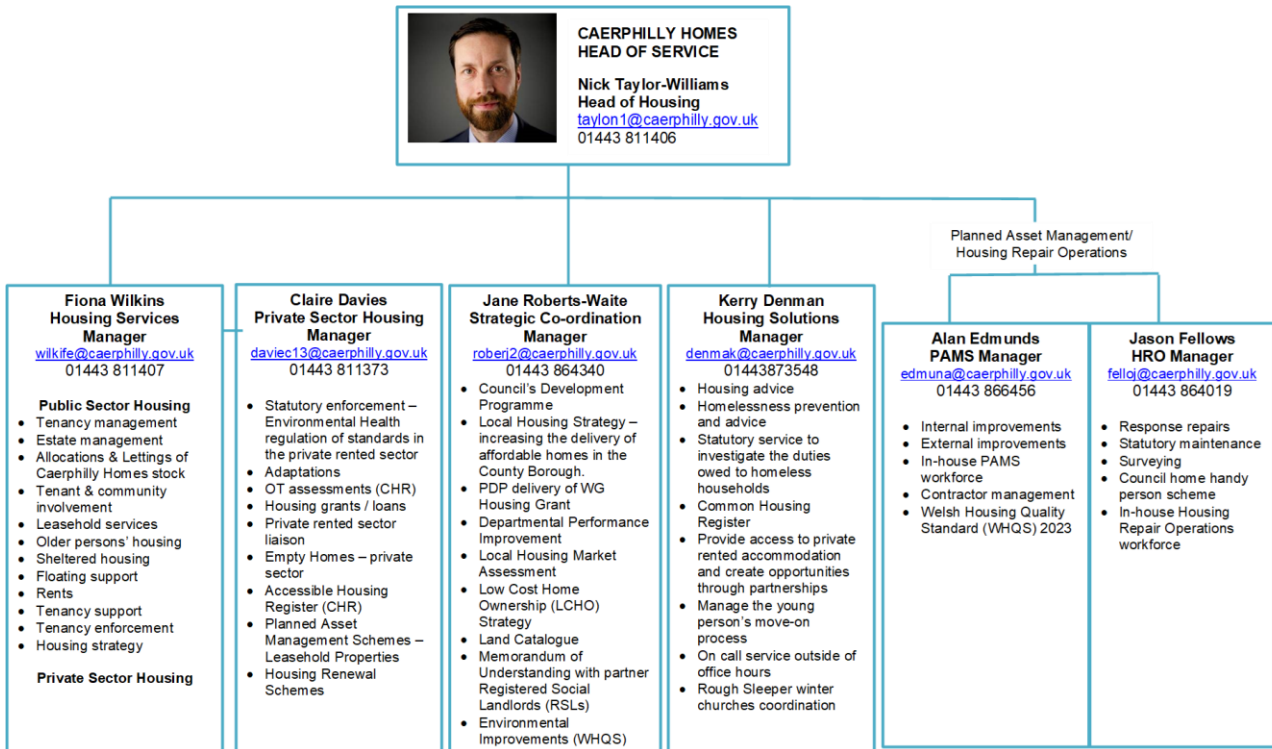


Diagram of Directorate and Service Framework



Brief description of Directorate and Service Framework

Caerphilly Homes is the brand name for the council's housing division. Some of the services delivered by Caerphilly Homes include: Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), Estate Management, Tenancy Enforcement, Rents and Tenancy Support, Tenant and Community Involvement, Older Persons' Housing, Housing Repair Operations, Housing Advice, Homeless Prevention and Common Housing Register, Private Sector Housing, Grants and Loans, Housing Strategy, Affordable Housing and Adaptations

2. Number of complaints by stage type, service, and targets met

Table showing summary of complaints by stage type reference

Stage Type	Count	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Stage 1	113	93	82.3%
Stage 2	6	5	83.3%
Escalated from Stage 1 to 2	21	19	90.5%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>83.6%</b>

