

OpenHouse

The Magazine for **Council Tenants and Leaseholders**

Issue 1 2022



The way you rent your home is changing. See page 9 for more information about the Renting Homes Act.



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ALL INFORMATION IN OPENHOUSE IS CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS.

Welcome to Open House

Welcome to the latest edition of our tenants and leaseholders magazine.

We hope you enjoy seeing pictures of the winning gardens from this year's gardening competition on page 4. We're sure you'll agree that there are some lovely gardens and deserving winners.

There's some important information on page 9 about the new Renting Homes Act and what it means for you.

On page 16 there's some useful tips on avoiding scams and staying safe online so please do take the time to read the advice.

We're also asking you to let us know your preference on how you receive Open House in future. Further details on page 17.

As always, if you do have any feedback on articles or what you would like to see in a future edition, we would love to hear from you.

Rachel Cole, Editor

Useful Contacts

Editor - Rachel Cole	☎ 635045
Repairs Contact Centre	☎ 635100
Out of Hours Emergency Repairs	☎ 521500
24 hour Neighbourhood Support Unit	☎ 648507
Housing Options	☎ 533100
Environment Contact Centre	☎ 635600
Housing Benefit Queries	☎ 635353

Central Area Housing Office

The CENTRAL AREA covers all the Townhill and Town Centre housing areas and will be based in Townhill and Town Centre Housing Offices.

✉ centralarea.housingoffice@swansea.gov.uk ☎ 01792 513900

East Area Housing Office

The EAST AREA covers all the Eastside and Morriston housing areas and will be based in Morriston Housing Office.

✉ eastarea.housingoffice@swansea.gov.uk ☎ 01792 601720

North Area Housing Office

The NORTH AREA covers all the Blaenymaes and Penlan housing areas and will be based in Blaenymaes Housing Office.

✉ northarea.housingoffice@swansea.gov.uk ☎ 01792 534060

West Area Housing Office

The WEST AREA covers all the Gorseinon, West Cross and Sketty housing areas and will be based in Gorseinon Library Hub and Sketty Housing Offices.

✉ westarea.housingoffice@swansea.gov.uk ☎ 01792 897700

If you require this information in a different format eg large print, Braille, disc or other, please contact Housing Customer Services ☎ 01792 635045 or visit our website

🌐 www.swansea.gov.uk/housing or email

✉ housing@swansea.gov.uk

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and will deal with Welsh and English correspondence to the same standards and timescales.



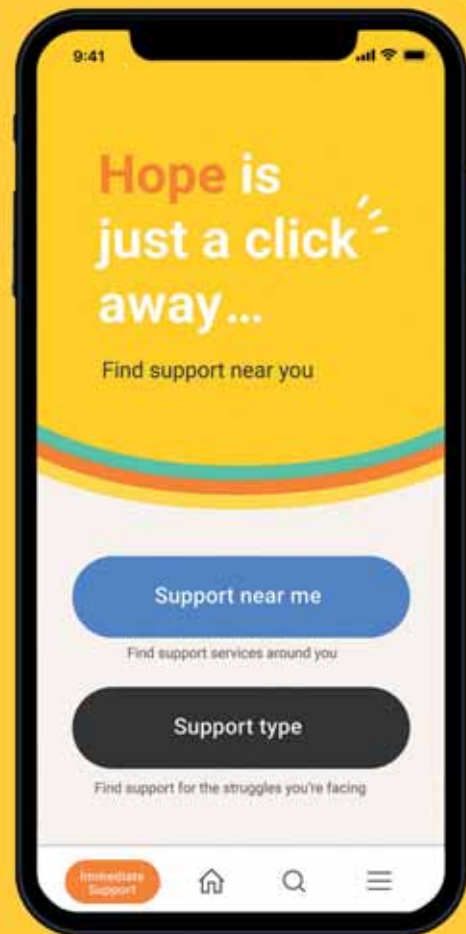
Brought to you by **Matthew's House**

Free

A signposting app to find you hope where you live!

A smartphone app created to provide a smooth path to support services in Swansea.

Let *Hope in Swansea* guide you to reliable, accurate, up-to-date details of local support – all in one place.



Support available for:

- Abuse
- Affected by Crime
- Disabilities and Health
- Employment and Education
- English Language
- Ex-Armed Services
- Ex-Offenders
- Families
- Finance and Benefits
- Gender and Sexuality
- Homelessness and Accommodation
- Hunger
- Hygiene and Sanitation
- Lifestyle and Addiction
- Loneliness and Isolation
- Mental Health
- Older People
- Refugees and Seeking Asylum
- Wellbeing and Community
- Women and Men
- Young People



Download the app today!
hopeinswansea.org.uk





www.swansea.gov.uk/workways

Workways+ offers training, paid work experience and volunteering opportunities to unemployed individuals over 25 to help them improve their lives by gaining sustainable employment.

Many of the people that **Workways+** help have challenges to overcome including work limiting health conditions and care giving responsibilities.

Backed by £17.3 million of EU funds, **Workways+** will benefit people in Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion. This project has been supported by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government.

