



Cynon Taf

Community Housing Group

Grŵp Cartrefi Cymunedol

Annual Report

21/22

#TeamCynonTaf

Welcome

Another year and another Annual Report brings with it the opportunity to look through the Thesaurus for a different word for challenging!

No doubt many of us look back fondly on the days before the floods, pandemic, Brexit and war in Europe but if the last twelve months have taught us anything, it's how important it is that we continue to support each other to be the resilient, creative and adaptable people we have proved we can be.

Despite the previously unimaginable circumstances, Cynon Taf has continued to focus on doing the best we can for our tenants, communities and people who use our services, and making sure we do this in a way that makes best use of our resources.

For example, I'm pleased that we are partnering with other housing associations to meet the new requirements set out in the Renting Homes Act.

I'm also excited that through the Down to Zero initiative we can do our bit to tackle the impact of climate change whilst broadening our support for our tenants and communities.

And although I would rather we didn't need to do this, I am particularly glad that through the work of the Housing and Communities team and the Care and Repair Agency over the last year we have helped tenants and people using our services increase their incomes by over £375,000.



Joy Kent Group Chair

As we look to the future, ensuring the people who rent from us and use our services have enough to live on, can feed themselves and their families and afford to heat their homes is – I'm sad to say – going to be a central focus of our work.

I'm also very sad to see our Chief Executive, Victoria Slade leave Cynon Taf. She's led us through the most unusual of times with a clarity of focus, tenacity and humour that has been an inspiration and I will always be incredibly grateful to have had her at the helm during such stormy weather.

On behalf of the Board I would like to thank all colleagues within the group who have continued to deliver as the world we work in has got more complex and demanding. To my fellow board members – we are all volunteers and everyone has their own personal and professional challenges outside the board room so thank you for your continued support and commitment. Whatever 2023 has in store, I'm confident we will continue to pull together to provide the best services we can for the people and communities we are here to serve.

Joy Kent Group Chair

Welcome

That's another wrap!

It's really positive to look back and think about how far things have moved on this year – we had the challenges of managing through a pandemic in the previous year, and this year has been about re-instating services and picking up the work we had planned to improve the way we do things, albeit in a different way.

Like others, we've had to learn and adapt in real time without losing our focus on what's important – a financially sustainable business which meets the needs of our tenants and service users. Some of the learning has been really valuable and accelerated the changes we had planned for working in a more agile way. We've reached a stage now where we can blend the way we work and make the most of the connections we have with each other and our communities.

This report sets out just some of the achievements of the previous year. We were still operating in a period of uncertainty and the impact that has on people's health and wellbeing can't be underestimated. We are proud of what our teams have achieved and the way they have worked to support each other, our tenants and service users.



Vic Slade Group Chief Executive

Looking forward, we know there are more challenges ahead. The cost of living is the lens we are now using to drive our focus on the coming year and will be our priority.

Our objective of supporting resilient communities is front and centre – and the achievements of the past year have provided the building blocks we need to do that, with a new Group Chief Executive at the helm.

I've loved being part of the Cynon Taf Group, and will be sad to say goodbye, but I'm confident that the Group has the skills and values it needs to keep doing things better for more people – from investment, to meeting housing need, supporting people through tough times and meeting the climate challenge, all backed up by people who are focused on the right things.

Vic Slade Group Chief Executive

Who We Are

Cynon Taf Community Housing Group is at the heart of Rhondda Cynon Taf in South Wales.

We're proud of our deep-rooted history in providing housing and support for the people and communities where we work.



OUR VISION

We want to be part of happy, healthy and prosperous valley communities where everyone has a chance to live well.

OUR PURPOSE

We're here to provide great homes and support for the people who make up our communities.

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Diversity is everybody's responsibility.

We value and promote equality and diversity at all levels throughout the organisation.

There's a strong and proven business case for creating diverse organisations.

