

# Your Newsletter



The tenants' newsletter for Denbighshire Housing

ISSUE 13

Spring/Summer 2024



**STAR**  
survey  
results

**You said...we listened!**  
Pages 4 & 5



**Safety advice**  
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# Message from Geoff Davies, Lead Officer, Community Housing

Welcome to the latest edition of your newsletter.  
As ever we hope you find it interesting and useful.

There is a lot happening in Housing within Wales and we are dealing with a few changes to how we work. This includes the recent introduction of Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016, which has changed the way of lot of our work is done. We also have the introduction of the new Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023 (WHQS) which came into force in April.



These changes set a very high standard for homes in Wales and is what we now have to work to achieve. This won't happen quickly as there are significant costs and resources needed to deliver the new standard. We also need the industry and contractors to be able to supply the materials, and skills to support us all in Wales to achieve how we think modern Welsh homes should be like.

We know we have a lot to do, and your advice on what we should be focussing on would be great. To begin with, we want to focus on our digital products and how we communicate with our tenants. For example, introducing a text messaging service for rent support. We will have more about this in our next edition.

This is in addition to the pandemic disruption, which still impacts on us and high inflation issues which has significantly increased costs in a relatively short period.

We work closely with the Denbighshire Tenant and Residents Federation (DTARF), our federation of tenant's associations in the county. We value the many hours of time that people commit to helping their neighbours and communities. However, we are always looking for more ways to engage with you. Please look out for opportunities to attend events, on-line forums or on-line surveys over the next few months.

We need your help too. We need people who live in our houses (our houses, your homes!) to tell us if we are moving in the right direction and when we are getting things right or wrong! We do listen to all feedback, but we always need more. You can do this by contacting us on 01824 706000, at housing@denbighshire.gov.uk or online www.denbighshirehousing.co.uk

You are always welcome to get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.



When you have finished reading this, please put it in the **TOP BOX** of your Trollobocs with the **BLUE** lid.



This one

This newsletter is 100% recyclable.

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## Denbighshire Tenant and Residents Federation (DTARF) Update

### Hi, it's John here, Chair of DTARF

In March, Brian (left) and I (middle) attended a TPAS Cymru event, along with two Denbighshire Housing officers at Venue Cymru.



This event was a chance to hear from a range of speakers about what's happening in North Wales communities and social housing. Speakers included housing associations, Councils, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, and charities.

Each shared what projects are happening in our communities and how they are working together to create better housing and communities for tenants across North Wales. It was well worth going, especially meeting other tenants from across North Wales.

Recently, I was asked what the benefits are of being a member of DTARF, and attending events run by TPAS Cymru is a great example. I would also say that DTARF members are able to:

- Learn about things already going on or new things coming up and meet officers monthly.
- Be the link between tenants and Denbighshire Housing.
- Be part of a group, of like-minded people, dedicated to improving housing services for tenants.
- Support each other. For example, Llys Y Felin and Trem Y Foel resident groups have been successful in applying for the Gwynt Y Mor and Clocaenog Wind Farm Community Funds.

These grants have allowed them to improve their community centres and purchase equipment and materials to hold various activities for their community.



Ffederasiwn Tenantiaid a Thirgolygon Sir Ddinbych  
Denbighshire Tenants and Residents Federation

### So, if you fancy being part of DTARF, feel free to get in touch!

If any tenants would like to get in touch via email (dtarf1@outlook.com) or comment on our Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/DTARF) , please do.

We are happy to travel to your community meeting to chat and hold our DTARF meetings at different community centres across Denbighshire once a month.

This is a chance for you to let us know about all things housing related (not potholes and bins for example). If you have any questions, you'd like us to raise, or feedback you'd like to share, just let us know.

