

# RHA

Tenant Magazine / 2023

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littleSHED



# Welcome to your tenant magazine

**Luke Takeuchi,**  
RHA Chief Executive



I'm pleased we can share a number of positive updates in this edition on the progress being made by colleagues across RHA. We are very conscious that there continue to be many challenges for people and communities in overcoming the lasting impact of the pandemic and dealing with continued pressures with rising costs in food and energy. These issues have meant that we have concentrated on ensuring that our services are directed to where our tenants need them most and we will continue to review this over the coming weeks and months to ensure we can be responsive to your needs.

As a not-for-profit organisation we also have a number of pressures we are having to face such as rising costs and balancing a number of priorities. We have also experienced pressures of the wider economic climate that currently exists. Therefore, we have placed even greater emphasis on ensuring value for money and careful management of resources to ensure we can maximise the funding and income streams that we have. We have also continued to listen and engage with tenants during several face-to-face tenant engagement events in recent months which have been extremely useful to hear your feedback.

The upcoming year is significant for RHA with some important milestones for us. Our corporate plan which sets our longer-term vision is coming to an end in 2023 and our Board and Executive team are beginning to shape our new priorities and areas of focus over the coming 5 years. It is critical that we continue to invest in your homes and strike the right balance to ensure we can continue to build much needed affordable housing in the area. Listening to our tenants and acting on your feedback will form a key part of creating our new plan and we look forward to hearing your views.

*Luke Takeuchi*

**Peter Hughes,**  
Chair of the Board of  
Management



By now we had all hoped to have seen some easing in the current cost of living conditions, but prices are still marching upwards, and money doesn't seem to go very far. This newsletter hopefully has pointers which can help.

My first year as chair was all about getting to know our colleagues, learning how RHA worked, and understanding its challenges - and there have been plenty! It only seems like yesterday we were living through covid restrictions. In truth I haven't been able to spend nearly as much time in the community as I had hoped. This is my current mission, and our board are united around a desire to listen even more to tenants.

Recently I have been fortunate to sit in on tenant groups telling us what they thought of RHA. Whilst everyone was supportive of us, equally they didn't hold back on where we can improve. There is clear recognition that sadly we won't have the resources to do all our tenants would want us to, but what you expect is to communicate the priorities we have and the difficult (and sometimes unpopular) choices we sometimes must make. Other areas included complaints and how works are carried out.

Rest assured we have listened. We also have plans to bring tenants closer to setting the strategic direction and decision-making processes - hopefully I can update next time.

As Luke references, we are updating our 5-year plan. Gazing into the future and mapping out a long-term strategy has never seemed so hard! Since joining however, I have been heartened by working alongside committed colleagues who want best for our tenants and invest in our communities. We will think really hard - with your help - on how we go about it and I am confident we will set the right course.

*Peter Hughes*



# RHA Getting in touch with us

There are a lot of ways to get in touch with us at RHA Wales. Please take a look at the different ways you can contact us:



## In person:

If you would like to speak to us face to face, then our colleagues can visit you at your home, or somewhere in your community or book in a time at the Tonypandy office that suits you.

Our Tonypandy offices are available for meetings with our colleagues' by booking in advance. Give us call on **01443 424200** or use your **MyRHA account** to make an appointment to see a staff member.



## Call us for a chat:

Telephone us on **01443 424200**:

We are open Monday – Friday:  
9.00am until 4.00pm  
(excluding bank holidays)

**PRESS OPTION ONE FOR TENANTS,**  
then press:

- **Option 1** – Gas, boiler or central heating queries
- **Option 2** – Report or get an update on a repair
- **Option 3** – Speak to someone about your rent, tenancy queries and support or to report anti-social behaviour
- **Option 4 and 5** – This will put you through to the Community Engagement teams to get involved



## your online account:

You can also get in touch via MyRHA – which is your online account giving you 24/7 access to report repairs, book appointments, report anti-social behaviour. Please visit: **[www.rhawales.com/myrha](http://www.rhawales.com/myrha)**



## Video chat with us:

You can also video chat with your Housing Officer or Payment Advisor. All you have to do is visit: **[www.rhawales.com/videochat/](http://www.rhawales.com/videochat/)** Follow our step-by-step guide and book in to meet online.



## Easier by email:

Just drop us an email to:  
**[MyAccount@rhawales.com](mailto:MyAccount@rhawales.com)**  
Or  
**[Enquiries@rhawales.com](mailto:Enquiries@rhawales.com)**



## Website:

You can contact us via our website:  
**[www.rhawales.com](http://www.rhawales.com)**

Or drop us a message on our social media channels, search for **@RHAWales** on:



# MyRHA

MyRHA – your new online account. It means you can access your tenant account directly from your smartphone, tablet or computer at any time.



**We are always trying to improve your experience as a tenant and make life that little bit easier, that's why we've created MyRHA.** If you choose not to use your online account, you can always call or email us.

## What can I do using MyRHA?

**When you log in to your MyRHA online account, you can:**

- Report a repair to us
- Chase or cancel an existing repair
- View your rent account & make payments
- Update your personal details and contact information
- Request a call back from our team
- Request a property exchange
- Give notice on your tenancy
- Report ASB
- Report graffiti or fly-tipping
- Tell us your views on our services

## What do I need to register?

**You'll need:**

- Access to a computer, laptop, smartphone or tablet
- Access to the internet
- An email address
- Your date of birth
- Your tenancy reference and PIN numbers (find these on the enclosed letter)

We match these details to the records we hold on our system to make sure the registration is secure.

