

Welcome Pack

Tenant
Handbook





About us

Cynon Taf Community Housing Group lies in 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.

We provide 1,850 homes for rent including 5 housing schemes for older people. We also provide a well respected Care and Repair service for older or disabled people living in privately owned homes.

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 Values

Passion

Every one of us cares passionately about what we do, and how it contributes to our purpose and vision

Integrity

We carry out our roles with sincerity and honesty, always aiming to do the right thing

Respect

We treat everyone with equal value and without judgement

Excellence

We always do our very best, meeting and exceeding expectations, embracing new ideas, whilst holding on to the things that work

Responsibility

We think things through, are accountable for our actions, and we put things right if we get it wrong

Contact details

Cynon Taf Community Housing Group
Unit 4
Navigation Park
Abercynon
CF45 4SN

-  0345 2602633
-  0345 2602634
-  Text 07946 171617
-  info@cynon-taf.org.uk
-  www.cynon-taf.org.uk
-  CTCHG
-  cynontaffhousing



Your housing officer

Contact details

Your housing assistant

Contact details

Your rent officer

Contact details

The name of your gas supplier is

Contact details

The name of your water supplier is

Contact details

Your housing benefit office is located

Contact details

You can now text us

Our texting service allows you to report a repair, request your rent balance, request a call plus much more. You can text us using the codes below and you will receive a text back with the information you have requested e.g. if you would like to report a repair, just text us the word **"REPAIR"** to **07946 171617**

CODE	DESCRIPTION	OUTCOME
BALANCE	To request your current rent balance	You will receive a message containing your current balance
MONEY	To request a call from the Money Matters Team	You will receive a message acknowledging your request and we will call you back
HOUSING	To request a call from the Housing Team	You will receive a message acknowledging your request and we will call you back
COMMUNITY	To request a call from the Community Team	You will receive a message acknowledging your request and we will call you back
REPAIR	To report a repair	You will receive a message acknowledging your request and we will call you back



We'll text you a reminder the day before your repair appointment. If your appointment is no longer convenient, you can text us and we will call you to arrange a new appointment.

Cynon Taf Connects

Cynon Taf Connects is an interactive web service that lets you view your own tenancy details online 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

What can I do on Cynon Taf Connects?

- Update your contact details
- View your tenancy details
- View your account statement
- View and report a repair
- Contact Us

What do I need to sign up?

All you need is your Tenancy Reference number (this may be on some correspondence you have recently received from us); then confirm your surname and date of birth so we know it's you.

You will then be able to create your own user name and password – you also have the facility to change your password once logged in!

How do I know my data will be safe?

Protecting your personal details is very important to us. This service is accessed through a secure web link that will stop anyone else seeing your details while you are online. It is therefore essential that you do not share your login information with anyone.

If you're unsure of your Tenancy Reference number, please get in touch on 0345 2602633



House Keeping

Your Utilities



Electricity

Enclosed in your tenancy pack will be a welcome to British Gas leaflet along with a gas card and an electricity key. Your electricity supply will normally be connected. We will contact British Gas with all your details.



Gas

In most circumstances your gas will be disconnected. You must contact Liberty Gas to get your gas connected on 0800 328 4322.



Water

Your details will also be passed to Welsh Water as soon as you sign your tenancy agreement.

TOP TIP!

Contents Insurance

It is important that you have home contents insurance to protect your possessions against fire, theft, accidental damage and household risks. Please see the leaflet enclosed.



How to...





Pay your rent

Paying your rent is simple, quick and easy with several different payment methods:



Direct Debit

Paying by direct debit is probably the easiest way to pay your rent with money going straight from your bank to ensure your rent will always get paid on time.



PayPoint

You will be issued with a rent payment card which can be used to pay your rent anywhere that displays the Paypoint sign.



Internet

Payments can be made online by going on our website at www.cynon-taf.org.uk and clicking 'Pay your rent' and signing up to the allpay service.



Telephone

You can pay by debit or credit card by contacting Cynon Taf on 03452 602633. Just ask for the Housing department.



Smartphone

Allpay has launched a new application that can be downloaded free of charge which will make paying your rent a lot easier.



Report a repair

Reporting a repair is quick and easy. During normal working hours (Mondays to Thursday from 9.00am to 4.30pm) (Friday 9:00am to 4:00pm) you can:

Telephone
0345 2602633

Fax
0345 2602634

Email
repairs@cynon-taf.org.uk

Report Form
www.cynon-taf.org.uk

Visit our office
or speak to member of staff

Text
07946 171617

Please give us as much information as you can, you will help us get your repair completed quickly. You will also need to let us know when you are available so we can arrange a time that is suitable.