I can't wait to hear from you  
**John, Chair DTARF**  
dtarf1@outlook.com

## BULLETIN BOARD

### To report any maintenance issues contact customer services:

Mon-Thu 9:00am-5:00pm,  
Fri 9:00am-4:30pm  
**01824 706000**

Out of hours emergency  
**0300 123 3068**

Galw Gofal (Careline)  
**0300 123 6688**

Single point of access (SPOA) for support referrals  
**0300 456 1000**

Gas emergency **0800 111 999**

Electricity emergency  
**0800 3163 105**

NHS Direct Wales **111**

Floodline **0345 988 1188**

Type Talk **0345 602 6340**



# Survey of tenants and residents (STAR)

Firstly, we'd like to take this opportunity in thanking everyone who took part in our recent survey as your views and opinions really matter.

We had **893** responses (28%), of which 890 (99%) were online. This is the highest response rate we have received since we started running STAR back in 2015, which is fantastic news!

### Your top priorities include:

- Improving the quality of our properties
- Carrying out repairs quicker and completing outstanding repairs
- Reducing ASB
- Listening to tenants
- Providing better communication

Other highlights show that 85% of you said you were satisfied with the overall quality of your home.

Further work will be undertaken to consider the detail behind the comments in order to enable us to develop our response and we will include a **"You Said – We Did"** update in our regular newsletters.

### What next?

#### The initial action plan will focus on the following actions:

- Communicating how the new Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS 2) requirements will impact on our property improvements and how and when programmes will be delivered.
- Reviewing our Repairs Policy - this will include more detailed tenant engagement.
- Analysis of comments about Anti-Social Behaviour and geographical areas where satisfaction is lower.
- Development of our Engagement Plan with DTARF to look at ways we can improve communication and understand how we can listen more to our customers.

### Areas we will be focussing on:

- Setting up a repairs forum with tenants to look at ways we can develop our repairs and maintenance services.
- Getting out and about in our communities more and hold events and roadshows in our communities.
- Re-establish our "Green Rangers" champions to help monitor the grounds maintenance service and ensure value for money for service charges.





Cymuned  
Community

# Community Resilience team update

Thanks to everyone who responded to our recent **Digital Skills survey!**

We had a great response, and we are now using the information to look at what support and help we can provide you.

## What next?

**We will be using the results to inform:**

- A new project to provide Digital Inclusion support for tenants and residents in Denbighshire. The Digital Confidence Denbighshire project is being delivered by Cwmpas and funded by Denbighshire County Council and UK Government.



The project offers direct digital inclusion support to individuals within the county. Support will take the form of digital inclusion advice, digital drop-ins and training to allow residents to access digital services they need for their everyday lives.

For more information, visit <https://cwmpas.coop/digital-confidence-denbighshire/>

- Which tenants need help and support getting online. This might be developing digital skills, building confidence or help getting online.

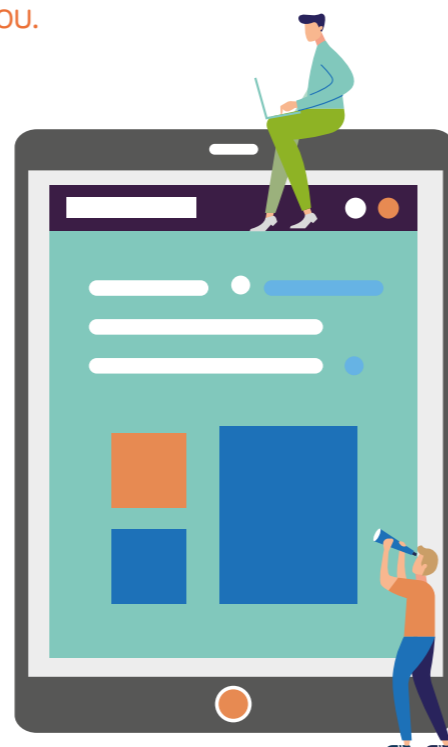
**Here is what we know so far from the responses that we've had:**

**79%** of respondents are comfortable searching online.

**52%** of respondents are extremely confident getting online.

**12%** of respondents don't know how to make sure their personal information is safe online.

**85%** of respondents have asked to be referred to our Digital Officer to get help with their internet speed at home.



The top 3 apps that respondents use are:

- WhatsApp
- Facebook Messenger
- Facebook

Once we have had a chance to go through all the information, we can update you more in our next edition.

