



Cartref



Act NOW to protect your benefits

If you are of working age and on certain benefits, you'll soon need to switch to Universal Credit. This isn't automatic, once you receive a letter from the DWP, you must act, or your payments will stop.

The letter, called a migration notice, will explain how to claim Universal Credit and provide a deadline. Claiming in time ensures you receive extra protection so you're not worse off.

More details on page 5.



Meet the housing team

Get to know the friendly faces behind our housing team, providing advice, support and help to make you feel safe and secure in your home.

More on pages 6 & 7.



Apprentice opportunities on the way!

Join us as a trade apprentice and earn as you learn.

All the details on page 3.



Rent charges – how do we compare?

How do we set the rent you pay and how do we compare to the private sector locally?

More on page 7.

Lil celebrates milestone birthday

A Glynneath tenant who has seen a century of change has celebrated her 100th birthday surrounded by family, friends, and neighbours who “spoil her rotten.”

Lil grew up in London and moved to Cwmgwrach post-war with her Welsh husband.

During the Second World War, she worked in a glass factory between 1939 and 1945, a time she recalls with surprise fondness:

“The war years were bad, but they were also the best days, bringing people together.”

After moving to Wales, she worked at the Sobells TV factory in Rhigos for many

years before taking a role at the local telephone exchange.

When asked about the secret to her long and happy life, Lil said:

“I’ve had a good life. It’s been happy. Friday the 13th never bothered me, I’ve got a good sense of humour, you can’t be miserable.”

Her zest for life extended well into her later years. In her 60s, she learned to swim, visiting Glynneath swimming pool three times a week. “In my prime, I loved dancing too,” she added.

Her advice for others? “Always be yourself and be good to everyone.”

Lil’s milestone birthday was



marked with lots of celebration, her neighbours threw her a surprise party as did her family, being joined by her son, grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren, to mark the occasion.

“I’ve got wonderful neighbours

who keep me in check, and they absolutely spoil me rotten for my birthday,” Lil said. “I’m so grateful to them, especially Christine and Jan. My family also threw me a lovely party, and spending time with everyone was just wonderful.”

Welcome from Linda



It’s been a busy start to the year, as this bumper edition of Cartref demonstrates!

We recently caught up with our housing team to find out more about the work they do in supporting tenants. Whether it’s helping you manage your tenancy, providing advice, or connecting you to services, they’re always on hand to help. You can read more about their role on page 6.

If you’re currently on certain benefits, it’s important to be aware that you’ll soon need to switch to Universal Credit, but this move isn’t automatic. Please take a look at page 5 for important information on what you need to do to avoid losing your payments.

We’re also excited to offer a fantastic opportunity to join us as a trade apprentice, whether you’re starting out or looking for a career change, it could be the perfect chance to begin a new chapter and join our repairs service. All the details below.

It’s been wonderful to meet so many of you at our recent Tenant Talk sessions held across all parts of the borough. Hearing your views helps us improve our services, and we’re looking forward to more events in the coming months. Keep an eye on our social media pages for the next community sessions.

We’re also proud of our recently completed energy-efficient property in Margam,

featuring the latest eco-friendly technologies. Again, it has been fantastic to meet tenants to talk about this and our plans for making homes safer, greener and better.

Finally, for those living in flats or Haven housing, we’ve included some important fire safety guidance to help keep you and your neighbours safe. Please take a moment to read this on page 10.

Thanks for reading, and as always, if you have any questions or feedback, we’d love to hear from you, contact details on page 12.

Linda
Chief Executive



Let’s play darts!

Tenants from Port Talbot have been enjoying some friendly competition in a series of darts matches that have brought Haven housing residents together in a fun and social way.

In the first match, Gwyn Court claimed victory with a 5-1 win on home turf. The return fixture at Michaelstone Court saw another close contest, but Gwyn Court once again emerged triumphant with a 5-3 victory.

Both teams proudly showcased their new team shirts emblazoned with names chosen by residents, the Gwyn Court Dinosaurs and The Michaelstone Muppets, giving the competition that professional touch.

The idea for the darts matches came from a desire to engage tenants who don’t usually take part in traditional activities like bingo or coffee mornings.

With tenants ages ranging from 55 to 98 it can be tricky to cater to everyone’s interests.

Since introducing darts, both Gwyn and Michaelstone Court tenants have invested in their own darts equipment and now regularly practice to improve their skills.

