

SPRING 2024

# barcud

NEWS





## New CEO

As we go to press, Barcud looks forward to the start date of our new CEO, Jason Jones. Following an extensive selection process, Jason will take up the post in May 2024.

The Board would like to thank all members of the Barcud Monitoring Group and our tenants for their support through the recruitment process. Their input and feedback were instrumental in ensuring the right person for the Association was found.

With Jason Jones at the helm and our stakeholders' continued support, Barcud will build upon our successes and achieve even greater heights in the future.

## To Contact Barcud

### By Phone

Call 0300 111 3030  
Press 1 for Welsh  
Press 2 for English

### By Post

Barcud, Unit 4, Pont Steffan Business Park, Lampeter, Ceredigion SA48 7HH

### Online

[barcud.cymru](http://barcud.cymru)

Fill in the 'contact us' form from our website

 Barcud

 @taibarcud

[post@barcud.cymru](mailto:post@barcud.cymru)  
(general enquiries)

[consent@barcud.cymru](mailto:consent@barcud.cymru)  
(any questions requiring consent)



## Welsh Government Surveys

We want to thank all those tenants who kindly completed the annual mini-satisfaction surveys we carried out on behalf of the Welsh Government. We are asked to arrange these every year to determine what our tenants think about our services. As promised, please find the results of the surveys we carried out in this newsletter. If you would like to compare Barcud's performance against other Housing Associations in Wales, these will be available on the Welsh Government website (Home | GOV.WALES ) once they have collated all the results across Wales.

## Calling Barcud Tenants

Tenant Involvement is at the heart of everything we do.  
Do you want to contribute?  
Contact Sue Thomas  
(Senior Tenant Participation Officer)  
0300 111 3030

## Social Event at Maes Arthur

Following a request from tenants at Maes Arthur, Aberystwyth, an informal meeting was held in November, just next door to the Aberystwyth Football Club. The meeting was arranged to chat about setting up a tenants group. A tenant suggested this to see if other tenants at Maes Arthur would be interested in organising and participating in social events, trips and days out with fellow tenants. It was a lovely meeting with many ideas and thoughts on how and when to meet up and participate in other events being organised elsewhere in the area.

# Update from the Barcud Monitoring Group (BMG)

Greetings, fellow tenants.

Thankfully, Spring is here, and hopefully, we can look forward to warmer and drier weather. I did say “hopefully,” but I am an optimist.

In December, the officers of the BMG met with the Barcud Group Board and Directors to discuss Tenant Involvement and the challenges we, the tenants, experience. David Wilton, Director of the Tenant Participation Advisory Service Cymru (TPAS Cymru), gave a presentation on the importance of Tenant Involvement and new approaches to increase participation levels. David also spoke about many concerns which are shared by tenants across Wales. Many of these concerns were familiar to the officers of the BMG and we have tried to address these in previous editions of this magazine. We want to mention a couple of these again.

## *Disrepair Claim Solicitors.*

There has been a huge increase in “No Win No Fee” adverts on TV and social media.

1. Many tenants using these companies are discovering that if they win, most of the compensation is used to pay the companies’ fees. In some cases, the compensation does not cover all the fees, and the tenants have to pay the shortfall, including interest charges, from their own pocket.
2. If you provide your personal details through one of the various social media adverts, your details are shared with a database of Disrepair Solicitors, and you may be overwhelmed with telephone calls, texts, and emails.
3. You should contact Barcud to report a repair, and depending on the nature of the repair, Barcud should complete it within a specified time. Your rent covers repairs.
4. If you have reported a repair and it has not been completed within the time period you were given, please get in touch with Barcud again.
5. You cannot be evicted or treated unfairly for reporting or chasing up a repair. This is the Law.

## *Comments, Compliments & Complaints.*

1. You cannot be evicted or treated unfairly for making a complaint. This is the Law.
2. Complaints help Barcud identify areas needing improvement in their services.
3. Barcud must be made aware of a concern to address it.
4. Complaints help Barcud in improving its services for all its tenants.
5. Again, you cannot be evicted or treated unfairly for making a complaint. Equally important, your complaint may improve services for other tenants.

Please remember that I and the members of the BMG are tenants just like you. Through our engagement with tenants locally and nationally, we know how important the two items above are for all tenants. We hope this information is helpful.

On a lighter note, throughout this year the BMG will be hosting its usual public events and working on some new projects. As with the recent CEO Recruitment process, we welcome and look forward to working with tenants who are not involved with the BMG.

Finally, please visit Barcud’s website and look at the BMG’s Annual Report and our guide about what we do and how we represent your interests and our fellow tenants. If you want to meet us or get involved with Barcud, contact Sue Thomas and Alisa Cakebread on 0300 111 3030.

