

Derby Homes News

Autumn 2019

 100
YEARS OF COUNCIL HOUSING IN DERBY
1919 – 2019



Welcome to another edition of Derby Homes News! We're well into the colder months now, so remember that you can find info on boilers, frozen pipes, and our cold weather services on our website.



Our celebrations for 100 Years of Council Housing are well under way - by now, you've probably spotted our staff out and about in their new pink t-shirts. All kinds of activities are taking place over the next year, including some that might be a bit unusual. We'll say no more for now, but here's a hint - you'll soon be able to drink to 100 Years of Council Housing in your local pub or coffee shop!

What we'd really like is for you to get involved with our celebrations, in whatever way you can:

Tell us your story - do you have fond memories of living in or visiting family and friends who lived in council houses in the past? Or do you know a tenant who's also turning 100 this year? Let us know!

Send us your old photos - dig out your old albums! Do you have photos of you or your family in a council house from the past?

If you'd like to do any of the above or have another idea to help celebrate, get in touch. You can reach us on Facebook and Twitter, or email

hub@derbyhomes.org

mmurphy

Maria Murphy
Managing Director



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6 Royal Visit

Christmas Closing Times

Over the Christmas period our offices will be closed from

Wednesday 25 December until
Wednesday 1 January 2020

During this time you'll only be able to reach us by phone for **emergency repairs** or **emergency housing needs**.

Offices and phonelines re-open as normal on

Thursday 2 January 2020

Fancy winning £50?

Contacting us online is quicker and easier to report your non-urgent repairs and queries. Signing up to MyAccount is easy, you only need your tenancy reference and an email address. Once you're online you can report repairs, check your rent statement, manage your tenancy and more.

All new sign-ups to MyAccount will be put into a monthly prize draw to win a £50 voucher, and we also have a pair of pantomime tickets to give away! If you're eligible you'll automatically be entered into the draw.

SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Rent-Free Weeks (48 week tenancies)

If your rent is calculated over 48 weeks, there will be no rent debits made on the following weeks:

16 December 2019
23 December 2019

If you are up to date (one week in advance) with your rent, you can choose not to pay during these weeks.

**PAY AS NORMAL TO ENSURE YOUR ACCOUNT IS ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE.
IF YOU ARE IN ARREARS, YOU MUST STILL PAY DURING
THESE WEEKS TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT YOU OWE.**

Meeting date changes

Our Operational Board meetings will now be held quarterly, rather than every two months.

You can find all of our meeting dates and the minutes, agenda and all public reports at derbyhomes.cmis.uk.com/derbyhomes

We're a Top 50 Landlord!

We're delighted to announce that we've been ranked 9th in 24housing Magazine's Top 50 Landlords! This makes us the second highest ranked ALMO in the country.



We've been singled out in particular for our homelessness work, such as the Proactive Engagement and Enforcement Partnership, our multi-agency project with Derby City Council, Public Health and the Police that tackles rough sleeping in the city centre.



Happy Birthday Parkland View!

Parkland View, the extra-care facility owned by Derby City Council and managed by Derby Homes, has just turned three years old!

The birthday celebrations took place on the newly expanded outdoor terrace area, on what was turned out to be the hottest day of the year! Residents and visitors were treated to ice lollies, a BBQ, music, balloons, and sparkling juice for residents and staff.

The new garden area has been put together by Derby Homes' Estate Response Team and residents are now enjoying the improvements, with more seating, café-style table areas, raised planters and a central gazebo to give shade and shelter in all weathers.

This summer is also the 100th anniversary of council housing nationally, and Derby Homes' staff heard some amazing stories from Parkland residents who had lived in council

properties ever since they were young.

Within the past year, Parkland has won several national awards, including a Gold Award at the Elderly Accommodation Counsel (EAC) Awards 2019. The scheme was also recognised by the Dignity in Care Awards, along with being a finalist in the TPAS Awards for Excellence in Engagement in Support and Care.

Parkland View is entirely focused around community. It is full of communal areas for residents to meet and socialise, including a lounge, hobby room, restaurant, wellbeing room, shop and reception area. There is an onsite care team that offers flexible, personal care to support people. Residents can choose how much or how little support they require to best maximise their health, wellbeing and independence. Even as these needs change over time, residents are able to remain in their own homes, and have services tailored around them.



