

Derby Homes News



Spring 2023



Made with 100%
recycled paper

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**New Tenant Satisfaction
Measures**

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Keeping you safe

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Getting involved

Welcome to our Spring newsletter



To start, I want to acknowledge that many of you have been waiting longer than normal for non-urgent repairs to be carried out.

There are many reasons why this is happening, including the fact that we are still catching up on backlogs caused by COVID and unfortunately there are still some delays in getting materials. However, the bottom line is that this is not where we want to be and it is not good enough.

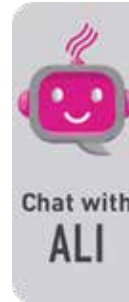
We are working hard to reduce the wait times and putting in many changes to improve our performance, but we also need your help. We are still finding high numbers of people not being at home for their repair appointments. I appreciate that there will be times when things crop up, but if you are not going to be at home please try to let us know in advance.

A missed appointment means that we are not making the most of staff time and this costs money, money from your rent that should be used to improve your services.

This year you will be hearing a lot about the new Tenant Satisfaction

Measures or TSM's (page 3). These are the new measures that will tell us how well you think we are doing. We will publish the results so that you can see them and you will be able to compare us against other housing providers.

If you have been on our website recently you might have noticed the newest member of our team, Ali. Ali is our digital helper and is there to answer your questions. Many of you will already be familiar with 'online chat' on many other websites and it can save you time if you need to get some information.



Another new service that we've launched is 'Let's Talk Derby Homes' (page 10). This is our new digital platform that allows you to have your say. We want to hear from you and that's why we are making it easier than ever for you to get involved.

There are a range of opportunities to meet everyone's needs, ranging from five minute surveys to our new mystery shopping roles (page 11).

Maria Murphy
Managing Director, Derby Homes



Getting in touch

The best way to contact us is through our website. You can find the answers to most questions, report anti-social behaviour and register for **My Account**

 www.derbyhomes.org



01332 888777

Non-urgent enquiries

Monday to Friday – 9AM to 3PM

Homefinder & homeless enquiries

Monday to Friday – 8.30AM to 4.30PM

All urgent enquiries

Call anytime

(Out of office hours, calls are diverted to **01332 642202**)

Out of hours homeless advice

01332 956606

 **Email us**
Customer Service

Contactus@derbyhomes.org

Rent

Incometriageteam@derbyhomes.org

Housing Advice

Housing.options@derbyhomes.org



07860 097426

Text service for hearing impaired customers
Or use Text Relay service

If you would like this newsletter in **Large Print**, get in touch and we will send one out to you

SUPPORTING

YOU WITH THE

COST OF LIVING

**FOR SUPPORT CALL 01332 346266,
TEXT 07490 341584 OR VISIT**

derby.gov.uk/costofliving

National news: New regulatory measures begin

Back in 2020, the Government introduced **the charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper**. It set out what every social housing resident should be able to expect from their landlord.

From **1 April 2023**, all registered providers of social housing must collect and publish a range of comparable information in key areas of service. These are known as the **Tenant Satisfaction Measures**.

They are part of the Regulator of Social Housing's wider programme of work to develop proactive, consumer regulation of the social housing sector.

A key part of the regulation is the measurement and reporting of the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

New Tenant Satisfaction Measures

The new measures will enable tenants to scrutinise their landlord's performance, give landlords insight about where they can improve, and provide a source of intelligence to regulator about whether landlords are meeting regulatory standards.

There are 22 measures in total. Ten of these are figures measured directly by the landlord. The remaining twelve are measured by carrying out perception surveys.



Keeping properties in good repair



Maintaining building safety



Respectful and helpful engagement



Responsible neighbourhood management



Effective handling of complaints

Will this change anything?

We already collect perception measures from tenants in our Customer Survey. We are now preparing for the changes in how we do this, which means some minor changes to the questions we ask, but also a change in how we select the sample of tenants to be surveyed. Our surveys will mainly be delivered over the phone with a random sample of tenants. We must collect a proportionate and representative number of responses each year, compared to the wider tenant population. We then submit our results to the Regulator of Social Housing.

How you can check our performance

As well as reporting the measures and survey responses to the regulator, we'll be making the results available for you to see how we're doing too.

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures will be reported to our Board and be published on our website. We'll ensure we summarise them in this newsletter and also plan to include links to the information in any email news shots we send out.

What is measured in each theme?

There are five main themes that the satisfaction measures fall within. These follow on from the key themes of the White Paper. They are shown in the graphic above, but are essentially the key areas of any housing service:

- **Keeping properties in good repair**
- **Maintaining building safety**
- **Respectful and helpful engagement**
- **Responsible neighbourhood management**
- **Effective handling of complaints**

We've decided to go into each theme a bit more in this newsletter. It's important for us to be transparent with you on the services we deliver. It also means you'll have a good overview on what to expect from us in these key areas.

Once you've read this newsletter you'll have a good idea of some of the key work we do across the city and be in a position to check our performance should you ever need to.