Our Values

PASSION

We care passionately about what we do

RESPECT

We treat everyone with respect

RESPONSIBILITY

We take responsibility for our actions

INTEGRITY

We carry out our roles with honesty and sincerity

EXCELLENCE

We always do our very best

Our Priorities

Support resilient communities

Deliver **excellent services**

Grow our supply of homes

Protect our **financial sustainability**

Invest in our governance, our people and our systems

Partner with others to **achieve shared goals**

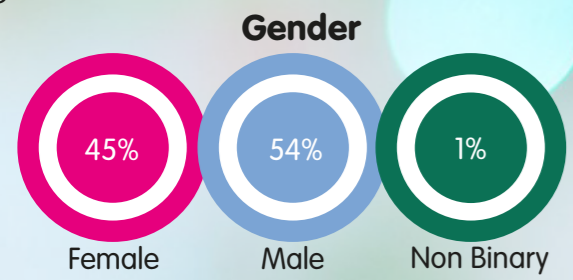
Across all priorities are

Fairness and equality

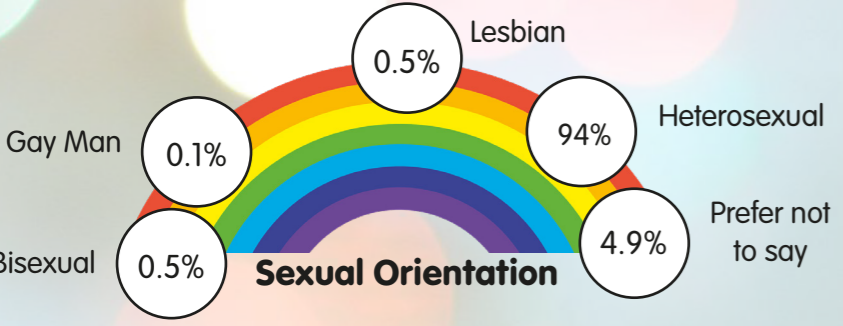
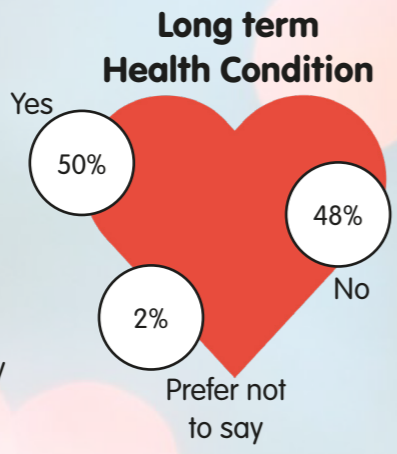
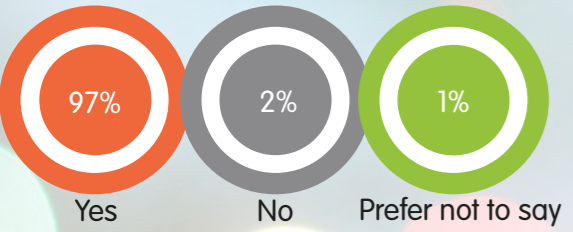
Value for money

