

## **Supporting social housing tenants in Wales through Coronavirus**

Housing associations and local authorities in Wales recognise that this is an uncertain and difficult time for everybody right now. COVID-19 is rapidly changing the world around us, and having a profound impact on people's jobs, communities and lives. We provide homes to more than 250,000 tenants in Wales, as well as providing essential care and support services. We stand by the communities we serve in these uncertain times, and we want to make a number of commitments to tenants:

- We will keep tenants safe and secure in their homes.

Nobody will be evicted from our homes as a result of financial hardship caused by COVID-19, and we will continue to work towards our commitment to end all evictions into homelessness.

We are concerned by the reported rise in domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, and we will work, in partnership with authorities and other service providers, to support those who are affected.

- We will help tenants get the financial support they need.

Many of us provide information, guidance and advice on managing your money and many of us work with local providers who are adapting to working in this new environment. We will ensure that tenants have access to the advice that is appropriate for their situation. This could include:

- Signposting, advice and guidance to navigate the welfare system and access Universal Credit and other benefits that people are entitled to
- Supporting people to access emergency payments to meet their energy costs
- Working with local partners to arrange access to services such as food banks who can provide tenants with the essentials they may be struggling to access
- Supporting people to access other emergency grant and support that may be available

As well as pro-actively reaching out to tenants, we are urging those in need to contact us at the earliest opportunity to access the wide range of support available to them. Many of us are also redeploying staff to customer facing roles, particularly care, homelessness and advice, to ensure the most vulnerable people are supported throughout the outbreak.

- We will support tenants and find solutions if they have difficulty paying rent

Paying rent is important to ensure we can continue to provide essential services, such as maintaining our homes and keeping them safe.

However, we recognise that with the huge impact on people's jobs and livelihoods, some will experience a sudden or significant loss to their income. We are here to help, and we have staff who will be able to support tenants through this difficult period.

Where people experience financial difficulties, we will listen, advise and support them to make suitable arrangements to pay their rent that are affordable and manageable for the long term.

- We will do everything we can to support tenants' wellbeing.

Housing association staff are working hard to continue to provide services and find innovative ways to ensure tenants can receive the support they need to ensure both their physical and mental wellbeing are the best they can be.

Where staff are entering properties to carry out essential work, they are following the latest guidance, and the sector is working collectively to ensure the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment is in place.

We are also working with partners to make a wide a range of wellbeing support available to tenants, which could include:

- Making our community and support services available digitally to keep tenants and our staff safe
- Support to access mental health and other community health services
- Online groups and phone calls to check in on their wellbeing and to support people who are lonely or isolated
- Regularly contacting our most vulnerable tenants to ensure they are able to access the support that is available