

Bridge Brief



Summer 2017

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The magazine for Newport City Homes' residents
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Reassuring residents with fire service
See pages 16–17

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News stories Local events Interviews Your stories
.....

OUR 2020 VISION

Newport is changing and so is Newport City Homes.

We have never been just a housing association. Our residents are Newport and we're proud of that. Working with our partners, it's time to realise the full potential of the city. 2020 Vision sets out our ambitions for the next five years and there is a lot to be excited about.

We are the largest social landlord in Newport, with 71% of the city's social housing. We are ambitious and ready to be the partner of choice in building Newport's future.

We're focusing on:



Putting residents at the heart of what we do



Investing in our homes and neighbourhoods



Providing new homes



Making a difference in our communities

Throughout Bridge Brief, you will find the 2020 Vision 'stamp' against some of the stories. This is so you can see exactly what progress we're making against each of the four areas.



Top tip!

"When carrying out DIY in your home, it is very important that any holes made in walls, ceilings and floors are sealed properly. This is to improve fire safety and will help to keep you safe should there ever be a fire."



Andrew Lloyd
Energy and compliance manager

See more fire safety advice on pages 16–17

Get in touch with us We need your help to make us even better!

Let us know how we've done, whether you've had a great experience or there's some way you think we could deliver a service better. We would love to hear your thoughts via:

enquiries@newportcityhomes.com
01633 381111

NewportCityH on Facebook

@NewportCityH on Twitter

Nexus House, Mission Court, NP20 2DW

8–11 Ringland Centre, NP19 9HG

8–11 Bettws Centre, NP20 7TN

www.newportcityhomes.com

Take a stand against fly-tipping



Help us take a stand against fly-tipping.

Fly-tipping is the illegal dumping of waste, either household or commercial, in streets, green spaces and wasteland.

It pollutes the environment,

attracts pests and causes significant risk to people and wildlife.

Fly-tipping spoils green spaces and beauty spots across the city. Anyone found fly-tipping could face a £20,000 fine and up to

six months in prison.

We want Newport to be a place we are all proud to live.

If you see fly-tipping, you can report it confidentially to the council by calling 01633 656656.

Make sure your home is gas and electric safe

It is important that your home has a gas safety check every year.

This is to check that your gas appliances are safe. We need you to let us into your home to do this. If you are a leaseholder, you need to provide us with evidence that you have had your gas appliance serviced.

During inspection, we only visually inspect gas cookers. It is your responsibility to maintain and service your gas cooker. All work must be carried out by a Gas Safe-registered engineer. To find a local engineer, visit www.gassaferegister.co.uk

We check the operation of smoke alarms and are currently fitting carbon monoxide alarms in all our properties.

It is very important to also provide access for inspections of your electrical installation.

In June we had to take a resident to court as they refused to allow access. The judge ruled in our favour and they were evicted. This was a last resort. However, if we can't get access to check your home is safe, we may be forced to take you to court. The checks take less than an hour and we legally have to do them.



Summer fun for youngsters

More than 80 children attended Fit and Fed events across the city.

The programme was created to allow children aged eight and above to access local, fun and safe sports activities while also receiving a nutritious meal.

The scheme is a partnership between Newport City Homes, Newport City Council, RASCAL, Melin Homes, Charter Housing, Street Games and Newport Live. It aims to help tackle holiday hunger, isolation and inactivity across some of the city's most disadvantaged areas.

People took part in a range of activities

including golf, football, tennis and making smoothies on a smoothie bike.

- **As Bridge Brief went to press, the following Fit and Fed events had been confirmed for the summer holidays (10am–3pm, subject to change, check details closer to time):**

Location	Dates
Hope Centre, Somerton	2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23 and 24 August
Gaer Community Centre	1, 8, 15 and 22 August
Share Centre, Stow Hill	2, 9, 16 and 23 August
Pillgwenlly (venue to be confirmed)	3, 10, 17 and 24 August



Investing in the city's homes

We are delivering home improvements in Somerton.