Take care and be well.  
Paul Clasby  
Chair,  
Barcud Monitoring Group.



## Meet the Team Events

Last summer, we held “Meet the Team” events at various locations throughout Powys and Ceredigion. There were staff available at each event to chat with from Housing, Maintenance, Tenant Involvement and members of the Leadership Team. Thank you to the tenants who came to say hello and chat with us. The feedback from the tenants that came along was that they found the meetings helpful, especially with them being held on their doorstep. We will be holding “Meet the Team” events again this summer. Once the dates and locations are confirmed, we will share the details with tenants in those areas.

If you would like to “Meet the Team” on your estate, please get in touch – email [post@barcud.cymru](mailto:post@barcud.cymru) or call 0300 111 3030.



## Donation to Montgomeryshire Family Crisis Centre

Barcud recently donated a children’s playhouse, playpen and alphabet foam jigsaw matting to a charity in Newtown called Montgomeryshire Family Crisis Centre (MFCC). We received a lovely letter of thanks from them following the



donation to say that the gifts have made a difference to vulnerable families they support.

MFCC provides an invaluable service and helps support men, women, and children experiencing or affected by domestic abuse in North Powys. Unfortunately, they have seen a 70% increase in referrals since the Covid lockdown eased. They rely on charitable donations within the community.

MFCC has a 24-hour crisis line: 01686 629114. If you want to learn more, please visit their website, [familycrisis.co.uk](http://familycrisis.co.uk), for further advice and information.



## Reminder to redirect mail when moving house

Some people think they don’t need to redirect their post because they only get a few letters, but you may receive more through the letterbox than you realise. You might receive letters from health services about appointment times or messages from the council or government departments about

your benefits or money you owe. Some letters might be unexpected or infrequent, like a letter telling you about a court date or fine. Royal Mail can redirect your post for 3, 6 or 12 months. If you receive Universal Credit or Pension Credit, you could save up to 40% on the cost of redirection.

# Garden Photo Competition 2024

Enter your garden to win a £50 garden centre voucher.

Keeping your garden looking lovely takes a lot of hard work and dedication, and we want to see your beautiful gardens. We are giving you a heads-up so you can start planning your prize-winning flower beds, pots, hanging baskets and veg patches. The closing date isn't until August 16th, so there's no panic. We are asking you to send in your photos again this year. All you have to do is take your camera for a walk in your garden and share your photos with us. The images can be emailed to us or printed out and sent by post. Gardening is great for your health and wellbeing. A colourful and interesting garden makes a difference to your property. It can also benefit the community you live in and the environment. Sadly, we had very few entries for our under-16 category – five last year. We want to see what our younger tenants are doing in their gardens.

Have you created a bug hotel?

Have you planted some wildflowers?

Have you provided a safe home in your garden to attract wildlife?

You might even have taken some photos of the wildlife visiting your garden! Send them to us; we would love to see them! Each category winner will receive a £50 garden centre voucher. The winners will be announced in a future edition of Barcud News.

The categories are:

- 1. Best Floral Display (private garden)**
- 2. Best Hanging Basket, Container or Window Box**
- 3. Best Vegetable Garden**
- 4. Best Floral Display in an Unusual Container**
- 5. Best Insect-Friendly or Eco/Wildlife Garden Feature (under 16s)**
- 6. Best Sheltered Scheme Garden**
- 7. Best Communal Garden (not in a scheme)**

Please send the photo of your entry, clearly stating the number of the category you are entering, along with your full name and address. For verification purposes, you must be in the photo with your entry. You can find terms and conditions on our website: [barcud.cymru](http://barcud.cymru). Please send your entries to the following: Gardening Competition 2024 FAO: Alisa Cakebread, Barcud, Tŷ Canol House, Ffordd Croesawdy, Newtown, Powys, SY16 1AL or email [Alisa.Cakebread@barcud.cymru](mailto:Alisa.Cakebread@barcud.cymru) The closing date for entries is Friday, August 16th 2023.

## Save the Date

The next Tenant Liaison Forum will be on Wednesday 19th June at 11am. At Hafan yr Afon, Newtown, SY16 2NZ

Why not come along and meet Barcud's new Chief Executive?

To book your place and for more information please contact Barcud on 0300 111 3030

## Congratulations

Congratulations to Ms Shaw, a tenant from Aberystwyth whose name was drawn from all the responses to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion questionnaire sent out with the last Barcud News. Her response resulted in her winning a gift voucher in the free prize draw. Thank you for responding. We hope you enjoy spending your voucher!