Derby Homes staff helped to refurbish the gardens at Parkland



Cracking Down on Housing Fraud

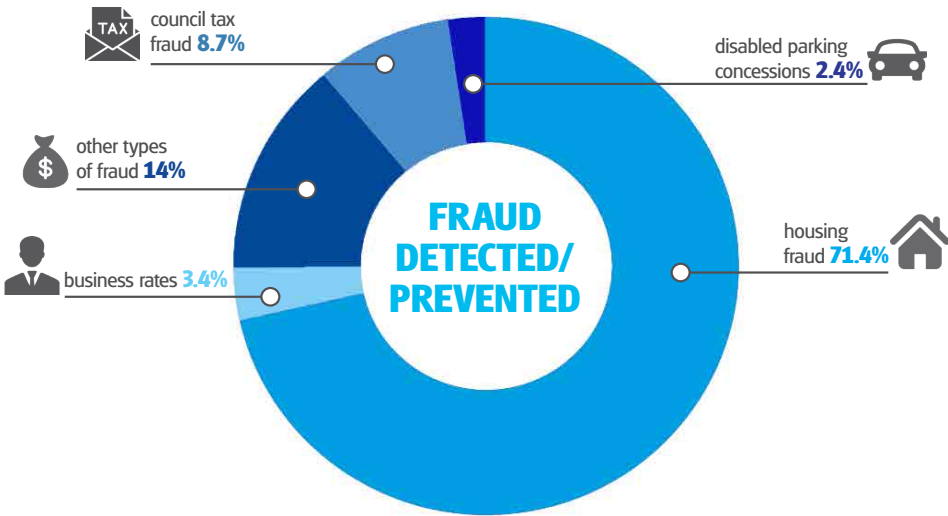
Housing is in high demand, which means it's especially important to crack down on people who are taking advantage of the system to obtain council housing fraudulently and depriving Derby's most vulnerable residents of a home and vital support services.

Wherever there is money, there is fraud. Tenancy fraud is a very serious issue and it involves much more than unlawful subletting, including:

- obtaining a tenancy by deception
- not using property as main home
- wrongly claimed succession
- unlawful assignment
- false right-to-buy

We work closely with Derby City Council's Counter-Fraud Team, who investigate and prosecute suspected fraud cases. As you'll see in the graph, housing-related fraud is by far the biggest area that the team tackle.

Since the team was set up in January 2017, they have identified over £2.5million worth of housing-related fraud in Derby, that was successfully prevented and the money recovered.



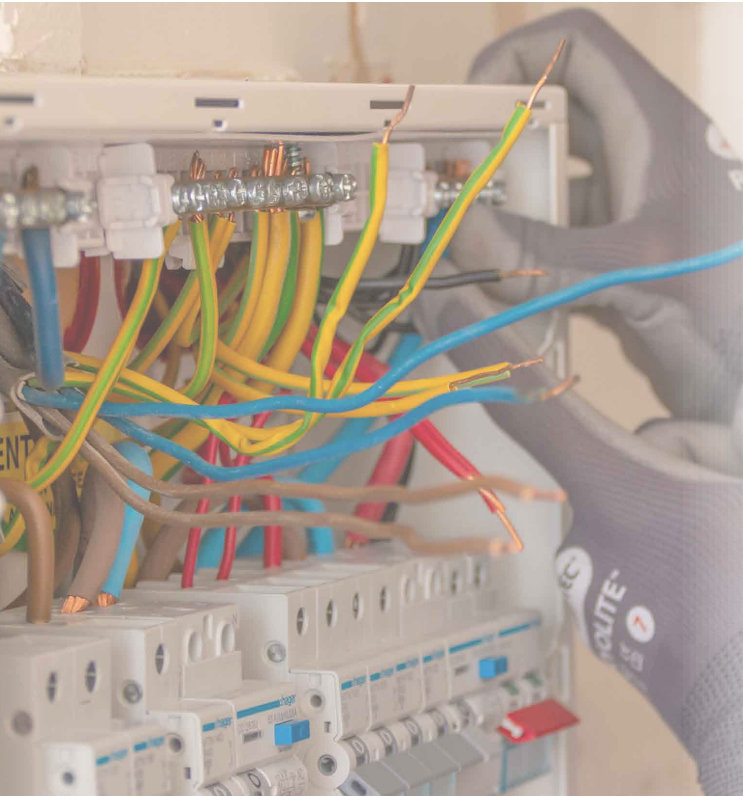
The team recently prosecuted a woman who had been subletting to a friend, whilst living in Shropshire. She was charged, fined and evicted from her council property, freeing it up for someone who really needed it.