Decide when someone can be at home to allow the repair worker in to complete the work and a responsible adult must be in the home while the repair is being carried out.

Please let us know about any special circumstances we need to take into account, for example if your hearing is impaired or you have difficulty getting to the door.



If your repair is an emergency and cannot wait for the office to re open, you should contact us on 0345 2602633. You will be transferred to our on call operative who will deal with the matter. If our contractor attends, but the repair is not an emergency, you may be recharged.

How to:

Save Energy



Switch off lights and appliances when not needed. Do not leave on standby as this can use an enormous 50% of it's normal consumption



Use energy saving light bulbs wherever possible. A bulb giving off 100w of light only uses 20w of electricity.



Avoid leaving mobile phone chargers on for longer than needed



The hot water cylinder thermostat should be no higher than 60°C for bathing and washing.



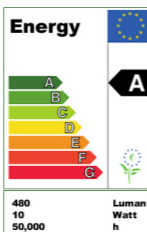
Don't fill the kettle with more water than you need



Wherever possible try to buy household appliances with an energy saving logo.



Your room thermostat should be between 18 and 22 degrees C. Turning down your thermostat by 1 degree C could cut your heating bills by 10%



Also ask for the EU label-appliances are rated A to G depending on their energy efficiency.

Always aim for the A rated appliance if at all possible.



Keeping your freezer full will make the appliance more efficient and help save money on your energy bills



Consider switching your energy supplier to reduce your bills

How to:

Get involved

At Cynon Taf we always encourage our tenants to be involved in developing and improving our services. We offer a range of opportunities to suit everybody...

Becoming a Tenants Forum Member Attending meetings every 2 months providing opportunities to find out more about Cynon Taf and discuss a range of issues with and with staff and other forum members.

Becoming a Key Tenant Taking part in telephone surveys & focus groups covering a range subject areas now and again.

Tenant Away days Attending consultation trips & events which cover a range of topics and that are fun for all ages



Becoming a Shareholder You will need to pay £1 to become a shareholder, you will then be able to vote at Annual General Meetings and Special General Meetings. You will also be able to stand for election to the Board of Management when there are vacancies.

Becoming a Board Member If you are elected to the Board of Management, you will attend monthly Board Meetings and be prepared to take part in meetings, read information sent out to you and attend any relevant training sessions.

Becoming a Mystery Customer Take part in telephone a survey twice a year telling us about the services you have received. We will also send you a gift card to say thanks.



How
to:

Make a complaint/ compliment

Cynon Taf welcomes and is committed to dealing effectively with any comments you may have about our service or lack of service received. We also value any feedback you can give us regarding our staff, multi-skilled operatives or contractors. Please contact us to discuss any comments or experiences you have.

How
to:

Reset a Trip Switch

Modern electric circuits are fitted with circuit breakers called trip switches. If a fault develops, a switch is tripped and the circuit is broken.

All of the fuses or trip switches are located in the consumer unit. Some consumer units have buttons rather than switches. The consumer unit may be next to the electricity meter (unless the meter is in an outside cupboard).

A trip switch or button usually operates because:

- there are too many appliances on a circuit and it is overloaded
- an appliance is faulty or has been misused, such as a kettle has been over-filled or a toaster not cleaned
- Water has leaked into a circuit or spilt on a plug
- a light bulb has blown
- an immersion heater is faulty



If one of your electrical appliances is faulty, leave it unplugged and get a qualified electrician or service engineer to check it. If a wall or ceiling light is faulty, keep it switched off (put some tape over the switch) and contact us.

Make sure your hands are dry when you touch electrical fittings.

Never touch the utility company's fuse and seals.

What to do to reset a trip

- Open the cover on the consumer unit to expose the trip switches / buttons
- Check which switches / buttons have tripped to the OFF position and which rooms (circuit) have been affected; and
- put these switches / buttons back to the ON position



If the trip goes again

It is probably being caused by a faulty appliance or light. You need to identify which circuit is being affected and which appliances on that circuit is causing the problem:

- check all the rooms and note which set of lights or sockets are not working
- unplug all appliances on that problem circuit, and switch off the immersion heater (if fitted)
- Switch the 'tripped' switch to the ON position (press in if it is a button); and
- plug in the appliances or switch on each light one at a time until the trip goes again. Do not use adaptors when testing appliances

TOP
TIP!

Make sure your hands
are dry when you touch
electrical fittings



Tenancy Matters



Your Tenancy Agreement



You will be required to sign a Tenancy Agreement when you move in and this agreement tells you what to expect from Cynon Taf as your landlord. It also explains what your responsibilities are as a tenant.

