



# WELSH HOUSING AWARDS 2016

## GOOD PRACTICE COMPENDIUM

Sharing the lessons learnt from  
Welsh Housing Awards 2016




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# **GOOD PRACTICE COMPENDIUM**

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# Welsh Housing Awards 2016 - shortlisted entries

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Acknowledgments Editor: Jonathan Barnes Compilation/support: Ingrid Smith, Lynne Hatch		

# Community focused contractor award

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.



## Caerphilly WHQS

### Keepmoat

*"Building communities. Transforming lives."*

At Keepmoat, communities are at the heart of what we do. Our work goes beyond bricks and mortar, we recognise that it is hugely important to support local people and make a difference to people's lives.

We fully integrate ourselves within communities and work closely with residents and partners to leave a long-term positive impact. In the last year, we have dedicated over 700 hours to community and charity projects in South Wales.

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

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

### Case study – Caerphilly WHQS

Keepmoat is one of the contractors on the £200 million Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme for Caerphilly Council. The WHQS programme will see

homes of council tenants in the Caerphilly borough brought up to a set of standards, including internal and external works and improvements to the environment.

As well as carrying out much needed improvements, the scheme has enabled Keepmoat to provide employment/training opportunities for local people:

- An unemployed student joined the Keepmoat team on an eight-week administrative work experience placement shadowing RLO's.
- Keepmoat visited Caerphilly job centre as part of 'Campaign in a Box' for construction month, to present to staff the routes into construction. Keepmoat also presented to 10 unemployed people about roles in construction.
- Keepmoat employed six local apprentices over the last year on the Caerphilly scheme.
- Alongside the LIFT programme, Caerphilly Council and Communities First, Keepmoat visited a group of 12 local unemployed people from the Caerphilly borough and held one-to-one sessions with them regarding the construction industry. The 12 candidates took part in the 'Induction to Construction' programme, gaining experience and skills through practical and theory based construction sessions during their two-week placement with Keepmoat.
- Cllr David Poole, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, said: *"The council made a clear commitment that its WHQS programme would be used not only to improve homes, but also to transform lives and communities. Through effective partnership working, innovative projects like 'Induction to Construction' are being developed to maximise the investment being made into WHQS, whilst delivering significant outcomes for local people."*

In the last year, Keepmoat has dedicated over 200 man-hours to community/charity projects in the Caerphilly borough:

- Keepmoat in partnership with the Business Class, which is part of Careers Wales, collaborated with Blackwood School over a three year period, to provide school engagement opportunities to the entire school. This year alone, Keepmoat has carried out a talk to 400 students on construction,



introduced a logo competition, carried out design workshops, and visited Keepmoat sites to discuss H&S issues. The logo competition has resulted in the school rebranding with a new logo designed by one of the students.

- School engagement with Penllwyn Primary School to provide H&S presentations and competitions, STEM sessions in partnership with The Eden Education Centre using Lego, and decorating bird boxes/ building bug hotels to highlight environmental issues.
- Communities First organised a skip day for the community, which Keepmoat funded and supported.
- Keepmoat were proud corporate sponsors of Tŷ Hafan Children's Hospice from 2013-2015. Staff also this year fundraised for many other charities, including homelessness charity The Wallich and 2016's corporate nominated domestic violence charity Hafan Cymru by taking part in the Cyclone 24 Challenge, a skydive and hosting a Masquerade ball. The team have raised a staggering £35k for charity over the last few years.

### Outcomes and achievements:

Our key outcomes and achievements over the past year, include:

- Around 40% of our workforce in South Wales is made up of apprentices and trainees.
- We commit to using local labour on our sites, wherever possible.
- In the last year, we have dedicated over 700 hours to community and charity projects.
- The value of our CSR contribution in the region for

the year is more than £40,000.

- We have dedicated over 200 hours on community and charity projects alone in the Caerphilly borough, with Penllwyn Primary School and Blackwood School giving us glowing reports for our safety, technology and environment workshops.
- We collate feedback from the schools and colleges we work with. Our satisfaction score for activities carried out in the last year currently stands at 98%, with 99.2% saying they would book other activities with us. We consistently receive positive comments too: *"The event was brilliant. We would not be able to run events in school like this without the support of Keepmoat, it's greatly appreciated."*
- This year alone, we have had 13 work experience students and 6 apprentices on the WHQS scheme.
- The team have raised a staggering £35k for Tŷ Hafan, The Wallich and Hafan Cymru charities.

### What the judges said:

*Keepmoat have provided a wide range of community benefits and taken ownership of making a difference.*

### Charlie Hargreaves

Community investment manager

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## Lovell Legacy

Lovell Partnerships Ltd

Community, education, employment and sustainability are the four cornerstones of our commitment to transform communities and are at the heart of our business. We are proud to help communities, protect our environment, and inspire future generations and are proactive in providing opportunities for local people from community based events, to employment and training initiatives which are all delivered by our dedicated staff in the communities in which we work.

At Trevor Bowen Court, we ran a 'Give and Gain' initiative to paint both the interior/exterior of the Overmonnow Family Learning Centre and supported the local primary school in their curriculum-based weather project, working with them to create an outdoor learning area.

*"The children loved visiting the site and finding out about the local building project. It has helped the children as they have become more aware of the impact weather can have. We would like to thank Lovell for giving us a memorable experience."* - Kelly Jukes, Overmonnow Primary School.

We also offered two apprenticeships - an apprentice plumber via our subcontractor and a Lovell apprentice, Chester, who has remained and developed with the company and now works on the Loftus Garden Village project.

We work with as many stakeholders as possible as part of our community engagement policy. At the Brackla development, we worked with Brackla Primary to deliver a road safety sign competition and had over 60 entries from pupils - 7 signs have now been erected outside the school as a result. We also strive to attract and develop a talented workforce and provide apprenticeship opportunities on each of our projects whether we are building homes for sale, design and build contracting, refurbishment or regeneration, we provide a huge variety of training and employment initiatives which are tailored to meet the needs of the project and the local people.

At the Bronte development, we invited local students behind the scenes, which saw 24 second-year students from the Welsh School of Architecture visiting site to see construction progress.

Linc's Tim Crooks said:

*"This was a chance for the architecture students to see construction work under way on a large-scale scheme and appreciate how designs are translated into reality when a project is actually built. We talked them through the construction process, explaining the sequence in which the work is being carried out and thoroughly enjoyed answering their questions."*

The Beeches Village, Caerphilly shows how we always strive to make a positive impact and, although the project at times was a challenging one, the views/ needs of the local community were considered throughout the project. We provided training schemes and four apprenticeships on the project. One of these apprentices, Jamie Baird, returned to the site where he was born, via the 'Y Prentis' Scheme:

*"This is the first time I've worked on an actual site so I'm learning all the time. Having been born here and still living locally, it gives me a personal connection with the site, which is really nice."*

We also created a new animation studio for GCSE and A Level art and design students at St Martin's School.

We have recently supported Coleg Gwent with their 'Improve Your Prospects' video which promotes the importance of maths and English to school leavers. Our regional director, regional technical manager and a number of other staff appear in the video which targets those who have just left school to improve their maths and English, and emphasises their importance in all jobs and careers. ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXZhakKzwkU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXZhakKzwkU))

We support a huge variety of different initiatives and are fully flexible in the events we arrange and provide. We have a creative approach to delivering tangible benefits for all and one site recently we raised awareness of breast cancer in partnership with Bullivants by piling pink foundations on site!

## Outcomes and achievements:

At Lovell, we are committed to leaving a positive, self-sustaining legacy in the communities in which we work. We have extensive experience of creating mixed tenure developments that help bring people together and we take corporate social responsibility very seriously, whether it's leaving someone with a new home, a refurbished kitchen or bathroom, a renovated community centre, CV advice, work experience or a new career. We try to leave hope and optimism on every project we undertake and call this commitment our 'Lovell Legacy'.

We support the regeneration of communities through the involvement of the local people and the provision of opportunities for all, from apprenticeships, mentoring and work placements to coffee mornings, improvement projects and working with local schools. We work with people who have an interest in their communities and with them we deliver engagement, training and employment initiatives - tangible benefits to real people.

We work together with our partners to challenge some of the issues being experienced in the communities where we work, to bring people together and encourage a more positive approach by all, providing support on all levels. Our annual Lovell golf day, which is in its 24th year, and is delivered with the support of our clients and supply chain partners, raises money every year for local charities which have included Shelter Cymru, Bobath, BHF, MacMillan, CHAPS (Community Horse & Pony Scheme)

In the last 3 years we have:

- Provided 38 apprenticeships /1440 apprenticeship weeks
- Provided 42 work experience placements.
- Donated over £78,000 to local communities and 486 hours of Staff time

## What the judges said:

*Lovell Partnership Ltd have shown an impressive commitment to learning and apprenticeships*

### Gemma Clissett

Business development manager

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## Leaving a legacy

### Contract Services South Wales Ltd with Communities First, Lift, Down to Earth, St.Martins Comprehensive School, Caerphilly

As a contractor in the social housing sector in Wales we have thought long and hard about going further than simply just ticking the boxes of TR&T compliance. As the only Welsh building contractor registered to the Living Wage Foundation, Contract Services has adopted a step change approach to meaningful community engagement by harnessing the strength of multiple stakeholders, and leading on projects that can be rolled out across several communities.

For example, with Caerphilly Council we've led the way amongst our larger framework competitors by challenging convention and identifying Caerphilly's aspirations from the WHQS programme. Rather than spread ourselves too thinly, we've committed to one secondary school throughout the duration of the 6 year contract and agreed a programme of initiatives; focusing on one specific community for whom we have devised a bespoke programme called 'Making a house a home'. Allocated to Lansbury Park, already dubbed 'Wales' most deprived area' in the BBC documentary 'Fighting back' earlier this year, we deliver measurable & jointly agreed outcomes that enhance life quality, leaving a lasting legacy on which people can continue to develop and grow. We now aim to replicate this approach across our other contracts.

Working with Communities First and Lift, we've developed a skills and confidence-building course for female tenants from Lansbury Park. The three week programme runs within school hours to break down barriers, and aims to empower individuals in the home, building confidence and independence. Training includes basic DIY, first aid, budgeting and income management; as well as confidence building, and construction job roles. On completing the course attendees can move to the next stage of attainment of CSCS cards if they wish. There is a positive agenda

towards women in construction, and the course aims to showcase the wide range of roles available and improve sustainability in their homes.

As Contract Services approaches its 20th year of trading we have set our sights on reaching key milestones by 2020. On training and employment we aim to ensure that 20% of our workforce is made up of formal training and apprenticeship roles. Of our current direct workforce 22 out of 145 employees are apprentices, equating to 15%. With the 2016 intake underway, we are looking to achieve 20% by the end of the year. To give an idea of scale of these efforts, a large national competitor has 294 trade apprentices which equates to just 2% of their workforce. This demonstrates our commitment to impacting the skills shortage in the sector as well as sustaining local opportunities for local people.

We have engaged with social enterprise 'Down to earth' based in the Gower who specialise in training hard to reach groups, for example young people, in an outdoor environment. The relationship is two fold: we've engaged with them by utilising their training services for confidence and team-building for our apprentices, and secondly, they are constructing a residential facility on site to accommodate delegates for future training, using more traditional heritage/craft forms of construction. They have limited funding and we are working with them to help provide materials and labour via training to complete these projects. In addition, we intend to source further team building training for the rest of the workforce. We've also introduced the secondary school to them and will use their training services as part of the support and mentoring our site team will provide to the school. In this way we are signposting them to new business opportunities as well as using their services as a business and partnering for the benefit of other stakeholders.

### Outcomes and achievements:

Outcomes to date include securing repeat business from clients, enabling us to continue to sustain employment.

As Cllr David Poole, deputy leader and cabinet member for housing at Caerphilly CBC commented:

*"Contract Services has made excellent progress, over a relatively short space of time, in their delivery of community benefits in the Caerphilly county borough. The company has demonstrated a real willingness to work in partnership with the council, along with the enthusiasm and commitment to really make a difference to the lives of residents and local communities."*

Charity commitments have seen us raise almost £25k, £12k of which in 2016 is for Ty Hafan. Activities include the Welsh 3-peaks challenge, family fun days, quiz nights, golf days, charity dinners and onesie walks. Employment-wise (sourced from the communities in which we work) achievements include:

- Extended a 12 month trainee placement by a further 12 months



- Secured 6 Jobs Growth Wales placements
- 100% retention rate with all apprentices
- Four work placements with candidates sourced from Shaw Trust and the Lift programme with two being taken into permanent employment.
- For every £1 spent on the contract £2 is put back into the Welsh Economy
- Committed to upskilling the workforce and sub-contractors

### Lucy Davies

Community liaison officer

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### What the judges said:

*Contract Services South Wales Ltd are an SME who are committed to building the local economy and making a difference*



## Back into the community campaign: supporting communities through social, economic and environmental sustainable development

### Morganstone

Morganstone are committed to developing and delivering tangible community benefits and targeted recruitment and training opportunities (TR&T) within the community. We strive to reduce environmental impact and maximise training and employment opportunities whilst building legacies within the communities in which we work.

Morganstone believe training and employment provide opportunities for the communities in which we work and are vital to the long-term future of the construction industry and are therefore mutually beneficial. This

approach is embedded in our corporate social responsibility policy and informs all our activities.

We support organisations and charities in the communities in which we work and are committed to investing in the local workforce and supply chain. We are committed to employing from the local communities via LIFT, Cyfle and Y-Prentis.

We are committed to promoting the construction industry. We developed a world of work day programme which engages with several regional comprehensive schools, to bring them together at events to inform them of the varied roles and routes into the industry.

We adopt a proactive and strategic approach to ensure that the existing communities are at the heart of planning and delivery of all our projects. Our directly employed community engagement manager (CEM) prepares bespoke community profiles for all our projects to identify:

- key stake holders
- potential areas we can benefit the community
- potential areas of negative impact of developments
- local apprenticeships, work experience and Employment opportunities

The profiles are used to tailor community strategies unique to each project. Our CEM works closely with the project team, clients and community to ensure these targets are delivered. Each project has its own "community web page" providing regular community updates in addition to traditional letter drops and community site boards. In addition to project-focused initiatives we run a number of company/region wide initiatives to support employment, training initiatives and community organisations across Wales.

Specific examples include:

### Old Oak Housing Co-operative

We have worked with Gwalia, Carmarthenshire Council and the Housing co-operative to carry out a range of community engagement activities including: briefing meetings, community information day, letter drops/newsletters, residents colour choice days, bricklaying activities, turf cutting ceremony, community party. We even brought our very own Father Christmas and selection boxes to the co-operative members Christmas party!

Jonathan Hughes, development director said:

*"Pobl Group has worked with Morganstone on a range of projects. Each scheme has been characterised by a strong and committed approach to community engagement above and beyond the construction works... The Old Oak Co-operative Project has demonstrated a positive example of this approach... Morganstone have committed considerable time and effort to ensuring that residents taking up occupation of the new homes have had every opportunity to place their mark on their new home... Importantly, the commitment to such a community focus is embedded in the culture of the organisation and not merely lip service, with dedicated resources and a commitment to such activity from the highest level of management within Morganstone."*

### Hamadryad

We worked with CCHA on a range of community engagement activities including: resident meetings, letter drops/newsletters, community day, Christmas shoe-box appeal, Cardiff Met student visit, Llamau toiletries appeal, Sports Relief darts, Children in Need cake sale, Llamau Easter egg appeal, DIY SOS project. 95 apprentice/trainee weeks, 4 trainees, graduate trainee placement, Lift employees.