REPORT FRAUD

If you suspect someone of housing fraud, tell us about it. You can also report it to the Counter Fraud Team at inspectionsservice@derby.gov.uk on **01332 640888** or anonymously at: report-fraud.co.uk/derbycity

SAVINGS IDENTIFIED BY THE COUNTER FRAUD TEAM

Recovered 38 properties	£1.7MILLION
Stopped 15 Housing Applications and RTBs	£49,200
Right to Buy Savings	£500,000
Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions	£136,000
Housing Benefits	£137,000



Why You Should Keep Your Electrical Check Appointment

Over time, your electrical appliances can deteriorate, increasing the risk of shock, fire and burns. We carry out an Electrical Safety Check every five years to ensure the electrics at your property are safe for continued use. Our electricians test the whole electrical installation, including cables in walls and ceilings. It's a legal requirement and you must allow us access for the work. You'll also need to stay in the property while our electrician carries out the check.

When your check is due, we'll send you a letter with an appointment date. If it's not convenient, just let us know as soon as you can on **01332 888564**, or email electricalservicing@derbyhomes at least 24 hours before your appointment to rearrange.



YOUR MEMORIES AND STORIES



100
YEARS OF
COUNCIL
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What was living in council housing like in times gone by? Derby Homes has only been around for 16 years, but people have been living in the properties we manage for a lot longer than that. Some of you have kindly got in touch with us and shared your memories of the places you've lived, grown up and how things have changed.

Got a story? Get in touch with us.

GROWING UP IN COUNCIL HOUSING



Lois and her mum in the garden of their council property, c.1950s

Sisters Lois and Allison grew up on Worcester Crescent in Chaddesden, in one of the many new homes built in the housing boom just after the Second World War. At this time, there was a wave of house building taking place in Derby. Slums were being cleared and new, modern homes were being erected at a pace never seen before.

Lois and Allison's family moved into the property in June 1947. Their parents met at the end of the Second World War, after their father was repatriated to Derby to heal from an injury he'd picked up fighting overseas. At first, the couple lived in the same army huts on Marketon Park where the soldiers had been sent to recover.

"The army huts were converted into family houses. They put a partition down the middle, and you had a family on each side," says Lois, "that's where I was born. They weren't very well built or well insulated. Mum used to say it was so cold, in the winter your hot water bottle would freeze in the bed."

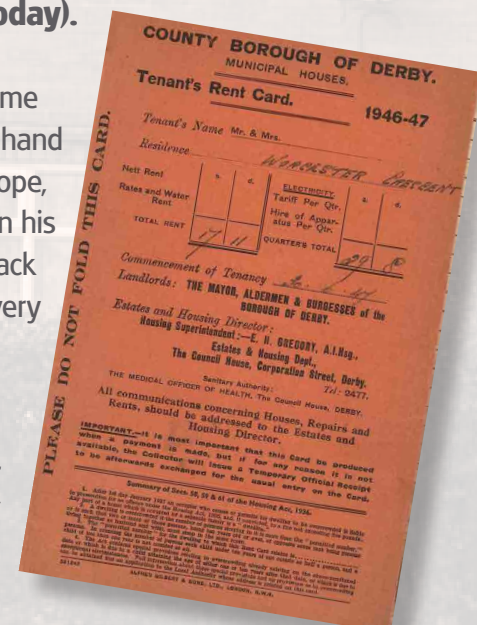
In comparison, their new house on Worcester Crescent was something of a luxury. It had an upstairs bathroom with a bath and a toilet. There was a big sitting room, a kitchen, three bedrooms, a pantry, and a back garden with enough space for the family to plant vegetables. The house had a boiler for hot water, but lighting came from paraffin lamps and to keep warm the family had a coal fire (later a heater that they rented from the council).