We are working on roofs, fascia boards, and soffits, which were contributing to damp in the properties.

We are also installing external wall insulation (EWI) to all of our properties in Somerton, and similar style properties in St Julians and Rogerstone.

Some of our properties in Somerton date back to the 1930s, and are traditionally made with cavity walls.

During the 1990s, there was a Wales-wide programme to insulate cavity walls. However, due to construction type and weather conditions, the cavity wall insulation in some of our properties in Somerton became wet. This resulted in internal dampness.

We decided to extract the cavity wall

insulation wherever possible, and undertake various repairs to prevent damp entering homes.

Resident Kevin Dennis has lived in his home for 29 years and had EWI installed at the start of the year.

“There was no disruption at all,” he said.

“The finish on the outside of the property is very good and makes the house really stand out. The workers were good – clean, friendly and nice guys.

“There’s been a huge improvement in heating. My daughter’s room was the coldest room in the house.

“Even when you had the radiators on full during the winter it would be cold. What a difference the EWI has made!”

Office closures

Our offices will be shut over the August bank holiday weekend.

All offices will close at 4.30pm on Friday 25 August and reopen at 9am on Tuesday 29 August.

For emergency enquires, call 01633 381111.

Recycling bench



Pupils at Somerton Primary School have a new bench, thanks to our work with Crown Paint.

The school received the bench as part of Crown Paint's 'Kick Out The Can' campaign, which helps contractors dispose of empty paint cans. Teacher Rhys Lewis said: "The bench has provided a focal point for our children and staff. It allows the children to understand the importance of reusing and recycling materials."

Service charges

Leasehold residents will receive their annual service charge invoice in September.

This charge covers their share of the cost of maintaining the building in which they live.

These will be due for payment within 28 days of being received.

Domestic abuse support available

Help is available to people suffering from domestic abuse.

CHAT Wales is a programme for people who want to maintain healthy relationships.

It also helps people who have been abusive in their relationship and want to change their behaviour.

CHAT Wales supports people to:

- Understand what is acceptable behaviour within a relationship
- Develop self-esteem

- Challenge their beliefs towards their partners
- Develop alternative strategies to stay away from abuse

The programme looks at the needs of the whole family while ensuring the safety of victims.

It can also complete risk assessments, safety plans, and referrals to specialist local agencies.

"It took a while, but I started looking at myself and realising the types of abuse that I was using to

try and control my partner.

"As soon as I realised this, I stopped blaming my wife for everything and started to see that I needed to change my behaviour," said one CHAT participant.

Self and agency referrals are accepted.

To find out more, contact familiestogether@family-action.org.uk or 02920 789732.



Garden grant in Shaftesbury

Residents from Shaftesbury Court have developed a communal garden with our financial help.

They used the money to have the ground prepared, as well as buying soil, bulbs, seeds, garden tools, a small shed and a green house.

Resident Alan Frown said: "We started the community garden about two years ago. The residents



really enjoy it, as they can buy their fruit and veg cheaper than anywhere else."

The garden has given residents the chance to come together, enjoy gardening, and create something

that everyone can take part in.

Scheme manager Sharon Holbrook added: "The grant from Newport City Homes has allowed residents to enjoy each other's company and have fun.

"It's had a really positive impact and is encouraging interaction between our residents and the wider community.

"It's providing a focal point for the residents who live here."

Make sure you have permission for CCTV

Lots of people use CCTV systems to protect their home from acts of crime and anti-social behaviour.

However, there are rules about the use of CCTV and how it is set up.

Firstly, you need our permission before installing cameras at your property.

A surveyor will visit your home to check if the camera can be suitably positioned on the wall. It is your responsibility to make

sure that the CCTV system is installed correctly.

It is important to consider the privacy of others while setting up your system. You are not allowed to aim the cameras into a neighbouring property and before installing a CCTV system you should tell your neighbours.

