

Making a difference in our communities



We will work in partnership with a range of stakeholders to improve the social and economic prospects of Newport's residents. We will support our residents to help unlock their potential for the benefit of households, their community and the city of Newport.

What have we done?

Over the last five years, we have...

Supported 62 individuals to secure employment following participation in our apprenticeships, academy and wider community benefits programmes.

Provided 38 residents and community members with valuable paid work placements through the NCH Academy.

Supported residents in need of additional help to maintain their tenancies and live independently.

Provided 19 apprenticeships for individuals to earn while they learn.

Supported residents to gain over £3 million in additional benefit income.

Changed our specialist housing offer for people over 55 in response to external funding changes. This allowed us to improve and continue the services our residents value the most.

Worked with a range of partners to support local communities and improve the health and wellbeing of our residents.

Improving employment prospects

NCH Academy

The NCH Academy has been offering valuable six-month paid work placements for the past eight years. The aim of the Academy is to provide support to residents and community members who have been unemployed for long periods, lack work experience or are looking for a career change by providing them with experience, confidence and opportunities to expand their skills and increase their career prospects.

This year, 11 trainees have benefited from these work placements. Seven trainees have since secured employment, including three trainees who have started new roles with NCH. Two trainees have also begun apprenticeships with us.

We'll be looking to provide new opportunities through the academy and are currently exploring how we adapt our offer during the disruption caused by Covid-19.



Kristian Barrett, former Academy trainee

Apprenticeships

We have been providing apprenticeship opportunities for individuals to earn while they learn and follow alternative routes into employment since 2012.

Apprentices gain vast knowledge and experience in different environments across a wide range of roles while working with experienced staff to gain job-specific skills. These individuals also gain nationally recognised qualifications with our partner training providers.

As we expanded this scheme, we have created apprenticeships in customer service, housing services, accountancy and business administration, in addition to trades roles.

This year we had three new apprentices start, while six continue to progress through their experience and learning. We will also explore new office-based opportunities in our digital services and human resources teams.

Ethan Hadley completed his carpentry apprenticeship back in 2016 through our Shared Apprentice Scheme. He's still very much part of Team NCH putting his skills to use as a carpenter.

David Kerr, who is one of our wet trades, also started with us through apprenticeships in plastering in 2017.

Working with local schools

We have worked with local schools to create awareness of career options available in housing, whilst also improving school leavers' employability skills as they prepare for the world of work. This has included attendance at careers fairs, talks at assemblies, mock interviews, CV writing and LinkedIn masterclasses.

NCH has also sponsored nine parents of Llanwern High School to sit GCSEs in Mathematics and English to help them support their children with their studies and to increase their own employment prospects.

"Last summer I attended the GCSE results day at Llanwern High School, seeing the excitement on parents' faces when receiving the grades they needed to progress on to further education to pursue their chosen career path really brings to light the impact and benefit this scheme has had on individuals lives."

Kate Adams
Employability Business Partner

Supporting and sustaining tenancies

Our tenancy support team has provided essential support to our residents in 768 cases this year. Depending on their own needs and circumstances, residents are offered free, confidential advice and support to help maintain their tenancy and to live independently.

This includes help with budgeting, managing debt and rent arrears as well as accessing additional welfare benefits. In 605 of these cases, we were able to successfully support and meet the needs of our residents.

Through our sustainability fund, we have also helped 92 households this year, during some of the most difficult moments in their lives. This has helped fund various needs including utility top-up payments, flooring and emergency baby supplies.



Maximising residents' income

We're committed to helping residents increase their disposable income, making sure that the ability to access financial support is available to all. Our experienced in-house team works closely with residents to support them in increasing their full financial entitlement.

We've partnered with Money Saviour, a social enterprise that supports people struggling with debt, so that 136 of our residents were able to receive further help with their finances this year.

This year, we helped residents to:

- Save £71,500 on their water bills.
- Access £190,000 through grant support, including the Discretionary Assistance Fund.
- Access additional housing benefit of £115,000.
- Access £887,000 in welfare benefits and Universal Credit.

Intergenerational approach to health and wellbeing

We offer a full range of activities for residents living in our 55+ schemes to help them keep healthy and active, connected with other residents and to feel part of the wider community. In addition to coffee mornings, bingo trips, fundraising events and Christmas celebrations, we often work with and involve partners, communities and people of all ages to offer opportunities including:

- **Growing Together with Keep Wales Tidy:** We're supporting Keep Wales Tidy's intergenerational project, Growing Together, by involving residents at our Milton Court 55+ scheme with pupils from Milton Primary School. Together, they have been growing fresh food and exploring digital technology.
- **Standing Together Cymru:** Over a six-month period, Mental Health Foundation staff facilitated weekly activity sessions in three schemes to improve the wellbeing and create new social groups. Our tenancy support and wellbeing team has continued to host coffee mornings to help sustain the groups.
- **Tea and Tech:** Offering one to one digital support to residents and held awareness sessions at three schemes.

