

Tenant's Information



If you require any of this information in a different format i.e. large print, Welsh or a different language, audio tape/CD or Braille please contact your local office.

This booklet tells you important information about being a Newydd tenant. You can also find more information in:

- Your tenancy agreement
- Newydd Insight DVD
- The Maintenance Handbook
- Customer Service Standards

or you can request a copy of any specific policy or procedure.

How to contact us:

Pontypridd Office

Trem Y Cwm, Masefield Way,
Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd
CF37 5HQ

Tel 01443 408080

Fax 01443 409903

Barry Office

121 Broad St, Barry
CF62 7AL

Tel 01446 701501

Fax 01446 701565

Newtown Office

St Davids House, New Church St.
Newtown, Powys
SY16 1RB

Tel 01686 621965

Fax 01686 640019

MAINTENANCE HOTLINE 0845 6031696

enquiries@newydd.co.uk

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1. Introduction

Newydd Housing Association is a registered social landlord in Wales. We aim to provide:

- **Sustainable Communities**
- **Affordable Homes**
- **Successful Partnerships**

We provide homes across south and mid Wales for people who are unable, or don't want to buy or rent their homes privately. Most of our properties are in the Vale of Glamorgan and Rhondda Cynon Taff. We also have estates in Newtown Powys, Cardiff and Neath and Port Talbot.

As a social landlord, it is not our aim to make a profit and we receive some of our income from the Welsh Assembly Government. We are governed by our board made up entirely of volunteers. Some of the Newydd Board members are Newydd tenants.

2. Data Protection



We make sure that information provided to us is kept confidential and access to this is strictly limited. Confidential information will only be given to staff or agencies where it is essential that they have this information.

They are then required to follow the same confidentiality rules. Any conversations with tenants that may need further investigation about personal or confidential issues will be held in private.

Tenants are able to inspect information relating to them free of charge and in accordance with their legal rights.

3. Equal Opportunities

Newydd recognises that certain groups and individuals are unfairly discriminated against in society. It is Newydd's intention to try to eliminate all forms of unfair discrimination from all areas of our work. This means that people will be not treated less favourably than others because of their race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, class, marital status, age or any other reason.

Newydd will consider the use of positive action to address the affects of past discrimination to assist in the implementation of this policy.

4. How would you like us to contact you?

Please let us know how you would prefer us to contact you. We can do this either:

- by telephone, or
- by letter, or
- by e-mail, or
- through a nominated advocate (someone who deals with things on your behalf)



Please refer to the contacts list on page 1 which tells you how to contact us.

5. The Tenant's Guarantee

The Tenant's Guarantee is a set of rules and minimum standards set out by the Welsh Assembly Government for all Registered Social Landlords in Wales. These are to make sure that as tenants you are treated fairly and receive a consistent service.

If you would like a copy of The Tenant's Guarantee, please contact your local office.

6. How to make a formal complaint



If you are not happy with a service you get from Newydd, it is important to let us know. You can inform the Housing or Maintenance department of the problem who will try their best to help.

You can also complain about our services. Any person who works for Newydd can take your complaint in person, on the phone, by email or in writing. If you complain, the Chief Executive will investigate your complaint and let you know what he has found out and any actions Newydd is going to take.

For a copy of our complaints procedure, which will give you more details, please contact your local office. Please note that you need to speak to your Housing Officer, or Assistant, to make an informal complaint or advise your community office staff advocate who can contact us on your behalf.

7. Your Tenancy Agreement

When you move into your home you sign a Tenancy Agreement. This agreement sets out what you can expect from Newydd, but also tells you your responsibilities (things you must do) as a tenant.

If you feel Newydd is not carrying out the work we should be doing you have a right to let us know, work with us to find a solution, or to complain about the service (see How to make a formal complaint - Section 6 above).

If you, as a tenant, do not complete work in line with your responsibilities in your Tenancy Agreement, **Newydd can take action against you**. This may mean that you have to go to court which could end in you being evicted (being made to leave your home).

8. Your rights

- You have the right to a peaceful home.
- You have the right to live in a home that is in good condition and which has repairs done.
- You have the right to get clear information about Newydd Housing Association and your home.
- You have the right to have your say in how we deliver services.
- You have the right to complain about things you are not happy about.

