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# 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Tenant Compact is a National Assembly for Wales initiative that Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords are required to have in place by April 2002. The Tenant Compact is an agreement between a landlord and its tenants and residents to form a partnership in order to improve the quality of peoples homes, the services supplied by the landlord and the local environment. This compact is supported by the Board of Tai Cymdogaeth Cyf.
- 1.2 Tai Cymdogaeth Cyf will implement one overall Tenant Compact that covers all of its properties. In the future, Tenant Compacts will be introduced to address the specific requirements of local areas or groups on interest. The Tenant Compact will empower each and every tenant and resident to choose how much they want to be involved in the services provided to them by Tai Cymdogaeth. Tenants and residents will decide what services they want to influence and at what level they wish to be involved.
- 1.3 The Tenant Compact is :
- An agreement between Tai Cymdogaeth and its tenants and residents;
  - A way for tenants and residents to influence planning, strategy and provision of services provided by Tai Cymdogaeth;
  - A way for Tai Cymdogaeth to monitor and improve its housing management and service delivery.
- 1.4 The Tenant Compact has been developed in partnership, working with its tenants and residents through a process of consultation and information, with individuals and groups, to encourage equality within the policy. This has been facilitated through Tenant Roadshows, Tenant Compact Steering Group, discussion with staff, Tenant Groups, Tenants Newsletter and the Tai Cymdogaeth Board of Management. The Tenant Compact is a living document and will be subject to a continuous review to ensure it reflects the needs and requirements of both Tai Cymdogaeth and its service users.
- 1.5 This Compact is an Agreement between:  
Tai Cymdogaeth being the landlord and/or the manager of the properties within their portfolio AND the Tenants and Residents\* of the Tai Cymdogaeth.

\*The term resident shall refer to a person who has purchased a leasehold interest in their property (such as a flat or maisonette bought for a number of years), purchasers under a shared ownership arrangement or those that have purchased a freehold property which is subject to a payment of service charges\*\*.

\*\*Persons who have exercised their right to buy the freehold of their property, without responsibility for service charges, are not specifically included in this agreement but it is agreed that their views will be taken into consideration on matters which directly affect them.

## **2. MISSION STATEMENT AND AIMS**

### **2.1 Mission Statement**

Tai Cymdogaeth is committed to working in partnership with its tenants and residents to enable them to:

- have full effective involvement in all the strategies, subject to commercial confidentiality, planning and delivery of services in connection with their homes and environment;
- work with other partners to achieve better and sustainable communities, subject to available funding;

### **2.3 Aims**

Tai Cymdogaeth aims to work in partnership with its tenants and residents to:

- achieve both an overall and local strategy to improve and maintain the quality of housing both existing and for future developments;
- continue its programme of review and improvement of services to all tenants and residents taking into account both overall and local requirements;
- to continue to develop efficient and effective services in line with current regulations and best practice;
- to ensure that tenant and resident involvement is equally open to all and that every effort will be made to ensure that information and opportunity will be widely available.

### **3. THE ROLE OF THE LANDLORD**

3.1 Tai Cymdogaeth recognises the valuable role tenant participation plays in continually improving its housing services. In view of this they will:

- involve tenants and residents in making decisions on housing matters that affect their home or environment;
- Make involvement possible through both formal and informal arrangements and processes, that are adapted to meet the needs of tenants and residents in addressing particular issues (see Appendix A);
- ensure that tenants and residents are made aware of the arrangements for involvement and consciously encourage it.