Reducing environmental impact

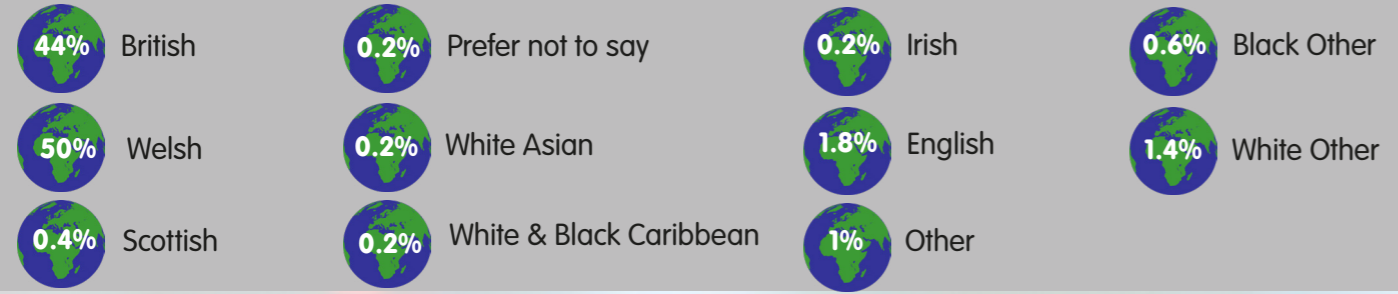




Gender the same as the sex you were registered at birth



Ethnicity

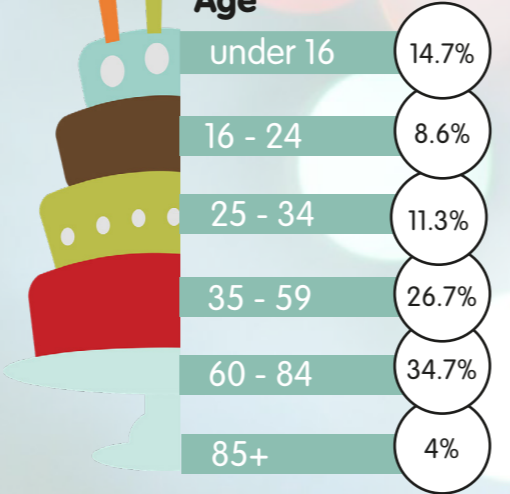


Our Tenants

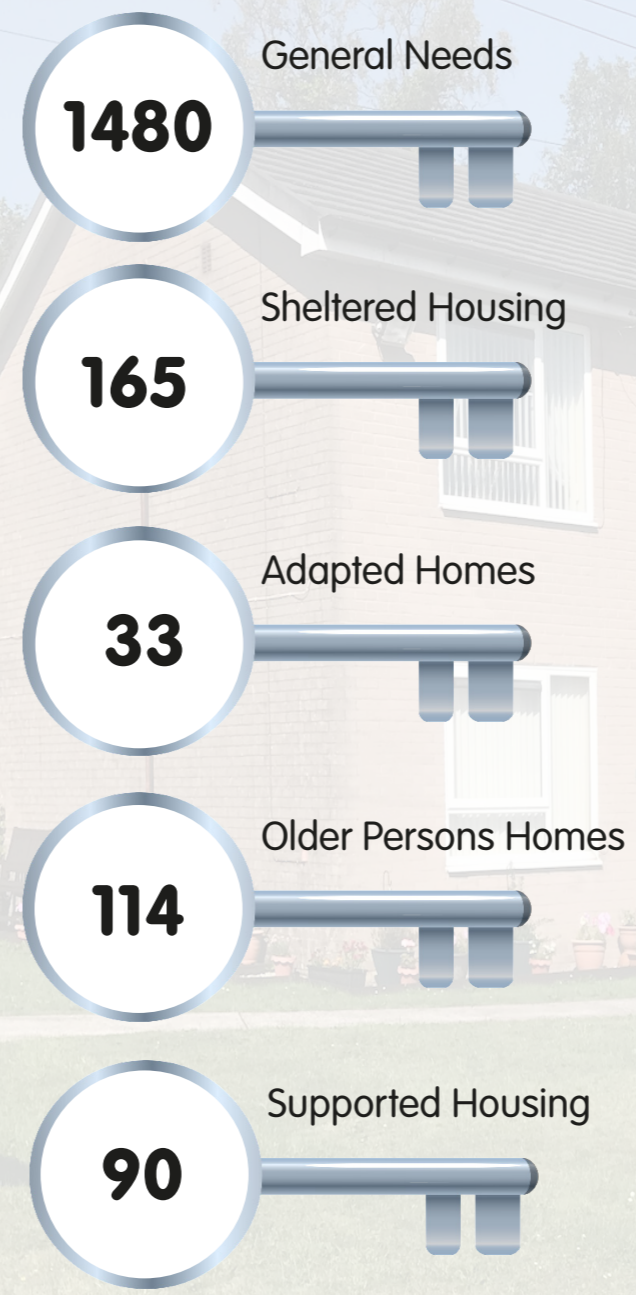
Religion or Faith

Christian	33%
Catholic	4%
Muslim	0.25%
Buddhist	0.35%
Atheist	2.7%
No Religion	54.7%
Prefer not to say	3.4%
Other	1.6%

Age



Our 1,882 Homes



As part of our commitment to Equality & Diversity we gather a breakdown of information on who lives in our homes. This information is kept safe & confidential, but we use it to shape our services & ensure they are inclusive to all.

Our Potential Projects

Our Potential and Community Potential Projects are designed to support our tenants and members of our local communities, tackling poverty and social exclusion for those furthest from the job market.

- Are you looking to return to or enter employment?
- Are you over 25 and long term unemployed?
- Are you looking to improve your skills through learning?
- Do you want to become more involved in the community?

The projects encourage growth and engagement through basic skill building, training and volunteering to help participants move closer to employment.

