

JULY 2012

CCCG

NEWS



WIN £300

Changes to benefits -
how will they affect you?

The latest on
WHQS



**CARTREFI CYMUNEDOL
GWYNEDD**

Your benefits



So what are the changes to housing benefit?

From April 2013:

- The number of bedrooms in social housing homes may affect your housing benefit. This means that if you have more bedrooms than you need, you will be classed as under occupying and your benefits will be cut.
- If you have one spare bedroom, your housing benefit will be cut by 14% and if you have 2 or more spare bedrooms it will be reduced by 25%.
- At the moment this only affects people of working age.
- A maximum payment for all combined benefits will be introduced which means that a family will receive no more than £500 a week, and a single person £350.

As we have reported in previous issues of CCG News, benefits are changing and it's important for you as a tenant to understand how the changes can affect you.

In March 2012, the Welfare Reform Act became part of UK law – this means that there are a lot of changes to benefits, including housing benefits, and the way they are paid.

From April 2014 – December 2017

- The new Universal Credit will be phased in across the UK. People will get their benefits as one monthly sum.
- With the Universal Credit system your housing benefit will be paid directly to you and not to your landlord. It will be up to you to pay your rent to your landlord.

These are just some of the changes, all benefits are affected by the reform in some way. We are keen to make sure people are prepared and understand what the reform means. For more information please contact us on 0300 123 8084 or Shelter Cymru on 0845 075 5005 or visit www.sheltercymru.org.uk.

WHQS

Work on our WHQS improvement programme is in full swing with tenants' homes being improved inside and out!

SO FAR WE HAVE INSTALLED:

- 6,803** windows
- 3,201** new doors
- 967** modern kitchens
- 969** bathrooms
- 2,131** loft insulation

To help you through every step of the work in your home, CCG and our contractors have a dedicated team of Tenant Liaison Officers, or TLOs as they are known. Your TLO is your main contact throughout the improvement work. They can answer any questions or queries you may have and they will ensure that you are kept informed at every step of the way. They will also help you to make the necessary arrangements before workers arrive.

Our TLOs are on hand to help you throughout the work. However, you can help us make sure that work on your home is done as smoothly and as quickly as possible by allowing workers to access your home.

It is essential that you let us into your house at all the agreed times, this includes TLO visits, surveys and when work begins. If you don't, this can result in delays, not only to you, but for many other tenants as well.

If you receive a letter, call card or message regarding visits, surveys or work, please let your TLO know as soon as possible if the time is not convenient.



Please let us know if you can't keep an appointment or if you need to leave your home during the work. Your TLO's number can be found on either the call card or letter and you can contact them by phone, text or email or call CCG on 0300 123 8084.



Sioned Morris, CCG's TLO

Getting to know each other – and a chance to win £300!

CCG is undertaking its first ever Tenant Profiling project and we want you to get involved! We are asking tenants to fill in the 'Working Together' questionnaire for a chance to win £300, £125, and £75 worth of vouchers.

The main reason behind the project is that radical changes are being made to the Welfare System, changes which could affect many of our customers. So we can help and provide support to those who are affected, we need first to get to know tenants better and understand their circumstances.

Information we are asking for ranges from how many people live in your home to ways you would like us to communicate with you and whether you have any disabilities or health issues. You should have already received the survey. If you haven't or you need help to fill it in, please let us know.

For further information about 'Working Together' contact Tamany W. Jones on 0300 123 8084 or enquiries@ccgwynedd.org.uk.



Winners of the draw will be announced on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/ccgwynedd) and on Twitter @CartrefiGwynedd on November 1st.

Is your home too big for you?

Sometimes personal circumstances change and your current home may no longer meet your needs.

Things you could consider:

- Are you living on your own?
- Are you worried about the cost of heating your home?
- Are you finding it difficult to clean your home or look after your garden?
- Would you like to be closer to family or friends?
- Do you have a disability or special requirements which could be better met in an adapted property?

We could possibly find a home that suits your needs. A smaller home may be easier for you to manage and it could also reduce your rent, council tax and heating bills.

We can give you information and advice on the process and answer any questions you may have. If you decide to ask us about moving home and you change your mind, you will not be put under pressure to move and you will be able to stay in your current home.

