.6%. Starter tenant arrears had reduced by two thirds as at March 2017 to 1.29% and were actually lower than the general arrears level. Further, the number of starter tenants in arrears has almost halved from 65% in May 2016 to 33.92% in March 2017.

End of starter tenancies: Starter tenancy endings per year dropped dramatically to 11 in 2016/17 from 26 in 2015/16, a decrease of 58%. Far fewer NoSPs are being served to starters and no Section 21 was served to a starter tenancy in the first year of service.

Satisfaction surveys: During 2016/17 100% of new tenants report being 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their new home.

Extended starter tenancies: The number of extended starter tenancies as a percentage of the total reduced by a third (from 6.94% to 4.09%) and more than 95% of starter tenants now progress to assured tenancies.

Other evidence: Improved officer/tenant relationships have resulted in few tenants missing pre-arranged appointments, with an average of only three missed NHO appointments per month. Officers made more than 70 referrals to internal and external specialist services for the 200+ starter tenants they worked with in 2016/17.

Cherry on the cake: MHA's re-let times have fallen from 35 days to 21, their tenancy turnover has fallen from 11% to 7.2%. It just keeps getting better!

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Space saviours

Valleys to Coast Housing with Newydd Housing Association, Monmouthshire Housing Association, Tai Calon Community Housing and United Welsh

Community development and regeneration is only successful if it has meaning to those people who live in our communities. But how do we ensure that our projects are of significance to our tenants? Consultation, participation and engagement are useful tools, but can we reach a point where regeneration is genuinely initiated by the communities themselves?

Can we find an approach where the housing association becomes just one actor on the stage that the residents are directing?

That is the approach that is being pioneered by Space Saviours. Set up three years ago with Big Lottery funding, Space Saviours is taking a new direction in 2017, moving ahead as a shared-service between housing association partners.

The shared-service model is being used successfully for auditing across several housing associations through Barcud. It is an innovative way to deliver a service that was previously procured from external companies. However Space Saviours is a way to deliver a new service that ties in with community investment and regeneration activities. It adds to community and regeneration initiatives by engaging with residents as an independent organisation. This allows housing associations to take a step back while residents bring forward their own priorities for open spaces. The Space Saviours officers are careful to make clear that the housing association may or may not fund any of the improvements, but that there are other potential funding streams available. This maintains the enthusiasm, but manages the expectations. It avoids starting the conversation about use of open space based on what the housing association wants to see or is able to fund, which put limits on ideas right from the start. It is relevant to a discussion about any publicly-accessible open space, irrespective of ownership.

It is not an external regeneration consultancy. It is operated by the housing associations purely for the benefit of tenants and residents. Its primary purpose is education, directed to people who may not be open to educational activities. It is focussed on the residents' enthusiasm to see something better in their communities and equips them with information about impacts of e.g. climate change, natural play, good street design, local food growing, urban drainage and green spaces.

For some groups, just this information is enough to get going, for example working with Keep Wales Tidy to start a litter-picking group. Another group accessed a small funding pot to plant heritage fruit trees in their local area. Other communities may have more comprehensive plans, and they can be put through to work with community and environmental consultants, such as Keep Wales Tidy, Groundwork or Eggseeds. They encourage the groups to undertake research and consultation themselves, to ensure ownership of the plans. They then produce rough-costed, consulted, outline plans for improvements that they can then seek funding for, with the housing association as just one potential funder.

What is innovative about Space Saviours:

- Arm's length delivery allowing residents to independently determine their priorities
- Comprehensive information on alternative uses of open space and their impacts, allowing the residents to make a fully-informed decision
- Workshops are tailored sessions delivered in community
- Residents themselves go through all steps of a regeneration project – including engagement, consultation with locals, applications for funding – to become self-sufficient and create community networks
- The residents' group can work directly with community and environmental consultants to draw up aspirational plans for the local area, without the constraints of housing association pre-conceptions and budgets
- Outcomes can be simple and low-budget, e.g. a once-a-month litter picking group, or flower planting event.
- housing associations can pick up the designs for delivery if they fits with their priority areas and budgets.

