



barcud

Newsletter

December 2020



barcud

# Message from Steve Jones

Group Chief Executive

The restrictions of Covid-19 have meant that Barcud's launch on the 2nd of November was a little different to the one we had hoped to arrange. I am very proud of all the hard work that was completed by our colleagues and partners to ensure the merger was finalised under very difficult circumstances.

This first edition of the Barcud newsletter will introduce you to people, places and some of the new systems we have in place to help you as our tenants. Like you, all of our colleagues and their families are coping with Covid restrictions. We have all either been working from home, out on site (following guidelines) and providing emergency services to ensure that our day-to-day work continues as efficiently as possible.

I appreciate the support received from the Board and from the new Barcud Monitoring Group (Tenant representatives). All the online meetings have ensured that our work is still challenged by people who care about the services we provide.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Barcud team for all their hard work and commitment in 2020. It's been a very challenging year for all.

The launch of Barcud is an exciting time. There will be new developments, updates in services and will be working hard to achieve positive things for our tenants, leaseholders and colleagues.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all. I sincerely hope that you will enjoy health and happiness in 2021. Stay Safe.



## Meet the Leadership Team

We are delighted to introduce the new leadership team at Barcud. For more information on the team, and to see their video profiles, please visit our website ([www.barcud.cymru](http://www.barcud.cymru))



**Steve Jones**

Group Chief Executive



**Charles Brotherton**

Group Director of Governance, Risk and Resources



**Eleri Jenkins**

Group Director of Housing and Support



**Kate Curran**

Group Director Finance and IT



**Liŷr Edwards**

Group Director Commercial Services



**Sian Howells**

Group Director Development and Asset Management

## Contact Us:

By post:

**Barcud Head Office**  
Unit 4  
Pont Steffan Business Park  
Lampeter  
Ceredigion SA48 7HH

**Barcud Regional Office**  
Tŷ Canol House  
Ffordd Croesawdy  
Newtown  
Powys SY16 1AL

By email: [post@barcud.cymru](mailto:post@barcud.cymru)

By phone: **0300 111 3030**

Press 1  
if you were a tenant of Tai Ceredigion

Press 2  
if you were a tenant of Mid-Wales Housing

By text: **07860 055038**

## Board Members

This is an exciting time for everyone involved with Barcud as we start our journey as a newly merged organisation, building on the history of Mid-Wales Housing Association, which was established in 1975, and Tai Ceredigion, a stock transfer association which has recently celebrated its 10 year anniversary.

We are a community benefit society registered with charitable rules. As a Registered Social Landlord, we are regulated by Welsh Government. Our primary purpose is to provide social and affordable rented homes to those who need them.

We currently have 12 members of the Board who all share a passion for providing great affordable homes and excellent bilingual services to the people and communities across Mid and West Wales.

The Barcud Board is an opportunity to help shape the future of the Association for our tenants, residents and clients, our colleagues and stakeholders.

For further information on each Board member, please visit our website [www.barcud.cymru/board-members/](http://www.barcud.cymru/board-members/)



**Karen Oliver**  
Chair



**Steve Cripps**  
Vice Chair



**Mererid Boswell**



**David Hall**



**John Jenkins**



**Siobhan Johnson**



**Wyn Jones**



**John Rees**



**Enid Roberts**



**Catherine Shaw**



**Cadwgan Thomas**



**John Wilkinson**

## Become A Shareholder

Did you know that you can become a Shareholder of Barcud?

For a nominal fee of £1.00 (lifetime membership), you will be invited to our AGM and to any Special General Meetings and you will have the right to vote - and have your say - on all important changes made to the association.

If you were already a shareholder with Tai Ceredigion or Mid-Wales Housing your shareholder membership will transfer to Barcud and you should receive a new shareholder certificate.

How?

Contact Sue Thomas, Senior Tenant Involvement Officer on 0300 111 3030

Complete an application form

Receive the Barcud Board approval

Wait for your Shareholder certificate to arrive through the post.

It's that easy - and an excellent way to be involved with YOUR housing association.

## Winter Fuel Payments

Important information!

If you were born on or before 5 October 1954 you could get between £100 and £300 to help you pay your heating bills. This is known as a 'Winter Fuel Payment'.

You usually get a Winter Fuel Payment automatically if you are eligible and you get the State Pension or another social security benefit (not Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Child Benefit or Universal Credit).

If you're eligible but do not get paid automatically, you will need to make a claim.

The deadline for claiming payments for winter 2020 to 2021 is 31 March 2021.

Most payments are made automatically between November and December. You should get your money by 13 January 2021.

If you do not get your payment, contact the Winter Fuel Payment Centre.