For now, if you'd like any help or support with your digital skills, please get in touch on 01824 706000 and ask for the Community Resilience team, or email us at [housing@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:housing@denbighshire.gov.uk)



## We've been out and about this spring!

Bruton Park community really enjoyed the Bruton Park Easter Event, held during the Easter Holidays.

There was plenty for the families to take part in including facepainting, arts & crafts, sports activities, and even an easter egg hunt around the nature reserve. It was great to see Welsh Water, Citizens Advice,

North Wales Fire Service and Flying Start there as well. Here are just a couple of comments from people on the day:

"People from leisure part with bikes got my youngest lad to ride

bike all on his own, thank you so much for wonderful day."

"The best part was the egg hunt my little one loved finding the eggs and naming them."



## Improving your communities

Recently two of our communities were successful in applying for grants to improve their community centres and give them a breath of fresh air.

Trem Y Foel Tenants Association, Ruthin applied to the Clocaenog Wind Farm Community Fund and were successful in receiving just over £3000, which was used to purchase new chairs and curtain/blinds to make a welcoming and comfy environment. The group also purchased a new multi-use table which can be used for a game of pool, table tennis or shoot some darts, along with investing in kitchen equipment which enables them to offer various activities to the tenant and residents.

Another successful story saw Llys Y Felin Resident Association, St Asaph were successful in receiving £1834 from the Gwynt Y Mor Community Fund which they have purchased:

- A greenhouse for their community garden,
- Raised vegetable bed, including soil.
- New equipment such as a pool, boules and table tennis for the residents to use. Following on

from the funding, the resident group is hoping to organise a games night and a gardening club for the local residents to enjoy and meet up.



## Denbigh Youth host consultation event for safer bike routes

A group of young people from Denbigh held an event to consult the public on the need for safer biking routes in the town for young people to be able to get out and about and keep active.



The idea came when Osian Gregson, 13, who attends Denbigh Youth Club decided to take action after becoming frustrated that there wasn't anywhere suitable in the town for him and other young people in the area to be able to play out on their bikes safely. He shared his concerns with a Youth Worker who advised him on what he would need to do to get his voice heard.

Osian went on to write to his local MP to share his views about the need for safer routes and areas for young people to be able to ride their bikes in Denbigh before banding together with other young people from the Youth Club to launch the 'Bumps and Jumps' campaign.

The aim of their campaign is to gather views and generate support for safer bike routes and areas where young people in Denbigh can go to ride their bikes safely.

The group launched the campaign on the 26th of March 2024 with a consultation event at Cae Hywel in Denbigh. The event was organised by the young people, with the support of their Youth Worker from Denbighshire Youth Service.

The aim of the event was to provide the local

community with an opportunity to share their views on whether they believe that more biking routes and areas to be able to ride your bike, such as pump tracks, are needed in Denbigh in order for people to be able to ride more safely in the area.

The group also set up a portable pump track at the event to show off some of their biking skills and to exhibit the benefits of a potential pump track in Denbigh.

Other activities were also provided by Denbighshire Leisure Ltd. and Denbighshire Housing such as zorbs and painting activities, while Denbigh Hwb and Denbigh Youth Project arranged packed lunches for attendees. Drosi Bikes also attended with their Doctor Bike service to provide bike safety checks and advice.

This consultation event was the first phase of the young people's 'Bumps and Jumps' project with the group already planning future activities with the support of their Youth Club to take the campaign further.

Osian said: "The idea for this campaign came partly from the fact that I love being outside; I would rather be outside than on my PlayStation! But also, not

everyone is able to easily get about. Some parents don't drive, and so young people rely on our bikes a lot to get around and I want to be able to feel safe riding from one place to the other in Denbigh.

"The campaign isn't just about having safer bike routes, but we don't really have anywhere in Denbigh where we can go out and ride our bikes with our friends. That's why something like a pump track in the area would be great because it would offer a space for us to go where we can socialise and keep active and not just sit at home."

Liz Grieve, Denbighshire County Council's Head of Housing and Community Services, said: "It's refreshing to see such an enthusiastic group of young people pouring their efforts into something with the aim of benefitting their local community and encouraging other young people to get out and keep active.