Tables showing summary of complaints by service, for each stage type

Service	Count Stage 1	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Adaptations	1	1	100.0%
Allocations	13	11	84.6%
Antisocial Behaviour	6	6	100.0%
Energy Works	4	4	100.0%
Grants	2	2	100.0%
Homelessness	2	2	100.0%
Housing Management	35	24	68.6%
Leaseholder	3	3	100.0%
Heating	2	2	100.0%
Private Landlord	4	3	75.0%
Rents	3	3	100.0%
Response Repairs	24	20	83.3%
Sheltered Housing	2	2	100.0%
WHQS External	8	7	87.5%
WHQS Internal	4	3	75.0%
Totals	<b>113</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>82.3%</b>

Service	Count Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Adaptations	1	1	100.0%
Allocations	3	3	100.0%
Antisocial Behaviour	3	2	66.7%
Energy Works	1	1	100.0%
Grants	2	2	100.0%
Homelessness	1	1	100.0%
Housing Management	7	5	71.4%
Leaseholder	1	1	100.0%
Heating	1	1	100.0%
Response Repairs	5	5	100.0%
WHQS External	2	2	100.0%
Totals	<b>27</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>88.9%</b>

Where target response times were not met, it has been identified that generally it was due to awaiting further information from other officers, other departments, or the complainants themselves. Constraints on officers to carry out their investigations in a timely manner due to Welsh Government regulations in response to Covid-19 also impacted on response times during this period. The Head of Housing – Nick Taylor Williams has been undertaking a review of all Stage 1 and Stage 2 responses to ensure consistency and customer focus. Due to the number of responses requiring review and redrafting, this has impacted negatively on the target rates however it is anticipated undertaking this exercise will have a positive impact on customer service, quality of complaint investigations and ultimately reducing escalation of complaints. Going forward, data will be provided monthly to managers and directors who attend SMB and HMT to discuss cases which fall short of meeting the target deadlines and to establish if trends can be identified in this area. Key members of the Housing Management team have also been involved in the planning and implementation of the changes required for Caerphilly Homes to successfully introduce the Renting Homes Act 2016. This was initially due to be completed by the 15th of July 2022 however this has been postponed until the 1st December 2022. The introduction of this legislation is paramount and therefore has taken priority over some other duties. The Housing Department has also commissioned a new computer system called CX. Managers and officers have been involved with the building and testing

of the system via workshops and group meetings, this new system is due to go live in October 2022. Managers/Officers will be provided with a list of open cases for their section on a fortnightly bases which will include brief details of the case when it was received and the target date for closure. This approach will be monitored to see if this has a positive impact on our target time percentages.

### Table showing how the complaints were received.

By source	Count Stage 1	Count Stage 2	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2
Telephone	38	1	4
Email	59	3	15
Letter	5	2	0
On-line	11	0	2
Contact Centre	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>21</b>

### 3. Key complaints - identified by type or theme

- Residents unhappy with delay in starting/completing Welsh Housing Quality Standards works.
- Waiting time to be allocated a property/unhappy with banding.
- Residents requesting new wooden fences or gates for their gardens.
- Former tenant arrears.
- Leaseholders unhappy with quality of repairs/maintenance works carried out on their properties or blocks.
- Operatives not attending pre-arranged appointments or turning up without pre-arranged appointments.
- Residents unhappy with the installation of new ground source heating system and the associated works within their properties.
- CCBC operatives or contractors not parking with consideration when working on properties.
- Delay in adaptations to property.
- Time taken to end a tenancy following tenant moving into a nursing home.
- Concerns raised regarding joint liability for repair costs.
- Poor relet conditions of property.
- Overgrown hedges protruding onto public pathways and occupiers' gardens.