Rent in 1947 was 17 shillings and 11 pence per week (around £31 today). The average yearly salary was £278 (£10,059 today).

"The rent man would come once a week, and you'd hand him the rent in an envelope, then he'd write it down in his book. No direct debits back then!" laughs Allison, "Every day someone different would come – the milkman, the coalman, the man from the corner shop to take your order."

This was one of the first council estates built in Derby. All the residents on their street were council tenants, and many of them, including the girl's dad, worked for Rolls Royce. Both of them remember the sense of community on the street.

"I think people tend to keep themselves to themselves a bit more nowadays, but you didn't feel the need for privacy the way you do now. It wasn't strange at all. Back then we all knew each other really well. For instance, for a long time, we





didn't have any fences or hedges separating us from our neighbours. The boundaries were marked with wires and posts, but you could see what everyone was up to."



"No-one had a car in those days; our neighbour Mr Bratton was the first person to get one, and it was a really big deal. The good thing was it meant you could play out in the street without worrying about traffic. At first, we were the only house in the street with a TV – black and white with a 9 inch screen (smaller than this



newsletter, when folded in half!) – and all the kids would come round to watch," remembers Lois.

"Mum had this great idea; she would charge them a penny to watch, and then when it was the Queen's coronation in 1953, she used the money to put on a street party for all of us. The party was great, but I remember the weather was terrible!"



Lois and Allison today

Thanks to Emma, Louis and Allison for sharing their memories, photos and incredible archive of vintage rent cards! ■

Irene is a resident at Parkland View, the Extra-Care facility managed by Derby Homes



Irene at the Parkland View birthday party in July

"I first moved into a council property in 1976, after living in a private property since we got married.

It was lovely, we went to look around before we moved in and I remember thinking how well kept the tenants had kept it. It had a lovely big garden, front and back, and a garage. We had great neighbours and it was just a great place to live. We were keen to move into a council house, we didn't want to be tied into a mortgage for years and years. In 2001 we moved another council property in Shelton Lock, which was specially adapted to help with disability. Now I live at Parkland View. I've always had great experiences when I've moved to a new home."

CUSTOMER FIRST - WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

Last Autumn, we launched a new Customer Service Strategy: "Customer First". Customer satisfaction is good; 94.4% good. But we know that these figures don't tell the full story. We might be meeting our targets, but you might think that the targets themselves need looking at. That's why we want you to tell us where you think we've failed, so we can refocus our services to make sure we're putting you first.

This is cultural change and won't happen overnight, but we've already seen some teams make changes since the strategy was approved last June. Some are big, some small. Some may be brand new ideas based on feedback and some may be things we may have let slip a little. Whatever the change, we hope they show that we're listening and taking steps to improve things, so keep your feedback coming!



Can you stop being so noisy please?

When we first advertised Walk-in-Wednesdays, the first feedback we had was about early Saturday morning noise from the monthly clean of the yard at our head office. We had no idea this was causing a disruption. As soon as we received the feedback we spoke to our contractors, who made sure their work was kept to more sociable hours.



Extra power sockets where we see a need

When we carry out our electrical safety check in a property and we find that the consumer unit needs replacing, we'll often take the extra time to fit additional power sockets to rooms where we can see people are having to use extension leads to cope with running everyday electrical items.



Sensible decorating for vulnerable tenants

Our decorating scheme usually provides decorating to one room a year; however for some specific tenancies, for example homes designated for those with learning disabilities, this isn't ideal. We work with families and carers to reduce disruption by providing the service in a more flexible way.



Money saving connections for new tenants

Previously, new tenants had to find and pay a gas engineer or electrician to connect their cooker when moving in. As our repair staff are often there at the start of a tenancy, we now offer to install cookers for free. Obviously it depends on having the cooker available and fitting around people's moving plans, but it saves people hassle and cost. It also ensures the appliances in our properties are installed safely.