Caroline Lewis, Development Director said:

*"Morganstone recognised the importance of working closely with the community at Hamadryad. The community previously felt let down and Morganstone ensured they went above the usual standards... Morganstone attended community meetings and worked with CCHA to deliver a successful community day. As a result of being open with the local community the community accepted the development"*

### Outcomes and achievements:

- £16,905 donations for in-kind labour/goods
- 629 hours in-kind labour
- £2 Welsh local multiplier
- Welsh SME's – 100% contribution

- 26 community events e.g. charity cricket, darts matches, family days
- Community contributions/sponsorship £39,724. E.g. Gwalia Trust £9,000, Prostrate Cymru £2000, Mileys Fund £800, Kidney Research Wales £160, Rudy's Fund £266.
- 2 DIY SOS projects - support children/families with illnesses/disabilities
- 25 schools, careers and construction events – primary school construction and housing talks, site safety visits/poster competitions, 2 CITB ambassadors, college and schools careers fairs, world of work day, university site visits, young business dragons, apprentice competition judging, Jobs Centre talks, Princes Trust get into construction.
- University street art project
- Project specific sponsored charities e.g. Air Ambulance Wales
- Cyffle - third largest employer of apprentices within Wales
- LIFT – Juan Sanchez previously unemployed – employed as labourer and trained as crane/forklift driver
- Owain Phillips – Apprentice employed trainee site manager, Cyffle and CITB Ambassador
- 2 Uganda charitable projects
- 35 apprentices
- 946 apprentice weeks
- 9 trainees/graduate trainees
- Occupational health assessments
- Staff training £39,310
- Investors In People
- Considerate Constructor Average Score - 41, Silver Award Imble Lane, Cwmgelli
- Recipro donations
- University thermal bridging research project - £15,343
- 90% waste diverted from landfill

### What the judges said:

*Morganstone Ltd have demonstrated positive outcomes across a range of areas.*

### Antonia John

Community engagement manager

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# New idea award

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



## Little by little

**Melin Homes with Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council, Torfaen Homes - Torfaen County Borough Council, Cardiff County Council, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council**

Little by Little (LBL) was a new idea created through Welsh Government Warm Homes funding and worked across five local authority areas located in South East Wales (Torfaen, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr, Blaenau Gwent and Cardiff) engaging with households in areas that had previously received Arbed or Max ECO funding and had hard measures installed e.g. new windows, doors, boilers external wall insulation. Its core aim was to demonstrate that significant positive outcomes can be achieved by providing residents with energy and behaviour change advice and interventions. The project set out to:

- Demonstrate the value (in terms of energy and money saved) of direct behaviour and advice interventions
- Demonstrate that investment in energy and behaviour change advice has a significantly greater impact on the Welsh economy than the cost of that advice

The project was submitted by Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC on behalf of the 5 local authorities, with all members forming a project board. Melin Homes' Being Greener Team, then managed, delivered and monitored the project. Project staff were employed within Melin Homes and hosted by some local authorities again to ensure value for money of investment but, as importantly, to ensure that outcomes, achievements and learnings were as a result of partnership working and the exchange of good practice.

The project worked with 1345 properties throughout the five local authority areas, and fully engaged with 998 households giving the project a 70% engagement rate. Those households not wishing to fully engage all received the relevant information to assist them with saving money.

The LBL project has been a huge success with many lessons learnt across the five local authorities. The approach was not solely energy, the officers visited each resident and surveyed the house to ascertain how they used energy and went through tips on how to save energy by changing behaviour. The officers supported residents to look at energy companies to compare energy providers and see if switching provider could save them money, and also a holistic referral approach toward:

- Employment and training needs
- Financial – income maximisation
- Digital – get them digitally included

Where it was clear that some residents were in financial difficulty with their fuel payments, hardship grants were applied for to pay off the debts, where boilers had been condemned and individuals were unable to afford new as they just sat above the grant criteria, the LBL officers helped write to charities to get them funding. The LBL officers supported some into apprenticeships and jobs through having the knowledge of vacancies locally.

Schools were worked with in each of the areas to educate young people in understanding how to save energy both in the school and their home environments through a fun, engaging programme. We recruited and trained volunteers in an OCN level one in understanding home energy efficiency to support them to go out and spread the message to their friends, neighbours and families.

Energy fairs were held in each of the communities to encourage those not engaged with in the programme to visit our switching advice stations, talk to energy providers and learn energy saving tips.

### Outcomes and achievements:

Total savings made by the project were £300,737.00. Equating to eight months of field work as the programme took time to create and staff were recruited. Savings were achieved through energy switches to new providers, better deals offered through existing suppliers, accessing grant funding, benefit entitlement checks and professional advice regarding the actual change of behaviour within the home.

Selections of case studies have been collated and evidence the professional work that the team have achieved during the project. They show a wide variety of savings and help that the team were able to give by also working in a multi-agency environment and referral system that was also incorporated into the work.

The evaluation film portrays the difference that the work the LBL programme made to residents lives. Some of the footage is hard hitting, showing the positive impact the LBL programme delivered.

LBL has been recognised as an example of best practice. Rhian Cook went to Westminster to discuss the project at a select committee on energy advice and health schemes.

Welsh Government has now put energy behaviour change and financial maximisation into all its hard measures tenders going forward from the results of the LBL programme as a requirement.

### What the judges said:

*Melin Homes have shown a great partnership approach, demonstrating wide ranging impact*

#### Allison Cawley

New business development manager

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## Managing empty properties

### Pembrokeshire Housing Association with Pembrokeshire Housing Direct Labour Services

In challenging times, ensuring the core business is operating well is clearly crucial. At Pembrokeshire Housing, we see void management as a customer service that can have a significant impact on communities and customer services. With over 3500 people needing affordable rented housing in

Pembrokeshire, our customers told us that it's important for the community, and also for the prospective customer, to see their landlord being proactive in allocating void properties. Customers also don't want to wait a long time between viewing the property and moving in so we knew we had to change the way we managed our voids to ensure that we provided the service that customers needed and deserved.

### So how did we achieve this?

- We simplified the process, by providing area officers with 8 simple steps to follow when dealing with a void.
- We use our own direct labour services (DLS) team to undertake all void repairs. This is very advantageous as we not only have more control on in-house maintenance, but we are not subject to contractor availability or reliability problems. We know we get a faster response time to jobs undertaken by our own operatives who know and understand our customers' homes and provide an excellent customer service. Our DLS also supports 4 apprentices
- We use the 28 day notice period to inspect, arrange viewings and allocate the property
- We introduced a 'clean and empty' incentive for out-going customers to encourage them to leave their property in a good condition
- We collect the keys from the outgoing tenant at their home, ensuring that all work has been undertaken and the property is clean and empty



- We handover to the customer at their new home, not in the office
- We visit the out-going tenant within a week of them handing in their notice and on the last day of their tenancy to collect the keys.
- We have had to think differently. We think commercially when dealing with voids having introduced 'back to back lets' in order to provide prospective customers with a quick housing solution
- We have learnt from estate agents to ensure that voids are treated commercially, and that we act as efficiently as possible; with set targets and monitoring in place.
- Our DLS is multi-skilled and will undertake all pre and post inspections, removing the need for inspectors
- Generic area officers, maintenance workers and customer service advisors are all engaged with the service, prioritising voids as they arise to ensure that we are meeting customer expectations.

#### What did we cut out of the process to meet customer needs?

- We don't inspect empty homes before sending in the person who will be doing the work.
- We don't do improvement works whilst a home is empty.
- We offer customers choice when it comes to replacing components in the void property, so, we nearly never change a kitchen, or a bathroom whilst a home is empty because our customers prefer to move in and have a choice on the style, design and layout.

Ownership of the empty home remains with the area officer throughout the process. We do not 'pass' the void to property services if it requires major works - voids and lettings are coordinated by the same person, ensuring efficient re-let times and an excellent service to customers at all times.

#### Outcomes and achievements:

Housing associations from Northern Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales have all contacted us to learn about how we manage our voids so effectively and have been impressed by our achievements during a challenging time.

Our current performance is as follows for quarter 1 in 2016-17:

- New empty homes: 144
- Average number of days to let empty homes: 3.8
- % of empty homes let within a week: 93%
- Rent income lost: £7,286.33

By implementing these changes, we have improved from dealing with 125 empty properties in 14/15 in Q1, which took an average of 6.5 days to re-let, with 87% of these being let within 1 week.

This means, each week, we have been able to remove almost 3 days of waste and provide a home to a person in a more time efficient and cost effective manner.

What did our customers say?

*"To finally get a house after 8 years has made such a big difference to our lives. We are saving £200 a month on rent and my daughter is so happy in her new home."*

*"Very high levels of customer satisfaction for: pride in my new home, my new home was in good condition, I feel secure in my new home"*

*"Since becoming a tenant in April this year, I've been delighted with the help and support that Pembrokeshire Housing offer. Thanx"*

*"On a scale from 1-10 I give a 10. Excellent workmanship, very clean and tidy. Could not fault him."*

In our most recent customer survey, 100% of customers who had moved recently said that their new home was in good condition, with 100% also saying that they were proud of their new home. Results for previous years, were 86% respectively.

#### What the judges said:

*Pembrokeshire Housing have developed an innovative approach to improving a core service*

#### Elin Brock

Housing director

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## Home partner

### Cartrefi Conwy

Cartrefi Conwy launched its new 'home partner' service in 2015 and it has proved to be of massive benefit not only to our tenants but to our organisation as a whole.

The concept is simple. Our in-house gas servicing team access all our tenant's properties on an annual basis and we saw this as a wasted opportunity to engage with our tenants on an individual basis. Our 2 'home partners' accompany the gas engineers on their safety inspections and spend around an hour with the tenant whilst the work is being carried out.

The service was established to provide an early intervention and preventative approach to a range of tenancy management and support functions. The following areas are discussed with tenants through the Home Partner service:

- Tenant information and details – this includes the tenant's preferred communications methods which supports our channel shift agenda
- Energy efficiency and advice
- Rent and financial support
- Housing condition and safety (including a full property inspection)
- Housing advice
- Health and well being

The service was introduced to ensure that Cartrefi Conwy:

- has up-to-date, accurate and informative tenant profiling information to support its business development and service provision in the future. This allows us to offer a more bespoke service to our tenants rather than a 'one size fits all' approach.
- could undertake property inspections in homes to ensure that properties were being maintained to an acceptable condition.
- was able to provide relevant information to tenants that suited their circumstances.

- could identify tenants early who need additional support to maintain their tenancy.

The service has been developed further within the first year of the project to provide additional benefits for tenants. These are:

- To provide a home fire safety check as part of the appointment (in partnership with North Wales Fire and Rescue Service)
- To reward tenants as part of our 'Home Rewards' tenant incentive scheme. Tenants who are identified by our Home Partners as maintaining their home to the required standard are entered into a monthly 'I'm Proud' draw to win £100.
- To support Public Health Wales agenda 'make every contact count' by enhancing the 'well being' element of the existing service.

This is the beauty of this service; it can be changed to meet the needs of our tenants and the objectives of our organisation.

We have been able to introduce this invaluable service through efficiencies realised by bringing our gas servicing contract in-house through our new social enterprise, Creating Enterprise.

### Outcomes and achievements:

In the first 12 months we have seen fantastic outcomes for tenants:

- 94 tenants identified as being vulnerable and needing extra support
- 189 have been referred for a home fire safety check
- 222 tenants identified as being in fuel poverty
- 20 tenants needing urgent financial assistance
- 462 tenants want to get involved with Cartrefi Conwy and have been referred to our 'voices at Cartrefi' scheme
- 25 households identified with serious property concerns e.g. hoarding that are now being addressed
- 641 tenants have received detailed advice about universal credit
- 110 tenants have been advised to improve the condition of their home
- 189 tenants have received advice about benefit entitlement that they were previously unaware of.
- 151 tenants have told us they want to move house within 12 months and have been provided housing options advice.

To date, tenants have recorded 100% satisfaction for the 'home partner' service. Specific feedback from tenants includes:

*"I got the answers I needed; I would like this service again in the future"*

*"I had a nice chat and everything was followed up"*

*"Very helpful and informative, great source of information and very approachable"*

*"I've saved money on my gas and electric since being given advice"*

### What the judges said:

*A simple idea from Cartrefi Conwy, with tenants at the heart*

### Claire Shiland

Head of neighbourhood services

Cartrefi Conwy

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## Collaboration award (RSL lead)

This award recognises that collaboration is increasingly important. Projects or campaigns will have been delivered in partnership and had high impact for communities or organisations. They will be able to show housing-led positive outcomes and efficiencies that are a result of partnership.



## Reuse, reduce and recycle

### Bron Afon with TRAC2

Bron Afon Community Housing is a social housing provider with 8300 rented homes in South Wales along with 915 leaseholder properties and over 2000 garages, we have numerous other assets such as shops, community centres, playgrounds and open spaces. We employ 550 staff which includes 165 trades. This year we will be spending £23 million improving and maintaining our assets. Our supply chain includes local and national building suppliers, contractors and specialist services. Our main aim is to build thriving communities and to improve

the quality of life and life chances of people living in Torfaen and neighbouring communities with a particular focus on those who face disadvantage.

### Why did we start our recycling initiative?

Our aims were to:

- Recycle building components replaced by the Welsh Housing Quality Standard programmes
- Recover and re-use surplus materials
- Reduce landfill (both environmental impact and associated tipping costs)
- Income generated goes towards community benefits

The recycling team manage all kinds of waste derived from void properties and maintenance carried out by their property services teams. The recycling centre team accept, segregate and reuse or recycle disparate waste streams including decommissioned boilers, wood waste, metals and cardboard.

In just 2 years we have saved 50 tonnes of waste from going to landfill sites by simply donating it to charity, along with 120 PAT tested appliances and over 3500 other non-electrical items, 150 tonnes of wood and 24 tonnes of cardboard.

Many household items can be re-used by those in need; the team ensure all items of good quality are safe to be

reused. Electrical items in working order are PAT tested and reused where possible but if the item is beyond repair, it's stripped them down by separating the components which are then sold to a scrap merchant.

We have developed many local partnerships with charities, such as:

- TRAC 2 Charity support people in crisis and in poverty by donating items direct to them free of charge, they sell many items through their shop and on-line and use income to support people in real need by paying the utilities bills, giving food parcels, helping with rent payments, even buying school uniforms and helping to pay for school trips. TRAC 2 consists mainly of volunteers, many of whom are young unemployed people who actively participate in the charity shop and food bank service that TRAC 2 provides.
- Changing Gearz provide support for young people aged 14-24 that need a little extra support to develop their potential, they train young people in bike maintenance and repair and also provides cycle training to young people. Bron Afon donate the bicycles they find in empty properties.
- Vision Products re-use disability aids in the community, free of charge
- Randomz – We donate old furniture, paint, tools and toys to this charity. The resources are used to train young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in restoration, it keeps the kids occupied and out of trouble!
- Reseiclo - a social enterprise based in Newport, South Wales, they prevent so-called waste timber from being wasted. We pay Reseiclo to collect our waste wood products. They sell reclaimed timber at low prices and manufacture unique wooden items for sale in their shop.
- All Creatures Great and Small - a local animal sanctuary, we donate pet supplies and books for them to sell.
- Greenmeadow Farm – a local community farm we donate garden tools to. We also take their unwanted cardboard

The project provides excellent community benefits and makes a significant contribution towards our national environmental targets in reducing landfill and recycling at every opportunity.

## Outcomes and achievements:

Since starting this initiative Bron Afon's landfill costs have fallen from £285,000 in 2012-13 to just £80,000 last year with this years projected landfill costs expected to be just £9000.

We generated an income of £50,000 since 2013 by selling mixed metals.

Overall weight of waste saved from landfill is 210 tonnes (including charity donations, cardboard, wood waste, metals).

Reseiclo made their first collection of wood from Bron Afon in March 2014 since then in total they have collected 2330 cubic yards in total (roughly 150 tonnes)

Construction Excellence Wales (CEW) has shown a great deal of interest in the venture and have written a case study about the recycling centre entitled 'Waste not want not: how a social housing organisation is winning the waste war through collaborative working'.

On the 6th July 2016 Bron Afon's recycling team, in conjunction with the charity TRAC2 and Reseiclo, won the MRW National Recycling Award for best business partnership ( <https://nra.mrw.co.uk/> )

Just imagine the difference it would make if all the housing associations in Wales did the same by recycling their waste and donated unwanted household items to charity.