If you already have a CCTV system installed, you should check that:

- Your system is still needed
- Your cameras do

not intrude on your neighbour's property

- You regularly delete the recordings and that they are not kept for longer than is necessary for the protection of your property.

You are also responsible for all the information that is recorded by your system. You must make sure that the information is not used for any other purpose than protecting your property. For more information, visit gov.uk

Day in the life

I deal with service charges and these affect every resident.

For two years I have been learning about service charges; what they are, the legislation around them and, of course, how to calculate them. This is a complicated issue reaching across all aspects of Newport City Homes, which means I've needed to learn how the entire association operates. This covers everything from how we organise our properties to how departments keep a record of costs.

My role has allowed me to understand not only how housing works, but how outside influences shape our work. This could be through changes in government policy, the transition to Universal Credit or the impact of policies like Local Housing Allowance.

At NCH, we put residents at the heart of what we do. Sustainable and affordable service charges for quality services help us do this. However, to get the most from this work, our residents must understand what we are doing, why and how it affects them. Every day I work through masses of data to ensure that we charge residents the right amount for our services and that they understand why they are paying.

The attention to detail and understanding of each individual resident is very different from a commercial environment, which is why I enjoy what I do so much.

David Roberts

Work begins at Glen Court



Work is progressing on our £1.6million development at Glen Court in Bettws.

Local contractor P&P Buildings has cleared the site and has started building 11 new family homes and a bungalow equipped for people with disabilities. Each home will include a fire sprinkler system.

Welsh Government has approved almost £1million of social housing grant towards the new development.



Architects named
We have appointed the architects to help us deliver our multi-million pound regeneration plans for Ringland.

A group of residents helped interview and select Pentan, which will design the first phase of the regeneration work on Cot Farm Circle.

A consultation event will be held on Thursday 10 August at No7 Ringland Shopping Centre at 2.30pm–7pm to allow residents to have their say on the plans.

- As Bridge Brief went to press, Powell Dobson was appointed to create the master plan for the next phase of the Ringland regeneration scheme.



Making Newport dementia friendly

Members of Newport's public services board, One Newport, have come together to help make Newport a dementia friendly city.



The aim is to improve services for people with dementia.

An ageing population presents new challenges across many services.

Dementia is a major concern, with one in 14 people aged 65 years and older reported to be living with the condition.

It is estimated that by 2021 the number of people with dementia across Wales will increase by 31 per cent.

Dementia can have a great impact, not only on the person, but their family and friends who often take on a caring role for loved ones.

All members of society will be touched at some point – if it is not immediate family, it will be extended family or friends.

Since April 2014, more than 2,000 people have taken part in dementia awareness raising session and become dementia friends.

Phil Diamond, dementia theme lead for the Gwent transformation team, said: "With a little awareness, we can understand the simple actions that can support a person with dementia.

"Newport PSB is shining the light across the city for other partners and business to follow and by investing in our communities today we can create the support needed by all of us tomorrow."



Universal Credit: Are you ready for the changes?

Universal Credit (UC) is a single monthly payment of benefit for people in and out work.

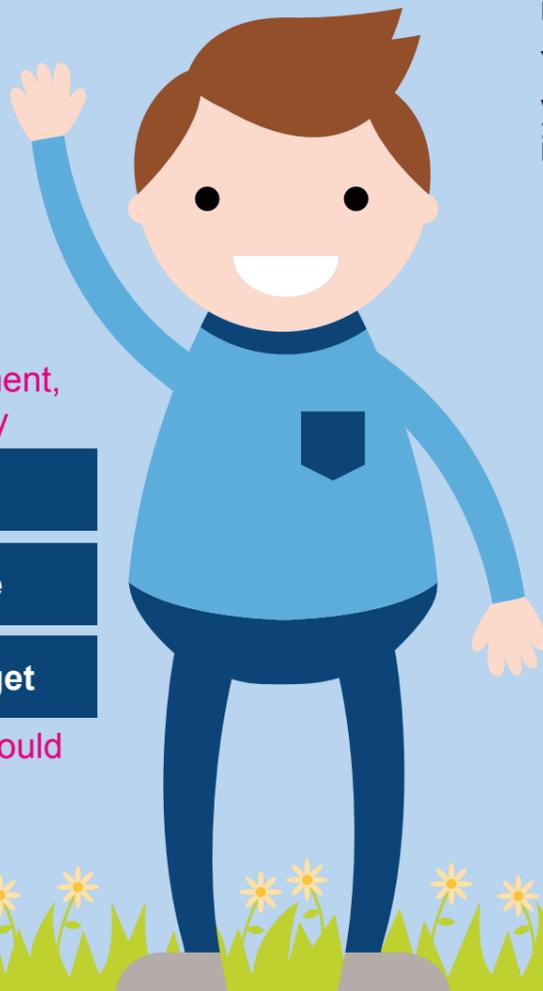
Some single people in Newport are already claiming UC.