If you are interested in hearing more about the possibility of moving, please contact your Tenant Liaison Officer (TLO) or CCG on 0300 123 8084 or enquiries@ccgwynedd.org.uk

CCG gets tough on anti-social behaviour...

One of our commitments to tenants is to tackle and reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB) to make our communities safer and better places to live.

Over the past two years we have built a strong team to work in our communities to reduce ASB with Neighbourhood Services staff based at all our area offices. Their work ranges from reacting to issues such as ASB to helping tenants sustain their tenancies and being proactive in projects to improve communities and estates.

ASB and neighbour nuisance causes real misery for people who simply want to get on with their lives, and should not be tolerated.

Examples of anti-social behaviour include:

- Harassment
- Intimidation, verbal abuse, violence or threats of violence
- Assault
- Unruly behaviour, public disturbance
- Vandalism, rubbish, graffiti, and fly tipping
- Excessive noise like loud music or barking dogs
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse

What you can do to try and resolve anti-social behaviour affecting you:

- Try and resolve the problem by contacting the individual with whom you have the issue
- If speaking to the person doesn't work, note down details of what the problem is, when it occurs and how long it lasts – an incident record form, available from our offices, will help you do this
- Contact our Neighbourhood Services team who can help
- Contact your local authority, who have a responsibility to investigate complaints of noise nuisance



What we will do:

- Make an initial assessment of your reports
- Take steps to minimise any immediate threat to your safety with other agencies such as the Police
- Treat all complaints you make in confidence
- Ask for you to keep a record of incidents that occur
- Keep you informed of progress

If the problem is serious or persistent we will consider taking legal action. This could include asking a court to demote an assured tenancy or seeking injunctions.

Last year the team dealt with over 400 cases ranging from anti-social behaviour to less serious complaints about rubbish and untidy gardens. Wherever possible, we will seek to mediate in neighbourhood disputes.

We always try to find solutions to issues without using any legal force, but sometimes this isn't enough when tenants and other residents are persistently bothered and harassed by anti-social behaviour. CCG has made effective use of Anti-social Behaviour Injunctions against individuals who cause problems to tenants on our estates. Between April 2011 and March this year 16 such orders were implemented.

Geraint Jones, Neighbourhood Services Manager said: "Eviction and demoting tenancies are very much a last resort for us, but where we have the necessary evidence we will make use of these powers. We are constantly

working in our communities to tackle the root causes of ASB and projects such as our Junior Warden scheme targets youngsters to educate them about the negative effects of disruptive behaviour on individuals and communities. We also support new tenants and help them understand how to be a responsible neighbour and maintain their tenancies. Our Community Wardens monitor the first twelve months of all starter tenancies and visit new tenants at regular intervals so that problems and issues can be spotted early. This scheme is proving to be successful with the introductory tenancy period only having been extended on nine tenancies during 2011/12."

If you are worried and are affected by anti-social behaviour please contact us on 0300 123 8084 and ask for our Neighbourhood Services team.



Arwel Williams, CCG Community Warden, Meirionnydd area



COMMON HOUSING REGISTER

In September the Common Housing Register for Gwynedd will be introduced across the four housing associations which operate in the county. The allocations team have been working on this project for several months now and it means that all applications for social housing will be channelled through one central team.

The hope is that it will make the process of applying for a home a lot simpler, with one housing policy for the whole of Gwynedd. The new Housing Options team

will be responsible for receiving all applications; they will be based with Gwynedd Council's homelessness service at Penrallt, Caernarfon. When the new system is up and running, prospective tenants will only have to fill in one application form, the information will then be shared between all the associations, using the same points system.

The initiative is a partnership between CCG; Cymdeithas Tai Eryri; North Wales Housing; Tai Clwyd and Gwynedd Council.

100% for gas servicing team

CCG has achieved a 100% record in servicing natural gas installations (mains) for the first time, thanks to the hard work of its staff, contractors PH Jones and the co-operation of tenants. The law requires that every tenanted home which has a gas boiler, meter or appliance must have an annual gas safety check and a valid gas

safety certificate. The team of 9 PH Jones engineers and one TLO have been working closely with CCG staff, servicing over 4,600 of our homes across Gwynedd. We are committed to gas safety in our tenants' homes and these annual checks are a vital part of this commitment.