## What the judges said:

*Bron Afon have developed a wide ranging collaborative project with a commitment to the environment*

### David Smith

Logistics manager

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## Free from fear partnership

**Charter Housing Association with Bron Afon Community Housing, Charter Housing, Derwen Cymru, Solas Cymru, Melin Homes, Monmouthshire Housing Association, Newport City Homes, United Welsh Housing Association, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Tai Calon Community Housing, Tai Gwalia, Linc Cymru, Newport City Council and the Welsh Governments Regional DA Team, The South Wales Police Crime Commissioners Office partnership (which includes social housing providers Valleys to Coast, Vale of Glamorgan County Council, and Trivallis) Gwent Police and Crime Commissioners Office**

The 'free from fear' project started in 2014 when, as a Gwent group of social landlords, we came together to improve our response to domestic abuse.

The introduction in 2011 of an information sharing protocol on cases of domestic abuse (DA) with the Gwent police opened our eyes to the prevalence of this amongst our tenants. With a 500% increase in cases we recognised the role of social landlords in combating DA affecting tenants and employees.

Our aim was to identify best practice and innovation in responding to those experiencing or perpetrating DA and to produce a practical toolkit for operational staff in Gwent.

The development of the project coincided with the establishment by Welsh Government of the regional

domestic abuse service led by Newport City Council. Their involvement in the partnership from its beginning has been invaluable.

By pooling resources, sharing our ideas, concerns and practice we have made this work a reality. The scale of the collaboration has been a great achievement, with the number of partners growing and contributing in a variety of ways.

Having failed to secure funding from other sources, the project was 'crowdfunded' by the partners. In 2015 a project manager to coordinate the work embarked on developing the content of the toolkit – to be launched at an information sharing event in early 2017 ([www.poblgroup.co.uk/news/the-seren-story-august-2015/](http://www.poblgroup.co.uk/news/the-seren-story-august-2015/))

Through our partnership we have enabled increased coordination of work around this agenda across Gwent. In 2015 the SW Police Commissioners Office, along with 3 more social landlords joined the project, contributing to the content, supporting the rollout of the toolkit in Wales.

With the introduction of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (VAWDASV), the project has broadened its perspective and has become involved in the pilot for Welsh Governments 'ask and act' initiative.

This project is a fantastic example of bringing a huge number of different partners together. Every member of the partnership has made a contribution collaborating on elements of the toolkit, sharing best practice, giving staff time and financial resources to achieve our goal.

We believe social housing can and should provide a gateway through which people experiencing abuse can access support, enabling them to achieve greater independence, improved resilience and a life free from fear. ([www.charterhousing.co.uk/faqs/tackling-domestic-violence/](http://www.charterhousing.co.uk/faqs/tackling-domestic-violence/))

*"No one should have to live in fear of violence or abuse and we will do all in our power as an organisation to protect people where can. We recognised how domestic abuse was blighting the lives of many of our tenants. We have made tackling domestic abuse an important priority within Bron Afon. We are proud to be part of the wider partnership now and it is making a really important contribution to enhancing the impact we can make to keep people safe."* - Duncan Forbes, CEO Bron Afon

*"This has been a unique opportunity for social landlords (council and RSL) involved to learn from each other and work collaboratively together to develop processes and tools that will be of benefit to any of our tenants experiencing domestic abuse."* - Rachel Thorne, Caerphilly County Borough Council

*"The 'free from fear' project is leading the way in Wales with regards to partnership working within the housing sector. It has demonstrated a commitment by all partner organisations to share and develop best practice and to make a real difference to survivors and potential victims of domestic abuse. The project has*

*worked closely with the regional VAWDASV Team and has enabled housing departments to form part of early adoption of 'ask and act' within Gwent."* - Rebecca Haycock, Regional Advisor, Gwent VAWDASV

### Outcomes and achievements:

This collaboration has enabled development of a range of practical resources for social landlords that reflect the Welsh context. Through our partnership we influenced the VAWDASV agenda during Welsh Government's regional pilot, ensuring social landlords are part of the conversation, influencing more positive perceptions of social landlords amongst other agencies.

Already the benefits of this collaboration are seen through:

- More effective, coordinated responses
- Better trained staff, more aware of the issues of DA and how to help
- Improved information sharing and multi-agency working
- Repairs and anti-social behaviour associated with domestic abuse decreasing
- By providing a gateway – more tenants are disclosing, knowing they will get a positive response.

Tenants:

- Feel safer
- Are more aware of support available to them
- Are more likely to be offered support earlier (reducing risk and escalation)
- Are more likely to maintain their tenancy – less likely to enter temporary accommodation and register as homeless
- Are more likely to engage with specialist services for on-going support
- Can move quickly and safely if they need to do so
- Specialist agencies report fewer families seeking refuge as they are supported to remain in their homes
- Project demonstrates value for money

### What the judges said:

*Charter Housing have a project in the early stages that has scope for significant benefits.*

#### Bron Lloyd

Director of community regeneration

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## Road to Rio

**Newport City Homes with Newport Live and Charter Housing, Linc Cymru, Monmouthshire Housing Association, Tesco**

Following a successful 'Try a Sport' event in 2015, where Newport City Homes collaborated with social enterprise

and charitable trust Newport Live to deliver sports taster sessions, it was felt that the project could have far greater impact if sessions were more easily accessible across the city. The same core values from 'Try a Sport' were used, along with the positivity attached to an Olympic year as a tool to engage with communities in this project. Other social landlords across the city were invited to work with us on a more wide-scale project in 2016, Road to Rio. As a housing association, it was important to stress the values of the Olympics (friendship, respect, excellence) and Paralympic (determination, inspiration, courage and equality) games in order to promote sustainable and cohesive communities.

We partnered with Monmouthshire Housing Association, Charter Housing, Linc Cymru and Tesco for the project which aimed to encourage more participation in sport/exercise, increase confidence and overall health in participants, create links to long term sports and community provision, increase engagement in communities and services, and to understand the needs of individuals and communities.

Road to Rio was officially launched on 28th May and toured until 26th August. The Road to Rio campaign was divided into two phases. The first phase would consist of a touring van that would house the equipment of over 20 different Olympic/Paralympic

sports. The concept was for the van to be deployed across the city, with Newport Live sports coaches delivering free, family friendly Olympic sporting activities anywhere, at any time. It was decided by all partners that the van would target the most deprived communities who traditionally find it difficult to engage in physical activities. Those living in deprived areas state that barriers such as cost, transport, lack of confidence and lack of knowledge inhibit them from participating in sport and physical activities. By taking the activities to them, the aim of the project was to break down those barriers, and encourage residents to lead more active, healthy lifestyles.

The second phase of the project involved organising Newport's very own Olympic opening ceremony. On 5th August, residents and the wider community were invited to attend Newport's first free community and family Olympic sports festival at Newport International Sports Village. There were over 20 different Olympic and Paralympic sports activities available at the ceremony, including athletics, canoeing, rowing, tennis, mountain biking, boccia, basketball, goal ball and many more. Over 40 partner agencies attended including national governing bodies of sport and local sports clubs to highlight the variety of sports provision across the city, and the ease and benefits of participating in sporting activities. As well as promoting sport and physical activity, it was important that we also highlighted the many health and well-being services on offer throughout Newport, including mental health services, addiction support, dieticians, and youth services. In addition, Tesco provided free healthy snacks and water throughout the day. All partners attended and had the opportunity to promote the services they offer.

Feedback from other partners has been very encouraging:

*"R2R was fantastic for us. From our perspective it gave us an appearance on our estates without us having an ulterior motive as is sometimes the case"*  
(Charter Housing).

*"It was really enjoyable being a part of it throughout the summer and was an excellent tool to engage with people in our communities and areas"*  
(Monmouthshire Housing).

We are now looking to continue to grow these strong partnerships formed to keep delivering free sports sessions throughout Newport and further afield.

## Outcomes and achievements:

In total, we engaged with 16,730 people during the 13-week tour, delivering 63 community sessions in 28 different communities across Newport and Monmouthshire. Newport Live staff provided over 410 hours of sports coaching at these sessions, including attending 19 school sessions.

The Road to Rio van attended 14 Newport events and festivals including The Big Splash, Rawffest and the Euro 2016 fan zone, enabling us to build more partnerships and promote the project before the ceremony.

Nearly 2,000 people attended the Road to Rio ceremony at Newport International Sports Village, with attendees giving an overwhelmingly positive response and saying they would like to see more events that are similar across Newport. Around 40% of those who attended the opening ceremony were NCH residents with the rest coming from the Newport and Gwent area.

The success of the project was a result of successful partnership working. The collaboration between Newport City Homes and Newport Live was vital in ensuring the right funding and resources were provided. The support from Monmouthshire Housing Association, Charter Housing, Linc Cymru and Tesco allowed us to attend more communities with the van and helped make the ceremony a real success.

## What the judges said:

*A fun and relevant collaborative project from Newport City Homes/Newport Live*

**Casey Edwards, Michelle Carlyle,  
Leigh Williams, Chloe Powton**

Newport City Homes/Newport Live

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# Collaboration award (LA/other lead)

This award recognises that collaboration is increasingly important. Projects or campaigns will have been delivered in partnership and had high impact for communities or organisations. They will be able to show housing-led positive outcomes and efficiencies that are a result of partnership.



## Homes for Wales

**Community Housing Cymru with CIH Cymru, RTPI Cymru, Shelter Cymru, Welsh Tenants, Residential Landlord's Association, Homes Builders Federation, Care & Repair Cymru**

The Homes for Wales campaign was set up with one objective: to ensure housing was a key political issue in the Welsh elections in May 2016. It was run in partnership by a coalition of organisations who believe everyone has a right to a decent affordable home to call their own.

The coalition was made up of CIH Cymru, Welsh Tenant's Federation, Homes Builders Federation, Care & Repair, Community Housing Cymru, RTPI Cymru, the Residential Landlord Association and Shelter Cymru.

In previous elections, the economy, health and education dominated the agenda. To meet our objective we knew partnership working would be key, and the coalition agreed to campaign using one message: 'End the housing crisis, build a stronger Wales.' Our one collective 'ask' of the incoming government was to publish an ambitious plan for housing for the next assembly term.

While each partner had specific asks of Welsh Government we knew we had to speak with one voice to cut through other agendas and grab politician's attention.

The partnership identified the extent of the housing crisis in Wales and all contributed to the narrative.

- 14,200 new homes needed each year to meet current demand.
- 8,596 families on a housing waiting list since before the last election in 2011
- 152,000 young adults aged 20-34 living at home.
- 23,000 properties lying empty.
- Last year, 5,070 households accepted as homeless.
- House prices more than 6 times the average person's income.
- 63% of under 35s renting their homes.

One of the key milestones of the campaign was the Homes for Wales rally. Partners were clear that this was to be a very public event to draw the media's attention to the subject of the housing crisis.

To avoid 'preaching to the converted', the partnership agreed that we needed to engage with non-housing organisations to widen the message. Research found that many other organisations were already talking about the housing crisis in their own circles.

We invited contributions from these organisations at the Homes for Wales rally to speak about the importance of housing to society (Church in Wales), health (RCN Wales) and education (Youth Cymru and a Cambridge University student who had experienced homelessness first hand).

Aside from the rally, we invested time in nurturing partnerships with other organisations to gain support to use in our social media activity. This included support from the Farmer's Union of Wales, NUS Cymru and the Older People's commissioner to name a few.

We applied further pressure with well-placed media activity including partnering with the CBI Wales on a press release where they were quoted: 'we are not building the new homes Wales needs. This has led to rising prices, undermining our economic competitiveness and Wales' reputation as a destination for investment.'



The partnership with the business community didn't stop there. We set up a mini social media campaign asking prominent business organisation to show their support. While the CBI Wales was the biggest influencer in this campaign, other prominent individual business supporters included Mike Learmond, FSB Wales, Gareth Jones CEO of Welsh ICE (Innovation Centre for Enterprise) and Cerys Furlong, director of the Learning and Work Institute Wales.

Finally the campaign would not have been a success without the partnership working with Welsh housing associations who were key in shaping and influencing the direction of the campaign via CHC's PR Network. They also provided the case studies to illustrate the 'human faces' of the housing crisis in Wales – which were an integral part of the campaign.

### Outcomes and achievements:

As a result of partnership working we achieved the following:

- Well attended rally – more than 400 people in attendance in a very public display outside the Senedd in Cardiff bay, marching to Cardiff city centre.
- We engaged and had support from all six political parties.
- Wales-wide media coverage; online, print and broadcast secured, and media crew in attendance at the rally. Wales Online story was shared 105 times.
- Trended on social media in Wales during the rally, had

tweets from Michael Sheen, used Periscope and had 282 combined live viewers. Video content has been viewed over 1,000 times collectively.

- Housing featured as one of 4 key topics on ITV Wales leaders' debate in April, alongside the economy, health and education.
- Our business-focussed mini social media campaign achieved 109 business supporters who collectively supported the message: 'investing in Homes for Wales makes good business sense for Wales'. The hashtag reached 90,720 accounts, with 159,612 impressions and trended in Cardiff on the day of the campaign.
- 5 parties included an affordable housing target of 20,000 in their manifestos – double the current target. Labour have now formed a minority government in Wales. They have confirmed the ambitious target of 20k affordable homes.

### What the judges said:

*Homes for Wales was an inclusive, collaborative campaign which raised awareness*

#### Edwina O'Hart

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## Bringing Emmaus to Wales

### Emmaus South Wales with Valleys to Coast Housing

Following the completion of one sheltered bedsit conversion project in Bridgend, V2C were left with another empty bedsit sheltered complex nearby. Originally planned to similarly benefit from conversion

of bedsits into self-contained flats, V2C soon realised this was not possible. Various options were considered before a conversation with the Wallich Community suggested we look to working with the then newly formed Emmaus Bridgend organisation. Introductions were made and a visit to an existing community home in Hampshire followed.

*"A home, a job, a purpose: Emmaus helps individuals build new lives".*

In an Emmaus community, formerly homeless men and women (called companions) live and work together in a supportive environment. Everyone in an Emmaus community has a role to fill and contributes to the well-being of the community.

This vision resonated with V2C's own vision. Since 2009 V2C and Emmaus have been working to establish a community home and a viable social enterprise to deliver the work experience. In the period between 2009 and 2013 V2C supported Emmaus' development with assisting fundraising, introductions with possible funding partners, project design and scheme development.

A wider partnership was established which included the key support of Bridgend CBC, the Welsh Government,

the BIG Lottery, the Henry Smith Charitable Trust and Emmaus supporters across the UK. Other charitable assistance has come from the Moon dance Foundation, the Bernard Sunley Trust, the Bridgend Civil Charities Fund and the people's Postcode Trust.

Rebranding to Emmaus South Wales, the establishment of the social enterprise and the grant awards from The Big Lottery and Welsh Government, which secured the gap funding necessary, enabled the project to proceed to detailed design, tender and implementation.

V2C sold Nantlais to Emmaus and then project managed the refurbishment programme to completion in December 2015. Officially opened by the First Minister, companions started moving into Nantlais in January 2016.

Companions are the real story at Nantlais. The reasons for their homelessness vary, relationship breakdown, substance abuse, poverty, but all companions share a desire and drive to get a fresh start. At Emmaus, as they learn new skills, discover hidden talents and develop friendships, they gain a sense of self-worth and independence. Companions often credit Emmaus as a turning-point in their lives, the point when they shifted from despair to hope.

Companions stay in the community for as long as they need to. There is no pressure for them to move on until they feel ready. Some stay just long enough to get back on their feet; others stay long-term.

Companions live by a few basic rules: all are expected to work to the best of their abilities within the community social enterprise and no drink, drugs or violence is allowed within the community. Companions are able to develop at their own pace without the pressure to move on to independent living when they may not be ready or confident enough to do so.

During their time at Emmaus they get the support they need, as well as the increased self-esteem that is gained from working together in the community. The community is supported by a recycling social enterprise, operating mainly from Bridgend, but also extending from Neath in the west, to Cowbridge in the east, and Aberdare in the north. The social enterprise provides companions with meaningful work opportunities.

## Outcomes and achievements:

This project has established the first Emmaus community in Wales and has developed 24 rooms for companions to have a settled home following a period of homelessness.

Nantlais has offered companions the opportunity to learn to live independently within a supportive environment. Life skills, healthy eating and cooking, managing budgets are taught within the home.

A key element of an Emmaus community is the establishment of a work ethic, by volunteering within one of their 7 retail outlets across South Wales. This work provides a reason for companions to get up in the morning, and a reward for their labours.