Workways+ support includes helping people search for jobs, develop their CV's, access funded training and qualifications, build their confidence, develop interview skills, access paid work experience and introduce people to potential employers.

Workways+ projects have already supported more than 1000 people living in Swansea, we are celebrating this by sharing Good News Stories from some of our participants we have helped find secure employment.

Workways+ supported Hugh to attain Banksman Training as well as Level 2 Health and Safety in a Construction Environment, which enabled him to find full time employment as a Gates person supported by our Employment Mentor and the Beyond Bricks and Mortar Team. *"For my part I am very pleased with the support received from Workways. They could not do enough to help and the result is clear to see - with help in preparation of my CV and some coaching I was successful in the very first interview I attended (no mean feat at the moment when so many people are looking for work) I am looking forward to the future and want to thank Workways for all their help".*



OUTREACH

Monday: Gorseinon Library, 9.30 - 12.30

Monday: Clydach Library, 9.30 - 12.30

Wednesday: Brynhyfryd Library, 9.30 - 12.30

To find out more about **Workways+**

 01792 637112

 Workways+@swansea.gov.uk



Workways+ helps Lauren build for success

Lauren Ellis, a single parent of three young children, needed a job and with her youngest now at school age the opportunity she was waiting for had arrived. Lauren has substantial experience working in the care sector but with her childcare responsibilities she needed regular daytime hours. Lauren wanted to work in administration, but with her lack of experience and qualifications in that sector she wasn't in a position to apply for admin jobs. Lauren's local Job Centre referred her to Workways+, the service that helps people improve their lives through employment and fully funded training support.

Workways+ assigned Lauren an experienced mentor Angela to work with her on a 1-1 basis. They enjoyed working together and it wasn't long before Angela was able to provide Lauren with a fully funded administration focused training course. Angela also helped Lauren get to grips with interview techniques and writing an effective CV. Workways+ funded a BSC Level 1 Award in IT User Skills (ECDL Essentials) and Lauren worked hard and with support from Angela she passed the test. Lauren now has a qualification relevant to administration jobs which was arranged and fully paid for by Workways+.

Next, using the Swansea City Council 'Beyond Bricks and Mortar' service, Workways+ was able to agree a work trial with Swansea Company R&M Williams, a contractor on the Palace Theatre Development. Lauren excelled in the trial and was offered a part time job at the company which suits the demands of her child care responsibilities.

Robert Theophile, Project Manager R&M Williams said, "Since joining R&M Williams at the Palace Theatre in Swansea, Lauren Ellis has quickly adapted to the role of site admin and is now a valued member of the team. She has been able to learn new IT skills and company systems whilst displaying great enthusiasm which has helped to make the process a smooth one".



Lauren said, "I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for Workways+. My Mentor took my interests into consideration and set me on this path which I'm really enjoying and offers me opportunities for progression. I am very grateful for the help and support Angela gave me and how fast it all happened. There was no messing about you was straight on it for me. Communication was excellent and this proved that she actually cared and was keen to help me. Angela never failed to respond efficiently, providing positivity and faith in me, which gave me the confidence to say... I can do this Lauren. Nothing was too much for her, which is how I am here in R&M Williams now."

This project has been supported by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government

www.workways.wales

Gardening Competition 2021

Thank you to all of you who entered our gardening competition in 2021. It was slightly different to previous years in that we asked you to send us photographs of your lovely gardens and surroundings.

The judges were very impressed with the standard of entries and had a difficult job deciding on the winners, but eventually they did! Here is a selection of the winners' gardens:



Best Garden - 1st place: Richard Russ



Best Edible Garden: Andrea Evans



Best Garden - 2nd place: Patrick McCormack



Best Lifestyle Garden: Stephen Rees



Best Garden - 3rd place: Geraldine Spencer



Best Sheltered Complex: Llys Y Coed



Best use of a small space: Mrs M Jenkins

LocalLinks

Local links provides information about activities taking place in your area.



What's going on in our libraries? Find out more here!

ABERTAWE SWANSEA



Lovers of the printed word are now able to get the books they wish for as Swansea Libraries have launched a **'Phone and Pick Up'** book service for local residents.

The service is operating at a number of libraries and is designed for those who prefer to have the books in their hands.

Ever since the start of the lockdown our libraries service has been offering an online service where readers can access e-books and audio books as well as magazines, news and other services.

The **'Phone and Pick Up'** service will be operating on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays out of Swansea Central, Gorseinon, Morriston and Oystermouth libraries.

Are you curious about your family history?

Would you like to find out more about your ancestors? Well, why not try and find out with Swansea Libraries' **FREE** access to Ancestry for library members.

NewsBank...

Our **@NewsBank** resource is a great way to research the latest news on any topic **#NewsBank**.

Wifi, Computers & Printing... All our libraries offer access to wifi, computers and printing services for library members.

eBooks, eAudiobooks and eMagazines...