CCG and PH Jones team who worked on the project

Mick Butler, Director of Assets at CCG said: "I would like to praise the team at CCG and PH Jones for all their hard work on this. It's the first time it has been achieved, and is an important step for us. I would also like to say a big thank you to tenants for working with us, without their co-operation we would not have reached 100%."

A helping hand for vulnerable tenants...

Handyman launched

A brand new service to help vulnerable and elderly tenants with DIY work around the house will soon be available.

As part of our commitment to tenants before the transfer of homes from the Council we made a promise to look at developing a Handyman service, particularly for tenants who are older, vulnerable or disabled.

Some of the services available:

- Replacing existing bulbs and fuses
- Fitting smoke alarms
- Installing doorbells
- Bleeding radiators
- Fitting curtain rails and shelves
- Moving and building simple furniture
- Changing toilet seats
- Changing plugs
- Small cosmetic painting jobs

CCG Chief Executive Ffrancon Williams, said: "This is a very exciting project and I'm pleased that this work can now get underway. I would urge anyone who meets the scheme criteria to contact us and to register for more information about the service. The Handyman scheme will not be replacing any of our responsive repairs work and it won't be considered as urgent. But there's no doubt that it will mean peace of mind to many who might struggle with those DIY jobs around the house that many of us would find easy."



Graham Hughes CCG's Handyman

Eisteddfod week at Glynllifon

Many tenants came to see us on the Urdd Eisteddfod maes in June at Glynllifon near Caernarfon. Despite the wind and the rain the event was a huge success and it was good to see so many of our customers face to face. Here are some pictures of the week.



A new customer services team

We have started looking at developing the way we deal with calls from customers at the first point of contact.

At the moment there are two customer services teams at CCG. One to deal with repairs and maintenance calls and the other to take all other enquiries. Following consultation with staff and customers it has become clear that this set up does not offer the best customer experience.

We are therefore looking to bring the two teams together and training staff to deal with calls at the first point of contact.

We are keen to hear your views on the plans. If you would like more information or if you have any comments please contact Mared Dafydd, Customer Services Manager on 0300 123 8084 or by emailing gwasanaethau.cwsmer@ccgwynedd.org.uk.

£250,000 Funding for a better future

What would you do with £1,000, £5,000 or even £10,000? Do you have an idea that would benefit your community?

CCG is offering community and voluntary groups the chance to apply for funding of up to £10,000 towards events, training, improving local facilities and running schemes to improve local surroundings. This grant is available as part of CCG's commitment to developing and strengthening communities across Gwynedd, with £250,000 a year available for groups through our Community Investment Fund.

For more information or to apply for funding please contact Mantell Gwynedd who are administrating the grant on our behalf on 01286 672626.

Children's Corner

A special page for our youngest tenants!