## **4. THE ROLE OF TENANTS AND RESIDENTS**

- 4.1 Tenants and Residents agree :
- to abide by the terms of their individual Tenancy Agreements and support Tai Cymdogaeth in taking action against those who do not;
  - to work with Tai Cymdogaeth to identify and address issues of concern in their neighbourhood;
  - to inform Tai Cymdogaeth of any concerns tenants and residents have with regard to any housing management or housing services before taking independent action.
- 4.2 The tenants and residents of Tai Cymdogaeth agree that tenant involvement, in positive decision making, will change the character from one of a complaint nature to one with a positive input to assist the running of the organisation.
- 4.3 To enable this process to take place tenants and residents will be responsible in:
- working in partnership with the landlords in their communities;
  - keeping tenants in their area informed;
  - representing the views and interests of tenants and residents in their area;
  - providing information and special knowledge to the landlord;
  - identifying resource and support needs;
  - being accountable for the use of public funds;
  - recognising the statutory and contractual and regulatory responsibilities of landlords and tenants;
  - encouraging wider tenant involvement.
- 4.4 Tenants and residents should meet their responsibilities under their individual Tenancy Agreements.
- 4.5 Tenants and resident groups must demonstrate that their presence at meetings with the landlords are truly representative of their areas and comply with the tenant and resident recognition criteria.
- 4.6 Tenants and residents will support the landlords in taking any action necessary against those who fail to comply with the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreements subject to such support not putting them at risk of their safety or possible reprisals.

## **5. BEST VALUE**

5.1 Tai Cymdogaeth will carry out the requirements of Best Value as applicable to Registered Social Landlords and will fully involve its tenants and residents in the formulation, planning, initiating, carrying out, reviewing and monitoring of such matters.

5.2 In order to do this Tai Cymdogaeth will ensure that:

- tenants and residents are informed of, and have the opportunity to comment on, the proposed time table for reviews. When time tables are published all tenants will be made aware of them;
- all tenants and residents are able to make any comments on services prior to the review and during the life of the review.

## **6. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS**

- 6.1 As a Registered Social Landlord with the National Assembly of Wales, Tai Cymdogaeth is required to follow regulatory requirements and subsequent guidance circulars issued to them.
- 6.2 Tai Cymdogaeth undertakes to;
- notify its tenants and residents of the existence of these regulations;
  - provide each tenant and resident with an outline of these regulations, if requested.

## **7. CORE STANDARDS**

- 7.1 Tai Cymdogaeth fully supports the National Assembly for Wales standards to enable real and long-term tenant involvement.

Tenants and Tai Cymdogaeth may want to add to these core standards, as the benefits of tenant participation become evident and new roles become settled.

- 7.2 The Compact applies to the following housing services:

- Developing housing policy and strategy;
- Developing and putting in place regeneration and improvement programmes;
- Budgets, finance, and rents;
- Policies for rent setting and service charges;
- Policies for allocating and letting houses;
- Tenancy conditions and agreements;
- Leaseholder issues and charges;
- Anti-social behaviour policies;
- Service and performance strategies, and arrangements for monitoring and reviewing performance, and dealing with any problems;
- Neighbourhood issues which affect tenants' homes or managing the housing service;
- Environmental works;
- Customer care;
- Arrangements for obtaining tenants' views on the quality and extent of services provided by the landlord;
- Arrangements for providing information for tenant consultation and involvement, including handling complaints and dealing with any problems.

- 7.3 Tenants will be provided with encouragement and assistance to make use of independent advice, training and other support, including external mediation and arbitration service.

- 7.3.1 Support will include:

- Reasonable financial support. (for example Tai Cymdogaeth will provide start up grants, annual grants and loans where appropriate);
- Facilities, (for example, access to premises and equipment, stationery, photocopying and help in sending out newsletters);
- Advice, community development support, and support for local tenant networks;
- Training to meet the needs of tenants' representatives or tenants' representative groups, including joint training with staff and board members;
- Providing new approaches to encourage tenants to become involved, and stay involved.

- 7.3.2 Tenants and Tai Cymdogaeth to agree that budgets will be made available for the above. Tai Cymdogaeth will give full information on:

- The level of resources available, including staff;
- The lead officers responsible for delivering specific goals in its strategy;
- Resources available specifically to support training amongst tenants' representatives and representative groups.

7.4 Tai Cymdogaeth will meet with tenants to discuss service performance and improvements and to respond to the questions and concerns of service users.