"I would like to thank Denbighshire Youth service for supporting these young people on their journey to achieve their goals and I look forward to seeing the progress of the 'Bumps and Jumps' campaign. I wish the group all the best with any future activities or events that they arrange to help drive the campaign forward."



## Spotlight - Community Hwb Pengwern, Llangollen

In our Autumn 2021 newsletter, we showcased the work that the Community Hwb Pengwern and the positive impact it's having in the local community. Since then, the Hwb has become a thriving place, in the heart of the Community and this is their story over the past 2½ years, an inspiration to everyone!

2022 saw the completion of the Hwb's buildings, creating bespoke units to provide additional confidential meeting and community workshop spaces, as well as a new office.

Since then, the Hwb has been supported by Jen Naylor, the Project co-ordinator for SDCP. Jen has supported the Friends of Pengwern group to bring a variety of events, projects, and activities for the community of Pengwern and Llangollen including:

- Ti & Fi
- Family Cook & Eat Together
- Minecraft Workshop
- Meet, Make & Create Sessions
- Wellbeing Wednesdays
- Themed community Events
- And so much more!



As a result of all their hard work, and the benefits they have brought to their community, they won the Denbighshire Housing Community Project of the year award, at our tenant awards in 2022!

They have continued to work with the community, developing new programmes, events etc and making a real difference. In their recent project report, over the past 12 months they have delivered:

- **306** community sessions.
- **98** community social activity sessions.
- **62** family specific activity sessions.
- **146** wellbeing and advice services/activities.
- Engaged with **2,472** residents at the Hwb.
- **331** new residents coming along to sessions.
- **1,643** adults access services and activities.
- **827** children access services and activities.

This is an amazing example of the community working and coming together, showcasing the best a community can be.

For more information about what is happening at Hwb Pengwern please visit their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Communityhwbpengwern>



Cynnal a chadw  
Maintenance

## Beware disrepair claims companies!

We've heard from several of our tenants, that they are being approached by companies claiming they can get them compensation for a disrepair claim, offering a 'no win, no fee' service. These companies are not connected to us.

Please get advice from a trusted company, like Denbighshire Citizens Advice first.

If you do have an issue with an outstanding repair with us, please:

1. Let us know by calling us on **01824 706000** or email [housing@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:housing@denbighshire.gov.uk)
2. If you are unhappy with how we are dealing with it, please use our complaints procedure and we will look into it.
3. If you are still not happy, please contact the **Ombudsman for Wales**, who can award compensation and there will be no cost for any of this.

### Here are some useful hints and tips about reporting a repair:

1. If your repair is urgent, please call us on **01824 706000** during working hours. Please bear with us on Mondays as it can get very busy on the phone lines. If it is out of hours and emergencies only, call **0300 123 3068**.

If your repair is not urgent, please complete an online form at <https://www.denbighshirehousing.co.uk/formbuilder/report-repair/view/> and we will aim to respond within 10 working days.

2. Once your repair has been logged, a member of our team will contact you to arrange a convenient date and time to carry out your repair.

**Please note**, if you see a number on your phone, which you don't recognise, or the number is withheld, this may be our team calling to make arrangements. Please answer the call or ring the number back.

We know it can be stressful when something breaks down in your home. Whether it's a fault with your electric, boiler, plumbing or roof, we are here to help. We always aim to repair any faults in your home, that are our responsibility within 20 working days.

For more information about types of repairs, emergencies etc, please visit [www.denbighshirehousing.co.uk](http://www.denbighshirehousing.co.uk)

## SAFETY MESSAGE

**Advice when answering your front door and letting contractors and other council staff into your home.**

Some of our tenants have been in touch to say rogue traders and potential thieves have been trying to get into their home using false identification. We thought that it would be useful to remind you how important it is to be aware of how to answer your door safely.

We will pre-arrange, either by a phone call, letter or text, to come and see you and will carry Denbighshire County Council photo identification.

Always ask to see identification before you open the door. Never be afraid to ask the caller to wait while you give us a ring to check who they are before letting them in your home.