W	D	G	H	E	Y	I	U
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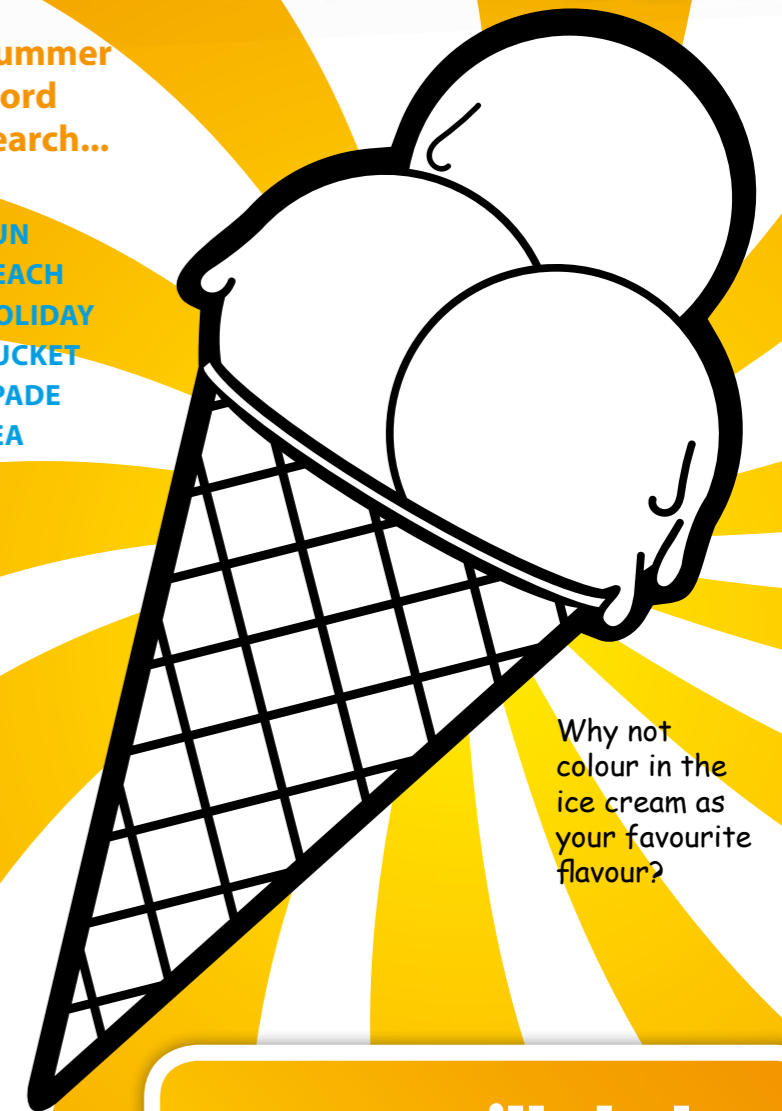
Summer word search...

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Why not colour in the ice cream as your favourite flavour?

Banana milkshake

1 banana
pot of yoghurt (150g) in any flavour
½ pint of milk

Peel and slice the banana and put in a blender with the yoghurt and the milk. Blend for 1-2 minutes to make a delicious milkshake. Pour into a glass and it's ready to drink!



Tenants' Voice

This page is dedicated to articles by tenants for tenants, so please send in your stories and photos to communications@ccgwynedd.org.uk



A busy time for CCG

Annual Report from Colin Hughes, Chair of the CCG Tenants and Residents Partnership.



Colin Hughes

The past 12 months have been a very busy period for CCG and for us as Partnership Members. Over the year, we've seen a lot of change within CCG and in our role as tenant representatives.

Groups and Forums

Our groups and forums are now well established and between us we have attended 44 meetings. On top of this we have also attended several CCG Board meetings, Local Tenant Participation Strategy Groups and a range of training sessions.

Meeting locations

We have visited numerous locations throughout Gwynedd including Bangor, Caernarfon, Pwllheli, Penrhyndeudraeth, Dolgellau, Porthmadog, Llanwnda and Llanllyfni. We hope to visit the Bala and Blaenau Ffestiniog area and the Dyffryn Ardudwy/ Barmouth/ Harlech area in 2012/13.

Members

33 different members have attended our meetings during the year and we hope to extend our membership next year. CCG has

recently produced a 'Get Involved with CCG' booklet which made its first appearance at the Eisteddfod. The hope is that over the next 12 months, this will enable us to attract more Partnership members.

Training

We went to a number of training sessions and workshops during the year and members have also represented the Partnership at the TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) Conference and Welsh Tenant Federation Workshops.

New logo

Towards the end of 2011-2012, we launched the new Partnership logo which has enabled us to produce marketing material such as banners and branded stationery to promote the Partnership's profile.

Events

The Partnership attended CCG's 'Festive Fun Day' last Christmas and the Urdd National Eisteddfod in June 2012. Hopefully we can attend similar events over the next year.

As the Chairman of the Partnership, I would like to thank everyone for their commitment and hard work during the year. I feel we have made a difference to the quality of life of many of our fellow tenants and residents across Gwynedd.

COLIN HUGHES

Chair TRP



Partneriaeth Tenantiaid a Phreswylwyr CCG
CCG Tenants & Residents Partnership

The next CCG Tenant and Resident Partnership Meeting will be on **Thursday 26th of July at Congl Meinciau Centre in Botwnnog**. New members welcome. For more information call the Community Involvement Team on 0300 123 8084.



TRP Members