Your tenancy agreement will include a range of details including your name, address and rent amount. It will also include the start date of your tenancy. This is a legal document and it's important that you keep it safe.

In most instances you will either receive an Assured Shorthold Tenancy, Assured Tenancy or a licence. If you have not been a tenant before and are not transferring your tenancy, you will receive an Assured Shorthold Tenancy which is a starter tenancy for 12 months. If there have been no issues during that period, you will automatically convert to an Assured Tenant.

Living with your neighbours

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Anti-Social Behaviour and hate crime can be difficult to live with and can have an impact on the community as a whole. Disputes between neighbours may occur, if this happens to you please contact us for further information. Illegal activity such as drugs, criminal damage or threatening behaviour must also be reported to the Police.

Domestic Violence

If you feel like you are a victim of domestic violence we will respond to your requests for help in a sensitive manner and advise you of your options.

Harassment

Harassment is considered a serious form of ASB whether verbal or physical. We will deal with complaints regarding harassment quickly and understandingly. We consider harassment as a breach of your tenancy and will take appropriate action where necessary.

Pets

To keep a pet you must have written permission from Cynon Taf. If we receive any complaints about your pet, we will contact you and discuss a course of action.

Gardens

It is your responsibility to maintain your garden to an acceptable standard. Failing to do so could lead to further action being taken against you.

Rubbish

It is your responsibility to ensure that your household rubbish is put out on the appropriate day. If rubbish bags are put out too early, this may cause unnecessary mess. Please contact RCT County Borough Council directly if you have any queries regarding refuse, recycling or special / bulky collections.

Property suitability

If your circumstances change and you are considering moving or modifying your home, please contact us and we can discuss your options. This might include a transfer, mutual exchange, a move to sheltered accommodation and or applying for a Physical Adaptation Grant.

Moving Out

When you decide to end your tenancy with Cynon Taf, we will need four weeks notice in writing. You will receive a visit from your Housing Officer before you leave. You must ensure your house is maintained to an appropriate standard and all your belongings are cleared.



Money Matters



Money Matters

Did you know that an astounding £12.3bn of welfare benefits goes unclaimed each year?

Are you claiming your full entitlement?

Not sure where to start?

The Money Matters team can help!

We don't just stop there, benefit changes are coming and we can support you to understand and prepare for how these changes might affect you in the near future.

Contact us for:

- A full benefit entitlement check
- Guidance on appeals, assessments and reviews
- Information on changes to your benefits
- Creative ways to boost your income
- Opening bank accounts
- Budgeting
- Information on low cost loans and savings
- Creative ways to maximise your income
- Internet access



Money Matters

Money Matters is a one-stop shop to give you free, impartial, one to one advice on money, benefits, utilities, community and wellbeing.

We can provide you with everything from simple tips to get you started to ongoing advice and support to help you increase your income and make your money go further to give you a better quality of life.

Our service is:

- Confidential
- Friendly and creative
- Tailored to your needs



Debt advice

Money Matters

Debt can cause feelings of stress, fear and depression which can destroy family life; but rest assured that debt problems can be solved! Debt varies from person to person and so do the solutions...

We can help:

- Practical solutions for dealing with debt
- Increase your income
- Work out a personal budget
- Organise your debt
- Dealing with creditors and bailiffs
- Loan Shark advice
- Access extra support

Energy Efficiency

Money Matters

We can help you look for the best payment options and energy tariffs for your needs to ensure you are only paying for your usage and not an average set by your supplier. Call us now and we can guide you through how you can save

- Top tips to reduce your energy bills
- Get on the right tariff
- Understand your bills
- Make your home energy efficient
- Grants & Discounts



Health and Wellbeing

Money Matters

We are able to help you access a range of activities so you can get the best all round service, as part of this we can support you:



Stop smoking



Eat healthily on a budget



Walking groups



Fun activities



On going support



Things to do as a family



Maintenance Matters



After reporting a repair

You will be contacted within two working days with an appointment. If the contractor does not attend at the time stated please contact the repairs department immediately. If they do not carry out ALL the work requested, or you are dissatisfied with workmanship you should refuse to sign the worksheet and report any issues to us. You may receive a phone call to see how the repair went or you may get a visit from one of our Officers either before the work starts or after it has been completed. This will help us assess the repair or monitor value for money.

What to expect when work is going to be done in your home

We will tell you if you need to move or protect any furniture or appliances, or if you need to lift any floor coverings (carpets, laminates). You should do this before the repair worker arrives, but let us know if you are having difficulties arranging this. Our repair workers may help but we accept NO responsibility for any damage that happens while doing this.