7.4.1 Tai Cymdogaeth will:

- Publicise meetings effectively with adequate advance notice. This may include, where appropriate, personal invitations to every service user, advertisements in relevant media and public places;
- Provide allowances, transport, or technical help for people who need special help, for example childminding allowances to allow people with children to attend relevant meetings or arranging for interpreters, signers and induction loop facilities as appropriate and practical;
- Hold meetings at suitable times and in accessible places;
- Make sure meetings are run in a fair and democratic way, so that everyone gets a chance to have their say and is kept informed;
- Ensure that information on the outcomes of meetings and other feedback is provided to all participants and affected tenants.

7.5 This Compact aims to make sure that information provided by Tai Cymdogaeth to tenants meets their needs. This then allows tenants to reach an informed view on the issues, and be involved in decision-making.

7.5.1 Information will:

- Be expressed clearly, using plain language and avoiding jargon;
- Be accessible (using large print, braille, cassette and translations if requested and practical);
- Not use racist, sexist or other biased language;
- Be of good quality, timely and relevant to tenants' needs.

7.5.2 Tenants will receive information on:

- housing strategies, policies and priorities;
- arrangements for developing and putting in place best value, including monitoring and reviewing performance, and setting service standards and targets;
- housing management;
- reports on performance in achieving housing management's targets;
- plans for spending and for future work which will affect tenants, their homes and their area;
- opportunities and support for tenant involvement, influence, and control;
- other local matters which tenants see relevant.

7.6 The Compact aims to make sure that tenants are offered genuine opportunities to get involved, through formal and informal structures, in management and in the decision-making process.

7.6.1 Successful structures for getting tenants involved will make sure that:

- Tenants are provided with choice and diversity in the way service users are consulted and a means of showing how views obtained have an impact upon service delivery and targets;
- Where appropriate tenants and residents are represented by recognised and active tenant and resident organisations, and that all tenants are represented in other ways;
- Where appropriate, a tenants' federation or other similar organisation is in place;
- Other informal measures are in place, such as tenants' panels or focus groups;
- Tenants control budgets for their own groups/panels where appropriate.

7.7 Tenants will have the power to choose structures for tenant involvement, which best meets their wishes. Tenants will be supported to develop these at a speed which suits them. If tenants want to set up and take part in representative tenants' groups, they should meet Tai Cymdogaeth's agreed and published criteria.

7.7.1 If tenants take part in formal structures with a role in decision making, they should show that these structures are democratic and have:

- A model constitution;
- Equal opportunities policies which they keep to;
- Regular elections, and a minimum membership level;
- Open financial records (and annual accounts if appropriate);
- Regular quorate meetings, and a quorate and minuted AGM;
- A minimum number of set percentage of tenants in membership;
- Open membership;
- Arrangements for making complaints and seeking redress;
- Information on officers, contacts and dates of meetings should also be made available to Tai Cymdogaeth.

7.8 The Compact aims to make sure that TP compacts are monitored and assessed consistently.

7.8.1 In monitoring TP compacts, Tai Cymdogaeth will:

- Assess the benefits and outcomes of the TP compacts against their original expectations;
- Set clear service standards and targets for tenants to be consulted and involved;
- Monitor and evaluate the effect and value for money of the different approaches to getting involved, including the scope for changing and developing these to make sure they continue to be effective and efficient;
- Monitor tenant representatives and groups to make sure there are equal opportunities;

- Check that the procedures for tenant consultation and involvement are effectively kept to and encourage tenants from all parts of the community to become involved.

7.8.2 Performance standards and targets should be set each year for the following:

- Keeping tenants informed;
- Taking tenants' views into account in decisions;
- What tenants think of value for money;
- Tenants' satisfaction with the area.