Any money you get will not affect your other benefits.

All information on this is available on gov.uk website: [www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment](http://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment).

If you need any further advice, please don't hesitate to contact our Cynnal team on 0300 111 3030.



### Are You Covered?

House insurance usually comes in two parts - Buildings and Contents.

The Building - Your Barcud home (the BUILDING itself) is covered by Barcud's insurance.

However, the CONTENTS of your home - your personal belongings - are your responsibility. This includes the obvious stuff such as electrical items but have you ever considered how you would replace carpets, curtains, furniture, clothes, bedding, and electrical items - even toys - if any disaster happened within your home?

Contents insurance can be purchased from local insurance brokers, or you can look for it online. We recommend everyone gets contents insurance because if any of your home contents are stolen or damaged, you will have to pay to replace them.

## Paying Your Rent

Barcud is committed to the principle that tenants should pay their rent. Barcud will always provide appropriate early advice and assistance to tenants in arrears.

You can pay your rent in many different ways:

Over the phone, by calling 0300 111 3030

By direct debit - call us to set up a regular direct debit payment

On the website [www.barcud.cymru](http://www.barcud.cymru) (follow the Pay Your Rent link at the top right hand corner)

By All Pay payment Card

Through the post, sent to either:

Barcud, Unit 4, Pont Steffan Business Park, Lampeter, Ceredigion SA48 7HH or Barcud, Tŷ Canol House, Ffordd Croesawdy, Newtown, Powys, SY16 1AL

If you are having money problems we will work with you to make sure you get all the help you are entitled to. Ways we can help include:

- Referrals to specialist advisory agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Welfare Rights or debt counselling services
- Working with local and county wide Credit Unions (organisations who can help with low costs loans and savings plans)
- Agreeing reasonable and achievable repayment arrangements, including deductions at source from state benefits and earnings

If you are worried or have problems paying your rent please contact us straight away.

If you do not pay your rent, you could lose your home.



### Online Safety

We would like to remind all tenants not to share personal information on facebook messenger. No one should share any details that could be used without your authority. It is a social media platform and we would not like you to compromise personal details.

# A Message from The Barcud Monitoring Group (BMG)

Dear Fellow Tenants,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the first edition of the Barcud Tenant magazine. In future editions the group will provide you with regular updates as to what we are doing on your behalf along with information on tenant events which we will be hosting.

The group held its first meeting on Friday 6th November 2020 at which we elected the groups officers. Paul Clasby was elected as Chair, Vic Brown as Vice-Chair, Martin Leett as Secretary and Peter Deakin as Treasurer.

The group has tenant representatives from both Powys and Ceredigion who volunteer their time freely. We feel it is important to let you know that the group is independent, which means that we are tenant led and so, we can ensure Barcud is tenant focused, open, transparent and accountable to all of us, its tenants. We are looking forward to working with Barcud as part of a team which strives to keep tenants and our communities at the heart of its operations.

Our activities include-

- Carrying out inspections on empty properties before they are relet.
- Carrying out estate inspections to ensure the services we pay for are being delivered.
- Carrying out telephone surveys on the repair service.
- Reviewing tenant related policies before they go to the Board for approval.
- Attending monthly meetings with the Group Chief Executive, Directors and Senior Managers.
- Working closely with the Barcud Board of management.
- Hosting Tenant Liaison Forums and the annual Tenant Conference.
- Monitoring the services, we all receive and reviewing the service standards.
- Designing and improving new and current services.
- Ensuring the assurances we have been given during the merger process are met.



We have a great deal of work ahead of us so please keep an eye out for our regular updates, our public events and requests for new tenant members.

With Christmas just around the corner, please spare an act of kindness for those in our

communities who are less fortunate than ourselves especially those of us who are feeling lonely and isolated. A simple “hello, how are you doing?” can make a world of difference.

Be safe and well.

The Barcud Monitoring Group

# Christmas Donations

Due to Covid restrictions, Barcud staff have been unable to get involved in their annual fundraising activities for charities this Christmas. However, Barcud has recently made its donation to foodbanks across the region to support the excellent work their volunteer teams do throughout the year, but especially as we approach Christmas.

Each of the following have received a financial contribution to help continue the work:

Welshpool Foodbank \* Llani Pantri, Llanidloes  
Bro Ddyfi Food Bank, Machynlleth \* Ystradgynlais Food Bank  
St Anne's Food Bank, Penparcau \* Llandrindod Food Bank  
Knighton Food Bank \* Brecon Food Bank  
Powys - Helping our Homeless Wales \* Lampeter Food Bank  
Cardigan Food Bank \* Llandysul Food Bank



## “Canolfan Dulais”

The site of the old Canolfan Dulais site in Lampeter is being transformed and work is progressing well on the new business centre which is an important development for local economic growth in mid Ceredigion.