- **Movement to Music:** Armchair activity sessions at Aneurin Bevan Court help residents to keep active, healthy and connected. Residents have enjoyed getting together and having a bit of fun.
- **Hybu Pobl Ifanc:** Since September, young people from this St Julians group have visited our schemes to take part in activities including gardening and singing.
- **Woodland Routes to Wellbeing:** Since November, residents in Duffryn have been regularly joining in the woodland craft activities thanks to the work of Duffryn Community link and partners.
- **Generation Crossover:** This intergenerational befriender project, with local schools and residents at Westgate Court and Aneurin Bevan Court, has been organised by mental health charity, MIND. It has helped to promote mutual understanding between generations and support mental health.
- **Digital Heroes:** In partnership with Digital Communities Wales and Ysgol Gymraeg Casnewydd, we've linked up children and residents to support digital learning.

Community benefits

In addition to the programmes we support to improve the economic and social prospects of Newport's residents, many of our contracts request a 'community benefit' in line with the Welsh Government Community Benefits Policy.

Our community benefits fund has helped 15 community projects across Newport this year. This has included providing litter picking equipment for community groups in Duffryn and Pillgwenlly and supporting a community centre in St Julians. We have also continued to support the 'Fit & Fed' programme through our partnership with Newport Live. Hundreds of children have been provided with meals and benefitted from meeting new friends and playing sports during school holidays.



CASE STUDY

Newport youngsters meet their football heroes

Last year, we teamed up with Lovell Homes and Football Association Wales (FAW) to offer local football fans the chance of a lifetime to meet their idols in the Wales football team.

Young people from youth and football clubs in Ringland and the surrounding area were invited to watch the team in a training session, followed by a meet and greet session where they could chat to the players and get autographs.

One of the youngsters said:

"It's a great opportunity to come here with all of my friends and to meet so many inspirational people... and I got a football shirt signed by Ryan Giggs for my team, Albion Rovers."



Gareth Bale with young people from Ringland

"This was a fantastic opportunity for these young people to meet their football heroes, and a great example of how partnership working can really benefit the local community.

"The new affordable apartments and houses in Ringland will help tackle the housing need in the city, and it's important to work closely with local people and residents throughout the regeneration."

Nicola Somerville, Chair of the Board at Newport City Homes

"We are thrilled to have been able to make dreams come true for these young people and we take pride in being able to build and develop communities in the areas we work in.

"In addition to the new homes and apartments, an important part of this redevelopment scheme is the increased job and employment opportunities for unemployed residents and the local community."

Bernadette Vickery, Community Coordinator at Lovell Homes

Our summary

We focused on supporting communities through our employability, financial inclusion and wellbeing initiatives.

The apprenticeship and academy programmes have supported a consistent number of residents to progress their career ambitions and secure employment over the last five years.

We have prioritised support to help residents maximise their income and maintain stable rent accounts. In five years, we have supported residents to gain over £3 million in additional benefit income. Our targeted approach has been successful in reducing the risk of tenancy failures.

We have recognised the fast-changing environment we operate in and have prioritised a 'social purpose' programme to understand and define our role in the community.

Our rating



AMBER

We are proud of the achievements and the positive difference we are making in communities. However, we want to make sure we target our efforts in the most effective way to have the greatest impact.



What next?

We will:

- Develop a stronger understanding of activities, partnerships and opportunities that will have the greatest impact on residents and communities.
- Prioritise a 'social purpose' programme to understand and define our specific offer, what we will deliver, what will be delivered with partners and confirm those services we will not provide.
- Align our activities with our role as a responsible, social landlord and which enhance the sustainability of tenancies as well as the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of our communities.
- Support our residents to sustain their tenancies and adapt our approach in response to any challenges they may face.
- Work with partners to increase financial and social investment.
- Ensure the community benefits achieved through procurement are fully utilised and lead to a positive impact on communities.
- Leverage our position to attract grant funding and other sources of investment and resources to support thriving communities.
- Use local goods and services to strengthen the local economy when appropriate.
- Seek opportunities to collaborate with others who share our vision and can add value to our communities.
- Utilise our resources and expertise to support the work of others in our communities where it improves the social, economic, environmental, cultural and wellbeing of our residents
- Work with partners to enhance our neighbourhoods, making them greener and healthier places to live.