9. Your responsibilities

- You must pay your rent - even if you receive housing benefit it is your responsibility to make sure this is paid to Newydd. If your rent is not paid you might lose your home.
- You must let us know when things need to be fixed in your home, or if damage has been done to your property.
- You must not damage your home - if you do you will be asked to pay for the damage.
- You, or your visitors, must not behave badly or break the law in your home or community. If you do behave badly you may be evicted and made to leave your home.
- You must not run a business from your home or garage without asking Newydd for permission.
- You must ask Newydd (in writing) for permission before you make changes or adaptations to your home e.g. adding an extension, changing doors, kitchens, bathrooms or flooring.
- You must keep your property and garden clean and tidy and in a good state of repair.

10. Rent & service charges



Your rent is the money you pay to Newydd to live in your home. Your rent includes the rent for your home and may include a service charge.

Your service charge pays for things Newydd carries out to your property and on your estate or scheme. These can include things like:

- Cleaning of internal communal areas
- Window cleaning
- Grass cutting and litter picking of communal areas
- Lighting and heating of communal areas
- Providing and servicing door entry systems, fire safety equipment or community alarms
- The cost of a sheltered scheme manager in sheltered housing
- Other communal items such as lifts, carpets, TV aerials and refuse bins

Your service charge may cover other items not listed above. If you would like to know exactly what your service charge pays for, please contact your local office.

Some services such as water rates, heating of your property and community alarms are not covered by housing benefit so you will need to make your own arrangements to pay for these.

11. Setting rents & service charges

Annual consultations on tenants' satisfaction with their service charges are undertaken by Newydd. Feedback is obtained from surveys or through a meeting. Before any new service charges are introduced, all affected tenants will be consulted. Services can be introduced throughout the year but more than likely will apply from the beginning of the financial year (April).

Your rent & service charge (if applicable) is reviewed annually and you will receive a letter giving 4 weeks notice of any changes around the beginning of March.

12. Paying rents & service charges

At the start of your tenancy, a rent payment card is ordered for you. This card can be used anywhere that displays a Paypoint sign e.g. your post office. You can also pay at your local housing office at the cash desk.

If you prefer you can pay by direct debit directly from your bank account - please contact your local office to complete a form which is then sent to your bank.

Payments can also be made online at www.newydd.co.uk or you can send a crossed cheque made payable to Newydd Housing Association to your local area office.

If you are experiencing difficulty in paying your rent, contact your Housing Officer immediately.

The following agencies can provide general debt advice:

- Citizens Advice Bureau - see your local phone directory for your nearest office
- National Debtline 0808 808 4000 or www.nationaldebtline.co.uk
- Advice UK 0207 407 4070 or www.adviceuk.org.uk
- Consumer Credit Counselling Service on 0800 138111 or www.cccs.co.uk
- Trading Standards - see the local phone directory for your nearest office or www.tradingstandards.gov.uk
- Shelter Cymru - 0845 075 5005 or www.sheltercymru.org.uk
- Department of Works and Pensions/Job Centre Plus - see your local phone directory for your nearest office

If you don't pay your rent you may lose your home!

13. Welfare & housing benefits



If you receive Income Support/Job seekers Allowances (JSA)/Incapacity Benefit/Disability Living Allowance (DLA)/state pension or even if you are on a low income, you may be eligible for full or partial housing benefit to meet the cost of your weekly rent and also council tax benefit to help pay your council tax. If you need help filling in the form, please contact a member of staff, or advocate or your Tenant Association.

Even if you claim housing benefit, you need to ensure that this is being paid to us and that you cover any shortfall e.g. if you are awarded partial housing benefit, you need to pay the difference between the amount of housing benefit awarded and the full rent due.

14. How to be a good neighbour

Everyone is entitled to peaceful enjoyment of their home, therefore you need to make sure that you or any visitors to your home do not cause a problem to your neighbours at any time.

15. Making a complaint about neighbour nuisance, or anti-social behavior (ASB)

If you do have problems with your neighbours e.g. loud music or visitors, unruly or noisy pets etc. You should:

- In the first instance, try and speak to your neighbour as they may not be aware that they are causing you a problem.
- Contact the housing office to report the problem.
- Call the police immediately if there is criminal activity involved, or if you feel that there is a danger to people or property.

We will respond to all reports of racial harassment/domestic violence/hate crime within 1 working day. All other reports of nuisance will be responded to within 5 working days. All offensive graffiti will be removed within 24 hours.

Your Housing Officer will work with you to decide on an action plan and will keep you informed of progress.

16. Contents insurance

Newydd is responsible for the insurance to cover the building, however, it is not responsible for insuring against damage to the contents of your home. You are strongly advised to obtain contents insurance when taking over your tenancy to protect your personal belongings.

17. TV Licence

If you intend having a television in your home you are responsible for buying a relevant TV licence.