The value of the Emmaus community to its companions is often an emotional one, meaning that companions are part of a stable environment, a working family, which enables them to get back onto their feet.

An independent study showed that an Emmaus community saved the state £24,000 per companion per year. Currently most companions stay for six months or less, before moving to another community, employment, or alternative accommodation. Three companions have moved on from Nantlais to date.

As one companion put it: 'Emmaus gave me a bed, and a reason to get up out of it'.

## What the judges said:

*Emmaus South Wales' work has demonstrated a real impact on peoples' lives*

**Tom Clarke**  
Director

Emmaus South Wales

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## Regenerating Rowan Place

**Caerphilly County Borough Council  
with Communities First, Gwent  
Police, Aneurin Bevan Health Board,  
Safer Caerphilly Partnership,  
Gwent Substance Misuse Area  
Planning Board**

Rowan Place is an estate situated in the north of Rhymney which is located within the Twyn Carno 1 Lower Super Output Area (LSOA). Twyn Carno 1 is the second most deprived area within the Caerphilly county borough and, according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014, lies within the top 10% of the most deprived LSOAs in Wales in relation to income, employment, health, education and community safety. It ranks as sixth within the overall index.

Rowan Place was an area characterised by high levels of anti social behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse, and short term tenancies. The immediate environment was poor, and tenants and residents have very little personal outdoor space. The outdoor space that was available comprised of unused and neglected grassed areas, parking and thoroughfares, which were closed to prevent criminal behaviour but later became a magnet for litter and anti social behaviour.

Rowan Place comprises of 80 properties; 10 are privately owned and 70 are owned by the council, a large proportion of these properties (48) are flats. The area in which the flats are located had become seen as a 'no-go zone' and became home mainly to transient single people and families with particular challenges, including anti social behaviour, criminal records, drug and alcohol issues.

The stigma attached to this area had also historically led to potential tenants refusing offers of accommodation in Rowan Place, resulting in a number of long term void properties.

Whilst carrying out surveys of the homes, as part of the council's Welsh Housing Quality Standard programme,

severe damp issues were identified along with external defects to the fabric of many properties.

Rather than simply undertake a home improvement programme in Rowan Place, the council's housing division saw this an opportunity for much wider regeneration of the area. It recognised that collaboration with partner agencies was key if the £4.2 million investment being made into Rowan Place was to be maximised to deliver wider benefits for the local community.

During the planning stages of the programme, the housing division identified a number of partners who would be pivotal to helping tackle the issues in Rowan Place. Key partners included Communities First, Aneurin Bevan Health Board and Gwent Police.

An additional £1 million of funding was secured to enhance the project through Welsh Government's Vibrant and Viable Places Tackling Poverty Fund. Part of the funding was used to refurbish the Hafod Deg Resource Centre on Rhymney High Street. This facility has been transformed into a fully functioning multi-agency facility, providing a broad range of provision and support services to meet the needs of the community in Rhymney. The facility provides a variety of important local services including Citizens Advice, training and employment support, community food growing projects and more.

The Safer Caerphilly Partnership and the Gwent Substance Misuse Area Planning Board have also developed a multi-agency substance misuse base within Hafod Deg to serve the needs within this area; allowing residents to access services in a convenient location, and thus increasing client retention and positive treatment outcomes.

The impact upon residents through this collaboration has been significant, with large numbers accessing treatment and support via Hafod Deg, many of whom would previously not have engaged. At the same time, residents in Rowan Place have received extensive refurbishments to their homes making them warmer and water tight as well as improving the aesthetics considerably. Environmental improvements will help raise the area further and encourage new tenants into the currently void properties. The improvements are also being used to engage residents and raise the community's aspirations.

### Outcomes and achievements:

The project is still ongoing but has already delivered significant outcomes for local people. For example, helping tenants lower fuel costs through improvements to homes, improving individuals' health and wellbeing through growing projects, supporting people into employment and the provision of treatment for people misusing substances.

Specific outputs to date have included:

- 3 traineeships and 10 jobs created as a direct result of the refurbishment works

- 74 households helped towards improving the energy efficiency of their homes
- 41 people supported into work
- 72 people completed employment related courses
- 16 people gaining employment related qualification
- 52 economically inactive people employed on or engaged in the project

### What the judges said:

*This project from Caerphilly County Borough Council is improving tenants lives through collaboration.*

### Kelsey Watkins

Communications & tenant engagement officer

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## Promoting equality, inclusion and support award

This award recognises an organisation that has developed excellent equality, inclusion and/or support approaches. They will be able to demonstrate that they have met the needs of a specific group that requires additional support, fostered inclusion and celebrated diversity, increased diversity in the workforce as a result of a working culture that promotes equality and inclusion, and demonstrated positive outcomes for service users from tackling social exclusion and increasing resilience.



### Connect

#### United Welsh

The Connect project was set-up by Thrive@United Welsh in answer to compelling and growing evidence that social isolation and lack of purpose/self-worth has a massive impact on people.

Evidence highlights that life expectancy is reduced between 2-5 times for people who are isolated, and that isolation increases significantly with age.

Thrive, the team who manage specialist accommodation and support for United Welsh, wanted to address this alarming trend and designed the Connect project to fill that gap.

The service is designed to help tenants build more capacity in relation to individual purpose, promote meaningful relationships and encourage them to become active within the community reducing feelings of isolation.

Connect originally focused on schemes for people aged 50 and over in Caerphilly, but has now also moved into Blaenau Gwent.

In the first instance Connect established a network of 10 community connector volunteers to support scheme managers to hold events directly linked to the interests of tenants. Connectors also assist with helping to tail off formal support for tenants.



The recruitment process for the volunteers was varied including adverts in local newspapers, social media and use of volunteering websites alongside attendance at community groups and workshops.

Each volunteer has different objectives for volunteering and brings a variety of skills. They are each given an induction, DBS check, and are mentored with regular 1:1 sessions.

Tenants at the schemes involved were asked to complete a simple form called 'all about me' which asks people to talk about what they like to do. We had a 78.7 per cent success rate for the forms being returned which gave us a great bank of knowledge.

Thanks to the information from the 'all about me' forms and the 1:1 sessions, a number of activity groups including bowls, needlework, reading and a film club have been established. A men's club has also been set-up as some of the men wanted a chance to discuss and debate. Activities that are undertaken 1:1 can include baking, debating or just talking.

Volunteers have given a combined total of 174 hours – earning 174 Time Bank credits (November 2015-April 2016). There have been a total of 54 1:1 sessions totalling 86.5 hours. There have been 87.5 hours for group activities.

The Connect project works closely with a number of different agencies in order to amplify its impact. These include the Blaenau Gwent community connectors and Working Links Caerphilly and Gavo who have given unlimited advice.

Connect is as beneficial for tenants as connectors:

**Sonia** (tenant - Fitzroy Lodge) – *"I feel I have someone there to talk to. My granddaughter is the only person I see apart from carers and it's nice to know someone is going to be there every week."*

**Clive** (tenant - Plas Hyfryd) – *"I like Marc's company and it's great to have someone who can accompany me on walks. I like how Connect isn't overpowering and it can be as little or as much as I like. It's a nice balance."*

**Angharad** (connector) – *"I now have a better understanding on what career I would like and have recently applied for a position at a private care home and been successful."*

**Zara** (connector) – *"Connect has boosted my confidence and has helped me get out of the house. I love working with Sonia and I feel I'm making a real difference."*

**Gareth** (connector) – *"The project has given me self-motivation and is keeping my mind active. It has allowed me to acknowledge my skills and highlighted areas for development."*

We now want to expand Connect and are identifying sources of funding to help reach even more people.

## Outcomes and achievements:

There have already been a number of good outcomes from the Connect project.

From the outset we were very keen to evaluate how well the project worked and asked those we are directly working with to complete the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale at the beginning of their involvement with Connect and then after they had been working with their connector for six months.

At the beginning of the project 37% rated their wellbeing as good or excellent; at the end of six months 87% said their wellbeing was good or excellent and directly linked this to their involvement with the project.

As a result we can say with some confidence that for every one hour spent directly managing the team of connectors per week, we see a return of four hours benefit in the effect they have and the difference they are making.

The people working with a connector have become less isolated, have grown in confidence and have developed new interests.

As Brenda, a tenant testifies:

*"Working with Angharad (her connector) is great, she is encouraging and has made me look at other things I can do. We are going to a farm soon as I love animals."*

## What the judges said:

*United Welsh's Connect is a joined up, well thought out initiative which addresses the increasingly challenging issue of social isolation*

### Dominy Palmer-Day

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## Cause for concern

### Charter Housing Association and partners

#### Supporting Statement:

Whilst developing our 'Prevention by Intervention' strategy and working with police and other local agencies, we became aware the scale of safeguarding issues affecting our tenants was much greater than previously thought. As a result, we wanted to create a more effective system of dealing with issues affecting vulnerable children, adults and victims of domestic abuse.

To do this, we identified a need to improve how we record, manage and monitor information relating to safeguarding concerns across the association so cases are dealt with in the most effective way possible.

We knew data relating to tenancies was often not easy to locate, that knowledge was often lost when staff left the organisation, and that we were not reacting as quickly as we could.

Addressing this would allow us to use the experience and knowledge of all our staff to identify concerns and help tailor an immediate and effective response.

We developed a new approach called 'Cause for Concern', in October 2014 based around a confidential database which allows all staff to record concerns around any type of safeguarding issue. It captures data from all departments in one central point only accessible by specifically trained staff. When there is an issue, this system gives us a clear picture of what has happened and allows officers to take an effective and informed response.

All staff receive specific training (184 over the past two years), in addition to other mandatory safeguarding training. After attending, they are given access to the database so they can start to record concerns immediately.

When concerns are logged, a 'Cause for Concern' group made up of 8 staff with varying roles in the organisation, each with a particular set of skills and experience, review each case and make decisions on

what action needs to be taken. We ensure the group report back to the staff member making the report to build up trust in the process. This has significantly improved reporting, especially from our staff in our maintenance teams and in house contractor.

Our staff are crucial to our approach. By working with partners, staff were the first to identify that we needed to improve our approach to complement our wider tenancy sustainment work. They have also been integral in developing a simple, effective but low cost response. We continue to develop and improve this as more staff engage and, although senior management actively support this work, the impetus and ideas to improve often comes from operational teams. This has allowed us to overcome traditional silos and sensitivities to embed this approach into our daily work and ensure it is seen as something we are all responsible for.

Safeguarding our tenants' welfare is hugely important to us and we believe Cause for Concern is unique. Results show it is a simple but effective way of using existing resources to improve our understanding, make best use of the skills and knowledge of our staff and work more effectively with local organisations to make an impact and help keep our tenants safe. It also complements our wider tenancy sustainment work.

Feedback from tenants and partners is positive. Social workers have told us our approach has helped prevent situations escalating and tenants explain our pro-active approach means they *"know where to contact us if they have any issues"*.

Many victims of domestic abuse tell us they feel safer and how our intervention has allowed them to break long standing cycles of abuse:

*"It made a huge difference to my life, without the support I would have been homeless; I couldn't have coped and could have lost my girls"*.

#### Outcomes and achievements:

Since the project launched, staff have reported over four times more cases than before we operated 'Cause for Concern'. As a result, we have been able to successfully intervene in far more cases than was previously possible.

Since 2014 we have reported and investigated:

- Domestic violence: 435 incidents
- Child safety: 70 incidents
- Adult safety: 219 incidents

This has led to hundreds of referrals to health services, police and social services, staff attending over 20 MARAC meetings and a range of other actions. We are now able to support far more people to stay in their home and avoid situations escalating out of control, with only 15% of all tenancies ending doing so for negative reasons.

We also have more effective links with police, adult and child protection teams as our expertise and results have improved. As part of this, we now host a Gwent wide project to improve our collective approach to domestic violence and are actively involved in the Gwent Police DACC process.

Finally, to ensure a quick and effective response to target hardening requests, we now work with Care and Repair Cymru, and have provided over 50 people with additional 'target hardening' support at their home since 2014.

## What the judges said:

*Charter Housing Association have taken a really practical approach to the constant challenge of sharing information*

### Kay Helyar

Head of sustainable communities

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## Film VibeZ

### Valleys to Coast Housing

For the annual general meeting (AGM) in 2015, V2C decided they wanted to do something a little different compared to previous years and bring a more inclusive audience to share in V2C's achievements.

With this in mind, V2C's regeneration team decided to run a film project in partnership with Big Foot Arts Education called 'Film VibeZ'. 30 young people from across the borough between the ages of 11-16 came together to demonstrate their acting and filming skills, creating and editing numerous short films sharing their views on 'What is it like living in your community?' A diverse range of issues were highlighted including bullying and discrimination, and the important role of youth workers.

At the same time V2C worked with sheltered housing residents aged 55+ to make films about changes they have seen in their communities and to give an insight into what it's like living in sheltered accommodation.

To showcase the talent a film premiere was held, guests were greeted with popcorn and refreshments to watch and enjoy the films. The audience, which included, tenants, residents, young people and their families, staff

and stakeholders; were encouraged to vote for their favourite film during the interval and awards were given to the best films along with Best Actor and Actress.

Autumn Hubbard; one of the young people that attended the Film VibeZ event commented:

*"I attended Film VibeZ and had the best time ever making lots of new friends. The film premiere gave everyone the chance to shine. It was a great experience that I think everyone enjoyed"*

V2C used this inclusive event to also hold their AGM where, in the spirit of the night, V2C chief executive Stephen Cook presented the successes and figures from the year at Valleys to Coast through a film of his own.

Mrs Bayliss at Llys Cynffig sheltered scheme tells us:

*"It just goes to show that even the oldies can have a fun time and find something to laugh about."*

The evening was a huge success, with residents of all ages coming together, sharing their different perspective on life and listening to issues from each other's point of view.

The FilmVibeZ project and premiere at the AGM provided participants and the audience with the following:

- Improved knowledge and understanding of the needs and priorities of young and older people within V2C communities.
- Positive promotion of sheltered schemes to reduce the stereotyping of such in the wider community.
- Increased skills and confidence amongst participants to share their ideas and views with V2C.
- Greater use of digital technology as an engagement tool especially within the sheltered schemes that has led to a desire for further IT training.
- Improving social inclusion and community cohesion .

The content of films and the diverse range of people and communities included in the events provided the audience, including V2C staff and stakeholders with improved knowledge and insight to:

- Improve social inclusion and community cohesion

- Review V2C services
- Positively promote of sheltered schemes and reduce the stereotyping of such amongst the wider community

### Outcomes and achievements:

The following outcomes were a direct result of the 'Fimvibez' project:

#### 1. Recognition of communities who self-exclude

Customer engagement team reviewed the community forum from large formal meetings to community specific 2gether events. Members of staff go along to different community hubs across the borough to deliver services and offer advice and information, as well as inviting partner organisations to offer their services too.

#### 2. Recognition of the need for community cohesion – youth worker role

V2C are currently supporting a tenant to complete a youth worker qualification, working in one of the hardest to reach communities, in terms of V2C customer engagement.

#### 3. Re-purposing of V2C customer service office

To encourage community cohesion and development of local networks that cross communities. V2C provide a new customer centre; where there is staff support, digital inclusion and access to other support agencies, these include days such as:

- Talk Tuesday (budgeting advice)
- On line Thursday
- Chitter Chatter Group

#### 4. The creation of age-friendly communities and services through long term sustainable practices.

The regeneration team's 'Garden Communities' initiative was led across the borough to clean up and revive gardens at:

- The youth club 'Friends of Brynheulog' community garden give and gain day May 2015.
- Sheltered accommodation; Dinham Close Garden project
- Sheltered accommodation: Merfield House Garden project

### What the judges said:

*Valleys to Coast can provide clear evidence of practical outcomes and breaking down barriers between customers of the future and core customers*

#### Lizzie Conway

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# Empowering and involving communities award

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.



## Digital champions

**Newydd Housing Association with Barry and Rhydyfelin Communities First, the Vale of Glamorgan Community Team, RCT and Vale JobCentrePlus, Glamorgan Voluntary Services, Wales and West Housing, Hafod Housing, Trivallis, RCT Council and Digital Communities Wales**

Newydd is committed to tackling digital exclusion and aims to improve the digital skills and access levels in our communities.