Keeping properties in good repair

Did you know our Customer Service Team handle over **110,000** calls a year and our Repairs Team complete around **36,000** repair jobs across the **12,500** homes we manage?



Our Repairs Team deliver a whole range of work that helps keep your home in a good state of repair. This includes a responsive service for things you tell us need fixing and the regular work we keep on top of, like servicing and other routine work.

Even though we're not an emergency service, we deal with "emergency repairs" by attending to them more urgently to ensure things are safe and there's no further risk to you or your household.

We also have teams that specialise in work that has to be planned in on a much longer timescale. This includes surveying and replacing things like doors, windows, kitchens, bathrooms, heating and roofs.

Performance and satisfaction for responsive repairs remains excellent, however at the moment we are trying to manage a backlog of work that has built up for a variety of reasons.

This could potentially affect you if you're waiting for a repair, so here's a summary of the current situation.

Current pressures on repairs



Derby Homes, like many housing providers, have a backlog of non-emergency repair jobs. For us, this is around **7,000 jobs** (over two months of work).

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We concentrate on emergency and urgent repairs to ensure these are dealt with first. Emergency jobs continue to be completed on time in virtually all cases. Because of this, our response times on non-emergency works is not as quick as we would like. For example, we now only complete two out every three jobs on time for repairs with a target of 60 working-days. Previously, this performance was four out of every five jobs.

Why is there so much outstanding work?

From April 2021 to March 2022, we saw an increase of 3,000 repair jobs being reported (a rise of 8%). This followed a period that saw a greatly reduced number of repairs reported (the previous year was impacted by Covid).

The number of repairs being reported have now returned to normal levels. However at the moment there is also rising demand for damp, mould, and



condensation related jobs. These types of jobs are often more complex and require more resource than traditional routine repair jobs.

What are we doing to improve things?

- We have increased our workforce to tackle the immediate problem
- We are reviewing the way we schedule work
- We are trying to improve access rates by calling you the day before an appointment
- Our Board and Senior Management Team are monitoring the situation closely.

How can you work with us to improve the situation?

We ask that you recognise the current workload pressure on this area.

We know that our response times on non-emergency work needs to improve. Please bear with us and give us time to allow for the remedial actions to be put in place and our performance to improve.

We want to reduce the number of appointments we

have to rearrange (due to prioritising emergency jobs), as we appreciate how frustrating this can be for you.

Please work with us to reduce this wasted time.

If you need to rearrange a repair appointment, contact us to agree a new time. This will significantly improve our efficiency and enable more jobs to be completed within target times, which benefits us all.



Record-high levels of no-access for repair appointments

Incredibly at the moment, we are seeing "no-access" for up to 30% of repair jobs with agreed appointments. This can be as high as **900** of the **3,000 repair appointments** we visit each month.

This is simply where no one is at the property at the agreed time when we visit to deal with the repair they asked us to carry out.

We then need to rearrange a date with the tenant. This not only wastes money, but it also causes delays in us carrying out repairs for others.

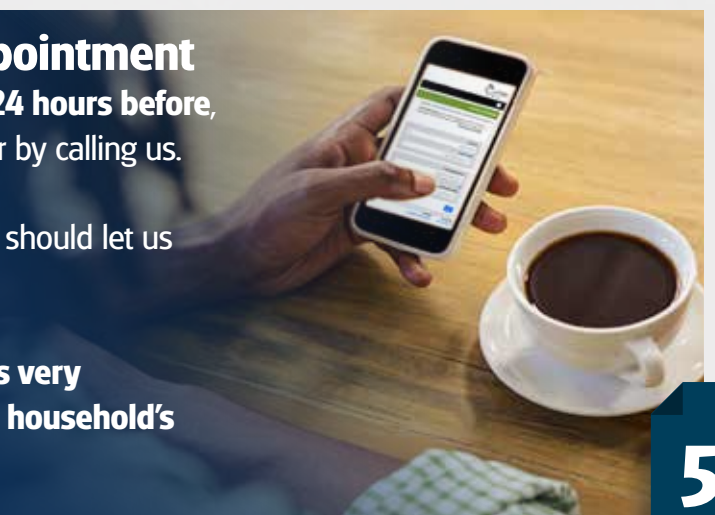
In the short term, we are now closing outstanding, non-urgent repairs, where the tenant has not been at home for two agreed appointments.

How to rearrange or cancel a repair appointment

You can change or cancel a non-urgent appointment up to **24 hours before**, by simply **replying to your SMS appointment reminder** or by calling us.

You cannot cancel gas or electrical safety appointments, but should let us know if you need them rearranging.

Faulty gas and electrics can be extremely dangerous. It's very important you keep your appointment for you and your household's safety.





Maintaining building safety

We want you to feel safe in your home.

There are many teams in Derby Homes who are responsible for making sure your home is safe and secure.

