



Cymdeithas Tai Cantref

Llys Cantref,

Church Lane,

Newcastle Emlyn,

Carmarthenshire,

SA38 9AB

01239 712 000

www.cantref.co.uk

post@cantref.co.uk

Tenants making a difference – a plan for Cantref

This plan has been created by tenants and staff from Cantref Housing Association, Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) and Pembrokeshire Housing (PH). In developing the plan tenants and staff worked in partnership with Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS) and with guidance from Tai Pawb and TPAS Cymru.

The plan explains how tenants can get involved to make a difference and how each landlord will help tenants to do this.

Why is getting involved important?

As landlords we value the importance of involvement from all tenants. We believe this improves the housing service and makes sure it meets tenants' needs and expectations.

Good quality tenant involvement leads to improvement of:

- housing services
- openness and accountability
- community development
- tenants' skills and confidence

The main aim – what we hope to achieve:

“Through openness and accountability we will ensure that all tenants have the opportunity to get involved in a way that suits them to influence decisions that affect their homes, communities and the services they receive.”

What we have done so far

Our first plan was written in 2008 and has now been reviewed by tenants and staff and the following has been highlighted:

What worked?

- commitment from both tenants and landlords
- tenants and landlords working together
- developing new ways for tenants to get involved
- supporting and involving communities and Tenants and Residents Associations, (TRAs)
- getting to know customers better

What didn't work so well?

- low uptake of training provided for tenants
- cost of organising the rural road show compared with numbers attending
- breaking down the barriers to get younger people involved
- developing a tenant time reward scheme
- tenants having more involvement in decision making across all housing services
- showing tenants how they have brought about real change to housing services

These points were identified by working with a steering group of tenants. The steering group also carried out a wider survey of tenants from each landlord. *See Appendix 10 of Consultation Report.*



Current activities

We carried out a workshop with tenants to identify the different ways that they can get involved now and how much influence they have. This is shown in the table below:-

Tenants can get involved in the following ways	Level of Influence	Cantref 		
Handbooks	★	✓	✓	✓
Website	★	✓	✓	✓
Calendar	★	✓	✓	
Information leaflets	★	✓	✓	✓
Newsletters	★	✓	✓	✓
Service standards	★	✓	✓	✓
Meet your neighbour events	★	✓		
Focus and working groups	★★	✓	✓	✓
Feedback postcards	★★			✓
You said – we did	★★		✓	
AGMs	★★	✓	✓	n/a
Telephone survey	★★	✓	✓	✓
Social media (Facebook/twitter)	★★	✓		✓
Postal Surveys	★★	✓	✓	✓
New home surveys	★★	✓	✓	n/a
Training and conference places	★★	✓	✓	✓
Tenants helping to produce information	★★	✓	✓	✓
Play days	★★	✓		✓
Housing road show	★★	✓	✓	✓
Having a say in WHQS programme	★★	✓	✓	✓
Exchange and study visits	★★	✓	✓	✓
Surgeries – You and Cantref	★★	✓		
Coffee mornings	★★	✓	✓	✓
Tenant award ceremonies	★★	✓		
Community events	★★	✓	✓	✓
Gardening competition	★★	✓	✓	
Skip and litter pick days	★★	✓		✓
Competitions	★★	✓	✓	✓
Editing/Communications group	★★★	✓	✓	✓
Planned estate walkabouts with tenants/staff	★★★	✓		
Annual feedback event	★★★	✓	✓	✓
Estate agreements	★★★			✓
Tenants and residents groups	★★★	✓	✓	✓
Older person social groups	★★★	✓	✓	✓
Housing services forum	★★★			✓
Community chest/Housing plus	★★★		✓	✓
Complaints and compliments	★★★	✓	✓	✓
Design group	★★★		✓	
Tenants panel	★★★/★	✓	✓	✓

Staff interviews	★★★★	✓		✓
Shareholders	★★★★	✓	✓	n/a
Budget setting for tenant involvement	★★★★	✓	✓	
Tenant/ board members	★★★★/★	✓	✓	

What tenants said we need to develop or improve

This table shows tenants' views on services and tenant involvement from a workshop attended by the tenant steering group.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff attitude - Strong Tenants Panel - Strengthening communities through TRA's - Joint working across 3 landlords (shared resources and exchanging ideas) - Commitment to improve from tenants and landlords - Variety of ways to get involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication and feedback - Need to increase commitment from all staff delivering housing services - Lack of resources - Lack of understanding on policies, procedures and how things work
NEW AREAS	BARRIERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involvement from wider age group e.g. junior residents association - Increase use of social media - Tenants volunteering their skills to improve local communities - Rewarding tenants' time e.g. time banking - More varied community events e.g. open days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not enough tenants getting involved - Tenants and staff not understanding the term "tenant participation" - Tenants' confidence