Our staff or contractors will let you know why they are there and what work will be carried out.

### We won't:

- Ask you for your personal details.
- Request payment for any services.
- Require access to your home, unless previously arranged and agreed with you in advance.

If you have any worries about anyone knocking on your door, claiming they are working for us or on our behalf, then give us a call on **01824 706000**.



Mannau gwyrdd  
Greenspace

# Introducing your new Grounds Maintenance team!

From this spring, our new Grounds Maintenance team will be out and about cutting grass, hedges, shrubs, play areas and hard standing areas around our communities and estates! Keep an eye out for our recently recruited a dedicated Council workforce, who will be out and about in council uniform and vans.

## Introducing our 'South team'

By working closely with the Council, we can reduce our carbon footprint with less travelling from depots around the county while spending more time carrying out the work needed.

We're hoping, that by bringing the service back in-house, that

we will be able to provide the best level of service to you, supporting biodiversity and creating green, tidy and clean communities.

If you'd be interested in getting involved, we are relaunching our Green Rangers programme in the

summer. We're asking you to work with us to monitor the service and see if we can improve anything. Get in touch today if you'd like more information!



Jack (left) and Sion (right).



## Introducing our 'North team'



Edward (left) and Reece (right)



Billy (left) and Jason (right)

## Getting to know some of the new team!

### What is your role?

We are part of the 'North' grounds maintenance team, looking after all of Denbighshire Housing's sheltered housing / estates and areas around sites in north Denbighshire. We carry out duties such as litter picks, mowing grass either on a ride on mower / or using a pedestrian mower, strimming grass, blowing excess grass off paths / walkways etc and other duties such as weed spraying, hedge cutting etc.

### The best thing about your job?

Working outdoors and in the fresh air is definitely a benefit and working with a great team and colleagues. It's great how two days are very rarely the same - we cover all over the North of Denbighshire, so we are very busy and, on the go, constantly.

We love meeting different people from all walks of life and creating a friendly and welcoming relationship with the community. We enjoy taking pride in our work too and keeping the communities / areas clean and looking presentable.

### Describe a typical day ...

We arrive at work, load the van with our equipment, make sure we have the essentials i.e fuel for the grounds maintenance equipment, and head to our areas that are on our list. We'll maintain the area and then move onto the other areas on our list !!  
It's pretty straight forward but we're constantly on the go and are very busy. At the end of the day, we'll head back to the depot, tidy our equipment, lock the van, liaise with our other

colleagues and make sure we're ready for the following day.

### What would you like our tenants to know about your team?

We are extremely friendly and always here for a chat. We love what we do and will always make sure our work is done to a great standard. We always think about how we would like our community areas kept if we lived here.

We are fairly new as we have taken over the recent contractors, so we are still learning areas and sites, so please do bear with us. However, we're always approachable, so please don't hesitate to come over and ask any questions. We look forward to getting to know you all.



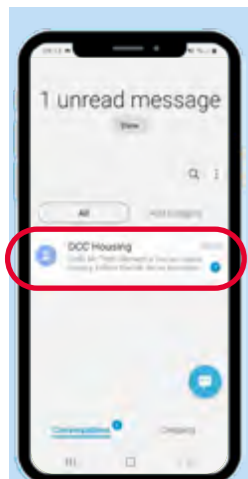
# Introducing your new Rent Support text messaging service!

We recently wrote to you, letting you know about a new text messaging service that we have been trialling. In case you've not seen the letter or had a text, here is what it's all about.

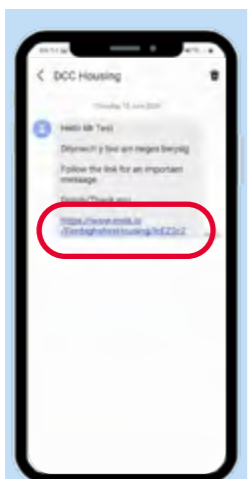
We've been listening to you and understand that times are tough. We want to reassure you that we're here to help, so have launched a new 'rent support' text messaging service.

