

Complaints and compliments

Whenever we receive a complaint we try to deal with it as quickly as possible and, if we've made a mistake, we try to learn from it and make sure it doesn't happen again.

Once a complaint has been closed we contact the person complaining again to find out how well they feel the complaint was dealt

with and how easy the person found the process.

This doesn't change any decision that may have been made in dealing with a complaint but it does give us an idea of how well we are doing in this area.

If you have any comments to make, good or bad, about the service you receive from us, then please let us know.

Anti Social Behaviour – an update

Between May and August this year we received 81 reports of anti social behaviour and, as in previous months, a significant number of these reports were about noise – music or people.

Most cases are dealt with in the earliest stages with tenants talking to one another and finding a way to live next to each other without disturbance. We also offer mediation to those who find themselves involved in problems with neighbours and this can help both parties understand how their behaviour affects others and reach a reasonable solution.

Anti social behaviour often needs the involvement of other agencies such as the Police for criminal behaviour such as threatening behaviour or assault; or the Local Authority who are responsible for dealing with noise problems, dumped cars, stray dogs etc.

Sometimes, where anti social behaviour is persistent and we have sufficient evidence we may take legal action against those responsible.

There are currently 36 open cases being dealt with. Of these cases, 9 are sufficiently serious that, providing witnesses come forward and give evidence, we will be taking legal action against those causing the anti social behaviour.

In July 2007, we joined the Anti Social Behaviour Housemark club. This is a group of social landlords who register the details of their anti social behaviour cases each quarter. It allows each member to look at how well they manage anti social behaviour and compare it to other social landlords.

Some of the areas included in the report are:

- the types of anti social behaviour being reported
- the numbers of cases reported
- success levels in resolving cases of anti social behaviour
- the actions taken which resolved a case
- satisfaction levels of the residents who reported the anti social behaviour

The first reports on this will be out later in the year and we'll be reporting the results in future editions of Linkup.



united
welsh

How well do we

Perform?

Autumn 2007

Homes within reach...

United Welsh has begun work on a new housing development with a difference. This innovative development involves the construction of modular style homes under the controlled conditions of a factory. Most importantly of all, the houses are being built specifically to help first-time buyers.

With property prices still on the rise across Wales it's becoming more difficult for first-time buyers to get a foot on the property ladder. Delivering affordable housing is crucial to ensure that more people have the opportunity to become homeowners.

To help tackle this issue a new development project called 'Clos Penallta' is being undertaken by United Welsh. The development near Caerphilly will include a range of properties from one-bed apartments to three-bed houses. Each property will be made up of a series of steel framed modules constructed within a factory. Before leaving the factory the modules are pre-wired, plumbed and have all sanitary fittings installed, windows fitted and are decorated to the buyers specification.

The modules are then transported to the building site on trucks and finished by connecting to the mains, roof tiling and construction of the outer skin ready for the first owner to move in. Once complete the homes are indistinguishable from those built using more traditional method.

On completion the homes will be sold to first-time buyers using a shared equity scheme. Under the 'Homes within Reach' housing scheme buyers

will be able to share the cost of the property with United Welsh. The buyer will become the sole owner of the property with United Welsh holding a second charge. In most instances the buyer would need to find 55% - 70% of the value of the property through a mortgage and/or savings.

A number of major building societies have confirmed they are happy to lend on the new properties, including Principality who have a mortgage advisor on hand to help potential first-time buyers enquiring about the 'Clos Penallta' site.

The properties are currently being sold at £65K for a one-bed apartment, £75K for a two-bed apartment,

and £85K for a three-bed house. Richard Mann, Director of Development for United Welsh, said: "This is an exciting time for housing development in Wales. Clearly we constantly need to be on the lookout for new and innovative ways of providing affordable housing for the people of Wales. Building homes using modules makes sense in terms of time and costs. Even adverse weather conditions can be eliminated from the equation.

"We have already sold a number of homes and demand has been high. This is a real opportunity for those people who currently can't afford to buy a property on the open market."

If you are interested in finding out more about the properties for sale at 'Clos Penallta' please call a member of the 'Homes within Reach' team on 0800 294 0195.



...innovative and affordable

Repairs Service – what you are telling us

In June and July 2007, our contractors were asked to carry out 2246 repairs. 303 tenants returned a satisfaction questionnaire to let us know what they thought of the repairs service.

Quality of Work

- **285** (94%) of you were satisfied with the quality of work
- **283** (93.5%) were satisfied with the service given by the contractor
- **294** (97.0%) were satisfied with the service given by Association staff
- **287** (95.0%) were satisfied with the overall service.