From November 2017, families and couples making a new claim for benefit will also be expected to claim this new benefit. You may hear it referred to as 'UC full' or 'UC digital'.

People of Pension Credit-age will remain unaffected.

When BOB heard his benefits were changing to become a single monthly Universal Credit payment, he got ready

to Bank
go Online
and Budget
so that he could claim.



Banking

Universal Credit can be paid into a bank or credit union account. Set one up or use the one you have



Online

All claims are managed online, so you need to know where you can access the internet and you need the skills to go online



Budgeting

You need to plan your budget. Universal Credit is paid monthly rather than weekly or fortnightly

How is Universal Credit different from previous benefits?

People moving onto UC, as well as those already on it, will be expected to apply for and manage their UC online.

You will only get one monthly payment for your household. Universal Credit will be paid into your bank account.

If you're entitled to help with your rent, this will be included in the monthly payment and you will have to pay the rent to us.

You will still need to claim some benefits separately, like council tax reduction and 'personal independence payment'.

Why will I be moved onto Universal Credit?

- Your Employment Support Allowance stops because you have been found fit for work
- Your relationship starts or ends
- Bereavement
- Change in working hours
- Loss of job
- Move from being in work to sick
- Moving from JSA to Income Support due to birth of a child
- Become a carer
- Youngest child turns five
- New claim for housing benefit
- Moving from one local authority to another

Changes to one of the following benefits will direct you onto UC:

- Housing Benefit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Income Support
- Employment Support Allowance (income-related)
- Job Seekers Allowance (income-based)

How to make a claim

To make the claim process as quick and easy as possible, make sure you have all of the following information:

- Your national insurance number, and your partner's national insurance number
- Your postcode
- Your email address
- Your mobile phone number
- Your landlord's address – Newport City Homes, Nexus House, Mission Court, Newport, NP20 2DW
- Your rent details – contact us if you're not sure of the correct amount
- Your tenancy start date – we can provide you with this
- Details of any household members that live with you, including their name, date of birth and relationship to you
- Details of any savings
- Details of any other money you receive
- Bank account details; sort code and account number



Community event success

More than 35 people expressed an interest in Pillgwenlly regeneration scheme apprenticeships at a community event in July.

The cabinet secretary for communities and children, Carl Sargeant, officially opened the temporary community hub in Pillgwenlly, before drop-in sessions for local residents were held throughout the afternoon.

The aim was to allow local residents to find out more about apprenticeships and how they can use the hub for community activities.

Chief executive Ceri Doyle said: "Employability is a fundamental part of our regeneration approach, which is why we have included 300 weeks' worth of apprenticeships into the regeneration contract.

"We want local people to make the most of this."

What are we doing?

We are demolishing homes, underpasses and garages in Knight Close, Coulson Close and Alma Street.

Nine one-bedroom flats and two three-bedroom houses will be built, plus a new community hub.

The basketball court in Francis Drive, which was often the target of anti-social behaviour, has been demolished.

In its place, two new areas of open space and parking will be created.



The event also marked the official handover of the site to contractors United Living.