We carry out a range of safety checks before you move in, and throughout your time in your home:



Fire safety



Gas safety



Water safety



Lift safety



Asbestos safety



Electrical safety



Fire safety

When it comes to fire, making sure you're safe is our top priority. We have procedures in place to help prevent fires and reduce the impact if a fire does break out.



We're responsible for:

- **Fire risk assessments in communal areas**
- **Helping prepare fire emergency plans**
- **Fire and building regulations for new builds**
- **Fire training for our staff**
- **Working with the fire service**
- **Rectifying any fire safety issues**
- **Your building's fire safety procedures**
- **Installing and maintaining fire detection systems**
- **Maintaining fire doors**
- **Ensuring external walls and cladding are safe and fire resistant**

Gas safety

Our gas engineers will check your boiler is working safely as part of your annual gas safety appointment. Unmaintained boilers can be extremely dangerous for you and your family, so it's extremely important you allow us access to complete these checks. Making sure your boiler is annually maintained can also help you save money on your energy bills.



Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors

We make sure smoke alarms are:

- installed on each level of the property
- interconnected
- tested and fitted to current regulations



Carbon Monoxide detectors will be tested where fitted.

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Electrical safety

Faulty electrics can be extremely dangerous. If electrics are not installed properly or have faulty wiring, they can cause fires and electric shocks.



We carry out electrical safety tests on all properties before you move in and every five years. During these checks, we'll check the condition of your:

- **electric meter**
- **service head**
- **fuse box/consumer unit**
- **earthing arrangements**
- **circuits throughout your home**
- **electrical accessories such as lights, sockets, cookers and showers**

Not all faults are easy to spot which is why, **for the safety of you and your family**, it's so important for us to carry out safety checks.

Maintaining building safety



Water safety

We aim to meet the highest standard of water hygiene. We carry out:



- water checks and a water system flush in empty properties before anyone moves in
- monthly checks in sheltered accommodation, communal buildings and common rooms
- risk assessments on properties whenever we carry out major works like kitchen or bathroom renewals

Lift safety

All passenger lifts, ceiling track hoists, through floor lifts and step lifts in our properties have a **LOLER** (Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulation) certificate and are inspected every **six months**.



LOLER is a lift inspection required by law and ensures lifting equipment is safe to operate.

Stair lifts do not need a LOLER certificate, but are still serviced **every year**.

Asbestos safety

Many of the properties we manage were built before to the ban of asbestos in 1999 and may have been built or refurbished using materials containing asbestos. The majority of the homes managed by Derby Homes contain low-risk asbestos materials.



Asbestos itself does not constitute a danger, but any materials containing asbestos may pose a hazard if disturbed or damaged.

Before you move in, a surveyor will carry out a visual inspection for asbestos. Any asbestos remaining in the property will be safe and intact.

We'll give you information on any asbestos in your home when you move in, and let you know what you need to do if any work needs carrying out that might disturb the materials.

Resident safety news

Bottled gas: Don't risk it

We've all felt the impact of on heating our homes and cooking food. This has been even more apparent over winter.

We recently visited a property and found the tenant was using bottled gas to fuel their hob, so this is a timely reminder to put your own safety first.

Your tenancy conditions are clear that these of bottled gas is not allowed.



"You, or anyone living with you, must not keep or use bottled gas, paraffin, petrol or any other dangerous material in your home or in communal areas."

If you're struggling with your energy bills, there is support and advice available. From tips to reduce your energy usage, how to cook more efficiently or direct help staying warm and getting hot food, the best place to start is:

derby.gov.uk/costofliving

Garden fires

Whilst it can be tempting to burn unwanted waste and garden or household rubbish, we advise against it.

Burning waste not only dangerous, but creates smoke, dust, and other air pollution that is harmful to health and a nuisance. You also risk the fire spreading to your house and neighbouring buildings.



No one wants to breathe in smoke, especially those with breathing or other health difficulties.

Make sure you dispose of your household waste responsibly, either in your bins or at a waste recycling centre. There are lots of options, but if you're unsure, contact Derby City Council or visit:

derby.gov.uk

Respectful and helpful engagement

There are a range of ways you can get involved with us. As a customer, you can make a vital contribution to Derby Homes by helping shape how we deliver services.

Depending on how much time you have, there's a way to give us your views or even take part in consultations or even scrutinise specific parts of our service.



Surveys

Easy and quick



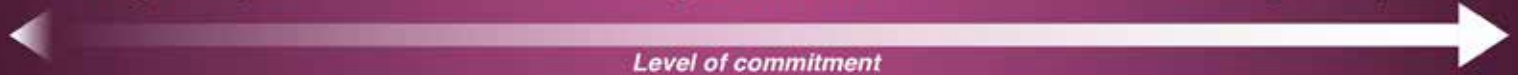
Consultations

In your own time



Scrutiny

Meeting and reporting



Surveys



Commitment level: Low

Surveys are the easiest way you can give us feedback on our services and policies. The **Customer Survey** is how we measure what you think about our services in the form of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures. It's carried out randomly to ensure fairness and representation of all tenants. If selected, you will be contacted by telephone no more than once a year.