## **8. STRUCTURES FOR PARTICIPATION**

- 8.1 Tai Cymdogaeth is committed to encouraging, developing and expanding involvement of tenants in the management of their homes and recognises that in order to do this a flexible approach to participation is necessary.
- 8.2 It is recognised that it is important that new tenants are made welcome and understand that they can participate in a variety of formal and informal ways. It is agreed that in addition to the new lettings pack supplied to all new tenants, Tai Cymdogaeth will supply additional information regarding:
- a summary of the regulatory requirements;
  - tenant and resident participation strategy;
  - local services;
  - local tenants group/key tenants etc.
- 8.3 The tenant and resident participation structure must be flexible and understood by all tenants and residents. Consequently in Appendix A terms, definitions and descriptions of various types of participation have been explained. In addition the current Recognition Criteria and Resources Policy are given in detail at Appendix B and Appendix C.
- 8.4 Tai Cymdogaeth understands that it may not be the wish of every tenant or resident to be a member of a group and will consult and inform individual tenants and residents by:
- mailshots;
  - surveys - by post or personal contact;
  - home visits;
  - appointments at offices and other suitable venues;
  - newsletters with tenant and resident involvement in editorial, articles and information provision;
  - individual meetings;
  - by internet and e-mail services if required;
  - any other appropriate methods.
- 8.5 Tai Cymdogaeth will provide tenant and resident groups with contact details of appropriate advice and support in connection with occupancy of their property and the local area.

## **9. METHODS OF IMPLEMENTATION**

- 9.1 Without powers tenant and resident participation is meaningless and influence and impact must be measurable. Due to this, Tai Cymdogaeth undertake to have tenant and resident representation at Board level. Tai Cymdogaeth will work with existing Tenant Groups and Area Tenant Committees as well as other individual tenants and tenant support organisations e.g. TPAS Cymru, to establish a Tai Cymdogaeth Tenant Federation.
- 9.2 The Federation will provide input into Tenant Participation and Community investment strategies. It will also act as the body through which tenant representatives to the Tai Cymdogaeth Board will be nominated and elected.
- 9.3 Tai Cymdogaeth agree to include tenants and residents in the planning, content and make up of the 5 year review regarding the delivery of services, subject to commercial sensitivity, under Best Value.
- 9.4 The general services are controlled by policies and these make a good base for considering whether tenants wish to become involved and the amount of their involvement. A timetable of policies, under review, will be publicised in the Tenants Newsletter. Tenants will be able to request a copy of any policy.

## **10. REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE**

10.1 In respect of repairs and maintenance Tai Cymdogaeth will ensure that tenants and residents are consulted on:

- Major Repairs including possible decant;
- Planned maintenance and replacements. Multi-year programmes will be developed and the tenants and residents consulted as to their priorities;
- Response to repairs. To carry out surveys etc. to gauge tenants satisfaction and publish results;
- Development Quality Requirements. The plans, when developed will be discussed with the tenants and residents as their priorities are important;

## **11. EVALUATION, MONITORING AND CUSTOMER CARE**

- 11.1 Monitoring and evaluation are essential to ensure that the compact is a living document and that progress is being made in improving participation and partnering within the group. At present there are two methods of monitoring;
- the performance indicators required annually by the National Assembly;
  - the periodic review of policies.
- 11.2 Tai Cymdogaeth will work with tenants to develop relevant performance indicators. These will be published annually in the Tenant Newsletter.
- 11.3 Policy reviews can provide an indicator as to tenants' and residents' wishes for involvement and be used as an outline service review. More detailed reviews will be carried out under Best Value.
- 11.4 A recognised complaint procedure, both for Tai Cymdogaeth and for tenants and residents groups, is in place. The procedures will be widely publicised and details of these will be available upon request.

## **12. LEASEHOLDER ISSUES AND CHARGES**

- 12.1 Tenant and Resident Groups will encourage leaseholders to participate as full members of their group.
- 12.2 Tai Cymdogaeth will encourage leaseholders to fully participate in their tenant and resident participation structures.
- 12.3 Tai Cymdogaeth will arrange convenient meetings with lease holders to discuss all matters related to the planning, contracting, carrying out and charging for service charges.
- 12.4 Where a variable service charge is made, Tai Cymdogaeth will only charge what is reasonable and only for a reasonable standard of service. In accordance with the Landlord and Tenants' Act 1985 as amended by the Landlord and Tenants' Act 1987, where tenants are required to contribute to any proposed works and the estimated costs are greater than £50 times the number of dwellings, or £1,000 whichever is the greater, (or an amount prescribed by the Secretary of State), they will be informed and consulted in advance, as follows:
- At least two estimates for the works will be obtained;
  - A Notice accompanied by a copy of the estimates will be given to each tenant concerned;
  - The notice will describe the works to be carried out and invite observations on them and on the estimates;
  - The notice will allow at least a month in which to reply.
  - Tai Cymdogaeth will have regard to any observations, and unless the works are urgently required they will not be started before the date specified in the notice.

