



March 2021



# Introduction

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As an organisation committed to continuous improvement, each year we undertake an assessment of our performance and the difference we're making for our tenants and our communities.

The Local Outcomes under each theme were developed by staff, tenants, Board members, leaseholders and community partners and aligned to Welsh Government requirements.

Our Academy, a group of our tenants and associate members, work with us to review the outcomes of our work and provide feedback against each of our Local Outcomes through a number of Storyboards.

These were reviewed in 2020 to ensure alignment to delivery of the organisation's aims and objectives as set out in our Corporate Plan 2020-2025.



*\*Image taken before March 2020*

# Self-Evaluation and Corporate Plan 2020-2025

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In 2020 we launched our new Corporate Plan and over the next five years this will focus on three key themes:



After consultation with our Academy, it was agreed that the Storyboards should be aligned with these three themes with the current Local Outcomes sitting under the relevant Storyboards. It was also agreed that a number of Local Outcomes would now apply to all three themes, these are:



The Academy felt these Local Outcomes should be a 'golden thread' throughout all Storyboards and could be visually represented.

# Sustainable Homes

This Storyboard titled 'Sustainable Homes' captures outcomes in relation to our Homes and Services and has five Local Outcomes:



# We work with our tenants and partners to provide tailored services

## Summary

The Safe and Well project was about collaboration with our partners and although it was initiated in response to the pandemic, we have taken the opportunity to contact all tenants to assess whether any extra support may be required, enabling us to tailor our services to individual needs.

## Academy evaluation

The Academy felt that the organisation deserved a lot of praise for the project. They felt that it was a very successful scheme and were pleased that we invested time in completing it. They could see how valuable it would have been to all tenants and how key it had been to check on tenants wellbeing during such a difficult time.



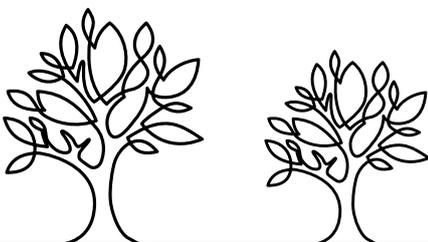
**ACTION** - The Academy recognised that we have engaged with Age Cymru at a national level. **They would like to see more collaboration with the local Age Cymru** as they know the local area well.

## Safe and Well project

From the first week of lockdown, the Safe and Well project started off as a Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) campaign looking at issues of vulnerable people who had no support.

We held discussions with NPTCBC to understand what we could do in terms of tenants asking for support through the Safe and Well project.

The project then escalated when Welsh Government issued a shielding list.



We implemented a process for our staff to deal with those calls, initially we had a limited number of calls and referrals from Safe and Well which then increased as the pandemic worsened.



We set up a new IT system which allowed us to easily record the data which we were gathering as part of the calls and eventually a process was rolled out involving staff across the organisation whereby we contacted all of our tenants through the Safe and Well project.



It became apparent that there were a lot of tenants that needed support:

About 10% of our residence required assistance in terms of shopping

Some tenants didn't have any food

A small number of requests were also made for walking dogs



In response

- ▶ We issued emergency food parcels and food bank vouchers
- ▶ Many internal staff volunteered to deliver these food parcels

We worked closely with the Council Community Leads and Community Volunteers and also involved our staff. We set up a local business directory so staff were able to help tenants find the right support, the directory included support groups in the borough and what agencies were available to help people.

The project was very beneficial as we were able to talk to the vast majority of our tenants during a difficult time and provide support where required.

**100%** of our tenants were contacted through the Safe and Well Calls

# We received over 100 ★★★★★ compliments during the period.

A staff member spoke to a tenant of one Haven scheme who had tested positive for the virus.

The tenant wanted to share that they were feeling 100% better. They wanted to thank the Independent Living Officer for their support when the tenant was initially informed over the phone about having COVID 19 and did not know what to do next.