We have received a grand total of **£275,677.73** funding from WCVA Active Inclusion to make these projects a success.

Natasha, a local resident living in RCT, was really keen to access help and support around employment, CV writing and interview techniques, as well as access to local volunteering opportunities.

We supported Natasha to update and improve her CV, along with opportunities to take part in our interview technique sessions, which Natasha thrived in.

Natasha also joined us at our Employability Workshops, where she took part in a Budget Checker exercise. This really helped her understand more about her income and benefits she was entitled to.

It wasn't long before Natasha was volunteering with us on our digital sessions at Cwmaman Canolfen building, and she was a natural.

Since her involvement with the Potential Project, Natasha told us she has more direction and motivation in her life, an increased level of confidence and now has ways to stop feeling isolated, which got worse during the pandemic.

"I feel I have more confidence than I did before I came onto the project. I've made friendships through some of the sessions which has really benefited me, as I am not feeling so isolated anymore. Thank you."

More confidence

Work training qualifications

Getting online

Improved skills

Building your CV

Volunteering opportunities



To refer a tenant or member of the community to the Potential Project please email;
PotentialProjectTeam@cynon-taf.org.uk

#EUfundscymru



Supporting Resilient Communities

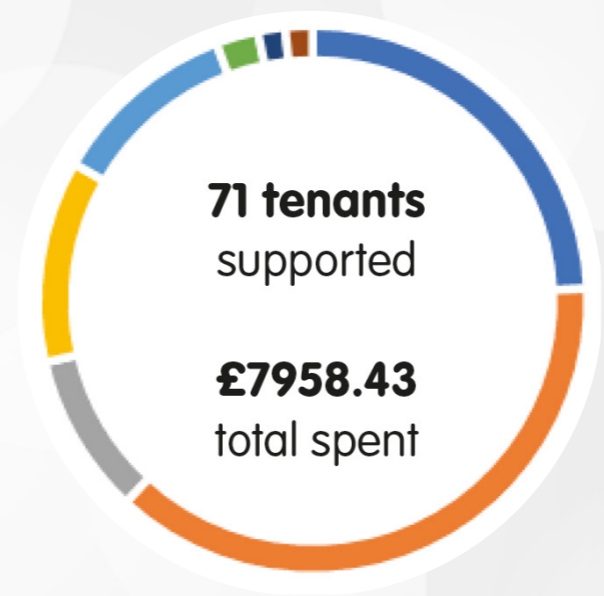
Our Housing & Communities Team worked tirelessly to provide vital support to our tenants and communities during another challenging year.

we let
149
homes

£186K
total income
maximised for
tenants who
accessed support

295
referrals for
financial or
well being support

Our Hardship Fund



- **24.3%** essential household items
- **37.6%** MIND mental health support
- **9.5%** food & groceries
- **11.9%** energy top ups
- **11%** tenancy management
- **2.5%** refugee settlement (digital)
- **1.6%** transport
- **1.6%** other

We're proud to have helped **714 people** with the following skills

81
improved their
digital skills

555
improved their
financial & wellbeing

78
accessed training &
volunteering opportunities

Our Hardship Fund is available to our tenants if they reach crisis point or become in urgent need of basic items, such as food, gas, electricity or anything to keep them safe and well.



Delivering Excellent Services



69%
said we listen to
views & act on them

81%
satisfied with the
service from us

81%
satisfied with the
quality of your home

84%
your rent is good
value for money

86%
we provide a safe
& secure home

88%
satisfied with your
neighbourhood



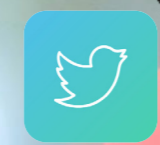
We invited our tenants to complete a recent STAR satisfaction survey.

'Very or Fairly Satisfied' results are shared above.

"Staff are so helpful. I don't know what I would have done without my Rent Officer, I am not very good at filling out forms. She helped with Universal Credit and bedroom tax and taught me how to use my journal which is new for me. She checks in regularly and I feel like she's a friend who wants to help"

"I can't thank Cynon Taf enough. Having this work done has made my life so much easier, getting about day to day.

The contractors were great and put me at ease. My quality of life is so much better because I can move around the house and get outside for some fresh air. Everyone has been amazing."



4433
Twitter
Followers



1368
Facebook
Followers



612
Instagram
Followers

@CynonTafHousing

We launched our My Cynon App & Portal.