### 4. Number by Category (Commissioner Case Type)

#### Table showing complaints by Commissioner Case Type, for prescribed Categories

Category	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
1 Collaborative Working	0

2 Decision Making	28
3 Delay in Service Provision	29
4 Officer/Contractors Conduct with public (including sensitivity/empathy of staff/politeness)	6
5a Following Council Policies	2
5b Following relevant Legislation	3
6 Accessibility of Services	0
7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information	10
8 Quality of Work	62
9 Openness/ Fairness and Honesty	0
10 Compliance with Complaints procedure	0
11 Combination	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>140</b>

## 5. Number by Outcome and lessons learned comments

Table showing complaints by Outcome Data sets as categorised by the Complaints Standards Authority.

Outcome Data	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Upheld	45
Not upheld	94
Withdrawn	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>140</b>

The following table shows more information regarding the complaints counts above, that were upheld or not upheld broken down by service area.

### Stage 1 Complaints

Service	Upheld	Not Upheld
<b>Adaptations</b>	1	0
<b>Allocations</b>	3	10
<b>Energy Works</b>	4	0
<b>Grants</b>	1	1
<b>Housing Management</b>	19	16
<b>Leaseholder</b>	2	1
<b>Private Landlord</b>	1	2
<b>Rents</b>	1	2
<b>Response Repairs</b>	8	16
<b>Sheltered Housing</b>	0	2

WHQS External	2	6
WHQS Internal	0	4
Heating	1	1
Antisocial Behaviour	0	6
Homeless Prevention	0	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>69</b>

## Stage 2 Complaints

Service	Upheld	Not Upheld
Adaptations	0	1
Allocations	0	3
Energy Works	1	0
Grants	0	2
Housing Management	0	7
Leaseholder	0	1
Private Landlord	0	0
Rents	0	0
Response Repairs	0	5
Sheltered Housing	0	0
WHQS External	1	1
WHQS Internal	0	0
Heating	0	1
Antisocial Behaviour	0	3
Homeless Prevention	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>25</b>

### **List of lessons learned. Comment on key findings resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, that may help curtail, prevent, or impede future repeats.**

The later part of this reporting period identified a trend with complaints relating to the relet standard of Caerphilly Homes properties. Initially each complaint is reviewed on its own merits and two common themes were identified. It was established our customers were unhappy with the standard of cleanliness of the property when they received the keys and some customers felt essential repairs were not undertaken (or to a poor standard) when the property was void, resulting in inhibiting our customers from either moving in or decorating the property immediately. This information has been passed to the Area Housing Manager and Landlord Services Manager to investigate and discuss a solution. Following an initial review of the complaints, the Higher Management Team met to discuss the current standard requirements with the Housing Repair Operations Manager and Surveyors to ensure a consistent approach is taken when agreeing to sign properties as suitable for relet. The meetings and discussions have taken place, enabling standards to be reviewed

and changed however this area will be monitored in line with the requirements for the Renting Homes Act 2016.

<b>Details of Case</b>	<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<b>Category</b>
Tenant unhappy with the mess left after the heating system installation - tenant thought they were having patios but then told they were not	Improvements needed to ensure regular updates are provided to communicate any decisions or delays with tenant – this was a pilot scheme so the changes will be considered when installations of this nature are considered going forward.	8 Quality of work
Possible data breach as aunt of Housing Applicant called and obtained information on behalf of applicant without verifications being asked.	Housing Solutions Manager has requested and completed refresher training for all staff within the team as a reminder of the verification process that we employ within the service area.	5b Following relevant Legislation
Sub-contractor called on a Sunday without prior notice.	Contact has been made with all contractors connected to the contract to remind them of their responsibilities within the terms and conditions.	4 Officer/Contractors Conduct with public
Leaseholder unhappy with the quality of paint work carried out on the railings and fencing	We now issue letters at the end of each contract to ask if leaseholders are satisfied with the completed works so that any issues can be dealt with in a timely manner.	8 Quality of work
Unhappy with works associated with ground source heating installation – letter regarding these works were illegible.	Make sure all correspondence is of a decent quality before leaving the office and that tenants are consulted with, and records held documenting this at all stages.	8 Quality of work
Stress and damage caused whilst installing the new heating system	Ensure tenants are consulted with and records held documenting this at all stages along with finishing works thoroughly checked going forward.	8 Quality of work
Wife recently passed away, but he received an arrears Letter from the Rents Section stating “following the sad death of Mr A”	Letter sent to tenant with deceased’s name as addressee. We have taken three steps to prevent this issue arising again: 1. Held a meeting with the administration assistant who sent the letter in error and discussed the distress this has caused the tenant. Expressed the importance of ensuring accuracy when sending such letters. Consequently, we have	7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information