Working to eradicate the problem of unsightly, mismatched kitchen units

If you had to repair a kitchen you'd paid for yourself, would you fit a cupboard door with a different design or colour? Didn't think so! Following some feedback, we're taking steps to minimise where this will happen in our kitchen repairs. For existing kitchens where identical replacements are no longer available, we'll try to get the closest match. In some cases, we may bring forward a modernisation where repairing is not good value.

Customer Voice Update



I'm pleased to say that we completed our recent review of Derby Homes' sign-up process, and our recommendations were sent to the Operational Board for approval.

We told the Board we wanted to see:

- ... Staff talking with new tenants about support available if they begin to struggle with money or other issues.
- ... Tenants feeling able to raise any issues they have with their new homes
- ... All customers provided with a meter box key for easy access to the meter boxes
- ... Staff receiving relevant training on sign-ups every 12 months to ensure consistency

- ... Staff being notified of amendments to procedures and policies quickly and clearly
- ... All keys to properties to be clearly labelled
- ... Minimise the paperwork provided to the customer at both escorted viewings and sign-ups by providing customers with just a Tenancy Agreement and document checklist
- ... All sign-ups to be completed by Friday lunchtime

At the meeting, the Operational Board approved all our recommendations, with a note to review them again in six months time.

Shirley, Chair of Customer Voice



Derby Homes Youth Board Wins Award

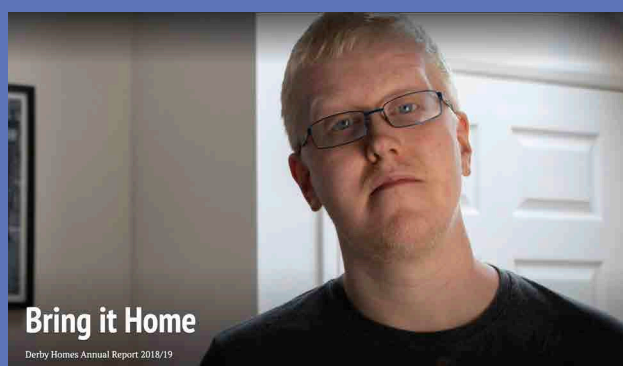
Derby Homes Youth Panel, "Ignite and Connect", have become the first ever winners of the Team Award at the Derby Youth Awards 2019.

The first Derby Youth Awards were hosted by Sporting Communities on Friday 2 August. They celebrate the inspirational stories of young people aged 11-25 who live in Derby. The Team Award is granted to a group of young people who have collectively contributed towards a great achievement within their community or the city.

The members of Ignite and Connect are aged between 13 and 19 and live in Derby Homes' properties and neighbourhoods. They are committed to engaging and empowering young people in Derby. In the four years since they were founded, they've been meeting regularly to improve the estates and areas in which they live and make a difference in their community.

The panel has continued to champion the young people across Derby to ensure that their voice is heard. One of

their major projects has been to support Derby Homes in tackling anti-social behaviour, by helping them to engage with young people and challenge negative stereotypes. They act as a sounding board for Derby Homes when we propose making changes to our services, ensuring that we consider the impact on young people. They have also helped to increase the number of young people across the city who are consulted by engaging with them through methods such as Instagram.



Annual Report - 2018/19

Have you had a look at our Annual Report yet? If you follow us on Facebook, you might have seen some of it already. We shared a clip of the poem written by Matthew J Fowler, who was inspired by the 'See The Person' campaign that aims to tackle the stereotyping of people who live in social housing.

The report is an easy way to see how we did in 2018/19.

To view it, go to:

<https://spark.adobe.com/page/jG3c05tdhTijK/>



HRH Princess Anne Visits Derby

100
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You probably heard that we had a very special guest in July, when Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal visited Derby to see the War Memorial Village and St. Martin's Church and Community Centre. Her visit came as the War Memorial Village celebrated its 70th Anniversary, and was part of our celebrations to commemorate 100 Years of Council Housing in Britain.

War Memorial Village Derby is situated in Shelton Lock, providing housing for disabled veterans of the Armed Services and Emergency Services, and is one of just two remaining original villages in the country. Derby Homes manage the properties, and we've recently been contracted to build even more.