Outcomes and achievements:

Outcomes first three years include:

56 formal community projects were established and taken through to design phase. Robust project reports were jointly produced between the participants and a supporting organisation, that covered land ownership, designs, costings and sustainability issues. Of these, 23 proceeded to become constituted. 948 tenants and residents engaged with the learning programme.

80% increase in the capability and confidence of participants to develop project plans. Community cohesion - 90% of participants reported a reduction in barriers between groups within their local community and 75% of participants reported an increase in their social networks.

90% reported a significant increase in understanding of the environment, in both local and wider context. Working with social landlord and other service providers on solutions - 90% reported a greater understanding of local service providers.

Outcomes since Space Saviours Mark II

Over 30 potential new tenant led projects identified since April 2017, 11 consultations carried out and 3 workshops delivered. Approx 55 new tenants engaged already.

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USING TECHNOLOGY AND PROMOTING DIGITAL INCLUSION

This award recognises housing organisations demonstrating innovative uses of technology or developing projects that have increased the adoption of technology, reducing digital inequality or exclusion. They show cutting edge design, that they have worked with the community to ensure local support, and provided value for money.



Melin's agile working journey

Melin Homes

Melin embarked on an agile working journey two years ago, which has driven business efficiencies and drastically enhanced customer service to its residents.

Melin were originally in a situation where every morning, their whole direct workforce (made up of 40 painters, electricians, gas engineers and plumbers) visited the office in order to pick up their work sheets for the day ahead, spending valuable time travelling instead of delivering repairs. They also had every single one of their office based staff spending hours on end at their desks undertaking admin tasks instead of delivering valuable services to residents.

Melin quickly established a working group of staff volunteers to identify how to move forward, ensuring a user-centred approach throughout so that everyone felt part of their agile working journey. The organisation looked at lots of different options, varying technology solutions and even visited other organisations to determine best practice. Melin realised that what they had to do needed to be right for them and fit into their inclusive culture whilst also working with their existing IT systems to enhance what they already had.

The initial focus was on their direct workforce (DWF), to limit their travel time to deliver more repairs, hence having the biggest impact upon frontline services. Melin therefore worked closely with their housing management system provider to become the first housing association in Wales to implement the TotalMobile (TM) mobile working solution with their direct workforce. This was a year-long project which ultimately enables staff to access their daily jobs on a handheld device and have direct access back into the housing management system, negating the need to come into the office at all. And Melin didn't stop there...they have since implemented TM for the debt management, customer management, building inspections and community safety teams so their customer services staff can conduct their day-to-day duties when they are out and about, rather than updating their systems back in the office. This empowered staff to work more on their own initiative, delivering enhanced frontline services at the direct point of contact.

Another priority was to allow staff to access systems from anywhere, whether this be from home, sheltered schemes or even MacDonalds!!! Melin completely virtualised their server and desktop environment, allowing staff to access core systems from any location, on any device, at any time. This meant the organisation could reduce the number of desks in their offices, enable people to work more effectively at home and reduce the amount of travelling done by staff, which ultimately has enhanced services to residents. In order to ensure its services are seamless to residents irrespective of where staff were working, Melin also introduced virtual printing facilities and upgraded their phone systems, which ultimately has enhanced their customer journey.

As a result of this project, Melin won the 'workplace transformation project of the year' award at the 2016 UK IT Industry awards. Melin's Income and Inclusion Officer stated **"when we are out with our residents, we are able to offer a more holistic approach, through both income advice and repairs, and are able to offer support there and then. We are able to see more residents than we saw before and are much more productive with our time"**.

Melin's dynamic vision has enabled the organisation to drastically improve the services they provide to residents whilst reducing costs, improving their working environment, reducing their impact upon the natural environment and delivering greater job satisfaction and empowerment for all staff. Their organisational motto is 'together we can' and they have certainly shown that they can!

Outcomes and achievements:

Melin's mobile working solution saves on average two hours per day per direct workforce staff by eliminating paperwork, unproductive travel and streamlining workflow and data capture. That's 20% more repairs that are carried out each day for residents! In addition to this, satisfaction with how repairs are dealt with has risen from 68% in April 2016 to 86% in April 2017. Likewise, percentage of repairs completed 'right first time' has risen from 87% in April 2016 to 99% in April 2017.