## Why should I register?

There are loads of benefits to registering for an online account with RHA:

- 24/7 access at a time that suits you
- No need to call us if you prefer not to
- Upload photos to help us better diagnose a repair
- Keep up to date on RHA events

## How to register

If you're ready to register for MyRHA, just follow the steps below. If you prefer, there's a video on our website to walk you through the registration process. You can find it at [www.rhawales.com/myrha](http://www.rhawales.com/myrha)

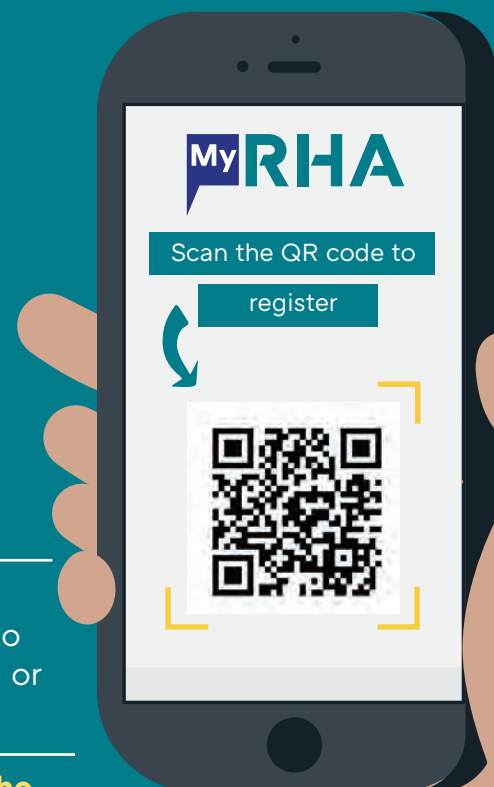
1. Go to [www.rhawales.com/myrha](http://www.rhawales.com/myrha) or scan the QR code
2. Click on the yellow **Register** button
3. Fill in the details on the registration screen.

### Some things to note:

- Your PIN and tenancy reference number can be found on the letter you received with this MyRHA magazine.
  - The password you choose must be at least 6 characters long and contain one capital letter, one lower-case letter and a number.
4. Once you hit '**Submit**' on the registration screen, you'll get an email containing a verification code. The email will be sent to the email address you entered above.

You will then be taken to a screen to verify all the information you have provided. This is an additional security measure that allows us to keep your information and data safe. It's important we keep all your personal details secure, just like when you log in to your banking information.

5. Check the inbox of your own personal email account and you should have an email from RHA Wales showing you your verification code. If you don't receive this email in a few minutes check your spam folder, just in case it has gone there.
6. Enter the verification code back into your internet browser and you're all done.



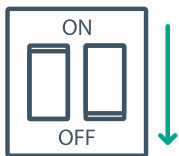
### What if I have any problems registering?

If you run into any problems or would like some extra help to register and log in, you can call our team on **01443 424200** or email us: [myaccount@rhawales.com](mailto:myaccount@rhawales.com)

**Special thanks to all our awesome tenant volunteers who helped us create, test and launch the MyRHA online account.**

# Save energy and money at home

When Summer rolls around, this is often when we worry the least about our energy bills. But now, with costs rising, we're all keeping a much closer eye on our usage. So with warmer weather in place and the longer daylight hours for now then this is a great time to start changing habits to help you save energy and money:



## 1. Make the most of lighter nights and save electricity

We are in British Summer Time, which means longer days and more daylight. Keep the curtains open for as long as you can and let the natural light flood in! When you do need to switch on the lights, get into the habit of only lighting rooms that are being used and you could save up to £20 a year on your energy bills.

And, if you're buying new bulbs, it's worth looking into LEDs. Fluorescent energy saving bulbs will be banned from sale in September 2023 and so only LED bulbs will be available. While they are more expensive, they also last a lot longer and in many cases the lifetime of the light fitting.



## 2. Bring the outside in and keep your home cool naturally

Being in a hot stuffy room isn't nice. But using fans for long periods to cool down can really add up on your electricity bill. Instead, if it's breezy, open windows and internal doors so natural ventilation can flow through.

During the hot weather it's best to leave windows shut when the day is at its hottest to keep your house cool. It's tempting to open them, but when the air outside is warmer than it is inside it'll only make you feel even hotter. It's best to open them only early in the morning or later in the evening to let the air in.



## 3. Give the fridge some love so it's more energy efficient

Your fridge is going to be a good friend through the summer. And the better it runs, the less electricity it will use. Typically, fridges and freezers account for around 12% of the average household's energy bill as they're always on and using energy. So, try to clean and defrost yours as often as you can to keep ice under control – and ensure that it works as efficiently as possible.



## 4. Greener washing

A good tip for anyone with outdoor space, whether it's a balcony, back yard, shared space

or garden then always dry your laundry outside. Tumble dryers are very energy hungry, adding up to £60 a year to your bills. Give yours a break and you won't just save energy, but all your clothes will smell lovely and fresh, and you'll be helping the environment too.



## 5. Be smart with your water

Heating up large quantities of water can have a big impact on your bills. Taking a four-minute shower instead of a bath saves a typical household up to £70 a year. And try to keep those long hot soaks in a bath as special treats to save your pennies.





## 6. Switch off standby

Leaving appliances on standby may seem harmless – but it's surprising how much energy they guzzle up. You could save around £55 a year just by turning appliances off at the plug when you aren't using them.



## 7. Use the microwave more

They're not great for cooking everything, but you can't argue with the energy-efficiency of a microwave. Cooking accounts for around 14% of electricity demand in UK homes, so using the microwave more is a simple way of saving energy in the kitchen.

# ENTER TO WIN

## Competition time

### Healthier, Safer and Save Money









We are giving away a Tefal Easy Fry Air Fryer & Grill!

**All you have to do is share your top energy saving tips with us by emailing: [Competition@rhawales.com](mailto:Competition@rhawales.com)**

Air fryers are more economical – especially compared to ovens. The average cooking time reduces, plus they are cheaper to run. Air frying is also healthier than frying in oil and they can be safer than deep fryers in your home.