# 2024/2025 Rent Increases

All tenants will have had their annual rent increase notifications in April 2024. Welsh Government Policy regulates Housing Association rent increases. For 2024/25, the maximum annual uplift overall was 6.7% as per the September CPI figure. Not all tenants have the same % increase, each year the Association sets an affordable benchmark rent per property type and rents are increased up towards that benchmark rent but within the rent policy. So the increase will depend on what level your rent was charged at for the previous year and individually that increase may be more than 6.7%.



Barcud has signed up to the Community Housing Cymru (representative body for Housing Associations in Wales), sector-wide affordability principles:

- ✓ **Affordable:** We will consider the total costs of renting homes and incomes to understand what is affordable for our tenants and ensure that tenants have the greatest opportunity to sustain their tenancies and thrive.
- ✓ **Sustainable:** We will set rents that allow us to continue to provide high-quality, safe, warm homes for the people who need them in the communities we serve.
- ✓ **Engage:** We will involve tenants to develop and review our approach to rent setting, and inform our decisions on rents.
- ✓ **Fair:** We will work to ensure that rents and other charges are set fairly and our homes and services represent value for money.
- ✓ **Accountable:** We will be open, transparent and accountable when we make decisions on rents.

We also compare the benchmark rents to private sector rents as a further affordability check and engage with our tenant monitoring group and the wider tenants through surveys as part of the rent-setting process. In our latest tenant survey carried out in November 2023, 87.5% of tenants thought that the rent charged by Barcud represented Value for Money.

The cost-of-living increases are a challenge for everyone, and Barcud is no different. Over the last year we have seen price increases across the board and our colleagues are working hard to ensure we continue to keep repairs on track and prioritise where we spend money on improvements. We're doing our best to balance the need for maintenance and improvements with the affordability of rent. Every penny of rent we receive is reinvested in running Barcud and looking after your homes, increasing the rent by a lower amount, would have resulted in delays to planned improvements and potential reductions to services. This responsibility is not limited to the provision of good quality accommodation tenants are proud to call home, but also includes a duty for us to be financially responsible. In essence, this means using the money we receive from rents wisely and making sure the Association remains a strong and viable organisation.

If you are worried about your finances, don't forget support is available to you.

Our tenancy sustainability team, Cynnal, are available to assist – you can contact them by email: [post@barcud.cymru](mailto:post@barcud.cymru) or by telephone: 0300 111 3030



## Croeso Events



Barcud recently held two Croeso events - in Powys and Ceredigion - to welcome tenants to their new homes. Signups were completed quickly, and families are now settling into the communities in Montgomery and Cardigan.

Here are two quotes from town councillors at Cardigan:

“All of the town councillors were invited by Barcud to visit the newly built houses on Tenby Road. The dwellings are of a very high standard, and I am sure the new habitants will be very happy there.”

“The new Barcud houses on Tenby Road are really lovely houses. It was good of Barcud to organise the tour for the councillors.”



## Video Doorbells

As convenient as video doorbells may seem, it's crucial to recognise their potential privacy concerns. While they offer security benefits, they can also record and store footage of your doorstep and surrounding areas. It is essential to be mindful of what is being captured on these devices, as they may inadvertently record sensitive information or moments you may not wish to be documented.

Additionally, this footage may fall into the wrong hands without proper security measures, compromising your privacy and security.

Therefore, it's essential to exercise caution and consider the implications of installing video doorbells, ensuring that you prioritise privacy and take necessary steps to safeguard your personal information and footage.

## Working for Barcud

Are you seeking a fulfilling career where you can make a real difference in people's lives? We're always looking for passionate individuals to join our team and embark on a rewarding journey in the housing sector. From office-based jobs to trades, the varied roles offer opportunities to support the communities we live in across the region.

All our posts are shared on social media; you can find more details on the Barcud website.

## Report a Repair 0300 111 3030

Out of Hours Service  
(after 5 pm and weekends)

### For EMERGENCY issues ONLY.

The response team for out-of-hours emergencies cannot access your general contract/tenancy information.

Please keep your enquiries about booked-in repairs or non-urgent requests for information for our customer service team during office hours. We're open Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm.

# Respect

At Barcud, we believe in fostering a culture of kindness and respect in all interactions, especially when communicating with our customer service representatives over the phone or face-to-face. Every team member is committed to providing the best assistance possible, and your cooperation and kindness significantly contribute to the effectiveness of our services. Remember,

behind every call or interaction is a dedicated individual striving to assist you promptly and efficiently. By choosing to be courteous and respectful, you make the experience more pleasant for yourself and create a positive environment where everyone feels valued and supported. Let's work together to cultivate a community built on empathy and understanding.

