



SUPPORTING PEOPLE LIES

HELLO AND WELCOME TO THE SPRING EDITION OF THE CWM TAF SUPPORTING PEOPLE NEWSLETTER 2016

If you want to contribute to the next edition please contact Sue Preece, Regional Development Coordinator on 01685 726230 or e mail Susan, Preece2@merthyr.gov.uk

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CWM TAF REGIONAL COLLABORATIVE COMMITTEE (RCC) NEWS & UPDATES

New Chair and deputy Landlord representatives for the RCC - A Big welcome to you Both!!

Meet the New chair of the RCC!

A New chair has been elected for the Cwm Taf RCC following the news that the current chair Keiron Montague has stepped down. Councillor Linda Mathews, Cabinet member with portfolio for Social Services will take up the role as chair from May 2016.

Councillor Linda Matthews was born in Penrhiwfer in the Rhondda and educated at Williamstown Infants and Junior Schools and Tonyrefail Grammar School. On leaving school she worked in the Pathology Laboratory initially at East Glamorgan Hospital, then the Royal Glamorgan Hospital before taking early retirement a few years ago. She moved to Merthyr Tydfil on her marriage in 1975 and has lived in the Town Ward ever since.

Linda was elected as a Labour councillor for Town Ward in 1983 and held several Chairs and Vice-chairs before becoming Deputy Leader in 1991. She was the Mayor in 1993/94.

Linda lost her seat in 1999 and so concentrated on enhancing her career by gaining additional qualifications in the form of an MSc and a PhD. Linda successfully stood as a Labour Candidate in Town Ward in 2012. After spending 2 years as a member of scrutiny committees, Linda took up a cabinet position in 2014 with responsibility to drive the

Transformational Change Programme in order to meet financial targets enforced by the Government budget cuts.

In May 2015 Linda took up the position of Cabinet member for Social Services which includes responsibility for both Adults and Children's services. She is now overseeing the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act and sits on several collaborative boards.

Safely reducing the number of Looked After Children is also a priority.

Linda is married to Jeff and they have 2 children, Sian (who has followed in her mother's footsteps and was elected to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council in a byelection May 2015) and Paul who is in the Royal Navy. Linda and Jeff have 4 grandchildren.



Debt Advice Service 02920 556120

Got Clutter?... Get





Cllr Linda Matthew - Cabinet Member & Portfolio with Social Services, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

Community Housing Cymru has elected a new Deputy Landlord representative:

Meet the New Deputy Landlord representative

I have recently been appointed as Deputy Regional Collaborative Committee (RCC) representative for the Cwm Taf area and am very keen to develop partnerships and represent the views and interests of landlords and support providers. I am currently employed as a Team Leader of Support Services within Merthyr Valleys Homes, managing six sheltered housing schemes, temporary accommodation units and a floating support service. I have a vast amount of housing experience, ranging from front line operational functions to strategically managing areas of the housing service. I have worked within the housing field for more than fifteen years and have developed an in-depth knowledge of the sector within this time. During this period I have attained a BSc in Housing Policy and Practice and am committed to continuous development and training. Therefore I feel with my knowledge and experience working within the housing and support field I can effectively contribute to shaping the future of the supporting people programme.

Julie McCarthy

Deputy Landlord representative



Grŵp Cartrefi Cymunedol Cymru



Community Housing Cymru Group

Goodbye and Good Luck!

Deputy leader Keiron Montague will step down this May

Councillor Keiron Montague, deputy leader RCT County Borough Council, has confirmed he will stand down from the role this May and will not seek re-election as a Councillor in 2017.

Councillor Keiron Montague – cabinet member with responsibility for tackling poverty, engagement and housing who currently stands as Chair of the Cwm Taf Regional Collaborative Committee– made the announcement following his appointment to a community development manager role with Cynon Taf Housing Association.

Councillor Montague, who was elected in Maerdy during 2012, said: "I have taken the decision not to seek re-election to the council in 2017.

'A hugely-exciting job opportunity'

"As a result, I will stand down as deputy leader of the council this May to allow a colleague who intends to stand in those elections to take up the post, and support the leader of the council in the run up to the local government elections.

"I have recently accepted a hugely-exciting job opportunity back in the housing sector, which as many of you will know is where my professional working background lies.

