



# MAINTENANCE NEWSLETTER

## HOUSING MAINTENANCE SPECIAL EDITION

**In the 'In View' magazine we told you about a new way of working to improve the quality of our repairs service. In this special edition we will tell you more about how you can be involved.**



favour of partnerships with our main reactive repair contractors, R&M Williams and Celtic Developments.

These partnerships came out of Newydd's membership of Integrate, a group of housing associations who have come together in order to attract better contractors and better prices.

To help us change the way we work we have moved away from traditional contracts in

The partnership will develop over the next four years, with both parties committed to improving the repairs service in whatever way we can.

This is an exciting time and provides the opportunity to review and change what we do and how it is done if needs be. Your opinions and suggestions are key to this process, so please let us know your thoughts.

This newsletter is dedicated mainly to one key change we are implementing as a pilot, to see if we can squeeze more out of the limited monies available: Zoned Working.

You will see the posters at Newydd's offices and will receive info from Fran and Sian on the Repairs Helpdesk when you report a repair, but outlined is a brief explanation of what it means and how it will affect you.

# ZONED WORKING - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **What is zoned working?**

Put simply, it is arranging to visit one particular area at a particular time rather than, as happens now, have the workforce spread thinly throughout all estates all of the time.

## **Will zoned working affect you?**

Yes, it will affect everyone. It means that most of the contractor's workforce will visit your area at a particular time rather than being around as and when a repair is reported.

## **What is a zone?**

A zone is a list of properties grouped together because they are broadly in the same location and where our records show that there is enough work to warrant visiting with the majority of the workforce.

## **What zone am I in?**

The whole stock has been divided into 12 zones. These are listed in the centre pages of this newsletter. Look up your street and see which zone you are in.

## **Will all zoned visits be one day long?**

No, it will depend on the number of properties in the zone. Some zones will only require a 1 day visit, but other zones will need a longer visit.

## **How long will you be in my zone?**

When you look up which zone you are in, look at the number at the end of the column. This tells you how long we plan to be in the area.

## **How long is the gap between zoned visits?**

We aim to visit all zones over an 8 week period, after which we will start again from the beginning.

## **On what dates will you be in my area?**

The date of the first and second visit to your zone is also shown in the address list in the centre of this newsletter.

## **Are all repairs going to be done on a zoned basis?**

No, because some works are required as an emergency or more urgently they will be still be done with a one day or 5 working day target. Only routine works will be organised and arranged for zoned working.

## **Will you do everything except emergencies and urgent works during the zoned visit?**

We will try to yes, but if it becomes clear that it would be better to arrange a proper programme, because there is lots of the same type of work across several zones, we might combine them together outside of zoned working to try to get better prices.

## **Will you complete all works during the visit?**

We will attempt to yes. Part of the reason for pulling all the routine work together like this is so that enough people are readily available to complete larger jobs. Also, by arranging works for a particular date it helps ensure that the right materials are bought beforehand.

## **What if my job takes longer than the zoned visit?**

If this happens we will return to complete it. We will not start a job and leave it half done until the next zoned visit. However, if we find something during our visit that we have not got the time or materials to fix there and then we may make a temporary repair and fix it properly on the next visit.

## **When do I report routine repairs?**

Whenever it is convenient. You do not need to wait for a particular date or time. In fact the sooner the better as it will give us more time to arrange the labour and materials. We will also be holding 'surgeries' at the Barry and Glyntaf offices where you can report a job in person.

## **Will you attend to everything I report?**

Unfortunately not. We have to work within available budgets and we anticipate that, to start with at least, we will receive more repair requests than we have money for. There is nothing wrong with this as we need to know what needs repairing so that we can decide when to do it. What we can't do immediately we will plan to do at some date in the future. We will be honest with you about what can and can't be done, but still invite you to report things that you find.

## **What are the benefits of zoned working for me?**

There should be many advantages, these are:-

- It will reduce the cost of works
- It will allow us to give more certainty when we will visit
- It will reduce the time taken to complete works.
- It should allow us to tackle repair issues before they escalate into major problems



#### **How will it reduce the cost of individual jobs?**

The cost of a job is greatly affected by the travel costs to get to site. With zoned working the workforce can share vans, materials can be delivered from fewer van drops, if help is needed, it will be readily to hand and most importantly, if the workforce turn up and you are not there, then they have other work that can be done in the vicinity. These cost savings will mean that budgets go further.

#### **How will it give more certainty when you will visit?**

The timetable lists the dates of the proposed visits. When you report a repair, if it is classed as a routine repair then you will be advised that it will be done during the next zoned visit. This is important so that you know when to arrange access. When we will be in a zone for more than one day, we will continue to call during the zoned period until we gain access.

#### **How will it prevent more major problems?**

Newydd's Surveyors intend being on-hand during the zoned visits. They will work with the contractor to highlight problems that you might not have noticed. If possible and labour and materials are to hand these will be attended to there and then. If not they will be recorded and suitable arrangements put in place to prevent them becoming a major issue.

#### **You said that this was a Pilot, how do I let you know my thoughts?**

Your views are very important. Whilst we think that this is a good idea, we need to know how it affects you. Letting us know is easy, just use the Satisfaction Questionnaire sent out with each repair. Alternatively write to us or email whenever you wish at the normal addresses. We will also be consulting with Tenant's Groups and Community Panels for further feedback.

# OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCIES

Some of our customers are still misusing this service by requesting call outs for work that could and should be left until the next morning to report. Please do not do this! Do not request this service if you simply find something broken or forget to call during normal working hours, it is only available for genuine emergencies, examples of which are:

- A major leak on the heating or water system (not just minor 'weeps' from joints or valves).

- No form of heating whatsoever (making sure that there is credit on the meter if needed)
- A complete loss of electric power and lighting. (again after checking credit on the meter)
- No way of using the toilet (not simply because the flush won't work)
- An external door or window that can't be secured because of damage.

## IF YOU MISUSE THIS SERVICE YOU MAY BE RECHARGED

## TENANTS SATISFACTION PRIZE WINNER



This year we decided to reward our customers' effort for giving us the feedback we need on the performance of our maintenance service by offering the chance to win £150 through a prize draw.

Pictured is our first prize winner, Mr Khan of Tonteg, with Area Maintenance Surveyor Owen Davies and in October a resident on the Vaynor estate in Newtown won the second prize draw.

## UNSERVICED BOILERS CAN KILL

In recent years, people in the UK have tragically died from carbon monoxide poisoning due to a leak from an unserviced or faulty gas boiler. Thankfully, this has been a rare occurrence but it is something that we cannot become complacent about.

The Government recognises this by imposing a legal duty on landlords like Newydd to arrange a visit to your property every year to carry out an annual service on your boiler. The service not only checks for faults and leaks on the boiler but also makes sure that it is working efficiently so helping you to keep your fuel bills down.

We find that the majority of our tenants help us by allowing us access to do the work. However, we do find that a significant number of people do not appreciate this need to carry out an annual service. They adopt the "it's not broken, so you don't need

to fix it" attitude; they refuse to allow access and repeatedly fail to respond to formal letters and notices requesting access.

Due to the potential life threatening risks associated with unserviced and faulty boilers, we hope that you understand our need to adopt a zero tolerance approach to those who repeatedly fail to provide access. This may result in Newydd recharging our costs, or in some cases issuing a Court Injunction to the tenant to gain access to the property. We do not really want to carry out either action – we just want to service the boiler – but we hope you'll agree that a robust approach is required.

So please, for your own sake and everyone else's sake, make time to allow us access when arranged so that we can carry out the service – it normally only takes 30 minutes.