The satisfaction levels for June and July are a little lower than those reported for February to May. Your main concerns with the service were primarily:

- Contractors not phoning to arrange a time for the work to be carried out.
- The contractor not keeping to an arranged time to complete work and not contacting you to re-arrange the work.
- The quality of the work of the contractor

Those taking part in the survey expressed less satisfaction with the quality of work, in particular with Elyo Suez, our electrical contractor. We are already working with Elyo Suez to look at why those satisfaction levels have fallen and to agree improvements to the service to restore them.

We meet regularly with all our contractors to discuss service improvements and issues you bring to our attention and are working hard with them to improve the service.

Please continue to complete the questionnaires - they are very useful to us and may win you a cash prize!

Letting our homes – what new tenants think of us

Between May and August this year we let 80 properties and 15 of our new tenants returned a satisfaction questionnaire to let us know what they thought of the letting process and their new home.

Of these 15 replies:

- **14** new tenants were happy with the information provided at the viewing stage
- **12** new tenants were happy with the information received about repairs – **3** were not happy.
- All **15** new tenants were happy with the way their tenancies were explained to them and with the answers to queries that they had.
- Only **8** were happy with the information on how to use the heating system.

The new tenants who were most satisfied were those moving into our Living+ schemes for the over 55's.

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

- **13** of the 15 tenants were happy with the standard of internal redecoration, the standard of the kitchen and the condition of the garden.

In the last edition of Linkup, we reported that the main issues which new tenants felt dissatisfied with when they took over a new tenancy were:

- the provision of keys for window locks and
- the cleanliness of their new home.

In the last 4 months we have seen an improvement in levels of satisfaction in both these areas of service. **13** out of the **15** tenants advised they had sufficient window locks and all but **1** tenant was happy with the cleanliness of their property at the letting. We will continue to work to improve this even further in the future.

**Don't forget! Return the repair slip
and you'll be entered
into the monthly cash prize draw!**



Meet the Exec!

Over the coming editions of Linkup we'll be giving you the opportunity to meet the members of the Executive Committee of voice4tenants.

This edition, meet Roger Dafydd, Chair of voice4tenants...

I live in Cardiff now, although I am originally from the Nantlle Valley in North Wales. After graduating from Bangor University, I gained my PhD in 1977 and by the time I retired on health grounds in 1991, I had been in academia for twenty years!

Retirement has given me the time to become more involved in voluntary work, especially in tenant participation – I was an active member of the Windsor Quay Tenants' Association and of the Tenants' Consultative Committee at United Welsh.

It was through my membership of the TCC that I took part in the discussions which concluded that

there was a need to strengthen the voice of tenants in consultation with United Welsh – the birthplace of voice4tenants in fact.

I am very proud of the work we have done to develop v4t as a credible voice for United Welsh tenants, a fact I had the opportunity of stating publicly when I represented v4t at a joint workshop about the development, conducted in partnership with United Welsh at the 2006 TPAS Conference.

If there are any questions you would like to put to the Exec members through this feature, please send them to: Linkup Editor, United Welsh, Ty Cennydd, Castle Street, Caerphilly, CF83 1NZ or e-mail them to tellmore@uwha.co.uk

Thursday 19th July 2007 saw voice4tenants and United Welsh coming together in an historic event to celebrate the Annual General Meetings of both organisations and to give people an opportunity to find out about how they are working, about what is on the horizon for both during the next year and, perhaps as importantly as anything else, about the strength of the partnership between v4t and United Welsh.

Roger Dafydd, Chair of v4t told us, "when we first started to consider the organisation of this event we were discussing potential attendance of up to 100 people – in the end we had over 170!"

"I am proud to have been involved in putting together an event which obviously captured the imagination of so many of our members and it's testament to the equality of the partnership that so many members told us they felt the event belonged more to them than either the v4t or United Welsh AGMs had done in the past."

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Roger Dafydd, Chair of v4t

Three new members were elected to the Executive Committee at the AGM, Christina Chidlow from Blackwood, Nicola Gatwood from Gilwern and Stephen Wildblood from Brynmawr, which brings the committee to full strength.

The Executive Committee used the event and its AGM to launch a fund in memory of its long-time member, John Newnham, who died in March. The John Newnham Memorial Fund will present an annual award of up to £500 to groups or individuals nominated to the voice4tenants Executive Committee whom they judge to have made the most effective contributions to improving the standard of life of United Welsh tenants and the communities in which they live.

The purpose of the award is to encourage tenant participation, one of John's great passions, and to reward those who are seen to make the greatest efforts in making tenant participation count.

Nominations will be invited through Linkup to be made directly to the v4t Executive Committee.



Joint AGMs increase attendance figures