	<p>agreed to put further training in place.</p> <p>2. We have changed the procedure in relation to deceased tenants, a letter now must be produced manually and populated by a staff member.</p> <p>3. We have added a further checkpoint, whereby the letter content is checked by another member of staff prior to mailing.</p>	
Tenant was told a mutual exchange could go through but after spending money clearing the rent and prepared property for inspection, has been told the exchange cannot go ahead due to overcrowding	Changes have been made to ensure that whilst advice is given during the process of applying for an exchange that it is made clear to all parties that until formal approval has been given, it cannot be assumed that permission will be granted.	7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information
Executor unhappy with the lack of correspondence he has received from Housing Office and has now received a rent arrears charge for over £600	Procedures being changed to ensure that wherever possible, we will telephone and speak to next of kin supplied in the 'Tell us Once' and that following this conversation, letters will be sent confirming the conversation and any advice that was discussed.	7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information
Tenant moved into a new property and unaware when required adaptations will be undertaken – feel there has been a delay	More comprehensive file notes from calls taken and meetings held to ensure we are aware of new tenants needs.	7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information
Relative unhappy with the time taken to end mother's tenancy, incurring further charges.	Area Housing Manager arranging meeting with social services to talk through with them the implications of tenancies and how they can't end them without following the correct legal requirements.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Relative of owner occupier concerned as they cannot afford to pay towards the cost of repairing the shared drive.	Due to lack of consultation or notification of financial obligations provided by the conveyancing solicitor at the time of purchase, the process of shared responsibility will be reviewed to find ways of improving our service.	8 Quality of Work/Service
Tenant has lived at property since 2018 and has spent a considerable amount of money there due to the poor relet standard	To communicate better and spend time listening to our customers to discuss if they are happy with the standard of accommodation.	8 Quality of Work/Service

Tenant raised concerns with the District Environmental Health Officer regarding the relet condition of the property when they accepted it.	Encourage tenants to report issues with property including quality of cleanliness and outstanding repairs	8 Quality of Work/Service
Owner Occupier unhappy with the service received after receiving a joint responsibility letter.	Did not give due diligence in this case and sent a letter to someone who had nothing to do with the issue because we made assumptions, we need to look at the Joint Responsibility procedure and in particular the tone of letters, all of which is happening as a result of Renting Homes Wales. This will be completed in time for the implementation of the new legislation – initially 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2022 but postponed until 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2022. Housing staff will receive training on a number of changes including joint responsibility.	8 Quality of Work/Service
Tenant advised nothing is being done about damaged fence, mould, electrical wiring problems with the boiler and back door and windows.	Officers will be reminded of the importance of listening to our customers and remain focussed on their needs.	8 Quality of Work/Service
overgrown section of pavement. The hedge causing the obstructions belong to 2 properties one is privately owned and the other is a council owned	Due to the covid pandemic no routine inspections or walking the estate have been undertaken, with restrictions lifted these inspections have recommenced.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Outstanding issues regarding shower and conservatory following delay in loan application.	Principle Housing Officer reviewing the loan procedure to ensure resilience going forward. Guidance is in the process of being produced to ensure that the applicants are aware of the criteria, process and timeframes involved with the loan going forward. In addition, admin support will be implemented to ensure key stages are scheduled for response and that applicants are kept informed regular during the process.	3 Delay in Service Provision

Following a recent review of all Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaint responses, we recognise the quality and tone of our responses are not in keeping with the good quality customer service mentality that we should be known for. The quality of draft responses will continue to be reviewed and guidance provided to investigating Officer's/Managers.