The Cwm Taf RCC would like to thank Keiron for his continued commitment and support over the last year as chair of the Cwm Taf RCC and would like to wish him every success in his new job.





PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Cwm Taf Regional Commissioning Plan (RCP)

The Fourth RCP 2016-2019 has been developed in partnership with the Cwm Taf RCC, Local Authorities, Health, Probation Wales, Public Health Wales and Supporting People Officers. The RCP was submitted to Welsh Government on the 15th February 2016 along with the Regional Spend Plan for 2016/2017.

RCP Priorities:

- > Form closer working relationship with the Tackling Poverty programmes and monitor the implementation of the Social Services & Well being Act to identify ways of streamlining services and possible joint working.
- > To explore options regarding the shared outcomes framework and how supporting people fit into this.
- > To implement the cost calculator across the region
- > To develop a strategic plan for identifying savings for any future budget cuts
- > Consider options for regional commissioning of SP services
- > Improve outcomes monitoring across the region to ensure services are able to effectively evidence quality services and the impact our services have on the service users
- > To explore options regarding the regionalisation of the SP teams

If you require a copy of the Regional Commissioning Plan please contact Sue Preece, Regional Development Coordinator.

Making Links with the Tackling Poverty Programmes

The Welsh Government has emphasised the importance of linking Supporting People services to the wider Tackling Poverty Programmes. Supporting People is a key part of the tackling poverty agenda and the Cwm Taf RCC has extended their membership to include tackling poverty leads for each local authority.

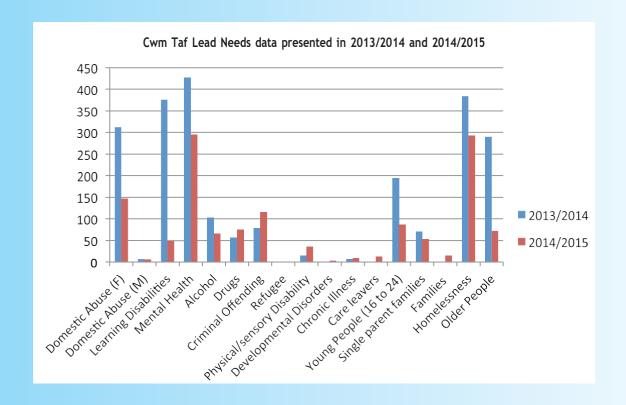
Upcoming dates of RCC Meetings & Planning Days for 2016

9th May 2016
16th August 2016
18th October 2016
15th November 2016

Cwm Taf Needs Mapping Data

Lead Needs data is collated and analysed by the supporting people teams across a two year period. This information has been presented to the RCC and will inform local and regional commissioning priorities.

The chart below illustrates the changing demand in services between 2 years data collection:



During 2014/15 the Supporting People teams received 1442 referrals, 681 for women and 761 for men through the central referral system.

- There is a significant decrease in 2 client groups across the region to include; Learning Disabilities & Older People. There was also a significant decrease in referrals for Mental Health & Domestic Abuse across the region, however these are still the highest numbers presenting for supporting people services.
- There was also a slight decrease with 3 client groups to include, Alcohol misuse & Single parent families. Homelessness also received a slight decrease however this is still showing as one of the highest numbers presenting for supporting people services.
- The remainder of the client groups have seen an increase across the region

Cwm Taf RCC Service User Consultation

The Cwm Taf Supporting People Regional Collaborative Committee commissioned HouseMark to find out what really matters to service users in supporting people services. A large consultation exercise was conducted to feed service user input into the performance indicators for supported housing services in future commissioning. This was a great opportunity for service users themselves to strategically shape future services.

Support providers already involve service users well, so we wanted to harness that, to **consult** people **as widely as possible.** We achieved this and oversaw an extensive consultation exercise. Some 400 service users of supporting people services were involved, from 53 different services and 18 service providers across Cwm Taf.



CWM TAF REGIONAL PROVIDER FORUM

Cwm Taf has an established Regional Provider forum that is facilitated by Cymorth Cymru. Quarterly meeting are held and this is you opportunity to have your say as a service provider! Please note that you do not have to be a Cymorth member to attend these meetings.

Cymorth Cymru is also on the lookout for nominations for a **New Chair & Vice Chair** for the Cwm Taf Regional Provider forum...

If you are interested then please contact Cymorth Cymru direct.