The foundation stone for the village was laid in 1949 by the Queen (then HRH Princess Elizabeth). On her visit, the Princess Royal was greeted by hosts Derby City Council, along with local school children, the Village Trustees and Derby Homes' staff. She also unveiled a new memorial plaque for the village, and laid a



wreath in memory of those who died serving in the armed forces.

To commemorate the visit, Derby Homes presented Her Royal Highness with a unique, commissioned Royal Crown Derby plate marking 100 Years of Council Housing in Derby. The gesture made reference to the Queen's visit 70 years prior, part of which included a visit to Royal Crown Derby, where she had a tour of the factory on Osmaston Road.

The second stage of her visit was to St. Martin's Church and Community Centre in Allenton to see the recent inspiring expansion and refurbishment. From here, Princess Anne went on to the charity Women's Work Derby, and then to Derbyshire Constabulary and Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service's Joint Headquarters and Joint Training Centre in Ripley.





The event included a full military parade

Centenary Bungalows

In August, the War Memorial Village hosted a second celebratory event: 'Salute to the Village'. This was the charity's official commemoration of 70 years since the first bungalows were handed over to veterans of the Second World War. The Village played host to a full military showcase, with a number of military displays, marches, live music, and a Battle of Britain commemorative fly-past by an original Second World War Dakota fighter plane.

Since opening, the War Memorial Village has been managed, maintained and developed by a group of trustees, which includes retired ex-services personnel, with Derby Homes acting as the managing agent since May 2013. The trustees have recently embarked on an ambitious plan with Derby City Council to replace some of its properties with new, purpose-built accessible homes over the next 20 years.

Derby Homes has been named as the main partner and is now building nine new "Centenary Bungalows" for the charity, further commemorating 100 Years of Council Housing in Derby. The aim is to respond to the ever-changing needs of ex-service personnel. This will mean changes not just in the design and specification of new homes for those with physical disabilities, but also in the increasing support available for those with post-traumatic stress disorder and mental health complexities.



Construction has begun on the new bungalows at the village



Can You Help Us Improve Our Website?

We're about to start a complete redesign of our website, and we'd like your thoughts! If you've used it recently, it would be really useful for us to know how your experience was. We're interested in knowing:

- What could have been done better?
- Is there anything missing or something you couldn't do?
- When you visit our site, is it easy to do or find what you want?

We'll be updating the content, layout and design, so it's going to be a big project over the next few months.

If you think you can help, take a few moments to complete a short survey on our website at the address below. Don't worry about hurting our feelings - be honest!

www.derbyhomes.org/get-involved/consultations

Coffee, Housing & Community

Derby Homes and Derby City Council are working with Sacred Bean Coffee to produce a special coffee blend to commemorate 100 Years of Council Housing.

Sacred Bean is a new Community Interest Company, set up by Revd Darren Howie, that aims to help ex-offenders and people overcoming addiction to find purpose, belonging and the structure they need to make positive, sustainable change in their lives.

Darren is very open about his past as a former heroin addict who was involved in crime. He turned his life around through a Christian rehabilitation programme. His first job out of prison as part of his rehabilitation was in a coffee shop, where he developed a love for coffee. He started experimenting with roasting coffee whilst still at St Peters church working on the Inside Out project, an initiative that connects men and women leaving prison and resettling to Derby.

A year on, Sacred Bean is much more than just "roasting coffee with a few mates". Darren is looking into funding to provide training and qualifications in health and hygiene, first aid and areas to develop people's coffee roasting and barista skills. This builds on his personal experiences and existing links with local organisations that support people recovering from addiction or leaving the prison system,



helping them into housing and accessing other related services.

"Volunteering with Sacred Bean can help provide the belonging that's vital to recovery. We all have a weekly meal together. It helps to bring the community together and build a culture. Our aim is to try to restore those connections, to help people find purpose in their lives and in turn, stability and sustainability in home and community."

If you want to taste the special "Home Blend" coffee, we'll be serving it at some of our events and it may even turn up in some of our charity prize draws! ☕

Full article at news.derby.gov.uk

 Sacred Bean Coffee