Many of our services carry out what's known as '**transactional**' surveys. These give us specific feedback on a service, such as a repair, money advice or after we've dealt with any anti-social behaviour.

This feedback may be used within a team to assess performance and deal with minor issues.

Consultations



Commitment level: Low/medium

Consultations give you the opportunity to help shape our services by giving us your views, experiences and needs in relation to a specific topic. This helps to ensure our services and policies are fair, accessible, and put you first.

We publish all open consultations on our **Let's Talk Derby Homes** website. You can usually respond to any public consultations. We may sometimes need to target specific groups of people to ensure we include the voices of those groups or those who receive certain services.

Scrutiny



Commitment level: High

Tenant scrutiny is a key part of ensuring we're delivering fair, tenant-focused services. We try to ensure customers are directly involved in evaluating how we work. Our main scrutiny group is known as the **Customer Voice**. This is a group of volunteers, made up of tenants, who work with us by reviewing services. They report their findings to the Operational Board (**pg.11**).

Members receive ongoing training and support to ensure they understand the reality of how services are delivered and how they affect tenants.

What we do with your feedback

The outcomes of feedback, consultations or scrutiny can be found in reports that go to our Operational Board.

These can be found online on our **Committee Meeting Information System**.

We also report on the outcomes of consultations in this newsletter.



Scan to get involved



New customer scrutiny role: Mystery shopping

Help us identify areas we can improve by becoming a mystery shopper.

As a mystery shopper, you'll be asked to test our services in a variety of ways. You may be asked to phone us to report a repair, test how easy it is to find information on our website, or access advice and information from different teams.

To be a successful mystery shopper, you must be:

- a Derby Homes tenant
- committed and enthusiastic
- objective and fair
- able to complete the feedback questionnaire

Successful applicants will be provided with training.

To show our appreciation of your time and commitment, we give mystery shoppers a **£25 Love 2 Shop voucher** per shop (maximum of four per year) on successful completion of each Mystery Shop. We'll also reimburse your travel costs if you're asked to travel for the Mystery Shop or training.

You may not be eligible to take part in this project if you are in breach of your Tenancy Agreement, for example, if you are in rent arrears without a repayment plan, or are causing anti-social behaviour.

Get involved

 hub@derbyhomes.org

 01332 643694

Respectful and helpful engagement

Keeping you informed

There are a number of ways you can find out about the things that matter to you. You may prefer to just sit back and only catch up on the important things. Or maybe you like to get into the detail?

Whether you want to check how we're performing, find out about things that affect you or see how decisions are being made, we try to make sure there's a way to get the information you're after, in a way that suits you.

General news and updates

Derby Homes News is posted out to you **every three months**. We try to make sure there's a mix of information in each edition. The newsletter is limited by space and because it only gets sent out four times a year, we're unable to put anything in it that's really timely. If you have any ideas about what you'd like to see, let us know at comms@derbyhomes.org

Email

If you've given us your current email address, you should expect to receive an email from us once in a while so we can keep you up to date on things that might affect you. We promise not to send you too much and you can always unsubscribe at any time.

SMS text messages

We use text messages to send you short bits of information. This is usually for things you need to know, like repair appointments and reminders, but can also be for urgent or important alerts.

Online

We publish major news and stories to our website in the News section.

How are we performing?

You can find out how we're performing in the **Performance** section of our website.

Annual report

Each year, along with our full **Financial Statements**, we produce an annual report aimed at customers. You can find the most recent and historic annual reports on our website. Our most recent annual reports have been condensed to fit within our newsletter.

Decisions, Board meeting and reports

Derby Homes is run by a Board (see opposite page). You can find information about our meetings, agendas, reports and minutes and read more detailed information about our Board Members on our external site: **Committee Management Information System (CMIS)**.



Volunteer Action Pass

Community Action Derby's latest volunteering pilot project has proved to be very successful and they're looking for more people to fill their next cohort.

Volunteer Action Pass is a brand-new training package with core modules which gives you access to further training.

Any Derby City resident above 18 can benefit from the free six-week programme where you can learn about customer service, safeguarding, disability awareness and first aid.

More information:



communityactionderby.org

vap@communityactionderby.org.uk

Respectful and helpful engagement

Who are the Board?

We are run by a board which oversees our work and ensures we are meeting our mission, objectives and values.

Our board members vote on decisions affecting how Derby Homes is run; they question our heads of service, check that we're providing value for money, and ensure we deliver services of the highest possible standard to our tenants and leaseholders.

Derby Homes Board typically votes on longer term, strategic decisions, whereas our Operational Board focuses more on the day-to-day running of Derby Homes.


The Operational Board has responsibility for making decisions and monitoring our performance to ensure that we deliver services of the highest possible standard on a wide range of activities such as anti-social behaviour on estates, rent collection and rent arrears, estate improvement schemes and community initiatives.