### Our top tips to get you started:

-  Get in the habit of only using your washing machine when it's full to save on electric.
-  Buy frozen fruit and vegetables so it will last you longer and won't go to waste.
-  When it's colder, and you're shutting windows then it's best to draw the curtains/blinds as this helps stop the heat permeating through the glass.
-  Keeping the freezer full to reduce running costs. A cheap way of doing this is filling up old plastic milk/pop bottles with water, these can be used as ice packs to keep cool but also stop your freezer keeping empty space cool.
-  Cook a few meals at once – so only using the oven once instead of multiple times.
-  Turn down the temperature of your water. You don't need such hot showers in warmer weather.
-  Use dish water or paddling pool water to water your plants. The chemicals in dish soap can act as a natural pesticide.
-  Make the most of your Smart meter to find out what home appliances cost to run.

## Now share with us your tips and win an AirFryer!

### Community Fridges – supporting you and the planet

**little SHED**

Our Community Fridges at the Little Shed shares surplus food from local supermarkets, preventing it from going to waste. They are open to everyone in our communities.

Our fridges are zero waste – so bring your own bags when you visit. We're open Monday to Thursday 10am – midday and Fridays 11am – 1pm.

# RHA achieves national equality mark



We have been successful in achieving a nationally recognised equality and diversity award for social landlords.

The QED Award (Quality in Equality & Diversity) has been developed by the Welsh Housing Charity Tai Pawb, who provide feedback and guidance on how well organisations like RHA manage equality, diversity and inclusion.

Through a twelve-month accreditation process we worked with colleagues and tenants, to understand how committed our board and colleagues are to providing services that tenants need, and in ways that are easy to access. They helped us to identify and plan how we can be better, and worked with us to make sure equality and diversity is understood by everyone in RHA, including our contractors, tenant groups and volunteers.

It was important for us to take part in this project, as building positive and trusting relationships is an essential part of the way we work. By better understanding our tenants and communities we can make sure that:

- **All tenants have an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and are not at a disadvantage because of the way they were born, where they come from or what they believe.**
- **We recognise, respect, and celebrate what makes us different, such as our age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or even our education.**
- **Different groups or individuals from different backgrounds are accepted, welcomed, and supported to access all RHA services, projects, or activities.**

**Thanks to all our tenants who got involved and gave us your support.**

If you would like to know more:

✉ [GetInvolved@rhawales.com](mailto:GetInvolved@rhawales.com)

☎ 01443 424200





## An MOT for your home

**As a social housing landlord, we have a legal obligation to complete important and compulsory safety checks / tests in your homes.**

The compliance team are here to ensure that safety checks are carried out on:

- Boilers and gas safety
- Smoke alarms
- Carbon monoxide alarms
- Electrics
- Asbestos management
- Sprinkler systems
- Fire doors

As a tenant, you can expect to receive appointments from our specialist contractors throughout the year so the checks can be completed. We ask our tenants to make themselves available for these appointments. If you are ever concerned about whose contacting you then you are welcome to get in touch with our team to confirm who to expect.

We understand that appointments are not always convenient, so your appointment letter will include a contact number you can call if you need to rearrange it.



## Gas Safety, Maintenance and Repairs

We wanted to advise everyone that Liberty Gas Group have been successful in winning a new 10 year contract to deliver the following services to all our tenants:

- Servicing and repairs to gas central heating and hot water systems
- Annual testing of smoke, carbon monoxide, heat and/or combined alarms
- Servicing and repairs to Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery (MVHR) systems and solar thermal hot water systems where fitted in some homes

As part of this new contract, Liberty Gas Group have committed to a range of community benefits, which include:

- Employing a community member as an apprenticeship / trainee each year
- Providing employment and skills opportunities for the local community and our tenants
- Voluntary support from their staff to join in an activity to help the local community

- A donation toward a community project to support disadvantaged residents or communities
- Working with schools, providing mentoring, supporting community sporting events and providing in-house training for community members

It is extremely important to get your gas central heating and hot water system checked by one Liberty Gas Group's Gas Safe registered engineers every year. This is to make sure that your gas boiler is working correctly and to reduce the risk of any gas leaks, fires, explosions, and carbon monoxide poisoning should your gas boiler be faulty. When you therefore receive an appointment from Liberty Gas Group, please make sure you allow the engineer access to your home for the work to be completed.

If you have any questions about compliance or safety in your home then please get in touch:



**01443 424200**



**myaccount@rhawales.com**

# Keeping you fire safe at home

**We believe the best way to stay safe from fire is to help you understand some common risks and reduce them in your home.**



## Smoke Alarms

Don't neglect your smoke alarms; they should be tested once a week. Remember, it only takes a second to press a button and test your alarm, but it could make all the difference if a fire started in your home. The Test It Tuesday campaign, which encourages habitual alarm checks, was created for this very reason.

## Candles

We urge all our tenants to take care. While candles can bring relaxation to a home, they can also cause its destruction and endanger the lives within. It's important to remember that candles are an open flame which if left unattended or near flammable surfaces can cause devastation.

Remove the risk by following our simple candle safety advice:

- Keep candles out of reach of children and away from pets
- Keep clothes and hair away from the naked flame.
- Always use a suitable holder when burning candles.
- Extinguish candles before moving them
- Don't walk away – Extinguish candles before you leave a room and never go to sleep with a candle still burning.
- Snuff out the flame – Use a snuffer or a spoon to put them out. Blowing them can send sparks and hot wax flying.
- Positioning your candles – No one expects an emergency; they just experience it. Don't put candles under shelves and make sure there's at least one metre (three feet) between a candle and any surface above it.
- Put candles on a heat-resistant surface – This might also be relevant for container candles, such as tea lights or filled glasses, to avoid damage of the surface below.