Library members can download eBooks, eAudiobooks and eMagazines for free. **Download free eBooks to your computer, tablet and phone with BorrowBox.** If you are a member of Swansea Libraries you automatically have access to our eBook service, **BorrowBox** which is available in English & Welsh. 📞 www.swansea.borrowbox.com/

Rhyme Time...

Brynhyfryd Library

Every Tuesday morning 10am

📞 01792 650953

Sketty Library

Every Tuesday morning

10.30am

📞 01792 202024

Morriston Library

Every Wednesday morning

10.30am

📞 01792 516770

Penlan Library

Every Friday afternoon 1.30pm

📞 01792 584674

The full list of libraries in Swansea is available on our website 📞 www.swansea.gov.uk/swansealibraries

Tenants' Voice



My name is Alison Winter and I am your Participation Officer.

In past editions of Open House, I have used this page to update you on what has been discussed in Local Neighbourhood Groups and Citywide groups. Whilst we are still currently unable to meet face to face, I have enjoyed speaking to many of you by telephone and having a chat and catch up.



You can still continue to be involved, have your say and stay in touch.

As well as contacting me by telephone, you can text me on 📞 **07775221453**, contact me via Messenger or email me ✉️ **Alison.winter@swansea.gov.uk**.



Facebook

Swansea Council Housing has its own Facebook group, which any council tenant or leaseholder can join. We post useful information, advise you on updates and changes to housing services and of course, answer any queries you may have. If you have any suggestions for topics that you would like to include, please get in touch.



If you would like to join, search for Swansea Council Housing on Facebook, request to join and you will be asked the following questions: 1. Lead tenant name, 2. Address, 3. Language preference. **Your request will only be approved if you answer these questions.**



Safeguarding week

During November, officers from Housing, Police, Fire Service and Safer Swansea held drop in sessions in various locations throughout Swansea to increase awareness of support agencies, promote services available to help vulnerable people and to offer housing advice. More events are being planned and I will give you information about these in future editions.

Sheltered Housing News



Congratulations to one of our residents from Conway Court, Eileen, who celebrated her 99th birthday in 2021. Eileen celebrated her birthday with her friends and family.

Happy 99th Birthday!

Christine, a tenant from Ty Dewi Sant, braved the shave to raise awareness of cancer and the work Macmillian do. In the process she raised over £450. Cheryl Duffy, Senior Warden said "We are so

proud of Christine for shaving her head and raising so much money for such a worthwhile cause."

Other tenants from Ty Dewi Sant held a coffee morning with a raffle and sold homemade goods. There was also a spin the wheel game to win a bottled prize. In total, the tenants raised £1870.88 for Macmillan. **Well done to everyone involved!**



Keep Wales Tidy Places for Nature Grant is offered to community groups to enhance, restore and develop green spaces into community gardens. There are several packages available for groups to apply for, depending on what the group would like to achieve. Several of our Sheltered Complexes including Heol Y Gors, Laugharne Court and Gloucester House have been successful in applying for the grant. We will update you further on this in future issues.



Your comments about Open House

Do you have any comments about this edition of Open House magazine or any of the articles you have read? If so, you can either write to Housing Services, City and County of Swansea, Oystermouth Road, Swansea SA1 3SN, Freepost RSCT-JJZH-KLJZ or email to [✉ housing@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:housing@swansea.gov.uk) or phone on [☎ 01792 635045](tel:01792635045).

Thank you for your time. Please let us know if you are happy for your comments to be included in Open House magazine.

Changes to the Sheltered Housing service

Some important changes have been made to Sheltered Housing, improving the service that we offer to residents.

Firstly, the name change! The Sheltered Housing service will now be named Independent Living Services. This is a better representation of the type of service that we offer and means that Wardens will be known as Independent Living Officers.

Other improvements to the service include:

Over 55s - Are you over 55? Have you ever considered sheltered accommodation but felt it wasn't for you or you weren't 'ready'? Some complexes will now accept tenants at the age of 55 or over as we recognise that you may also require the support and peace of mind living in Independent Living can bring.

Upgrading of call systems - These are being upgraded from analogue to digital, which will allow more assistive technology for our tenants in the future.

CCTV - there is an ongoing programme to install CCTV at our complexes to provide extra security, allowing residents to feel safer in their own homes.

Communal lounge refurbishments - All communal lounges will be refurbished over the next 5 years, providing a much nicer environment for residents to feel comfortable in.

Handyperson - A newly appointed handyperson will now be available at our complexes to assist residents with jobs such as changing a lightbulb or putting up a shelf.

Pendants and pull cords - Please remember these can be used to access assistance when it is required and are not just for emergency use. If you pull the cord or activate your pendant a call handler in the Delta service will provide you with assistance. This service is available for you 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week.

If you or anyone you know is interested in applying for 'Independent Living', you can contact Housing Options on ☎ **01792 533100**. There is also further information available on our website

🌐 www.swansea.gov.uk/shelteredhousing.