## Sheltered Forum Dates for 2024

**May 17th**

**July 19th**

**September 20th**

**November 15th**

The Sheltered forum is open to Barcud tenants who live in any of the Sheltered Schemes. It's held at Penrobyn, Aberaeron and transport is provided to and from the venue. Why not come along for these informal social events, meet new friends and socialise in a homely environment. If you would like more information, please get in touch with our Customer Service Team on 0300 111 3030

## CAVO Caring Communities Grant 2023/24

### *Llys Pedr Sheltered Scheme*

The Tyfu Llys Pedr Gardening Club has successfully applied to CAVO's Caring Communities Grant Scheme. Over the next few months, local garden designer and trainer Kim Stoddart will run a series of six weekly indoor gardening workshops in the communal lounge in Llys Pedr.

The Workshops will be open to anyone over 55 years of age.

Together with the Young at Heart Group, also based in Lampeter, they will produce container plants outside Llys Pedr.

Kim has designed the gardens at Creuddyn for Barcud and runs courses for the RHS and the National Botanic Gardens of Wales, among others.

Kim's previous gardening sessions have promoted positive memories of gardening and gardens, which can be built upon with another series of workshops.

If you would like further information, please contact Tess Price on 01570 422947





## Stay Safe with Water

Domestic hot and cold water systems can provide an environment where Legionella bacteria can grow.

### *What can you do to help?*

Ensure hot water in your home remains hot.

Ensure cold water remains cold.

Ensure all water outlets are used frequently.

It is important you do not alter the settings on your boiler or hot water system. Inform Barcud Customer Services (0300 111 3030) if your boiler or hot water tanks are not working properly, particularly if the water is not coming out of the taps at a sufficiently high temperature. It should come out at a temperature of 50°C after it has run for an appropriate amount of time.

### *Showers*



If showers are used only occasionally then flush them through by running them for at least two minutes every week. Keep as far out of the way as possible whilst this is being done.

Clean the showerhead periodically, descale and disinfect it. This should be done at least every six months.

### *Water Butts*



Water butts can also be a hot spot for Legionella, the water inside may remain stagnant for months. This water should never be used in conjunction with a hosepipe or to fill paddling pools, but instead put towards keeping plants hydrated. To use safely, water should be slowly decanted into a watering can (without a rain-head attachment).



## Repairs Survey

Many congratulations to Mr & Mrs Eddy, from Llanfyllin, who recently won a £50 voucher from Barcud. All tenants who return a repairs satisfaction form are entered into a free prize draw, drawn twice a year at a tenant meeting. So don't forget to send in your form, as your feedback helps us improve our service.

# Renting Homes Act 2016

## Phase 1 is done!

As required by the Act, all tenants whose tenancies started before December 2022 received their Converted Renting Homes Secure Occupation Contract by June 2023, while new tenants receive the updated version. Barcud converted over 60 types of tenancies and we have ended up with 20 variations of the secure occupation contract. The Act aims to standardise tenancy types, so we have decided to reduce the number further.

So time for;

## Phase 2: streamlining!

We want all tenants to have the same contract, and we'll make it happen through a Consultation and Variation exercise. Hopefully, by Summer 2024, you'll get a Preliminary Notice from Barcud outlining proposed changes to your contract and inviting your feedback within 28 days. We'll consider your comments, then in

## Phase 3:

we will issue a Notice of Variation and the new contract will take effect within one month.

## You Said, We Did...

We welcome all feedback from our tenants and customers and we use this to make improvements and efficiencies in our services.

Below are some of the ways in which you have helped us to improve:

- ✓ Ensuring that any follow-up repairs (after a temporary repair) are undertaken in a timely manner
- ✓ Ensuring that letters are dated as close as possible to their dispatch date
- ✓ Ensuring that any policy distributed to tenants or used to make a decision on service provision is the latest version of that policy
- ✓ Ensuring contractors working on void properties are reminded to put any mail to one side for Barcud Officers to determine if the mail can be returned to sender.
- ✓ Understanding that if an issue cannot be resolved within a reasonable timescale and the contract holder is still not happy, then their concerns should be escalated to a Stage 1 complaint

We thank you for your input.

## National Lottery Community Funding

### *Llys Pedr Social Club*



We were delighted in February 2022 when the Llys Pedr Social Club members were informed that their grant application to the National Lottery's Community Fund had been successful. It enabled them to arrange events and an activity programme

that could be shared with relatives, friends and other social groups within the local area. This funding has greatly benefited the tenants and others in the community, who are coming together to improve social connection and reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation. We have joined forces with local schools and groups and aim to build further connections with them by organising activities where tenants and families can meet and work together on other projects in the future.