My Cynon means you can report a repair, check your rent account, make a payment plus much more any day, any time, 24/7.

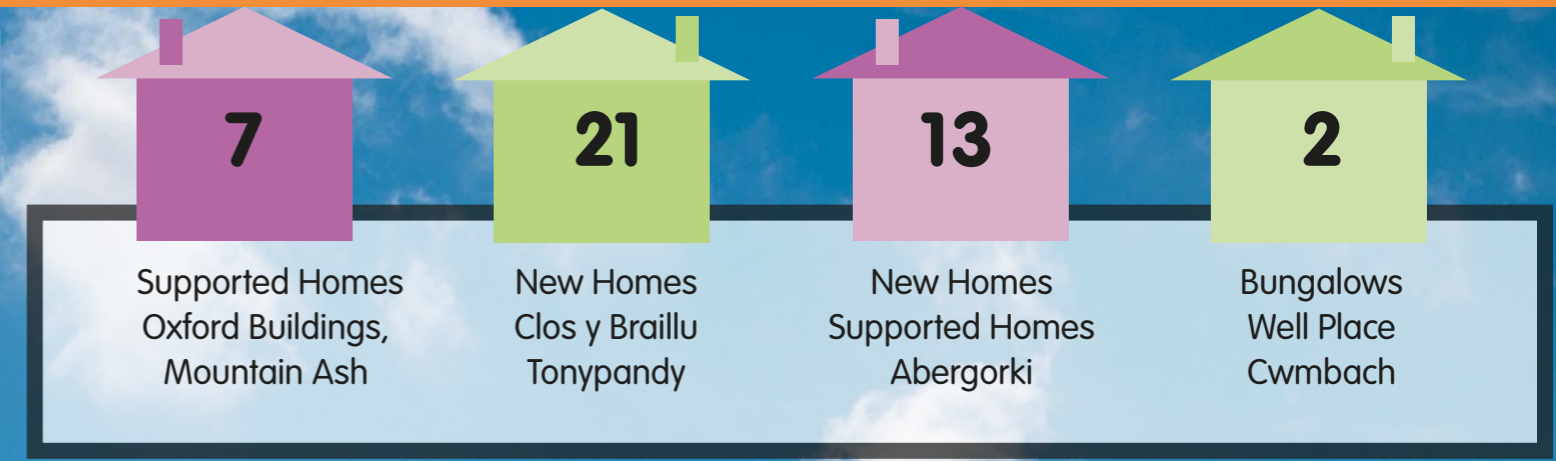
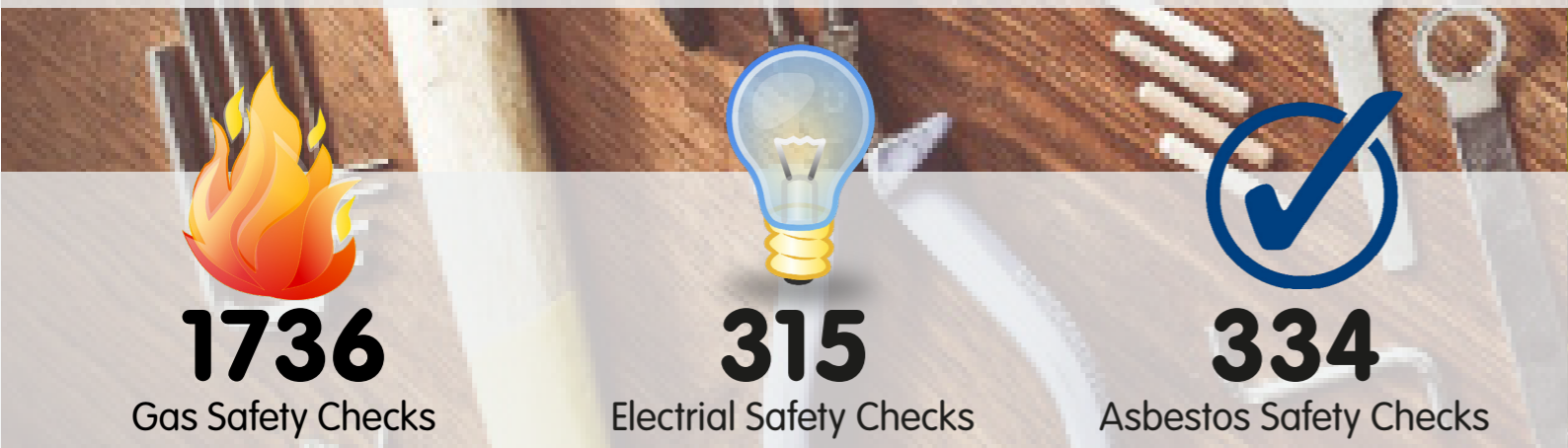
The My Cynon app is free to download on Apple or Android devices.