The organisation saves a tonne of CO2 emissions a month just from reduced travel as a result of home working. Over the last year, their printing has reduced in every department by up to 55% and just in the last 6 months 80,000 sheets of paper have been saved!

The impact on Melin's office based staff has also transformed the culture of the organisation and morale has increased as a result. Both business results have improved, such as rent arrears decreasing from 1.8% in April 2016 to 1.43% in April 2017, as well as staff engagement results, with Melin achieving position 37 on the Sunday Times best not-for-profit organisation to work for 2017!

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This was the starting point for Charter, from showing older people how they can develop their hobbies and interests through websites and shop online when limited mobility or disability means you are reliant on others so choice is limited, to using fun things like researching family trees or developing gaming skills through coding. All these activities develop digital literacy leading to more interesting lives, increased social interaction, greater employability and better access to services.

By 2010, the growth of social media saw a gradual application of digital by default - applying for benefits, accessing news media and booking holidays online. This combined with the organisation's move towards the modernisation of online services, meant tenants had to become digitally literate.

Charter appointed two digital communities staff to drive forward their digital inclusion target; to achieve the same percentage of Charter residents online as in the general population.

The following are examples of some of the activities Charter has done or is currently undertaking to achieve this;

- Developing a community wireless project in 2007 on an estate in Newport, giving residents free access to communal wireless aerial to encourage them to go online. 'Build your own computer', coding for kids and similar projects engaged residents and a 2016 survey showed that 85% of tenants used the internet via a PC, tablet or smart phone. This demonstrated that concentrated and sustained work had a significant impact.

Charter's approach to digital communities

Charter Housing (Pobl Group) with local housing associations, Communities First, residents and funders

For Charter the journey to digitally inclusive communities has been a long one. Starting in 2005 trying to reduce social isolation in older tenants by encouraging them to go online, the organisation learned early that people need a reason to go online. For them to want to learn more than the basics they need to be motivated by interest.

- Developing the Charter App in 2013 enabling tenants to report repairs, anti-social behaviour and more 24/7. By 2016 nearly 1,000 tenants had downloaded the App prompting Charter to develop a bespoke web portal. **“I had a reply from Customer Services in two hours through the App, which was great.”**
- Arranging roadshows from wireless enabled events vehicle to show people how to use the internet effectively, download the app and save money.
- Providing free Charter USB’s loaded with useful sites and information on how to save money. Online training has saved tenants on low incomes hundreds of pounds per year **“I would not have thought there would be websites to get things for free or reduce your bills.”**
- Developing a heritage project using local history and family tree to develop research, communication and literacy skills online.
- Introducing laptop and tablet loan schemes complimented by recycled smart phones linked to customer feedback on services etc.
- Using digital stories to evaluate projects and communicate issues to tenants
- Using social networks to support project work e.g. closed Facebook groups
- Shifting the emphasis to demonstrate how people can improve their job prospects. Digital work skills support get tenants ready for volunteering, training and work applications **“I found out useful things to help me apply for jobs online.”**
- Helping tenants wanting to start their own businesses to develop their own websites **“We have learned so much.”**
- Becoming a registered centre in 2017 to deliver ECDL computer training. This opportunity has also been opened up to staff
- Providing training from digital team to also help staff become digitally literate, this includes lunchtime sessions on app’s, social media and how get the best from your phone/tablet.

Outcomes and achievements:

An annual survey of tenants since 2012 showed an increase from 56% in 2012 to 75% in 2017. More detailed surveys on two estates where there was a focus of getting people online increased to 85% (Newport) and 83% (Blackwood)

The financial benefit to tenants from the laptop loan scheme and refurbished phone project totals more than £6,000 **“The laptop scheme is great; I would recommend it to anyone in need”.**

Digital volunteering has reduced social isolation and improved skills - **“It has given me a buzz and made me a lot happier”.**

Digital drop-in sessions have raised skills, increased job prospects, improved mental health and reduced social isolation – **“I never thought I would learn how to use a computer, but they have shown me I can do it”.**

Charter has also made contact with hard to reach tenants through online communication, working with British Sign Language signer to support several deaf tenants. **“Being on Facebook has been really good for me.” “I wish I’d known about this app earlier, it’s amazing,”** hearing impaired Charter tenant.