Gorseinon Area Housing Office opening times

With effect from the 10th January 2022, the opening times of Gorseinon Area Housing Office changed to the following:

Monday 9.00am - 1.00pm

Tuesday 1.00pm - 4.00pm

Wednesday 9.00am - 1.00pm

Thursday 1.00pm - 4.00pm

(Mon - Thurs phones available 8.30am - 4.30pm)

Friday 9.00am - 1.00pm

(Fri phones available 8.30am - 4.00pm)

The revised opening hours will not reduce the overall housing service provided to tenants as you will still be able to telephone and email the office when it is closed. We will also continue to offer pre-arranged appointments at the Gorseinon Area Housing Office or in your home at a time suitable to you.

Given the geography of the area covered by the Gorseinon Area Housing Office, our intention is to enable Neighbourhood Officers to use their time being more visible in the community rather than being based in the office.

The way you rent your home is changing



The Welsh Government has confirmed that the Renting Homes Act will come into force on 15th July 2022.

Every tenant and landlord in the public and private rented sector will be affected by the new act.

The act will:

- Simplify several pieces of housing law and create one single legal framework.
- It will simplify and improve rights and responsibilities.
- For the first time, the act will create two types of contracts: Secure and Standard.

Secure contract: This will replace secure tenancy agreements issued by the Council. It will also replace assured tenancies issued by Housing Associations.

Standard contract: This affects tenants in private rented accommodation but will also be used by the Council and Housing Associations in certain circumstances (e.g. an 'introductory standard contract' for new Council tenants).

I am a Council tenant how will this affect me?:

- Your legal rights to live in your home will not be any less secure and you will not have to move home.
- You will continue to receive the same service from the Council as your landlord.
- Swansea Council will become a Community Landlord, a change from the term "social landlord".
- Tenants will become contract holders.
- Tenancy agreements will become occupation contracts.
- Succession rights will be increased – if you share your home, two successions to the contract will be allowed to take place, for

example a spouse followed by another family member. In addition, a new succession right for carers is created.

- Joint contracts - Contract-holders can be added or removed from occupation contracts without the need to end one contract and start another. This will make managing joint contracts easier and help victims of domestic abuse by enabling the perpetrator to be targeted for eviction.
- There will be greater security for people who live in the private rented sector.

Do I need to do anything?

There is nothing that you need to do right now. Existing tenants will receive their new occupation contracts within six months from 15th July 2022 and new tenants (contract holders) will sign up to a new occupation contract from this date.

We have been liaising closely with Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association and other housing organisations to prepare for the changes, and our staff are working hard to ensure the changes are implemented as seamlessly as possible.

We will keep you informed of progress and information will be sent out to you in the next few months to explain the changes in detail.

You can also find useful information on the Welsh Government's website 📄 www.gov.wales/tenants-housing-law-changing-renting-homes

Or from TPAS Cymru – Tenant Participation Advisory Service 📄 www.tpas.cymru/blog/the-way-you-rent-is-changing-for-tenants-and-landlords

If you have any questions or comments, please submit them here:

📄 www.swansea.gov.uk/rentinghomesact

Want to move home?



HomeSwapper can help!

If you want to move home you can apply for a transfer or an alternative is to swap your home with another social housing tenant. Swapping your home can be useful if you want to move to a similar sized home or within the area you currently live and don't have a high enough priority to be able to access a new home through our normal allocation process. It may be quicker than waiting for a transfer.

To find a swap, you can use the **HomeSwapper** website which is the UK's biggest home swap service for social housing tenants.

Swansea Council is a member of **HomeSwapper** and it's free for Swansea Council tenants to register and use.

You can register or log into your account at www.homeswapper.co.uk or you can use the free **HomeSwapper** app on your phone or tablet - download the app from the Apple App Store or Google Play onto your phone or tablet.

Why is it important?

One of the key things that can make your search a success is how your advert looks - and there's nothing better for this than including some great photos of your home.

So, if you're serious about swapping, add a photo!

It shows you're dedicated and helps other swappers to see straightaway if your home would be somewhere they would like to live.

Taking a great photo

Try to show your home at its best.

Set the scene

Think about your home as though you were seeing it for the first time... what would you be impressed by? Make sure these things are in the picture. Try and take your photos when the weather is bright and sunny as they look better and ensure that rooms are well lit.

Whether you're new to HomeSwapper or you are already using it, the photos on your advert can really help you to get a successful swap.

90% of successful swaps have at least one photo.



Get the angle right

Hold the camera in the corner of the room, so that you're able to see as much of the room as possible and give other swappers a good idea of its size. And don't forget to hold your camera still – you need a nice clear image, not a blurry one! If you're worried about your home being identified, upload photos of the inside or a garden, and make sure you use the description box (tenant comments) to add information about the outside of your home.

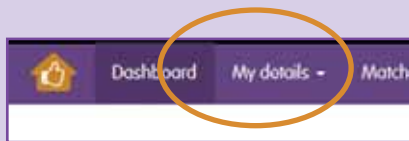
How to add your photos to your advert

Step 1

Log into your account at www.homeswapper.co.uk to access your dashboard.

Step 2

From the options at the top of the screen click 'My details'.



Step 3

From the drop-down list that appears click 'The home I've got'.