A BIG thank you to Ben Griffiths & Hazel Yates who have been Chair & Vice chair for the last 12 months!

If you require further information on becoming a member of Cymorth Cymru please contact: Oliver Townsed on 02920 553687 or olivertownsend@cymorthcyru.org.uk



SUPPORTING PEOPLE CASE STUDIES

Picking up the Pieces...



And that is exactly what infamous local resident Nicky Owen Davies is doing these days - literally and metaphorically - thanks to the ongoing support he's had from Merthyr Valleys Homes' Floating Support Officer Darren Davies.

Nicky was released from prison in January 2015 and moved into Garth Villasthe homeless hostel in Pont Morlais run by Adref. Like all residents that move into hostel accommodation, Nicky was set a number of goals, which he diligently stuck to for the course of his residency. Due to his exemplary behavior and positive engagement this was extended from three months to five, but as this was only a short term measure, at the end of the five-month period he was referred to Merthyr Valleys Homes temporary housing scheme with the provision of floating support.

Needless to say he was very apprehensive, as he didn't feel ready for more upheaval and certainly didn't feel as though he could go it alone just yet. He was making great strides in terms of getting his life back on track having recently signed a voluntary contract with the probation service (they had changed the conditions of his license). He had also put himself forward for fortnightly drugs testing and enrolled on an OCN tenancy and employability qualification, which Merthyr Valleys Homes has developed in partnership with Adref and the Neighbourhood Learning Centre.

Nicky successfully accessed the Merthyr Valleys Homes temporary accommodation scheme and quickly settled in with the provision of intense support from Darren. Darren was so impressed by the way that Nicky not only maintained his home, but the efforts he was making to get all aspects of his life in order, that a few months back, he referred Nicky to the Merthyr Valleys Homes volunteering scheme. He now spends a couple of hours every week working with the Environmental Task Force in Merthyr, and hopes to increase his hours in the coming months.

This is the longest period of time that Nicky has spent outside of prison – from the age of 13 (following the death of both parents) he has been in and out of various institutions, accused of 120 offences with 42 convictions.

Nicky openly admits that he would be released with the immediate intention of reoffending – because in prison he was guaranteed a roof over his head and three meals a day. The underlying need for a secure 'home environment' was the main factor that drove him to reoffend – so Darren's timely and much needed intervention was crucial.

Nicky had a traumatic childhood – and whilst he is the first to concede that this was the reason that he went off the rails at a very young age – he is also keen to point out that this certainly doesn't justify his criminal behaviour and persistent offending.

"It took the best part of 17 years for me to finally realise that it was up to me to take responsibility for my own actions and turn my life around. This is mainly thanks to the ongoing support I've had from Darren and the fact that he was prepared to give me that first real chance. I don't want to let him or myself down."

"He was prepared to stick his neck on the block and gave me that vital opportunity to prove myself. I've had support before but having my own place has made such a difference. When I was released this time I set myself three goals – to sort myself out with a home, to be a proper father and to find a job. And I'm well on the way to achieving those three things. My next priority is to pass my driving test as this will put me in a better position to find paid work. I know it won't be easy – as an ex-offender I'm fighting an uphill battle – but I'm confident that with ongoing support I'll get a job soon."

A father of 2 small children, Nicky has worked really hard to build bridges with his ex-partner - he has had a restraining order against him lifted and he now has unsupervised access to his children. He openly acknowledges that his children are the driving force behind his determination to turn his life around for good. He wants to be a positive role model for them and to ensure that they don't go down the same path that he did.

His girlfriend is expecting a child in the next couple of months and Nicky is determined to provide a stable home environment for his family. He is currently applying for two-bedroom properties and is looking forward to the future – one that he genuinely believes wouldn't have been possible without the help and support he has had.



SUPPORTING PEOPLE CASE STUDIES

Castle House Floating Support



My name is John and I started receiving support from Liz my support worker from Gwalia back in October 2015.

A close friend of mine suggested that I refer myself for support through Supporting People as he had had lots of help and had managed to turn his life around.

So I found the information on the RCT website, printed it out, filled it in and sent it off, not really knowing what to expect.

At this time I was sharing a house with a friend who was moving out to a place of his own and was at risk of losing my home as I didn't think I could afford to stay there. Life was slowly falling apart. I am a binge drinker with a dark relationship with alcohol. When things go bad I drink until it all goes away. Unfortunately this was also affecting my health. I was diagnosed with a heart condition and my drinking was making it worse. My marriage was over; I was estranged from my daughter.