Upcoming meetings


Derby Homes Board



Operational Board



YOUR CHANCE



**TO MAKE
A DIFFERENCE**

**Join our
Operational Board**

- ✔ 4 meetings a year
- ✔ Full training and support
- ✔ Laptop and phone provided
- ✔ Open to tenants and family members aged 18 and over*



www.derbyhomes.org

 governance.services@derbyhomes.org

*Full terms and conditions on our website

Effective handling of complaints

We try to get things right first time. However, we appreciate this doesn't always happen. We take all complaints seriously and believe we can learn from our mistakes to improve our service in the future.

These pages give you an overview of what we mean by a complaint and what you can expect if you make a complaint.

Please talk to us if you are dissatisfied with any of our services. You should first contact the staff who provided the service, who will try to resolve it for you. If you remain dissatisfied you can speak to their line manager. If you are still not happy, you should make a complaint. **We aim to resolve all complaints first time.**

Complaint definition

"An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents."

Before you make a complaint

There are some things people refer to as complaints that aren't. These can often be resolved more quickly just by speaking directly to the right person. It's important we make sure we get your query to the right place so we can resolve your issue quickly.

Common queries that aren't complaints

Derby Homefinder frustrations

Many people can get frustrated with how long it takes to find a home, the lack of offers or banding decisions. Unfortunately, the limited availability of homes is largely outside of our control. Instead, see the comprehensive **Find a home** section on our website or contact the Housing Options team.

Complaints about nuisance behaviour

It's common to want to "complain" about anti-social behaviour, such as noise or nuisance parking, but these are dealt with another way. Instead, you can report anti-social behaviour online or by calling us.

Outstanding repairs or improvements

Many non-urgent repairs can take a number of weeks to be completed. You can usually check My Account online or call customer services for an update.

Complaints about estate issues

Often, we just need notifying about things like untidy gardens, dangerous trees, fly tipping or dog fouling. These issues will then get picked up by your local patch team.

Complaints about bins, Council tax or benefits

Remember, we manage housing. You should contact Derby City Council if you're not happy with any of their services.

If we decide not to accept a complaint, we'll give you an explanation of why it's not suitable for our complaints process.

The Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman Service is set up by law to look at complaints about housing organisations. Their service is free, independent and impartial. You can contact the Ombudsman at any time during the complaints process. Alternatively, if your complaint is about Money Advice, you can ask for it to be reviewed by the Financial Ombudsman.

How to make a complaint



Online

www.derbyhomes.org



Email

housing.complaints@derbyhomes.org



Phone

01332 888777



In writing or in person

Customer Experience Team
Derby Homes
839 London Road,
Derby
DE24 8UZ





How we deal with complaints

When we receive your complaint we will:

- acknowledge it within two working days
- investigate and respond within ten working days
- review all the available evidence
- discuss the outcomes with you
- provide you with a written record of this
- record it on our housing management system

Complaint escalation

If you feel we have not resolved your complaint satisfactorily, you can ask for it to be escalated to the next stage.

This will be looked at by a different investigating officer. We call this a 'stage two' complaint. If you want us to do this, you must request your complaint be escalated within 20 working days from the date you receive our response to your initial complaint. The relevant head of service will appoint an appropriate manager to investigate the stage two complaint.

If you are still dissatisfied

If you're still not satisfied after the appeal process has been carried out, you can request that your complaint be considered by a 'designated person'. This can be an MP, a local Councillor or a recognised tenant panel. The designated person will either try and resolve the complaint themselves, or refer the matter directly to the Housing Ombudsman.

Petitions and group complaints

A group complaint is one that has been submitted by residents from more than one property, relating to the same issue.

The group need to agree on a lead complainant. The names and addresses of all members of the group are needed as part of the complaint to show that their permission has been gained and to confirm they are a member of the group making the complaint.

Remedy and compensation

If we've made a mistake, there are several ways we try to put it right. We can:

- make an apology
- carry out work, such as repairs
- review a decision we've already made
- improve the way we do things and train our staff so the mistake doesn't happen again.

If we find you've been disadvantaged in some way, either by the cause of your complaint or in pursuing it, we will consider paying you compensation. Generally, compensation will be a payment in recognition of distress or inconvenience caused to you. The person who investigates your complaint will determine the right level of compensation.

Learning from complaints



We don't always get things right, we recognise it's just as important to learn from our mistakes as it is from our successes. We listen to your comments and feedback and use it to help improve our services.

We record and analyse all complaints and their outcomes and provide quarterly reports for the Operational Board. You can read all about the lessons we've learned in these reports and in our Annual Report.



Responsible neighbourhood management

We know your home is more than just a roof and four walls. It's also the area you live in and the community you're part of.

We invest in, and maintain our estates to help you feel proud to live where you live. We:

- **help tackle anti-social behaviour**
- **clean, maintain and improve our estates**
- **clean and maintain communal areas and communal gardens**
- **work with community groups and provide community spaces**



Anti-social Behaviour

Problems that cause nuisance and disputes are often collectively called 'anti-social behaviour' (ASB).