If you already have a TV licence, you will need to advise of your change of address by calling 0870 240 1294 or go on line at www.tvlicensing.co.uk/moving, or visit your local post office. You could face a large fine if you do not get a licence!

18. Keeping pets

You must get permission from your Housing Officer to keep any pets in your home. A decision will be made based on the type of pet you want, the size and suitability of your home and if you already have pets at the property.

Newydd can take away permission at any time should your pet cause a problem to others.

Exceptions are made for guide dogs.

19. Gardens



You are responsible for looking after your front and back gardens and for keeping it clean and tidy. If you pay a service charge to cover the cost of cleaning and maintaining a communal garden, Newydd will employ a landscaping contractor to carry out this work.

Regular inspections will be undertaken by staff to ensure the work of the landscaping contractor is to an acceptable standard. Tenants are encouraged to get involved with the inspections of their estates. Contact the maintenance department on 0845 603 1696 for further information on this.

20. Car parking

- Please park your car/van/motorbike where it does not cause problems to others.
- All vehicles parked on Newydd's land must be taxed and in a good state of repair.
- Many estates are now subject to parking restrictions or permits.
- Caravans should not be parked in communal areas.

21. Gas boiler servicing

Newydd is legally bound to carry out an annual service of your gas boiler. You **MUST** allow our gas service engineers entry to your home to carry out the work.

Failure to do so could put you and your family's life at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, which in extreme cases can result in serious injury, or death.

Three failed attempts to access your home will result in legal action being taken against you.



22. Property adaptations

Sometimes tenant's homes become unsuitable for their changing needs. However, moving is not always the best option and we may be able to carry out adaptations to enable you to continue to enjoy your home. Adaptations can range from small items such as grab rails to major alterations or extensions.

We offer advice and assistance about adaptations to tenants who are finding it difficult to live in their home because of age, disability or illness. If a property only requires small changes, we may be able to cover the cost of these. However if major changes are needed we can offer advice about what is currently available in terms of other sources of funding.

If you think you would benefit from adaptations to your home, please ring our maintenance staff on 0845 603 1696 during office hours (9am-5pm Monday to Friday).

Please remember that before making any arrangements for changes to your home, you need to contact Newydd to obtain permission and get a report from an Occupational Therapist.

23. Transfers and mutual exchanges



If you would like to move to another Newydd property, you will have to make an application for housing. If you contact your local office we will send you the forms and explain what you need to do. We will also help you fill in the forms if you ask us to.

If you wish to carry out a mutual exchange, we will give you our decision within 42 days. Applications must be made in writing. All parties applying for a mutual exchange must comply with the following:

- Inspections of both properties involved in the exchange will be undertaken before you move. Any repairs identified at the inspection and are your responsibility to be put right must be completed before the exchange can go ahead
- You must have a clear rent and recharge/court cost account before permission will be given to allow an exchange.
- There must be no unresolved housing management issues such as anti social behaviour or noise nuisance complaints against you
- A satisfactory reference is received for the other landlord of the tenant you wish to swap with (if applicable)

Details of people looking for an exchange are held in our Barry, Pontypridd and Newtown offices.

24. Ending your tenancy

If you are going to move out of your home you must:

- Give 4 weeks notice in writing.
- Give a forwarding address and contact telephone number.
- Make sure your home is in a clean and tidy condition with no outstanding repairs.
- Take all your belongings with you.
- Make sure any outstanding debts owed to Newydd are paid in full.
- Please note that tenants may be recharged for any outstanding works required to the property and that all former tenant debts will be pursued.
- If the property is left in a good, clean condition and no repair works needs to be carried out, tenants may be rewarded with a payment.



25. How to report a repair

All repairs in office hours can be reported by phoning the repair hotline on **0845 603 1696** day or night, or by going onto Newydd's website www.newydd.co.uk and using Housecall, the on line repair reporting service, or by calling in to your local office.

Before you report a repair to us, please look at the Repairs Handbook Section of this handbook. This will help you to accurately identify the repair that needs to be done and will give us more details so that we can report the work to our contractors accurately. This should mean the contractor will visit you with the right tools and materials and complete the job on the first visit.

26. Sheltered housing



Newydd has several sheltered housing schemes in the Vale and one in the Valleys. The schemes are designated for those aged 55 and over, or for those who are registered disabled or receiving permanent medication for an illness.