Board chair Nicola Somerville said: "We are aiming to deliver something substantial that will be the catalyst for changing hearts and minds. We want our £7.9million investment to help redefine the narrative of Pillgwenlly, with the support and commitment of our partners in Newport, the wider Gwent area and those in government."



To keep updated on the project, like NewportCityH on Facebook or follow @NewportCityH on Twitter

Graffiti project brightens area

A graffiti project in Pillgwenlly is helping engagement with the local community.

The main purpose is to encourage interaction with young people and encourage them to learn more about the regeneration project.

They designed a mural to go on the hoarding that surrounds the site where the new homes will be built.

Head of development and regeneration Rachel George said: "The new mural has become a real talking point for residents and brings colour to what otherwise would be wooden barriers.

"We hope this initiative encourages young people to learn more about the regeneration project and the opportunities available to them."



New tenant liaison officer for Pillgwenlly

Meet Andrew Young – United Living's new tenant liaison officer in Pillgwenlly.



A Pillgwenlly resident himself, Andrew took up this new role in May and hasn't looked back: "The regeneration is definitely a positive thing, you can already see the community becoming more cohesive. I'm really excited about what's happening in the area. The community can also feel a difference already.

"Pill has its fair share of problems like anywhere else in the UK, but we, as residents, have a great community spirit. This regeneration project really gives Pill the opportunity to reach its full potential."



Duffryn's historic past

Local historian and resident Keith Wood continues his series of historical articles:

Duffryn is derived from the Welsh 'Dyffryn'. Duffryn High School opened in 1959 under the headship of Doctor Gordon Williams. The school motto was 'Semper Vigilans Animo Tolerante' meaning 'always vigilant, but with a tolerant mind'.

Planning for the Duffryn housing development took place in the 1970s. It used architectural 'perimeter planning', which emerged from Cambridge School of Architecture in the 1960s. The main contractor was John Laing Construction Limited and the development was completed by circa 1978.

Many streets in the area were named after birds. Some anomalies are Duffryn Drive, which is on the site of the old manor, Pencarn Way after Pencarn Farm, and Tredegar House Drive.

In 1951, Tredegar House was sold to the Sisters of St Josephs for use as a school. In 1974, Newport Borough Council purchased the house and 90 acres of land.

The River Ebbw flows to the east of Duffryn and some baptisms took place close to Tredegar Park and the Cardiff Road bridge. In the 1950s, the river become dark and

polluted and people would gather coal that had been washed down the river.

During the Second World War, a prisoner of war camp was erected on the east side of Lighthouse Road to detain Italian prisoners, although some would work on local farms. When the war ended in 1945, the camp was converted to social housing, before being demolished a few years later.

Keith Wood



Help us take a stand against hate crime

We will not tolerate any incidents of hate crime and any incidents should be reported to the police.

Hate crimes are offences that would not have happened if the person had a different identity. For example, someone could be bullied for using a wheelchair – this would be a disability hate incident. Examples of hate include verbal abuse, assault, withdrawing services, and writing things on the internet or graffiti.

Anyone can be a target, but it is usually linked to ethnicity, religion, disability, age, gender, gender identity, sexuality or lifestyle choice (for example, goth).

Hate crime can have a devastating impact on someone's life and does not necessarily have to be physical abuse. In fact, it is often mental, from verbal abuse, offensive graffiti and threats, to cyber bullying, abusive texts, emails or phone calls.

If you think you are, or have been, a victim of a hate crime or incident, if you witness a hate crime or incident, or think someone you know is a victim, do not ignore it. Help is available including face to face and/or telephone support.

To report hate crime, call Gwent Police on 101, call Victim Support on 0300 3031982 or go to www.reporthate.victimsupport.org.uk

UNITY community action praised

Uniting Newport Inspiring Tomorrow's Youth (UNITY) is a youth forum led by young people, providing them with a voice in housing, services and communities.

We set up UNITY in partnership with Charter Housing last year to develop skills and confidence, and promote and campaign for young people's rights.