One really positive outcome from this project is a change in perception that social housing tenants struggle to do things online, many people who use Facebook don’t realise they are using the internet. Once you show people they thrive.

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WORKING WITH OTHER SECTORS AWARD

This award recognises projects that have been developed in partnership with organisations from outside the housing sphere, such as health and education, which have resulted in improved outcomes for local people or service users, and value for money.



Brynteg Road

United Welsh with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

Brynteg Road is a supported housing scheme in Blaenau Gwent delivered by United Welsh in partnership with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB).

The purpose of the scheme is to support patients in the transition from living in secure forensic psychiatric long-term hospital ward placements back to living in the community.

This helps them to develop life skills and move toward resilient independent living, while also creating bed space on wards for those in need and creating significant cost savings for the health board.

Consisting of five separate apartments, each with a living and kitchen area, a bathroom and bedroom, Brynteg Road has United Welsh staff on-site 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

This model gives the five tenants their own home and independence for the first time in many years, but has also enabled staff to develop therapeutic relationships with tenants to support their social needs and minimise the risk of mental health relapse, thus assisting the work of the ABUHB Community Mental Health Team.

Brynteg Road was established as part of the In One Place initiative – a collaboration between ABUHB, eight housing associations and the Gwent local authorities which aims to develop and provide accommodation and care for those with Continuing Health Care (CHC) needs for individuals in ward placements that are no longer suitable.

In 2015, a United Welsh property became available and was offered to the In One Place collaboration as it was deemed suitable to house people who have been assessed as having a primary, complex health care need.

United Welsh worked closely with ABUHB to refurbish the property and to identify the support requirements for the new tenants, and the housing and care model established at Brynteg has produced meaningful outcomes since the first tenants moved to the scheme in October 2016.

One example is Mark Davies, who previously lived in secure forensic settings for eight years.

Mark has been diagnosed with mental health illnesses that impact how he sees the world. His anxiety affected his ability to communicate and form relationships and when he first left the ward, Mark struggled to make eye contact and speak with others without becoming distressed.

Mark also misused substances to try to manage his emotions and his behaviour during mental health crisis had left him isolated from his family; consequently impacting his parents' mental health.

Since moving to Brynteg, Mark's independent living arrangements and support from staff has enabled him to develop DIY skills to create his first home; reconnect with his family; learn to cook; manage his own budget; take up swimming and walking resulting in a three-stone weight loss; teach digital skills and re-start practising his faith. He now delivers sermons in front of 70+ people and recently won a 'Learner of the Year' tenant award.

Mark has made so much progress that his Care and Treatment Plans coordinated by the Community Health Team have been lowered from every three months to six months - a huge achievement given staff initially felt a ward bed needed to remain open for Mark.

You can watch Mark and his mum talk about their experiences of Brynteg at 6m:30s of this film: www.ow.ly/wa6X30dNUpo

In addition to the impact the Brynteg Road scheme is having on the lives of tenants, it has also resulted in significant cost savings.

Each apartment at Brynteg is saving £119,668 per year in hospital costs, creating a total saving of £598,340.*

*Sources for cost savings: Cost prevention database - HM Treasury Public Service Transformation Network and Supporting Public Service: Cost benefit analysis guidance for local partnerships.

Outcomes and achievements:

The housing and support provided by the Brynteg Road scheme has resulted in several positive outcomes; significantly improving the lives of the tenants and their families and creating efficiencies for the agencies involved.

Each apartment is saving £119,668 per year in hospital costs; a total saving of £598,340.

Brynteg is also creating ward bed spaces for those in need and providing an environment for tenants to thrive, enabling them to regain their independence and maintain good mental wellbeing.