“It’s fantastic to see tenants who’ve never really socialised before now becoming regular faces in the communal lounge,” said Kirk, the independent living officer who looks after the schemes.

“We’ve seen three or four people who’ve lived at the scheme for years now getting involved thanks to darts, and they love it.”

The social benefits are clear, but darts is also proving to be a great way to stay active and keep minds sharp. The scoring system encourages mental

maths, and the friendly rivalry has helped build connections between the two schemes.

The Gwyn Court team is led by a talented captain who plays for a local darts club twice a week. “She really knows her stuff,” Kirk added.

Plans are now underway to expand the initiative, with nearby Mozart Court joining the fun and fundraising efforts in progress to buy a new dartboard at Hafan Brynheulog, Pontardawe. The hope is to launch a Haven Darts Championship in the future, giving even more tenants the chance to take part.

Tenant Jeff Winter said:

“The matches have been brilliant, friendly competition, some great darts, and most importantly, people getting to know each other, we can’t wait for the next game.”

Time to kickstart your career?

Kids not sure of their next steps now that school is nearly over, or are you keen to learn a trade while earning a wage?

Our trades apprenticeship programme could be just what you’re looking for and is just about to launch.

You’ll get hands-on experience working on tenant homes in our communities, learning from experienced tradespeople while spending one day a week at college.

As an apprentice, you’ll earn the real living wage, get your own tool kit and safety gear, have access to our pension scheme, enjoy 25 days of holiday (rising to 31 after five years) plus bank holidays. On top of that, you’ll have plenty of training and support throughout your journey.

What do you need to apply?

GCSEs in English or Welsh (first language) and maths (grade A*-C) (or be on track to achieve them this year), the ability to arrange your own travel to sites across Neath Port Talbot, including college, and a willingness to commit to your studies.

Last summer we took on 11 apprentices and recently caught up with Josh to find out about his experience, you can watch his video here.



Josh, our latest apprentice

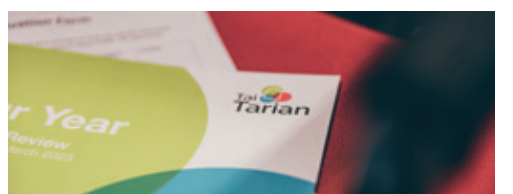
Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok for details of when it’s time to apply. Info will also be posted on our website www.taitarian.co.uk/apprenticeships.

Join the team

We offer a range of exciting job opportunities where you can make a real difference to our communities.

Whether you’re a skilled tradesperson, passionate about customer service, or looking to grow your career in housing, we have a wide range of roles.

Apply online today:
www.taitarian.co.uk/careers



AGM date

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) takes place on Tuesday 22nd July and is an opportunity for our members to find out more about our progress and vote on key decisions.

Attendance at the AGM is only open to Tai Tarian members. Being a member offers a variety of opportunities to have your say and shape services, and it costs just £1.

To sign up please ring 01639 505291 or email corporate.governance@taitarian.co.uk

25 years of factory life



Anthony and Matthew at the factory

Back in February 2000 a uPVC windows and doors factory opened its doors in Seven Sisters.

The facility was transferred from Tregelles Court, Neath Abbey and has employed people in the area ever since, providing bespoke products for our homes.

There has been huge change to the way the team work, making improvements to the products so they are more energy efficient, upskilling staff and being environmentally conscious.

We caught up with colleagues at the factory, some of whom have been working there since the beginning, and others who are learning the ropes.

Fabricator, Lee said: "There's a massive difference from 25 years ago. Before we would own one job, but now we work in rotation so we are good at everything, so if someone is off, we can cover it with no delay to completing work."

Steve manages the factory and added:

"There has been a huge change to the energy efficiency

of our windows, previously they didn't carry a rating but now they are all A-rated, the similar stickers you see on household goods such as your fridges and washing machines.

"We are proud to employ 11 staff here in an area where industry has declined over the years. All the team are local, living in Seven Sisters, Crynant, Banwen and Resolven, which is a real positive."

You can watch the video here:



Visitors to energy efficient home

A home in Margam which has benefited from cutting-edge energy efficiency measures has been made available for not only tenants to visit but also government, educators and other housing providers.

Neath Port Talbot Council, in partnership with us and Cardiff University's Welsh School of Architecture, secured funding through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, to create Swansea Bay's first 'Homes as Power Stations' (HAPS) demonstration houses. Two homes in Margam were identified, one vacant and the other occupied, and retrofit work began.