Newydd believed that in order to achieve optimum results, collaboration with partners was essential to ensure consistency of service provision. Therefore, when Newydd first looked to set up digital drop-ins in the Vale of Glamorgan in 2014, Barry Communities First and local library services were approached to discuss working in partnership to tackle digital exclusion and decide how best to attract voluntary digital champions to run sessions.

Newydd then set up a number of digital drop-ins in community facilities, local libraries and independent living schemes across the Vale in order to offer tenants and the wider community opportunities to gain or refresh skills on any digital devices they have i.e. mobile

phones, tablets, laptops or desktops. Clients are able to have a 1-2-1 with a digital champion, or can learn in a small group setting with either a Newydd, Barry Communities First or Vale of Glamorgan Council staff member or a digital champion.

Newydd later introduced drop-ins in Rhydyfelin and have now linked with even more partners - Rhydyfelin Communities First, the Vale of Glamorgan Community Team, JobCentrePlus (Vale and Rhondda Cynon Taff), Glamorgan Voluntary Services, Wales and West Housing, Hafod Housing, Trivallis and Rhondda Cynon Taff Council to bridge the digital divide.

Creating informal learning environments in easily accessible locations has enabled us to successfully interact with participants who might not necessarily have the confidence to engage in a learning opportunity in a more formal setting. The training they receive enables them to access digital opportunities, make monetary savings, get closer to the employment market, communicate electronically and prepare for universal credit.

We recognise the importance of volunteer digital champions and to ensure the scheme is sustainable, we work with Glamorgan Voluntary Services, Digital Communities Wales and Barry JobCentrePlus to promote the programme and encourage potential volunteers to get involved. All volunteers are given a project overview before deciding if they wish to lead a particular drop-in session, provide ad-hoc support, or provide cover to a session if another digital champion is unavailable. All digital champions are supported by a member of staff until their DBS check has cleared and until they feel confident to run a session unsupervised.

Regular communication and information sharing ensures that our digital champions do not feel isolated but instead feel more confident in their training delivery. To this end, Newydd set up a Facebook page and a shared google drive so that digital champions can be kept up to date on the latest news; find out about upcoming training/job opportunities; request support/resources; or access step-by-step guides on computer basics, Word, email, Internet Explorer, Facebook and protecting you and your computer. The user guides were created with support from Barry Communities First.

Newydd also runs a 'Loan IT' scheme where drop-in participants are able to purchase a laptop/tablet that they have loaned at a very reasonable price after 6

weeks. Not only are participants able to practice their skills in between sessions, but IT equipment becomes a more affordable option for them especially with the support available from their local credit union.

Digital champions have also helped improve Newydd's website and 'My Account' application. They also help steer Newydd's digital strategic direction and as a result, the shift to digital services is now incorporated into 4 out of 8 departmental strategies.

Feedback from both participants and digital champions has been extremely positive and they have loved being involved in this project. This is clearly apparent on the recently commissioned promotional video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuHG1tBlmk0>

### Outcomes and achievements:

Newydd has established 20 drop-ins in the Vale of Glamorgan and Rhondda Cynon Taff and has 23 trained digital champions. Our key outcomes are:

- This financial year, over 150 people have engaged in our drop-ins
- A total of 662 volunteer hours have been amassed by our digital champions
- 2 digital champions have attained the 200-hour Volunteer Star award, 3 attained the 100-hour award and 5 the 50-hour award - all other volunteers are currently waiting for their hours to be processed and receive their certificates
- A list of Wi-Fi spots in the Vale of Glamorgan has been

developed and we are currently developing a list for Rhondda Cynon Taff. Digital champions are also teaching clients to use Wi-Fi mapper to locate Wi-Fi hotspots

- 21 people have attended non-accredited training courses
- 5 people are undertaking Agored Cymru accredited training
- 4 digital champions have gained employment

Additionally, in February 2016, Newydd signed up to a digital inclusion charter for organisations in Wales. The charter includes six pledges and details how organisations support digitally excluded people to obtain basic digital skills and help them get online, particularly older people, people with disabilities, unemployed people, social housing tenants and families in poverty.

### What the judges said:

*Good partnership working by Newydd Housing Association, with a wide range of positive outcomes*

### Rachel Honey-Jones

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## Wildmill youth revival

### Valleys to Coast Housing with Wildmill Youth Club

During the summer of 2014 the dedicated youth facility on Wildmill run by locally-based youth organisation Youth Works started to decline due to difficulties in their

parent company, Groundwork BNPT, who subsequently went into administration in October 2014. By the end of the summer it had closed completely, leaving the young people without a valuable hub for youth activities.

On a large housing estate of approximately 800 properties (made up of mainly family homes) this was a devastating loss. Young people formerly accessed social activities, health advice and learning, and employability training at the centre. There were fears that, without any social hub or activities to occupy them, there would be a real loss of engagement with the youth of Wildmill.

*"There was a noticeable rise in young people just hanging around the shops and creating a nuisance when the youth centre closed...seeing it reopen was amazing for the area"* Wildmill Resident

The announcement of the closure in the local press led to the young people approaching (nagging) Debbie Bryn to do something. Debbie was a youth worker with Youth Works before it closed and a local resident in the area. Debbie and others on the estate saw this as a real opportunity, they brought local people together in an action group to see that youth provision was not lost forever. This small group went door-to-door with a

petition gathering support for a centre and the volunteers.

*"The group were just local people from the estate, one of whom, Debbie, had some experience with youth work. They came to V2C in November 2014 asking for support after the old Groundwork/Youth Works building closed. They have overcome the barriers of admin - setting-up as a company, grant applications, health & safety and fire/building/insurance issues."*  
Steve Curry, V2C Regeneration Manager

The group were keen to work with V2C as we had worked closely with them in the past. They approached us to see how we could help them with their plan. Their commitment, ambition and drive to ensure young people have the best start was obvious and we were more than confident that the group would be able to achieve great things for the estate.

Although the group had a lot of experience, we identified the need to support the group with a mentor, we organised for an experienced youth work manager to work with them to develop some policies and identify what they needed. V2C then arranged for one of their buildings on the estate to be allocated to the group to use as a youth club/building at no cost to the group. They developed a plan including setting up a constituted group, opening a bank account and consulting young people and the wider community about their feelings and thoughts towards a future youth facility.

The volunteers gave their time to work closely with V2C on the refurbishment of the building, and have taken on the responsibility of all health and safety aspects including fire safety. The group all took training sessions and are continuing to do so based on the developing needs of the group. This is on top of their own employment and family commitments. The group officially re-opened the youth centre in April 2015.

Since then the group have worked closely with us on a number of projects, including designing a new outdoor play area and developing signs to use on the estate to tackle the problems of dog fouling. Through the work of the group we are now able to successfully engage with the young people and families on the estate.

## Outcomes and achievements:

Outcomes that can be recognised from the first year of opening and running the youth club project include:

- Increased volunteering opportunities on the estate leading to increased confidence and skills amongst both young people and other residents in a variety of capacities
- Volunteers have increased skills through taking part in a variety of training courses including sports leadership, how to teach netball, food hygiene, IT-safety online, safeguarding, substance and alcohol misuse, and first aid
- An empowered and engaged community both amongst themselves and also with other organisations such as V2C
- Improved communication with V2C and other organisation that can also include opportunities for greater aspiration amongst young people who live on the estate
- Giving young people a dedicated voice and an avenue for achievement through structured activities
- Improvements in the environment of the estate including physical changes such as a new natural play area
- Greater community ownership for the facility, the area and the many projects and events that take place
- Reduced anti-social behaviour through providing opportunities for young people.

## What the judges said:

*Wildmill Youth Club is a good example of combining training, skills and empowerment to support people's skills development, and to make a difference locally*

### Debbie Bryn

Youth volunteer worker

Wildmill Youth Club

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## Realise your potential

### Cadwyn Housing Association

Cadwyn's realise your potential (RyP) project offers a unique bespoke service. Our team of three work with tenants and residents to map their journey exploring what the barriers are that stop them realising their potential, and how these barriers can be overcome. This can include dealing with social isolation, accessing courses, education or training and employability skills, or looking for volunteering opportunities or paid work. The service includes:

- An agreed SMART action plan
- Meeting / contacting regularly
- Referral and sign-posting to specific /specialist provisions
- Having no time limits on the scheme and individuals can return at any time

Because we offer a range of individual, group and community involvement – both formal and informal - we provide plenty of opportunities and support for people to get to know each other, grow in confidence and develop their interests. Our one-to-one approach helps to support those who want to lead on projects. We now have tenant volunteers leading many of our groups including our weekly food co-op, sewing group, neighbourhood watch and Cadwyn's service improvement team. Involvement in Cadwyn can be the familiar environment in which tenants begin their leadership journey, before they go on to take key roles within their local community. Such examples include our three tenants who run the twice-weekly Wyndham Street diner and those who are Communities first community ambassadors.

Training opportunities are central to our engagement programme. We listen to what tenants want and tailor what we offer accordingly. We have built strong relationships with a wide range of providers across the spectrum including Cardiff Met, Neighbourhood Learning, WEA, Princes Trust and Business Wales alongside other community based organisations such as Love Food Hate Waste.

We help people to enrol in college and university as well as deliver short courses and taster sessions in-house. Courses include starting your own business, introduction to housing, food hygiene, digital champions, complementary therapy, sewing, photography, becoming a tenant scrutiniser and how to organise an exhibition (subsequently displayed at our tenant /AGM event).

Examples of partnership working include co-facilitating an accredited course STEPS to excellence in conjunction with Communities First. Also working with the Princes Trust to deliver 'get into construction' courses for local young people. Recently, we partnered with Cardiff City FC Community Foundation to pilot a pioneering 'get into security' course for tenants, which resulted in all attendees passing their exam and gaining their SIA license. This has enabled those tenants to be less dependent on benefits and vulnerable to welfare reform, open new employment opportunities and build confidence.

Involving tenants directly in assessing, shaping and improving services has always been a priority for Cadwyn. The association has always actively engaged at least 30% of its tenants in service improvement with tenants directly involved at operational and strategic level. Tenants revised our TP Strategy in 2014, establishing its vision for Cadwyn to "... *listen to our tenants, value their contribution and be interested in what matters to them. We will enable and encourage tenants to have their say and work together with us to shape and improve services*". Since 2013 we have had a panel of tenants working independently to scrutinise a particular service area and identify recommendations for improvement. To date they have reviewed how the association deals with complaints, Cadwyn's communication with tenants, and how Cadwyn deals with reports of damp and condensation. The success of our Service Improvement is a prime example of how our 'realise your potential' community engagement team work together to recruit and support new members in their personal development plan as they volunteer as part of the team.

### Outcomes and achievements:

In the past twelve months RyP has:

- Supported 109 members
- Engaged over a third of Cadwyn's tenants in service improvement.
- Engaged 50 tenants in education and training (many taking multiple courses)
- Worked with partners to provide 4 apprenticeships and 8 opportunities for work experience in the construction industry.

Resulting in:

- 23 job outcomes
- 39 tenants actively volunteering



- Improvements in design of Cadwyn's Rent Statements
- Better communication and information sharing regarding complaints handling led to increased tenant satisfaction
- Tenants involved in shaping the content of Cadwyn's new website
- A comprehensive report on how the association deals with damp and condensation detailing recommendations for improving the service.

Feedback:

From a tenant: *"I am being heard as a tenant and as a member of the panel I am benefitting from all the training we are being offered".*

RyP client Sue successfully gained employment with Communities First: *"Thank you so much for all your help and support with helping me gain employment. You are really inspirational and I hope that I can help people in such a positive way"*

Feedback from the RNIB *"Two young people have had placements with Cadwyn and they both gained so much confidence as well as learning new skills".*

### What the judges said:

*Cadwyn Housing Association have put together a joined up project, with an impressive list of outcomes*

### Alessa Hill

Employment and training officer

Cadwyn Housing Association

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## Our Mutual

### Merthyr Valleys Homes

#### Together we're stronger

Together, tenants and employees are now making the big decisions at Merthyr Valleys Homes (MVH).

Our key objective in creating our mutual was to give people a real voice in the organisation that plays an important part in their lives, their communities and which also impacts on their economic circumstances. Our mutual has been about more than changing our rules and our governance structure - it is about creating a new relationship between the providers and the consumers of public services.

In order to give communities power and responsibility, you need the right rules, the right structure, and the right training to make it happen. You also need a huge amount of commitment and drive.

In November 2014, the board of MVH agreed to review the governance structure and look for a better model. One that recognised the historic struggle of working people in Merthyr Tydfil, that gave tenants greater accountability, and that met the challenge of creating a board that was accountable and had the rights skills and expertise to run a large organisation. Many associations have wrestled with this issue of how to get the right skill balance onto a board without diminishing the role of tenants. The board added a further dimension when they sought to give employees, many of whom have given their working lives to the organisation, a say equal to that of tenants.

Over 70% of the employees of MVH live within the borough, with some living in the very houses that they work on and manage. The interests of tenants and employees were very similar, in fact, they were mutual.

A commission to decide the future shape of MVH was established. It was made up of tenants, employees, local councillors and stakeholders from the local community. They met throughout 2015, and together they designed a new vision for housing, a whole new organisation and with it a new governance structure.

The commission created an accountable and mutual structure where tenants and employees become members. Members have a share in the organisation which entitles them to a vote and have a real say in the decision making. These members will appoint an elected body of tenants and employees to oversee the organisation, setting key strategic goals and appointing a board of non-executive directors. The board will run the business, and will be appointed based on their skills and values. The formation of the mutual has been one of the biggest shifts in power in Welsh housing, bringing tenants and the employees they work closely with, to the very top table.

To establish the mutual required a new constitution outside of the current model rules for housing associations in Wales. We also needed consent from the Welsh Government, the approval of our funders (without a change to the loan cost) and we required the local authority to give up their 'golden share' and their seats on the current board. The local authority gave a ringing endorsement of the new model when they voted 29 votes in favour (and no votes against) for tenants and employees to take real control over the organisation. We also consulted with our tenants and employees as we wanted to gain their support.

### Outcomes and achievements:

At an AGM in November 2015, shareholders voted in favour of MVH becoming a mutual. Over 80% of employees joined immediately. The recruitment of tenant members ran alongside, with many previously uninvolved tenants joining. Elections for tenant and employee seats on the democratic body (DB) became a real contest. We now have over 1,000 members.

The DB meet regularly, appointed Keith Edwards as their independent chair, and appointed the non-executive directors. They developed their membership strategy, and a new corporate strategy to take the mutual forward. MVH now has new values and a new vision around responsibility, communities and mutual including:

- Commitment to VfM
- Recognition that rents cannot keep rising
- Local employment & spend
- No diversification/ subsidiaries

Also our DB has established working groups:

- Complaints panel
- Governance
- Office tender
- Contractor interviews
- Planning our first annual members meeting

The volume of work our DB has undertaken demonstrates the commitment and momentum that exists and the dedication to making our mutual a success, it also shows they are involved in key decisions and set future direction.

The real transfer of power is truly underway; members will now establish the priorities and budget for the board in-line with the new corporate strategy.

### What the judges said:

*Merthyr Valleys Homes' move to a mutual structure is a good example of a transfer of power*

#### Mike Owen

Chief executive

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# Customer excellence award

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



## Customer culture

### Cardiff Community Housing Association with Morgan Sindall Property Services, The Creative Thinking Company

CCHA initiated a customer services improvement project following disappointing results in the national tenant survey of 2015. The head of customer and support services and the corporate services director were asked to jointly lead the initiative, as it was felt that in order to see results in our external customer services, we first needed to address internal issues. Initially they met with representatives from our tenant service inspectors group to discuss how CCHA could improve the tenant experience, and what they expected from our staff.

Staff engagement and participation with the project was key from the outset, and workshops on customer service for all staff were run by an external facilitator. Following these workshops, a group of staff volunteers met to identify what they considered to be the principles required to achieve excellent customer service, and they also came up with a new slogan for the project 'Be the Best', which was launched at our staff conference in 2015. It was vital for the success of the project that these initiatives and ideas be led by the staff themselves, as we were trying to achieve a 'ground-up' rather than a 'top-down' change process, to empower the staff who were most likely to be interacting with our customers on a day-to-day basis.