This new text messaging service will help those of you who are struggling to pay your rent and in rent arrears. It's important to us that we improve ways that we get in touch with you and help you where we can.

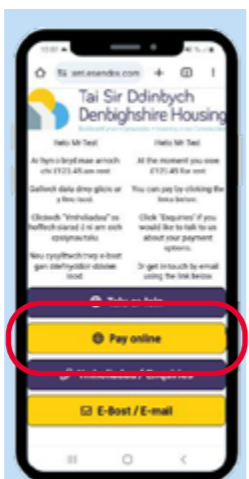
## If we text you, it will look like



Open the text from us



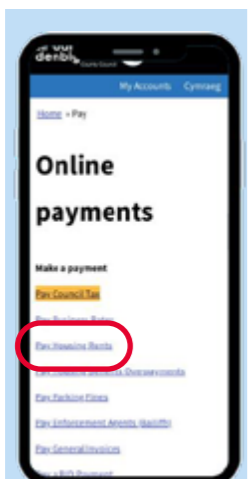
Click on the link in the text



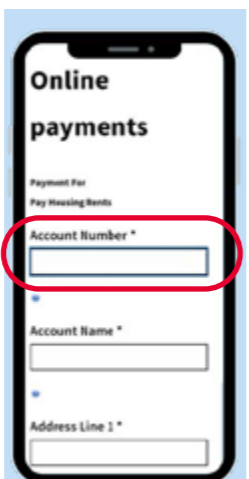
Read through the message, choose an option that suits you



If you choose to make a payment towards your rent arrears, you will see this page



Click here



Make sure you have your account number and details

## To summarise – key information to know if we text you:

- You will get a text from us, 'DCC Housing' with a link to an external website.
- The link in your text will be <https://www.endx.io/DenbighshireHousing/> please click on this link.
- When you click on the link, it will take you to a webpage. You see information about your rent arrears and some options of what you can do next, including:
  - Paying your outstanding balance online.
  - Giving us a call to talk about a repayment plan.
  - Sending us an email for more information and advice.

Click on the option that best suits you and follow the next steps.

For more information, visit our YouTube account <https://www.youtube.com/@taisirdinbych-denbighshir3165>

Other useful links for advice on rent arrears and other budgeting support:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/debt-and-money/rent-arrears/>

<https://sheltercymru.org.uk/housing-advice/advice-for-young-people/rent-arrears/>

<https://www.stepchange.org/debt-info/rent-arrears.aspx>

For more information about our new service, please contact us on **01824 706000**.

# The new recycling service

The new Trolibocs containers continue to be delivered throughout the county and you can check forthcoming deliveries on the recycling pages on the website.

## The new service started from Monday 3 June

We appreciate your patience as we roll out the new service to 45,000 households throughout the county. Your collection day may change, and you will be able to check this information on our website from Wednesday, 15 May.

Please note that a comprehensive information pack about the new service is in the top box of the Trolibocs and there is extensive information on the frequently asked questions page of the website.

All you need to know about the new service is available on the recycling and waste changes page of the website. This includes information about what's changing, guides and information, an introduction to the new Trolibocs and much more.



### Key facts about the new service:

- recycling (paper, glass, cardboard, plastic, metals and tins) to be collected every week
- food waste to be collected every week
- recycling capacity increasing from 240 litres every fortnight to 290 litres every week (more than double the current capacity)
- free collection of small electrical items and household batteries every week
- absorbent hygiene materials to be collected every week (subscription service)
- garden waste to be collected every two weeks (chargeable service)
- free textiles collection every four weeks
- non-recyclable waste to be collected every four weeks in larger 240 litre bin



At the moment, Denbighshire has to pay for recycling to be sorted and this cost is increasing. As some of the current mixed recycling is contaminated, it leads to fines. In addition, approximately 33% of what is currently put in black bins could be recycled. With residents sorting their own recycling it will mean less contamination, and therefore fewer fines. In addition, recycling will increase and be better quality so the council can choose where materials are sold.

Even with more collections and workers, the service will be cheaper than the existing model and more importantly, it's better for the environment.