The retrofit measures included fabric upgrades such as sheep's wool insulation and PVC windows, alongside state-of-the-art technology, including solar panels, battery storage, and an air source heat pump.

Once complete the focus turned to encouraging others to support more use of technology to create cleaner, greener, more energy efficient homes.

The property welcomed a range of visitors, including university and college students, educators, Welsh Government, local authorities, community landlords, suppliers, contractors,

and technical experts.

But for us it was visits from our tenants that were most important. Four days were available where they could come and see how the solutions designed to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and lower energy costs work, and how they could work in their own homes.

It was also an opportunity for us to chat to tenants about the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS 23), arranging to carry out a survey at their home if required and talking to them about what was needed at their own homes.

While this work in Margam was going on we continued with our own retrofit programme which saw a further 300 solar panel installs, together with external wall installations, making even more homes more energy efficient.



Steph's top tips

Benefit changes – what you need to know

We know there's a lot of information in the media right now about upcoming benefit changes. While six major changes have been announced, we want to reassure you that nothing will change immediately.

Here's a summary of what's been announced:

- **Health-related Universal Credit** – For new claimants, this was already set to be halved from April 2026, and will now also be frozen in cash terms until 2030.
- **Universal Credit Standard Allowance** – This will rise to £106 per week instead of the previously planned £107 by 2030.
- **Health-related payments for existing claimants** – These will also be frozen in cash terms until 2030.
- **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)** – A stricter eligibility test will be introduced from November 2026.
- **Incapacity Benefits** – These will be frozen at £97 per week from April 2026, with a top-up for those with the most severe conditions.
- **Incapacity Benefit top-up for Under 22s** – This top-up will no longer be available for claimants under the age of 22.

We know these changes may be concerning, but please remember that nothing will change immediately



and our team is here to help. For further guidance, please get in touch with our team on **01639 506623** or visit www.gov.uk for updates.

Got a letter about moving to Universal Credit?

Continued from page 1

If you're of working age and on certain benefits, you'll soon be moved onto Universal Credit (UC). The move isn't automatic – once you get a letter, you'll have to take action, otherwise your money will stop.

This process is officially called 'managed migration' and started last year. So, if you've already had a letter and moved across to UC, there's no need to do anything else.

need to claim UC in future, so you could be worse off.

If you're currently claiming one (or a combination of) the following benefits, you should expect to be contacted:

- **Child Tax Credit**
- **Working Tax Credit**
- **Housing Benefit**
- **Income Support**
- **Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)**
- **Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)**



But if you're still on certain, older 'legacy' benefits, you'll soon get a letter from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) formally inviting you to move from your existing benefit – or combination of benefits – onto UC. This is called a 'migration notice'.

Follow the instructions in your migration notice to start your Universal Credit claim. You will also find much more information here:



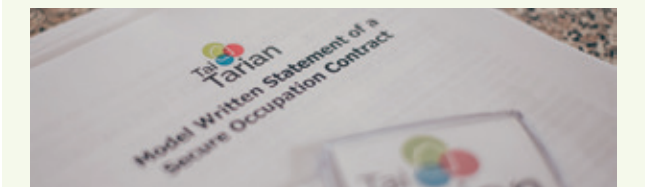
This letter will tell you how to make a claim for UC and will give a deadline date by which you must claim. Making the claim within the deadline means you'll be entitled to extra protection so that you are not worse off on UC. This is called 'transitional protection'.

If you don't make a claim in time, your benefits will stop, and you won't get the extra 'transitional protection' if you

Please remember that the move to Universal Credit doesn't happen automatically. You must actively claim UC within the three-month deadline set out in your letter. If you don't make a claim in time, your benefits will stop.

If you need any help, please contact our Financial Inclusion Team by e-mail financialinclusion@tairarian.co.uk or by phone 01639 506623.

Contract notice



In the last edition of Cartref, there was confusion around notice periods needed to end or withdraw from your contract.

To clarify, if all tenants wish to bring their contract to an end at the same time, we require a **four-week signed notice** from all.

If you wish to remove someone from your contract, the person wishing to withdraw from the contract needs to give us a **one month signed withdrawal notice**, specifying when they want the contract to end.

