

united
welsh

How well do we

Perform?

Winter 2006

We often receive thanks from customers who take the time and trouble to let us know when they have received a particularly good service. Here are a few that we received recently...

Mrs G (Gilwern) ..was thrilled with the work carried out by Quadron. They fixed a roof leak that had been ongoing for some time. She wanted to pass on her appreciation for the way the operatives from Quadron sat down with her and fully explained what the problem was and why it occurred, she was very grateful that they had taken the time to do this.

Mr & Mrs W (Blaenavon) ...wrote to Willis Construction thanking them for excellent work done and fact that Willis work team were polite and worked in professional manner, keeping them informed through every stage of the work

Some very satisfied customers!



Mrs P (Hengoed) ...advised that Clive James (Housing Officer) has been a wonderful help to her during her recent move. He encouraged and advised her through a difficult time.

But if you are not satisfied...

We monitor the complaints that we receive about the services we provide and try to make sure that we put the problem right and learn from any mistakes we or our contractors may have made. Every quarter complaints are reported to our Board of Management and we aim to improve our services and reduce the complaints we receive.

Please let us know if the service you receive is not to the standard that you expect and we will investigate your complaint and try to resolve it.

If you would like a copy of the instruction manual on your central heating system, please contact our Customer Services team on 0800 2940195, give them the name of the boiler in your home and if we have an instruction manual available for your system we will post or e mail a copy it to you.

Do you need some help using your central heating system?





Welsh Housing Quality Standards

In October of this year, all United Welsh tenants had a questionnaire sent to them asking about the physical condition of their homes. The purpose of the questionnaire was to fine tune the assessment of our housing stock for information to help in meeting the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS). The initial assessment was carried out by physically surveying a proportion of actual homes.

The WHQS are a set of housing standards devised by the Welsh Assembly to try to make sure that design and quality of social housing is consistent throughout Wales. The deadline for meeting the standard, details of which can be found on our website at www.uwha.co.uk is 2012. A copy of the standard is also available for viewing at our offices.

The results of the survey carried out in October have been added to comments made by tenants as part of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey which ended in August 2006 and a consultation held with the Executive Committee of voice4tenants in October 2006. The preferences for inclusion in a works programme are clear. The most important areas tenants of United Welsh feel that we need to address if we are to meet the Standard are kitchen replacement, including installation of extractor fans; bathroom replacement, also including installation of extractor fans and showers; estate works, such as fences and sheds; and heating and insulation upgrades.

Over £5 million will be invested in achieving the WHQS over the next five years. The programme will be reviewed continually through surveys and consultation with tenants and works will continue to

ensure where necessary that homes are brought up to standard to meet the WHQS by 2012.

We will also be meeting with a tenant focus group throughout the five year programme to discuss the works programme itself as well as delivery of the service. To set this group up we are encouraging tenants with particular interest or skill or perhaps experience that can help make sure we can all get the most out of the focus group discussions to come forward and volunteer a modest amount of their time to the project. Anyone with an interest in joining the focus group should contact David Williams on 029 20 858166 to put their name forward for the group.

Roger Dafydd, Chair of voice4tenants has given the commitment of v4t to the programme and to making sure that tenants get information as well as an opportunity to have their say. 'As a result of the survey of all tenants conducted by the Development team in October of this year, it seems obvious that tenants are largely keen to be consulted through the process of meeting WHQS. Richard Mann, Director of Development, has given a commitment to consult with voice4tenants and we'll be doing our bit to make sure that anyone looking for information or wanting to put forward a view gets the opportunity. The v4t Local Area Forums will include an exhibition of current developments in the progress United Welsh is making in meeting the requirements of WHQS and all v4t members, which includes all tenants of United Welsh, have the opportunity of feeding their comments through our secretary, Ann Pethers, who can be contacted on 07949 759859.'

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voice4tenants

The schedule for meetings of the Executive Committee of voice4tenants has been finalised and is set out below. The Committee is keen to point out that meetings are open to all members of v4t, which includes all tenants of United Welsh. Attendance at Executive Committee meetings as an Observer can give an opportunity to check how the Committee conducts its business on behalf of tenants and is a great way to find out what else is happening - it may even lead to becoming involved either directly with the Executive or in other ways.

The two most recent Observers have both decided to take their involvement further. Stephen Wildblood from Brynmawr will be offered the opportunity of becoming a co-opted member of the Executive in January, while Eric Bailey from Cardiff has elected to look at an opportunity to be part of the developing Tenant Inspector Service. 'The prospect of developing this service is very exciting', Eric told us, 'to have a way for tenants to directly monitor the services United Welsh provides is a big step forward in making sure they are run for our benefit.'

At the joint Tenant Participation Advisory Service and Welsh Tenant Federation Conference in November at Llandrindod Wells, Roger Dafydd presented a workshop with David Williams, Community Services Manager at United Welsh. The workshop, based on a presentation of the development of voice4tenants and the differences it has made to tenant participation at United Welsh, was

well received by the Conference and prompted a number of delegates to follow up with enquiries about details of the development.