As a result of the feedback from the tenants steering group and wider consultation this is what we commit to improve:

- More tenants understanding how to get involved:
 - changing the words 'Tenant Participation' to something that is more meaningful to tenants
 - using language that is clear and easy to understand
 - promoting different ways to be involved
- Breaking down barriers to get more tenants of different ages, backgrounds and other circumstances involved from:

- people under 50 years of age
- people with disabilities
- people with caring responsibilities
- people from ethnic minority backgrounds
- More staff understanding the importance of tenants being involved:
 - commitment from senior staff to getting tenants involved
 - raising awareness to all housing services staff of the benefits of tenant involvement
 - consistent clear communication from all staff to tenants
 - keeping tenants informed
- Letting tenants know how they made a difference:
 - decision makers using feedback to influence change
 - providing meaningful feedback
- Tenants have more decision making powers in all areas of the housing service:
 - Working with managers to identify ways tenants can get involved in decision making
 - Ensuring tenants have the necessary skills and confidence

What we will do

Objectives – what we hope to achieve

Objectives	Outcomes
Objective 1 "The landlords housing practices are communicated in an open and honest way"	1.1 Tenants understand and can access information on housing services 1.2 Tenants are satisfied with the communication from their landlord 1.3 Tenants are satisfied with the feedback they are given when they have been involved
Objective 2 "Involving tenants in tackling issues which affect them and their communities"	2.1 Tenants feel safer within their home and community 2.2 Tenants have an increased sense of pride in their community 2.3 Tenants feel supported to improve their community
Objective 3 "To develop tenants' skills, knowledge and capacity to enable them to become more influential"	3.1 More tenants understand what tenant participation is and how they can get involved 3.2 Tenants have a better understanding of how the housing service works 3.3 Tenants have the confidence and skills to get involved 3.4 Tenants know about our joint plan and what we want to achieve
Objective 4	4.1 A representative range of tenants influence decision making about

"To give all tenants an opportunity to improve current and plan future housing services"	their housing services
	4.2 Tenants get involved in a way that suits their individual needs
	4.3 Tenants receive the services they want that meet their expectations
Objective 5 "To ensure that all housing services staff are aware of and committed to getting tenants involved"	5.1 Tenants know their landlord is committed to tenant involvement
	5.2 Tenants feel they are important and listened to
	5.3 Housing staff understand tenant involvement and its importance in improving services

Funding and Practical Support

Each landlord has a dedicated budget and resources in place to enable tenants to get involved.

In addition, we make sure that training courses and / or conference places are offered to tenants. We believe this is important to build tenants' skills and confidence so that they can be as influential as possible.

We also commit resources to make sure that staff/board members'/elected members' have the skills and understanding to involve tenants in their everyday work.

We pay each existing approved tenants and residents groups/sheltered housing groups a yearly grant to help them run their activities. We also help wider community projects and events through grants and practical support.

To make sure that all tenants can get involved, whatever their circumstances, we provide expenses for tenants' travel, child-care and replacement care costs.

We also offer help in kind such as IT equipment loan, room hire, printing/photocopying and help with applying for extra funding from other organisations.

Making the best use of what we have

We need to offer good value for money to our tenants particularly at a time when money is scarce. This is even more important in a rural area where we have communities with limited public transport and services. Because of this we have worked with tenants to decide which joint working is most important and how we will carry out this work.

We will make the most of the resources we have by:

- making effective use of comments, complaints and compliments
- measuring the success of activities to make sure we get the best results
- attend existing community events to raise awareness of / increase resident involvement
- sharing resources for joint events/initiatives where it makes sense to do so
- working together with other support groups and organisations.

Tenants said that the key area for the three landlords to work on together over the next three years is breaking down barriers to get more people involved. Together we agreed to prioritise¹:

- people under 50 years of age
- people with disabilities
- people with caring responsibilities
- people from ethnic minority backgrounds

More detailed actions for this joint working will be found in each landlord's action plan. Tenants will also work with their landlord to prioritise individual action plans to commence in 2012.

Action plans

Each landlord will develop their own action plan with detailed, timed activities to achieve the objectives and outcomes in this joint plan.

Monitoring and review

The tenants and landlords will monitor and evaluate the success of this joint plan through a working group of tenants and staff who will meet quarterly.

The working group will produce a report which will be fed back to each landlord and used to influence service delivery. *See Appendices 1,2,3 for details of how this will happen for each landlord.*

Feeding back on progress

We will feedback to tenants and staff on the progress we have made on the strategy and action plans by:

- the working group producing a quarterly report for the Tenants Panel and Board of Management for Cantref and PH and to the Development Management Team for PCC
- annual feedback feast event
- inclusion in tenants' newsletters and each landlord's website

¹ See appendix 7,8,9 of Consultation Report for pie charts



