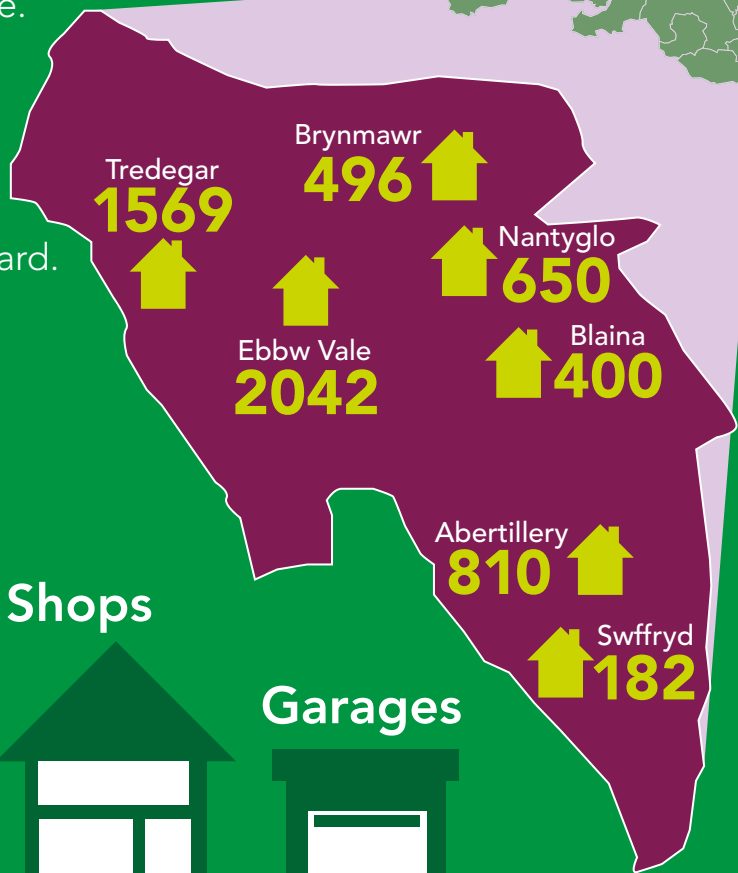
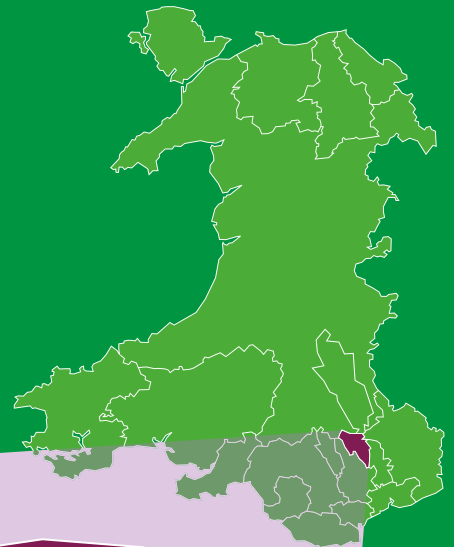


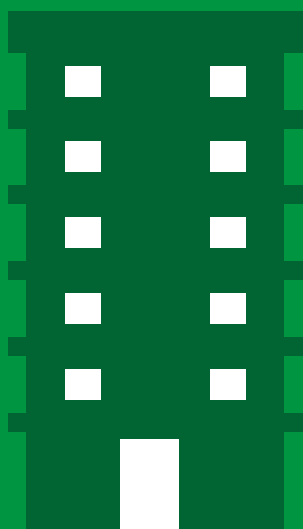
*at the heart of your community*

## Did you know?

- We have 6,149 homes and are the largest social housing provider in Blaenau Gwent.
- We also have leasehold properties – 339 homes, mostly flats, 27 shops and 548 garages.
- 21,562 repairs had been completed during 2014-15. Nine out of ten of them (90.5%) carried out within our agreed target time.
- 548 empty properties had been made available for rent.
- More than 8 out of 10 homes (83.22%) have been brought up to Welsh Housing Quality Standard.



### Flats



339

### Houses



6149

### Shops



27

### Garages



548

Annual Report 2014-15

# Tai Calon in your Community

Your **Neighbourhood team**

- looks after you; and
- most things to do with you living in one of our homes and neighbourhoods.

You said:

We have a problem in Cefn Golau with people misbehaving and drinking alcohol in the street.

We did:

We arranged for trees, shrubs and vegetation to be cut back making the area more visible and harder for the drinkers to meet in the area.

## Did you know?

The Move On project at Ffynnon Court in Brynmawr helps adults develop the skills they will need to live in their own home.

We have 11 Supported Living schemes where tenants can live independently or with the assistance of the scheme manager. The schemes have a communal lounge, laundry and 24 hour emergency alarm system.

We provide homes in the community for six people with mental health and other issues as part of a supported living scheme with the local authority and Esgyn.

We carried out around 270 minor and 200 major adaptations to help tenants remain in their own homes.

440 tenants who live in their own home are supported by the Piper Alarm system which is connected to a 24 hour emergency control centre.



# Did you know?

Your Neighbourhood, Your Choice is you working with us to improve your outside spaces.

**Ashvale** – We have created an orchard as part of a community garden after listening to what you wanted. We are also building a play area for children, improving car parking and putting up new boundary fences.

**Newtown** – we installed colour coded road signs because you said it will make it easier for visitors and delivery firms to find their way around.

We are also **involved** in activities in your area. We run neighbourhood surgeries, help organise community events and activities like clean-up days.

- The youngsters involved in the **Rainbow Rangers** highlight any environmental issues in the Newtown area of Ebbw Vale. They also enjoy activities like pumpkin carving and bug hunts.
- **Farm Friends** is a youth group at Bryn Farm in Brynmawr.
- **Space Saviours** helps tenants and residents who want to “turn an empty space into a great place”.