Following the staff conference, we began to produce visual materials to help to bed-in the new principles across the organisation, which included T-shirts, wall canvases and computer desktop backgrounds. Once again, staff participation was key here, and volunteers from across the organisation came forward to create the artwork for these visuals, which are now displayed across all of our offices.

The visuals themselves were launched at our December corporate briefing in 2015, and every staff member was presented with a fold-out business card, to serve as a constant reminder of the new principles. We then began to share the message and aims of the project with our contractors, to ensure that our tenants received consistently good customer service. To achieve this, we ran workshops for operatives from Morgan Sindall Property Services and Westwards, to ensure that their staff were also on board.

Richard Jones, assistant project manager for Morgan Sindall says:

*"Morgan Sindall work closely with the CCHA team to maintain excellent levels of customer service. We have been involved in the customer culture project, with joint team workshops involving our operatives, management incorporating good practice customer services methods, and the sharing of experiences, ideas and information in order for us to work better as a partnership and improve the whole experience for the customer."*

Our HR team worked to align the new principles with CCHA's existing corporate values, and the existing competency framework was replaced with a new principles framework, and added to our online performance management system. A customer culture 'champions' group was created, who meet around once a month to discuss ideas for implementing the new principles across the business, and to act as points of contact for other staff who may have concerns or questions on how to provide the best possible customer service.

Going forward, we are looking at creative ways of keeping the principles alive across the organisation, whilst also celebrating our successes so far, including the significant improvement in customer satisfaction rates that we have seen this year. We were thrilled to be reaccredited with the Customer Services Excellence award a few months ago, and especially because our

assessor highlighted the customer culture project as a particular area of good practice on her report.

### Outcomes and achievements:

CCHA's customer culture project has been a huge success so far, and continues to deliver results. At the end of the financial year 2014-15, our customer satisfaction rates were at 85%. Since the launch of the project, and the implementation of the initiatives mentioned above, we managed to increase this to 92% at the end of 2015-16. The most recent figures from our customer service team (from Q1 of this year) report an average satisfaction rate of 93%, and even more impressively, the satisfaction with our customer services office has risen to 98%.

Internally, we have also started to see improvements: an employee engagement survey was carried out at the end of 2015, and 85% of staff said that they felt positive about working for CCHA, with 55% saying they felt 'very positive'.

There has also been a marked improvement with our

contractors, following their involvement with the project. We have just received the reactive repairs satisfaction monitoring statistics for July and it is over 90% satisfaction for both Morgan Sindall Property Services (MSPS) and Westward. For MSPS in particular this is great news, as their performance was at 80% at the beginning of last year.

### What the judges said:

*Cardiff Community Housing Association have achieved a cultural change that is organisation-wide*

#### Louise Sulley

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## Customer contact team

### Melin Homes

The customer contact team is a team of 12 advisors dedicated to delivering excellent customer service, each team member is committed to service delivery and focuses on exceeding customers' expectations by going the extra mile. We strive to ensure that a customer's journey is an enjoyable experience and that they look forward to any further engagement with us.

Over the past two years the team has undergone some radical changes in order to meet the growing demands our customers face due to financial, economic and wellbeing changes that our customers are experiencing.

Originally two teams comprising of general enquiries and a repairs function, the team were merged together to create one team, trained to deal with all enquiries on a

first call resolution basis where possible, enhancing the customer experience resulting in faster response times and reduced queries for other internal departments.

Our customer relations management (CRM) system was primarily a customer contact team function was rolled out to the entire organisation to ensure that customer interaction was recorded in its entirety – from this the customer contact team has complete visibility when dealing with a customer, resulting in smoother transactions for customers.

Acknowledging that there was a need to introduce a multi channel service as customers expect to be able to contact us using a channel of their choice, we implemented the live chat function in 2015, all of the customer contact team are able to answer queries via the live chat function, and we are seeing an increase in usage and query types. We also answer queries through Facebook and Twitter and use this to post updates and information to residents – ensuring that they are kept up to date.

We are also able to offer our text facility for customers to text us; this has been particularly useful for our residents who are hard of hearing, who we will also text to remind them about appointments. Our CRM system allows us to easily identify these customers.

At Melin Homes we understand that our services cannot be a 'one size fits all' solution and we will adapt to the changing needs of our customers, we have recently piloted late night opening, where members of the customer contact team remained contactable until 7pm – dealing with a variety of queries via all channels. This will become a permanent function.

Engaging with our customers is fundamental to the



customer contact team, the customer services group was created to look at the services that we are providing. In 2015 the group focused on customer service and access, we engaged heavily with the group and implemented a number of recommendations, some of these included:

- Changes to improve reception services
- Amending the phone greeting to make it more user friendly

We regularly participate in community events with our residents; this is of great benefit as it allows our residents to put a face to a name and also helps with relationship building and engagement. Very often when our residents call in to the customer contact team they address advisors by their first name, indicating that a relationship has been established.

We work closely with other teams in Melin Homes to ensure that our knowledge is up to date for our customers, we also have direct links with support staff to enable us to do referrals for support for both financial support and tenancy sustainability.

We work hard to ensure customer service excellence and a number of checks have been implemented to ensure the consistency and accuracy of advice being given, that a high standard of customer service is being delivered and to identify team training needs.

### Outcomes and achievements:

First call resolution has been an area of focus for the team, over the past 3 years the customer contact team has seen this increase from 45% in 13/14 to 74% in 14/15 and increasing to 78% during 15/16.

The Star Survey was conducted in 2015, there were

significant increases across all areas of customer service and communication, which is a testament to how hard the team have been working to deliver customer service excellence. Increases included:

- The way Melin deals with repairs and maintenance (generally) - increased by 5.8%
- That Melin listens to your views and acts upon them – increased by 7.5%
- How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Melin deals with your enquiries generally? – increased by 5.7%
- Did you find the staff helpful or unhelpful – increased by 4.3%
- Was your query answered within a reasonable time? – increased by 6.3%
- Satisfied with the ability of staff to deal with your query quickly and efficiently – increased by 3.8%
- Satisfied with the final outcome of your query – increased by 6.3%

Live chat has been a huge success, to date we have received 735 chats, with a positive customer rating of 73%.

### What the judges said:

*Melin Homes has built a well-rounded customer service function, showing some innovation in the teams' methods*

### Rhiannon Elston

Customer contact team leader

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## NPT Homes

### Mi-space UK Ltd

Mi-space is a well-established and experienced local contractor; currently delivering year 3 of a 4 year electrical re-wiring contract for NPT Homes

We strive to provide a positive resident experience by:

- understanding residents' needs
- proactive communication
- interactions with a respectful/efficient team
- flexible delivery
- delivering a quality product and subsequently measuring our effectiveness in achieving customer excellence and implementing learning.

On this contract, we measure 'customer experience', rather than 'satisfaction'. Our collective view is that 'satisfactory' is not good enough; only if we are 'excellent' are we delivering what our customers deserve.

To ensure employees are fully engaged, we:

- employ local people who have an intrinsic sense of pride and achievement when working in their own communities supporting excellent customer service; over 80% of the workforce resides in the Neath Port Talbot area
- have recruited individuals and partners who have the right aptitude for working in peoples' homes
- have provided training in 'soft' skills e.g. customer care, diversity awareness, and safeguarding
- have a code of conduct; ensuring our staff and subcontractors understand our expectations; courtesy, respect and care for residents, their homes and communities
- have conducted regular 'customer care' toolbox talks and issued 'respect & consideration' reminder cards

As a result of feedback from residents, we have:

- created, in partnership with NPT Homes and its residents, bespoke project resident documents to support resident liaison officer (RLO) engagement with residents
- carried out 'home visits' to each resident having work completed on their home to understand their needs and priorities, and subsequently create bespoke delivery strategies for each
- attended open events; enabling our team to meet residents and community members in a relaxed and informal way
- understood that dust in people's homes is a big issue; we now use 'zip-lock' doors and screens to prevent dust travelling outside the work area
- implemented 'in the moment' toolbox talks for the workforce dealing with issues raised by residents

## Outcomes

NPT Homes awarded us 100% for customer service in our most recent customer survey, as a result of our approach and feedback they receive from residents.

96% of customers now receive a customer experience measured at 'very good' or 'excellent', whereas before we started the project 78% of customers, were merely satisfied.

All feedback is investigated to understand what went well and how we could improve. If we receive anything less than 'very good' for customer experience we arrange a home visit, by the RLO and senior project manager, at a time convenient to the resident to understand why.

The above has resulted in a better understanding of what customer excellence looks like for residents of NPT Homes, and consequently enabling us to improve the customer experience through informed improvements.

Our excellent customer service is evidenced by this recent resident feedback:

Mr and Mrs A. Goddin, Neath:

*"...this kind of upheaval can create a significant amount of stress... to be quite truthful we were not looking*

*forward to it...The team carrying out the rewire were exceptional. I say that with hand on heart and with much gratitude. From the moment they set foot through the front door, they were punctual, professional, polite and first class tradesman. Nothing was too much trouble...My wife and I were delighted with everything, especially the respect that this team had given to our home."*

Mr P Williams, Neath:

*"Very pleased with all the work done...very polite, helpful and well-mannered teams worked very hard and gave professional results. I would recommend them to the fussiest of tenants knowing that all belongings would be treated with the greatest of respect"*

## Outcomes and achievements:

We put customers at the heart of everything we do, consulting with them to understand their needs, wishes and priorities, tailoring services according to the consultation, and ultimately measuring their experience to inform required change.

Mi-space has been working with NPT Homes for 3 years delivering a re-wire programme to improve safety in customer's homes and we jointly agreed that 95% of customers being satisfied, a traditional benchmark for good performance, was not enough.

We have removed traditional performance targets, a 'glass ceiling' to customer excellence, and instead introduced experience monitoring for every customer. All feedback is investigated to understand what went well and how we could improve. If we receive anything less than 'very good' for customer experience we arrange a home visit at a time convenient to the resident to understand why.

This approach has resulted in a better understanding of what customer excellence looks like for residents of NPT Homes, and consequently enables us to improve the customer experience through informed improvements.

96% of customers now receive a customer experience measured at 'very good' or 'excellent', whereas prior to our engagement 78% of customers were merely satisfied.

## What the judges said:

*Mi-space UK Ltd have gone beyond customer satisfaction to customer experience*

### AJ Eaton

Divisional director

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# Communications and publications award

This award recognises an internal or external campaign or publication which effectively communicates its message. They demonstrate positive outcomes in line with the campaign or publications aims for the organisation, residents, the community or wider society.



## Tenants Voice

### First Choice Housing Association

First Choice tenants have a learning disability. This requires innovative methods to enable them to participate in First Choice and meaningfully influence the services provided to them. We are further challenged by our geography with tenants dispersed throughout eighteen local authorities.

The Tenants' Voice newsletter helps breakdown barriers providing an insight into tenants' lives. Distribution to First Choice stakeholders encourages them to learn more about tenant's disabilities. Stories about tenants' lives have encouraged other tenants to try new activities which increase their independence and quality of life.

The Tenants' Voice editorial group is made up of people with a learning disability and many also have a physical disability who are supported to take part and encouraged to take ownership of the newsletter. The newsletter is produced internally with the use of images and accessible easy read information in which the staff have received specialist training.

Here are some of the supporting comments from members of the Tenants' Voice editorial group.

- 'My name is Kathleen I feel that I had a voice in the organisation and that the newsletter belongs to me'
- 'My name is Andrew and it makes me feel proud, I like sharing my stories with lots of people. I like to

talk about other people's articles'.

- 'My name is Keith and I like taking part in a group; I feel the newsletter belongs to me'

First Choice produces a Tenants' Voice newsletter four times a year in partnership with our tenants. We hold meetings in North, Mid and South Wales. As a result we do not have regular members but a variety of members with different and interesting viewpoints who are encouraged to have maximum involvement producing the newsletter.

Each issue of the Tenants' Voice newsletter is aimed at allowing the editorial group to participate, building on the previous newsletter. Every article brought to the meeting is discussed and the editorial group will decide if it is a piece that we can use in the Tenants' Voice newsletter. It is essential that the editorial group members take ownership of the final edition.

The editorial group is an informal meeting with a friendly and open atmosphere; this encourages and allows for the sharing of ideas about the format and content of the newsletter and personal stories about tenants' achievements. This relaxed environment is empowering for the entire group. Each member has a chance to enhance and develop communication and decision making skills, whilst learning more about housing related issues and how First Choice communicate with tenants.

The Tenants' Voice editorial group meeting is made up of tenants, support staff and two members of First Choice staff. The meeting requires a high level of partnership working in order to achieve the best outcome and to encourage the group to take ownership of the next issue of the newsletter.

As our tenants have a learning disability it can be challenging to reach our client group. In acknowledgement of this and acting on feedback from tenants which told us that 15% of our tenants did not want communication in writing we developed a DVD to support the newsletter for those with communication barriers. 96.5% of tenants were happy with the way we communicate in the latest survey.

The Tenants' Voice editorial group maintain regular feedback and encourage participation before an event. Having the members bring stories to the meeting for

discussion helps the group to bond and relax. Improving the Tenants' Voice newsletter is always the main focus of the group and encouraging ownership of their edition of the newsletter drives on-going improvement and continual success.

### Outcomes and achievements:

As our tenants have a learning disability it can be a challenge to reach our client group. The newsletter and supporting DVD enables those with communication barriers to participate but the outcome is a truly tenant-led 'Tenants' Voice' newsletter.

By taking ownership of the Tenants' Voice newsletter the editorial group develop their negotiation skills and knowledge. This leads to influencing First Choice services while empowering its members.

It has helped members to develop transferable skills, one member sat on an interview panel for a First Choice contractor, something he wouldn't have had the confidence to do previously.

Tenant survey comments:

- Nancy from Shrewsbury and James from Flintshire told us the stories they read in the Tenants' Voice newsletter about First Choice made them want to

come to more events.

- David from Rhos told us 'The layout is disabled friendly'.
- Peggy from Cardiff said 'What I like most about Tenants Voice newsletter is the DVD'.
- Adam from Wrexham likes: 'reading stories about other First Choice tenants and the competitions'.
- Matthew from Cardiff said 'It's easy to understand'.
- Keith said 'What I like best about the newsletter editorial group meeting is that my skills and knowledge have grown'.

### What the judges said:

*First Choice Housing Association's Tenants' Voice is a publication for users, by users*

#### Donna Lloyd-Williams

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## #HatsOffNewport

### Newport City Homes

#### What is #HatsOffNewport?

#HatsOffNewport is a viral video campaign that saw people posting videos to Facebook and Twitter nominating 'Newport's kindest person'.

The person films himself or herself wearing a hat, saying who they think is the kindest person in Newport and then they 'take their hat off to them'.

For example: "I nominate Josephine Blogs as Newport's

kindest person, because she picked me up when my car broke down. Josephine, I take my hat off to you!" [Doffs hat]

The person posts this video to their Facebook profile and/or Twitter profile and then nominates three other people to make their own video. This creates a chain reaction of stories about the nice things we do for each other in Newport.

#### Why did we do it?

One of Newport City Homes' 2020 Vision aims is 'Putting residents at the heart of what we do'. #HatsOffNewport helped make this real by allowing audiences to tell their stories, in their spaces online, in their own way.

Newport City Homes is Newport's biggest social landlord. However, brand recognition is low among residents of Newport: there is some confusion over if we are run by the council, and other social landlords operating in the area are better known. The way to increase understanding of the organisation is to start conversations that will lead to long-term relationships. We are not in the business of 'the hard sell' but in engaging communities, showing our relevance and building trust.

The most successful social media campaigns do not talk about organisations - they allow people to talk about



themselves, their friends and their lives. This is seen with such campaigns as #NoMakeUpSelfie (where people posted pictures of themselves barefaced and donated money to a cancer charity) or #IceBucketChallenge (where people filmed themselves tipping ice water over their heads). This gives the person a chance to show themselves to their friends in a good light: doing something worthwhile while appearing to be a fun/ attractive person.