The withdrawing joint tenant will also need to give a written warning/copy of the notice to the remaining tenant. If you do not provide us with a signed withdrawal notice, even if you have left the property, you will remain a joint tenant and be subject to all the contract obligations.

Pest reminder

It is your responsibility to deal with pest or vermin infestations in your home or garden. This could include rats, mice, wasps, fleas, flies or even ants.

If any repairs are advised by pest control once the issue has been dealt with, please contact us on 0300 777 3000.





Paul, Rachel & Lilly on their rounds

Meet our housing officers

One of the most regular staff contacts you have with us is likely to be with your housing officer. These are the people to go to for any tenancy related queries and are on hand to support you in your home.

A 23-strong team, we caught up with three of them, Rachel, Lilly and Paul to find out a bit more about their role:

Paul starts our conversation by telling us a bit about the job:

"In essence, it's about us ensuring that the tenant can sustain their tenancy, through building strong relationships with them and making sure they feel supported.

"There are lots of different aspects to this, including making sure they have any extra support they need, the property is suitable for their needs, they are able to make their rent payments and that their home remains in a good condition."

Rachel continues:

"Each housing officer has around 500 properties on their patch, so it can be difficult to make regular contact with each one, but we are happy to visit any customer, if they reach out.

"However, we do have a system in place whereby if we haven't had contact from someone in a while, we will arrange to visit, just to make sure that they are okay and to see if they need any help or support from us. If they do need any extra help then we can make more regular visits or refer them on to our specialist teams within Tai Tarian or to one of the external agencies that we work with."

For Lilly, it's the diversity of the job that appeals to her:

"I love the variety of what we do. It could be anything from making sure a tenant has settled into their new home, meeting tenants on our estate walkabouts or dealing with challenges such as anti-social

behaviour. We also have to maintain the health and safety of blocks of flats by ensuring communal areas are kept clear of potential fire hazards, ensuring the bins and recycling facilities are being used properly and reporting any instances of fly tipping.

"It's a bit of a cliché, but no two days are the same. We may have our day planned out, but then the phone rings or a situation arises, and we need to change our plans. We have to be flexible and react to changing situations."

Although the housing officers are often out and about in the community, they are never alone, as Paul explains:

"We have great support from our managers, who are always there to advise and help us with anything.

"We also have great connections with lots of partners who we can refer tenants on to if they need extra help with things such as

their mental health, financial wellbeing or independent living.

"We have strong relationships with local police and often partner each other on estate walkabouts, where we can identify any issues early and hopefully deal with them before they get out of hand. We also work with social services if we spot any potential safeguarding concerns."

One of the major issues the team deal with is anti-social behaviour (ASB), and this is something Rachel says takes up a lot of their time:

"It is a big issue, and we do get complaints. It can cause a lot of stress in a community, whether that's loud music, late-night parties, people having a disregard for our tenants or neighbour disputes.

"We realise how stressful it can be for victims and that they may be fearful of what might happen if they report ASB, but the only way we can deal with it is if they come forward with

the information we need in order to investigate and take any necessary action. We take every report seriously and do look into every accusation."

"We always try and resolve issues amicably," adds Lilly. "Sometimes it can be as simple

as having a quick word with the neighbour who was unaware their music was on so loud and was having an impact on others, but in more serious cases we have to take more robust action.

"In extreme cases, where there's no chance of finding a peaceful resolution, we will consider enforcement actions, by way of injunction or making a possession order. This is always a last resort, and we will exhaust all other options and remedies available to us first, to try and resolve the issue, but we will do it and have done it if the situation warrants it. ASB can have a detrimental impact on a whole street, so when the situation gets so bad, we will enter into a form of legal action to support the wider community. We have to consider the wellbeing of our tenants in our communities."

Despite the challenges and sometimes the difficult situations they deal with, all three are in agreement that it's a worthwhile job:

"It's the little tasks that are the most rewarding for me," says Lilly. "What might seem like a small thing for us can make a big difference to a tenant's life,

and that's what I enjoy most about this job."

Rachel agrees that helping tenants is the most satisfying part of the job:

"If you're struggling to maintain your tenancy though health, financial or any other reason, then we can support you. I promise we won't judge you and will do everything we can to find you the right support."

The final word goes to Paul, who says:

"It's the people you meet in our communities and the positive

difference that we can make to people's lives that really make this job so rewarding."

"I love the variety of what we do. It could be anything from making sure a tenant has settled into their new home, meeting tenants on our estate walkabouts."