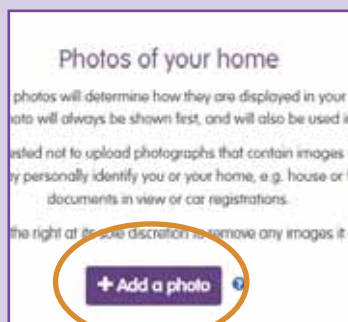
Step 4

You'll see a line of circles, each with a different option for your advert. The last circle has a camera in it, click on that.



Step 5

Click on 'Add a photo' and it will tell you to 'Choose a photo to upload' and you can pick the ones you want to use from the photos that are saved on your device.



Step 6

You can add a description to your photo of the room/location eg lounge, garden etc. You can also change the order that the photos are listed. You will also choose one photo to be your main listing photo - this photo will always be shown first, and will also be used in search results.

Please note: Don't upload photographs that contain images of children and please also ensure they do not include anything else that may personally identify you or your home, e.g. house or flat numbers, people (including pictures on walls), private documents in view or car registrations. HomeSwapper reserves the right to remove any images it deems inappropriate.

Step 7

Once you've uploaded your photos and are happy with the order they are shown in you can save your advert ready for people to view! **Don't forget to share your advert on the HomeSwapper Facebook page -**

www.facebook.com/HomeSwapperOfficial/

Step 8

Remember to log onto your account frequently to check on potential swaps and to ensure your account stays live.



You can find more advice and detailed articles about

HomeSwapper at www.homeswapper.me/homeswapper-blog/

or contact your local Area Housing Office or Housing Options.



Rent payment methods



Forms are available on-line or you can request them from your Rent Officer on ☎ **601720 / 534094** or email request to ✉ rentsteam@swansea.gov.uk



You will need a Payment swipe card, ask your Rent Officer, or phone us on ☎ **601720 / 534094**. Payments made on a Thursday or Friday will not show until the following week



Payzone - You can use your Payment swipe card to pay at any retailer that displays the payzone logo. For a list of retailers please visit 🌐 www.payzone.co.uk

By contacting your Rent Officer

You can pay using Debit, Switch, Solo, Maestro or Credit Card by ringing ☎ **601720 / 534094** or your local AHO during Office Hours

Via the Internet



Please visit the Council's website 🌐 www.swansea.gov.uk Click **"Do It Online"** & **"Pay for it"**. If you have any difficulties, please call on ☎ **601720 / 534094** for assistance

Over the phone



If you know your rent reference number, you can phone our automated service **English** ☎ **0300 456 2765 / Welsh** ☎ **0300 456 2775** at any time. (If you do not know your rent reference please call ☎ **601720 / 534094**)



If you are on **Universal Credit** your **Housing Costs** will be paid to you directly by the **DWP**. Please contact the **DWP** on ☎ **0345 600 0723** if you have not received your Housing costs

Support services

Housing Benefit Claim

To make a new claim for Housing Benefit contact the **Take Up Team** ☎ **635353**

or email ✉ newclaims4benefits@swansea.gov.uk

To discuss your existing claim with a Housing Benefit Officer please ring ☎ **635353** or email

✉ benefits@swansea.gov.uk

Rents Team

If you are having difficulty with paying your rent account, contact the **Rents Team** on ☎ **01792 534064** or **07920 560243** ✉ rentsteam@swansea.gov.uk

TSU Tenancy Support Unit

The **TSU** is run by the City & County of Swansea; they can offer a support worker to help with financial problems or any other support issues with your tenancy. Please contact your Rent Officer or the **Tenancy Support Unit** on ☎ **774360** if you feel you need support

Housing Options

Money advice and debt advice -

Also free advice given if your tenancy is at risk.

☎ **01792 533100** ✉ housingoptions@swansea.gov.uk



Swansea Citizens Advice

Second Floor, City Gates, 50a Wind Street, Swansea SA1 1EE

☎ **0300 3309 082** 🌐 www.adviceguide.org.uk/wales.htm



If you are threatened with homelessness they will offer you free advice and assistance ☎ **01792 469400**

Housing Advice helpline ☎ **08000 495 495**

🌐 www.sheltercymru.org.uk/shelter/home/



Stepchange Debt Advice ☎ **0800 138 1111**

🌐 www.stepchange.org

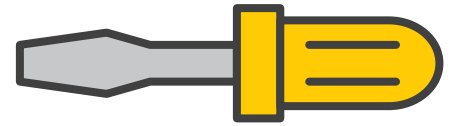


For advice on how to get into work

☎ **01792 637112** 🌐 www.workways.wales

✉ workways+@swansea.gov.uk

Repair claims



Hardly a day goes by without hearing about someone who has had a nuisance telephone call or uninvited traders calling to their home. In previous editions of Open House, we have given important information on how to avoid these callers and uninvited traders.