Examples of ASB include drug or substance misuse and dealing, alcohol-related behaviour, noise nuisance and rowdy behaviour.

Our Anti-social Behaviour team work with the police, the Council and other organisations to tackle issues affecting people and the community.

Our first approach is always addressing the behaviour at it's source, resolving disputes and using low level intervention. We will only consider enforcement and eviction as a last resort, or when serious issues such as hate crime incidents have occurred.

You can report ASB through our website. If you need to report issues such as fly-tipping and dog fouling, please contact Derby City Council.



Well maintained estates

We regularly carry out inspections of the areas around our properties.

We carry out inspections to:

- keep the areas around properties safe
- identify defects that are hazardous or dangerous
- prioritise any necessary repairs
- identify potential repairs early to plan work

We visit more frequently where we get reports of damage or issues.



You can report any issues on our estates by contacting us. If you know the issue is not on housing land estates, you will need to contact Derby City Council.

Clean communal areas

Flat inspections

We'll inspect your block at least every two months. This may be more frequently if issues are picked up. See your flat information sheet in your communal noticeboard to find out when your next inspection's due.

If we find anything in the communal areas, we will dispose of it. If we find anything valuable we will try to identify the owner. If it is not removed, the item will be disposed of.

Communal areas

We clean communal areas weekly. You're still responsible for keeping the communal areas clean and clear.



Communal gardens

We maintain communal gardens throughout the year – which includes the grass, shrubs, hedges, trees and control any weeds.

Positive contribution to neighbourhoods

Estates Pride

Funding is given to us annually from Derby City Council to improve our estates. We use the funding is used for things like:

- **fencing**
- **parking**
- **pathways**
- **landscaping**

The aim of the work is to:

- **give people pride in the areas they live**
- **reduce anti-social behaviour**
- **make areas safer**
- **make areas cleaner**
- **make areas greener**

We visit areas to look at what improvements can be made and consult with residents in the area, with **most improvement ideas coming from the residents.**

Links in the Community

Did you know we have 22 Community Spaces across the city? These rooms are a hive of community led groups and activities and are available to hire.

Our Customer Engagement team work closely with groups, offering support and guidance to help them thrive.

To find out what's on in your area, or to book a room, contact hub@derbyhomes.org or call **01332 956356**

Neighbourhood news: No Mow May

We're taking part in No Mow May this Spring. It's an annual campaign introduced by the charity Plantlife, to encourage all garden owners and green space managers not to mow during May, providing a space for nature.

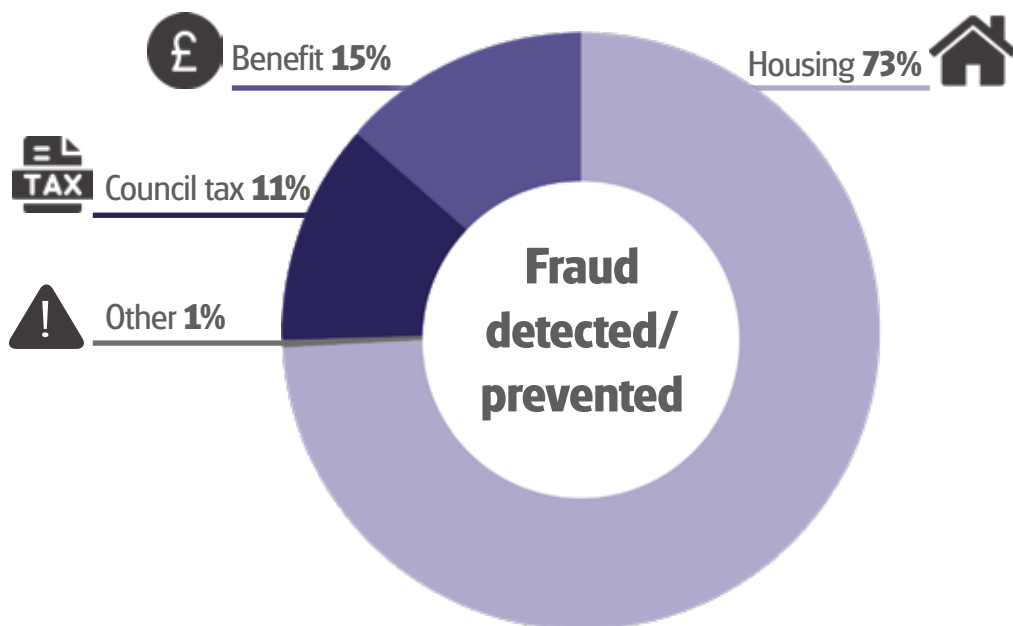
We've chosen a number of sites on housing land around the city where we won't be cutting the grass. Instead we're working with Derby City Council to plant more wildflowers to increase the amount of nectar available to pollinators.

www.plantlife.org.uk/nomowmay



🔍 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 **£4.75 million** worth of housing-related fraud in Derby, that was successfully prevented and the money recovered.