## Cooking

Cooking is one of the major causes of fires at home, or accidental dwelling fires. Here are some tips from South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to help you make your kitchen a safer place:



- Make sure you have a working smoke alarm and test it regularly.
- Never leave cooking unattended.
- Don't leave children alone in the kitchen when cooking. Make sure you keep matches and saucepan handles out of their reach.
- Make sure saucepan handles do not stick out – so they don't get knocked off the stove.
- Keep tea towels, cloths, and clothing away from the cooker and hob, away from heat and flames.
- Keep electrics (leads and appliances) away from water.
- Where possible, use spark devices instead of matches or lighters to light gas cookers, to avoid the naked flame.
- Hot oil can ignite easily, use a thermostat-controlled deep fat fryer – they stop the fat getting too hot.
- Don't fill a chip pan or other deep fat fryer more than one third full of oil.
- Never tackle a pan fire yourself. If a pan catches fire, never use water on it.
- Avoid cooking if you have been drinking alcohol or are taking medication that may make you drowsy or tired.
- Double check the cooker is off when you have finished cooking. Take care with electrics and turn off switches.
- Keep the oven, hob and grill clean and in good working order. A build-up of fat and grease can ignite a fire.
- In the event of a fire in your kitchen, get out, stay out and call 999.

If you would like to know more about staying safe at home then get in touch with us.

**MyRHA** 01443 424200

[www.rhawales.com/repairs-improvement/home-safety](http://www.rhawales.com/repairs-improvement/home-safety)

## Home alterations and improvements



If you want to make any alterations or improvements to your home, you must also ask us for permission in writing.

We will consider your request but may have to ask you for additional information and/or visit your home, in order to make a decision.

Under the terms of your Occupation Contract, we require written permission if you wish to alter or improve fittings or fixtures in your home and we will not refuse permission unreasonably.

We will confirm our decision in writing in line with Renting Homes Wales Act legislation for deadlines. And if we must refuse permission, we will write to you telling you why and work with you on solutions.

**MyRHA**

**For more information:**

 [www.rhawales.com/myrha](http://www.rhawales.com/myrha)

 01443 424200

 [myaccount@rhawales.com](mailto:myaccount@rhawales.com)

 RHA Wales  
9 Compton Rd  
Tonypandy CF40 1BE



# Welcome to all our new tenants

Our teams were busy in 2022 completing building works on **56 new homes** across Rhondda Cynon Taf.



It's easy to see the positive impact redevelopment of these sites will have. The pandemic has presented many challenges to the construction industry, availability and cost of labour and materials being a huge barrier to delivery of new homes, we would like to thank our new tenants for their patience whilst we completed the building works and wish them every happiness in their new home.

## Regenerated homes in the heart of Treherbert

Abertonllwyd House is a beautiful building located in the heart of Treherbert which was built in the 1920's. We have owned the building since the mid-1980's and it was previously a mix of bedsits and flats which became difficult to manage with high void rates, which meant the building was empty for several years.

We were successful in securing Welsh Government funding to help us refurbish the building, and appointed contractor P & P Builders Ltd to complete the works. After a 10 month build period, the building is now fully refurbished and once again stands proud on the main street in Treherbert.



Abertonllywd House has eight one bedroom apartments alongside staff accommodation, a laundry area, training rooms and a communal space. Both ground floor apartments have been adapted to for residents with disabilities and specialist needs. We worked with RCT Council to repurpose this beautiful building to create accommodation that would provide a pathway for individuals who were homeless and to alleviate pressures on the use of temporary accommodation.

We would like to thank, RCTCBC, Pobl and the Welsh Government for working in partnership with us to provide essential supported accommodation and securing a sustainable future for this historic local building.

## Over 270 homes added to RHA Wales portfolio

This represents the largest stock acquisition in RHA's history and helps with our continued growth strategy. The homes have been purchased from Wales and West Housing Association (WWHA) and are in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Both organisations have been working closely together to complete the transfer process for several months.



Our colleagues have been meeting our tenants to welcome them and ensure they are fully informed of any changes to enable a smooth transition to us as their new landlord. We're delighted to welcome our new tenants following this transfer as we already operate in these areas, which means tenants will benefit from our local community presence and our support services. They can be certain we will maintain the high standards of service they are used to.

## Big Shed project update:



Works on our Big Shed project in Tonypanyd have been progressing well in 2022 with all of our redevelopment approvals in place, we have now completed demolition of the former Co-op supermarket which was needed to make space for our new apartment block.

As a reminder we are building 51 apartments here 8 of which will be specialist accommodation for adults with learning disabilities along with commercial spaces on Dunraven St. 2023 is looking to be a busy year on this project as our main construction works starts this year with Willis Construction.



# The little SHED is open!



We've worked really hard to turn our old office space into a modern community hub called – The Little Shed, we now use this space to run:

- A food parcel project and community fridges
- Health and wellbeing sessions
- Digital Skills sessions
- Coffee mornings

Back in August 2019 we joined forces with the Black Sheep youth project (part of ARC Training Company) to refurbish the space on Dunraven Street in Tonypany. The Black Sheep project supports young people to learn skills for work in construction and the young people involved put their learning to good use in the Little Shed, through renovation of the space including taking walls down and rebuilding new rooms, creating a beautiful feature wall and talking with designers on how the space should look.







In total thirty young people from Maes Gwyn, Ysgol Nant Gwyn and Ferndale Community School have worked on the space and these amazing young people have all completed Level 1 in Health and Safety in construction, Level 1 in Asbestos Awareness and Level 2 in Manual Handling.