The group has already had national success, having



come third place in the community action category at the TPAS Cymru awards.

Unity has also been busy raising awareness of changes to the local housing allowance (LHA) for people under 35s. It has produced tea coasters highlighting key messages around the changes and these are being distributed across the region.

Officially launched at an awareness raising event at Friars Walk, the coasters were produced with an independent charity, Fixers.

Trainee resident engagement officer Chelsea Crook said: "As far as we are aware, Unity is the first young people's group in Wales to focus on this crucial issue and change in housing. Welsh Government's LHA working group is supporting Unity's campaign and we're really proud of their hard work."

"They have achieved so much in a year and we're all delighted that this was recognised at the TPAS Cymru awards."



Fire safety in tower blocks

In light of the tragic events at Grenfell Tower, we wanted to remind you of the things you can do to stay safe.

You may not live in a tower block or flat, but fire safety advice is important for everyone to know.

We have three tower

blocks – Milton Court, Hillview and Greenwood.

There is a one-hour barrier between each floor in our tower blocks and half an hour in the walls of each flat. These will slow the spread of fire.

Flats are fitted with fire resistant doors that will withstand fire for half an hour.

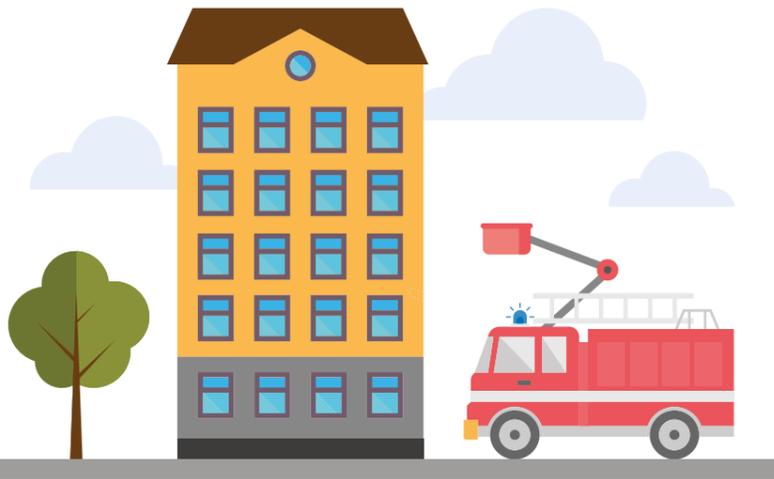


These barriers provide enough time for the fire service to attend an incident and put out a fire before it has a chance to spread.

We carry out regular training exercises with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service on our tower blocks to make sure that during an emergency firefighters can respond quickly.

In addition to this, we carry out regular fire safety checks, including:

- ✓ Fire alarm systems
- ✓ Smoke alarms
- ✓ Emergency lighting
- ✓ Electrical safety
- ✓ Firefighting equipment
- ✓ General housekeeping



If the fire is in your home, you should get out and call 999.

If the fire is somewhere else in the building and you are not in immediate danger, ie affected by heat or smoke, you should call 999 and 'stay put' until the fire service can get you out safely.



Dos and don'ts to stay safe

Here are some helpful dos and don'ts to help you stay safe if you live in a tower block or flat.

If your smoke alarm is faulty, you must report it immediately. You can do this by contacting us on 01633 381111 or by making a repair request at www.newportcityhomes.com



Do:

- ✓ Keep the fire doors closed. They will help to slow the spread of fire and give you extra time, so you can safely exit the building.
- ✓ Keep landings and corridors free of objects and rubbish, particularly flammable items, that would obstruct people's exits.
- ✓ Make sure that cigarettes are extinguished properly.
- ✓ Place rubbish in small bags when using the refuse chute. A blocked chute can back-up quickly and become a fire hazard.