- Repair workers need you to be at home while they work. They may need to discuss issues with you. Also, we insist that they must not work in homes where the only person home is under 16 years old.
- Keep your pets under control and keep your children away from the working area. Repair Workers can refuse to work if they feel you or they are at risk.
- We ask that you please do not smoke whilst repair workers are at your home.

From time to time we will undertake other routine maintenance works. Central heating, smoke alarms, extractor fans, etc. will be serviced annually. There are other matters that need attention on a fairly regular basis e.g. external painting. We carry out a Condition survey to every home at least once every five years. This information is then used to draw up a programme of work to maintain the structure of your home and replace any defective fixtures and fittings that are our responsibility. You will receive a notice telling you what work is needed, when this work will be carried out and who the contractor will be.



Repair workers need you to be at home while they work

The Group will not pay for any improvements, alterations or additions proposed under this Policy and Procedure. There will also be no compensation or reimbursement for any such works. The position will be outlined verbally by the Inspecting Officer during the inspection and a statement to this effect will be included in the approval letter.

Where an Officer of the Association discovers an unauthorised alteration has been made to a property without consent, we will visit the property and if the alteration is found to be of an unsatisfactory nature and/or standard, we will carry out necessary works either, to make the alteration good, or to reinstate the property to its original condition, in both cases you will be charged the cost of the works.



Meter cupboard doors

When you report a faulty meter cupboard door we will check when you moved in. If your tenancy commenced from August 2011 the meter cupboard doors would have been checked as part of the void works and any necessary repairs done then. Therefore broken doors will be rechargeable to you. If your tenancy commenced before August 2011 a one off repair/replacement may be made and a meter cupboard key issued to you. From the date of this repair you will be responsible for any breakages and repairs.



Contractors use of power tools

Please be aware that contractors should not plug in to your electrics without your prior permission. If works are of a substantial nature and of which requires extensive use of power tools the contractor may negotiate this cost with you. We have to stress that this arrangement is between you and the contractor, however if you are unhappy about the contractor's proposals you should contact us for further advice.



Pest control

You are responsible for the removal of pest infestations from your home such as fleas, mice, cockroaches, ants etc.

To remove pests you can contact RCT County Borough Council, there may be a cost for this service which you will need to pay.

We will repair any holes through roof coverings, eaves, walls etc which allow pests such as mice, rats, birds and squirrels to enter a property to prevent further problems occurring.

If you find bats in your property you must not remove them as they are a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. You can however contact us for advice.

You can help reduce the problem of unwanted pests by:

- Cleaning your bin regularly
- Wrapping up your rubbish
- Putting your rubbish out on the correct day
- Not placing your rubbish in the rear garden and allow it to build up.
- Regularly using flea powder or spray on pets
- Not feeding birds left over foodstuffs.

Safety Information

What to do if the alarm goes off

- Take your family to where it is easy to escape in case there is a fire.
- Check all rooms for signs of smoke.
- Feel around each door before opening it. If there is any sign of heat, smoke or noise, do not open the door.
- If a fire has broken out do not attempt to tackle it yourself. Smoke and fumes can kill in minutes.
- Get everyone out of the house and call the Fire Service on 999.
- Do not go back inside for any reason.

If there is no sign of smoke or fire

- If your smoke detector is battery-operated, the battery may need replacing.
- Something may have caused it to operate in error and you may need to reset it.

A smoke detector may operate in error if

- A heater or clothes drier is too near to it.
- Someone smokes a cigarette or pipe, or an aerosol spray is used near it.
- There are excessive cooking fumes or steam
- There are strong draughts from nearby doors or windows
- The back up battery (if any) is low.

To reset the alarm

- If it has a HUSH button, press the button. The alarm will stop for 10 seconds, but it then beeps every 40 seconds. If the problem does not clear after 10 minutes the alarm will continue.
- If there is no HUSH button, turn off the electricity supply for at least 15 minutes. Then switch the electricity back on.

To test your alarm (only if it is battery-operated)

- Press and hold the test button for a few seconds. The alarm should sound. DO THIS WEEKLY.
- If the alarm does not sound, try cleaning it and try again.
- If the alarm still does not sound when tested after cleaning, replace the battery. If it still doesn't work the detector needs replacing.

To replace the battery (not for mains-operated detectors)

- Open the detector - gently prize off the cover.
- Unclip the old battery from its connections and retaining clips.
- Clip the new battery firmly into place. Check that the + and - signs on the battery match up with the + and - signs on the detector.
- Close the detector and press the test button to check that it works properly.





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