## 6. Identified relationships to Equalities or Welsh Language

Table showing a count and list of findings resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, that specifically relate to the Equalities or Welsh Language protected characteristics.

Characteristic Strand	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Age	0
Disability	7
Gender Reassignment	0
Marriage and Civil Partnership	0
Pregnancy and Maternity	1
Race	0
Religion/Belief or Non-belief	0
Sex	0
Sexual Orientation	0
Welsh Language	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8</b>

### Extracts from cases linked to the Disability characteristic:

- Sister contacting on applicant's behalf as applicant has been in band 2 for 5 years and is still waiting for a property despite supporting letters from doctors.
- Unhappy by the way housing application has been handled and it's affecting the mental health of the applicant.
- Applicant offered a house and as soon as additional cost was involved the offer was taken away – applicant feels disability is being used against them.
- Advocate for applicant questioning why we are not carrying out adaptations to their property rather than suggesting the residents move.
- Applicant felt the adaptations should have been planned before they moved into property.
- Grant application delayed and applicant feels this was unnecessary.
- Tenant reporting alleged harassment from neighbour for a number of years.

### Extraction from the case linked to the Pregnancy and Maternity characteristic:

- When tenancy began the property had a shower, not a bath and the tenant was heavily pregnant and requested a bath be fitted as soon as possible. Tenant now advises after months of waiting her baby has now outgrown the baby bath and there is not a job booked in on the Housing Repairs system to fit a bath in her property in the near future.

## **7. Annex – Referrals to Ombudsman, complaints resulting from appeals and examples of relevant items (points to note) specific to this reporting period**

**Identify how many referrals to the Ombudsman and list and append any relevant supplementary information here, namely, points to note, or an example data set.**

Thirteen cases were referred to the Ombudsman for Housing in this reporting period. The Ombudsman decided not to investigate twelve cases due to Caerphilly Homes undertaking properly made decisions, the customer presenting their complaint to the Ombudsman prematurely or because the issue raised is not for the Ombudsman to investigate and subsequently closed their records. The Ombudsman investigated one case relating to a decision not to undertake adaptations to a property following OT assessments and costings. The assessments undertaken established the required adaptations were not feasible for the property nor the resident and the OT's final recommendation was to suggest the resident move to a suitably adapted property. The support worker for the family challenged this decision and the Ombudsman considered the complaint. The Ombudsman recommended an early resolution and Caerphilly Homes accepted this option which involved a one-off payment of £500 for inconvenience, a letter of apology for our failures in relation to communication and record keeping and a new OT assessment to be carried out on the resident at their property.

Caerphilly Homes recognised the problems largely arose due to the lockdown restrictions coming into force when this case was under active consideration and the sudden transition to home working. This significantly impacted on what was, at that time, a paper-based process and inadequate IT resources were available to staff for an extended period to enable them to work effectively from home. Lessons learned related to the recognition that our traditional record keeping processes worked less effectively under pandemic restrictions, that staff needed access to adequate IT facilities to enable them to work effectively from home and staff needed to improve record keeping of conversations with customers and colleagues and their communication of decisions to customers. Relying on a conversation to advise the customer that their application for assistance was refused and the reasons for that decision, rather than providing a reasoned decision letter, was inadequate.

Since that time staff have been provided with IT devices and been reminded that a digital or paper record must be kept of all conversations and decisions related to a case. A reasoned decision letter is now provided to applicants whose application for major works of adaptation is refused, for clarification and to enable them to understand the reasons for this decision being taken.