Trudy Davies, mother of tenant Mark said:

“Mark is a different boy and he’s turned his life around. It’s like a family here and Emma (Team Leader) treats him like a brother.

“I couldn’t believe it when he won an award – I cried! I’m so proud.”

Tonia Malson, Contracts and Performance Manager for ABUHB said: **“I couldn’t be more supportive of the work of the Brynteg Road team. Beyond the resource efficiencies the project has created, the scheme is improving people’s lives.”**

Joanne Lewis-Jones, ABUHB In One Place Programme Officer said: **“The project is testimony to the effectiveness of collaboration between Health, Social Care and Housing. We applaud the commitment of everyone involved and hope Brynteg becomes an exemplar for future projects.”**

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Closer to home

First Choice Housing Association

First Choice Housing provides supported housing for vulnerable people enabling them to live independently within the community. Initially established in 1988 to provide housing for people with learning disabilities resettling from long stay institutions the organisation has enabled individuals to live independently as valued members within their local community. Since then First Choice has diversified and now provides housing to the wider sector including acquired brain injury, physical

disabilities and veterans who may need support when leaving the Armed Forces. Passion and values for providing specialist housing for the most vulnerable is what drives First Choice to continuously look for ways to improve standards and ensure that customers receive the best service possible.

Working together to provide homes in place of residential care for people with challenging behaviour “Closer to Home”(C2H) is a partnership between First Choice Housing Association, local authorities and Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board. The house provides an environment bespoke to the needs of the tenant and support partners to deliver Positive Behaviour Support. This powerful combination has seen behaviours that challenge reduce dramatically.

People with challenging behaviour have often been housed out of county and away from their families due to the lack of suitable accommodation within the locality. The “Closer to home” partnership supports the Welsh Government’s Wellbeing of Future Generations and Social Services and Wellbeing Acts aims as it provides a joined up long term multi agency solution to improving the quality of life for people with complex support and health care needs. People are accommodated in the areas they grew up and can integrate properly into a community which has huge benefits for them and their families. The model has seen incredible results which have given

tenants independence and security of tenure. The partnership has successfully demonstrated that living in an 'ordinary house in an ordinary street' with the appropriate support can deliver significant outcomes for people with complex health needs and challenging behaviour.

An ordinary house in an ordinary street -That's how it appears but First Choice and its partners have carefully chosen and adapted properties to provide a therapeutic environment to reduce challenging behaviour. The typical features of a "Closer to Home" property include the location chosen to maximise social integration, a quiet area (as noise can be a trigger) and a large footprint to allow for breakout rooms to help manage challenging behaviour. Many of the properties have adapted bathrooms, concealed shower and toilet cisterns and specialised solid walls to minimise damage

Case Study - Brian has ASD and lived in Swansea but at the age of 11 he went to a specialist residential school in Basingstoke. The distance meant that there was infrequent contact with his family. Brian, now 19 needed new accommodation so First Choice Housing Association worked with ABMU Health Board, City and County of Swansea Council, Bridgend County Borough Council and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to develop a housing and support package which would address his issues and reduce his challenging behaviour. Brian now carries out his own activities of daily living whilst engaging positively with his support staff. His quality of life has improved and his challenging behaviour significantly reduced. Brian was also able to see his family much more frequently, in particular his maternal grandmother with whom he has a relationship that is very important to him.

Outcomes and achievements:

C2H has addressed issues rather than managed Brian's behaviour resulting in lower levels of support. Within one year support costs have reduced from £300k to £100k.

Working with partners First Choice Housing Association has provided 38 bed-spaces resulting in:

- 40 people living in their own homes
- 30 people returning from out of the area or very costly local services
- Dramatic improvements in quality of life
- Reductions in challenging behaviour
- Annual revenue savings averaging more than £100k per tenant

C2H has led to increased participation in a range of activities at home and in the community, developing personal interests and relationships. This has been associated with reductions in frequency and intensity of behaviours that challenge. Families have commented that it's easier for them to spend more time with their relative now that they are closer to home. One mum commented **"marvellous"** when asked to sum up her experience of her daughter moving to a C2H house adding **"she's happier, more confident and her self-esteem has increased"**.