The Officer followed up on this and contacted the health centre on the tenants behalf and put the tenant's mind at rest (as much as possible in these circumstances).

**“The officer was a big help and the supportive welfare calls are so important”.**



A tenant at our Haven Scheme was

**“very pleased that we are taking the time to check on them, it means a lot to know someone is there and cares about them”.**

One tenant contacted a Housing Officer to say:

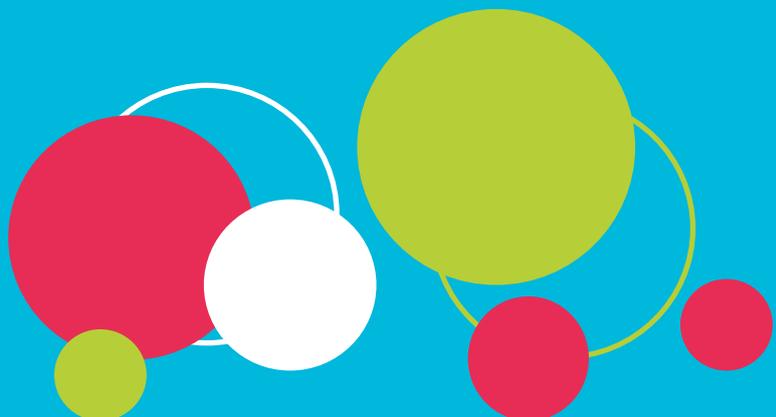


Just wanted to say **‘Thank you’** again for the chat, plus the advice. You guys have been so amazing during these uncertain times. Extremely helpful and a massive support to me. I hope your work, dedication, commitment during this period (and in general actually) doesn't go unnoticed.



We received a phone call from a tenant to say that they have received the food parcel and they wanted to say

**“a massive thank you and they appreciated all the help, they felt very choked and couldn't believe they have been given this. The food parcel is fantastic and hats off to who prepared them”.**



# We repair and maintain homes in an efficient, cost effective and responsive way

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## Summary

Repairing and maintaining our homes in an efficient, cost effective and responsive way is part of how we demonstrate our commitment to delivering value for money. We have an in-house workforce that is dedicated to maintaining our homes to this standard. We work to ensure the service is being operated as efficiently as possible to provide the best service to our customers and ensure value for money.

## Academy Evaluation

The Academy were impressed with the future plans of the major works programme. In particular how we are taking a considered approach to things such as researching more sustainable heating alternatives. The Academy felt it was forward thinking and a very positive approach.

## Major works

We 'continue to invest in our properties and communities' and as such have an extensive investment programme to ensure that we maintain our homes in an effective way.

## Our major works programme consists of:

### In house roofing

We have two separate roofing teams which are spread throughout the Borough replacing the roofs that are 40 – 50 years old. As we know the condition of our homes we are able to plan each year which properties need to be looked at next.

### Fabric Programme – External Wall Insulation

We had a lot of properties that weren't suitable for cavity insulation so we have been rectifying these issues through our External Wall Insulation programme.

### Kitchens , Bathrooms, heating and Rewire

In 2017 we completed our Welsh Housing Quality Standards programme, which included fitting new kitchens and bathrooms, however at the time there were a small number of tenants who didn't want this work undertaken. We are therefore continuing with this work where possible so we can ensure we are improving homes for our tenants.



# External Boundary Programme

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This is a large scale programme which we are aiming to start early Spring in Sandfields, which will address external issues such as fencing and boundaries.

## Improvement to Communal Areas –

Over the past few years we've been making improvements to our flats with the majority of these being fitted with new flooring and fire doors.



The COVID-19 pandemic has inevitably had an impact on a lot of the major works programme which was due to be completed in 2020. As a result of this we have made adjustments to programme of work and have a plan in place to deliver improvements as soon as the situation changes.