Key dates:

**23 February – 17 May**  
Delivery of Trolibocs containers throughout the county

**Wednesday, 16 May**  
Information about collection dates available on the website

**Monday 3 June**  
New service begins

**Your recycling is making a BIG difference in Denbighshire.**





## DID YOU KNOW... you could save extra pounds by claiming Marriage Allowance?

Couples who are married or in civil partnerships in Denbighshire could be due a financial boost by sharing unused tax allowances.

Eligible couples have the option to backdate their claim for the previous 4 tax years, resulting in a lump-sum payment worth more than £1,000, in addition to reducing their tax bill each year. To benefit from the tax relief, one partner must have income less than the Personal Allowance of £12,570. Couples must have been born on or after 6 April 1935.

Residents in Denbighshire can find out in 30 seconds if they are eligible by using the online Marriage Allowance Calculator.

Gwyneth Ellis, Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets said:

*"Many couples are not aware they are entitled to these incentives so it's important we highlight them to ensure residents are maximising their household incomes."*

*We're keen to offer ongoing help and advice in conjunction with our partners especially to those struggling with day-to-day costs to support economic growth and help communities to thrive in Denbighshire.*

*I would encourage anyone seeking to improve financial and personal resilience to contact Citizens Advice Denbighshire. They provide free, confidential advice, providing people with the knowledge and confidence to find a way forward."*

Marriage Allowance saves couples money by allowing the lower or non-earner to reduce the amount of tax their partner pays by transferring up to £1,260 of their Personal Allowance to their husband, wife or civil partner.



Sharon Evans, Registration Service Team Manager/ Superintendent Registrar at Denbighshire County Council commented:

*"A great deal of wedding and civil partnership ceremonies take place here in Denbighshire every year. Many couples will be unaware of this tax incentive, and I would urge anyone who meets the criteria to use the calculator and apply online particularly during this current financial climate."*

The easiest way to claim Marriage Allowance is online via <https://www.gov.uk/marriage-allowance>

For more information on cost of living support in Denbighshire, please visit [www.denbighshire.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/costofliving) or contact Citizens Advice Denbighshire [www.cadenbighshire.co.uk](http://www.cadenbighshire.co.uk)

## Young people urged to claim their savings!

Many young adults in Denbighshire could have an average of £2,000 waiting for them in their unclaimed Child Trust Fund account.



Child Trust Funds are long-term, tax-free savings accounts which were set up for every child born between 1 September 2002 and 2 January 2011, with the government contributing an initial deposit of at least £250. Funds can be withdrawn once the account matures when the child turns 18.

According to government data, nearly a million young people in the UK have yet to claim their Child Trust Funds. More than 800,000 accounts belong to people from low-income backgrounds – prompting concern that those who need the money the most are not accessing it.

Every 16-year-old is sent information about finding their Child Trust Fund from HMRC with their National Insurance letter. Anyone unsure about their situation should check with their bank or building society. Alternatively, young adults and parents can also search on [www.gov.uk/child-trust-funds](http://www.gov.uk/child-trust-funds) to find out where their Child Trust Fund account is held.

Gwyneth Ellis, Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets said:

*"I would encourage all young people in Denbighshire to investigate if they have money which is unclaimed in a Child Trust Fund and to use it wisely. The investment could be placed into an adult ISA or put towards their education or driving lessons."*

*I would urge young people to use the online tool to track it down or, for parents of teenagers, to speak to them to ensure they're aware of their Child Trust Fund. It could make a real difference to their future plans."*

*The money in a Child Trust Fund has the potential to be life changing and the lack of knowledge about them shows the importance of financial education and planning from a young age."*

There are currently 5.3 million open Child Trust Fund accounts. Young people aged 16 or over can take control of their own Child Trust Fund, although the funds can only be withdrawn once they turn 18. Families can continue to pay up to £9,000 a year tax-free into a Child Trust Fund until the account matures. The money stays in the account until the child withdraws or reinvests it into another account.

If a parent or guardian was not able to set up an account for their child, the government opened a savings account on the child's behalf. The Child Trust Fund scheme closed in January 2011 and was replaced with Junior Individual Savings Accounts (ISA).