Our contractors and suppliers kindly supported this project and we would like to thank:

- **Vision Products**
- **Property Building Maintenance Wales Ltd**
- **Flair Electrical Engineering Ltd**
- **Bright Collie**
- **Greenstream Flooring**
- **IVC Flooring**
- **Ministry of Furniture**
- **Arts Factory Rhondda**

Through their help the Little Shed is a beautiful home to our:

- **Food parcel project Grub Hub**
- **Community Fridge project**
- **Repair Cafe Wales**
- **Digital Fridays, Computer Skills Sessions**
- **Craft and Coffee mornings**
- **Youth Drop**
- **Health and wellbeing sessions**

If you would like to find out more you can call:

 **01443 424200** choose option 1 then option 5

 Email: [Getinvolved@rhawales.com](mailto:Getinvolved@rhawales.com)

# What is condensation?

There is always moisture in the air, even if you can't see it. When the air gets colder, it cannot hold the moisture which then condenses on cold surfaces such as windows, doors and even walls **and this can cause mould if left untreated.**

## What CAUSES condensation

There are 4 main factors that cause condensation:



Too much moisture being produced in your home



Not enough ventilation



Cold surfaces



The temperature of your home

## How much moisture do we produce in a day?



## How to REDUCE condensation



### 01

Ventilate your home by opening windows, even only slightly and making sure any extractor fans are used.



### 02

Use heating correctly. It is better to keep your heating on low during the cooler periods as this improves air circulation, reducing condensation.



### 03

Reduce the amount of moisture produced.



Don't dry clothes on radiators



Keep lids on pans when cooking



When bathing, run the cold tap first



Make sure tumble driers are properly ventilated



When cooking or bathing, keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed

### 04



Use crystal moisture traps, which can be bought cheaply and locally.

### CONTACT US:

01443 424200

enquiries@rhawales.com

www.rhawales.com

@RHAwales





# what are we offering young people?

YEPS - Youth Engagement and Participation Service is RCT youth and engagement service and we work in partnership with them to provide enriching opportunities and support services for young people across the borough.

## Youth clubs & After school

YEPS offer 14 youth clubs throughout RCT on Monday-Friday evenings. Our Youth Clubs are a place where young people can participate in fun activities in a safe space. Young People will have access to our YEPS Team that will be able to support with any social, educational or emotional needs and development. We also work closely to support other organisations such as Hirwaun YMCA, Llanharan, Rhondda Sea Cadets, Cwmparc & Valleys Kids. We also offer a range of after school activities at all secondary schools.

## YEPS Van & street based provision

YEPS Mobile Youth Provision visits various locations across RCT on Monday-Friday evenings. For more information on the YEPS Van location visit:

**[yeps.wales/whats-on/yeps-van-locations/](https://yeps.wales/whats-on/yeps-van-locations/)**

We also provide street-based youth work to young people throughout RCT, to identify hotspots to provide any support to young people who may not engage with us through activities/schools.

## 1-to-1 referral support

YEPS work with vulnerable young people on a 1-1 basis through a YEPS referral. The types of support staff offers varies, from talking to young people who are feeling low or worried about themselves/ family/ friends, to more significant mental health issues or are at risk of being homeless. Staff also signpost and refer to other agencies and provide access to 24-hour helplines. Referrals – **[YEPS@RCTCBC.GOV.UK](mailto:YEPS@RCTCBC.GOV.UK)**

## Holiday provision

YEPS offer a range of activities for young people during school holidays - for more information visit: **[yeps.wales/calendar/](https://yeps.wales/calendar/)**

## Promoting childrens rights

YEPS give young people an opportunity to influence local and national decisions through youth forums and consultations.

## youth homelessness support

YEPS Youth Homelessness Officer provides 1-2-1 support to young people who are at risk of becoming homeless or facing housing related issues. Early intervention and support can be offered around a range of issues such as: accessing homelessness support from The Housing Advice Centre, applying to HomeFinder (council housing register), setting up and maintaining your tenancy, applying for benefits and grants, independent living skills, debt, money management and budgeting. The 16+ team also run independent livings skills programmes in a group setting, where you can learn lots of skills to enable you to move out or enter the world of work.



# How you can Get INVOLVED with RHA

If you have ideas on what RHA does well, how we could be better and if you would like to know more about the way we work, then we'd love to hear from you.

We've made it easier for tenants to get involved and give us their feedback on:

- 1. Changes to the way we work**
- 2. The Services you receive**
- 3. Our plans and priorities**

You can get involved in different ways:

- Get Informed – Take part in surveys and receive information from us
- Get Together – Join a local group or talk to us through RHA On The Road
- Get Involved – Become a member of one of our groups and influence the way we work and the decisions we make.

Our groups look at lots of different topics, covering:

- the way RHA supports you to manage your home
- our repairs and maintenance work
- how we keep you safe
- community projects
- working with young tenants
- building new homes
- dealing with complaints
- ways we communicate with you
- our commitment to work in a way that is fair and easy to access
- how we look after our environment.

## Listening to you

Every year we ask tenants to share their feedback with us through surveys, or through our tenant groups. We listen to what you say and use your feedback to make our services better.



**We need to make tenant involvement more interesting – instead of having a small group of tenants who look at everything, tenants should be supported to get involved in topics or services they are interested in and should work closely with staff members who manage that area of work.**

**You wanted our Contractors to be more aware of the needs of tenants.**

- We have a new Tenant Involvement Commitment, with groups for different topics or services, from Tenancy Matters and Repairs, to Equality & Diversity and a Youth Group

- We made changes to our 'Code of Conduct' the document that outlines how our contractors should behave and asked them to sign-up to the Samaritans 'Working With Compassion' standards.



As RHA aims to be an organisation that is fair to all tenants, we need to make changes to the way we communicate with tenants and the information we share.