## Roofing

Original Planned 150

Revised Planned 70



The reduction in numbers is due to the special projects at Llandarcy as this was of a complex nature, with more detailed work. There was also additional measures required due to the Ecology License.

As outdoor work was more straightforward during the pandemic we took the decisions to apply additional resources to the External Wall Insulation programme, this meant we were able to make improvements to more properties.

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## Fabric (Roofing Element)

Original Planned 50

Revised Planned 81

## Fabric (Wall element)

Original Planned 153

Revised Planned 221

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## Windows and Doors

Original Planned 305

Revised Planned 183



As windows are installed from the inside of our homes the programme was forced to slow down during the pandemic in order to safeguard tenants and staff. With access to homes being on hold during periods of increased restriction.

## Heating

Original Planned 468

Revised Planned 156



The installation of new heating programme was set back by the pandemic and the lockdown restrictions imposed. In addition, we have decided to cut back on traditional gas installation whilst we look for more modern sustainable heating systems in line with the Sustainable Planet theme of our Corporate Plan. Our programme is however dealing with essential and emergency breakdowns.

## Electrical rewires

Original Planned 257

Revised Planned 165



The reduction in electrical rewires is due to the pandemic, as work can be intrusive and take a number of days to complete. Tenants have understandably been reluctant to allow access for the work to be completed, particularly those tenants who may be shielding or isolating.

## Kitchens

Original Planned 149

Revised Planned 94



## Bathrooms

Original Planned 184

Revised Planned 75



Replacing kitchens and bathrooms over the last 12 months has been paused due to the pandemic, this is due to the restrictions imposed and also tenants not wanting the work undertaken.

## Day to Day repairs

In response to the pandemic we introduced a triage system for repairs reported. This means that an Inspector will complete a risk assessment for each repair and assess the risk for both the tenant and the staff member in completing the repair in light of the pandemic.

This has meant that some non-urgent repairs could become urgent depending on the tenants circumstances. Our aim is to ensure that tenants aren't at risk should the repair not be undertaken.

**100% completed on time**

**2313**

emergency repairs completed from April 2020 – December 2020

### Tenant Feedback:

"I just wanted to compliment on the two staff members who attended my house today carrying out repairs. They were very friendly, professional and polite. They made me feel at ease as I am normally anxious around people I don't know and even more with the COVID-19 pandemic. They also respected social distancing. Please send my thanks and appreciation to these men."

	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Number of repairs reported (Non emergency)	178	185	711	1405	1141	1556	1335	1560	519
Number of repairs completed (Non Emergency)	5	8	539	1053	931	1288	1222	918	1037



# Tenants feel our homes are affordable



## Tenant Feedback:

“Please may I pass on my sincere thanks to the team. I raised an issue regarding my intercom not working this week and this has now been resolved. It was resolved promptly and in line with social distancing. Thank you so much. This is a big relief for me as I can now order food or deliveries if required and I am extremely grateful. “

## Summary

As an organisation we understand how important it is for our tenants to get the most out of their money. We want to help our tenants to do this by making sure our homes are affordable and our new homes are energy efficient from the outset. Our aim is to support tenants to maximise their income and reduce costs, to make their homes affordable and tenancies sustainable.

## Academy Evaluation

The Academy felt that they had been fully involved with the Rent Affordability work presented under this local outcome, as they attended the virtual affordability session with other tenants. They felt that the information presented was clear and gave them a good understanding of our affordability principles.

## Rent Affordability

We completed a co-design piece of work with tenants to look at the affordability of our properties. As a result of this work, three affordability principles were developed.

## Affordability principles

We will assess our rents against market rents and agree a proposal based upon the results.

Our rents will be affordable in line with the Living Rent Model for households with tenants who earn a low wage.

Our rents will take into consideration the number of bedrooms within the property. We will consider the feasibility of introducing a minimum size bedroom requirement.

As per our affordability principles we complete vigorous affordability testing by comparing Tai Tarian rents to private rented, household income and local housing allowance.