One commissioner said **"Closer to home has given us strong partnerships with common visions and priorities and is a key strategic commissioning priority, we want to continue the supporting living model and develop and ensure services remain high quality "**.

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Step down team housing options

Conwy Housing Solutions with Denbighshire Housing Solutions, Betsi Cadwalader University Health Board, Conwy Care and Repair and Denbighshire Care and Repair

Health and Housing 2025 is a collaborative movement with a shared purpose of ending avoidable health inequalities in North Wales, and its membership includes representatives from Betsi Cadwalader University Health Board (BCUHB), Public Health, housing associations, local authorities and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. 2025 partners have identified five priority work areas that can contribute to tackling health inequalities, and one of these is around "Hospital Discharge".

This has supported the creation of Step Down Team. This is a new pathway to improving patient flow within Ysbyty Glan Clwyd and the community hospitals serviced by the acute site. Following increasing numbers of patients accessing the health service and an unprecedented amount of those patients being unable to be safely discharged to appropriate accommodation, BCUHB approached Conwy Housing Solutions to introduce a specialist housing officer who would be imbedded within the Step Down Team.

The housing officer worked alongside discharge liaison nurses, occupational therapists, district nurses and physiotherapists and was directly managed by the matron of the Step Down Team.

The role of the housing officer was to identify patients in housing crisis whose discharge from the site was likely to be delayed. Early intervention to establish the nature of the housing crisis and to determine the barriers to discharge were the main focus.

Significant amount of time was spent 'walking the wards' and attending board rounds. This was vital to promote the role of the housing officer and also for the housing officer to familiarise themselves with the

hospital layout, jargon and ways of working unique to that environment.

The housing officer worked closely with ward managers to develop trust and understanding of each other's roles and to ensure the highest standard of service could be offered. The housing officer developed a simple referral system within the busy emergency department ensuring that patients could be highlighted during admission with minimal disruption to the difficult task of nursing. This system was developed over time and has proved successful in being able to work with a patient through their journey and ensure that appropriate services are considered for the patient's needs.

Quotes from those involved;

"I was treating a patient in ED who was homeless. He was medically well but I was going to admit him into the hospital as I was worried about discharging him back to the street. Housing officer took the time to talk to the patient and discuss his housing options. I felt much more confident that services were there to support him so I proceeded to discharge him which meant another patient who was not medically well could receive the care and attention they needed"

– Emergency department doctor.

"I'd had extensive surgery and was very low when I spoke with housing officer on the ward. The circumstances leading up to my stay in hospital meant that I couldn't go back to my partner's house and things with my family were really messed up. Speaking with the officer really helped, they were really clear about my options and were patient with all the questions I asked. Up until then I felt that everyone was making decisions for me but they told me everything I needed to know and then let me make my own. In the end I was able to go back to my family but knowing that there were other options really helped me make that choice" – Patient.

Estimated savings of £163,200 within first 6 month period evidence the benefits of the role.

Outcomes and achievements:

- In the first 6 months of the project, the housing officer aided discharge for 80 patients. Of these, 45 were homeless. The housing officer provided assessments to respective local authorities.
- Of these, 32 were accepted as being homeless and services were offered to them. 6 were referred to counties outside of Wales, 6 declined to engage following discharge and 1 was found to not be homeless.

- 12 of those patients were deemed to be in priority need and offered emergency accommodation.
- Of a further 3 priority need cases, 2 were offered supported accommodation and 1 was assisted into their own AST direct from hospital.
- 6 have since been accepted into supported accommodation projects, 3 have been offered social housing tenancies and 2 have been assisted in securing their own AST.
- It has been found on average, homeless patients in priority need spend 30 additional days in hospital. An estimated cost of £400 per night equates to £180,000.
- In contrast, 9 of the 15 patients deemed to have

priority need were discharged on the date they became medically fit. The remaining 5 were discharged within 7 days. Total figure £16,800.

- Estimated savings of £163,200 within 6 months and vital support being delivered to patients where and when needed.