Do not:

- ✗ Store gas cylinders, paraffin or other highly-flammable liquids in your flat.
- ✗ Block access to tower block flats. Access roads and gates allow the fire service's vehicles to get as close as possible to the building.
- ✗ Wedge doors open. Remove wedges if you find them.
- ✗ Leave objects on landings.
- ✗ Give access to people you do not know. Only allow access to people visiting you.
- ✗ Smoke in communal areas, including the landing and lifts. It is against the law to do so.
- ✗ Place candles on or near materials that could burn or catch fire (for example, curtains).





DOORSTEP CRIME
KNOW THE SCAM

Unfortunately not everyone who calls at your door is who they say they are, so you should always be on your guard.

Doorstep crime is when someone comes to your door with the aim of scamming you out of your money or tries to get access to your home to steal items from inside.

While there are many legitimate tradespeople and officials, it's wise to always be vigilant when you answer your door to someone you don't know.

Criminals who commit doorstep crime can be pushy and persuasive, or appear to be kind and caring and it can be very easy to fall victim. It's especially important to be vigilant and aware if you live on your own.

STOP – before you open the door and think about who it could be...

CHECK – who is at the door, using a window, spy hole or chain if you have one, but don't let them in...

ASK – who they are, why they are there and what they want...

MAKE THE CALL – use a 'nominated neighbour card', available from your local neighbourhood policing team, or contact a family member or friend.

If you have any concerns call **101** or contact your neighbourhood policing team – see www.gwent.police.uk for details.

Demolitions update

Work is progressing well on our garages project.

We routinely survey our properties as it helps us understand their condition, and plan any work that might be needed to keep them in a reasonable condition. Our priority is to ensure the safety of residents and the wider community.

As part our surveys last year, we found that a number of garages need considerable repairs. If ignored, they could pose health and safety risks.

We decided to demolish these garages. So far, we have demolished 272 garages at sites across the city. All the Bettws garage sites that posed a risk have now been demolished and we have started work in Ringland.

We have had positive feedback results recently from some Bettws residents, including Kerry Knight: "I'm glad the garages have been removed. A lovely accommodating group of lads did the work. They were helpful and polite."

AP Waters site manager Daniel Robinson added: "We have proven that by getting the foundations right and providing efficient high standards of work, an effective working partnership with all stakeholders can be maintained."



Thumbs up to stock survey



We are currently visiting all of our homes to carry out stock condition surveys.

This is to help us ensure we provide you with a safe and comfortable property. The survey is not about you or your lifestyle. It looks at the condition of a building, inside and outside, to help us plan for immediate and future maintenance, so your home is in the best possible condition.

During the last year, we have already visited the majority of our homes. If you haven't had a visit yet, it is important that you allow us access to your property, including roof space and outside areas. Otherwise, you may not be included in any further works.

Our surveyors pictured above will carry out the visits, which normally take about 10 minutes. They will be carrying identification, so please ask to see it.

If you home hasn't been surveyed, call **01633 227699** and book an appointment. The surveyors can visit between 8am–5pm, Monday to Friday.

The survey does not cover repairs. These can be reported at **01633 381111** or www.newportcityhomes.com

Keep on track with your rent

Make sure you don't risk losing your home.

Our sustaining tenancies team is here to help you. Here are some tips to help you keep on track with your rent.

PAY ON TIME

Pay by direct debit, which can be set up for any day of the week or month. If this doesn't suit you, you can pay in other ways:

- over the phone: **01633 381111**
- through our website:
www.newportcityhomes.com
- at a PayPoint outlet or Post Office with your rent card.

If you need to contact us
telephone **01633 381111** or email
tenancy.support@newportcityhomes.com

STICK TO YOUR BUDGET

Budgeting will help you manage your money so you don't fall behind with your rent and risk losing your home. We can help you set up a weekly budget and make sure that you are receiving all the income that you're entitled to.

OPEN A BANK ACCOUNT

You will need a bank account to pay by direct debit and also to receive any benefit payments that are due to you.

GET ONLINE

There are lots of simple ways to save money by being online. Getting on track now will help as you will shortly need to claim most benefits online. We can help you to get online with courses, classes and use of computers at our offices and other locations across the city.