Lilly

Rent Charges – how do we compare?

Back in January, we sent you a booklet outlining your rent and service charges (where applicable) from April onwards. **If you claim Universal Credit, you should have updated your journal with your new rent amount, please get in touch if you need help.**

As a community landlord we receive **guidance from Welsh Government every year** on how much we can charge you, while still ensuring we are able to spend on maintaining your home, providing services and improving our communities. We then calculate what this would

mean in pounds and pence for all tenants to ensure what you pay is still affordable.

Speaking to tenants about this has been key, with a roadshow of summer workshops, face-to-face sessions and almost 800 responses from our survey on rent. We have had

important conversations with the people that matter.

How do we compare to the private sector?

When speaking to tenants, they were sometimes unaware how our weekly rents compare to the private sector here in Neath Port Talbot, this table gives the detail.

Property Type	Our weekly rent	Difference per week	Private sector average
1 Bed Flat	£93.86	£40.02	£133.88
2 Bed Flat	£102.06	£56.87	£158.93
2 Bed House	£114.03	£48.23	£162.26
3 Bed House	£123.47	£74.38	£197.85
4 Bed House	£126.45	£103.70	£230.15

Worried about rent?

If you're worried about paying your rent or your household budget being squeezed by bills and everyday costs, please get in touch with us as soon as possible. Whether you're in work or claiming benefits there may be help available. Contact details for your designated rent officer and housing officer were included on page 3 of your rent booklet or you can call us on 0300 777 0000 for further advice.

Noise nuisance app

We are now using the Noise App, a free tool available to download on Android or iPhone to record samples of noise nuisance you may be experiencing.

The app allows you to record audio evidence and submit to your housing officer so we can address issues you may be experiencing more effectively.

If this would benefit you, please get in touch with your housing officer so they can give you the necessary permissions for you to submit recordings to us.

Scan the QR code to find out who your housing officer is:



Let it grow, let it grow, let it grow

Over the last few years we have adopted a new way of managing land to encourage biodiversity. By cutting our grass less often we have seen native wildflower and plants thrive, creating a better habitat for bees, butterflies, invertebrates, birds, small mammals, amphibians and reptiles.

Some people loved the new approach immediately, it's taken time to grow on others.

Over the winter months our grounds and biodiversity team have again been busy preparing land and planting flowers and shrubs ready for the grass cutting season which started in March.

Our approach to cutting

Our land has been placed into three broad categories

1. Grassed areas that are enjoyed by the community for recreation or socialising, or that can potentially restrict visibility if left uncut, will be cut regularly during

spring and summer.

2. Other areas will be partly maintained with border cuts and made accessible with walkways, but with parts still being left for nature.
3. Several areas will continue to be maintained as wildflower meadows.

Thinking differently about wildflowers

As we've already been doing this for a couple of years, in some areas we are starting to see lots of beautiful flowers, long grass, and trees.

We expect to see even more year-on-year, but it can take up to five years for native wildflower meadows to really take hold, so it might not look neat straight away.

Why do we care?

- We are living in a climate and biodiversity emergency and as an organisation we want to do all we can to protect the planet. That's why we have a Sustainable Planet strategy.



- Our wildlife is decreasing, and biodiversity is declining globally at rapid rates.
- 1 in 6 species assessed in Wales are at risk of extinction. Over 130 species have already been lost in the last 500 years.
- We have seen a 97% decrease in natural meadows including grassed areas.
- Welsh Government is encouraging all of us to let it grow, and reduced grass cutting on our land is creating a better habitat for bees, butterflies, invertebrates, birds, small mammals, amphibians and reptiles.
- With many hectares of land throughout Neath Port Talbot, changing our approach will make a big difference.

Bogus callers – check ID



Always ask for ID!

Our staff and contractors will always carry named ID to show they work for us when they visit your home.

If a member of one of our teams comes to your home, then you can ask to see their ID.

If you are still feeling unsure about someone who knocks at your door saying they are working for us, or carrying out work on behalf of Tai Tarian, please check with us.

You can do this by calling us on 0300 777 0000 and we can check if they are who they say they are.

We have a working relationship with the police who take reports of suspicious callers seriously.

General advice

Anyone who calls at your door from any legitimate organisation should have some form of identification. You are well within your rights to ask for this and make a note of their details.