We are committed to preventing and detecting fraud and have increased our resources to support this.

The Counter Fraud team are actively tackling illegal subletting to reduce unauthorised occupation and return properties back to the housing stock.

In addition to acting on referrals, the team undertake pro-active work to identify other cases.

Anyone found committing fraud may lose their home, face prosecution and be subject to additional financial penalties.

Savings identified by the Counter Fraud team since 2017

Recovered 68 properties	£3.1 million
Stopped 27 Housing Applications	£88k
Stopped 29 Right-to-Buys	£1.6 million
Council Tax discounts	£686k
Housing Benefit	£406k

Right-to-Buy fraud

In certain circumstances tenants have a Right-to-Buy their house, but this is an area of potential fraud.

Examples are:

- Tenant did not reside in the property in the 12 months prior to the Right-to-Buy application
- Tenant not resident, but others are
- Application submitted by a third party and tenant unaware
- Providing false or misleading information
- Using 'illegal' money to fund a right to buy

If you think fraud may have been committed, refer it to the fraud team:

 **01332 640888**

 **InspectionService@derby.gov.uk**



Neglect

'When the person/people responsible for meeting an individual's basic and essential needs, don't do it'

In the case of self-neglect, this is when you are not looking after yourself, or are not letting someone else do so. It can come in many forms, such as physical neglect, hoarding or emotional neglect.

It's important that you know how to spot the signs of neglect, how to get help for anyone suffering from the disorder and where you can report it.

Hoarding disorder

Hoarding disorder is when a person finds it difficult to part with belongings, regardless of their value. It is a mental health problem that a doctor can diagnose.

It can be recognised by someone having piles of stuff in their home, for example. The number of things keeps growing and causes trouble to move around, sit or carry out daily tasks.

They might collect items such as newspapers, plastic bags, bottles, cardboard boxes, photographs, household appliances or food and clothing.

Hoarding can also be related to obsessive buying or the gaining of free items. It can make it very difficult to part with belongings and they may show signs of anxiety or distress when they try to do this or get organised.

We recognise that some of our residents may collect or hoard items which they do not want to part with.

Different types of Hoarding

Digital hoarding - Keeping a large number of digital files (such as photos) on devices. Deleting files can cause distress and they may want to keep these files 'just in case'.

Animal hoarding - Keeping too many animals to provide proper care for. They might have trouble noticing that this lack of care causes harm to the animals.

Food hoarding - Gathering large amounts of food in case of a disaster or emergency. This becomes a problem when the amount of food tends to cover every spare space within the kitchen and/or living spaces.



We can help with hoarding habits

We have a team of dedicated and supportive staff who can provide additional help to tenants with a wide range of complex needs. Our goal is to enable them to remain safe in their home.

We can work with you to address support needs and any actions that would improve the day-to-day life of you or your family.

If you recognise this behaviour in yourself and would like our help, please contact us to discuss it in confidence.

Enjoy a bite to eat and support your local community!

Why not have a freshly prepared lunch, drink or a slice of cake to eat at one of Derby Adult Learning Services cafés in Derby?

The "Better Together" café at the Council House is open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday (term time only) between 10am-2pm. The café at St Philip's Church on Taddington Road is open on Wednesday between 10am-2pm.



Ozzy Wheels storage container given fresh new look

BMX group Ozzy Wheels' storage container at Osmaston Park has been given a lick of paint.

The graffiti art was done by music and arts development organisation Baby People, funded by Derby Homes and Sinfin Neighbourhood Board, and we think it looks fantastic!

The club continues to grow and run weekly sessions. To find out more and get involved search 'Ozzy Wheels' on Facebook.



FREE blood pressure checks and support which could save your life

We're working with Derby City Council's Livewell service to help residents improve their cardiovascular health.

Over the coming months, you'll be able to get your blood pressure checked and receive FREE support and treatments to stop smoking in our community spaces around Derby.

High blood pressure usually has no symptoms. One of the first signs can be a heart attack or stroke, so it's important we all know and understand our numbers to reduce our risks of serious health conditions.

Stopping smoking is easier with the right support and can improve your physical and mental wellbeing in as little as six weeks.



The Livewell team will also identify eligible residents aged 40 to 74 for its free, 30-minute, NHS Health Checks, which include a cholesterol test and personalised heart age, as well as signposting appropriate residents to its weight-loss support programme.

The team will also give helpful tips and advice on how to lead a long and healthy life.

www.livewellderby.co.uk

Livewell offers friendly, habit-changing guidance alongside free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products for up to 10 weeks.



Renewed vows at Parkland View

A huge congratulations to Parkland View residents Jacqui and Brian who renewed their wedding vows in front of family and friends.

Anita from St Peters Church and Kate, Chaplain for Parkland View, held a beautiful and moving service in the lounge overlooking the garden. This was followed by a celebration in the restaurant.