Modern, state of the art business units will be available for local business, the social care sector and charitable organisations and will be perfect for start up businesses looking for premises in the town. It will be an important community facility, which will bring people together, to help tackle social isolation, support jobs, provide training opportunities and the accommodation of social enterprises.

The project has been supported by Welsh Government, Welsh European Office and Ceredigion County Council who share Barcud's vision to bring the idea to reality. Barcud is looking forward to starting conversations with anyone looking for business premises in this excellent location in Lampeter. If you would like further information, please contact Catrin Owen on 0300 111 3030.

## Development Update WG's Innovative Housing Program Grant Success

Barcud is excited to announce that it has been successful in bidding for a grant under the Welsh Government's Innovative Housing Programme, which will allow for the development of nine affordable one-bedroom flats on Heol Dinas in Penparcau, Aberystwyth.

The proposed innovative development, a partnership between Barcud and Williams Homes, Bala, would replace a row of redundant garages along Heol Dinas with a highly sustainable building that showcases the latest modern methods of construction and energy performance technologies. Each of the nine flats has its own amenity area and off-street parking space, and the development would also provide nine additional off-street parking spaces for existing residents on Heol Dinas.

Ceredigion Council is currently considering a planning application for the proposed development. You can view the submitted plans and other supporting information by clicking on the links below. If planning permission is granted, the works will commence in Spring/Summer 2021.