Here are some tips for you:

- Be suspicious of all 'too good to be true' offers and deals. There are no guaranteed get rich quick schemes.
- Do not agree to offers or deals immediately. Insist on time to obtain independent legal advice before making a decision.
- Never send money to anyone you do not know or trust, whether in the UK or abroad, or use methods of payments that you are not comfortable with.
- Never give banking or personal details to anyone that you do not know or trust. This information is valuable so make sure you protect it.

We have also previously highlighted the issue of legal firms offering to help to get repairs done and obtaining compensation for tenants. The Council has a comprehensive service to ensure any required work is carried out as quickly as possible so if you do notice any repairs needed in your home, you should report it by calling the Council directly on ☎ **01792 635100** or use our online form 📄 www.swansea.gov.uk/requesthousingrepair.

So if you are contacted and you have any doubts, please contact your Area Housing Office for help and advice before signing anything and importantly, make sure you are satisfied that the people who are claiming to represent these legal firms are who they claim to be before letting them into your home.

Pension Credit Helpline

0800 112 4763

If you're over State Pension age, you may be eligible to get Pension Credit to help with the cost of daily living.

You could still be eligible even if you have a pension, savings or own your own home. Plus, if you get Pension Credit, you may get other help too, like with your rent, a free TV Licence, NHS costs (e.g. dental, opticians & travelling to hospital), council tax and heating bills.

Across the UK, people are missing out on £3 billion in unclaimed benefits every year, with 2 out of 5 people not claiming the Pension Credit they are entitled to (worth £39 a week on average). 1 in 7 people don't claim the help they are entitled to with their rent.

To find out if you are eligible and for further information, call the helpline free on: 0800 112 4763 (Monday to Thursday, 10am to 3pm).

DELIVERED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



Repairs Policy Consultation



The Council's Housing Repairs Policy is currently being up-dated and all tenants and leaseholders received a consultation survey during November and December giving you an opportunity to give your opinion on the draft policy.

The policy has been updated because feedback from previous Tenant and Leaseholder Surveys that we carried out told us that:

- Some tenants were not sure what they are responsible for repairing in their home and what the Council was supposed to repair.
- Tenants have told us that they want to be able to make appointments on specific days.
- Tenants have told us that they want us to help people who cannot do repairs themselves because they are elderly or disabled and do not have family or friends who can help them.

We also looked at examples of repairs services and policies provided by other councils and housing associations to learn from best practice elsewhere. We also consulted with the Tenants' Consultative Panel to get views on what should be in the up-dated policy.

Some important changes to the policy are;

1. A new commitment for the Council to carry out repairs to all elements of new kitchens and bathrooms installed as part of Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) investment programme. Tenants will remain responsible for any repairs needed because of willful damage, neglect or

negligence by them or anyone residing in or visiting the property. If the Council carries out the repair then the tenant will be recharged as per the Rechargeable Repairs Procedure.

2. The introduction of appointments for all repairs.
3. The introduction of tenant satisfaction surveys following every completed repair – these will be automatically sent by text or email, or by post if we don't have a phone number or email for the tenant.
4. Provide clearer information on tenant, leaseholder and landlord repair responsibilities by improving the information in the policy and providing an Easy Read Guide to the policy.

The consultation exercise has now ended and we are very grateful to all those who replied as it is extremely important to us that every tenant has the opportunity to have their say on our proposals. The replies are now being looked at in detail and they will shape the final policy. The up-dated policy will be implemented during the spring and more information will be available from your Area Housing Office or our Tenant Participation Officer. The final version of the Policy will be available on the Council's website.

Pop Up Energy Awareness Hub

In response to the current energy crisis, Swansea Council has commissioned the Swansea Environment Centre to set up a support facility with assistance from various partners. It is based in the vacant shop at 13, Nelson Street in the city centre.

The hub has trained staff from the Environment Centre and other organisations, and is open until April. It offers wide-ranging and unbiased free support to people struggling to pay fuel bills. It includes information for all on how to better insulate homes, switch energy providers and access support on welfare rights. It also sells eco-friendly items including household product refills. So why not pop in and chat in confidence with the team?

Opening hours are:
Thursday 12pm - 6pm
Friday 10am - 4pm
Saturday 9am - 3pm

Online scams and how to stay safe



There are many different types of online scams which you should be careful of. It is impossible to list all types of online scams as there are so many, however here are some of the more common ones and tips on how to protect yourself:

Online dating

Many people use online dating sites and apps to try and find romance. There are many genuine people doing this, but please be mindful that not everyone is completely honest when they use these sites.

- Never give your personal details out to someone when chatting online.
- **DO NOT** send money to someone you have just met online.
- What you see on someone's profile is not always who they are.



scam unsuspecting customers into paying for accommodation that is not available or doesn't exist. Often the victim only becomes aware they have been scammed when they arrive at their accommodation or destination and find no booking has been made.

- Where possible, pay for holidays and travel using a credit card. This can provide you with additional financial protection.
- Research any property before you book and look to see if it is advertised elsewhere or has its own website. Be cautious if the prices are significantly different.
- Ensure your booking is covered by a financial protection scheme such as ABTA (Association of British Travel Agents) or ATOL (Air Travel Organiser's Licence). Look for the membership number and contact the scheme to confirm if the company you are using is really a member.