Then I was contacted by Liz and Sharon from Gwalia to call to complete an assessment. This was a friendly chat at home where I felt safe to talk. I

then began to receive support with Liz who came out to see me weekly, and we slowly started to work things through together.

I applied for a grant to help with the housing benefit shortfall for 13 weeks and was successful. I didn't know anything about this until I began support.

Liz liaised with my landlord, housing benefit and Council tax and slowly I was able to 'see the trees for the wood' at last.

I now have a single tenancy, extra money which helps with my shortfall, I'm starting counselling soon and am also addressing my relationship with alcohol and haven't had a drink for a long time.

Life looks so different now compared to six months ago when I was on the verge of losing everything and I can't thank my support worker, Gwalia and Supporting People enough for all the help I have received. It's made such a difference to me. I still have some things to work through but now the mountain seems a lot smaller to climb.

SUPPORT PROVIDER NEWS & EVENTS

NEW SUPPORTING PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT OPENS!!







A FRESH START

Martins Close was built in the early 1990's, on a former police station site, by Cynon Taf Community Housing group. It was originally 18 rented flats. However due to problems the flats have not been in use for some years.

Its location at the heart of a community meant that it was identified as being suitable for a new project and a new lease of life was planned. A partnership was created between RCTCBC Supporting People Team, the Cwm Taf Regional Collaborative Committee and Cynon Taf Community Housing Group to redevelop the building to provide necessary Supported Accommodation for individuals who are homeless and need to develop skills to be able to manage their own homes within the community.

Gwalia were appointed in February as the support provider to manage the project; which now contains 13 independent flats. Gwalia will deliver a comprehensive support service to enable those who stay at Martins Close to become independent and economically active members of the community. The project will be staffed 24/7. The facilities contained within the project are an activity room, facilities to provide independent living skills training and a digital inclusion room.

To ensure the project works with the community, a community forum has been established, the first meeting was held on the 10th March 2016. Future meetings will be planned to ensure regular communication is maintained.

For more information about Gwalia and Martins Close please contact Dean Parfitt or Julia Winter on

01443 742220

For more information on how to be referred or access Martins Close please contact RCTCBC Supporting People Team

SupportingPeopleTeam@rctcbc.gov.uk or



Supporting People Outcomes Framework

New Outcome Spreadsheets – April 2016 - Onwards

As many of you will already know, the Supporting People Outcome & Data Group has been running a pilot since April 2015 with 12 LA's and a variety of providers, to look at the homelessness status of service users both when they enter the service and upon leaving. Following the outcome collection in November 2015, we have had the opportunity

to look at the first set of 'Homelessness Status' data collected by piloting providers and Local Authorities. This information has been valuable, and as a result we are rolling the spreadsheet out for the collection starting in April 2016.

If you have not received a copy of the new spreadsheet please contact you Supporting People Team urgently!

Supporting People Outcome Submission Deadlines 2016 - 2017

Period	Dates	Deadline to submit to Local Authority
2	October 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 (date set by your LA)
1	April 2016 – June2016 (New spreadsheet)	July2016 (date set by your LA)
2	July 2016 – December 2016 (New spreadsheet)	January2017 (date set by your LA)

This will bring us in line with the data collection time scales of Jan – June, July – Dec which is now being utilised across other programmes.

Caersalem House -Gwalia Project



As part of the Gwalia Healthy Conversations Programme the cooking group here at Caersalem House is still going strong; Every Wednesday evening the service users cook a delicious and nutritious meal together as a group, providing them not only with a healthy, hearty meal but also the life skills needed to live independently.

The cooking group involves service users deciding on the meal to cook, budgeting and shopping for the ingredients and learning new skills in the kitchen to create healthy home-cooked meals from scratch. The cooking skills are delivered by our experienced and skilled staff who pass on their life skills to the service users through practical learning and gaining confidence to cook a meal of their own. Service users then enjoy the fruits of their labour by having the meal together.

The group have already learnt to cook and make spaghetti bolognaise, sausage casserole, roast chicken dinner, lasagne, chicken and leek pie, trifle, apple pie,

To go one step further the cooking group are planning to grow their own ingredients at the Gwalia allotments this year, there will be a selection of fruit and vegetables chosen to be grown and nurtured.