In these cases, a certain amount of peer pressure is involved to take part through nominations. This is far more powerful than being asked by a brand. People are more influenced by their social circle than by marketing messages. Organisations are not the main message, people are. This is an approach that #HatsOffNewport adopted, and has the added benefit of being low resource as the bulk of the content is user-generated.

Our organisational purpose is 'To provide homes in communities where people want to live'. A main objective for this campaign was to promote pride in Newport's communities; creating conversations, encouraging positive debate and giving attention to voices that aren't 'the usual suspects'.

Everyone who submitted a video with the hashtag #HatsOffNewport had their names put into a hat, with five winners drawn. The winners each received £50 worth of gift vouchers to spend in independent Newport retailers Parc Pantry, Love Fresh, AD Turners and The Kiosk Newsagent. This encouraged people to get involved and helped promote our local traders.

### Media coverage:

**South Wales Argus:** *'People 'take their hats off' for Newport in viral social media campaign'*

[www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/14156219.People\\_take\\_their\\_hats\\_off\\_for\\_Newport\\_in\\_viral\\_social\\_media\\_campaign/](http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/14156219.People_take_their_hats_off_for_Newport_in_viral_social_media_campaign/)

**The Voice magazine:** *'Share your video and you could win £50 shop local vouchers'*

[www.wearevoice.co.uk/news/family/14184062.Get\\_involved\\_with\\_HatsOffNewport/](http://www.wearevoice.co.uk/news/family/14184062.Get_involved_with_HatsOffNewport/)

**Wales Online/Wales on Sunday:** *'People are starting a new 'Ice Bucket Challenge' - but this time to find a city's kindest person'*

[www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/people-starting-new-ice-bucket-10626471](http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/people-starting-new-ice-bucket-10626471)

**ITV Wales:** *'Hats Off Newport: The video challenge where people take their hat off to someone making a difference'*

[www.itv.com/news/wales/2016-01-04/hats-off-newport-the-video-challenge-where-people-take-their-hat-off-to-someone-making-a-difference/](http://www.itv.com/news/wales/2016-01-04/hats-off-newport-the-video-challenge-where-people-take-their-hat-off-to-someone-making-a-difference/)

### Testimonials:

The videos:

<https://hatsoffnewport.com/category/your-videos/>

[twitter.com/search?q=%23hatsoffnewport&src=typd](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23hatsoffnewport&src=typd)

### Prize draw winners:

<http://spnch.newportcityhomes.com/BridgeBrief/06-2016/index.html#p=12> (583 Words)

### Outcomes and achievements:

In total, 40 videos were uploaded publicly on social media from a range of people including residents, local businesses, educational professionals, and councillors. The campaign promoted pride in the Newport community, and everyone, no matter what their background, were on an even keel as they were all posting videos with the same purpose: to celebrate the wonderful people of Newport.

The campaign helped develop our social media profiles and in turn promote to the wider community who we are and what we do. #HatsOffNewport was mentioned 880 times on Twitter through original posts and retweets. Therefore, if every person who posted about #HatsOffNewport had 100 followers live on Twitter, we can predict that an average of 88,000 people viewed a post about the campaign. Our Facebook page likes increased from 552 at the start of the campaign to 707 after the prize draw announcement. Seven of the #HatsOffNewport videos that we shared on Facebook received a total of 6,285 impressions. Our WordPress blog, which contained all the #HatsOffNewport videos, received 1,517 views.

We received national coverage on ITV Wales and Wales Online, which not only promoted the campaign and our organisation but also the city and people of Newport.

### What the judges said:

*Newport City Homes found a creative way to raise the profile of housing through local people*

#### Jessica Roberts

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## Take Control Campaign

### Cartrefi Conwy with Blah Creative

Cartrefi Conwy launched the Take Control campaign in December 2015 in response to the changing pressures on tenants' financial situation and a desire for Cartrefi Conwy to engage with our tenants as early as possible and provide much needed support for them to manage their finances appropriately. The campaign wanted to support tenants impacted in the following areas:

- Universal credit
- Reduced income due to other welfare reforms
- Tenants who are financially excluded
- Tenants who need support to pay their rent in the correct way that suits their situation

The campaign message is simple: to 'take control' of your finances, and to come to us for help and support if you are having difficulties.

It is a multi-faceted campaign and includes:

- A new microsite which gives tenants a range of online information about controlling their finances (including a budget calculator)
- A 'mock' eviction notice that the income collection team uses when visiting tenants who are in arrears
- New vehicle graphics for trades who are frequently visiting our tenants
- A range of literature for tenants
- New stationery for use within the incomes and finance teams
- Display boards for communal areas and office HQ
- Social media campaigns
- Seasonal features in tenant newsletters
- New Take Control 'piggy bank' mascot

The campaign centres around various scenarios played out on a fictional tenant's mobile phone (please see artwork provided with the application). Although these are 'fictional' scenarios they are based on real circumstances witnessed by our income management

team. These scenarios range from a tenant who is at court facing eviction to another not being able to pay the rent because they've overspent at Christmas or spent it on a holiday. The beauty of this campaign is the ability to be flexible enough to respond to trends within the income collection teams.

The campaign is hard hitting in its delivery but the key message is that Cartrefi Conwy is here to support our tenants. Our organisational ethos is to 'create communities to be proud of' and we have a dedicated financial inclusion team that are on hand to support tenants in financial difficulty. The campaign gives this team the resources they need to do their job effectively.

Various teams across Cartrefi Conwy worked with a local design agency, Blah Creative Agency, to come up with branding, scenarios etc. We also held a consultation session with our tenants (including those that were facing financial difficulty) to ensure the campaign was impactful whilst not being upsetting or unsympathetic to those tenants who are in financial crisis. These tenants also came up with a range of scenarios based on their own experiences. These included:

- The impact of not having home contents insurance
- The financial strain during school holiday times (particularly Christmas)
- Prioritising bills and budgeting
- Doorstep lending and its impact
- Not having a bank account in order to access online billing etc

This information was key to the successful delivery of the project.

Although the Take Control campaign was initially launched nearly a year ago, new elements have been added and it is continually growing. We will continue to work with the strong branding we have developed to convey different messages.

Our head of neighbourhood services, who oversees the income team at Cartrefi Conwy, is delighted with how the campaign has developed:

*"Rent collection and keeping rent arrears to a minimum is obviously a priority for the continued success of Cartrefi Conwy and the invaluable services we offer all our tenants. However, the introduction of universal credit could potentially have a significant impact on our ability to maintain these award winning support services in the future, if we can't successfully maintain our main income stream. With this in mind we worked closely with our communication and marketing manager and Blah Creative Agency to look at how we can mitigate this risk to our organisation; hence the Take Control campaign. We also discussed the campaign at length with tenants, Shelter Cymru and Wales Cooperative Centre to make sure we got the message right. The resources created through the Take Control campaign have really helped us to reinforce the message that ultimately, if you don't pay your rent, you face eviction,*

*which is a hard message to communicate. I strongly believe that by creating a consistent message with our tenants along with the invaluable services of our financial inclusion and incomes team we can minimise the impact to our organisation"*

### Outcomes and achievements:

We are already starting to see some real impact in terms of rent collection, arrears figures and the number of tenants accessing our financial inclusion services since the launch of the Take Control campaign. This is a fantastic achievement when you consider the current financial climate and the introduction of universal credit and other benefit reductions.

Cash collected from current tenants has increased from £6,203,018 (end of August 2015) to £6,547,517 (end of August 2016).

Since March, we have seen a reduction in our arrears in comparison to the same period last year – currently 2.61% whereas at the same time last year it was 2.89%.

The Take Control stand at our recent tenant fun day (the BIG day out) engaged with over 400 tenants over 4 hours, many of whom requested a visit from our financial inclusion team.

Over the last 12 months, our financial inclusion team have supported 286 tenants to claim over £265,237 in benefits they didn't know they were entitled to.

We have also seen a massive reduction in the number of evictions this year (from 11 to 3).

### What the judges said:

*Cartrefi Conwy have developed a big plan to sort a big problem*

### Annette Hennessey

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## Ban Bed and Breakfast

### End Youth Homelessness Cymru with Llamau, GISDA, Dewis Housing, Swansea Young Single Homelessness Project, Adref

The "Ban Bed and Breakfast" campaign was started by the End Youth Homelessness Cymru coalition, (which includes Llamau, GISDA, Adref, Dewis and Swansea Young Single Homelessness Project.) It was created in response to the estimated one hundred 16 and 17 year olds in Wales who were being housed temporarily in bed and breakfast-style accommodation. The campaign aimed to deliver a specific change to the statutory

guidance issued by Welsh Government (WG) on how young people should be accommodated and asked WG to ban the use of bed and breakfast.

The campaign's rationale was that teenagers who find themselves homeless need specific support to combat isolation. Young homeless people need access to expert support, advice and mediation, to ensure a safe return home, a care placement, or an independent tenancy.

The coalition decided to create an online petition, in partnership with Michael Sheen, in order to generate enough public support to encourage the Welsh Government to change its statutory guidance. The petition generated over 115,000 signatures in 6 weeks, and was enough to present to Lesley Griffiths AM, the then minister with responsibility for housing, in February 2016.

[www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/michael-sheen-starts-campaign-stop-10635531](http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/michael-sheen-starts-campaign-stop-10635531)

[www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/how-michael-sheen-forcing-politicians-10872366](http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/how-michael-sheen-forcing-politicians-10872366)

The campaign achieved a change in the statutory guidance which now limits the use of bed and breakfast to extreme circumstances and for no longer than 48 hours.

### How the campaign is intrinsic to the social purpose of the organisations

The five organisations that make up End Youth Homelessness Cymru all wish to see an end to homelessness in Wales. We specifically work with young

people in Wales who are facing or experiencing homelessness and all provide holistic and tailored support to enable young people to gain the skills they need to live independently and purposefully in their communities.

We believe that safe and supported housing is a right, not a privilege, and a change to the Welsh Government's statutory guidance was therefore vital in ensuring that young people are appropriately supported when they are at their most vulnerable.

### Process used to build the campaign

The campaign's aims were clear but we felt that the best chance to secure a change to the statutory guidance was through public pressure on the Welsh Government. We therefore needed to increase public awareness of the issue. In order to do this, we partnered with Michael Sheen in order to build more widespread public support than we could achieve as a group of organisations.

With Michael's support secured he launched our petition, and we used social media channels and traditional media channels to promote the campaign. (<https://www.change.org/p/welsh-government-stop-housing-homeless-teenagers-in-unsuitable-bed-and-breakfast-accommodation>)

Much of the media coverage and public support was secured because of Michael Sheen's involvement, however, the demand to the Welsh Government on policy change was clear and unambiguous because of the expertise and experience of the EYH Cymru partners.

### Outcomes and achievements:

The campaign resulted in a change to the most-recently published statutory guidance in March 2016:

( <http://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/160324-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-allocation-of-accommodation-and-homelessness-en.pdf> Page 299 for the specific change)

The guidance sets out a clear intention to end the use of bed and breakfast and institutes a formal monitoring process for local authorities.

The campaign called for a network of properly staffed emergency accommodation, and this is reflected in the guidance. The updated guidance now describes bed and breakfast accommodation as "not normally regarded as suitable" for 16 and 17 year olds. In the very rare situations when bed and breakfast is used, it must be signed off by a senior decision maker with move-on into suitable accommodation within 48 hours. There are more stringent conditions attached to the quality of accommodation, including free access to a telephone to contact support services, toiletries, hot meals and 24 hour access to their room.

These were all problems that young people reported to us when accessing bed and breakfast, and the strengthened guidance will now resolve this.

### What the judges said:

*End Youth Homelessness Cymru co-ordinated a great campaign in partnership, with a strong outcome*

### Richard Lewis

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# New development award

This award recognises high levels of build and design quality, which is making a meaningful contribution to increasing housing supply and improving affordability, nationally or in the local area. They will also be able to show innovative and cutting edge design, and that they have worked with the community to ensure local support, and provided value for money.



## Cysgod y Gogarth

### Cartefi Conwy

Cysgod y Gogarth\* is Cartrefi Conwy's £4M+ flagship, eco-friendly development that promotes and supports independent living for older people.

Cysgod y Gogarth replaced two ageing sheltered housing schemes consisting of 30 flats and bedsits at Llys Seiriol and the adjoining Llys Eryl in St Andrew's Avenue in Llandudno because they were not fit for purpose and did not address the local housing need.

Cysgod y Gogarth is close to the heart of this award winning Victorian seaside resort and its many historic attractions including its famous 'Orme' headland - Cysgod y Gogarth means 'Shadow of the Orme'.

It was designed by award-winning architects, PRP, and the design of the building has incorporated many features in keeping with the town's local buildings and Victorian history. The outward appearance of Cysgod y Gogarth is a row of traditional terrace houses, surrounded by landscaped gardens and parking areas reserved for tenants and their guests.

Tenants now benefit from much more than just modern and comfortable accommodation, which incorporates many innovative features to meet the environmental benchmark for best practice in sustainable building design, construction and operation:

- Each unit has received Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4.
- The space heating for both the apartments and the 4 houses is served via combined heat and power (CHP) communal system. The heating boiler plant and CHP is installed in the apartment block with pipework run within trenches to each house. Each apartment and house has its own heat interface units with separate meters. The average heat consumption for the scheme for both the flats and houses amounts to £4.41 per week (£230 per year).
- A total of 70 PV solar panels have been installed to the roof of the apartments with a total capacity of 17.50Kw providing a total annual generation of 14752kWh, the equivalent of £2,360.

The development has been built to 'Life Time Homes' standard which means as the health, wellbeing or mobility needs change as residents get older, we can easily adapt the property to suit individual requirements. The scheme has been awarded the Royal National Institute for the Blind Platinum Visibly Better Award accreditation. All aspects of the build and interior design have been considered to enable people with visual impairments to live independently with minimal adaptations and support by ensuring that there is sufficient contrast between surfaces allowing them to navigate comfortably around their new home.

All of the apartments have been designed to create modern and functional living spaces, with open-plan kitchens leading onto spacious living areas.

Compared to orthodox elderly extra care schemes, this development was pioneering in providing an 'Extra Care Lite' model, drastically reducing capital costs while still providing sustainable independent living with care and support through local peripatetic services.

The community benefits of further economic activity are summarised below and the Welsh community benefits measurement tool indicates the Welsh local multiplier as £1.90, the direct investment in the Welsh economy for every £1 spent on Cysgod y Gogarth

- Sub-contractor total value of works £1,783,000 with £1,539,000 spent in Wales (86%)
- 100% employed labour from North Wales with 70% employed labour in local Conwy County Borough Council area with the main contractor RL Davies

- £5,000 contributions/sponsorship as community benefits.
- 1 apprenticeship completed and gained NVQ Level 2 carpentry and joinery

Dr Peter Higson OBE, chair of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board said:

*"The health board is very keen to work with housing associations such as Cartrefi Conwy to support people as they get older. Cysgod y Gogarth is the future and has got to be the way forward for all of us."*

*\*Cysgod y Gogarth development also included the build of Tan y Gogarth consisting 2, two bedroom and 2, three bedroom family homes let at intermediate rent tenures which are typically 20% less than the market rate. The above information on sustainability, community benefits and further economic activity relates to the overall development project. (650 Words)*

### Outcomes and Achievements:

Cysgod y Gogarth is more than just a housing scheme, it is a hub for the wider community; encouraging interaction through social activities and events led by tenants and local residents that routinely brings them together for more than 26 hours each week. In addition, other award winning projects and clubs use the facilities including:

- Give Where You Live has 51 members who have shared over 500 hours of volunteering that has encouraged social inclusion and a 'feel good' sense of purpose and has improved the community spirit of older people in Llandudno. Since joining the project

members have started up a Sunday coffee and chat group to combat loneliness, another is running a craft and hobby club, whilst another tenant holds IT classes and they also have their very own in-house handy man.

- An art therapy programme with a renowned local artist has improved the health and wellbeing by not only gaining new art skills but dealing with the loss of loved ones, mental illness and to revisit cherished memories.
- Another pioneering reading project with a local high school opened up a new chapter in breaking down age barriers with older tenants helping schoolchildren with their reading.