Property	20/21 Rent	2020 Income	Percentage of Income
1 Bed Flat	£78.84	£345.71	<b>22.8%</b>
2 Bed Flat	£84.11	£449.42	<b>18.7%</b>
3 Bed Flat	£88.92	£553.13	<b>16.1%</b>
2 Bed House	£93.96	£449.42	<b>20.9%</b>
3 Bed House	£100.21	£553.13	<b>18.1%</b>
4 Bed House	£102.88	656.85	<b>15.7%</b>

Flats			
Property	19/20 Rent	2019 Private Sector	Percentage of Private Sector
1 Bed	£77.30	£91.15	<b>84.8%</b>
2 Bed	£81.90	£103.85	<b>78.9%</b>
3 Bed	£86.51	£112.38	<b>77.0%</b>

Houses			
Property	19/20 Rent	2019 Private Sector	Percentage of Private Sector
2 Bed	£91.49	£103.85	<b>88.1%</b>
3 Bed	£97.50	£112.38	<b>86.8%</b>
4 Bed	£100.10	£137.54	<b>72.8%</b>

# New homes



During 2020 we built 15 new homes.

All of these homes have an Energy Performance Certification (EPC) rating of A. Which is the highest energy efficiency rating possible.

## Tenants are confident that we will help them to sustain their tenancies through providing additional advice and support

### Summary

We continue to develop the ways in which we help our tenants to sustain their tenancies. Our Financial Inclusion and Universal Credit teams provide specific financial advice and support to our tenants when they need it most.

This need has increased dramatically during the pandemic and our teams have adapted to this need to ensure that we support as many tenants as possible to sustain their tenancies. We also work closely with tenants to provide pre tenancy support to ensure that any needs or financial difficulties are identified as early as possible.

During lockdown we have amended our lettings processes to ensure that we can still support tenants to access properties whilst maintaining safety for tenants and for our staff.

## Academy evaluation

The Academy felt that the evidence presented demonstrated that the staff have clearly stepped up and done an excellent job during a difficult time. The number of food bank vouchers issued increasing during the peak of lockdown demonstrates how tenants have been experiencing financial difficulties. The Academy were particularly complementary of the unclaimed benefit money which has been retrieved for tenants through the support provided by the Financial Inclusion and Universal Credit Teams. Tenants are experiencing financial difficulties and it is amazing to see how Tai Tarian is supporting them. The 100% success rate of the benefit appeals with support provided is admirable.

The Academy recognised it is difficult to forward plan as a result of the pandemic and the changing restrictions. They felt that the only action which they could suggest was for the teams to continue doing what they are doing and commended staff for working over and above in a difficult climate.



# Lettings update

We typically receive an average of 401 expressions of interest for housing per month (pre-COVID pandemic). Since June 2020 we have seen an increase in the expressions of interest for housing we have received. We have had an average of:

**43** additional expressions of interest per month

Part of the housing assessment process includes an assessment on affordability and budgeting. Assessors complete this with all applicants and provide appropriate advice or signpost to other agencies, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau. Tai Tarian allocates on average:

**63** properties per month

## Financial Inclusion and Universal Credit Teams

Restrictions imposed due to the pandemic have had a significant impact on how we would usually provide services to tenants.

We have therefore found new ways to continue providing support and have strived to make sure it is the same quality support as we would normally provide. Home visits and surgery office appointments have been replaced with telephone advice and we have put in place alternative electronic methods of completing benefit forms.

## Lettings and adapting to COVID-19

Where possible during the pandemic and lockdown periods we continued to house people at risk of homelessness. We also increased the number of properties we leased to the Local Authority to be used as temporary accommodation, also to those at risk of homelessness. Since the start of the pandemic we've provided an extra 18 properties.