For more information on cost of living support in Denbighshire, please visit [www.denbighshire.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/costofliving) or contact Citizens Advice Denbighshire [www.cadenbighshire.co.uk](http://www.cadenbighshire.co.uk)

# New build updates: Llys Llên, Prestatyn – first look inside



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Over the last few editions of our Newsletter, we've been providing you with updates about the new apartments being built on the old library site in Nant Hall Road in Prestatyn.

Getting them up and running has taken a bit longer than we'd originally hoped for, but tenants will be moving into their new homes this spring.

There are 14 one-bedroom apartments on the top three floors of the building which are all served by a lift and all apartments have level-access showers in their bathrooms.

The development is fitted with ground-source heat pumps which use the natural warmth of the Earth to provide central heating without any need for gas boilers. The building also has solar panels on the roof which generate electricity and help to keep energy costs for tenants low.

On the ground floor of the building are two units which can be used as shops or offices and North Wales Police are proposing to establish a new Police station for the town in one of the units.

We are in the process of identifying how these new homes will be allocated to meet the housing needs in the local area.

This is the second development of new Council homes which has been completed in Denbighshire in the last twelve months – both in Prestatyn as it happens – and in the next edition of the Newsletter we'll be bringing you details about new Council homes in Rhyl and Denbigh.



# Our communities

Llygadog communal room in Corwen has recently had some improvements carried out to make the room modern and a fresh new look.

The kitchen area has had a new extension to allow more room for activities to run such as a lunch club and tea and chat. The IT area has also had a revamp and is now waiting for the new computers to be installed and digital skills sessions will take

place for those who are not confident using them. This improvement works were able to be carried out thanks to funds from the UK Government Wales Levelling Up Fund.



# Introducing the new Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS 2023)

## – What it means for you!

Some of you may have heard about the new WHQS 2023 updated by Welsh Government (WG) in Oct 2023, but what does this actually mean to you and how are we going to deliver it?

**Here are some frequently asked questions about WHQS, which we hope will help.**

### 1. What is WHQS 2023?

In October 2023, the WG introduced a new set of standards for social housing in Wales. It focusses on providing tenants with affordable housing of good quality, suitable for the needs of existing and future residents.

### 2. What are the main things included in the new standards?

For us to meet the WG standards, your homes must:

- Be in good condition.
- Be safe and secure.
- Not cost too much to heat. And not be bad for the environment.
- Have an up-to-date kitchen and utility area.
- Have an up-to-date bathroom.
- Comfortable and suit the person living there.
- Have a garden if possible.
- Have a nice outside space if possible.

### 3. What are the timescales?

These are the main deadlines that we will be working towards:

#### 31 March 2025:

- Assess the condition of your homes so we know what we need to do. To do this we will look at the information we have about your homes. We may need to visit some of your homes but will let you know if we do.
- Create a plan and work out how much it will cost to get homes up to the standards. We must give this to WG.
- Engage with you and show what we're going to be doing so you can have your say. We will be working closely on this with our Denbighshire Tenant and Residents Federation (DTARF).
- Update our business plan to include any improvements and works we need to do to comply with the WHQS 2023 standards.

#### 31 March 2027:

- Produce our Target Energy Pathways (TEP) using the information we have got from your home assessments. A TEP shows us what we need to do to make sure your home has a heating system that you can afford to turn on.

#### 31 March 2034:

- We must meet these standards.

#### 4. What have you done so far?

At the moment, we are working through the WHQS 2023 standards and putting together a plan of action that we can share with tenants by March 2025. We will have more information about this in our Autumn newsletter for you.

#### 5. How will this be paid for?

The improvements we need to achieve the new standards will be funded by a percentage of the WG Major Repairs Allowance, other grant funding and tenants' rents.

#### 6. How can I get involved?

An important part of these new standards is your involvement. If you'd like to get involved and support us implementing the WHQS, then please get in touch on **01824 706000**.

#### 7. Where can I find out more information?

For more information about what these include, please visit <https://www.gov.wales/welsh-housing-quality-standard-2023-0>