[www.dailypost.co.uk/whats-on/arts-culture-news/llandudno-art-project-stages-first-10697076](http://www.dailypost.co.uk/whats-on/arts-culture-news/llandudno-art-project-stages-first-10697076)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=tr8yKA\\_vu5U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tr8yKA_vu5U)

### What the judges said:

*Cartrefi Conwy have developed a scheme demonstrating affordability and sustainability*

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## Urban Village

**Coastal Housing with Holder Mathias Architects, R&M Williams, City and County of Swansea, Welsh Government**

Initiated through a £25 million scheme for the regeneration, redesign and rebuilding of the High Street and Strand Row areas of Wales' second city, the Urban Village is a vision of sustainable living and working - intimate, yet connected and cosmopolitan, strong on identity and character, but also modern and metropolitan.

Coastal Housing Group has completed this exciting project in two phases, culminating in the recent completion of the Village's centrepiece, the Creative Cluster.

The first phase of Urban Village was completed in spring 2012 and saw the development of five floors of office and retail space facing Swansea's High Street, along with the construction of 76 affordable apartments to the rear of the development.

The Urban Village concept was initially developed by Coastal Housing Group to tackle Swansea High Street's problems from a new angle. In the first phase, the new, high-quality buildings were incorporated to replace the unattractive and poorly maintained older structures; high-spec office spaces were introduced to attract businesses into the area; and the new apartments were built to re-introduce life and footfall to the street, all of which are now tenanted.

With the first phase complete, the development had already started to have an effect on the local area, with new businesses and residents applying a real change to perceptions of the street.

The second phase of Urban Village comprises of two separate buildings, The Warehouse and Creative Cluster.

The Victorian warehouse forms a unique part of Swansea's historical past, having been originally built in the late 1880's as a manufactory for furniture producers Down and Son. Reports show that the land on which the warehouse was built on (known then as Morris Lane) was first marketed for sale in the early 1880's, with the construction of the warehouse taking place between 1888 – 1889. The warehouse then played home to Down and Son for over a century. The building itself is also significant, as it is one of the few examples of Victorian architecture in the area to have survived the Swansea wartime blitz. Coastal Housing Group have retained as many of the building's original features as possible, in order to keep a glimpse of the building's past. The building has been gutted and refurbished inside in order to bring it up to a high specification and make it a useable and desirable working area for today's business needs.

The last part of Phase 2 has seen the construction of Urban Village's centrepiece, the Creative Cluster. With 16,500ft<sup>2</sup> of creative space situated over five floors, the Creative Cluster is an affordable and cutting-edge hub for small start-ups and the creative companies. The community-centred work environment will allow likeminded creative individuals to engage and share ideas with one another and help foster a thriving creative quarter in Swansea.

The building is the first dedicated space in Wales to be built purely for use by the creative industries. The establishment of more modern and affordable office space in the city centre will prove useful for business growth, and the construction of a dedicated workspace for the creative industry is set to only add to Swansea's already growing creative and cultural landscape.

With the Urban Village now complete, the development continues to incorporate social, economic and physical regeneration into an area which will draw ever increasing levels of related activity to its immediate area, resulting in spillovers which have already begun to fuel sustainable economic growth in this formerly deprived and neglected area of the city.

## Outcomes and achievements:

Whilst developing the Urban Village, Coastal Housing Group carried out the following community benefits in order to give something back to the local area:

Phase 2:

- No of full time employment opportunities created: 4
- No of training weeks provided: 35
- No of voluntary work opportunities created: 13
- Total amount of labour materials donated to local businesses: £1670

As well as bringing much needed housing to Swansea city centre, Urban Village has also become home to a number of established and independent businesses, resulting in an increased level of footfall to High Street. The first phase is now home to the city's local newspaper, the Evening Post as well as Coastal Housing Group's Swansea based staff, with the retail elements playing host to independent businesses such as Coast Italia, NVUS Aesthetics and Galerie Simpson.

Being the first building in Wales to be built specifically for use by the creative industry, the Creative Cluster is now a centre to develop digital and hi-tech start-up companies. TechHub Swansea moved into the space in March 2016, which offers shared office space, mentoring and advice, networking events and super-fast broadband internet connection, as well as a cafe open to the public.

## What the judges said:

*Coastal Housing Group's development is a truly inclusive regeneration project*

### Dom Amirat

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## Custom House Court

### Flintshire County Council with Wates Residential, Halliday Clark

**Overview:** Custom House Court is the first development from the unique Flintshire SHARP (strategic housing and regeneration partnership) programme that will build 500 council and affordable homes in five years across the county. This ambitious and innovative programme is the first of its kind in Wales, and this project is the first completed council house development in Wales since self-financing for council housing was introduced. This programme will regenerate the whole of Flintshire, not just in terms of much needed housing but also in terms of the economic and social benefits for local communities and businesses. SHARP will generate £60m worth of benefit and 2,000 employment opportunities.

**Design and build quality:** Cwrt Y Tollty (Custom House Court) is the development of 12 homes built by Flintshire CC for social rent in Connah's Quay. The design is to the Flintshire Housing Standard, which is of a much higher quality than standard council homes for social rent. The new residents will benefit from homes that are highly efficient, built to the equivalent of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4. In order to alleviate fuel poverty for the residents, the homes are built with a fabric-first approach meaning that each house benefits from highly insulated walls, floors, roof, and high quality windows and doors that improve all-round air-tightness. Each property is fitted with a waste-water heat recovery system which heats water coming into the property, as a passive system it benefits the resident without them having to maintain or control complicated renewable technology.

**Innovative design:** Built on the site of the former Custom House school, we worked with architects Halliday Clark to develop a design that was in keeping with the local area as well as protecting the architectural and aesthetic integrity of the former school. Following consultation with the local community and councillors, it was agreed that iconic features recovered from the old school should be incorporated into the new scheme. This included blue glazed engineer brick in a cross stitch pattern with stone heads, cills and gable vents.

**Local support:** A key element of the scheme has been close and on-going engagement with the local community. The future of the site was of great importance for the local community and both the council and Wates appreciate the contribution the local community has made in shaping the development. Community consultation events were held at an early stage in the nearby church hall enabling local residents to both learn more about the scheme and importantly, inform both its design and layout. Wates has also worked closely with the head teacher at the nearby Ysgol Cae'r Nant primary school, with excited pupils visiting the site on organised visits. Cwrt Y Tollty was built within an impressive 8 months, much to the delight of the surrounding community, businesses and school.

**Housing need:** The development is much needed and will provide enhanced housing opportunities for local people currently waiting on the council's housing register. The new scheme will make a significant contribution of easing some of the local pressure for housing in Connah's Quay evident from the housing register. This will be supported by the development of a local lettings policy which will ensure local people living in Connah's Quay in housing need are prioritised for the new homes.

**Value for money:** The houses are built to the council-approved Flintshire House Standard, which sets a high design and layout specification and excellent quality that embeds into the community a development to be proud of, increasing the wellbeing and desirability of the area.

#### Outcomes and achievements:

- Unique development that captures the spirit of the former school, with architectural design and original features incorporated into the build
- Much needed new housing of 12 high quality and energy efficient two and three bedroomed homes
- A social return on investment of £1m (to date) in terms of local supply chain use, apprenticeships, training and activities
- Creation of the Flintshire Apprentice Academy to provide training and employment opportunities for 50 local people

Community investment plan developed, with input from local people and the entire team helped to deliver:

- Installation of protective fencing for Ysgol Gynradd Cae'r Nant (school)
- Two of the former school stone gate posts were removed and placed at the entrance to Wepre Park
- Hosted a football fun day in May 2016
- Donation of £1000 to the local football team for new kit
- The programme has proved so successful in its first year that other local authorities are now following Flintshire CC's lead, with many visiting the programme to see how this can be replicated in their boroughs.



- An excellent example of how cohesive developments integrate well into a community and can enhance the quality of life and tackle poverty in the community

### What the judges said:

*Flintshire County Council have demonstrated an impressive social return on investment*

### Melville Evans

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## Hamadryad Court, Cardiff Bay

### Morganstone with Cardiff Community Housing Association

Hamadryad Court is a development on the site of the former Royal Hamadryad Hospital now an NHS Health Centre.

The site had lain undeveloped as a succession of developers failed to unlock this challenging site, which called for a development that would do justice to its prominent position on the River Taff corridor, with panoramic views towards Cardiff bay and the channel, and back towards Cardiff city centre.

Morganstone in collaboration with CCHA procured the scheme as a land-led package deal providing high quality affordable homes. The prominence of the site on the riverbank meant that a high quality design was essential. Morganstone and CCHA appointed Austin Smith Lord as architect based on their previous work with the development team and their record of high quality projects in Cardiff.

The project addressed specific housing needs identified by the City council for 1 and 2 bed properties and the needs created by those wishing to downsize.

Consultations were undertaken with local residents and their representatives including four consultation meetings, eight letter drops and newsletters as well as a dedicated project community page on Morganstone's

website. The team worked with the community to reassure them in respect of potential disruption from piling operations including surveying properties and placing vibration monitoring equipment on residents' properties. Given the concerns of the community the monitoring took in an area greater than the recommended guidance. The team worked closely with the NHS to ensure that the operations of the Hamadryad Centre were not compromised. This included access to the site through the centre's car park and finally the relocation of part of the car park to facilitate the development.

Design quality was a major driver for the team and Cardiff City Council. The team worked hard to find creative solutions that delivered a high quality design to budget. What has been achieved is a building that not only offers residents a high standard of accommodation, with spectacular views, but also contributes to the wider built environment and enhances its special setting. The design also took account of the development's relationship to the existing community and environment, including the former Victorian hospital Hamadryad Centre and groupings of existing mature trees.

The development originally consisted of 55 apartments and 20 houses and planning was obtained for this mix. Cardiff City Council late on in the development process expressed a desire to acquire the site for a Welsh medium school. CCHA, Morganstone and Cardiff City Council worked closely together amending both the land and build contracts to ensure that a portion of the site could be delivered for the school development. This resulted in the houses being omitted from the contract and a new application being submitted while the development was on site for the apartments as a standalone development.

The building is a four and six storey block of 55 apartments and has been constructed in light weight steel frame following a value engineering (VE) process to determine the most economic and fast frame solution. The adoption of modern methods of offsite construction accelerated the construction process and reduced disruption to residents and the environment. A detailed VE process was also undertaken in respect of the energy solution before a central gas plant with photovoltaics was adopted.

Pre-planning consultation was maintained with the local community post contract and the team committed to a number of community benefits, engagement, training and employment initiatives.

The team bid for knowledge transfer partnership funding with Cardiff Met for research into construction methodologies/fabric performance and how the lessons learned could be transferred to future projects.

On completion lessons learned workshops have been held and the findings disseminated.

### Outcomes and achievements:

- Partnership working - local government, project team, supply chain
- Design quality realised
- Open market site secured for affordable housing
- Resident consultation
- MMC
- Project completed within budget
- Project completed two months early
- Considerate Constructor Score - 41
- 55 rented apartments
- Brownfield Site
- Community benefits and engagement initiatives:
  - Community fun day in Royal Hamadryad Park
  - Butetown family fun day
  - Community garden project
  - Cancer Research Butetown Mile - Sponsorship and employees participation
  - Cardiff Metropolitan students visit
  - Charity events
  - Llamau toiletries appeal
  - Sports Relief
  - Christmas shoe box appeal
  - Children in Need

- Llamau Easter appeal
- Project management, materials and trades for DIY SOS Project to adapt a property for a disabled child
- Health and well-being - occupational health checks for site operatives, mental health, healthy living promotion local training and courses available.
- Training
- 95 trainee/apprenticeship weeks
- Graduate trainee placement
- Trainee site manager placement
- Apprentice - electricians, plumbers, carpenters
- LIFT Project
- 4 trainees - onsite training and full time posts
- Trainee given permanent post with Morganstone and trained as crane and forklift operator
- Community Benefits ToolKit 2015/16 - £1.98 Welsh Local Multiplier
- R&D KTP university project
- Lessons learned workshops

### What the judges said:

*Morganstone Ltd have demonstrated an interesting use of off-site construction*

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## Ty Heulog Extra Care, Rhondda Cynon Taf

### Keepmoat with Hafod Care Association, RCT County Borough Council, Welsh Government

Ty Heulog is an £8million extra care development for older and vulnerable residents in the Talbot Green area of Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT), which was completed in September 2016.

Replacing the former highways depot, the scheme, built by Keepmoat on behalf of specialist care, support and housing provider Hafod Care, consists of 40 self-contained apartments and a range of communal facilities including a restaurant, laundry, sensory garden and craft studio.

Ty Heulog has been specially-designed to provide the over 55s with the support they need to continue living independent lives.

### High levels of design and build innovation

The project has been designed and built to the highest levels of quality and specification, with features including:

- Mobility scooter store and charging station on all floors
- Disabled access and two lifts
- Assisted bathrooms on all floors
- Individual fully-accessible wetroom in each flat
- Large kitchen window viewing the 'street' corridor connecting opposite neighbours
- Residents' own front doors
- Individual warden-call system
- Secure sensory garden
- 24-hour independent access control and manned admin wing
- External bike store

The spacious apartments have been insulated and constructed to a standard of sustainability that will achieve a 'Very Good' rating under the Building Research Establishment environmental assessment methodology (BREEAM) sustainability model.

During the build, we experienced technical challenges when petro-chemical tanks were discovered within the lower ground structure during initial groundworks.

Substructures were then redesigned from ground-bearing to suspended ground floor slab, designed with no additional cost implications, and production resumed with no time lost.

### Working with the community

Throughout the project, every effort was made to involve and engage the local community.

40% of employees on-site lived within 10 miles and 12 young unemployed people carried out paid work experience on-site.

The name Ty Heulog (Sunny House) was chosen by pupils of Tonysguboriau Primary School, who also took part in site visits and workshops during the build. A key part of independent living is maintaining links with the local community and it is hoped that the children will visit regularly when the scheme opens next month.

Other activities included:

- helping a Cubs group work towards their DIY and environmental badges by creating a 'bug-hotel' using 100% recycled site materials

- providing half-term activities for young people at Fir Tree Community Centre
- including an emergency 'baby-changing facility' on-site for the large numbers of young families passing daily

Relationships were forged with the local community centre to utilise their car park in return for repainting the exterior and interior of the building as well as providing sponsorship for events including Christmas parties for the elderly.

Some of the communal areas at Ty Heulog are open to local people, in order to help residents retain links within the community.

### Supporting housing need

Ty Heulog is a real flagship development – the first of its kind in RCT. Wales' ageing population and shortage of suitable housing is well-documented – schemes like this help to solve this issue by providing quality, affordable housing that enables older residents to live independent lives, with individual levels of support.

Tenants will have care and support plans in place, tailored to their personal needs and delivered within the comfort of their homes.

### Value for money

From the outset, we were committed to value engineering – working with our partners to maximise economies of scale where possible and provide the best value for money.

### Client testimonial – Hafod Care Association

*"Ty Heulog is an excellent scheme and provides much-needed high quality homes. The design of the building enables independent living within a community setting which we know makes a huge difference to people's health and well-being."*

### Outcomes and achievements:

Ty Heulog has been specially-designed and purpose-built to provide the over 55s with the support they need to continue living independent lives.

The result is a state-of-the-art spacious living environment where tenants will have care and support tailored to their needs and delivered within the comfort of their homes.

The development is the first of its kind in the RCT area.

High levels of insulation and sustainable construction mean that the building will achieve a BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'.

To ensure residents of Ty Heulog are integrated into and maintain links with the community, some of its communal areas are open to local people.

The project has also had wider benefits for the local area:

- 40% of the site's workforce lived within 10miles
- 12 unemployed young people were given paid work experience on the site
- By liaising with local schools and community groups, including maths in construction days and site visits, we reached more than 900 children
- Ty Heulog was named by children from a local primary school, forging links between pupils and the new older people's development that we hope will continue into the future
- Rating of 10/10 ('innovative') for 'Community' by the Considerate Constructors Scheme

### What the judges said:

*Keepmoat overcame a range of build challenges and illustrated they have learnt lessons from previous schemes for older people*

#### **Rachel Bettison**

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