## **13. COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**

- 13.1 The landlord will assist, as far as it is able, the tenants and residents in improving their communities and environment by supporting them on mutually agreed actions in the following areas:
- Services provided by the local authority and/or their agents;
  - Facilities provided by the local authority and/or their agents;
  - Obtaining of housing and other benefits in connection with the occupation of their home;
  - National Assembly for Wales initiatives;
  - Community Agencies and support services.
- 13.2 Where mutually agreed Tai Cymdogaeth will advise, assist and support tenants to make grant applications to improve the quality of life.
- 13.3 Tai Cymdogaeth will make funding applications to support community initiatives for the benefit of tenants in the areas it has properties.

## 14. DECLARATION

- 14.1 In signing this document the Tai Cymdogaeth Board of Management agree to maximise the influence and involvement of all tenants and residents in the planning, strategy and provision of housing services provided by Tai Cymdogaeth.

Signed .....  
Michael Williams, Chief Executive Gwalia Housing  
Group, Director of Tai Cymdogaeth.

Signed .....  
Tony Pearce, Chair of Tai Cymdogaeth Board of  
Management

Signed .....  
Bill Jones, Tenant Representative Tai Cymdogaeth Board  
of Management

Dated .....

## APPENDIX B

### RESOURCES POLICY

The purpose of funding a Tenants Group/Panel is to enable it to be independent and have an equality of status with the landlord.

In order to qualify for funding, the Tenants Group/Panel would need to meet the requirements set out in the **RECOGNITION POLICY**.

#### Annual funding

This is a yearly amount paid to all Tenants Groups/Panels and is split into 3 bands:

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>Band 1</b> | Groups/Panels representing up to 25 properties<br>£75 CORE GRANT plus £1 per property represented.      |
| <b>Band 2</b> | Groups/Panels representing 26-50 properties<br>£100 CORE GRANT plus £1 per property represented.        |
| <b>Band 3</b> | Groups/Panels representing more than 50 properties<br>£125 CORE GRANT plus £1 per property represented. |

A new Group/Panel starting up partway through the financial year would receive annual funding on a proportional basis.

E.g. A Group/Panel starting up in June would be entitled to 10 months funding from June to the end of March (the end of the financial year)

## APPENDIX C

### RECOGNITION POLICY FOR TENANTS GROUPS/ASSOCIATION/PANELS

The Recognition Policy clarifies what the Society requires from potential groups and panels in order for them to receive formal recognition and funding.

1. **Membership:**  
**Area:** All tenants in the area covered by the group/association/panel to automatically be members.
2. **Area:**  
The area covered by the group/association/panel is to be agreed with the Society.
3. **Equal Opportunities:**  
The group/association/panel to have an equal opportunities statement.
4. **Aims and Objectives:**  
The aims and objectives of the group/association/panel to be agreed with the Society.
5. **Officers:**  
The officers/members to be elected either at the A.G.M. or first committee meeting. Only one officer per household.
  - 5.1 Nominated officers are an option for Tenant Panels but are not compulsory.
6. **A.G.M.**  
The Committee (elected members for Tenants Panel) to notify all represented members of the date of the A.G.M. at least 7 days in advance.
  - 6.1 An A.G.M is another option for Tenant Panels but is not compulsory.
7. **Committee Meetings:**  
A specified minimum number of Committee Meetings (Elected Members Meetings for a Tenants Panel) to be agreed by the group/association/panel and the Society.
  - 7.1 This again is an option for Tenant Panels, but is not compulsory.
8. **General Meetings:**  
A specified and agreed number of meetings a year to be general meetings open to all represented members to attend, speak and vote.

**9. Finance:**

Proper records of money received and spent to be kept. Accounts to be audited annually by someone independent of tenants group/association/panel, and made available to Tai Cymdogaeth on request.

**10. Administration:**

Agendas to be drawn up for each meeting, minutes taken and made available to any member on request.