Online shopping fraud

More of us are shopping online than ever before. As a result, online fraud is on the increase.

- If possible, use online retailers/brands you are aware of and trust. Check the delivery, insurance, warranty and returns policy.
- Be especially careful when purchasing expensive items.
- Make sure you have adequate anti-virus software that will enable your computer to flag any untrustworthy sites.

Holiday fraud

At this time of year, many people will be looking to book a holiday. Scammers target online holiday booking and accommodation sites to

Banking

The use of online banking or people using banking apps has grown. To stay safe whilst banking online, you must protect your password and personal details to stop criminals from accessing your account.



You should also:

- Choose a strong password which is not easy for someone else to guess and do not share this with anyone else.
- Always log out of your online bank account or banking app when you have finished using it.
- Do not use public wifi spots for banking as you cannot be certain if a hotspot is secure or not.

Other ways to keep yourself safe online

- Make sure any websites you use are secure. Reliable websites start with HTTPS, not HTTP. The 's' stands for secure.
- Once the page has loaded, make sure the

website address that you have entered hasn't changed to a slightly different spelling.

- Use safe and secure WiFi connections.
- Keep virus protection software up-to-date.
- Make sure all accounts have a strong password. Don't use the same password for multiple accounts and change them regularly.

If you are in any doubt as to whether you are being scammed, or you would like to report a scam, you can report it online -
📄 www.swansea.gov.uk/scamalerts.

Alternatively, scams can be reported to Action Fraud - ☎️ **0300 123 2040**
📄 www.actionfraud.police.uk.

Let us know how you would like to receive Open House

Later this year we will be moving towards a digital copy of our tenants and leaseholders magazine Open House. In our recent satisfaction survey we asked whether tenants read the magazine and how they preferred to receive it.

A number of tenants said that they would like to continue to receive a paper copy and so will continue to receive it in that way. For those tenants who prefer to receive it by email they will also receive it in their preferred format as long as we have an up to date email address for you. Where tenants have requested alternative formats such as large print these will continue to be sent to them. Current and past issues of Open House magazine are also always available on our website for you to read.

It's very important that you let us know your preference for receiving the magazine as you will **NOT** continue to automatically receive a paper copy in the future. You can do this by signing up for a digital copy here Open House - Swansea or by emailing ✉️ housing@swansea.gov.uk or calling on ☎️ **01792 635045** if you would like to continue to receive a paper copy.



Condensation and mould in your home

What is condensation?

There is always moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it. It is produced from normal day to day living. Condensation occurs when warm moist air hits cold surfaces, which then causes the air to cool down and turn into droplets of water. The build-up of water on surfaces can lead to the growth of patches of black mould.

Waking up to condensation on windows is a familiar sight for many people, especially in winter and is not usually a problem if it clears. However, if condensation occurs over a long time and doesn't clear, other symptoms will start to appear such as damp patches on walls, peeling wallpaper and ultimately black mould growth. Most of our homes are also double glazed with draught seals on doors and windows which can also stop moist air from escaping.

Do you know how much moisture everyday activities produce?

Total amount of moisture produced in your home in one day 28 Pints

Drying clothes		9 Pints
Cooking & boiling a kettle		6 Pints
One Medium size pet		4 Pints
Two People active for one day		3 Pints
Having a bath or shower		2 Pints
Washing clothes		1 Pint

How do you know if you have condensation?

If your home is suffering from condensation you will start to see signs of it very quickly which include:

- Streaming windows (i.e. water droplets on them).
- Wet walls.
- Damp areas on walls.

- Wallpaper peeling.
- Signs of mould growth.
- Musty smell on clothes in wardrobes.

If condensation is left to develop into mould it can lead to an unsightly, musty property. It can also trigger or make worse health problems such as asthma and other complaints.



Reducing condensation

It is possible to reduce the amount of condensation in your home by producing less water and by letting moist air escape from your home. Here are some handy tips:

When cooking

- Always cook with pan lids on and turn the heat down once the water has boiled.
- Only use the minimum amount of water for cooking vegetables.
- Open kitchen windows slightly and shut doors or use your extractor fan if you have one.
- Don't use your gas cooker to heat your kitchen.

When bathing

- When filling the bath, run the cold water first then add the hot - it will reduce the steam that leads to condensation by up to 90%.

Washing and drying laundry

- Never dry washing on radiators.
- Dry washing outdoors if possible, or put it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or extractor fan on.

- Vent your tumble dryer to the outside (you can buy DIY kits for this) unless it is a self-condensing type.

General

- Open windows in the morning for 20 minutes to air your home.
- Wipe down all surfaces and windows affected by condensation every morning – **this is your responsibility**.
- Leave trickle vents on windows open all year round.
- If you have a Drimaster/Flatmaster fitted, leave it on at all times and keep windows and doors shut.
- Leave a gap between your furniture and the walls.
- Keep lids on fish tanks.
- Try and keep heating on low for several hours a day when it's cold.
- Don't use bottled gas heaters (Calor etc.).
- Make sure your home is insulated – the Council offers free loft insulation for its tenants.