The happy couple met and married in Hull on 23 November 1968 and moved to Derby in 2011.

While living at Rivermead House they watched the construction of Parkland View on the site of the old bath St Mills building that dramatically burnt down in July 2009.

They successfully applied for extra care accommodation and moved into their new flat on 22 August 2016.

The couple now enjoy their spacious flat, the views

of the garden and river and the lively community at Parkland View.

Brian describes the residents at Parkland View as being like part of one big family. He also runs the weekly indoor bowling sessions with his friend Colin. Meanwhile Jacqui is very involved with the Chaplaincy sessions, Mindful Arts and Crafts and the bingo sessions.

Best wishes to you both!



Derby County Community Trust

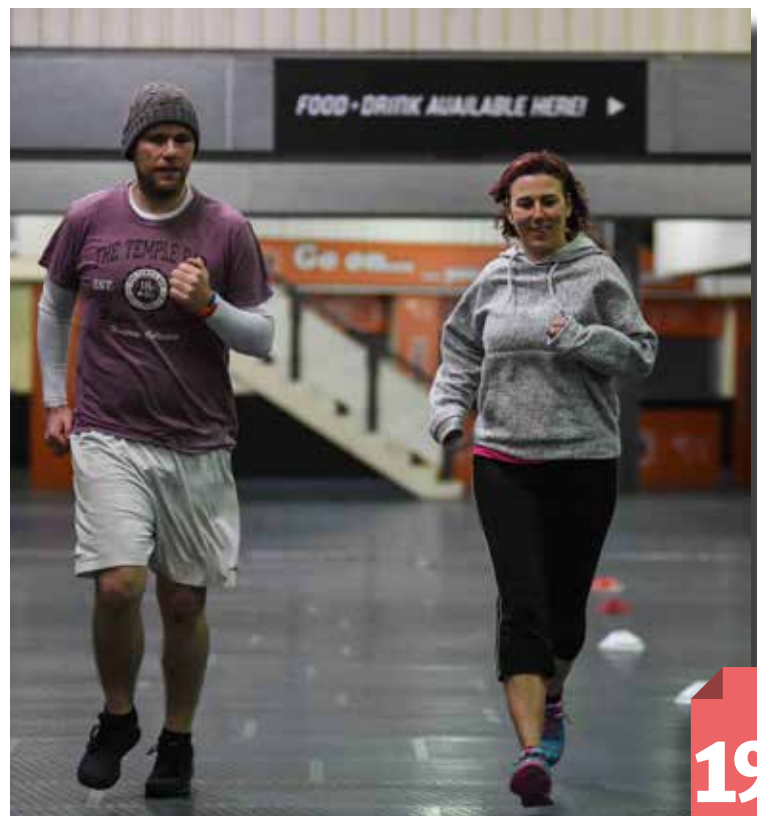
Derby County Community Trust run a Health and Wellbeing programme in partnership with local GP practices (you can check if your practice is included within the programme on their website).

The aim of the programme is to support patients who are living with long-term conditions, including asthma and other chronic lung diseases, diabetes, stress or anxiety and arthritis, to exercise and engage in a healthier lifestyle in a tailored approach which is adapted to their needs.

Sessions range hugely, from badminton to walking groups, DanceFit to pilates and from holistic therapy and muscle release clinics. Social elements are also hugely important to the project, with regular coffee mornings and catch ups.

Successes of the programme have seen clients no longer be at risk of diabetes, sleep better, have lower blood pressure, and generally gain more confidence.

The project is free to take part in for the first 12 months before participants will be invited to continue their journey across the ongoing fitness sessions.



Hundreds of tenants miss their gas and electrical safety check appointments every month

STAY SAFE, SAVE MONEY

Keep your **safety check appointments**

Don't let **DAMP & MOULD** get **OUT OF CONTROL**

Mould growth in your home can cause health implications. The longer you let it build up the higher the risk to you and your family.

If you're concerned about damp or mould get in touch with us as soon as possible.

You can report this to us online using **My Account** or by calling us.

We have more information on damp and mould and how to reduce the risk of it appearing in your home on our website.

We promise to:

- Listen to your concerns
- Visit your home to carry out an initial assessment
- Undertake any necessary repairs
- Provide after-care advice to help you prevent the issue re-occurring

Have you been approached to make a disrepair claim?

Legal firms make huge profits from these claims. Even if your claim is successful, you will likely be left with only a very small percentage of money paid in damages. In some cases, tenants have been left with legal debts, and the stress of going to court for nothing.

✗ **We do not work with any of these companies**

✗ **Be wary of giving out your personal information**

✗ **Never let anyone into your home unannounced**

✓ **Always ask for identification**

✓ **Call the police if you feel scared or threatened**

✓ **Talk to us before you sign any documents**

**No Win No Fee!
Win or Lose, You Pay!**

Call Free 01332 888777

contactus@derbyhomes.org

If you feel that you need to approach a company or solicitor for a disrepair case or if you've been approached to make a claim, contact us to discuss things first.