'The most remarkable result of the presentation was the number of tenants from other social landlords who approached me afterwards to let me know how fortunate we are to enjoy the relationship we have with United Welsh.' Roger told us. 'We'll certainly be encouraging others to follow in our footsteps and to lobby their landlords to help them develop similar organisations with the status and independence we have achieved with voice4tenants.'

v4t Timetable 2007

Date	Location
Thurs. 18th Jan	Walters Building, Cardiff
Thurs. 15th Feb	Ty Cennydd, Caerphilly
Thurs. 29th Mar	Ty Cennydd, Caerphilly
Thurs. 2nd May	Ebbw Vale
Thurs. 21st Jun	Ty Cennydd, Caerphilly
Thurs. 19th Jul	(AGM) Ty Cennydd, Caerphilly
Thurs. 13th Sep	To be confirmed
Thurs. 18th Oct	Ty Cennydd, Caerphilly
Thurs. 15th Nov	Ty Cennydd, Caerphilly
Thurs. 12th Dec	Cardiff

Do you want to take part in the decision making process?

The Welsh Assembly Government are planning to issue a National Strategy for Resident Participation in January 2007. The purpose of the Strategy is to make sure that landlords like United Welsh offer genuine opportunities for their tenants to take part in decisions which affect their homes and communities and the way that they live in them.

United Welsh has already agreed with voice4tenants that there will be a joint project to develop opportunities to make it easier for more members of voice4tenants to be involved in whatever ways suit them best as individuals.

As a first step the voice4tenants Executive Committee decided at their December meeting to invite any

interested members of v4t to join a small group to make sure the project works properly for tenants of United Welsh. If you are interested in becoming part of this group, contact Roger Dafydd, Chair of the Executive Committee on 07949 759911 for more information.



**Merry Christmas
from the Executive Committee of
voice4tenants**

Select a Home – how are we doing?

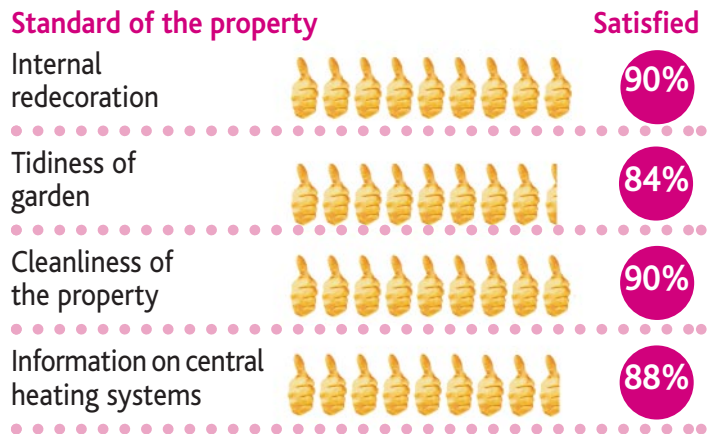
Between April and September 2006 we let 155 properties. Each of our new tenants were asked to comment on the information they received before and after they moved into their new home and the standard of the property. A third of new tenants returned their survey form and here are some of the answers they gave us:

How satisfied are tenants in their new homes?



There has been an improvement in each of these areas compared to last month.

We also asked new tenants about the standard of their new home:

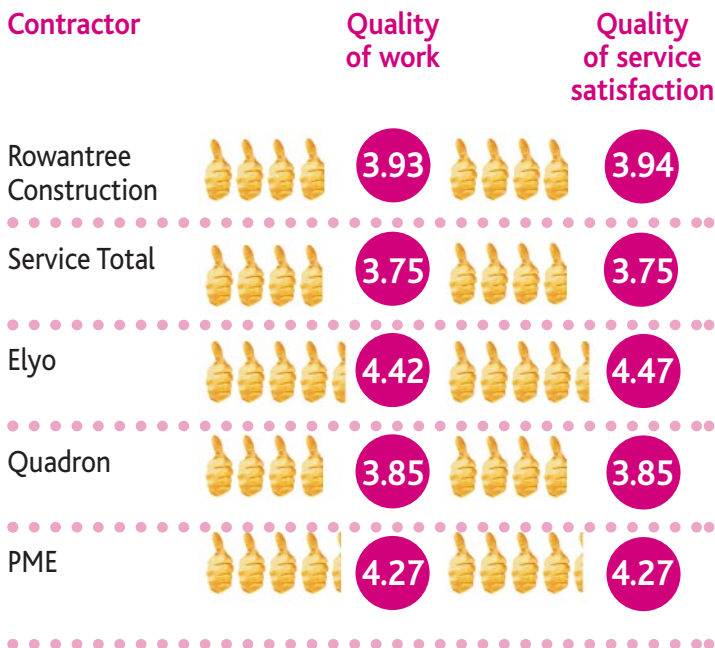


Whilst overall the majority of tenants were satisfied with the condition of the property, the satisfaction levels with the information tenants receive on the heating system in their new home differed according to the area they live in as did satisfaction levels with the standard of the garden.

We aim to improve the information available to tenants in all areas and increase the satisfaction with this in the future.

Repairs service update

How satisfied are you with the level of repair services you receive?



We measure the satisfaction levels with the overall quality of the service you receive from a contractor and the quality of work they have completed.

The table (left) shows the current satisfaction levels for our main contractors for the period 1st August 2006 to 31st October 2006. Remember, the maximum mark is 5, 4 is good and 3 is satisfactory.

Overall average is **3.92** for Quality of Service and **3.92** for Quality of Work

During the period 3652 orders were issued to all contractors we received 432 responses (11.83%).

Overall satisfaction with the completed repairs was **94%**, which was a dip of 1%. We are working with our contractors to improve our service to you, in particular, asking contractors to telephone you prior to making a visit.

In order for us to improve our service to you please let us know your telephone number or email address.

If your telephone number is not on a repairs order this means we do not have your number – please contact us with this information as it makes it easier for us to offer you a good service.