Hafod Care Craft Group

We have so far been knitting and sewing "Twiddle muffs" for patients with Alzheimers. We have donated a number of Twiddlemuffs to local care homes where they have been gratefully received. A twiddlemuff is a double thickness hand muff with bits and bobs attached inside and out. It is designed to provide a stimulation activity for restless hands for patients suffering from dementia.

Our knitting 'teacher' Suzanne Lewis (one of our support workers) patiently taught the men and women to knit and sew and provided the wool and needles for all.

The craft group has now moved to Pontypridd library on a Thursday morning as it is a more central meeting point for service users. We have joined another craft group which also includes card making and crocheting.



Hafod Service User Christmas party

The annual Hafod Christmas party for service users from across South Wales was held in the Barry Memorial Hall on 9 December 2015. A number of service users from all projects and services in RCT attended the party and were supported by their support workers to do so.

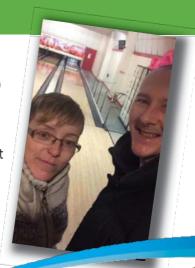
Prior to the day there was a competition held between the different support areas in South Wales to design and make table decorations for the party. Staff and service users from all areas took part in this and produced some amazingly creative designs on the day!

The party is an opportunity for service users to meet other people and have a fun day out at what can be a difficult time of year for some of our service users. There was entertainment and a sing along from the Hafod Choir which is made up of staff and service users from RCT, Bridgend and Cardiff. There was also a disco which was a big hit and service users enjoyed getting up for a dance.

There was a lovely buffet provided which was thoroughly enjoyed by all as well as a raffle and everyone received a Xmas gift before leaving. The raffle raised £138.15 on the day which was donated to the Foodbank.

Hafod Non-Electronic Days

Hafod have been holding "non-electronic days" once a month for over a year. Once a month all staff dedicate a day out of the office and away from their computers to spend with service users. The day is spent undertaking voluntary work or activities to decrease social isolation and improve social engagement and health and access to the community. Recent activities in addition to the craft group have included walking excursions, a visit to the Cardiff Christmas markets, a trip to Barry Island and bowling. The bowling was a very popular with service users who are looking into arranging further outings in the near future.





Alltwen Independent Living Scheme in Aberdare transformed to meet standards

Alltwen, an independent living scheme owned and managed by Newydd Housing Association, has been transformed in the last few months to make a difference to tenants' lives.

R & M Williams and Brooking Decorators were employed by Newydd to renovate the scheme to meet RNIB visibly better standards. All the internal areas were decorated to make key features such as doors, floors, handrails, furniture and new blinds more visible. Handrails were also installed to assist tenants with sight loss.

Bob Humphreys, Operations Manager at R & M Williams, said, "I'd never realised the difference these changes could make to people's lives. It has been a pleasure to work on a project that has had such an impact; more schemes should be working towards achieving this."

Outside the residence pathways have been widened and clearly marked with handrails installed. The parking area has also been clearly marked and raised steps and kerbs have been installed to assist tenants and visitors to get around the scheme.

Ray Kemmery is 88 and has lived at Alltwen since its opening in 1988. When Ray moved in he was a fit and healthy man who enjoyed keeping fit in the home made gym at the scheme and he enjoyed sunbathing in the surrounding gardens. Eight years ago Ray visited the hospital for a check up on his eyes and was amazed when he was told that he was almost blind.

Ray said, "The doctor asked me how I got to the hospital and I told him I drove. He was shocked that I'd been able to get there, and told me that I wouldn't be driving home. I'm now registered blind and have struggled to get out for the last eight years."

Ray is almost completely housebound except for days when he is able to get out and about with his family, which sadly isn't as often as he'd like. He is now over the moon with the recent work completed at Alltwen. He said, "I'm able to get out of my flat every day to walk around the building. There are benches dotted around the path so I can rest if I need to and take in the beautiful garden which I haven't been able to see for a long time. I don't worry about falling as I can see the path clearly and it's wider with no obstructions. It's the best thing that has happened to me for a long time."

Ray has benefitted in many ways from the improvements made at Alltwen, "I'm able to keep up to date with the news as Hazel, Neywdd's Independent Living Officer, provides me with a blown up newsletter with extra large writing. The changes that have been made really have made a big difference to me and I'm so grateful."

OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS & INFORMATION

Goodbye & Good Luck!

Rhondda Cynon Taf Supporting People Team are sad to announce that our colleague Lorraine Griffiths has moved on to pastures new. Having spent 12 years in Supporting People, Lorraine has now begun a new challenge by becoming an Area Manager for Gwalia Care and Support. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank Lorraine for all of her hard work and contribution to the Supporting People programme over the past 12 years. Lorraine's commitment, drive and attitude has played a massive part in the development and success of Supporting People in RCT and she'll be greatly missed. Good luck in the future Lorraine!

Meeting the Needs of People with Learning Disabilities across Merthyr Tydfil

As part of our work to continually improve services we deregistered two learning disability residential group homes into two Supported Accommodation establishments.

This meant that the people living within the two homes would be able to enjoy a much more independent lifestyle where the care and support could be tailored to flexibly meet their needs. This approach will enhance opportunities for the seven residents living within the scheme including more control over their care and support.

This has also led to an increase in the supported accommodation provision available within the County Borough for our vulnerable residents with learning disabilities.

The scheme came online in January 2016 and is working well towards meeting the needs of the tenants, increasing their opportunities and maximising their independence.

Further information on this project can be obtained by calling 01685 724636.



Merthyr Tydfil Local Commissioning Plan

This year the Merthyr Tydfil Local Commissioning Plan (LCP) will be available on the Cwm Taf Engagement Hub for consultation. The LCP outlines the needs data and commissioning, reconfiguration and decommissioning decisions across Merthyr Tydfil.

If you would like to have your say on the Merthyr Tydfil LCP you can do so by accessing the Cwm Taf Engagement Hub. www.cwmtafhub.com

Further information on the LCP can be obtained by calling 01685 724636.

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act Care and support in Wales is changing

From April, you will have more say in your social Services.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act comes into force on April 6.

It is the new law for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support.

What does this mean for me?

The Act changes the way people's needs are assessed and the way services are delivered- people will have more of a say in the care and support they receive.

It also promotes a range of help available within the community to reduce the need for formal, planned support.

- Services will be available to provide the right support at the right time
- More information and advice will be available
- Assessment will be simpler and proportionate
- Carers will have an equal right to be assessed for support
- There will be stronger powers to keep people safe from abuse and neglect

What happens now?

If you receive care or support, you will take part in the new process during your next scheduled review date.

For more information please see www.rctcbc.gov.uk or www.merthyr.gov.uk or www.gov.wales/careandsupport



Merthyr Tydfil Housing Allocation Policy We want your views

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough is considering changing the way we allocate social housing within Merthyr Tydfil.

The housing allocation policy needs updating due to changes in legislation and the needs of the people in Merthyr Tydfil.

This is your chance to have a say on how the Housing Choice scheme will operate in the future.

The Council cannot allocate social housing to everyone who wants one, as overall demand exceeds available housing stock. It is therefore vitally important the Council works in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, including local citizens, to ensure the needs of the local population are considered in any decisions made.

Many of you will have used or at least heard of the Housing Choice (Tai Dewis) housing scheme. It is a choice based letting scheme which allows people on the housing register to bid for a property they would like to live in, owned by one of the four local Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) (a.k.a. Housing Associations). These are:

- Merthyr Valleys Homes (MVH)
- Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association (MTHA)
- Wales & West Housing Association
- · Hafod Housing Association

Please note the Council does not own any social housing. It was all transferred to Merthyr Valleys Homes in 2009. The Council does however remain liable for managing access to social housing as part of its strategic housing function.

Your views are really important and will help ensure we collectively make the best use of the social housing available locally, whilst offering applicants the widest possible choice of accommodation.

You have up until Monday, 16th May to have your say on this which can be done by completing a survey online at www.cwmtafhub.com or collecting a paper copy from the Civic Centre or requesting one to be sent to you by e-mailing housing@merthyr.gov.uk or phoning (01685) 725452. Following the consultation period, we aim to publicise a draft policy for consideration in summer of 2016, with a final policy becoming live in the autumn of 2016.



CONTACT DETAILS

For further information on supporting people services in your area please contact:

MTCBC Supporting People Team

Telephone: 01685 724690

Email: supportingpeople@merthyr.gov.uk

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