Type 1 schemes benefit from a sheltered scheme manager who is on site from 9 to 5 Monday to Friday. They carry out checks of all residents on a daily basis and are responsible for the day to day running of their scheme. It is not their responsibility to provide personal care to residents. Extra help, however, can be obtained from Social Services. The sheltered scheme manager has a master key to gain access to flats in the event of an emergency. There are also emergency pull cord systems in place for added peace of mind. Type 2 schemes do not have a sheltered scheme manager on site but do have an emergency cord system.

To ensure residents feel safe and secure in their homes, there is a door entry system and some schemes also benefit from a lift enabling easier access around the scheme. Each resident has their own flat consisting of a bedroom, bathroom, living room and kitchen but they also have use of a communal lounge, laundry and garden. Visiting family members are also able to make use of the guest room facilities for a small fee. Some schemes have tenant groups who along with the sheltered scheme manager help to encourage social activities and arrange trips.

Sheltered housing is ideal for those who want a secure environment but wish to retain their independence.

27. Supported housing

Newydd works in partnership with a number of agencies that are able to provide tenancy support to new and existing tenants who struggle to manage their tenancy for the following reasons;

- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Care leavers
- Family support
- Mental health issues
- Learning disabilities
- Ex-offenders
- Vulnerable young women

Support can be offered for up to two years on some of the projects and may help with things like skills towards independent living, social support opportunities within the local community, support and advice relating to tenancy management, budgeting and advice on state benefits, training, educational and employment opportunities, improvement of health through physical, emotional and psychological support as well as practical help and support to access advice from other agencies.

Applicants will need to undergo an initial assessment and support places are subject to availability. Support services are offered by partnering organisations and are independent from Newydd.

28. Owning your own home



Right to Buy & Right to Acquire

This depends on the type of tenancy agreement that you have and when your property was built. People who became tenants prior to January 1989 are likely to hold secure tenancies and may have the Right to Buy their homes. Other tenants who live in homes built after 1st April 1997 may be eligible to buy their homes under the Right to Acquire Scheme.

There is a range of qualifying criteria and some properties are exempt from the schemes e.g. adapted homes and sheltered housing.

If you wish to find out if you are eligible for either scheme, please contact your Housing Officer.

Homebuy

Homebuy is a scheme which enables people to become a home owner who could not otherwise afford to buy a property on the open market. The applicant is required to raise a proportion of the asking price, and Newydd retains the remainder of the asking price. The scheme is flexible and the proportion to be paid by the applicant can be as low as 50% or as high as 80%.

For further information on available Homebuy Schemes and application criteria, please contact your Lettings Administrator in your local area office.

29. Having your say

Newydd believes in delivering the best possible housing services to all its tenants. To achieve this we believe that the role of tenants and partners is important in making sure that our services reflect the views of the people and communities with which we work.

At Newydd we feel that offering flexible ways of becoming involved allows all our tenants the opportunity to inform us of what they want us to achieve in a way best suited to individuals.

At Newydd we will:

- Be clear on how our tenants can get involved.
- Provide a variety of ways to get involved to suit the needs of our tenants.
- Ensure that tenant involvement is at the heart of the work we carry out.
- Show you how your involvement has made a difference.

What we do

Community Panels - Newydd has a panel made up of tenants which is consulted on all issues.

Tenants survey - Gives the opportunity to give your views on all Newydd services.

Newsletters - Offer you easy to read updates on all that's going on within the organisation and on our estates.

Newydd 90 - Offers those who wish to get involved the opportunity to express their opinions on a wide range of Newydd services.

Advisory Groups - We consult with a number of issue specific groups (e.g. Disability and Equality) working together to improve services.

Accessible information - provide documents in a language (e.g. Welsh) or format (e.g. large font) which is best suited to the needs of tenants.

Task and Finish Groups - Provide tenants the chance to work with staff to improve specific aspects of our service (we have already had Task and Finish groups looking at anti social behaviour and service charge policy).

Tenant Festivals and events - to offer you the opportunity to meet other tenants and have access to staff and information at a fun occasion.

Board Membership - Elections take place every year to allow everyone to stand for election to the Newydd Board.

Tenants Groups - We fund and support tenants groups. If you are interested we will signpost you to your local group. If no group exists in your area we will help you set up a group in your area to improve your community.

Newydd AGM - We invite all tenants to attend our Annual General Meeting where you can learn more of what we are doing as well as express your own views.

Reading Panels - All information sent to tenants is first sent to the Reading Panel. This is made up of tenants and aims to make sure that all documents are clear for all tenants to read.

Interested? If you would like to get involved in any of these aspects of our work or if you would like a copy of our full Tenant Involvement Strategy please contact your local Community Involvement Officer.



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