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and practical insight into how housing makes a vital contribution to health and wellbeing. This knowledge and insight required greater thought around specific challenges for older people made vulnerable from complex health issues, sensory loss, dementia, stroke, etc. This understanding, along with housing technical expertise, professional standards, regulation compliance, specialist works schedules and supervised contractor outcomes, is crucial to getting it right for the client.

Older people, irrespective of health challenge, still want to live independently. This means in homes that are free from hazards, warm, dry, accessible and easy to manage. If these outcomes are to be successfully provided for beneficiaries then it cannot be on a 'one size fits all' but on an individually tailored basis that building work needs to be approached. Getting the house right as a liveable home is our service mission.

Over thirty years of working in housing for older people, supporting safe discharge of care and preventative cost avoidance savings for the NHS has emphasised the benefits of partnership working. However, tackling more complex health challenges was a growing concern and required greater collaboration and new knowledge and skills. Critically, preventative services need to improve outcomes and make community, stitch-in-time interventions as effective as they can be, removing the potential for harm.

Care and Repair's new partnership with RNIB Cymru and Action on Hearing Loss Cymru has also recently been extended to Alzheimer's Society Wales and Stroke Association for better co-production and improved targeting of the Managing Better service. To target resources effectively new partnerships have been developed with NHS teams and GP surgeries across Wales. This helps to get to older people that are struggling in their homes with poor health, and also encourages the health sector to identify vulnerable older people that have health conditions exacerbated by poor housing.

Managing better

Care and Repair Cymru with RNIB Cymru, Action on Hearing Loss Cymru and partners in a number of Health Boards, notably UBMU, UBUHB, CTUHB, CVUHB and BCUHBd

Care and Repair's starting point was based on experience that helping people to live in safe, warm and accessible homes, independently, gives greater health and life opportunity. Care and Repair also has expertise

The service operates across Welsh communities and many are referred through health, GP or Social Services, thus being in high priority need. Beneficiaries are often living in cold, damp, unsafe, poorly maintained homes. The fact that most will have an identified sensory loss, stroke, Alzheimers and sometimes a combination of these makes independent living far more of a challenge. Some are victims of social exclusion and many have poor access to mainstream services. Our experience suggests that housing needs are often not considered from a care standpoint and sensory loss is often not considered by mainstream statutory services.

The outcomes across Wales are therefore: improved access to services; getting the 'right', specialist services, living in homes that are easier to manage, lower reliance on NHS and G.P. services; more confident of coping with a sensory loss; more creative options to adapt the home to meet a critical need.

The service is funded through Sustainable Social Services Third Sector Grant for an annual sum of £438,250 utilising research from reports produced by BRE, Age UK, Welsh Audit Office and the Personal Social Services Research Unit to calculate a value return on investment. The average intervention from the Managing Better service is £560 and the potential direct cost to the NHS and Social Services for a falls trauma is £116,225 per client. For only 5% of the most at risk clients the return would be £11.50 for every £1 invested. The service also ensures that expertise from a range of organisations reaches the client through single contact points at the frontline.

Outcomes and achievements:

This new service is delivered by Care and Repair Cymru, in partnership with RNIB Cymru and Action on Hearing Loss Cymru. At the end of Year 1 it has recruited 13 caseworkers, providing services in 22 counties and linked to the NHS across 7 Health Boards. It combines home improvement, older people's welfare and technical building expertise, with a range of skills to assist beneficiaries with sensory loss. The outcome is independent living: the challenge is enabling older people to manage better.

So far, it has assisted 1,425 vulnerable people, 79% have sensory loss, 1,136 received falls prevention measures, 270 were helped to improve heating, clients received £96,966 additional welfare income, and £380,428 of home adaptations were completed. Based on calculations for 5% of the most vulnerable clients, with low cost interventions and prudent health advice, an estimated £11.50 for every £1 invested is saved as NHS preventative cost avoidance.

The new service has also helped develop new partnerships between housing, ophthalmology and audiology in the NHS, with greater understanding of how housing impacts on poor health. Better understanding of sight loss has impacted on home adaptations, with Visibly Better standards giving greater consideration to lighting, shade, tone and design.

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