- We will make sure all staff understand good communication, through our new Service Standards (see page 20).

And that our communication is:

- Friendly
- In plain English, Timely
- Short if via text message as it can be costly.

The words we use around environmental concerns like 'Climate Change' are confusing.

- We are training a tenant group to be 'Carbon Literate' and they will help us to better communicate on what we are doing to protect our planet and how you can help us.



### This year our tenant group have also worked with us to review and improve:

- The support we offer to tenants
- The feedback survey we complete when tenants move into a new home
- How we manage issues of fly tipping
- The community organisations and projects we work with and support.

If you have ideas on how we could be better or if you would like to know more about the way RHA works, you can Get Involved: Call **01443 424200** and pick option 1 then option 5.

Email **Getinvolved@rhawales.com**

Join our Facebook group - **RHA/Get Involved**

## Food Hamper Support



In 2022, three staff members from our Community Engagement Team took part in a 24 hour Danceathon at the Little Shed – they danced nonstop for 24 hours, from 10am on the 1st of December to 10am on the 2nd of December and raised over £3500 for our Christmas Hamper Project.

With the money raised in 2022 we were able to:

- **Support 5 community organisations**
- **Gave out 90 Christmas hampers for those in need**
- **Sponsored Community Christmas events**

In July 2023 more than 20 colleagues from across the association walked over 20 miles from Tonypandy to Cardiff to raise money for our 2023 winter campaign. We have raised over £3000, and we have more planned, so follow us on Facebook to get involved.

**Our contractors, suppliers, community partners, staff, board members, family and friends all donated and sponsored us and we would like to thank each and every person who has supported us in helping others.**

# Service Standards

One example of the way our involved tenants worked with us this year is our new service standards.

We spoke with both staff and tenants to find out what good communication and good customer services should look like. Together with our tenant groups we agreed a standard of behaviors we feel is fair for both staff and tenants.

We will use this way of working to agree our service standards for every service, including services like maintenance and repairs, adaptations, tenant involvement and housing.

## /OUR STAFF BEHAVIOURS

**Tenants told us what was important when we (RHA staff) communicate with them.**



### **Start well /**

Begin your conversation by identifying yourself and asking ‘is this a good time to talk?’



### **Be considerate /**

You don’t always know what others are going through, it’s important to be kind.



### **Be polite /**

That means considering your tone of voice, your mannerism and body language. It’s more than the words you use.



### **Be Patient /**

Appreciate that we are all individuals and have different needs. We all deserve to be treated fairly.



### **Be Kind /**

If I am contacting you, it’s because it’s important to me – you can make a positive difference to my life.



### **Be Honest /**

If you can’t resolve something straight away, please explain why, what you will do next and how long it will take. Keep us updated throughout the process.



### **Listen /**

Seek to understand our situation or circumstances before you respond to our queries. (eg – are we loud because we’re hard of hearing, are we stressed because we’re dealing with a lot at home).



### **Remember /**

My home is my safe space, although an issue may seem unimportant to you it could be very important to me.



### **Commit /**

When you can’t do something you said you would, contact us to explain why and agree a new date.



### **Language /**

Use language that is easy to understand, polite and friendly.



**We will use this guide to build good relationships and communicate better.**

**You can expect RHA staff to be considerate, polite, patient and kind and we will expect you to treat staff the same way.**

## TENANT BEHAVIOURS

**Our staff told us what is important when you (RHA tenants) communicate with them.**



### Start well /

Please don't assume that we know who you are, please tell us your name and address so that we can help you.



### Be considerate /

Understand that we may not have all the answers for you but will do our best to help.



### Be polite /

Treat staff the way you would like us to treat you, just like you we may be experiencing stress ourselves.



### Be Patient /

We want to provide a good service so we may ask you questions to better understand your need. From time to time we may also need to visit your home, this is not us interfering, but us needing to check your home is kept safe and suitable for your needs.



### Be Kind /

RHA Staff are like you, we are all unique. We have different backgrounds, experiences, hair and skin colour and we are proud of our differences.



### We will question /

If we feel you are using unkind words, or words that make us feel uncomfortable, we will discuss this with you and ask you not to use these words again. Please don't take this personally, this is part of our commitment to ensuring all staff and tenants feel safe and are treated kindly and fairly.



### Unkind words /

If you use unkind words there could be consequences, such as limiting the way you communicate with us or who you are able to communicate with, perhaps even receiving a written warning.



### Remember /

We do sometimes make mistakes so before you end a call it's ok to check we have taken the correct details.

If you would like to help us design and agree these standard, you can get involved by:

- 01443 424200 option 1 then option 5
- [Getinvolved@rhawales.com](mailto:Getinvolved@rhawales.com)
- [www.rhawales.com](http://www.rhawales.com)
- @RHAwales

# RHA on the Road

We make sure we regularly talk to you and listen to your opinions and views. That's why we take RHA on the road and visit different communities, bringing our colleagues, support and information to you in person.



In 2023 we have taken RHA back out on the road for the fifth time. We have visited 26 places across Rhondda Cynon Taff and spoken to you about:

- **Cost of living**
- **Affordability of your homes**
- **Welsh Governments Renting Homes Act**
- **RHA's plans and priorities**
- **MyRHA – your new online account**

We use your feedback to make sure we're offering support and services that you need, and if we can't do something we'll work with organisations who can.

## We will be back out later this year!

Look out for information on where we'll be and when on our Facebook page and website.

We'll let you know when we are in your community by texting you.

**Like our Facebook page to keep up to date on our news and plans**

 **@RHAWales**



# **HOME**GROWN is growing...

Our Homegrown gardening project started in 2020 during the pandemic and aims to get more people involved in healthy gardening activities and growing their own fruit and vegetables.