Never give out personal or financial details to anyone you're unsure about. If you aren't comfortable, legitimate visitors will understand this and allow you to check or rearrange.

Here are some tips if you are concerned about bogus visitors:

- If you have doubts about who is at your door, do not let anyone into your home.

- Always put the chain on before you open the door.
- Check the identity of the caller by calling the company they claim to be from. Do not use any phone numbers provided by the caller – they may be bogus.
- Genuine callers won't mind making an appointment for a date when you can have someone with you. This gives you time to check their identity too.
- Remember, if the caller refuses to give details or does not show what you believe is a genuine ID card, do not let them in and call the police straight away.
- Keep doors locked and windows secure at all times.
- If somebody asks for your help, needs to make a phone call, needs a drink or pen and paper, don't invite them into your house. If you really want to offer help, make them wait outside and while you're away from your door, close and lock it. Remember: it is your doorstep, your decision.
- Never use companies who make unsolicited calls, don't provide written contracts or who offer to do work for cash.

Latest on our new homes



Progress at Heol Crwys

With so many people in desperate need of a home, we continue to work with the local council to support those most in need, whilst also making homes available on our Homes by Choice bidding system.

At County Flats, Sandfields work on Flint and Morgannwg House is continuing, with completion of the entire site expected by late summer. At Eagle House in Port Talbot town centre, work continues with 18 apartments expected to be ready for let by late autumn. Clos Castan is now fully occupied, with our local MS, Jeremy Miles and MP, Carolyn Harris visiting to meet tenants recently.

Work is continuing in Cwmavon at Heol Crwys, where we should see the first stage of the new development being completed in summer 2025,

with more to follow in early 2026. In Cimla, planning has been approved to build 22 new homes on the former Tudor Inn site. Work is expected to begin in the summer.

In recent months consultation with residents regarding a proposal for a development of 12 homes at Laburnum Avenue in Baglan has taken place. Consideration is also being given to building 22 homes on land at Brynbryddan Cwmavon.

More on our progress in the next edition of Cartref.

Contract talk: Looking after your garden

As part of your contract with us you are required to keep gardens in a reasonable condition and free from rubbish, so this time of year is a good opportunity for a tidy-up.

Grass cuttings, weeds and leaves can be put in your green garden waste recycling bag, collected fortnightly as part of your wheelie/black bag collection. Or you may prefer to take garden waste and other items to your local recycling centre, where you can book a slot.

If you have a number of bulky items to dispose of (up to 7 items), you can book and pay for a bulky items kerbside collection, you can make bookings, find out when your bin day is and order extra recycling equipment by clicking this QR code, or calling 01639 686868.



You may find you need some help at home which includes maintaining your garden. For information about local support to help you live independently, including domestic service providers who charge a set fee for services such as basic garden care, you can view using the QR code below.



Gardens can be special places to help our well-being, if you use them to enjoy good weather or longer evenings with friends and family, please consider neighbours around you.



If you are proud of your outdoor space, look out for details of our annual garden competition in the next edition of Cartref.

Your privacy matters



We take your privacy seriously. Our privacy notice explains how we collect, use and keep your personal information safe. You can find it on our website <https://www.taitarian.co.uk/privacy-statement/>.



Help us keep communal areas clear

We have a legal responsibility to ensure that communal areas in flats and Haven housing schemes meet fire safety requirements. This includes corridors, staircases, landings, escape routes, gardens, and pathways, all of which need to be kept clear for everyone's safety.

How can you help us?

If you live in a flat or Haven scheme, your contract asks you to keep communal areas clear. While we know it's sometimes tempting to leave items outside your flat for convenience, it's important to store these inside your home instead.

Some common items that we regularly see left in communal areas include:

- Prams/pushchairs

- Bikes
- Mobility scooters
- Children's toys
- Plants (including pots)
- Door mats
- Rubbish bags
- Electrical goods
- Furniture and bulky items (e.g. sofas, fridges, etc.)

These items can create serious risks. In the event of a fire, they could:

1. Block escape routes for you and your neighbours
2. Make it harder for emergency services to help
3. Add to smoke and fumes, increasing the danger

Action from us

If our staff notice items that could be a safety risk, we



will try and find the owner for it to be removed. If we feel the risk is serious, we may have to remove items without notice to keep everyone safe.

We're here to help

If you're unsure about what's allowed in communal areas or need advice, get in touch with your housing officer,

details on page 7. If you need help with bulky waste collections or to find out when your bin day is, visit page 9.