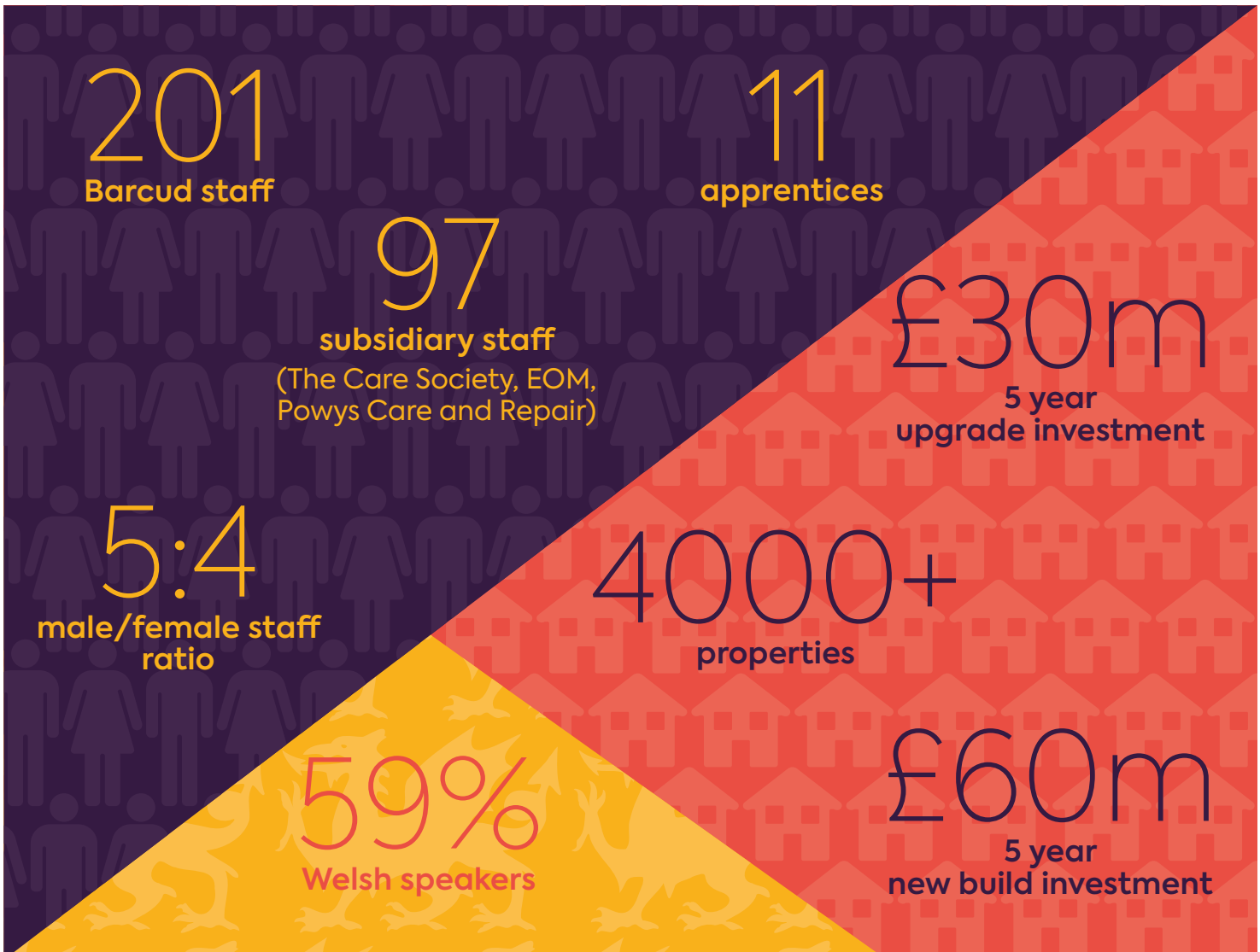


## Contact Us:

We're glad to report that many of our tenants have already started to follow the new Barcud facebook page. We will use this page to share information on our work and also general community information on behalf of our partners. If you would like us to share information on behalf of your charitable group or society, please fee free to send us a message.

Here is a quick guide and reminder of how to contact us:

	Phone 0300 111 3030	Website barcud.cymru	Email post@barcud.cymru	Facebook (direct message)
Report a Repair	✓	✓	✓	
Out of Hours Emergency	✓			
Rent Issue	✓	✓	✓	
General Enquiry	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sharing Information				✓
Estate Issue	✓	✓	✓	✓



## Sheltered Schemes

Barcud (then Tai Ceredigion) took the difficult decision to lock all communal lounges in our Sheltered Schemes back in March to protect our tenants from the spread of Covid-19. This decision was made for the safety of tenants and also the Scheme Coordinators who have remained (where possible) stationed at the schemes as usual to provide support and reassurance.

It has been reported that some sheltered housing providers hadn't locked their communal lounges at the beginning of lockdown but had advised tenants not to use them. They also removed all staff from sheltered schemes. This led to tenants using the lounges unsupervised, resulting in high Covid cases and, in some schemes, sadly, a high death rate from Covid. A situation like this has had a huge negative effect on tenant and staff morale.

Although Barcud is still receiving some negativity from a few tenants in sheltered schemes, we genuinely believe that the stance Barcud (Tai Ceredigion) took in locking all communal lounges and the high level of support the tenants and their families have received from our Scheme Coordinators has enabled us to protect not only our tenants but also their families from this awful virus.

Christmas time would usually see our lounges filled with Christmas festivities and cheer. The staff, as well as the tenants, are missing the usual celebrations. Barcud will, however, be keeping the lounges locked - for our tenants' safety - for the foreseeable future, until such time as Welsh Government advice and guidance changes.

### Covid-19

Transmission rates are on the rise. Please keep to Welsh Government guidelines - especially over the Christmas holidays - so that we can all ensure our friends, family and loved ones keep safe and well as we enter 2021.

## Barcud Service Status

### Repairs

We will continue to carry out repairs in occupied homes and outside; but with the following precautions:-



Before entering your home, our contractors will check that no one has Covid 19 symptoms, and will ask all occupants to move to another room. Our teams have all been provided with Personal Protective Equipment and will wear this to protect their and your safety. They will also wipe down any surfaces they come into contact with.

### Planned Works



These works will continue if it is safe to do so, with our contractors checking that no one at your home has Covid 19 symptoms, and will ask all occupants to move to another room for the duration of the work. External planned works will continue.

### Gas, Oil, Fire Alarms and Electrical Checks



These are continuing, as they are essential for your continued safety, and in line with Welsh Government guidelines. We will carry these out safely but you must tell us if there is someone in your home who has Covid 19 symptoms.

### Cleaning Services



We are continuing to clean in Sheltered and communal areas, where it safe to do so.

### Estate Caretaking



The estate care-taking services will continue, with the exception of play areas, as these remain closed. Service charges will be reviewed at the end of the financial year, so you will only be charged for what work we have done.

### Sheltered and Older People Schemes



Visitors are advised to only visit if essential contact is needed for the older or more vulnerable tenants and that they must wear facemasks while in communal areas. All communal lounges in the schemes are closed.

### Lettings



We will continue to let properties and viewing will be done with relevant safety measure in place. This will be the same for sign-ups.

### Ending a Tenancy



Once you have given notice, we will contact you and advise how you can return the keys to the property.

### Barcud Offices and Customer Services



Our offices are closed to visitors so please contact us through our normal phone lines, by e-mail or via our website.

### Paying Your Rent



There are many ways that you can pay your rent including by direct debit, online, using an AllPay Payment Card at the post office or shop displaying the Pay Point Logo or by phoning our offices. If you are having difficulty paying your rent please contact us as soon as possible as we have specialist staff in our Cynnal team who are here to help.