You can also log on to the My Cynon portal via our website: www.cynon-taf.org.uk

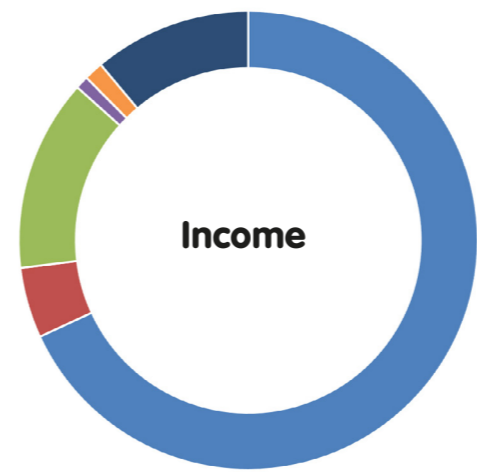


Growing Our Supply Of Homes

This year we are proud to have developed and grown our in-house trade team, employing a number of talented, local people in roles such as plumbing, plastering and carpentry.

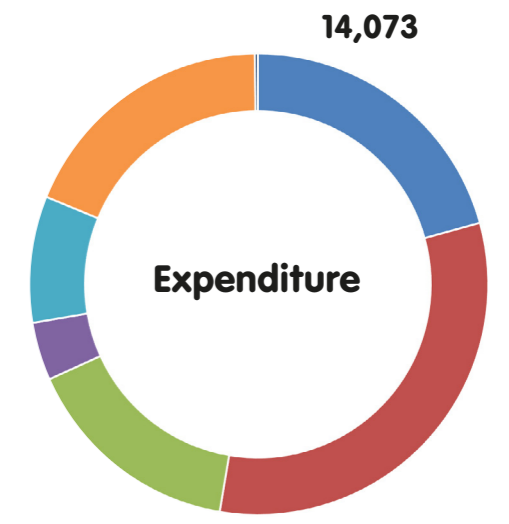


Protecting Our Financial Sustainability



	£000's
Rents & Services	9,569
Amortisation of grants	699
Care & Repair	1,901
PAG Grants	130
Interest	0
Other Income	188
Pension Adjustment	1,561
Asset Disposals	25

	£000's
Management & Services	2,377
Repairs	3,666
Care & Repair	1,785
Other Costs	470
Mortgage Interest	1,024
Depreciation & Impairment of Housing	2,129
Properties	11,451



Senior Management Team Salary

Chief Executive Officer: V. Slade	£92,361
Corporate Services Director: A Williams	£71,959
Housing & Communities Director: K Ellis:	£56,222

Board remuneration 2019/20	
Total Board member remuneration:	£nil
Total Board Member benefits:	£673
Total Board Member expenses:	£0

These figures are an extract from our accounts.

For a full set of accounts:
www.cynon- taf.org.uk/corporate
info@cynon- taf.org.uk
 0345 2602633

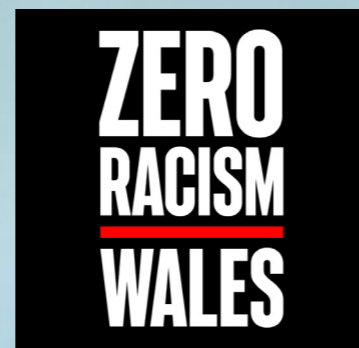
Investing in our governance, our people & our systems



We continued our work with Tai Pawb through progressing our Deeds Not Words pledge, maintained our QED Award for Year Two and introduced Equality, Diversity & Inclusion themed blogs.



Partnership with Race Equality First & Trans Aid Cymru for complaints and advocacy



Victoria Slade, our Group Chief Executive, has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of Guernsey Housing Association.