At **Cae Glas** in Nantyglo, Space Saviours is helping a tenant create a “hanging out” area where children will have space to “play and stay” without disturbing anyone else.



## Did you know we can support you in other ways as well?

- The **Community Involvement Fund** gave grants of up to £4,000 to 11 local organisations. The applications, which can be for one-off or longer term projects, are decided by a panel of tenants.
- The **Tenant Bursary Fund** is for tenants, their partners and children who want financial help with educational courses or work related equipment. The fund supported 27 people who had up to £250 each.
- Anyone who gets involved with us – by helping out with a community event, taking part in surveys or attending a meeting – is rewarded with a **2for1 Time Banking voucher**. You get one for every two hours you give us. The vouchers can be spent at the Market Hall Cinema in Brynmawr, for play sessions, beauty therapies, hair treatments, leisure activities and day trips.

## Did you know?

Cinema goers can buy tickets for just £3.50 on **Tai Calon Tuesdays** at the Market Hall Cinema.

**Tai Fest** is our annual funday for tenants. Nearly 530 people enjoyed our fourth free day out in July, 2014 which was hosted at Solis One. The theme was the World Cup which had been held in Brazil that summer.

We are the first housing association in the UK to be awarded **White Ribbon** status. The campaign raises awareness about violence towards women.

# Menu Planner

Use this meal planner to help you organise your food and shopping for the week.

Tai Calon  
Community Housing  
www.taicalon.org

	Breakfast	Lunch
Mon	CORN FLAKES	SANDWICH
Tues	YOGURT	
Wed		
Thurs		

- We dealt with 378 complaints about **anti social behaviour**, mainly to do with noise. We obtained court injunctions to prevent ASB in 15 cases and one Possession Order to end a tenancy.
- More than a thousand tenants (1,093) have been affected by the so called "**bedroom tax**", introduced by the UK Government as part of its welfare reforms in April, 2013.
- We have a special team of **rent and income advisors** to support tenants.
- We can help you claim **benefits, set up a bank/post office account** or if you are **in debt** or behind with your **rent**.
- We supported 211 tenants to apply for **Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)** which can be awarded to "top up" their rent for a period of time.
- There were 23 **evictions** for rent arrears. If you are struggling or can't pay your rent, please contact us on 0300 303 1717. The **earlier** you call us, the **sooner we can help** you.
- **Citizens Advice** has an advisor based at Solis One every weekday. Since July, 2014, she has supported more than a 100 tenants who between them had debts totalling £854,554.

## Case study

An elderly, vulnerable couple on welfare and disability benefits had been targeted by two doorstep lenders.

The advisor persuaded the lenders to write off the remaining balance of £4,973. She intervened a second time after one company sold on the debt to a collection agency. The firm sorted out the situation and compensated the tenants for their distress.

- **Smart Money Cymru** offers access to competitive savings and loan accounts. An advisor is available by appointment on a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at Solis One. She and Smart Money Cymru can offer other help, like support in getting back into work.

## Case study

A single parent, with a young child, was provided with childcare so that she could volunteer for Smart Money Cymru. The tenant, who wanted to return to work, was also given support and training. She is now in part time employment and hopes to return full time when her child starts school in September 2015.

## Did you know?

We also help tenants and residents find **work** as well as **volunteering** and **training**.

**Work Club** is every Thursday at Solis One. You can search for jobs, get help in applying and preparing for an interview.

We helped more than **40 people** into work over the past year. While two tenants **set up their own businesses**, one has opened a gym and the other is setting up a parent support group.

## Case study

"J", an experienced ground worker, had been unemployed for nearly two years. He had also been frustrated by the lack of support in renewing his CSCS card, the leading skills certification scheme within the UK construction industry.

However, with the help of Work Club he renewed his card and received further employment support and training.

"J" has since found employment after spotting a job advertised while at Work Club.

## Case study

Four tenants, who attended the Work Club, took part in the Wear 2 Work scheme run by law firm Blake Morgan LLP and department store, John Lewis. They received training in interview techniques at John Lewis in Cardiff and given an outfit to wear when job hunting.

## Did you know?

Businesses which work with us donated £6,500 to our **2014 Christmas appeal**. The money bought presents, food, electricity and gas tokens for young people and families being supported by Blaenau Gwent social services and local charities.

We had **116 compliments** of which 91 were about staff and 25 for our contractors. The majority, 51, praised your tenant liaison officers.

There is a formal **complaints** procedure and during the past 12 months we received 128 complaints, six more than the previous year. The majority were about **repairs** and **planned works**. Most of these were to do with delays or the failure to carry out work. Just under half of all complaints were upheld.

We also raised £27,735 for our **community benefit** schemes. Businesses working with us either gave their time or donated money for neighbourhood projects. This can mean anything from providing raffle prizes, supporting community projects, like clean up days, as well as our Time Banking scheme.



## Did you know?

You can keep up-to-date with what is going on by following us at [facebook.com/taicalon](https://www.facebook.com/taicalon) or on [youtube.com/taicalonhousing](https://www.youtube.com/taicalonhousing)

You can also tune into **Tai Calon on the Radio** every Wednesday at 10am on BRfm 97.3 FM to hear our latest news and about what is happening in your area.

We run an annual garden competition which is open to tenants and their children. Those who have **Made a Difference** in their neighbourhood can be nominated for the MAD awards. Meanwhile the winners of our photographic contest have their pictures published in the Tai Calon calendar.

Read more about our **Annual Report** and **Financial Statements** at [www.taicalon.org](http://www.taicalon.org) or get a copy by emailing [press@taicalon.org](mailto:press@taicalon.org)