We are delighted to have been awarded more funding from National Lottery Awards For All Community Fund, to help get tenants involved and more active in green spaces – sharing gardening skills, growing your own and taking care of our natural environment.




This recent funding success allows us to expand our partnership with Cambrian Village Trust and offer community gardening session in more communities, which will help you to get creative with your outdoor spaces, share gardening tips, learn to grow your own and be more active with nature. We already have several community gardens which are perfect spaces to bring tenants together to plant flowers, trees, vegetables and encourage our local wildlife.

#### Would you like to:

- Gain new gardening skills and confidence in your own garden
- Learn about biodiversity - how to create areas that are good for bees, butterflies, and other wildlife
- Learn to grow your own and how to eat healthy and affordable
- Get inspiration and ideas for your own garden

**If you are feeling inspired and green fingered, then get in touch with the Get Involved Team:**

 **01443 424200** - Option 1 Option 4

 **Getinvolved@rhawales.com**

**My RHA**



# HERE TO HELP YOU

## Your Housing Officer

Our housing officers are here to offer support and advice about your home and community and their aim is to ensure that your tenancy with RHA is a happy and successful one. Your Housing Officer is your main point of contact for any help with your tenancy:

- Estate matters such as inspections, fly tipping on land, abandoned vehicles etc
- Deal with neighbour disputes and support other agencies such as the Police
- Tenancy changes – Succession, mutual exchanges and where there has been any changes
- Tenancy management – ensuring both RHA and you meet the obligations set out in your occupation contracts

## Your Payment Advice Team

Our Payment Advice Team are here to help if you are having problems paying your rent and they can support you if you are in financial difficulty. We are a team of specialist staff who have a wealth of experience and knowledge and we want to ensure you are free from worry, managing to pay your rent and receiving everything you are entitled to.

### Here's how we can support you:

- We can help you make informed choices in regard to your budgets
- Support you to claim benefits, including Universal Credit, Housing Benefit & any other entitlements
- Ease your financial worries and ensure you are not in rent arrears
- Help you maintain your tenancy and prevent any potential eviction
- Refer you to our Grub Hub project who can offer you food donations in times of need
- We can also put you in touch with other partner organisations which give you free and confidential advice

### PATCH 1

#### HOUSING OFFICER

Rachel Sinfield

#### PAYMENT ADVISOR

Donna Gale

- Tonypandy
- Clydach Vale
- Llwynypia
- Ystrad
- Gelli
- Ton Pentre
- Pentre
- Cwmparc
- Ynyswen
- Treorchy
- Treherbert
- Ty Newydd

### PATCH 2

#### HOUSING OFFICER

Liam Way

#### PAYMENT ADVISOR

Emma Jones

- Penygraig
- Williamstown
- Dinas
- Porth
- Hopkinstown
- Maesycod
- Pontypridd
- Treforest
- Thomastown
- Rhydyfelin
- Tonyrefail
- Tonteg
- Talbot Green

### PATCH 3

#### HOUSING OFFICER

Sian Fenaroli

#### PAYMENT ADVISOR

Mark Richards

- Llantwit Fardre
- Beddau
- Brynna
- Bryncae
- LLantrisant
- Pontyclun
- Llanharry

### PATCH 4

#### HOUSING OFFICER

Tracey Turner

#### PAYMENT ADVISOR

Emma Burnett

- Trealaw
- Ynyshir
- Pontygwaith
- Wattstown
- Stanleytown
- Tylorstown
- Ferndale
- Maerdy
- Aberdare
- Cwmdare
- Hirwaun
- Cyncoedd

## PATCH 5

## HOUSING OFFICER

Amanda Anstee

## PAYMENT ADVISOR

Amy Morgan

## Scheme Name

- Ty Mawr Uchaf
- Bethel Court
- Balaclava Court
- Cwrt Saron
- Watkin Rhys Court
- Compton Road
- St. Andrew's Court
- Ty Alban
- St, Cynon's Court
- Ty Ebenezer
- Pendyrys Court
- Llys Maendy
- Ty Bethania
- Plas Horeb
- Glenrhondda Court
- Hendreselsig

## Location

Hopkinstown  
Trehafod  
Penygraig  
Williamstown  
Tonypandy  
Tonypandy  
Tonypandy  
Llwynypia  
Llwynypia  
Tylorstown  
Tylorstown  
Ton Pentre  
Treorchy  
Treherbert  
Treherbert  
Ty Newydd

## PATCH 6

## HOUSING OFFICER

Victoria Leach

## PAYMENT ADVISOR

Amy Morgan

## Scheme Name

- Trem Y Mynydd
- Llys Glanrhondda
- Llys Nazareth
- St Peters Court
- Ty Ddewi
- Llys Hebron
- Llys Ben Bowen
- Constantine Court
- Llys Bryn Felin
- Llys Yr Onnen

## Location

Treherbert  
Treorchy  
Pentre  
Pentre  
Ton Pentre  
Pentre  
Ystrad  
Tonypandy  
Tonyrefail  
Mountain Ash

**Citizens Advice RCT** offers practical information and advice on a wide range of topics, including debt, legal, employment, immigration and other problems.

It is really important  
to let us know if you  
are struggling to  
pay your rent

There are lots of ways we can help you and your family so please don't bury your head in the sand. Let us know and get in touch

## CONTACT US:



01443 424200



enquiries@rhawales.com



www.rhawales.com



@RHAwales

# Renting Homes Act (Wales) – Converted Contracts

Working together

for a safe home for all

**The Renting Homes Act changes the way all landlords rent their homes to improve how we provide, manage, and live in rented homes in Wales. The new law was applied from 1st December 2022 and affects all landlords and tenants in Wales.**

This new law introduced many changes to tenancy laws and will apply to both social landlords and the private rented sector. It simplifies and improves your rights as a tenant, and it improves how some landlords manage rented homes in Wales.