Victoria said: "I'm sad to be leaving Cynon Taf, but also hugely excited to join Guernsey Housing Association following the announcement of Steve Williams' retirement. I know Steve will be sorely missed by everyone and I'll be working hard with the Board, colleagues, tenants and partners to do his legacy justice.

I'm really proud of the achievements of everyone in the Cynon Taf Group – the Association and the Agency - particularly during the challenge of the pandemic. The focus on tenants and clients really reflected what's important to us all – being rooted in the community, doing the right thing and living our values.

Those are qualities which I know are a match with Guernsey Housing Association and I'm looking forward to joining the team in October."

Joy Kent, Chair of Cynon Taf Community Housing Group added, "I'm sure I speak on behalf of all the staff, tenants, clients and board when I say that we're really sad to lose Victoria. She's led the organisation with energy, focus, imagination and most importantly, integrity through one of the toughest times imaginable.

We wish her well in her new role."

The Board will now focus on leading the organisation through the coming changes making sure the interests of our tenants, clients, workforce and wider community remain our top priority going forward."

Partnering With Others to Achieve Shared Goals



Down to Zero is a unique project that is focused on capturing carbon through land-based draw down but has so many additional benefits. The project will engage tenants, staff and local communities in a wide range of social business initiatives such as food growing, tree hive production and agroforestry.

We have secured a piece of land in the Rhondda Cynon Taf area and will capture and draw down carbon - in simple terms using land to collect and keep carbon.

On the land we will set up a series of initiatives that will help us to collect and keep carbon.

This includes employment and volunteering opportunities, local food production, collaboration with local schools and groups, low carbon building methods and innovative techniques such as biochar production.

We are so excited about this!

Responsibility

We have a responsibility to our tenants, staff and communities to act against climate breakdown.

Integrity

Our contribution to the environmental crisis must make an impact.

Excellence

A sector leading project that would set an example and case study for others to follow.

In 2016, Welsh Government passed the **Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016** with the aim of making it simpler and easier for landlords and tenants to rent a home in Wales. The Act is the biggest change to housing law in Wales for decades.

The Act will apply from December 2022, and It introduces many changes to tenancy laws and will apply to both social landlords (like Cynon Taf Community Housing) and the private rented sector.

We entered into a partnership with five other housing providers and created a role for a Project Manager to steer us through this exciting transition.

Who does it affect?

- All landlords: private and social
- All tenants: private and social

Why is it happening?

- To make it easier to rent a home in Wales
- To improve the condition of rental homes across Wales
- To improve the consistency of housing standards
- To give people living in rented homes, as well as landlords, better security

Find out more about Renting Homes (Wales) Act;
<https://gov.wales/housing-law-changing-renting-homes>



Renting Homes Wales

Cwm Taf Care & Repair



Dementia Service

We are delighted to celebrate continued funding from RCTCBC & MTCBC Housing Support Grant to provide a dedicated Dementia service to clients and their carers who live with Dementia.

We maximised income for clients to a value of **£189,498** through unclaimed benefits

We took part in numerous events across Cwm Taf including the **Living Well for Less** road shows

we delivered **100** winter warmer packs to clients in energy hardship throughout Cwm Taf



Adele is one of our amazing Dementia Friends Champions.

The agency now has 4 Dementia Friends Champions who will continue to make Cwm Taf a Dementia Friendly place to live.