Treating mould

If you notice mould growing in your home you should treat it straight away to prevent it from spreading and causing more damage.

- Do **NOT** use bleach to treat the mould.
- Sterilise the affected area with a suitable fungicidal wash (available from most DIY stores). Ensure that you follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep checking the affected area for a week and if necessary, treat the area again.
- Using an anti-mould paint will help prevent the mould from returning.

If you continue to have problems with condensation and mould in your home, please contact the Housing Repairs Call Centre on ☎ 01792 635100

🔗 www.swansea.gov.uk/requesthousingrepair

🔗 www.swansea.gov.uk/article/23191/Repairs-hints-and-tips

Do you have difficulty accessing your home or the facilities in it? If so, have you thought of applying for a Disabled Facilities Grant?

Disabled Facilities Grants are available to help and assist the elderly and disabled to access their home, provide facilities within the home and to maintain an independent way of living.

Grant funding will help to provide you with much needed adaptations such as:

- Bathroom adaptations
- Stairlifts
- Room conversions
- Ramps
- Alterations to doorways
- Extension

(Extension are only if internal conversions aren't feasible)

You are eligible to apply if you are:

A Council tenant / Home owner / Private tenant.

**You do not need to be registered disabled to apply -
An Occupational Therapist will help assess your needs.**

These grants are mandatory and some applications will be means tested to calculate if a contribution is required.

To find out more or to apply, contact:

Renewals and Adaptations Section, Housing Department

☎ 01792 635330 ✉ urbanrenewals@swansea.gov.uk

🌐 www.swansea.gov.uk/homeadaptations



New online Housing Portal - Coming Soon!

In the near future we will be launching improvements to the way you can use housing services online.

We are developing a new portal for tenants called "My Housing". This is a gateway to a secure website for tenants which will be accessible from your smartphone, tablet or pc. It will allow you to set up a personalised housing account that you can use at a time that suits you. Providing easy access to view your rent balance and transactions, pay your rent, keep track of any repairs you may have reported, amend your personal details and send us messages or report housing management issues.

We will be in touch to let you know when we are launching the portal and how you can get help to sign up for your account. This portal will help us improve how you can access online housing services. It will not replace our face to face services, so you can continue to contact us in the same way via our Area housing offices.

Kerbside Recycling and Black Bag Collections

Green Week



Paper & cardboard together

Separate bags



Metal, glass & foil together



Garden Waste

Pink Week



Plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays



Non-recyclable waste only

Every Week



Food waste

Recycling Centre



Accepted at all recycling centres



To find out your collection day and download a recycling calendar go to www.swansea.gov.uk/recyclingsearch or request one at your local library or housing office.



Place bags and bins out **after** 7pm the evening before collection day and **before** 7am the morning of collection.



Recycling bags and food bins are available to collect from libraries and recycling centres. For a full list of collection points go to www.swansea.gov.uk/morebags.



Keep It Out! Black bags are for non-recyclable waste only. Recycle all accepted materials in the bags and bins provided as shown to keep them out of landfill.



If your bag is stickered and left uncollected you have made a mistake. Remove it from the kerbside to store/sort for the next collection or you could receive a fixed penalty notice.



Many **other items** can be recycled at Recycling Centres. For a full list of locations and items accepted at each go to www.swansea.gov.uk/recyclingcentres.



We offer a chargeable '**bulky waste**' collection for large items of furniture and white goods. Only place these items out if you have booked a collection.

BOOK YOUR VISIT to Llansamlet Recycling Centre



If you want to visit Llansamlet Recycling Centre you will now need to book ahead before making your journey.



This new measure is being introduced to manage traffic levels at our busiest site and ensure social distancing can be maintained by residents and staff.



Bookings can be made online with a copy of the confirmation and proof of Swansea residency required to gain access on the day of your visit.



All other recycling centres will continue to operate as normal at this time. Please keep checking our webpages for the latest information.



For more information on the new measures and to book your visit go to:

www.swansea.gov.uk/llansamletHWRC

✉ evh@swansea.gov.uk
☎ 01792 635600

 Abertawe yn ailgylchu
Swansea recycles

 Cyngor **Abertawe**
Swansea Council

Can we help you?

Do you have difficulty reading small print or perhaps you sometimes feel bogged down by the amount of information you see on letters, leaflets and application forms.

If this is the case we can provide information to you in other ways. We can send you information in Large Print, Braille, or on a Compact Disc. If you are a Welsh Speaker or are learning the language we can also provide information to you in Welsh.

To receive information in an alternative format, please let the staff at your Area Housing Office know or contact the Customer Services Team on ☎ **01792 635045** ✉ housing@swansea.gov.uk

If you need help completing a form that we have given you, please ask your Area Housing Office staff for help.

It's important to us that you are able to have access to all of the services which are available to you from the Housing Service; so if you would like us to do things differently for you, please just ask and we will be pleased to do so.