One of the biggest changes was the introduction of a new 'Occupation Contract' which all landlords must issue in place of the old 'Tenancy Agreement'. So, if you became a tenant with us after 1st December 2022, you will have signed an Occupation Contract as the 'Contract Holder' of your new home.

For all tenants prior to the act coming into force, you will have received your new contract from us a little while ago. This replaces your old Tenancy Agreement and are automatically 'converted' over to the new Occupation Contract.

The changes have no effect on your rent and will not cost you any money.

Your new Converted Contract didn't need to be signed or returned to us – just kept in a safe place in your home.

If you have any queries about your Occupation Contract then please get in touch with us.

📞 01443 424200

✉️ enquiries@rhawales.com

🌐 www.rhawales.com

📱 @RHAwales

## RHA / Get INVOLVED

### My name is Dean.

I've been a volunteer with RHA for the past five years and I would like to tell you what this has meant for me and why you should join us.

Six years ago my partner suffered a stroke, I left full time employment to become a full time carer. I was encouraged by RHA staff to volunteer, saying yes was one of the best decisions I have made! Volunteering has allowed me to learn new skills, do training, make new friends, improve my health and help RHA improve their services for all tenants. It has been really satisfying to belong to the RHA family, helping to improve services, advocating for others and have an interest outside of my homelife.



If my experiences have inspired you and you feel like becoming part of something bigger, I strongly recommend contacting RHA and getting involved.

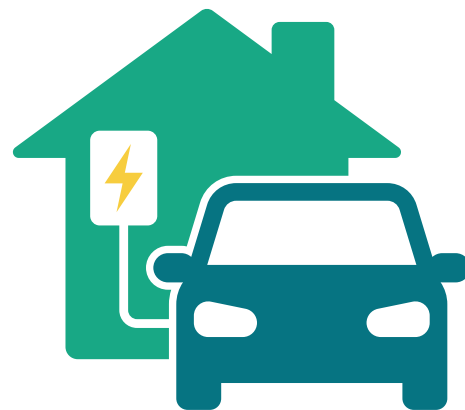
📞 01443 424200

✉️ getinvolved@rhawales.com



# Can I install an electric vehicle charging point?

Yes you can, but as your landlord and owner of the property, you will in the first instance need our permission to get this installed and you can do this by requesting permission in writing.



## 1. What information do you need to be able to give me permission to install an electric vehicle charging point?

There are several factors we have to consider when granting permission for you to install an EVCP such as, do you have your own dedicated off-road parking space and if yes, do you have adequate access to your electricity supply and is there capacity to be able to install one? All EVCP's have to have a dedicated supply going directly to your home's consumer unit (fuse board) and cannot be installed off another supply within your home. You also cannot install a charger where the cable to your vehicle will trail across any footpaths or pavements etc – even for a short period.

## 2. Are there any grants/financial assistance available to help with the cost of installing my charger?

The governments Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) has recently made some changes to the way you can claim a grant towards the cost of an EVCP which means people who live in rented accommodation can apply for a grant of up to £350 towards the cost of buying and installing the charger, more details can be found on the [www.gov.uk/electric-vehicle-chargepoint-grant-household](https://www.gov.uk/electric-vehicle-chargepoint-grant-household) website.

RHA Wales will not pay for any costs associated with your charge point installation including any additional work required such as ground works to lay cables, additional wiring or alterations to your household electrics which may be needed to accommodate the power supply of the charger.

## 3. If I can say yes to the above, are there any rules about who installs the charger and any documentation that I need to provide on completion?

Absolutely yes. Electric Vehicle Chargers can be very dangerous if not installed correctly and must be fitted by a fully qualified and competent electrician who is a registered installer under the Governments OZEV scheme. All chargers should have an RCD built into the unit and be installed in accordance with: **BS EN 61851-2:2022**

The current edition of the IET Code of Practice for Electric Vehicle Charging Equipment Installations (as amended)

The Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations

Upon completion, your installer should provide you with a Minor Electrical Installation Works Certificate and a Building Regulations Certificate of Compliance which you must send copies of to us. Your installer should also notify the District Network Operator (DNO) of the installation by completing and submitting the relevant form.

## 4. What happens if I don't have my own dedicated parking space or have access to my electricity supply without trailing cables e.g. over a footpath?

Please submit your request explaining your position and we will review whether there are any other options for you.

# When and who to contact

## When to contact RHA



**01443 424200**



To amend  
current tenancy



To get approval  
for a pet



To swap homes with  
another RHA tenant



To report fly tipping  
in shared areas



To request grass cutting  
or weeding in shared areas

## When to contact RCT County Borough Council



**01443 425001**



To report  
dog fouling



For pest control  
of rats mice etc.



To report fly tipping  
in local area



For rubbish/recycling  
collection



To report  
dead animals



To report highways  
issues i.e. traffic,  
abandoned vehicles

## Where to find further help



### Thinking of moving?

Log on to your account at  
[www.homefinderct.org.uk](http://www.homefinderct.org.uk)  
or call **01443 425678**



### To report animal welfare worries

contact [www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk)  
or call **0300 1234 999**



### To request support

You can self refer into  
**Supported People** services  
call **01443 425473**



### For drug related nuisances

(i.e cannabis smell)  
contact [www.south-wales.police.uk](http://www.south-wales.police.uk)  
on **101**. Your housing officer can only  
act if you've told the police.



### For anti-social behaviour or disturbances

Car parking issues or for neighbour  
welfare issues tell your **PCSO**, visit  
[www.south-wales.police.uk](http://www.south-wales.police.uk)  
or call **101**.