We supported Merthyr & Cynon Foodbank with volunteers from the organisation

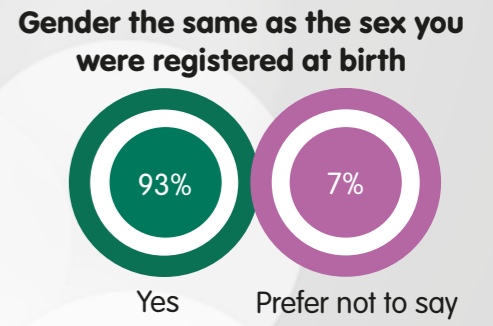
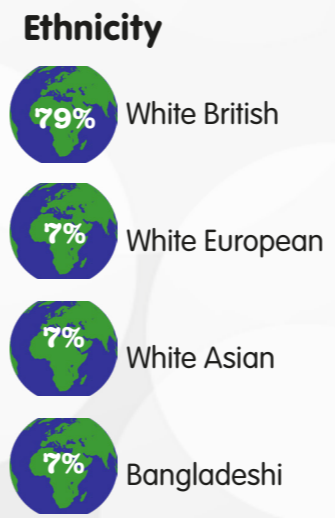
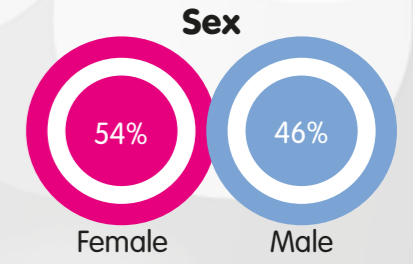
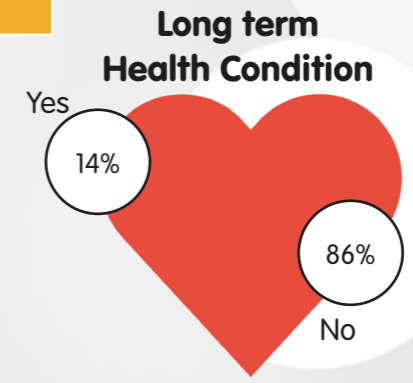
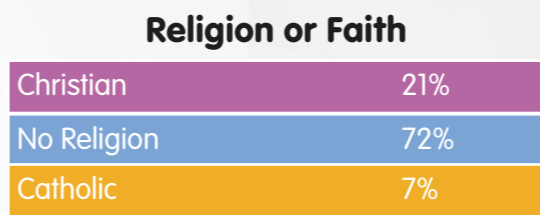
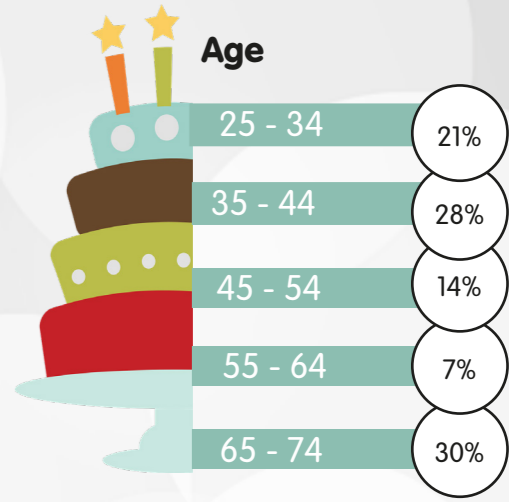


- 160** referrals made for living with dementia support
- 160** clients received a Healthy Homes Assessment
- £85,199** worth of funding accessed
- 180** jobs completed

70 clients returned customer satisfaction forms with **100%** agreeing that:

- Our intervention **improved their quality of life**
- They would **recommend our services** to others
- They were **satisfied with the standard of work** completed

Our Board



Thank You to our Board of Management



Joy Kent
Group Chair



Julie Nicholas
Vice Chair



John Chown
Board Member



James Thomas
Tenant Board Member



Howard Osborne
Tenant Board Member



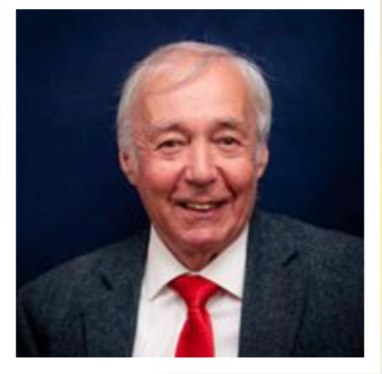
Nazia Azad-Warren
Board Member



Jonathan Morgan
Board Member



Clare Gunning
Board Member



Barry Stephens
Board Member

Our Charity Fundraising

£8192
total raised

To donate please visit:

www.grandappeal.org.uk/donate



During the past two years our chosen charity has been **Cots For Tots.**

This charity was very close to our hearts as our Colleague Hannah accessed the charity services following the birth of her baby Ivy Grace.

We recognized the vital work this charity has undertaken since 1995. We as an organisation are proud to be raising money for this wonderful charity.

Cots for Tots is the special care baby charity raising money to save and transform lives at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at St Michael's Hospital Bristol, and Cots for Tots House, free 'home from home' accommodation for families of babies from Bristol, the Southwest, South Wales and beyond.

It was another very difficult year due to COVID and staff working remotely but we still managed to raise an amazing £8192.

The money was raised through staff raffles and donations from staff and board members.

We would like to say a big thank you for your kind support.