



Housing LIN

*Connecting people, ideas and resources*

## Case Study 158

# Taking extra care in lockdown: Ty Llwynderw Extra Care & Care and Cae'r Ysgol Independent Living bungalows, Maesteg

**SEPTEMBER 2020**

Written for the Housing Learning and Improvement Network by **Andy Tansill**, Director, Quattro Design Architects and Linc Cymru's **Trudy Davis** (Service Manager) and **Richard Sheahan** (Independent Living Manager) kindly gave time to be interviewed via Microsoft teams.



# Summary

This case study features Linc Cymru Housing Association's development in Maesteg, Wales. It provides some context on why and how the scheme came about, reflects on its' design and also captures how the scheme has coped under lockdown, successfully ensuring a Covid-free home to date.

## Background

When circumstances dictated the need for Bridgend County Borough Council to close two of their residential homes, the shortfall in bed spaces needed to be redressed. The tender placed by the Borough Council required the rather unusual combination of residential care bed spaces and a new modest Extra Care development on sites in Maesteg and Tondu in Wales.

Linc Cymru Housing Association were the chosen developer and appointed Quattro Design Architects to develop a scheme for Maesteg consisting of 10 residential bed spaces, 20 Extra Care Housing one bedroomed apartments, plus communal spaces and 17 one and two bedroomed bungalows.

Opened in mid-2019, the scheme quickly became a community hub for the 47 unit development which centred around the kitchen / café, dining, lounge and garden area and also included residents in the nearby streets, enjoying the congenial atmosphere created.

## One year on

One year later, and with the rapid escalation of Coronavirus, the way of life within the heart of the development came to an abrupt halt in early March 2020. Prior to the lockdown measures being announced by the First minister, Mark Drakeford, Linc Cymru and Bridgend Council management teams had in advance of this announcement chosen to 'lockdown', recognising the dangers posed by the Covid-19 virus to the very vulnerable residents in the residential care cluster.



*Communal dining room and servery*

The 'lockdown' process required good communication with not only the residents but also their families to ensure they understood that there was no longer free movement as previously experienced. The main doors were closed early, and visitor numbers restricted to a max of 3 family members and by appointment only. The main entrance double Bi-parting doors were a perfect arrangement, allowing staff to interview visitors before granting entry, combined with the use of door fobs staff had the ability to take control of all areas.



*Resident activity session pre-lockdown*

Lockdown for the kitchen and housekeeping staff required additional duties, in addition to the full PPE and the delivery of 3 meals a day to the 10 residential bed-spaces, kitchen staff delivered to each apartment the daily hot meal in a further bid to reduce the now 'frowned upon' resident social interaction.

To date, Trudy Davis (Service Manager for Maesteg and Tondu) and Richard Sheahan (Independent Living Manager) are pleased to report the leadership policy has delivered a Covid-19 free home for 30 residents which includes the residents in the bungalows, who also received welfare checks throughout. Richard stated:

*"Working in partnership and nurturing excellent relationships with all stakeholders is the key to our success"*

Trudy stressed the importance of being resilient and demanding, always insisting on any hospital visit by a resident requiring a Covid-19 negative test prior to anyone's return to the development. She said:

*"Lockdowns in the schemes were very challenging at times due to the tenants always enjoying social interaction with each other and all the staff. Tenants were not getting to see anyone apart from the staff, so more calls were put in place to try and combat loneliness and tablets given out to allow face to face with family members, family could drop parcels and shopping at the doors and staff would deliver to each apartment while those without families who could venture out for their shopping were supplied with food and essentials by staff."*

And Mrs W, a tenant, added:

*"I felt very safe knowing that people couldn't just come in and out as they pleased. There was hand sanitiser everywhere around the building for tenants and staff to use. The staff team acted very quickly in closing the building down to visitors etc. I felt safe because of this and very proud that to date we haven't had any Covid 19 cases in our building."*

Residents are asked to remain in their apartments and communal spaces are closed, all except for a rota arrangement allowing the garden and covered veranda space to be accessible for resident use, providing social distancing is adhered to.

Acknowledging the lockdown arrangement could be untenable, the Linc Cymru staff worked hard to produce and deliver activity packs to all residents, combined with a genuine and frequent communication policy.



*Street themed main communal corridor*

# Lessons learned

Flexing the design to respond to Coronavirus have in the main ensured that they functioned and adapted well for both the Maesteg and Tondu schemes. Operationally, staff were able to make changes so as to be able to use the building to best effect during the intense Covid 19 'lockdown'. For example, the observations which became apparent at the outset of the Covid-19 regime highlighted the need for additional space in the kitchen which would have allowed more efficient delivery of meals and the scheme manager's office was far too small to allow social distancing.

The next challenge is to begin to open up the shared spaces allowing residents a degree of social interaction with the return of the hairdresser top of the list.

With a second wave widely predicted, possibly sometime in the autumn / early winter this year, Trudy and Richard were quick to express caution on how far opening up and social interaction can be taken with communication between care and scheme managers across the two schemes needing to take place on a daily basis to ensure this untested model is always being fine-tuned, using best practice to meet with the changing social and political landscape.

And lastly, above all, through their collaborative approach and partnership working Linc and Bridgend County Borough Council have managed to keep Ty Llwynderw safe and Covid-free whilst ensuring the ongoing wellbeing of tenants, residents and families.

## Note

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Housing Learning and Improvement Network.

## About Quattro Design Architects

Quattro's housing with care team has many years' of experience creating award-winning schemes from dementia nursing homes to independent living, all aspiring through design to ensure a highest possible quality of elder living lifestyle.

Our specialist experience and training, enables Quattro Design Architects to offer industry leading expertise and successfully deliver bespoke solutions for this unique sector.

We provide a strong and positive lead on all our projects, ranging from large mixed-use extra care villages with specialist facilities to cater for diverse care needs, to chalet bungalows and retirement cottages. We understand the need for high quality, inspiring environments which will attract downsizers, as well as those who need care, simple to maintain and operate whilst delivering cost effective solutions. We are also focused on creating energy efficient environments, using passivehaus principles as the basis of our approach to save both energy and to reduce carbon.

# About the Housing LIN

The Housing LIN is a sophisticated network bringing together over 25,000 housing, health and social care professionals in England, Wales and Scotland to exemplify innovative housing solutions for an ageing population. Recognised by government and industry as a leading 'ideas lab' on specialist/supported housing, our online and regional networked activities and consultancy services:

- connect people, ideas and resources to inform and improve the range of housing that enables older and disabled people to live independently in a home of their choice
- provide insight and intelligence on latest funding, research, policy and practice to support sector learning and improvement
- showcase what's best in specialist/supported housing and feature innovative projects and services that demonstrate how lives of people have been transformed, and
- support commissioners and providers to review their existing provision and develop, test out and deliver solutions so that they are best placed to respond to their customers' changing needs and aspirations.

To access a selection of related resources on extra care housing, visit our dedicated webpages at: <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/HousingExtraCare/>

And to find out more about housing for older people in Wales, visit our Housing LIN Cymru webpages at: <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/HousingRegions/Wales/>

Lastly, for more information about how the Housing LIN can advise and support your organisation on community-led approaches to shaping your 'offer' for an ageing population, go to: <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/consultancy/consultancy-services/>

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