Did You Know?

Mobility scooters and electric bikes can pose a fire risk, particularly when charging, as they can generate smoke and heat.

Tenant Talks, listening to you

Since the start of the year, we've been out and about in our communities, hosting more Tenant Talk sessions, because your voice matters.

These sessions are all about listening to your views, whether it's rent, repairs, services, or areas where we can improve, and we've enjoyed chatting with you over a cuppa.

Since the last edition of Cartref we've visited:

- Cwmafan Library
- Alltwen Community Centre
- Brynamman RFC
- Neath Community Centre
- Croeserw Community Enterprise Centre
- Resolven Building Blocks
- Tonmawr Community Centre
- Margam Community Centre

We also attended several community events to catch tenants there too and held some Easter family fun days.

A big thank you to everyone who came along and shared their thoughts.

Themes from our conversations have been:

1. You want it to be easier to communicate with us, with critical information you've told us shared between teams, so you don't have to tell us the same thing again.



2. While you're happy with our repairs service, you would appreciate more clear timeframes on when to expect work, so you can plan for it.
3. You want to see us in your communities more often, and you want us to provide you with more opportunities for face-to-face sessions

This has been invaluable and we're reviewing everything you've told us and are working on ways to improve.

What's next?

We're continuing our Tenant Talks to speak to as many of you as possible. If you are a Saturday morning shopper at Morrisons in Port Talbot, we will be there for a chat on Saturday 3rd May between 9am-12noon. We've also got some online sessions planned, keep an eye on our social media for all the details.

If you have any questions or would like to share your views, get in touch with Katie, our tenant engagement officer, at tenantvoice@tairarian.co.uk or call 01639 507035.

Tell us your views on the Welsh language

We want to understand the needs and preferences of our tenants when it comes to Welsh language services.

We will be sending out a short survey via text and social media to gather your views in the coming weeks. By sharing your thoughts, you'll help us better understand how we should be using the Welsh language in the future.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey when it arrives.

Diolch yn fawr, thank you.



How is WHQS 2023 going?

WHQS is the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, which aims to make your home safer, greener, and better. This standard is for all social housing in Wales. Social housing landlords must reach this standard by 31 March 2034, and we're already working towards it.

So, what's it all about?

Your home must:

- Be in good condition
- Be safe and secure
- Not cost too much to heat
- Have an up-to-date kitchen
- Have an up-to-date bathroom
- Be comfortable
- Have a garden if possible
- Have nice outside space if possible

So, what has happened so far?

- We have started upgrading homes to make them more comfortable. This includes insulating some homes that need it, meaning they stay warmer in winter and cooler in summer.
- Completed surveys on over 80% of homes. These surveys check whether your home meets the standard and what upgrades are needed.
- Talked with you about WHQS and gathered your feedback. We hope to talk to you more in the future, so please do come along to any events in your area.
- Developed a plan to upgrade homes to meet the standard. This plan covers the next nine years, until the 2034 deadline, so some upgrades will happen later than others.
- Reported back to the Welsh Government about how we're approaching WHQS. We now have a policy that outlines how we will meet each part of the Standard, and this policy can be found on our website.

As part of WHQS, we need up-to-date energy performance certificates (EPCs) for all homes. These are like the colourful labels with A-G ratings on appliances, but for the whole house. An EPC tells us how easy it is to heat and light your home. It's important information which will help us to decide which homes to upgrade sooner.

We will be looking for tenant partners to work alongside us in making some important decisions on how we deliver WHQS going forward. If you are interested in being part of this process, please get in touch with our assets team, assets@tairarian.co.uk or call 01639 506051.

We will get in touch if we need to visit your home.

Giving us access is important to ensure your home remains safe and comfortable. Without up-to-date information, you may miss out on necessary upgrades in the future. Allowing us to upgrade your home should make it more efficient to run, which could help you save on energy bills.



New critical bleed control kit on Aberavon seafront

We have answered a call from the High Sheriff of West Glamorgan to install a potentially life-saving critical bleed control kit on the busy Aberavon seafront.

The project was funded by our contractors Sabre Services via a community benefits arrangement which sees all companies we work with committing to give back to good causes locally.

It follows the installation of nine defibrillation devices across the borough which our Haven tenants have recently received training on.