- ▶ New tenants are signed up remotely as it hasn't been possible for staff to undertake viewings
- ▶ New technology is helping us to do this electronically

### Tenant Feedback:

"This was a particularly difficult time as I have been dealing with a family bereavement and loss of employment due to COVID-19 but the staff member provided me with reassurance and this put my mind at ease."



**Financial Inclusion and Universal Credit Team  
April – November 2020**

Referrals to the team for support	1,574
Digital Support	89
Food bank vouchers issued	198
Affordability checks completed	344
Benefit Appeals Supported	64
<b>Money Raised</b>	<b>£3,620,215.79</b>

**Of the 1,574 referrals, telephone advice has been provided for 1,429 cases.**

**Ongoing support was required in 746 cases.**

## Grants

Our Financial Inclusion team also support tenants to access grants and other support available. During the pandemic we have been helping with our normal grant route, the Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) grants from the Welsh Government, we have also accessed new schemes created as a result of the pandemic; CHARIS Energy Redress Fund, Red Cross Hardship Fund.

The Energy Redress Fund from CHARIS grants has been providing energy credit vouchers for those on gas and electric metres who have been adversely affected by the pandemic. The scheme was only open for three months and in those three months we issued 40 energy credit vouchers to tenants, a total of £1,519.00 in gas and electric. Tenants have been very grateful for the support, saying it has helped to remove

some of the financial pressure.

We have also been made an approved partner for the Red Cross Hardship fund. Although the qualifying criteria is strict we have only had one successful case, resulting in a payment of £360 for a tenant who had been left with no income for two months through the pandemic.

Grants and energy credit	Number of tenants who received funding
DAF	68
Energy Redress	40
Red Cross Hardship Fund	1
<b>Money Raised</b>	<b>£31,645.88</b>

# Food bank vouchers

Food bank vouchers are unfortunately something we do find tenants have regular need off and the pandemic has resulted in an increase in the number of vouchers issued. In particular during the peak of lockdown and when tenants may have been furloughed (May – July).

Comparison below of this year and the same period last year:



Food bank vouchers issued for Financial Year 2019/2020	
April	20
May	24
June	20
July	18
August	27
September	30
October	21
November	18
December	21
January	22
February	17
March	21
<b>Total =</b>	<b>259</b>



Food bank vouchers issued since April 2020	
April	16
May	28
June	53
July	36
August	17
September	17
October	20
November	12
December	43
January	25
<b>Total =</b>	<b>267</b>



# Benefit Appeals

Benefit appeals are another area that has been significantly affected by the pandemic restrictions. Appeals are either being postponed or taking place over the telephone. During the pandemic we have continued to support tenants with benefit appeals during lockdown and have been able to take part in the conference call hearings.

**We have had 100% success rate with the 34 appeals we have supported with.**

# Universal Credit (UC) cases

Since the onset of the pandemic and lockdown restrictions there has been an increase in the number of Universal Credit cases being received. March and April saw the biggest rise in cases with a lot of

jobs losses for our tenants and many self-employed tenants with no work.

In 2019/20 we received an average of 12-15 claims per week, at the start of lockdown we received around 30 claims per week.

## Comparison of New UC cases logged for the same periods

	2020	2019
<b>March</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>May</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>June</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>August</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>September</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>October</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>November</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>December</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Totals =</b>	<b>752</b>	<b>716</b>

# Tenants feel secure in their homes

## Summary

Tenants feeling secure within their homes is a high priority for us and we are committed to ensuring that our properties meet all health and safety compliance regulations. Our anti-social behaviour policy and the work of the Tenancy Relations Team evidences our commitment to ensuring that tenants feel secure in their homes.



**Action:** The Academy would like to see staff trained to be able to undertake mediation in house, they feel long term it would be much more cost effective.