High Sheriff Melanie James thanked us and our contractor and explained why getting critical bleed control kits in the community was a passion project for her:

"Taking on the role of High Sheriff gives you an opportunity to do something important and fundamental in the community.

"Making sure there are critical bleed control kits out there is important to me because I also work as a youth magistrate, and I became very concerned at what seemed to be a lack of public provision if someone was bleeding out.

"The kit contains military grade equipment, and it is as easy as possible to use. The most important thing should you encounter an emergency is to call 999, but in the interim the kit can be used before the emergency services arrive."

To watch the video, scan the QR code:



More community donations

This year we have continued to support our local communities, by providing donations to good causes.

This is thanks to fundraising efforts, donations from staff and contributions from contractors as part of our community benefits programme.

Community benefits are built into every tender to ensure that our contractors give something back. Whether that's providing training or employment opportunities for local people, helping with community projects or providing financial contributions or goods to community groups. It has a huge impact locally and makes sure that everyone can benefit from the work we do.

Before Christmas we donated materials and resources to Skewen Library arts and crafts club for their Christmas workshop.

With leftover items, the group got creative again on St David's Day, producing some beautiful bespoke artwork.

We've also donated Easter eggs and craft items to community celebrations, sponsored local sports clubs and supported upcoming events like the Urdd Eisteddfod in Margam and FerryFest in Briton Ferry by donating prizes and vouchers.




If you know of a worthwhile cause that could benefit from our community benefits, please get in touch with community@tairarian.co.uk



Taken from www.bbcgoodfood.com

Easy Rocky Road

What better way to use up any leftover Easter chocolate than by making this yummy Rocky Road treat!

 Serves: **4**
 Prep: **15 mins**
 Cook: **5 mins** plus chilling

Ingredients

- 200g digestive biscuits (Rich Tea can also be used)
- 135g butter or margarine
- 200g dark chocolate (70% cocoa works best)
- 100g mini marshmallows (chopped regular marshmallows work too)
- 2-3 tbsp golden syrup
- Icing sugar to dust
- Optional (up to 100g) raisins, dried cranberries, or any dried fruit, nuts, popcorn or honeycomb broken into pieces.

Method

Step 1:

Grease and line an 18cm square brownie tin with baking paper.

Step 2:

Place 200g digestive biscuits in a freezer bag and bash with a rolling pin or just the side of your fist until they're broken into a mixture of everything between dust and 50p-sized lumps. Set aside.

Step 3:

In a large saucepan melt 135g butter or margarine, 200g dark chocolate and 2-3 tbsp golden syrup over a gentle heat stirring

constantly until there are no or almost no more lumps of chocolate visible, then remove from the heat. Leave to cool.

Step 4:

Take the biscuits, 100g mini marshmallows and up to 100g of additional ingredients (dried fruit, nuts, popcorn, honeycomb), if you like, and stir into the chocolate mixture until everything is completely covered.

Step 5:

Tip the mixture into the lined baking tin and spread it out to the corners. Chill for at least 2 hrs then dust with icing sugar and cut into 12 fingers.

Tea break challenge

How to play?

Within the rows and columns are 9 "squares" (made up of 3 x 3 spaces). Each row, column and square needs to be filled out with the numbers 1-9, but these can only be used once, and columns are 9 "squares" (made up of 3 x 3 spaces).

9	3	6		2	5		1	4
	1	7		3	6	9	2	8
8				9	7			
		3	4			5	9	
6				1				
			3	8			7	1
			9					5
	5	1		4				
4	6						1	8

Give it a go!

Bank holiday reminder

Two bank holidays fall next month. Monday 5th and Monday 26th May. On these days our offices will be closed but emergency repairs will be in operation.

On Wednesday 25th June we will be closed for an all-staff training day, however emergency repairs will still be in operation.

For more on what we class as an emergency, please scan here:



Win £50 by going green

If you fancy receiving future editions of Cartref via email instead of post, please let us know by emailing media@taitarian.co.uk. All those that get in touch before 15th May will be entered into a prize draw with the chance to win a £50 shopping voucher. Congratulations to Cheryl from Cimla – the winner from our winter edition.



Need to get in touch?

- ☎ 0300 777 0000 (General enquiries)
- ☎ 0300 777 3000 (Report a repair – only emergency repairs can be dealt with outside of office hours.)

This document is available in alternative formats. Please phone 0300 777 0000 or email media@taitarian.co.uk to request a copy.

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