## Academy Evaluation

The Academy felt that the Anti-social behaviour statistics presented, highlighted social media harassment and the impact this has on tenants. They also noted that because of the pandemic there are new issues being raised with an increase in the number of anti-social behaviour calls being received. The Academy also felt it was important to note the impact of an increased notice period of six months preventing court action being taken quickly affects the action which can be taken to remedy issues. They felt that in light of this the tenancy relation team are doing a great job and commended that the department also worked closely with the Police to deal with anti-social behaviour.

# Health and safety compliance

Our Property Compliance Team ensures that all our homes are managed in accordance with all statutory rules, regulations, policies and procedures.

As a landlord we have a legal obligation to ensure that the heating systems in our properties are serviced every year to make sure they are in good working order and remain safe for use.

The lockdown restrictions enforced by the pandemic meant that we had to work differently in ensuring all homes for safe for our tenants. However health and safety compliance is a high priority for us and we

have an extensive compliance programme to ensure our homes meet all health and safety requirements and that our homes are safe for our tenants. Our compliance programme was one of the key essential work streams we needed to continue. closely with the Police to deal with anti-social behaviour.

During the summer months when lockdown restrictions were eased we put plans in place to prepare for further lockdowns by bringing forward our compliance programme, working 3 months ahead on property compliance checks and inspections.

## Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

We are committed to ensuring that our tenants and the local community feel safe in their homes and we endeavour to do this through our anti-social behaviour policy and procedures.

Since the onset of the pandemic we have seen an increase in contacts from tenants in relation to anti-social behaviour.

From January to December 2020 we received 3161 contacts related to anti-social behaviour. A 49% increase to the number received in 2019.

Anti-social behaviour contacts	2020	2019
Animal or pet nuisance	112	84
Clash of Lifestyles	440	130
COVID-19	235	0
Crime	207	125
Domestic abuse	60	103
Domestic violence reports	1	0
Use of drug reports	320	146
Fly tipping	11	22
Harassment or intimidation (including via social media)	445	144
Hate crime	19	7
Neighbour dispute	51	58
Noise nuisance	694	576
Other	260	397
Substance misuse	6	5
Vandalism or damage to property	32	84
Vehicle complaints	31	45
Verbal abuse	125	112
Violence	112	82
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3161</b>	<b>2120</b>

With staff working from home, new restrictions in legal remedies due to increases in notice periods to six months,

court hearings suspended and no evictions, we have had to look at creative ways to resolve anti-social behaviour issues.

## **Anti-Social Behaviour Measures during the pandemic**

**Telephone and e-mail contacts replaced face to face**

**Supporting Police colleagues to reinforce COVID-19 rules**

**Multi-agency working**

**Additional CCTV and noise monitoring equipment purchased**

**Independent mediation service procured**

Our ASB customer satisfaction survey was developed by our Academy and staff. The survey measures satisfaction with resolving the complaint and how well we handled the complaint. We recognise that we cannot always resolve a complaint or deliver the

desired outcomes of the complainant, so we aim to carefully manage expectations throughout the process. Where satisfaction is lower than what we would expect we look at the cases in detail to ensure that we did all that we could do resolve the complaint.

## **Overall they rated the service 7/10**

Did we resolve your complaint?	60%
Did we communicate as agreed?	76%
Were you given the right advice when you first complained?	76%
Were you given the right advice during the complaint?	80%
Were you given the right advice when the case was closed?	56%
Were you provided with help and support throughout the complaint?	60%
Would you feel confident to report cases of ASB to us in the future?	72%

**25**

customers responded of the 55 anti-social behaviour cases

## **Action Plan**

- ▶ The Academy recognised that we have engaged with Age Cymru at a national level. They would like to see more collaboration with the local Age Cymru as they know the local area well.
- ▶ Introduce a number of ways for tenants to complete satisfaction surveys.
- ▶ The Academy would like to see staff trained to be able to undertake mediation in house, they feel long term it would be much more cost effective.



*\*Image taken before March 2020*



Tai  
Tarian



[www.taitarian.co.uk](http://www.taitarian.co.uk)